

Golden mo

Victorious: Reigning world champion saddle bronc rider Tom Reeves waves to the crowd during a victory lap following his win in Round 2. Reeves earned a silver medallion at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.

'I'm not belittling working as hard as I did for my gold buckle, but it means the world to me to be voted the Olympic team captain by these guys who are my friends.'

Team USA
Captain
Tom Reeves


SALT LAKE 2002


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Rodeo basks in glow of Olympic Spirit

By Kendra Santos
Photos by Mike Copeman and
Lyle Barwick



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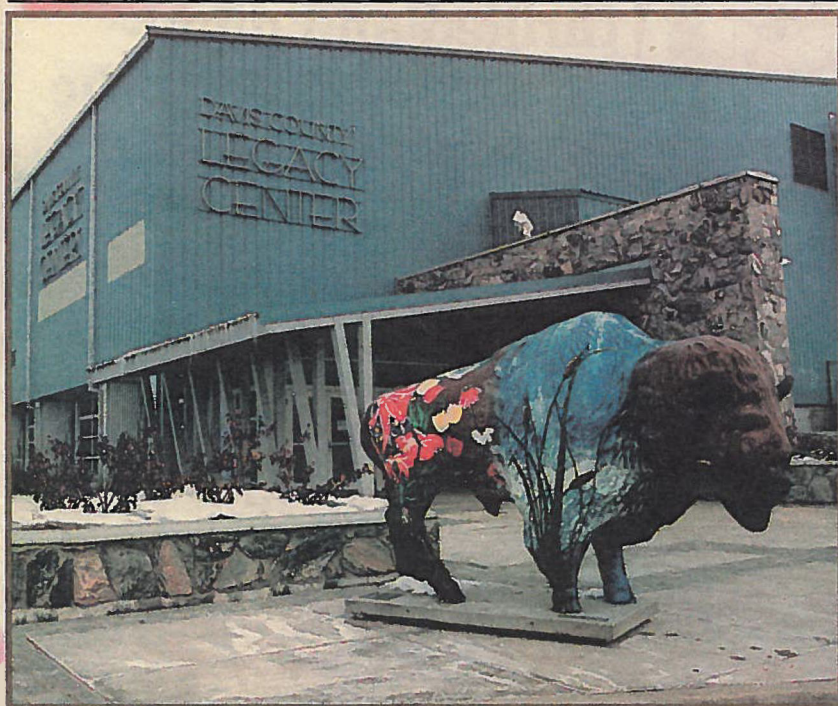
Contestants were thrilled and dignitaries dazzled by the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo, which stormed the Davis Legacy Center in Farmington, Utah, Feb. 9-11. The \$160,000 event played a proud and prestigious part in the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Arts Festival, which was held in conjunction with the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

"If the overall philosophy is to put this sport on a far grander scale there's no

Rodeo continued on p. 14

2002 OLYMPIC COMMAND PERFORMANCE RODEO

'We didn't want just another rodeo - we wanted



Cutting edge: Employees and staff The Davis County Legacy Center performed spectacularly during the Olympic rodeo.

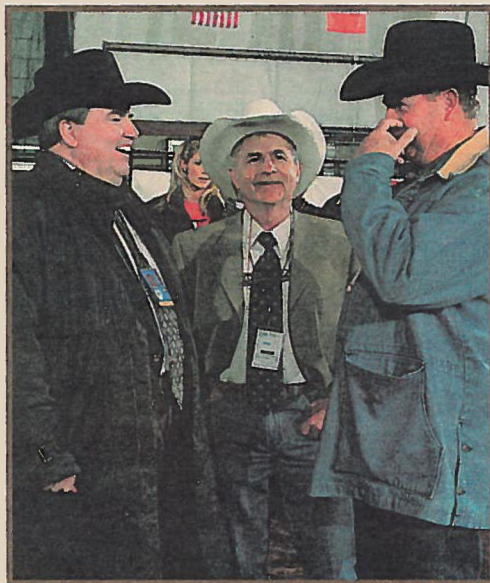
Rodeo continued from p. 13 greater venue than the Olympic Games," said PRCA Commissioner Steven J. Hatchell. "The Olympic Games is about patriotism, world-wide reach and excellence in sport. Just being here is far more enormous than a lot of people realize. We worked really hard at this. We didn't want just another rodeo — we wanted to showcase the sport with the best of the best."

