



K-State RODEO News

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K-State Rodeo
Advisory Council

EXCITEMENT BUILDS AS NEW K-STATE ARENA NEARS COMPLETION

Construction is nearing completion on the new home for K-State rodeo. The new 3,000-seat Bilbrey Family Event Center is scheduled to be finished in September. It features the 130' by 250' Duane and Jo Walker/Tee Jay Quarter Horses indoor competition arena, where the K-State Rodeo Club will host its next college rodeo, February 19-22, 2026.

With the building expected to be available in the late October-early November time frame, the rodeo club tentatively is planning to host the Mike Christiansen Memorial Team Roping in the facility.



Rendering of Bilbrey Family Event Center.

In addition to serving as home for the rodeo team, the Bilbrey Center will support K-State Animal Sciences & Industry (ASI) teaching, youth and extension events.

An 80' by 80' warm-up arena, complete with showers for competitors and a wash rack for live-stock, is connected to the main building. There are covered stock pens for housing and sorting timed event and rough stock animals.

A new arena the magnitude of Bilbrey has been on the list of stated goals set by the K-State Rodeo Advisory Council for 30 years. The new arena will complement other key components the rodeo program already has in place, including a full-time coach on the ASI staff and an expanding scholarship pool.

K-STATE RODEO TEAM TO BE LARGEST IN YEARS

K-State will have its largest team in many years when the new season starts this fall. Preliminary numbers indicate there will be 46 students competing on the team. The men's team is expected to consist of 12 members, with eight of those being returning students and four new to the program. A large group of 34 are set to be part of the women's team, including 17 returning students and 17 new additions.

Some of the incoming talent arriving on the K-State campus includes: Bayli Ladner, an all-around cowgirl and state high school champion goat tyer from Oregon; Emma Bays, the second place break-away roper and third place team roper in Virginia High School Rodeo; Jake Szukelewicz, a transfer from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College who has competed at a high level in the tie-down roping in the Central Plains Region; Reece Conner, the state finals average champion in the breakaway roping at the Montana High School Rodeo Finals; Kyan Frost, a top 10 barrel racer in the Missouri High School Rodeo Association; Katie Prieb, the 11th ranked goat tyer in the Kansas High School Rodeo Association (KHSRA); and Audrey Boyle, a top 15 barrel racer in KHSRA.

These and other top-notch student athletes are coming to Manhattan during a landmark year, as the new home of K-State Rodeo will open its doors for a new era of the program. The Bilbrey Events Center will host the K-State Rodeo February 19-22. Plan to attend and be part of the first college rodeo in this spectacular facility!

Clarke Jackman
Chairman
Baldwin City
KSU '88

Jeff VanPetten
Meriden
KSU '83

Todd Domer
Topeka
KSU '83

Joel Wimer
Smolan
KSU '79

Amber Thompson
Olsburg
KSU '17

Greg Gardiner
Ashland
KSU '81

Jeremy Ostrander
Winchester
KSU '95

John McDonald
Ablene
KSU '86

Madeline Meyer
Rodeo Club President

Teresa Douthit
ASI Interim Dept. Head
(Ex-officio)

WILDCATS SHOW WELL IN CENTRAL PLAINS REGION

K-State rodeo athletes completed another season in the tough Central Plains Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. Several students went right down to the wire trying to qualify for the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR), held in June in Casper, WY.

Breakaway ropers represented K-State well. Kassandra Shoemaker finished sixth in the region, while Chancy Johnson ended up 12th and Alli Nippert was 13th. Shoemaker was the overall high point earner on the team and was named K-State women's team co-MVP along with Johnson.

Other notable women's team finishers in the region were Karsyn Fuchs, who was 25th in the goat



Shoemaker



Oftedahl

tying; Kasey Carr, who competed in

barrel racing and breakaway roping and was the high-point freshman; and Claire Biles and Madison Rotenberger, short-go qualifiers in the goat tying. Maddie McDowell and Sage Toews also made contributions to the team.

