



RODEO TERMINOLOGY

*Your handy guide to understanding
important rodeo terminology*

TERMINOLOGY SOURCE: [PRO RODEO](#)



AVERAGE

Usually used to describe the aggregate score for a contestant who competed in more than one round, e.g., "He had times of 9.3 and 9.8 seconds in the two rounds and placed third in the average with 19.1 seconds on two head."

CALF ROPER

A tie-down roper.



CHUTE

A pen that holds an animal safely in position Covering: in the roughstock events, staying on for at least the minimum time, eight seconds: "He covered all three broncs he rode last weekend."

BARRELMAN

An entertainer who uses a barrel to distract a bull after a ride, and sometimes to protect the cowboy.

BARRIER



In timed events, a line at the front of the box that the contestant and his horse cannot cross until the steer or calf has a head start, usually marked with a rope and a flag so the timers can see it drop and start the clock.



BULLFIGHTER

An athlete who protects the bull rider after he dismounts or is bucked off by distracting the bull and directing its attention to the exit gate, sometimes stepping between the bull and the bull rider.

BOX

In a timed event, the area a horse and rider back into before they make a roping or steer wrestling run. Breaking the barrier: in the timed events, if the rider leaves the box too soon – failing to give the animal enough of a head start – he is assessed a 10-second penalty.

BRONC REIN

A saddle bronc rider holds onto a bronc rein at a specific position that he determines based on the size and bucking habits of the horse he's about to ride; bronc riders often give each other advice about the length of rein a specific horse will perform best with, e.g., "Give him 3½ fingers"

BULLDOGGER

A steer wrestler.



SLACK

Excess entries at some rodeos may be scheduled for preliminary (slack) competition, usually before the rodeo opens to the public.



FLANKMAN

A cowboy or cowgirl who works in the bucking chutes, adjusting the flank strap around the animal before the ride; the best flankmen and women are familiar with each individual animal and know exactly how much flank to give each animal to encourage optimal bucking.

GOLD CARD MEMBER, LIFE MEMBER

A 10-year, dues-paying member of the PRCA who has reached his 50th birthday, or a 20-year dues-paying member of any age.

SCORE

In the roughstock events, the points awarded for the difficulty of the ride (bucking) and the cowboy's skill in riding; in the timed events, the length of the head start given to the calf or steer, which the judges calculate based on PRCA rules (each cowboy must correctly calculate how much of the required head start to allow the calf or steer to get before signaling his horse to leave the box; if he miscalculates, he will be out late and get a longer time, or will be out early and be penalized for breaking the barrier); however, when used to describe a horse ("That mare really scores well"), it refers to the horse's obedience in staying in the box until the cowboy signals it to start the pursuit.

TRY

A noun used for both cowboys and livestock, denoting grit, determination, fitness, stamina and resilience: "Give that cowboy a hand – he had a lot of try".



SPURS

The spurs used in PRCA rodeos have dulled rowels that do not penetrate the animals' skin, which is several times thicker than human skin; see the PRCA and Livestock Welfare chapter for more information.



FLANK STRAP

A soft sheepskin- or Neoprene-lined strap placed in the area where a human's belt would go, it encourages the animal to kick out behind itself rather than rear up, which provides a safer, showier ride.

HEADER/HEELER

The two partners in team roping – the header throws the first rope, over the animal's head or horns, and the heeler throws the second rope to catch both the steer's hind legs; roping one leg results in a five-second penalty.

CROSSFIRE PENALTY

In team roping, if the header doesn't change the direction of the steer before the heeler catches, the run is disqualified.

LEFT (OR RIGHT) DELIVERY

Many bucking animals prefer to stand in the chute facing a particular direction, so they can leave the chute in the direction they prefer.



FLAGS

Because rodeo's timed events are measured in tenths of seconds, judges in the arena drop flags to signal the timers to stop the clocks.



MARK OUT

In the bareback and saddle bronc riding, a cowboy's feet must be above the point of the horse's shoulders when the horse's front feet hit the ground – if so, he “marked the horse out,” but if not, he “missed him out” and the ride is disqualified.

TRIPLE CROWN WINNER

A cowboy who wins three world championships in the same year; the most recent cowboy to do so was superstar Trevor Brazile in 2008 and 2010.

ROUGHSTOCK

The bucking horses and bulls used in bareback riding, saddle bronc riding and bull riding, usually bred and raised for the job.