State-of-the-art big-screen video and sound systems were brought in to raise that bar, and delivered sell-out crowds instant, slow-motion replays to bring the action and contestants up close and personal.

Hatchell attended a night of the last and only other such event, the Challenge Cup, which was held in conjunction with the 1988 Calgary Games.

"There have been 19 Winter Olympics, and this has only happened twice," Hatchell said. "So it's

Rodeo continued on p. 16



Rodeo trio: PRCA Commissioner Steven J. Hatchell shares a laugh with Shawn Davis, general manager of the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo, and stock contractor and PRCA board member Bennie Beutler before the start of the rodeo.



OLYMPIC COMMAND PERFORMANCE RODEO DIGNITARIES:

Mitt Romney, Salt Lake Organizing Committee president

Orrin Hatch, U.S. senator

Mike Leavitt, Utah governor

Francois Carrard, secretary general of the International Olympic Committee

John Coates, president of the Australian Olympic Committee

Denis Oswald, president of the International Rowing Association

Hine Verbruggen, president of the International Cycling Union

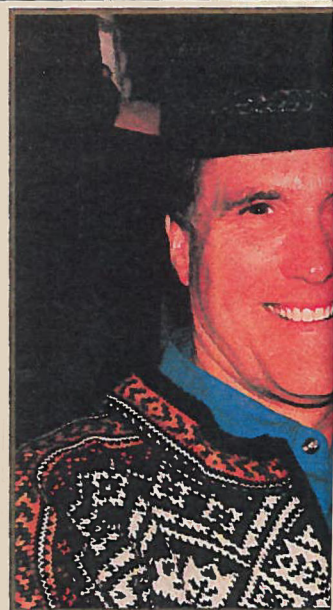
George Walker, director, Council of Europe

Ray Grant, director, Cultural Olympiad

James Hansen, U.S. representative

Lee Brown, Houston mayor

Patrick Samach, International Olympic Committee medical director



2002 OLYMPIC COMMAND PERFORMANCE

to showcase the sport with the best of the best.'

PRCA Commissioner Steven J. Hatchell



Rodeo fans: Mitt Romney, head of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee, and his wife, Ann, received a taste of cowboy life during the three-day Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.



Opening act: Ann Romney waves to the audience after performing a dressage exhibition at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.

Twice in a lifetime experience . . .



Double the fun: Canadian Guy Shapka was one of two cowboys who also competed in the 1988 Olympic Challenge Cup in Calgary.

If you had the privilege of attending the Challenge Cup in Calgary in 1988, you probably recognized a few familiar faces at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo this time around.

The only two contestants to make a repeat trip to the Olympic Rodeo were bareback rider Darrell Cholach and saddle bronc rider Guy Shapka.

"I really liked the Calgary rodeo," said Cholach, 38. "We were downtown, right by the hockey and speed skating arena, and we were standing side by side with some of the world's greatest athletes. I was a lot younger then, and had less experience and therefore less confidence.

"I was just starting to ride bareback horses back then. I'd been a bull rider. So there wasn't a lot of pressure — I was more or less just happy to be there. I feel very fortunate to be here with friends like Clint Corey and Kelly Wardell, who I've known for 15 years, and Lan LaJeunesse, who I'm staying with here."

"I find this really exciting," added Shapka, 38. "Calgary was the Olympics, but they used to have a spring rodeo there the same time, same place, so the only real difference was the team concept. This is such a production, and since I thought last time was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this one's extra special. Because I know for sure this is my last one."



The man: World champion bareback rider Lan LaJeunesse captured a gold medallion.

'It's been the ultimate high for all of us who got to be a part of this.'

2002 Olympic Command Performance Rodeo
Bareback Riding Gold Medallion Winner
Lan LaJeunesse



Rootin' for the home team: Utah's Lan LaJeunesse brought his own cheering section to the rodeo. His son Kyle, wife Natalee, and daughter Kelsey showed their Olympic spirit by making posters and carrying the American flag.

ANCE RODEO



Smiling spectators: U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and his wife, Baine, enjoy the rodeo action inside the Legacy Center in Farmington, Utah.