On the men's side, Stranton Oftedahl closed out his first season as a Wildcat by placing 15th in the region in the steer wrestling. In doing so, he was the high-point earner on the K-State men's team. Maddox Stevens ended the season 16th in the bull riding. The men's team co-MVPs were Kord Ostrander, who finished 20th in the heading, and Stuart Rose, who was 19th in the heeling.

Many of these students return this fall with experience under their belts for another run at a CNFR qualification!

RODEO CLUB MEMBERS PUT IN THE WORK

The K-State Rodeo Club had an extremely successful year, with students leading the charge. There were 26 active club members, 36 team members and 19 executive officers who put in a whopping 3,158 volunteer hours at various events and activities, and another 685 hours parking cars at home K-State football games as a fundraiser for the club!

Club members of the year for 2024-25 were recognized during the club's annual banquet in May. They were Candace Koether, Cooper Bailey, Destin Warr and Ava Collins.

The new executive officer team for 2025-26 consists of: President Madeline Meyer; President Elect Alli Nippert; Vice President Abby Muck; Coach Assistant Kassandra Shoemaker; Secretary Brooke Kiehnhoff; Treasurer Karsyn Fuchs; Treasurer Elect Claire Boles; facilities chairs - Will Kessen, Destin Warr, Maddox Stevens and Cole Hobrock; stock chairs - Kord Ostrander, Carson Leatherman and Stranton Oftedahl; advertising chairs - Alli Nippert and Maddie McDowell; sponsorship chairs - Ava Collins and Olivia Dehaan-Burch; Ag Council/Student Government Association representative - Sage Toews; social chairs - Candace Koether and Isabelle Barker; and membership chair - Tara Mahan.



Meyer

HELP STUDENTS BY DONATING TO CHRISTIANSEN SCHOLARSHIP

Alumni and friends can support K-State students involved in the rodeo program by contributing to a new endowed scholarship. The J. Michael Christiansen Memorial Scholarship was made possible by generous friends and supporters of the K-State Rodeo Club. Additional funding is needed to fully endow the scholarship.

Christiansen was a 1981 K-State graduate and active member of the Rodeo Club during his time on campus. He was a long-time, passionate member of the K-State Rodeo Advisory Council. Christiansen passed away in 2022.

Those who wish to support students through this scholarship can make any size contribution by using this direct link www.ksufoundation.org/give/rodeo or contacting K-State Rodeo Advisory Council Chairman Clarke Jackman, a 1988 alumnus from Baldwin, KS, at (785) 865-6514 or clarke.jackman@frontierfarmcredit.com.

Individuals, organizations or companies interested in creating similar named scholarships to honor an individual or family and benefit K-State rodeo students can call Jackman at the number above or Casey Droddy at the KSU Foundation at (785) 775-2042.

OSTRANDER, McDONALD BRING EXPERIENCE TO RODEO ADVISORY COUNCIL

The K-State Rodeo Advisory Council welcomed two new members earlier this year. Jeremy Ostrander of Nortonville, KS, and John McDonald from Abilene, KS, have joined in the council's mission to enhance financial assistance and serve in an advisory role for the K-State Rodeo Club and Team. The three primary objectives of the group are to increase scholarships, improve facilities and maintain a full-time coach on the K-State Animal Sciences & Industry staff.

Ostrander is a 1995 K-State graduate with a degree in biological and agricultural engineering. He was an active member of the K-State Rodeo Club during his time in Manhattan. Today, he serves as the chief executive officer for AgriVision Equipment group and PrairieLand Partners, with John Deere dealerships covering portions of Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. Ostrander and his wife, Tamera, have five children, with four still being involved in rodeo. His son Kord is currently on the K-State Rodeo Team and a member of K-State Rodeo Club executive officer team!



