

Bull riding, the ride of your life essay sample

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Bull riding is the epitome of rodeo excitement. Nothing quite compares with man vs. beast when one outweighs the other by about 10 to one. With nothing but a rope separating them, the cowboy must hang on to the rope with one hand for eight seconds.

With 2,000-plus pounds of angry beast doing everything in its power to toss you off, you will need the following equipment for bull riding. First you need a Protective Vest, invented by Professional Bull Rider (PBR) Cody Lambert, is worn by the PBR athletes for protection. It serves two primary purposes: it absorbs shock and dissipates the blow to the body, while protecting the torso from threatening punctures caused by direct contact with the bull's hooves and horns. Since the athletes began wearing the protective vest, the number of internal injuries has dropped. Next you will need gloves. Cowboys wear a glove only on their riding hand (the hand that grips the bull rope). This leather glove protects a cowboy's hand and fingers. It also makes it easier to hold on to the bull rope. The cowboys actually tape the gloves to their hands, since the force of the bull and the friction of the rope could easily tear a glove off during a ride. Along with the glove a bull rider uses a sticky substance called rosin, to help their glove stick to the bull rope.

The bull rope is a flat rope braided from nylon or grass that goes around the bull's girth area behind his front legs. The rope has a handle, constructed partially of leather that is braided into it and serves as the cowboy's only anchor for the duration of his ride. Most cowboys run the rope through their pinky or index finger; however, some riders prefer to use a suicide wrap, which is harder to get out of and increases the chances of a rider hanging up to his bull. Brazilian bull ropes are the preferred gear of several of the top

bull riders. The Brazilian bull rope varies in construction from those braided in America, and are slightly wider.

The major difference for those using the Brazilian rope is that the rope is pulled from the opposite side. For instance, an individual riding with his right hand would have his rope pulled from the left side and vice-versa if he is using a Brazilian bull rope. Otherwise, the rope is pulled from the same side as the hand with which he is riding. Chaps and boots are also important. Chaps are a custom-made piece that provides protection to the riders legs. The boots the cowboys wear while riding have a special spur ridge on the heel which helps their spurs to stay in place. Some cowboys wear the traditional pull-on boot, while others prefer those that lace up to fit the foot snugly.

Now that you have all the correct equipment, its time to ride. Each bull has a unique name and number used to identify the bull. A sufficient number of bulls, each judged to be of good strength, health, agility, and age, are selected to perform. The rider and bull are matched randomly before the competition, although starting in 2008, some ranked riders are allowed to choose their own bulls from a bull draft for selected rounds in PBR events. A rider mounts a bull and grips a flat braided rope. After he secures a good grip on the rope, the rider nods to signal he is ready. The bucking chute (a small enclosure which opens from the side) is opened and the bull storms out into the arena. The rider must attempt to stay on the bull for at least eight seconds, while only touching the bull with his riding hand.

His other hand must remain free for the duration of the ride. The bull bucks, rears, kicks, spins, and twists in an effort to throw the rider off. This continues for a number of seconds until the rider bucks off or dismounts after completing his ride. A loud buzzer announces the completion of an eight second ride. Throughout the ride, bullfighters, also popularly known as rodeo clowns stay near the bull in order to aid the rider if necessary. When the ride ends, either intentionally or not, the bullfighters distract the bull to protect the rider from harm.

The ride is scored from 0-100 points. Both the rider and the bull are awarded points. There are usually two judges, each judge scoring the bull from 0-50 points, and the rider from 0-50 points. The combined point totals from both judges make up the final score for the ride. Scores of zero are quite common as a lot of riders lose control of the animal almost immediately after the bull rages out of the bucking chute. Many experienced professionals are able to gain scores of 75 or more. A score above 80 is considered excellent, and a score in the 90s exceptional.

There is a heated debate between animal rights organizations and bull riding enthusiasts over many aspects of the sport. The first controversy is over the use of a flank strap. The flank strap is placed around a bulls flank, in front of the hind legs, and encourages bucking. Critics claim that the flank strap encircles or otherwise binds the genitals of the bull. However, others note that the flank strap is anatomically impossible to place over the genitals; as well as unrealistic, pointing out that the bull's genes are valuable and that there is a strong economic incentive to keep the animal in excellent reproductive health. Critics also claim that "hot shots", electric cattle prods, <https://assignbuster.com/bull-riding-the-ride-of-your-life-essay-sample/>

are used to injure and torture the bulls while supporters claim that a quick shot simply gets the bull out of the chute quickly and are only a moderate irritation due to the thickness of the animal's hide. Cattle prods have not been used in the PBR tour for several years. And lastly, Bull riding also has the highest rate of injury of any rodeo sport. It accounts for approximately 50% of all traumatic injuries to rodeo contestants, and the bull riders have the highest injury rate of any non-contestant group.

Although bull riding is a dangerous sport, its popularity seems to rise more and more each year. Most common in the south west and great planes, this sport give average old cowboys something to dream about. If youre debating riding a bull, just use the precautionary technique and equipment, and hang on because your in for the ride of your life.

Works Cited

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