



Ladies Barrel Racing

Barrel racing is the only ladies' event in professional rodeo. Barrel racing has no judges, which means the event has no subjective points of view. Time is the determining factor. Barrel racing is graceful and simplistic - one woman, three barrels, a horse, and the stop watch. The contestant rides her horse as quickly as possible around a clover-leaf pattern around three barrels and back across the score-line to end time. After all the racers have finished their runs, the clock is the one and only judge. So ride quick and win - hesitate and lose.

Riders spend countless hours practicing and honing their skill. Not only must the horse be swift, they have to be intelligent enough to avoid tripping the barrels, an infraction that adds a five second penalty for each barrel knocked down to the time and kills any chance for victory.

A cowgirl starts the run at the end of the arena and crosses a line to start the clock. She then chooses either barrel, on the left or right, either may be taken first, and completes a cloverleaf pattern around and between the three barrels. A contestant will be disqualified for not following the cloverleaf pattern. A contestant may, from a riding position, hold a barrel from falling to keep from having penalty seconds added to her time. After completing the cloverleaf the cowgirl gallops on her horse back across the start line to end her time. The time is generally taken with the use of an electric eye to the hundredths of a second. The goal is to stop the clock as quickly as possible.

Show What You Know

1) What is the rider's goal in barrel racing?

2) How may a cowgirl be penalized in barrel racing?

3) Is there a way for riders to avoid being penalized?

4) How is a cowgirl's performance rated in barrel racing?
