



Tie-Down Roping

The roots of tie-down roping can be traced back to the ranches of the Old West. When calves were sick or injured, cowboys had to rope and immobilize them quickly for veterinary treatment. Ranch hands were proud of themselves based on the speed with which they could rope and tie calves. Tie-down roping is a timed event that combines being a good horseman and a fast sprinter.

Like team roping, the cowboy starts from a box, a three sided fenced area next to the chute holding the calf. The calf is attached to a breakaway rope barrier that is looped around the calf's neck and stretched across the open end of the cowboy's box. This breakaway rope is what measures the calf's head start. Once the calf reaches the end of its head start, the barrier is released and the cowboy works with his horse to rope the calf. If the roper breaks the barrier before the calf reaches its head start, the cowboy receives a ten second penalty.

The cowboy will throw his loop to catch the calf and the trained horse comes to a stop. The cowboy will then dismount and sprint to the calf. The roper then throws the calf by hand, a maneuver called flanking, in order to tie any three legs together. If the calf is not standing when the cowboy reaches it, he must allow the calf to get back on its feet before flanking it.

Once the cowboy has flanked the calf, he will tie any three legs together with a pigging string, which is a short, looped rope that the cowboy clenches in his teeth during the run. While the contestant is doing this, his horse must pull back hard enough to remove any slack in the rope, but not so hard as to drag the calf. When the roper finishes tying the calf, he throws his hands in the air as a signal

that the run is complete. The roper then remounts his horse, rides forward to create slack in the rope, and waits six seconds to see if the calf remains tied. If the calf kicks free, the roper receives no time.

Show What You Know

1) What are the goals of the roper in tie-down roping?

2) What must the rider do after he has tied down the calf? Why?

3) How can the roper be penalized?

4) Under what conditions will the roper not receive a time?

5) Compare and contrast team roping and tie-down roping.
