



# *Buckin' Wild*

*Professional Bull Riders being introduced in a circle of flames before the start of the event in Los Angeles, Calif. at Crypto.com Arena on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2024. (Dustin Pevan / The Corsair)*

As bull riders took home awards, animal rights activists protested. The Michelob ULTRA Professional Bull Riders (PBR) Los Angeles Unleash The Beast, presented by Arlat, made their annual stop in Los Angeles, California, for a two-day event at Crypto.com Arena from Feb. 16-17. The best bull riders from around the world put on a thrilling display of bull rides as they took on 1,200 pounds for an intense eight seconds.

The event kicked off at 7:45 pm on Friday and resumed at 6:45 pm on Saturday. The booming sport has brought new sponsors that have doubled since 2020 and new fans as they came out to see the award-winning entertainment of man and beast.

Upcoming riders in their late teens lead the competi-

tion for almost the entirety of the event, with John Crimber (18) of Decatur, Texas, at the top. Crimber held on to first place for the majority of the Championship Round, where he would be overtaken by the top rider in the world who had the biggest ride of his life.

Cassio Dias (22) from São Francisco de Sales, Brazil, the best rider in the world, took on the best bull in the world, Man Hater, in an unforgettable event within the Championship round. Man Hater had a previous record of 30-0 before being broken by Dias after he held on for 8 seconds and jumped from fourth to first place with an aggregate score of 182 points.

Aside from their dominance in soccer, as uncommon as it sounds, Brazil also dominates in the bull riding world. Dias is one of the few

Brazilians that have dominated in PBR which as bull riding is very popular in Brazil and many dream of competing against professionals. This has left at least one Brazilian rider in the top three since 2019.

When asked how he managed the impossible by making it eight seconds on Man Hater after winning the Tournament, Dias said, "God gave me the strength to make this happen. Without his blessing, we couldn't do all this, and I'm very happy, and I'm just doing my job".

Despite the growing popularity of the sport, controversy continued as animal activists rallied outside Crypto to protest against the "cruel" rodeo. Organizations such as the Los Angeles Animal Defense League and Los Angeles for Animals came out in solidarity with Last Chance for Animals (LCA),

the organizers of the protest, to stop a "display of animal abuse."

LCA issued an advisory on Wednesday stating, "Rodeos and stand-alone bull riding events, like PBR, glorify animal abuse as they masquerade as a family entertainment."

On Dec. 5, 2023, the L.A. City Council unanimously voted for an ordinance defining and prohibiting rodeos and any rodeo-related events in the city. A draft of the ban is in the pipeline, and once approved, it could be the end of the annual PBR events in Los Angeles.

PBR returns to Southern California in Anaheim for a three-day event at the Honda Center on September 13-15 for their Camping World Team Series.



Brazilian, Cassio Dias jumps through a lasso during the entertainment section of the bull riding event on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2023 at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, Calif. (Damián Pérez / The Corsair)



Cassio Dias celebrating as he finishes the biggest ride of his life against the best bull in the world, Man Hater, to reach first place in the Championship round on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2023. Dias is currently the best bull rider in the world and did the impossible by conquering Man Hater who had a record of 30-0 before being broken in a memorable ride at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, Calif.



Photos by Dussio Perez / The Corsair  
 (Bottom) Cassio Dias rides Man Hater in the Championship round at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, Calif. On Saturday, Feb. 16, 2023, the best bull rider, Dias, conquered the best bull in the world to break Man Hater's record of 30-0.



Shirtless man dancing to country music in the state of Crypto.com Arena.



Joe Vitor being introduced at the start of the Professional Bull Riders Unleash the Beast show at Crypto.com Arena. Vitor came 24th in the tournament.



(Above) Professional Bull Riders (PBR) being introduced at the start of the PBR Los Angeles Unleash the Beast event at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, Calif. PBR took on 1,000 pounds of beef for eight seconds for these rounds.



Actor Neal McDonough drinking beer from his wife's boot in front of a sold-out crowd at Crypto.com Arena.



Brixxon James performs with lasso during the entertainment section of the bull riding event on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2023 at Crypto.com Arena.