

FALCON FRONTIER DAYS RODEO

“The idea of a college rodeo was conceived during the winter of 1962 – 63. Organizational meetings were held that winter and the River Falls Collegiate Rodeo Assn. became part of college life at UWRF. The association had much to do and a short time to get it all done. A faculty adviser had to be found. The idea of a college rodeo had to be sold to the student council and the schools administration. A rodeo arena had to be built. A stock contractor hired. Advertising and promotion needed to be handled. It was amazing what a group of college kids could accomplish with the backing of the administration and our faculty adviser Dr. Gerhardt “Doc” Bohn. Doc Bohn was horsy at the time. He had a carriage and a driving horse. His best qualification was his sense of humor. Something you need in anyone you partner up with in life. He didn't jump for joy when first asked, but he finally gave in when we told him he wouldn't have to do anything. Of course he knew that was a fabrication, but went ahead anyway. All of this was done and on May 16 and 17, 1964 the first college sponsored rodeo east of the Mississippi was held.” (Submitted by David Stafford)

“That first rodeo was an open amateur rodeo with stock supplied by Fred Cochran's Circle C Ranch of Solon, Iowa. That same year the association became part of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Assn.(NIRA) and on May 8th and 9th 1965 the first intercollegiate rodeo was held. States besides Wisconsin having schools competing at that first intercollegiate rodeo were Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. If you add Minnesota that did not have a team at the time, these were the states that made up the Great Plains Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Assn.” (Submitted by David Stafford)

Winners list from that first rodeo:

Bareback Bronc riding – Jim Davis....La Port City, IA.

Bull riding – Hal Sharp....Stillwater, MN.

Saddle Bronc – Larry Branian....Brooklyn, IA.

Calf Roping – Johnny Walters....Waterloo, IA.

Bull Dogging – Russ Sawyer....Denver, CO.

All-Around Cowboy –....Grinnell, IA.

Officers elected at the start up organizational meeting:

David Stafford - Grinnell, IA....President

Ron Purvis - Knapp, WI....Vice President

Kay Simmons – Stillwater, MN....Secretary

Jerry Smith – Downing, WI....Treasurer

Members of first UWRF intercollegiate rodeo team:

Ted Fetting – Greenwood, WI.

Chuck Overbeck – Sturgeon Bay, WI.

Jim Baier – Tomah, WI.

Gary Olson – Shell Lake, WI.

Dave Stafford – Grinnell, IA.

Janet Griffy – River Falls, WI.

Laurel Kadlec – Tomah, WI.

Doc Bohn helped students build the arena, which is still being used today. He continued on as advisor until 1991 when he retired from the university. He served many functions with the team including being selected as the Great Plains Regional Director during the 60's and 70's. He took several girls' teams as well as numerous individuals to the college finals. He had one national champion, Shelly Haskins Mueller. He was succeeded by Mr. Steve Watters who was assisted by several other faculty and served for five years. In 1997, Dr. Anthony (Tony) Jilek was selected as the new advisor and in 1998, Mr. Todd Kirschbaum, an electrician from Prescott, offered his assistance for the rodeo and, shortly after, was selected as a co-advisor.

Rodeo Club and team member numbers have fluctuated over the years, but the Rodeo Club at UWRF remains strong and team members enjoy the opportunity to continue their competitive ways while concentrating on their studies here at UWRF.