

MTA Bus Rodeo 2002

Fun, Exciting and Rewarding Competition



Winner's Circle - Top operators, foreground from left, 2nd place winner Gateway Division Operator Candelario Gomez, top scorer North Los Angeles Division Operator Daniel Keosababian and 3rd place winner San Gabriel Valley Division Operator Ludovico Castro, are joined by, back row, from left, UTU General Chairman James Williams, CEO Roger Snoble, and General Manager Jack Gabig. PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

Below, CEO Snoble presents trophy to winning South Bay Division mechanics team, from left, Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan. Looking on: Competition organizer Steve Mullaly, center background, and, at right, General Manager Dana Coffey and South Bay Senior EMS Sergio Rubalcava. PHOTO: BILL HEARD



By ERIC RAPP

- GO TO> [Competitors](#): Winners All
- Plus! [Annual Bus Rodeo](#) Was a Day for Family Fun, Food and Competition

(June 25, 2002) The competition was tough, but the competitors were tougher. Bus operators and mechanics gave it their all, last Saturday, under a blistering sun and the watchful eyes of the judges at the MTA's 27th Annual Bus Rodeo.

Through it all, competitors, judges and spectators never lost sight of the

real purpose of the Roadeo – to have fun.

“It’s always fun and exciting,” said El Monte Division 9’s Susan Tompkins, who has competed in the Roadeo almost every year since 1991. For CEO Roger Snoble, the day is a good way “to see everybody and enjoy the competition.”

But no matter how much fun they were having, competitors always kept their eyes on the prize and did their best to come out on top.

Bus operators had to demonstrate not only their knowledge of safety, regulations and bus equipment, but negotiate a tight obstacle course as well.

Operators had to perform such precision maneuvers as a serpentine course, left and right-hand reversing, and a high speed precision stop.

PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON



A tricky course

The 30 competitors from various divisions showed why they were some of MTA’s most skilled operators. Even volunteer judge Jose Medrano of Montebello Bus Lines, who judged the “Mystery Obstacle” part of the course, was impressed with the quality of driving he had seen. “Nearly everyone has been perfect on this obstacle,” he said.

Frank Cecere, Central Instruction TOS and Field Marshall for the Roadeo, agreed. “The competition gets better and better every year,” he said, “and if we make the course any tighter than it is now, it will be impossible.”

Operators had to perform such precision maneuvers as a serpentine course, left and right-hand reversing, and a high speed precision stop.

In the end, it was North Los Angeles Division 3’s Daniel Keosababian who had the best score, a near-perfect 634 points out of 650 possible. For him, the secret to success in the Bus Roadeo is simple: “Skill and a little bit of luck,” he said.

Hot on Keosababian’s heels were Candelario Gomez from Gateway Division 10 with 618 points, and Ludovico Castro of El Monte Division 9

with 601 points.

Keosababian will go on to represent the MTA at the regional Southern California Bus Roadeo, competing against operators from Montebello Bus Lines and Foothill Transit, as well as other local transit properties. He also will represent the MTA at the International Bus Roadeo in Las Vegas this September, going up against operators from around the United States and Canada.

Put all their skills to use

The teams of mechanics from every division, including the RRC, also had to navigate a bus through a slightly modified version of the operators' course. In addition to that, mechanics had to put all their skills to use in a series of difficult events designed to test their knowledge of brake and air systems, bus inspection, and engine repair.



The engine event was especially difficult. The mechanic teams were required to correctly diagnose 7 faults with a Compressed Natural Gas engine. One of the faults kept the engine from running properly. The fault had to be repaired and the engine started. And it all had to be completed within 10 minutes.

The mechanic teams were required to correctly diagnose 7 faults with a Compressed Natural Gas engine in the engine competition.

PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

"Under pressure, everything just goes blank and you have to rely on second nature," said Division 15 team captain Cliff Thorne. "Everything you practiced is forgotten and only your years of experience come through."