Rodeo continued from p. 14 special, and you better make the most of it. That's been the goal with this event since day one. More than 90 members of the International and U.S. Olympic committees from around the world came to see this event. We showed them around, and introduced them to the cowboys and the cowboy way of life."

And they loved it. Salt Lake Organizing Committee President Mitt Romney was one of dozens of high-profile people who attended the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo and fell in love with the sport after getting a great and lasting first impression.

"I really feel like I've been introduced to the spirit of a cowboy today," said Romney, who emceed a dressage demonstration by his wife, Ann, during the rodeo's second performance. "What fabulous athletes and animals. This is a great sport."

Other celebrity faces in the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo crowd included Utah Governor Mike Leavitt, Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, Utah Congressman James Hansen, Houston



Rapt spectators: U.S. Representative Jim Hansen (R-Utah), right, and wife, Ann, enjoy the rodeo action at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.

Mayor Lee Brown, Secretary General of the International Olympic Committee Francois Carrard, International Olympic Committee Medical Director Patrick Samach, and representatives from the Olympic World Anti-Doping Agency.

Media representatives from around the globe, Sweden to Germany, France to all points across Canada and America

Rodeo on MSNBC

The Olympic Command Performance Rodeo was featured during a segment televised on the network MSNBC on Feb. 13.

Reporter Len Berman covered the event, with footage shown from the Davis County Legacy Center. Berman's report included snips of video from various Olympic events mixed with the rodeo action.

Bareback rider Clint Corey, who won the world championship in 1991, was interviewed along with 2000 Barrel Racing World Champion Kappy Allen and Salt Lake City Organizing Committee President Mitt Romney.

Following the report, Berman was interviewed by studio host Jim Lampley, who asked him about the athleticism displayed at the rodeo.

"I was impressed," Berman said. "I mean, being a New York City kid, I hadn't seen a whole lot of rodeo, but those cowboys on bucking broncs and bulls was fairly impressive."



Stars and stripes: Team USA barrel racer Kelly Yates shows her true colors at the Olympics.



O' Canada: Danielle Lunden performs the Canadian national anthem before a rodeo performance.

secure and memorable ever.

Tears of pride welled in the eyes of Team USA Captain Tom Reeves as he stood center stage after the final performance to accept the Olympic Command Performance team trophy on behalf of the squad that voted to have him lead the charge. Team USA earned 1,363 points to Canada's 737.

"I'm not belittling working as hard as I did for my gold buckle, but it means the world to me to be voted the Olympic team captain by these guys who are my friends," said Reeves, who set a Wrangler National Finals Rodeo saddle bronc riding qualifications record with his 17th NFR appearance in 2001, and won his first gold buckle while he was there.

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2002 OLYMPIC COMMAND PERFORMANCE

Sandvick the chap-man



Concentration: Veteran bareback rider Larry Sandvick prepares for his ride in the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.

Bareback riding silver medallion winner Larry Sandvick filled a tall order before he ever straddled a bucking horse at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo. He made every pair of chaps worn at the event — 32 in all, including 10 pair in each of the three roughstock events and two more to fit pickup men Lewis Feild and Bobby Marriott.

"It was actually my wife's (cheering, whistling queen Lynn Sandvick) idea," said Sandvick, who typically crafts 25-45 pairs of chaps a year sporting his Custom Chaps label, and has been the chap maker to the stars since 1986. "We kept looking at Lewis (Feild) and Marvin (Garrett's) memorabilia from Calgary (the Challenge Cup was held in conjunction with the 1988 Winter Games), and we thought it'd be cool for everybody to have a uniform so we'd look like a team. Lynn got all the chaps sponsored for both teams so the cowboys wouldn't have to pay for them."

Olympic Rodeo chap sponsors included Wrangler, Justin Boots, Dr. and Mrs. Tandy Freeman, and Gene Grant and the Bareback

Bar and Ice House in Houston, Texas.

The list of challenges Sandvick faced was a long one. But in the spirit of the Games he pressed on and persevered.

"I started working on them Jan. 4," he said. "I ordered the leather before Christmas, but had to deal with the Christmas rush. The red leather for the Canadian chaps didn't arrive until Jan. 17. Then I had to send some of the white leather back because it didn't match the shade I started with."

