



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Nation applauds Student Athletes competing at the College National Finals Rodeo

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PHOTO: Council Delegate Wilson C. Stewart, Jr. addresses the Navajo people outside the Navajo Nation Council Chambers in Window Rock, Ariz. during the 2022 Spring Session.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Council Delegate Wilson Stewart Jr. of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and President Elmer Guy applaud Navajo Technical University (NTU) student-athletes for qualifying for the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR). Mr. Hiyo Yazzie of Brimhall, New Mexico, will compete in the tie-down and team roping categories, and Mr. Rooster Yazzie of Coyote Canyon, New Mexico, in the steer wrestling event.

Sponsored by the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA), the CNFR will be hosted between June 12 to 18, 2022, at the Ford Center in Casper, Wyoming. The NIRA sanctions more than 100 college rodeos every year across the United States and represents over 3,500 student-athletes attending more than 135 member colleges and universities.

“The Navajo people love the sport of rodeo and are deeply proud of Hiyo and Rooster for representing us at the College National Finals Rodeo. We have witnessed their accomplishments in the rodeo arena and the Navajo Tech classroom through the years. We wish them well as they compete to become national champions in their events. May the Holy People protect their horses and their travels to Wyoming this June,” said Council Delegate Wilson Stewart (Fort Defiance, Crystal, Red Lake, Sawmill).

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Representing the Grand Canyon Region, both are members of the All-Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association (AIRCA) and the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). Each rose through the ranks competing with the Indian Junior Rodeo Association, before leading them to the Indian National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, NV.

“The Navajo Nation is proud of all our college athletes for breaking barriers by representing Indian Country on the national level. Hiyo and Rooster join a group of Diné rodeo athletes like Erich Rogers, Derrick Begay, Aaron Tsinigine, Danielle Lowman, Cody Jesus, and many others. We have a long and proud history of being ranchers, farming the land, and raising livestock. This is a way of life loved by the Navajo people. A heartfelt congratulations to all our young men and their families,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

In March, Rooster Yazzie was the champion in the steer wrestling event to win the trophy buckle at the University of Arizona rodeo. He later added, “It’s always a great feeling to be in the winner’s circle, and it’s even more exciting at this level, but I can’t let that slow my pace. It is important for me to stay focused on my studies at Navajo Tech and during practice. Our rodeo team trusts the outcome will be a positive one.”

Both are all-around athletes that are earning their certificates with NTU’s Heavy Equipment Program and completing their Commercial Driver Licenses (CDL). Hiyo Yazzie recently won the All-Around trophy buckle at the Payson College Rodeo and then in steer wrestling at the Yuma Pro Rodeo earlier this year.

Serving in her sixth year as the NTU Head Rodeo Coach, Nicole Pino earned a B.S. in Animal Science from New Mexico State University. She shared her excitement by adding, “It has been an amazing year for the Navajo Technical University athletic program. My goal as a coach is to help our students succeed at NTU, in the classroom and in the rodeo arena. Hiyo and Rooster continue to make us proud as they also compete in the ProRodeo circuit around the country. We are a small but mighty rodeo team and got the job done this year.”

The Skyhawk Men’s Rodeo Team is currently in fourth place in the Grand Canyon Region, behind Mesalands Community College, New Mexico State University, and Central Arizona College. The Navajo Technical University rodeo team is seeking student-athletes who want to earn a certificate or degree while competing at the collegiate level: <http://www.navajotech.edu/athletics/sports/collegiate/rodeo>

Other CNFR qualifiers from the Navajo Nation include Mr. Brad Moreno of Kayenta, Ariz., in the bull riding category, and Mr. Jaken Todacheenie of Indian Wells, Ariz., in the team roping category. A complete schedule of upcoming events for the College National Finals Rodeo can be accessed here: <http://cnfr.com/schedule>

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