

THE

NOVEMBER 2021

# BREAKAWAY

ROPING JOURNAL

## Finals Bound

**Boisjoli banks  
big in 2021**



>MECHANICS: The Delivery

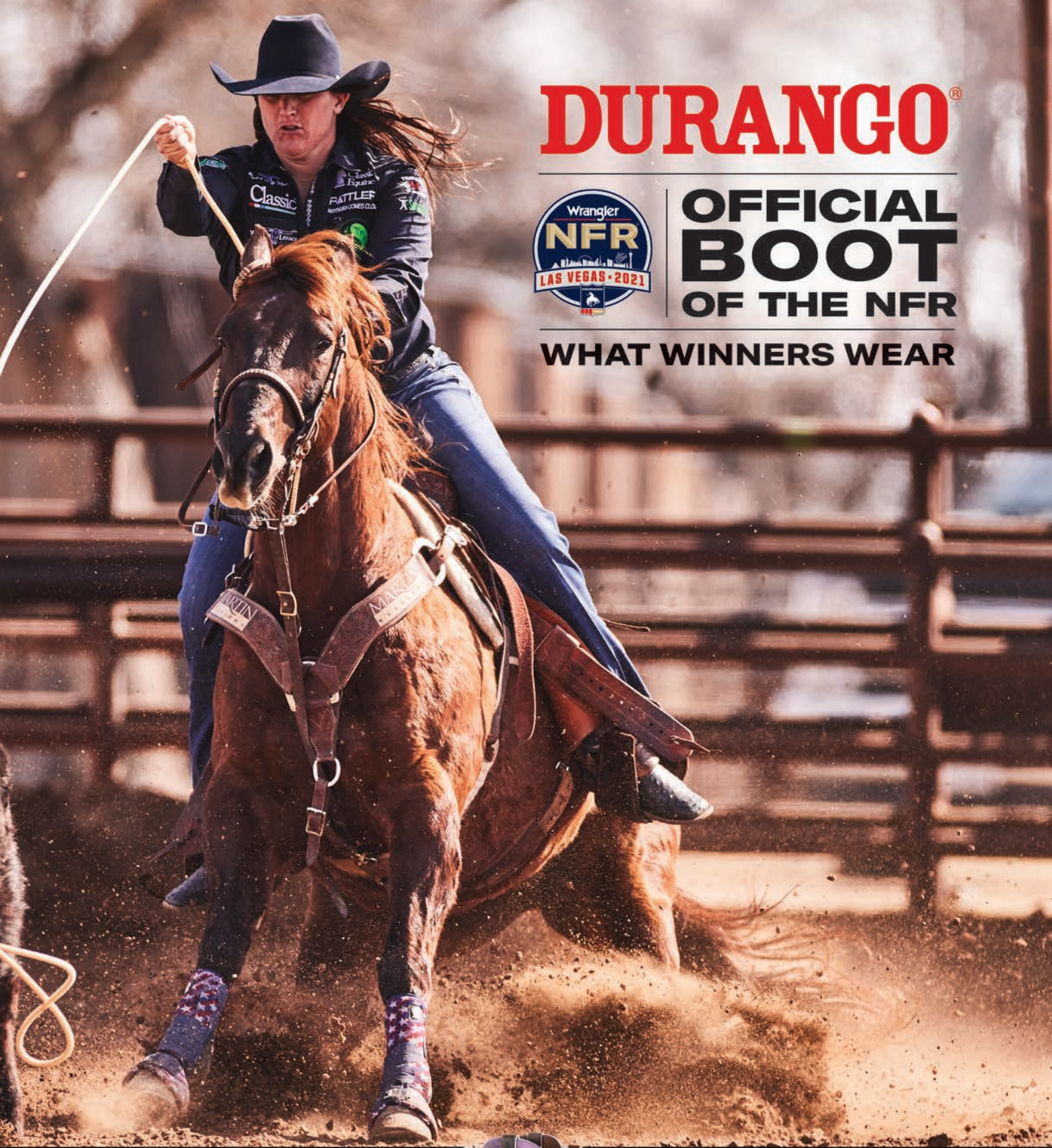
>NFBR FORMAT EXPLAINED

>5 ELEMENTS OF BREAKAWAY SUCCESS



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FC PHOTOGRAPHY

## First Swing *with Shelby Boisjoli*

Two-time National Finals of Breakaway Roping qualifier Shelby Boisjoli leaves the box with a noticeable first swing. Here, she explains how her rope mechanics make for a more powerful and efficient delivery.