It usually takes Sandvick about seven hours to build a pair of chaps. But he didn't quite have that kind of time this go-round. So he went at it with an assembly-line-style strategy.

"I built these chaps 15 pair at a time," he said. "I did each step, like cutting out all the yolks, fringe and leg straps, enough for 15 pairs of chaps before going on to the next step."

He did underestimate the amount of thread he'd need, and production came to a screeching halt because of it. But there were other delays beyond Sandvick's control.

"After the 11th of September red, white and blue leather got a little hard to find," he said. "I had a tough time getting enough identical dye lots, and I didn't want any variation in the colors."

He custom-fitted each pair, and still managed to get the job done in 28 days.

"Making all those chaps on short notice kind of made a job out of this rodeo for me," Sandvick said. "But when I got here and that adrenaline got to pumping I forgot all about busting it in my leather shop. It's pretty cool to look around and see all those flags waving."

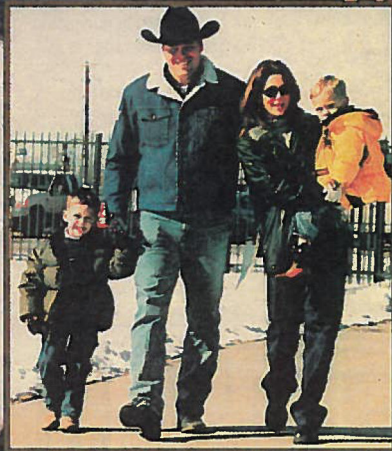
"Rodeo is America. It's down-home country America. That's what it is, and hopefully that'll never change."

'This is a way of giving back to the guys who paved the way. My dad never had this chance.'

2002 Olympic Command Performance Rodeo Steer Wrestling Gold Medallion Winner
Rope Myers



Golden boy: Newly crowned world steer wrestling champion Rope Myers enjoys the Utah sunshine before the rodeo with his wife, Candice, and sons Layton, left, and Holden. Myers added another title to his impressive resume — gold medallion winner at the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.



ANCE RODEO

Utah governor rides high on his birthday

Barrelman Flint Rasmussen delivered his best Marilyn Monroe rendition of *Happy Birthday to You* when he stepped out to the center of the arena on closing night to help the horseback Governor Mike Leavitt celebrate his 51st birthday.

"The atmosphere was even more electric than I expected," said Rasmussen, the PRCA clown of the year the last four years and a three-time Coors Man in the Can winner. "I quit taking my profession for granted this weekend. This was different than any other event I've ever worked, and it was cool."

Bullfighters Rob Smets and Joe Baumgartner have worked 16 NFRs between them, and even they were in awe.

"This event is a tremendous step up the ladder for the whole sport," Smets said. "I'm ecstatic to be here representing the PRCA, and it was fun working it with a past student of mine."

That would be Baumgartner.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," Baumgartner said. "There are only two guys in the world who will ever get to work the Olympic Rodeo in Salt Lake City."

Birthday wishes: Rodeo barrelman Flint Rasmussen wishes happy birthday to Utah Governor Mike Leavitt.



Black and Blue: Ian Lajeunesse helps fellow Utah cowboy Blue Stone after Stone suffered a fractured sternum en route to winning a gold medallion in bull riding.



Rolling Stones: 2001 World Champion Bull Rider Blue Stone of Ogden, Utah, enjoys the festivities with his wife, Misty, and son, Rowdy.



SALT LAKE 2002



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ANCE RODEO



TV time: Included in NBC's blanket coverage of the Winter Games was a segment on the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo and Ann Romney's dressage routine.





Games luminaries: PRCA Commissioner Steven J. Hatchell, bottom row second from right, and PRCA and International Olympic Committee legal counsel Rich Young, top row third from left, hosted this prestigious group of dignitaries who received new Wrangler hats. Others pictured are second from top left, Australian Olympic Committee President John Coates, IOC Secretary General Francois Carrard, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency official Bill Bock, Marc Oswald and his father, International Rowing Association President Denis Oswald. Bottom row from left, Pamela Harris, General Manager of the Olympic Rodeo Shawn Davis, Claire Lise Oswald and George Walker, director of the Council of Europe.

