Rodeo team wins big at Nationals

MARTIN, Tenn. – Privately, both John Luthi and Nelson Davis had visions of the University of Tennessee at Martin men’s rodeo team taking home top honors at the 2014 College National Finals Rodeo. When those thoughts occurred, they may have served as a surprise.

“I never told anybody but I thought this group could go and have the experience and opportunity to win our first title when they were freshmen,” said Luthi, UT Martin’s head rodeo coach since 1997. “We’ve taken some very talented teams to the CNFR and this was another good group.”

“I knew when the seniors were freshmen,” said Davis, UT Martin rodeo assistant coach and athletic trainer who has been a part of the program since 1988. “That bunch carried us for four years and we had two guys that qualified for the finals as freshmen, sophomores and juniors that just barely got shut out this year and didn’t get to make the trip.”

Fast forward four years later and both predictions were spot on. Last month, the UT Martin men’s team disproved traditional rodeo wisdom and became the first team east of the Mississippi River to claim a national championship. UT Martin accumulated 755 overall points at the CNFR in Casper, Wyo., edging out Tarleton State University (730 points).

Not only did the UT Martin team make geographical history but all of its six finals participants (and one cowgirl) were born and raised on the east side of the Mississippi River.

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MARTIN, Tenn. – The National FFA Organization has named Dr. James Butler, agricultural education professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin, a National VIP. The honor is the highest in the organization and recognizes Butler’s significant contributions and dedication to FFA and agricultural education.

The FFA mission is to create a positive difference in the lives of students by developing leadership potential, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

“The VIP citation recognizes the dedicated individuals who contribute to the FFA mission of student success through their hard work and cooperation,” said the National FFA Organization CEO Dwight Armstrong in a news release. “Without such strong and outstanding commitment, FFA would not be able to help build strong character in its members, who in turn build strong families, communities and industries.”

Butler has a 25-year association with the National FFA Organization. During this time, he has served as a national proficiency judge and a national career development event judge. For the past 12 years, he has served as the co-coordinator for the national meats evaluation and technology career development event.

He has received the honorary state FFA degree and the Tennessee VIP Association VIP award. Butler has also served as a member of the career and technical education state staff in Tennessee and is a member of the Tennessee FFA Board of Directors and technical education state staff in Tennessee. Butler is the collegiate FFA board advisor and coordinates regional and state FFA career development events in livestock, equine and vet science.

The National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to almost 580,000 student members in grades seven through 12 who belong to one of 7,570 local FFA chapters throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Amy Richards, has joined the Family and Consumer Sciences family this fall as Didactic Program in Dietetics Director.

Previous to her appointment at UT Martin, Richards was the dietetic internship director at the University of South Dakota School of Medicine. She is currently completing her PhD in Nutrition, Exercise and Food Science at South Dakota State University.

Richards is currently making contacts, getting acquainted with the R.D.’s in the area who are vital to our program, and teaching Nutrition and Disease and Advanced Nutrition.

She enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, and hiking in her spare time.

While here, Richards would like to help students be successful and help the program be as successful as it can be as well.

Welcome to UTM, Ms. Richards!
The College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences would like to welcome Dr. Emalee Buttrey BACK to UTM! She is a 2003 graduate of UTM with a degree in Animal Science. Her husband, Brad, also graduated from UTM with an Animal Science degree in 2005. They have been married since 2006 and have two small children, Rachel and Grady. Dr. Buttrey and her family enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, and attending church together.

As a student at UTM, Dr. Buttrey was involved in Alpha Delta Pi and Collegiate FFA. She was a student ambassador and was also a member of the livestock judging team.

She received a Masters at Texas A&M in Animal Science with a focus in stocker cattle management and a Ph.D. in Agriculture from West Texas A&M.

Dr. Buttrey spent the last two years teaching animal science courses at Louisiana Tech, with the intention of eventually returning to UTM as a professor. “I figured out I liked teaching at this level when I was in graduate school at Texas A&M. It was always my goal to come home and teach at UTM,” she said.

While at UTM, Dr. Buttrey plans to expose more students to research to prepare them for graduate school and for their careers. She would also like to teach real-world, useful applications.

Students have begun their studies in Hospitality and Food Service Management this fall. This concentration is designed to prepare students for management careers in the hospitality industry and related sectors.

To help support this program, a new food science lab, commercial lab, multipurpose classroom and event/reception area is being built as part of the new UT Martin press box at the football stadium, to be completed in the Fall of 2015. The degree program provides the opportunity for students to acquire those skills that are necessary to operate and manage a multitude of food service operations.

The curriculum enables students to develop their managerial, functional, operational, and analytical capabilities to maximize their success in hospitality and food service management industry. Careers opportunities are excellent for students in this concentration.

Graduates of this program will be prepared to work in entry-level management positions of the hospitality industry. Areas of employment include restaurants, hospitals, hotels, resorts, and universities, catering, event planning, and commercial food service.
CAAS welcomes students back for fall semester

Students, faculty and staff from all walks of the College of Agriculture and Applied Science gathered in the quad, outside of Brehm Hall for a Welcome Back BBQ. Family and Consumer Sciences, Military Science, Agriculture, Natural Resources Management, and Geosciences spent an afternoon together catching up with old friends and making new ones to begin the 2014 fall semester.

CAAS gave away nearly 40 prizes to the students and fed them BBQ with all the sides. Organizations and clubs within CAAS set up displays to recruit new members. A good time was had by all!
“I feel rodeo in this part of the country is finally getting the credit it deserves,” Luthi said. “When I first came to the Ozark region, we weren’t looked at as being a very tough region. I feel like with the coaches that we have in the region, our competitiveness has escalated in a big way. It’s a neat deal to do something that nobody has ever done.”

“Being the first team east of the Mississippi River to win is a major deal because we’ve been told for years that we couldn’t compete,” Davis said. “They used to say if you had a kid around here that could rope, they thought they had to go to Oklahoma or Texas. You’re not supposed to have cowboys this side of the Mississippi River. But for the last several years, we’ve had national individual champions from our region.”

Will Lummus (steer wrestling and calf roping), Tyler Waltz (bareback riding), Clark Adcock (calf roping, team roping), Tanner Phipps (bareback riding), John Alley (team roping), Colt Kitaif (bareback riding) represented the men’s team while Nealey Dalton (barrel racing) also qualified for the CNFR from the women’s squad.

“It wasn’t only the guys that went to the finals that helped us do that, it was the team all year long,” Luthi said. “Everybody on the team had an impact on us being able to win just by doing their part in the region. It was a great team effort – everybody came together and was supportive and helpful with each other.”

Of course, some of the credit has to be deflected to Luthi. One year after garnering National Coach of the Year honors by the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association, the humble Luthi saved his best coaching performance for 2014, the same year he notched his 13th Ozark Region championship in 17 years and led the program to its 41st consecutive CNFR appearance.

“It’s been a whirlwind of firsts for Luthi. In addition to UT Martin becoming the first team east of the Mississippi River to win the national rodeo title, it also is the first-ever national team championship for any UT Martin athletic program.

“I’m thankful to be able to bring home a national title to UT Martin,” Luthi said. “So many things could have happened in that situation, God must have just thought it was our turn. I’m really appreciative of all the support that we get from the university, the booster club and the community. This wouldn’t have been possible without all of that.”