

Local Youths Take Top Honors

Two Hardee County youths garnered the top honors in their division at the Reality Ranch Youth Rodeo banquet held last month at the Hardee County Agri-Civic Center.

Lauren Senn, daughter of Steve and Regina Senn of Ona, won the All-Around Cowgirl award, and Dawson Cantu, son of Luke and Mandy Cantu of Bowling Green, won the All-Around Cowboy award, both in the Tots Division.

Each child was presented with a saddle donated by sponsors Peace River Electric Cooperative Inc. and Cantu Apiaries, each saddle being inscribed with the child's new title.

Reality Ranch Youth Rodeo runs from September to March every year, and is held on the second weekend of every month at Reality Ranch east of Zolfo Springs.

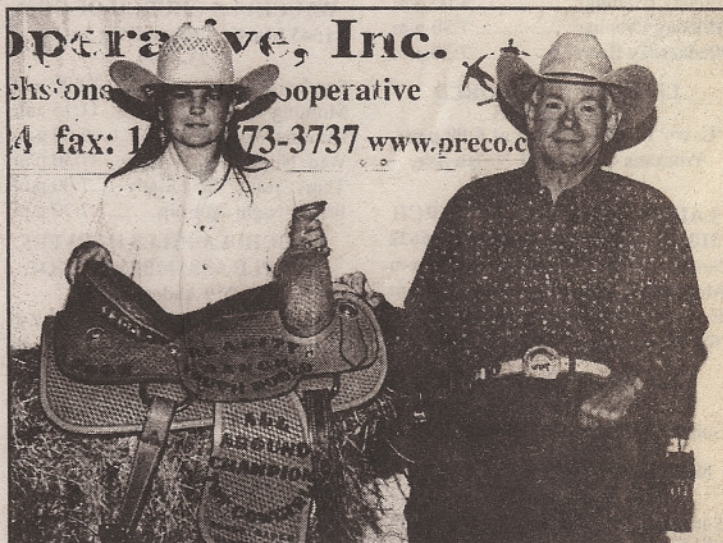
The events usually held are barrel-racing, pole-bending, goat-tying, breakaway and team roping, mutton bustin', calf-riding, steer-riding, and junior and senior bullriding.

In order to qualify for the All-Around Cowgirl/Cowboy award, the contestant must participate in three of more events, for at least five of the rodeos during the season. The Tots Division is for youth ages 8-and-under.

During the past season, Dawson simultaneously suffered both a broken left wrist and a broken right elbow, but still managed to stay on the top in his events. He also won the championship buckles for the Tots barrel-racing and goat-tying, the Reserve Champion buckle for the Tots pole-bending, and placed third in both the calf-riding and Tots breakaway roping.

Lauren also won the championship buckle for the Tots pole-bending, the Reserve Champion buckle for the Tots goat-tying event, and placed fourth in the Tots barrel-racing.

Lauren's sister, Rebekkah Senn, won the championship



COURTESY PHOTOS BY KATHY GREGG

Lauren Senn receives her saddle from Pastor Randy Johnson of Reality Ranch Ministries.



Dawson Cantu accepts his saddle from his grandfathers, Steve Cantu and Jimmy Parker.

buckles for Junior barrel-racing and pole-bending, and placed fourth in the Juniors goat-tying. She was edged out of the All-Around Cowgirl in the Juniors Division by a mere two points, winning her the Reserve Champion buckle.

Scotty Meeks won the Reserve Champion buckle for the mutton bustin' event.

Other Hardee County youth who participated in the rodeos

were Ariel Singletary, Hagan Bylund, Courtney Bailes, Jessica and Caleb McVay, Hailey Andrews, Mary Kate Harris, Hope Elliott, Colton Howell, Cameron Cantu, Austin Harris and Thomas Hovis.