Rodeo continued from p. 18

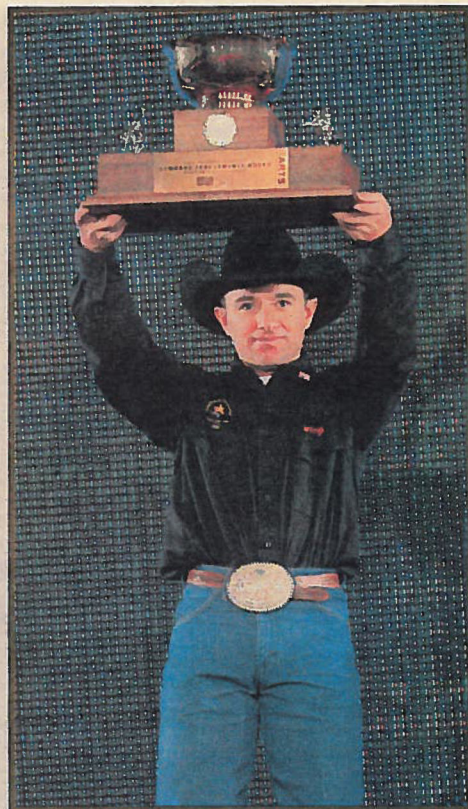
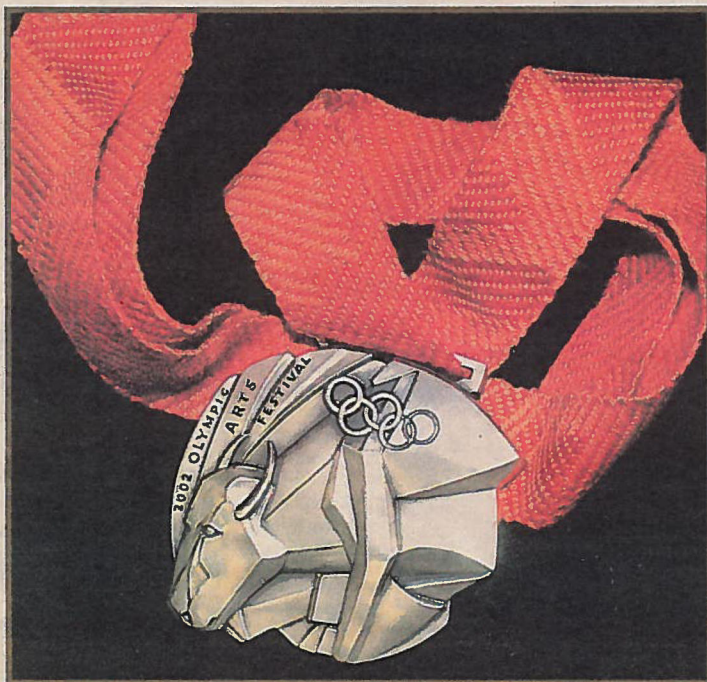
USA in the final round. After the whistle, the bull stepped on Stone, who suffered a fractured sternum. Stone was transported by ambulance to Lakeview Hospital in nearby Bountiful, Utah, for treatment.

Another reigning world champion who stepped up on center stage to receive a gold medallion was steer wrestler Rope Myers.

"You don't grow up as a steer wrestler dreaming about winning a gold medal, you grow up dreaming about winning a world title and the NFR average," Myers said.

"Now that I've done that this is a really cool bonus.

"I'm old school. I really look up to the guys who broke ground in this



Trophy time: U.S. team captain Tom Reeves holds up the team trophy. Team USA beat Team Canada 1,363 to 737 for the title. The U.S. squad also won the 1988 Challenge Cup in Calgary.

'I really feel like I've been introduced to the spirit of a cowboy today'

Salt Lake Organizing Committee President
Mitt Romney

Coveted memento: Rodeo athletes from the United States and Canada competed for the medallions commemorating the 2002 Olympic Command Performance Rodeo.

2002 OLYMPIC COMMAND PERFORMANCE



Rodeo welcome: PRCA Commissioner Steven J. Hatchell, left, greets International Olympic Committee Secretary General Francois Carrard before the start of the Olympic Rodeo.

sport. It's so cool to compete in a venue in front of the world. This is a way of giving back to the guys who paved the way. My dad never had this chance."

