



NEWS

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JOSE ARIZMENDI CORRALS DISTINCTION OF BEING TOP BUS DRIVER AT MTA BUS ROADEO; MECHANICS LASSO HONORS AS WELL

Bus driver Jose Arizmendi of Alhambra won top honors today during the finals of the 22nd annual MTA Bus Rodeo finals held at Santa Anita Race Track.

Arizmendi placed first in a field of 30 operators who snaked their way through an intricate course filled with such obstacles as cones, trash barrels and tennis balls, to mention a few.

Arizmendi, Samuel Morales of West Covina and Michael Hubler of Rancho Cucamonga, the second and third place finishers, respectively, were presented with rings for their efforts and will compete in the national championships to be held in Chicago on Sept. 23 at the American Public Transit Association finals.

"These Metro Bus system operators are the best of the best," said Ellen Levine, Executive Officer for Transit Operations. "The agility, gracefulness and toughness they displayed today can be compared to a cowboy's true grit riding a bull."

Alan Wong of Montclair, Marco Pedemonte of Tujunga and Doug Crevling of Glendora, one of eleven teams to compete, placed first in the mechanics division after being given four hours to repair and maintain bus engines. The dynamic threesome received \$500 each and will travel to Nashville, Tenn., next month to compete in the national championships.

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"To run the third largest transit authority in the United States in the most efficient manner not only requires expert drivers but also master mechanics," continued Levine. "The MTA mechanics today proved why they deserve this distinction. Like the baseball player who bunts in order to advance the runner, mechanics' contributions don't always show up in the box score, but without them the MTA strikes out."

The event started at 7 a.m. today in a parking lot located north of the track off Colorado Place. Scores of MTA employees and their families, including management, gathered to witness the event. Bus Operator Arizmendi was declared the winner because he completed the course in the least amount of time and steered his 15-ton, 40-foot bus the closest to the impediments without knocking any down.

A field of 30 operators was culled from 150 operators who participated in preliminaries earlier this month at the race track.

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