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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BMCC men's, women's rodeo teams clinch Northwest Region titles, head to National Finals

HERMISTON, Ore. – Blue Mountain Community College's men's and women's rodeo teams once again took home the Northwest Region titles in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association after big wins at home over the weekend. Both teams now head to Casper, Wyo., June 11-17 for College National Finals Rodeo with the two-time reigning national champion women once again sitting in first place in the country, while the men enter the competition third in the nation.

On April 28, both teams landed at the top of the reader board at the end of the night at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds, and on Saturday, the men's team again took the top spot while the women placed second behind Walla Walla Community College. Friday's dominance included wins in the men's and women's all-around for Preston "Johnny" Espeland and Quincy Pendergrass, respectively. Espeland was also the only contestant to conquer the 8-second ride for both saddle bronc and bareback on Friday night. Preston Pederson clinched the No. 1 spot for tie down roping, while Pendergrass rode to a first place finish in barrel racing.

On Saturday, Calvin Shaffer and Espeland took the one-two spots for saddle bronc riding as the only contestants to earn qualifying rides, while Kaylee Aldrich and Pendergrass brought home wins in barrel racing and breakaway roping, respectively.

While both the men's and women's teams will head to Casper for CNFR, individual student athletes also qualified in several events for college rodeo's culminating competition. Espeland will compete at CNFR in the men's all-around (ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in nation), saddle bronc riding, and bareback riding. Last year's CNFR women's all-around champ Danyelle Williams will compete for the top spot again this year (currently ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>), while also qualifying for barrel racing. Pendergrass (ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the all-around nationally) will compete in barrel racing and breakaway roping, while teammates Jessica Lewis and Lauren Leyva qualified for CNFR in barrel racing and goat tying, respectively.

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