Gold medalist saddle bronc rider Denny Hay was one of two Canadians headed straight to the operating table after the Olympic Rodeo. Hay tore muscles away from his left (riding arm) shoulder at Denver's National Western Stock Show & Rodeo in January. The Justin SportsMedicine Team's resident medical miracle worker Dr. Tandy Freeman was scheduled to perform the surgery Feb. 20 in Dallas. Hay is expected to be sidelined about six months.

"I can't believe I won anything coming down here in the shape I did," admitted Hay, a three-time Canadian champion and four-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier. "But Larry Sandvick gave me some good advice. He said, 'It's only eight seconds, and hey, no pain, no gain.' He called that one — it burned pretty bad."

Denny and Rod Hay were one of two sets of brothers who competed in the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo. Fellow Canadians Wayne and Dale Skocdopole competed in the team roping event.

The Olympic Command Performance Rodeo will be Rob Bell's only rodeo of 2002. The two-time Canadian champion bull rider demolished his right (riding arm) elbow when he hung up to a bull in round seven of the 2001 Wrangler NFR. The wreck was so spectacular that it earned a color double-truck spread in *Sports Illustrated*. Bell was so sore at the Olympic Rodeo that he couldn't sign autographs with the rest of the contestant contingent at the close of each performance.

"I write with my right hand and couldn't lift my arm let alone a pen," he said.

2001 Wrangler NFR calf roping average winner Jerome Schneeberger led an American sweep in the calf roping event. The Americans also swept the medals in the bareback riding and bull riding events.

"I was glad this wasn't an average after I froze up and missed my first calf," Schneeberger said. "What a great event, and what an honor to be a part of the Olympics. Rodeo is a patriotic sport, so it was really fitting to be included, especially this year."

The biggest upset of the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo had to be Canadian team ropers Murray Linthicum and Rocky Dallyn grabbing the gold after edging reigning team roping world champions Speed Williams and Rich Skelton by a scant five points. Team roping has not historically been a major event in Canada, and was only added to the Canadian Finals Rodeo lineup two years ago. There was no team roping event at the Calgary Challenge Cup.

"There wasn't as much pressure on the underdogs, because nobody expected us to win," said Dallyn, the heeling half of the 13-year partnership.

Barrel racing gold medalist Molly Swanson-Powell, who also was featured in a color double-truck spread in *Sports Illustrated* just after last December's Wrangler NFR, won it all in that event on a horse by the name of J.D. that she borrowed from Wilderness Circuit Champion Sue Smith. Swanson-Powell jumped on J.D. cold turkey

on opening night, and dominated the rodeo. Swanson-Powell's own horses, Quaker and Shadow, spent the week in Texas awaiting her return to the regular rodeo schedule.

"This is the biggest thing I've ever won," said Team Canada's Swanson-Powell, who has dual citizenship and currently calls Simms, Mont.,

home. "It's the best feeling I've ever had."

Six-time PRCA Announcer of the Year Bob Tallman could relate.

"Thank God that we have pounded a month into a long three-day weekend," said the 15-time NFR announcer. "I've never been prouder to see the Olympic rings, and I've never heard the national anthem the way I've heard it here this week."

"Salt Lake City will take on a whole new meaning for the rest of my life. Snow will mean something different to me from now on, and so will mountains. This was one of the greatest tests in my 30-year career."

"I just finished 35 straight performances in Fort Worth last Sunday night, and the night after we leave here is opening night at Houston. In the first 68 days of this year I'll do 66 performances, not including 24 radio shows and Pay-Per-View TV. Don't think I'm not blessed, and I get to wear a coat that says Team USA."

Media at the rodeo

NBC Olympics
Canadian Broadcast Company
Ogden Standard-Examiner
Deseret News-Salt Lake City
Dallas Morning News
Salt Lake Tribune
Washington Post
Atlanta Journal Constitution
CNN
Houston Chronicle
Svenska Dagbladet - Swedish paper
German TV
Aftenposten Norwegian paper
KPRC TV2 - Houston
TV4 - Sweden

'Rodeo is a patriotic sport, so it was really fitting to be included, especially this year.'

2002 Olympic Command Performance Rodeo calf roping winner Jerome Schneeberger

Golden Okie: Jerome Schneeberger shows off his Wrangler NFR average champion form en route to winning a gold medal in calf roping.

ANCE RODEO