The team from South Bay Division 18, consisting of Javier Soria, Mina Ros, and Luke Logan, took top honors this year with 859 points. Also with a strong showing were teams from Gateway Division 10 (last year's winners Alan Wong, Doug Creveling, and David Klinkenborg) with 818 points and Crossroads Depot Division 2 (John Tena, Andy Filimaua, and Ed Hernandez) with 800.

Division 18's team also will represent the MTA at both the regional and international events.

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector General Manager Jack Gabig may have said it best. The Bus Roadeo is not only an opportunity for "the best of the best to compete," he said. "It demonstrates the excellence and professionalism of all MTA's operators and mechanics."

Congratulations to the winners and all the competitors of this year's Bus Roadeo!

Winners All: 2002 Bus Roadeo Competitors

Operators

First Place

Daniel Keosababian
North Los Angeles
Division 3 - 634 Points

Second Place

Candelario Gomez
Gateway Division 10
618 Points

Third Place

Ludovico Castro
San Gabriel Valley
Division 9 - 601 Points

Ricardo Martinez

San Gabriel Valley
Division 9 - 573 Points

Juan Navarro

North Los Angeles
Division 3 - 569 Points

Jose Villanueva

San Gabriel Valley
Division 9 - 559 Points

Samuel Morales

Central City Division 1
558 Points

James Hazelitt

Gateway Division 10
548 Points

Christopher Doan

Central City Division 1
536 Points

Marcos Mejia-Portillo

Central City Division 1
535 Points

Joe Acosta

North Los Angeles
Division 3 - 535 Points

Ramon Reilly

San Gabriel Valley
Division 9 - 528 Points

Marcial Garcia

Central City Division 1
520 Points

Jeffrey Ralph

Arthur Winston Division 5
497 Points

Alfonso Quezada

Gateway Division 10
496 Points

Martin Schempp

San Gabriel Valley Division 9
- 483 Points

Francisco Gomez

Gateway Division 10
481 Points

Jaime Martinez

Crossroads Depot Division 2 -
471 Points

Cain Portillo

Arthur Winston Division 5
468 Points

Peter Ortega

Gateway Division 10
465 Points

Luis Rodriguez

Crossroads Depot Division 2
444 Points

Juan Serrano

Crossroads Depot Division 2
440 Points

Francisco Escobedo

West Hollywood
Division 7 - 439 Points

Ramiro Mota

Central City Division 1
438 Points

Nipon Pasaphunthu

North Los Angeles Division 3 -
435 Points

Miguel Colmenares

San Gabriel Valley Division 9
- 418 Points

Darren Doucette

South Bay Division 18
398 Points

Mechanic Teams

First Place

South Bay Division 18
Javier Soria
Mina Ros
Luke Logan
859 Points

Second Place

Gateway Division 10
Alan Wong
Doug Creveling
David Klinkenborg
818 Points

Third Place

Crossroads Depot
Division 2
John Tena
Andy Filimaia
Ed Hernandez
800 Points

Arthur Winston Division 5
Alfonso Dealba
Fermin Mora
Daniel Galindo
787 Points

North Los Angeles Division 3
Tim Wong
Jose Gomez
Roy Ramos
730 Points

Central City Division 1
Fredrick Hines
Gustavo Sanchez
Sergio Barron
711 Points

West Hollywood Division 7
Oscar Flores
Gabriel Valdivia
Jesse Guerra
681 Points

San Gabriel Valley Division 9
Ricardo Hernandez
Omar Nomuru
Steve Goytia
594 Points

East Valley Division 15
Cliff Thorne, Henry Arias,
John Dirito

Maximiliano DeAngelis

West Hollywood Division 7

515 Points

Susan Tompkins

San Gabriel Valley

Division 9 - 511 Points

560 Points

West Valley Division 8

Tom Lucas

David Lugo

Frank Cruz

466 Points

Venice Division 6

Naren Desai

John Edrich

Edgar Grazzianni

428 Points

Regional Rebuild Center

Tony Herumin

Cal Tran

David Rodriguez

405 Points

[Back to MTA Report](#)