



## Bull Riding

Bull riding ranks as one of rodeos most exciting and popular events because of the size, agility, and power that increase the danger in the event. In bull riding a cowboy climbs on the back of a 2,000+ pound bull. There are risks involved during these events; serious injury is always a possibility for those fearless enough to sit on an animal that weighs a ton and has dangerous horns.

Bull riding is dangerous and exciting for competitors. It requires balance, flexibility, coordination, quick reflexes, courage, intense physical ability, and a strong mental attitude. The bull rider may use only one hand to remain on the bull during the eight second ride. If he touches the bull or himself with his free hand, he will be disqualified and will not receive a score. Riders may spur their bulls and add to their score; they are commonly judged on their ability to stay on the twisting, bucking mass of muscle, otherwise known as the bull.

To stay aboard the bull a rider grasps a flat braided rope that has been wrapped around the bull's chest just behind the front leg and over its withers, the raised area between a bull's shoulder blades. The cowboy then wraps the end of the rope, called the tail, around his hand; sometimes the rider will wrap the rope between his fingers in order to secure his grip.

When the cowboy is ready, he will nod his head, the chute gate will open, and rider and bull will explode into the arena. Every bull is unique, and at times unpredictable, in its bucking habits. Some dart from side to side and rear back. Some spin continuously while others circle in one spot in the arena. There are also

bulls that add jumps or kicks to their spins, while others might jump and kick in a straight line or move side to side while bucking.

In bull riding, the bulls are as celebrated as their riders. Bulls are ranked based on their performance with riders. A "rank" bull is one that is difficult to ride. For bulls, an "out" is an attempted ride. The ranked bulls can earn \$1,000 per out plus bonuses, which are usually earned for less than eight seconds of bucking.

Cracked skulls, dislocated shoulders, internal injuries. Everyone knows it: It's not a matter of if a bull rider is going to get hurt, but when and how badly.

"It's a very serious, dangerous contact sport," says the PBR's Cody Lambert. "And it's always gonna be. People can die doing it, even champions, even when you do everything right."

## Show What You Know

1) How can a bull rider be disqualified?

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2) What are the main goals of every cowboy riding a bull?

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3) After reading the information about bull riding, why would this event be considered such an exciting yet dangerous sport?

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