Ostrander



McDonald

McDonald was at K-State from 1983 to 1986. After qualifying for the National High School Rodeo Finals three times and serving as Kansas High School Rodeo Association Student President in 1981-82, he spent three years on the K-State Rodeo Team. McDonald was third in the Central Plains Region bull riding in 1983. In 1991, he joined the production team of Bull Riders Only, the first-ever televised bull riding series. He combined his rodeo experience and entrepreneurial vision to start Rawhide Portable Corral in Abilene. McDonald currently serves as president of the innovative livestock handling equipment company. Both he and his wife, Mary, a 1984 K-State graduate, are proud sponsors and supporters of K-State Rodeo.

K-State Rodeo Advisory Council Chairman Clarke Jackman of Baldwin said the council is fortunate to have Jeremy and John as members. He said their experience, passion for the program and willingness to volunteer will help move K-State Rodeo forward!

GALA DRAWS LARGE CROWD TO STOUT CENTER

The K-State Rodeo Club held its first ever gala February 15, 2025, at the Stanley Stout Center. There were 188 in attendance at the event, according to Rodeo Club Social Chair Candace Koether.

One of the highlights of the special evening was the crowning of the new Miss Rodeo K-State. Madeline Meyer earned the title and is representing the rodeo program at numerous rodeos and civic activities across the state.

There also were live and silent auctions to raise funds for the K-State rodeo program. Alumnus Jeff Ruckert sold live auction items provided by generous donors. The two auctions combined to generate \$3,538 for the student-run K-State Rodeo Club.

Thanks to all who attended, bid and donated items!

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED FOR UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR

The K-State Rodeo Scholarship Committee has awarded \$43,100 in scholarships and stall waivers to students for the 2025-26 school year. Of the 33 applicants from 15 states earning scholarships, 18 are returning students and 15 are freshmen, transfers or current K-State students new to the rodeo program. This is the largest number of K-State students planning to rodeo in many years.

There was \$23,400 available for scholarships, along with \$19,700 in stall rent waivers awarded. Stall waivers are for horses students house at the rodeo facility during the school year.

Committee members based decisions on information provided by students including grade point average, leadership experience, K-State Rodeo Club involvement and rodeo accomplishments. Congratulations to the following students who were chosen as scholarship recipients!

Wimer Family Foundation Scholarship

Stranton Oftedahl, sophomore, Minnesota
Claire Boles, sophomore, California
Katy Prieb, freshman, Kansas
Braedon Nation, freshman, Kansas

K-State Rodeo Advisory Council Scholarships

Kassandra Shoemaker, graduate student, Wyoming
Karsyn Fuchs, junior, Missouri
Kyan Frost, freshman, Kansas
Madeline Meyer, senior, Washington
Abby Muck, senior, Illinois
Grace Elliott, senior, California
Brooke Kiehnhoff, senior, Kansas
Stuart Rose, senior, Kansas
Braylen Renz, freshman, Nebraska
Audrey Boyle, freshman, Kansas
Faith Roten, freshman, Arkansas

K-State Rodeo Club Scholarships

Jacob Szukelewicz, junior, Arkansas
Ashley Smith, freshman, Colorado
Madisyn Sly, freshman, Kansas
Olivia Burch, senior, Iowa
Macie Morris, junior, Missouri
Emma Brighton, sophomore, Michigan

Mary Vanier/K-State Rodeo Club Scholarship

Alli Nippert, junior, Oklahoma

Bob Clore Memorial Scholarships

Bayli Ladner, freshman, Oregon
Taylor Gustafson, freshman, Kansas

Fitzgerald Family Scholarship

Sage Toews, junior, Kansas

R.B. Warren Memorial Scholarships

Reece Conner, freshman, Montana

J. Michael Christiansen Memorial Scholarship

Kasey Carr, sophomore, Wyoming
Bayleigh Schneider, sophomore, Kansas
Emma Bays, freshman, Virginia
Addison Oliver, freshman, Colorado