

CALIFORNIA RODEO SALINAS cowboy

Cowboy competitors, with their numbers affixed to their backs, compare notes in the chutes as they wait to ride in the 2005 California Rodeo Salinas. Nothing's guaranteed in the professional cowboy world and, after, posting an entry fee, they may leave town with less money than when they arrived.



PHOTO BY RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Rodeoing can be hard road, landing

Give the cowgirls and cowboys a big welcome and a big hand no matter how the ride turns out

By **JIM ALBANESE**
The Salinas Californian

More than 700 cowboys and cowgirls are to compete for the California Rodeo Salinas' \$500,000 in prize money this year. But most of them will leave town with lighter wallets. Pro rodeoing's a heck of a way to make a living. Nothing's guaranteed. You have to pay an entry fee just for the privilege of being bucked, gored or trampled and then, maybe, just maybe, pick up a check. Those who follow professional rodeo know the big names. Paul Tierney, part of 2008's freshman class of the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, is one of them. Tierney made a habit of filling

his pockets with riding and roping prize money in Salinas. But for every performer we do know are hundreds of cowboys who ride and rope and wrestle, barely eking out enough day money to make it to the next rodeo. The goal of each, from the most experienced cowhand to the greenest tenderfoot, is to make enough money to make a Top 15 finish in one of the seven arena and track events. That'll earn you a spot in the World Series, or rather, National Finals Rodeo, in Las Vegas, and that's where the big pay day resides.

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