FC PHOTOGRAPHY

I get a lot of people complimenting me on my swing. I'm able to rope calves no matter where they are—if they are out in front of me, up close, left or right. I feel like I'm able to get a lot of coverage.

If you try and point it at the calf on the first swing, then you have to try and get power on the second swing and you're trying to throw on the third swing. You have to have the power already on the second swing so that you can aim it at your target. I feel like pointing your first swing at the calf could be a mistake, but a lot of girls have perfected it.

I don't necessarily try and point my first swing at the calf because I feel like that kills off your momentum when you're trying to break your first swing over. I try to swing my whole arm around my head so I can get power on my first swing. Then, on

my second swing, all I have to do is bring it down to the calf because I already have the power there.

I just bring my rope up and try to get my first swing off as big as I can and get a full swing off so that on my second swing, I can get a hold of my rope and bring my rope to my target.

I use a big loop and a big swing. The loops that I throw, my curl comes up and over every time. I let my rope work. I don't choke anything up on my rope. I keep everything fluid and get a lot of coverage and keep it smooth and follow it to the neck every time. **BRJ**

► **BONUS TIP:** Shelby Boisjoli uses her first swing as well as her body position out of the box to be so hard to beat in the breakaway. For her strategy on getting to the front of the saddle, visit [breakawayropingjournal.com](http://breakawayropingjournal.com).



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## On the Cover

Shelby Boisjoli led the Women's Professional Rodeo Association's Breakaway Roping World Standings for the bulk of the 2021 season—making her a perfect fit for the last issue of The Breakaway Roping Journal in 2021.

Boisjoli, originally from Canada but now a resident of Stephenville, Texas, leads the pack heading into the National Finals of Breakaway Roping with \$52,485.90 in season earnings over 68 rodeos. In 2020, Boisjoli finished eighth in the WPRA Breakaway Roping World Standings with \$21,555.85.

"I was pretty excited to accomplish both of my goals for season leader and my goal for the season was \$50,000, so I was happy that I accomplished both of those short-term goals," Boisjoli said.

Notably, Boisjoli won the ProRodeo Tour Finale in Salinas to close out the season, worth \$8,786. But she was consistent all year, winning Glasgow, Montana, Sheridan, Wyoming, Drummond, Montana, Delta, Utah, Newtown, North Dakota, North Platte, Nebraska, Fort Smith, Arkansas and Atoka, Oklahoma.

"It felt really good to end on a good note, especially since the last month out there was kind of rough for me," Boisjoli said. "I felt like I messed up a lot of really good chances on a lot of great calves. I was getting really upset and down on myself. I said to [boyfriend and PRCA World Champ] Haven (Meged), 'I've never won a big rodeo. I haven't hit at any of the big rodeos.' I was literally a mess the week before. I shed so many tears. There were so many highs and lows and so many emotions. I literally did not sleep up until three days before Salinas. I was so excited, nervous and stressed out. My whole goal for the season was coming down to one rodeo. It probably wasn't a very big deal to end up second, but it felt like it was a huge deal because that was a goal that I had set before I left for the summer."

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# The Breakaway Roper's Delivery *with Lari Dee Guy*



TRU FILE PHOTOGRAPHY



In the last two issues of *The Breakaway Roping Journal*, we discussed the breakaway roper's grip in relation to control of the swing, as well as the elements of a successful swing in breakaway roping. If you missed either of those articles, you can find them in the "Roping Tips" section of [breakawayropingjournal.com](http://breakawayropingjournal.com), and you can watch videos demonstrating each on [breakawayroping.com](http://breakawayroping.com). In this issue, I want to talk about the delivery—which, believe it or not, is actually the least complicated of these three elements.

## THE CONCEPT

The delivery is a continuation of the swing. It's so common in breakaway roping to see ropers deliver from the bottom of their swing. When you deliver from the bottom of the swing, your butt is out, your shoulders are forward and your core is not engaged. You're not in an athletic stance.

