



With the grace of dancing partners in a violent adagio of death, the bareback bronc rider and his mount whirl through the eight-second ride. "Hoss" Inman, producer for the Holt fair's two-night rodeo, will employ some of the most rugged broncs to be found in the country.

Bronc Riders Need Plenty of Skill

Spectators Often Dislike Calls

In judging a rodeo, there's no place for sympathy. No points are earned by hard knocks or muscle-busting bruises. You've got to stick to the rules in deciding who scores highest in these wild rides for an eternity of eight seconds.

The first rule in bareback bronc riding gives an indication of how tough the event is. All the rider has between himself and the bronc is the regulation bareback "rigging", a smooth surcingle with a handhold in the center not unlike a suitcase handle. He has no rein to balance his weight against, no stirrups to help absorb the shock of the bucking, no cantle or swell to a saddle to help him hold his seat. Just the suitcase handle.

The rigging is cinched to the horse with the handle over his backbone about where the saddle horn would be. It can be either right or left handed and the rider can wrap it with tape or rub it with resin to improve his grip. When balanced against the full-force pitching of half a ton of wild horse flesh these aids are small concessions indeed.

Watch the bronc's first jump out of the chute. If the cowboy's spurs aren't touching the horse over the shoulders when the front

hooves hit the ground on the first jump, give him a goose egg—a score of zero, indicating a disqualified ride.

You goose egg him, too, if he touches any part of the horse with his free hand or bucks off before the whistle indicates the end of the eight seconds.

Provided he makes a qualified ride to the limit, you mark your score according to how hard the horse bucks and how well the rider keeps his seat and spurs. Mark the horse from 65 to 85 points, using the full 20-point spread and the rider from one to 20 points.

In this event the rider gets credit only for spurring over the point of the shoulders. Most twisters do this by a jerking motion with their knees, keeping their heels well ahead of the bronc's forelegs since it's hard to get them back up once they slip behind.

Don't be discouraged if your ranking disagrees with the judges' Judging the riding events will always be largely a matter of opinion, one reason why rodeo rules require all cowboy judges to be active contestants.

As in other sports, most controversy rages about the close call, the decision half the crowd sees one way, the other half the other.

In bareback riding most close calls come at the whistle: Was the rider still on the horse or not? According to the rules if he still has a firm grip on the rigging with his riding hand, hasn't touched the horse or the rigging with his free hand and hasn't touched the ground, he's consid-

ered still on the horse. It doesn't make any difference if he's standing on his head, flat on his back or in the air. The rider is qualified.

If the horse refuses to buck, fouls the rider on the chute or the gate or deliberately throws itself the judge rules on whether he gets another turn—a re-ride—on that horse or another that will be drawn for him.

At the end of the bareback riding section of the performance, add up your markings and name your own winner, combining the scores for the horse and the rider. If the announcer gives the judges' scores for the event, the totals may double yours, since they will include the markings of both judges.

Rodeo is the most native of

American sports. Baseball, normally considered native American, actually is patterned after a game played with sticks and a ball in England in the Eighteenth century.

Rodeo is the fastest-growing collegiate sport in the U.S. This year 70 Western colleges and universities fielded rodeo teams.



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