



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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President Shelly praises Navajo contestants in Wrangler National Finals Rodeo



Kassidy Dennison is contestant number 35 at this year's Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. She will be joined by fellow Navajos Erich Rogers, number 19 and Aaron Tsinigine, number 82. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—President Ben Shelly said the opportunity to see Navajo contestants performing in the 2014 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo is a source of pride. He wished the contestants the best for tonight's opening round in Las Vegas.

"These athletes are great role models for our Navajo people," President Shelly said. "We'll be cheering you on every step of the way. Make us proud."

Having Navajo contestants as card-carrying members of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association and competing on the big stage is no longer a dream, he added.

One Navajo cowgirl has the opportunity to shatter the glass ceiling this year.

Tohatchi, N.M. cowgirl Cassidy Dennison and her horse, Eagle, will be competing in barrel racing at this year's NFR. Dennison is an eight-time Indian World Champion and was the 2010 National High School Breakaway Robing Champion.

She's currently ranked number 10 in the 2014 World Standings and has earned more than \$92,051 for the year.

"She's an exciting cowgirl to watch. Go fast, Cass," President Shelly said.

One Navajo cowboy is no stranger to the Big Show and has proven his mental and physical toughness time and again.

Erich Rogers, of Round Rock, Ariz., will again be competing in team roping (heading) and tie-down roping. Rogers is no stranger to the NFR and has won big money over the years, including last year's first place tie in Round 2 of the team roping competition with a time of 4.5 seconds.

Rogers is currently ranked number 2 in the 2014 World Standings and has earned more than \$101,421 for the year.

President Shelly said Rogers is another exciting Navajo cowboy to watch because of his timing and quickness. He said Rogers needs to cowboy up for tonight's opening round.

Also competing in team roping (heading) at this year's NFR is Aaron Tsinigine of Tuba City, Ariz. This Navajo cowboy is currently ranked number 14 in the 2014 World Standings and has earned \$68,074 on the year. It's his first qualification to the NFR.

Tsinigine's hasn't won a world title yet, but President Shelly is confident that he will overcome the nervousness of competing this year to do well for the Finals.

"Good luck to all of our Navajo athletes competing this year. We'll be tuning in and cheering for our cowboys and cowgirl to show the world how the Navajo Nation rodeos," President Shelly said.

The NFR will air nightly from 8 to 11 p.m. (MST) from Dec. 5-14, 2014 on CBS Sports Network.

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