

Automatic Equipment Eliminates Guesswork

The use of automatic equipment in calf roping has taken a lot of the guesswork out of this rodeo event. But human nature being what it is, there still must be judges to rule on the close calls and make the tough decisions.

The automatic equipment consists of a barrier, a device that gives the calf a predetermined head start. A rope is secured across the box where the roper waits by a spring latch. When the calf crosses the scoring line marking the head start, it releases the barrier.

If the roper rides through the barrier before it is released, it breaks at a point where it is held by light twine and the judges, inspecting the twine after each ro-

per, rules that he broke the barrier and adds a ten-second penalty to his time.

Sounds easy but it isn't. With hundreds of dollars riding on the saving of a tenth of a second, the roper sometimes charges past the barrier the split second after it has been released but before the rope has fallen out of the way.

The roper might be broken where it catches on the horse or a strap, leaving a tough decision up to the judge. If the broken rope falls within 10 feet of the post he rules the barrier was broken and adds the penalty.

The other judge waits mounted in the arena, ready to signal time with his raised flag as soon as the roper has completed the tie. But he, too has to keep a sharp eye for infractions of the rules.

The roper can catch the calf any way it works out, over the

head, around the middle, even by a leg. But he must let go of the loop when he throws it and the rope must hold on the calf until the cowboy can get his hands on him.

The rules prevent the calf being thrown or jerked down by rope. Sometimes, in these furious races against the stop watch, it can't be avoided. If it happens accidentally the cowboy must let the calf up and throw him by hand.

Once dismounted the roper can approach the calf from the right or the left side, ducking under the rope on the run if necessary. He can down the calf from the right side by "flanking" it, picking it up bodily and setting it down or from the left side by "legging" it, lifting and pushing on a foreleg to tip it over.

He can cross and tie any three feet with his pigging string and tie the legs with any knot he

likes as long as the tie holds, preventing the calf from getting up until the field judge has passed on the tie as being secure. Occasionally you'll see the field judge consulting a stop watch to make certain each roper's tie is tested an equal period.

You'll see the judge's flag wave the "no time" signal if the tie slips or the calf rises.

The rope will signify he's completed the tie by jerking his hands sharply away from the pigging string. The instant the signal is given, down comes the judge's flag and the timers stop their watches.

Missing on the first throw doesn't disqualify the roper. He can try again provided he carries a second loop coded and ready on his saddle when he enters the arena. If he misses both he'll be waved out.

Commercial Club Will Present 8 Fair Trophies

The Chambers Commercial club is being "very generous" this year with awards, according to Club Secretary James H. Gibson. A total of eight trophies will be presented by the civic organization in the host town.

The awards will be presented in these categories:

- Champion stock-raider.
- Champion baby beef.
- Champion dairy beef (presented by Harley Produce).
- Champion cow and calf.
- Champion breeding heifer.
- Champion dairy showmanship.
- Champion beef showmanship.
- Champion swine showmanship.

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