## THE POSITION

When you deliver your rope, you deliver it with your right hand and follow it with your left hand, all in an *athletic* position. That means, I want to be in my stirrups when I'm riding to the calf, on my feet. When I go to deliver the rope, I feel like my feet should push my upper body up, get my chest up and arch my back. It should feel like throwing a ball or shooting a basketball.

## THE TOP OF THE SWING

Refer back to my column last issue, where I laid out the four blades of the

swing. Blade three is when my tip is behind me, with my elbow coming forward slightly, so my shoulder can roll backward and my hand can get slightly behind my shoulder even with my ear. The delivery comes from this point to the calf.

## THE THROW

So when I deliver the rope, I'm on my feet, with an athletic stance, with my arms bent and momentum on my swing. When I deliver the rope, I feel the momentum come around and I deliver it to the target with both hands.

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Makayla Boisjoli

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# NFBR 2021 Insights



In the 2020 NFBR sudden-death format, Martha Angelone banked \$29,343 to win the event and become the WPRA Reserve World Champ by less than \$3,000.

PRCA PRORODEO PHOTO BY JOE DUTY

## Finals champ to be decided on 10 calves across town from NFR—By Julie Mankin

The wild and jam-packed-with-fans Monday Night Football kickoff game Sept. 13 in Las Vegas brought Sin City back into people's periphery, while reminding the WPRA's best breakaway ropers that they still didn't know if they'd have a culminating PRCA event in Vegas as the regular season wrapped.

Fortunately, the PRCA and WPRA's National Finals of Breakaway Roping, following up the inaugural event held last December in Arlington, Texas, was set, at press time, to feature 10 rounds and an average, likely over two days at The Orleans, with at least the same \$200,000 purse offered last year.

"We're excited to have a Finals," said Jordan Fabrizio, who throat-latched all

12 of her calves at last year's NFBR. "Our end goal is for our Finals to be consistent with the men's events."

It's not quite there in location—considering the Wrangler NFR plays out in UNLV's Thomas & Mack Center nightly—but it's a big win that the NFBR will feature the traditional NFR format. To breakaway ropers, it's simple: The NFR means 10 rounds and an aggregate payout.

For anyone who didn't know, the 2020 NFBR was also 10 rounds and an average. But wait—it was *also* a sudden-death semi-finals and a sudden-death final-four. That's right. The gals making history in Arlington last year roped through both kinds of rodeos because neither side

would concede on format.

"Last year, the PRCA wanted it all sudden-death so that the winner earned most of the money on the last calf, which rendered the regular season worthless," said WPRA Breakaway Director Jolee Jordan. "We pushed back on that. This explosion in the popularity of breakaway is due to these ladies, and they deserved to have their voices heard, I thought. I still feel that way. We compromised to where the average didn't pay, but was used as the basis for who advanced."

In those first 10 rounds Dec. 8–10, 2020, Fabrizio and Martha Angelone waged the most epic breakaway battle in history. Fabrizio's 34.5 seconds on 10 edged Angelone's 34.8 on 10 by a scant three-tenths of a second. Can you say unbelievable scoring and roping? The rounds paid six holes, with \$4,412 going to each winner. But after 10 runs, Fabrizio earned nothing for her aggregate feat. Not an NFR average buckle. Not a single dollar.

Instead, the top eight in that 10-head NFBR average simply advanced to a two-calf tournament that paid out the real money. Seven of the Top 15 were eliminated after the eleventh calf. The four who advanced with their smoking runs earned zero dollars. Because the final-four round would pay out a whopping \$33,087.

"Everyone was obviously grateful to be there, but last year didn't necessarily feel like the NFR," Boisjoli said.

In the top-eight round, Fabrizio and Angelone caught their 11<sup>th</sup> calves in matching 1.8s to continue their battle for dominance. Then, in the Finals, Angelone's 2.3 won the top check of the NFBR, just edging Fabrizio's 2.5, while the other two advancers—Jackie Crawford and Lari Dee Guy—both broke out. But Crawford's breakout was still worth a third-place check for \$7,258. It was enough to give her the World Title by \$1,925.