STOCK CONTRACTORS

The companies that bring livestock to the arena for rodeos – bucking horses and bulls for the roughstock events and steers and calves for the timed events.



TIMED EVENTS

Steer wrestling, team roping, tie-down roping and steer roping – events in which the contestant(s) who make the fastest qualified runs win.



RERIDE

If a cowboy's score is affected by equipment failure or a horse or bull that doesn't buck to performance specifications, the judges may offer the cowboy a clean-slate chance on a different horse or bull.

PERMIT HOLDER

A PRCA contestant who has not yet won his first \$1,000 at PRCA rodeos, which enables him to apply to become a card-holding member of the organization

HOOEY

The knot that a cowboy uses to finish tying the calf's legs together in tie-down roping.

JUDGES

As in other sports, trained PRCA judges ensure that all participants follow PRCA rules; they determine times for runs in the timed events and scores for rides in the roughstock events; record penalties for any infractions of the rules; and inspect the arena, chutes and livestock before each competition.



STANDINGS

A professional cowboy's success is measured in earnings and cowboys may keep track of where they rank in yearly earnings in several sets of standings.



DROP

In roughstock events, the way a bucking horse or bull may lower its front end suddenly while kicking out in back, creating a more difficult ride; in timed events, the way a calf or steer may lower its head to avoid a catch.

GO-ROUND

Many rodeos have more than one round of competition; each is called a go-round, and all cowboys entered in that rodeo compete in each go-round unless there is a semi-final, final or progressive round.

PICKUP MEN

Two mounted cowboys who help riders dismount, release a bucking horse's soft flank strap, and escort bucking horses and bulls to the exit gate after a ride.

DALLY

In team roping, each roper, after throwing his loop, wraps the loose rope around his saddle horn – dallies – and the two ropers move their horses to face each other, pulling the ropes taut to stop the clock.



HAZER

In steer wrestling, the cowboy who rides on the right side of the steer from the contestant to make sure the steer runs straight.



NODDING

In the roughstock events, a cowboy nods when he is ready for the gateman to open the gate and the ride to begin; in the timed events, a cowboy nods when he is ready for the calf or steer to be released from the chute and get its head start.

DRAW

Each roughstock competitor who enters a PRCA rodeo is assigned a specific bucking horse or bull in a random draw conducted at PRCA headquarters three days before the rodeo; each timed-event contestant is assigned a calf or steer in a random draw on site, shortly before each performance of a rodeo begins.


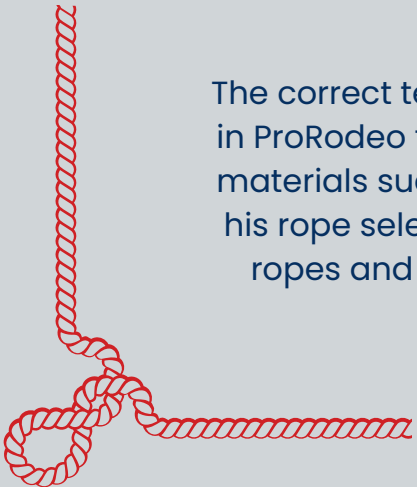
PIGTAIL

A piece of string attached to the barrier that breaks if a timed-event contestant's horse exits the box too soon, not giving the calf or steer enough of a head start according to PRCA rules.

RANK

An adjective of praise and respect used to describe especially challenging roughstock.

ROPES



The correct term is rope, not lasso, lariat or riata; most ropes used in ProRodeo timed events are made of strong yet flexible braided materials such as nylon/poly blends, and a cowboy may change his rope selection depending on the weather and the cattle; bull ropes and bronc reins are often made of sisal or poly blends.



RIGGIN'

A suitcase-style handhold customized to a rider's grip and attached to a molded piece of leather that is cinched, with a pad, around the horse's girth.

HUNG UP

When a bull rider or bareback rider cannot remove his hand from the rope or handle before he dismounts or is thrown off the bull's or horse's back, his hand is "hung up" – a dangerous situation – and the pickup men or bullfighters will move in to help dislodge his hand so he can get clear of the animal.

TURN OUT

A cowboy may turn out of a rodeo if, for example, he has a scheduling conflict; this is different from "doctor-releasing" due to injury.

PIGGIN' STRING

In tie-down roping, the small rope used to tie a calf's legs together.



PENALTY

In timed events, common penalties include 10 seconds for breaking the barrier and, in team roping, five seconds for a one-hind-leg catch.