

RODEO IS RAD!



came on, house lights went down, and a single horse and rider carrying the American flag circled the Brick Breeden arena twice, leaving few dry eyes in the crowd. A stirring rendition of the National Anthem was followed by the exciting rodeo runout that football fans adore. It was more than touching—it was deeply, genuinely moving.

The action that followed matched the powerful opening, with bronc riders leading the lineup. A number of close calls were averted by very capable sidemen on horseback (later, bull fighters did the same for bull riders, on foot). Rodeo entertainer JJ Harrison was classy, not corny, and kept things lively by throwing a football into the audience, often catching the return in his hat. Jesse Knutson kept the music coming, spinning tunes from many genres that fit each moment perfectly. Timing of events went off without a hitch; as one competition ended, attention was called to gates on

BY CYNTHIA LOGAN

There were nearly as many ball caps as cowboy hats among MSU Spring Rodeo-goers Saturday night, and flip flops and flowing tops matched the number of boots and western shirts. All rose to their feet as strains of the 'John Dunbar Theme' from *Dances With Wolves*





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The transformation of the Fieldhouse from basketball to volleyball court, to track and field, to rodeo arena is hugely impressive. It is awesome to think that rodeo announcer Vance Ruff was standing in the exact spot where Elton John stood, when the Brick House became a top-notch music venue. Kudos to Ruff, along with Head Coach Kyle Whittaker, Shelby Rasmussen, Mike Lowell, and the 'rodeo kids' who set up and tore down arena panels, bucking chutes, the whole shebang. They all kicked it.



area, and some feisty horses not yet ready to retreat (it was particularly amusing to see a gatesman gesture a bronc into the corral area as if the animal were a theater guest).

There's just something about the magnificence of horses that's truly thrilling, whether they are standing guard or galloping at full pace. Equine athletes. And, of course, there are those bulls. Dust was kicked up, and knees were brushed as fans kept pouring in. The Rodeo was an all-out feast for the senses: the smell and feel of fine-grit sand, physical and emotional touches; the sound of galloping hooves or an occasional whinny, the announcer, the music, the applause. At times, the sights were close to astonishing.

the opposite side of the arena, where the next began. Goat tying, team roping, barrel racing and bull riding were all enthralling to watch; a number of contestants accrued penalties for 'breaking the barrier' that gives livestock enough time for a head start.

Commercial breaks were filled with sights like a line of goats walking back behind the seating



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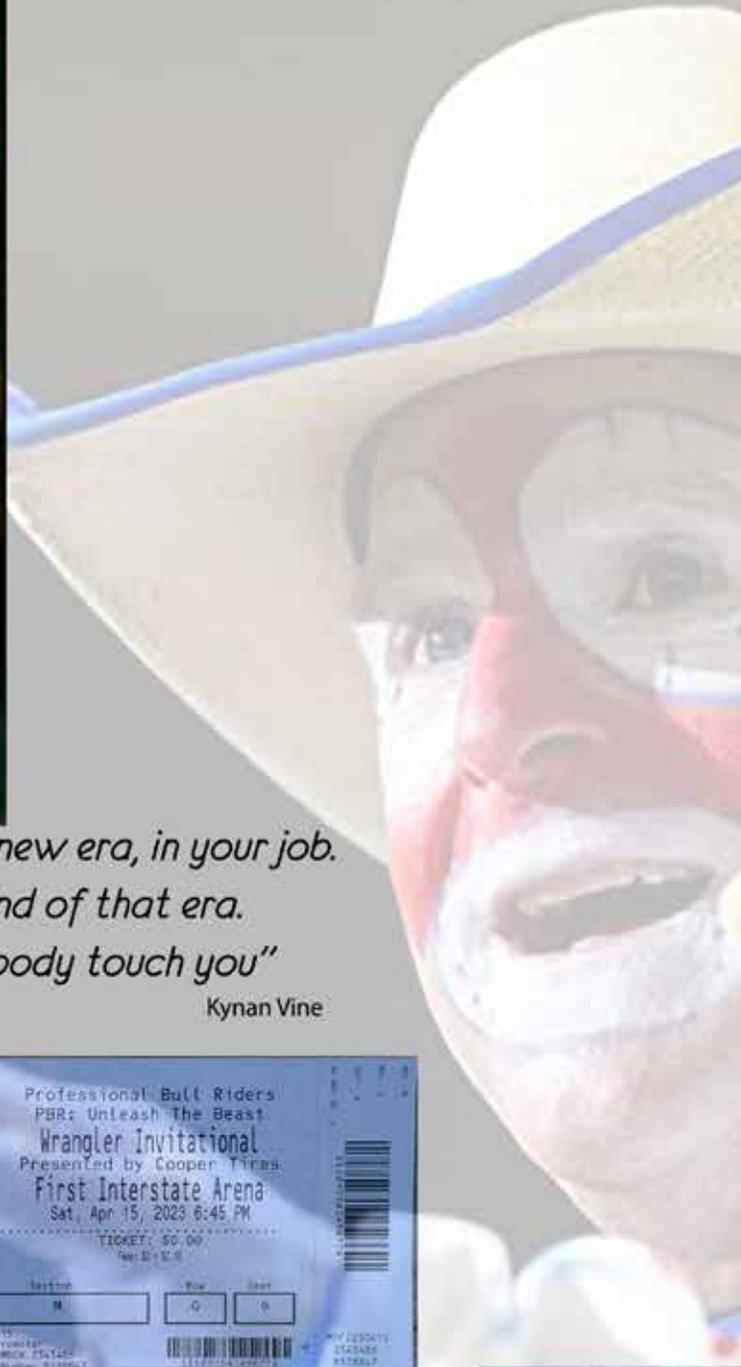
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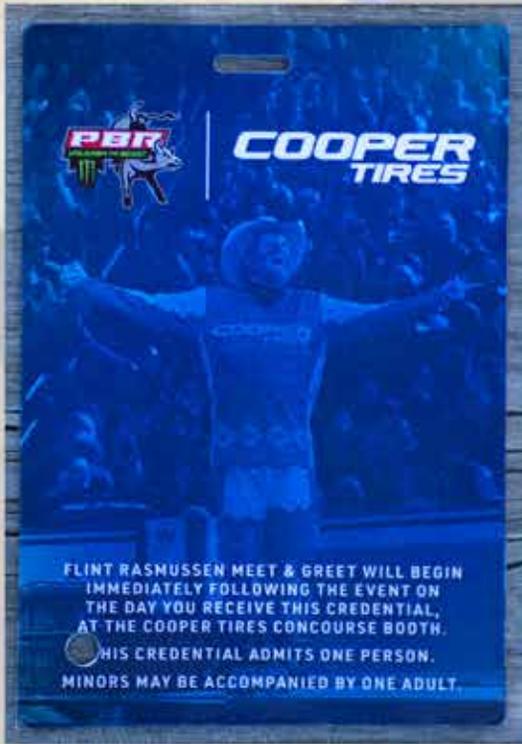


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