# Jessi Wade

Futurity Barrel Horse Trainer

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# Aspen Miller

All-In Breakaway Champion

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# Jessy Remsburg

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In the end, for roping 12 calves in a row clean, Angelone took \$29,343 total out of Arlington and Fabrizio earned \$26,426. Crawford caught a leg on a calf and broke out on a calf and earned \$25,536.

All this to say, the top female ropers are ecstatic to see the National Finals money being distributed traditionally this time. To Fabrizio, keeping the format traditional is about “protecting the integrity of the gold buckle.” To Boisjoli, it’s about letting every one of the 15 girls at the Finals have an equal opportunity to make money. Nobody this December will get to run extra calves.

“You rope all year and haul a million miles and drive 10 hours to a \$750-added rodeo over and over and then, in December, it can just be about one calf for the big money?” Boisjoli asked. “That’s not how a world title should be decided, in my opinion. Look at Shad [Mayfield] last year, who had six no-times and still won the World, deservedly. If the NFR had been tournament style, he’d have had no chance with that bad start.”

The push for tournament brackets came from PRCA administrators who believed breakaway wouldn’t be palatable to fans unless it was sudden-death. This theory, that fans of rodeo can’t understand an aggregate format, has led to historic rodeos like Cheyenne Frontier Days swapping a hundred years of tradition to go sudden-death. Yet, most contestants say tournaments are actually more confusing to both them and to fans trying to figure out what’s going on any particular day.

Consider golf. Can non-golfers understand that Tiger Woods’s score at the Masters Tournament is simply an aggregate of his strokes over four rounds? Yes, according to international TV ratings.

As the world’s best breakaway ropers get ready to match skills over 10 rounds in a different arena, Interim CEO Tom Glause said in September that the PRCA is going to continue to work to find a way to introduce breakaway at the NFR. He pointed out that the performances at the Thomas & Mack Center run on



Jackie Crawford won \$25,536 for third at the NFR, leaving with the gold buckle.

PHOTO: PRORODEO PHOTOS

a very tight time schedule. He also said they’ve added 2-minute breaks for TV commercials and will hand-rake after every barrel racer this year.

Purses have to grow along with breakaway, and female ropers understand it will take time for their purses at PRCA rodeos across America to match that of other events. And they’re happy to do anything they can to grow breakaway financially.

In 2021, they spent just as much money hauling to roughly 75 rodeos to make the Finals as did the PRCA’s male calf ropers, who plan to recoup their losses via a \$1.2-million NFR purse.

But the gals are tapped out. It’s imperative, Boisjoli and Fabrizio said in September, that they know, now, what the 2022 National Finals will pay, so they can plan accordingly where to invest their time and money next season.

Lari Dee Guy, ranked eighth in the World Standings at press time, would love to see the breakaway ropers bring new sponsors to professional rodeo, thus supporting all events—including the breakaway—with more funding.

“If the PRCA could just let us know what it needs from us to treat us the same, that would be great,” she said. “I know we need new sponsorships in rodeo, period.”



The profitability of reaching new female fans could be the most exciting thing about the addition of breakaway to the oldest rodeo-sanctioning body in America. Consider the popularity across the country of Hailey Kinsel and Sister, her sunshine-colored barrel racing mare. Over seven years at RFD-TV’s *The American*, barrel racing was the fan-favorite event to watch. This is not lost on Wrangler. Not a single female Western sports fan—to the tune of 2.8 million views—could help tuning in to the Wrangler Network last December as Kinsel herself interviewed the inaugural NFR champions. **BRJ**



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## 5 Elements of Success in Breakaway Roping with Linsay Rosser-Sumpter

To set yourself up for success in breakaway roping—and to make it manageable to teach, as well—you can break the sport into five key elements. Those elements are position, scoring, power, tip and follow-through. In this article, I'm going to explain how you can work on each fundamental on its own, then put them all together to make fast, fun runs.



BRJ FILE PHOTOS BY KAITLIN GUSTAVE



### 1 POSITION

Breakaway roping gets faster and faster as the sport continues to grow, so being in a position leaving the box to set up a fast throw is more critical than ever. In this photo, I'm standing in the corner of the box to show you that this is where you want your horse to be. You want your horse to be positioned toward the pin. The pin is important because that is where the barrier is going to pull from, so you want to take the fastest line from the corner to the calf.

