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California barrel racer Nellie Miller is the new leader in that event after stopping the clock in 17.23 seconds at the second performance of the Cody Stampede. PRCA photo by Andy Watson

California cowgirl takes barrel racing lead at Cody Stampede

CODY, Wyo., July 2, 2017 --- Nellie Miller's quest for a Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualification may have gotten some help at the Cody Stampede on Sunday night.

Miller, from Cottonwood, California, took her blue-roan mare that she calls "Sister" around the cloverleaf pattern in 17.23 seconds, the fastest time of the rodeo so far. She is coming off of a big win at the Reno (Nevada) Rodeo just over a week ago and the momentum has stayed with her.

Ranked sixth in the Women's Professional Rodeo Association world standings, Miller is on track for her second Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (NFR) qualification. She was there in 2010 aboard a horse they called Blue Duck that was raised and trained by her father Sam Williams. Blue Duck took her to a reserve championship in 2008 at the College National Finals Rodeo held in Casper. She was also part of the women's champion team that year.

Sister was also raised by the family and trained by Miller's father. She is a half-sister to Blue Duck. After competing in college and at the NFR, she married James Miller and the couple had two daughters.

Taking time to be a mom first put her rodeo goals on hold for a few years. In barrel racing, timing is everything and timing has certainly been right for Miller. Sister, at nine-years-old, has hit her stride this year and fans at the Cody Stampede got to see that first hand.

There are still over 100 competitors left in the barrel racing, so Miller will have to wait to see if her first-place position holds. However, last year Michele McLeod from Whitesboro, Texas, won the rodeo with a 17.27-second run so Miller is likely to get a check from Cody with her 17.23.

There were four bull rides on Sunday that were 80 points or better. Bryce Barrios from Bluff Dale, Texas, is leader of the pack after scoring 86.5 points on Frontier Rodeo's Levi the Boss.

Competition at Stampede Park continues Monday night at 8 p.m.

CODY, Wyo., July 2, 2017 ---The following are unofficial results from the 98th annual Cody Stampede.

Second Performance –

Bareback Riding: 1, Steven Peebles, Redmond, Ore., 83 points on Frontier Rodeo's Full Throttle. 2, Wyatt Denny, Minden, Nev., 81. 3, Luke Creasy, Lovington, N.M., 80. 4, (tie) Kash Wilson, Gooding, Idaho and Devan Reilly, Sheridan, Wyo., 75 each.

Steer Wrestling: 1, Payden McIntyre, Douglas, Wyo., 4.5 seconds. 2, Bridger Anderson, Carrington, N.D., 4.6. 3, Tommy Cook, Waller, Texas, 5.4. 4, Logan McDonald, Hemingford, Neb., 6.7.

Team Roping: (three times) 1, Lane Santos Karney, Creston, Calif., and Dalton Pearce, San Luis Obispo, Calif., 9.6. 2, Blake Teixeira, Tres Pinos, Calif., and monty Joe Petska, Turlock, Calif., 10.1. 3, Brady Tryan, Huntley, Mont., and Lane Mitchell, Bolivar, Tenn., 10.2.

Saddle Bronc Riding: 1, Cody Wright, Milford, Utah, 81 points on Frontier Rodeo's #138. 2, Curtis Garton, Kaitaia, New Zealand, 80. 3, Leon Fountain, Socorro, N.M., 79.5. 4, Spencer Wright, Milford, Utah, 79.

Tie-Down Roping: 1, Cory Solomon, Prairie View, Texas, 8.7 seconds. 2, Matt Shiozawa, Chubbuck, Idaho, 9.7. 3, Scott Kormos, Teague, Texas, 10.0. 4, Ryan Watkins, Morgan Mill, Texas, 11.5.

Women's Barrel Racing: 1, Nellie Miller, Cottonwood, Calif., 17.23 seconds. 2, Shali Lord, Lamar, Colo., 17.28. 3, Kynder Starr, Catoosa, Okla., 17.45. 4, Stacey Smallwood, Laramie, Wyo., 17.48.

Bull Riding: 1, Bryce Barrios, Bluff Dale, Texas, 86.5 points on Frontier Rodeo's Levi the Boss. 2, Elliot Jacoby, Fredericksburg, Texas, 83.5. 3, Brennon Eldred, Sulphur, Okla., 82.5. 4, Jeffrey Ramagos, Zachary, La., 81.5.

Current leaders –

Bareback Riding: 1, Tim O'Connell, Zwingle, Iowa, 85.5 points on Frontier Rodeo's Gun Fire. 2, 83. 3, (tie) Jessy Davis, Power, Mont., and Wyatt Denny, Minden, Nev., 81 each.

Steer Wrestling: 1, Kyle Irwin, Robertsdale, Ala., 3.8 seconds. 2, Chason Floyd, Buffalo, S.D., 3.9. 3, (tie) Tyler Pearson, Louisville, Miss., and Will Lummus, West Point, Miss., 4.2 each.

Team Roping: 1, Riley and Brady Minor, Ellensburg, Wash., 4.5 seconds. 2, (tie) Cory Kidd, Statesville, N.C., and Cole Davison, Stephenville, Texas; and Luke Brown, Stephenville, Texas, and Jake Long, Coffeyville, Kan., 4.7 each. 4, Seth Hall, Albuquerque, N.M., and Trey Yates, Pueblo, Colo., 4.8.

Saddle Bronc Riding: 1, Jake Finlay, Goondiwindi, Australia, 85 points on Burch Rodeo's Strawberry rocket. 2, Chase Brooks, Deer Lodge, Mont., 83. 3, Cody Wright, Milford, Utah, 81. 4, Brody Cress, Hillsdale, Wyo., 80.5.

Tie-Down Roping: 1, (tie) Caleb Smidt, Bellville, Texas, and Sterling Smith, Stephenville, Texas, 7.7 seconds each. 3, Trelle Etbauer, Goodwell, Okla., 8.4. 4, Justin Brinkerhoff, Corrine, Utah, 8.6.

Women's Barrel Racing: 1, Nellie Miller, Cottonwood, Calif., 17.23 seconds. 2, Shali Lord, Lamar, Colo., 17.28. 3, Toni Hardin, Wetmore, Colo., 17.31. 4, (tie) Lake Mehalic, Oro Valley, Ariz., and Kynder Starr, Catoosa, Okla., 17.45 each.

Bull Riding: 1, Bryce Barrios, Bluff Dale, Texas, 86.5 points on Frontier Rodeo's Levi the Boss. 2, Elliot Jacoby, Fredericksburg, Texas, 83.5. 3, Brennon Eldred, Sulphur, Okla., 82.5. 4, Jeffrey Ramagos, Zachary, La., 81.5.