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NEWS RELEASE

Dodge horsepower prevails in middleweight Heavy Horse Pull

CALGARY – For the second straight night, it was time for the competition to get outta Dodge.

Randy Dodge, that is, the veteran teamster from Albany, Ore., who snared the middleweight division crown on Saturday at the Calgary Stampede's Heavy Horse Pull, sponsored by Soderglen Ranches, UPS, Burnco, and Wrangler.

Dodge is the toast of the Big Top tent right now, having already captured the Stampede's lightweight division on Friday night. Twenty-four hours later, he doubled his pleasure with a minuscule margin of victory . . . four inches.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to me, besides my kids being born," said an exuberant Dodge, whose Glover International Trucks-supported Belgian duo of Herb and Mike pulled an 11,500-pound sled 71 inches for the win.

"I didn't even know I had it won until a friend told me. I was sure I was third or fourth. But my pair hooked really nice, and gave it a very good second effort."

With four teams still alive at the 11,500-pound level, Saturday's Heavy Horse Pull was decided by the measuring tape – and not much of it, at that.

Dodge's 71 inches gave him the champion's cheque of \$3,000. Meanwhile, two Springbank Belgians teams teamstered by Dennis Weinberger of Cochrane, Alta. – the Copps Services Inc.-supported pair of Tim and Dillon, and the Candor Engineering Ltd.-supported team of L.D. and Mark – finished in a dead heat for second place, pulling those 11,500 pounds exactly 67 inches each, allowing Weinberger to pocket a total of \$4,000. Fourth place went to the Airdrie-based Soderglen Ranches outfit of Simon and Hawk, teamstered by Uruguay native Nicolas Pouso and supported by Lantz Farms Ltd., which managed 57 inches at the same weight.

Now, Dodge has a chance to accomplish what Weinberger did last summer for the first time in Stampede history – pulling off the Heavy Horse Pull triple crown. On Sunday, July 17, at 7 p.m., the heavyweights will take over the Big Top, and Dodge has his own team entered.

"My team tomorrow night (Jack and Michael) is an older team, kind of on the downhill side of things right now," said Dodge. "And they're smaller . . . they're outweighed by about 1,500 pounds, since the heavyweight division is unlimited. But they'll give it a good try."

This year's Stampede Heavy Horse Pull, the richest in North America, has drawn teamsters from as far away as Oregon, Washington, and Saskatchewan, with outfits primarily featuring Belgian and Percheron horsepower. The teams of the Stampede's heavyweight division tip the scales at a combined two-horse weight of 3,501 pounds and more.

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

Box 1060, Station M, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2K8 1.800.661.1260 T 403.261.0101 F 403.265.7197 www.calgarystampede.com



Weinberger, meanwhile, marveled at how the bar is continually raised at the Stampede's Heavy Horse Pull. Last year, he won the middleweight division when his Belgians managed 25 inches at 11,000 pounds.

"What we saw tonight was four teams pull further, and with more weight, than first and second last year," he noted. "Every year, the competition gets a little better."

Weinberger, who hauls to horse pulls in Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky, was also second-guessing his middleweight pairings in hindsight. Dillon was his only division returnee from 2010, while Tim, L.D., and Mark were newcomers.

"We put lots of time in this crew here," he said, "and if I had to do it all over again, I'd make it L.D. and Dillon together. Next pull I go to, that'll be the lineup."

The Stampede will be webcasting all events held under the Big Top this year. Visit <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/big-top-ustream-2011> for live streaming of Big Top action.

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For more information, please contact:

Annemarie Pedersen
Ag Media Committee Chair

Todd Kimberley
Agriculture Media Writer

Erin Bartlett
Agriculture Program Coordinator

C 403.816.1583

C 403.815.2752

T 403.261.0336

T 403.232.9087

F 403.262.3067

C 403.461.2063

E agmedia@calgarystampede.com

E tkimberley@calgarystampede.com

F 403.262.3067

E ebartlett@calgarystampede.com

The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit www.calgarystampede.com.



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