I want my horse's chest to be pointed towards the pin, because that is going to give me the most effective start, which is the second element of breakaway roping that I will get to next.

You'll notice the red stick 3 feet in front of the chute. That is where I want my horse to pick up the calf that comes out of the chute. The reason it's 3 feet in front of the chute is because that is about the length of the calf, if the calf goes a full calf length. My horse needs to pick the calf up about three-feet in front of the chute in nearly every situation. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, so, when I'm coming out of the box, I want to give myself the fastest opportunity to throw. It doesn't matter if the start is 20 feet, like Cheyenne, or if it's really short—like 4- or 5 feet under, like at Northside—I want my horse to pick up the calf directly in front of the chute, because that's going to give me my highest-percentage shot.

I want my horse to pick that calf up right off the right hip and follow in right behind him with a little bit of crossover. Not too far to the left. Just right off that right hip, so that I can see and catch my calf.

### 2 SCORING

The second step in the five-step process to breakaway roping is scoring. How do you judge your start? Take the measurements of the box, and you decide how many feet less than the measurements of the box that you're going to be. Generally speaking, it's usually 3 feet under at a traditional rodeo. Obviously, the elements are going to be a little bit different, depending on where you are.

So, what is the head start that the calf has to have before you go? There'll be a barrier strung across the box here with a neck rope tied to the calf. Once the calf breaks the neck-rope, this barrier will pull, so it's so important to be in a good position to score. The basic start is going to be the calf's head around the end of the gate or one step out of the gate.

Now, some people see the start differently. Some people look at the pin, where the pin is and the position of the calf on the pin. Some people look out the end of the gate. Me, personally, I look at the end of the gate because I want to watch the cattle. I want to watch what my target is, which is another step and where it's going. If I'm backed in the box, I'm going to see the full head around the end of the gate. And that's what's going to give me the fastest start.



### 3 POWER

When I say power, I mean power in your swing. We don't have to be physically as strong as men, but the most effective way to get power on our rope is to use our entire arm. I'm going to get power from pushing my rope out in front of my head and then pulling my rope back behind me and bringing my base back. If I just use my wrist, I can't use my whole arm.



### 4 TIP

The tip is the bottom of your rope, opposite your hand. As the heaviest part of your rope, the power of your swing is going to come from pulling that tip behind your head. The weight of the rope is what's going to make your tip go to where you want it to go.

I look at the base of the neck, and that's the target at which I want the tip of my rope consistently pointing—where the calf's neck and shoulders come together. So, every time I'm swinging my rope, whether I'm on a horse and my calves are running to the left or to the right, my tip is to my target.



### 5 FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow through is important because, in the breakaway roping, it's bell-collar catch only. In order to have a time in the breakaway, the loop has to be tight around the neck. You can't have a hind leg, a tail, half a body, a flank, anything—it has to be tight around the neck.

So this fifth step, the follow-through, is what's going to help you make your rope come around and come tight around the neck.

I want you to match your tip to your target, and your left hand is going to be pointed to the calf. And when you deliver, you want your left hand to come across to your right hand, which is going to push your tip around and come back.

A good follow-through will save you, say, if you miss your slack. A good follow-through will help you with that. So, when I say, "Follow through," push that rope so it figure-eights around the neck. Make your hands meet, then pull your slack. **BRJ**

### THANKS, COACH

**Linsay Sumpter**—who coaches for Otero Junior College in La Junta, Colorado—provides online breakaway roping instruction through [breakawayroping.com](https://breakawayroping.com). Use her promo code **LINSAY15** for 15% off a membership, with all access to hundreds of videos of breakaway roping instruction from the best in the world.

# High Call






## TO THE TOP

**Sawyer Gilbert**, 19, is the youngest National Finals of Breakaway Roping finalist after securing the two-head average win at the Pendleton (Oregon) Round-Up with a time of 5.0 seconds, worth \$5,981. The South Dakota native completed the rare, ultra-cowgirl feat of winning the Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Pendleton Roundup in 2021. Rodeo Ready/Clay Guardipee

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