



Rodeo 4 Life Arena Spectacular Thrills for Charity with Troy Wilkinson Named 2019 Rodeo 4 Life Champion in Australia's Richest Bull Ride

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When Rodeo 4 Life the arena spectacular exploded at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong on Saturday night, this ground-breaking first in extreme entertainment that combined Australia's richest bull ride rodeo with a full length country music concert did not fail to impress.

A packed house of country music fans, rodeo and extreme sports enthusiasts were thrilled when Rodeo 4 Life's Grand Entry opened to Queens' We Are The Champions with a star-studded line-up of 25 elite Australian bull riding champions, Rodeo Queen of Australia, Bonnie McLean, country singer Victoria McGee and host John Jarratt, amid a spectacular light show that set the tone of what was to come.

Every bull riding champion lives for this extreme sport, its high energy and unpredictability with success dependent on the bull they draw and what happens on the night, Rodeo 4 Life was no exception with the energy fast and furious.

Round 1 of the bull riding competition had the audience on the edge of their seats when the thrill-seeking cowboys burst from the chutes drawing on their experience and sharpened skills to stay mounted on John "Happy" Gill and Sons and Matt Besant's mightiest bulls as they exploded from the chutes to a roaring crowd with Australia's legends of rodeo, Glen Morgan and Tyler Pendagast calling the shots.

Rodeo Clown Big Al Wilson kept the mood upbeat and the audience laughing while Rodeo Protection clowns Gene McDonald and Rodney-Ray (Rude) Mancell risked life and limb to protect the fallen cowboys from possible disaster.

When it came to the concert; the power and spectacle didn't let up when Travis Collins and his band rocked the crowd performing some of his greatest hits for over an hour while the audience cheered and lit up WIN Entertainment Centre with phone torches to much loved music and songs.

Then came Round 2 of the rodeo and the competition for the grand prize was fierce as the bull riders challenged themselves against the bulls in the ride of their lives to help save the lives of others in need of organ transplants.

With scores close, Troy Wilkinson, 29, from Upper Horton and Marrickville who is ranked 114th in the world, won the inaugural 2019 Rodeo 4 Life Championship title with a combined total score of 169 riding Vertical Exit and Earthbound adding to his string of credits including the highest individual bull riding score in Australia with a record of 93 and the titles of 2015 APRA Bull Riding Champion, 2017 PBR Australia Champion and 2017 PBR World Finals Qualifier.

Commenting on his win, Wilkinson said, "The riders always give it their best. We go into every rodeo competing not with each other, but competing with the bulls hoping that all elements come together to achieve the highest score."

"With Rodeo 4 Life, I got lucky. This event has taken rodeo bull riding to an incredible new level," said Wilkinson.

"Holding Australia's richest bull ride rodeo in an indoor arena, located right on the beach, and combining it with a light show and a full-length concert starring one of Australia's best country music singers, Travis Collins made it an exhilarating experience for riders and the audience.

"The house was pumped, the atmosphere incredible, and because it was for charity, it was even more special," he said.

Cowboy Toby Collins, 27, from Maldon VIC was the only other rider to successfully score in both rounds and earned a combined score of 160 riding White Ice and Vertical Exit and walked away with \$7,500 while Cliff Richardson, 28, from Gresford NSW, earned the highest individual ride score of 92 on superstar bull High Flying Akubra.

The evening of extreme sport was not without its thrills and spills when Jono Couling, 26, from Singleton, was thrown in Round Two having a dramatic run in with B.F.G. which left audiences shocked.

Couling said, "It's a dangerous sport and that sort of thing is part and parcel of being a bull rider. It happens from time to time. I don't feel too bad, there's nothing majorly wrong with me just a cracked shoulder blade and some scrapes. I've had worse injuries and I'm looking forward to my next rodeo at Christmas."

Producer Doug Vickers OAM was delighted with the outcomes saying, "Rodeo 4 Life had 4 primary objectives; to raise wide-spread awareness of the life-saving work of the RPA Transplant Institute and funds to support their vital research; to increase awareness of the importance of organ donation; and, to create an arena spectacular that would thrill and entertain our audience."

"Through combining a full-length country music concert with the extreme sport of rodeo bull riding, Rodeo 4 Life achieved all of this and so much more," he said.

"Travis Collins gave an incredible performance and every one of our bull riding champions rode their hearts out to give the audience a show they'll never forget while helping give others a chance at life," said Mr Vickers.

“Congratulations to all, especially Troy Wilkinson who took out the grand prize and the 2019 Rodeo 4 Life title. Together we achieved what we set out to do including generating widespread awareness of organ transplantation and more than \$100,000 for the RPA Transplant Institute as a result of Rodeo 4 Life. With exciting plans are now underway to make next year’s Rodeo 4 Life bigger and better, in 2020 we’ll give the audience an even more spectacular show,” Mr Vickers said.

Thanks to the funds raised from Rodeo 4 Life, the RPATI will be able to continue with the development of a world first organ perfusion system that will be able to extend organ viability from the current length of just a few hours to become viable for several days. This will allow more organs to be made available for transplant and a greater number of Australian lives to be saved.

-ENDS-

RODEO 4 LIFE LINKS

Rodeo 4 Life Website: <https://rodeo4life.com.au/> Rodeo 4 Life Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rodeo4lifeau/Organ Donor Register: https://donatelife.gov.au/>

RODEO 4 LIFE MEDIA CENTRE – DOWNLOADS

Photographs of Rodeo 4 Life the arena spectacular can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/RFL-Media> or rodeo4life.com.au/media - PHOTO CREDIT:

FRENCH'S PHOTOGRAPHY

RODEO BULL RIDING RESULTS

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Overall Winner

Troy Wilkinson:

- Riding Vertical Exit & Earthbound
- Score 169
- Prize: \$9,500 (total: Round 1 + \$2k)

Round One

1. Troy Wilkinson on Vertical Exit scored 89 - Prize \$7,500
2. Toby Collins on White Ice scored 78 - Prize \$4,500
3. Jack McArthur on Reverend Black scored 73 - Prize \$3,000

Round Two

1. Cliff Richardson on High Flying Akubra scored 92 - Prize \$6,000
2. Bryden Atkins on Turbulence scored 89 - Prize \$4,500
3. Toby Collins on Vertical Exit scored 82 - Prize \$3,000
4. Ty Thompson on Bloodline scored 81 - Prize \$1,500
5. Troy Wilkinson on Earthbound scored 80

Contacts

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