

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

## Mesquite ProRodeo, Texas: The Thrill of the 8-Second Ride



We experienced the thrill of the **rodeo** at [Mesquite ProRodeo](#) in **Mesquite, Texas**, where 8-seconds to a cowboy can mean emerging as a hero or resulting in a heartbreak. While 8-seconds may not seem like a very long time, in rodeo, it can seem like a lifetime for the contestants in bareback, saddle bronc, and bull riding competitions, exhilarating when achieved, yet it is often illusive. Yee-haw!

Founded in 1958, the Mesquite ProRodeo located on Rodeo Drive in Mesquite, Texas, just 12 minutes east of Dallas, holds competitions every Friday and Saturday night from 7:30 pm until 9:30 pm during the 12-week rodeo season from the end of May through the third week in August in a climate-controlled, air-conditioned arena perfect for when the summer temperatures skyrocket.



### Rider Opens the Rodeo for the Evening

While in Dallas, Texas for a wedding, we took the opportunity to attend the opening night of the Mesquite ProRodeo season on Friday, May 30, 2014 with Steve Nesta, (Edward's brother), and had an exciting evening of thrills. Our night began in the Rodeo 8-Second Club where we enjoyed the delicious pre-rodeo barbecue buffet as part of the VIP package, where the ambience was friendly and clearly cowboy.



### Pardon Me Partner - Yee-Haw!

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Although this was not our first rodeo, (we always wanted to be able to say that in the right context), to prepare us relatively speaking "city slickers" for our night at the rodeo, we boned up on rodeo terms before our visit by reading **Rodeo 101** on the Mesquite ProRodeo website, [www.MesquiteRodeo.com](http://www.MesquiteRodeo.com), which provided us with an excellent introduction to what we would experience over the course of the evening. If you have never experienced the excitement of watching a professional rodeo, you are in for a treat. We arrived ready for action and thrills, and that is exactly what we got!

Professional rodeo categories include Roughstock and Timed Events. **Roughstock** events include: Bareback Riding, Saddle Bronc Riding, and Bull Riding where "a contestant must stay on the animal for 8-seconds while using one hand to make a qualified ride and his score is determined not only by his performance but that of the animals as well. Judges score the ride and the contestants are awarded between 0 to 25 points, and the animal's effort is also awarded between 0 and 25 points. The scores are then combined to give the contestant their score. It is important to note that if the cowboy touches any part of the animal or himself with his free hand, he is disqualified." Although 8 seconds may not seem like a long time to you, for a contestant trying to hang on for points, 8 seconds must feel like a lifetime.

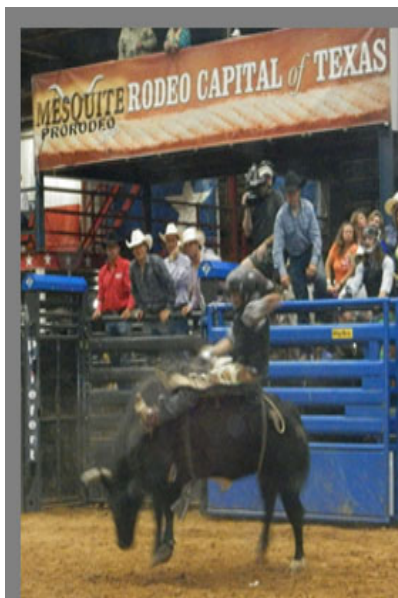


**Cowboy's waiting their turn**

**Timed events** include: Steer Wrestling, Team Roping, Tie Down Roping, Steer Roping, and Barrel Racing where "contestants compete against the clock to obtain the fastest time."

The rodeo opened with **Announcer Boyd Polhamus** introducing **Country artist Cody Dell Akridge** who sang the national anthem, and then it was time for the first event of the evening, Bareback Riding, which had 7 competitors.

In **Bareback Riding**, a rider "uses a special leather rigging that is placed on the horse's withers and secured with a cinch. As the horse comes out of the chute, the rider must have both spurs touching the horse's shoulders until the horse's front feet hit the ground after the initial jump out of the chute." Failure to do so will result in disqualification. Top competitors were **Chris Yates** with a score of 78, and **Lucas Buck** and **Hunter Green** tied with a score of 77 points each.



### Bareback Riding

Sometimes the cowboy wins; sometimes the steer wins in the exciting competition of **Steer Wrestling**, which requires the use of strength and technique. The cowboy must ride up to the steer on horseback, slide off his horse on the right side, hook his right arm around the steer's right horn, grasp the steer's left horn with his left hand, wrestle the steer to the ground as quickly as possible, and get the steer on its side with all 4 feet pointing in the same direction for the ride to be complete. Contestant **Tory Johnson** earned 1st place with a time of 4.3, **Termaine DeBose** earned 2nd place with a time of 5.2, and **A.D. Davis** earned 3rd place with a time of 5.6.



### Rodeo at its best

Each of us had our favorite events, for Steve it was the **Cowgirls Barrel Racing**, where the riders compete to make the run as fast as possible. The rider must enter the area at full speed on horseback and round 3 barrels strategically set up in various parts of the arena in a cloverleaf formation and then exit the arena the way that they entered. They must take their horse as close to the barrel as possible without actually touching or knocking down the barrel. Although a rider is looking for the best time, knocking into a barrel will result in a 5-second penalty added to their total time. Top contestants of the evening were **Christine Maples** with a time of 15.145, followed by **Maci Ray** with 15.227, and **Jenny Smith** with 15.241.



### Barrel Racing

Edward: **Bull Riding** was my favorite event of the evening. For this competition a contestant uses "one hand to grasp a flat braided rope wrapped around the bull's chest just behind the front legs and over its withers. One end of the bull rope (tail) is threaded through a loop on the other end and tightened around the bull. To secure his grip he then wraps the tail around his hand - sometimes weaving it through his fingers to further secure his grip. The contestant is not required to *mark out*, and while spurring can add to their score, riders are judged solely on their ability to stay on the bull." This event is all or nothing, it is where a rider can earn a place on the scoreboard if he can remain on the bull for a minimum of 8-seconds, or walk away with nothing if he cannot. Although 9 riders entered the competition, 0 riders were able to score points in this most daring event. When a rider is thrown from the bull it is up to the hardworking efforts of the bull fighters **Darran Robertson** and **Scotty Spencer** and clown **Keith Isley**, to divert the bull's attention away from the rider.





### Bull Riding

Debra: My favorite event was **Saddle Bronc**, where the "rider uses a thick rein attached to his horse's halter. As in bareback, the contestant uses one hand and tries to stay securely seated in his saddle for 8-seconds. The contestant strives to keep his toes turned outward while he spurs from the horse's shoulders to the back of the saddle. He must maintain this during the 8-seconds to score well." This event had 3 courageous contestants with only 2 of the 3 scoring points: **Slatyr Hunnicutt** with 82 points and **Cole Hatfield** with 75 points.



### Rodeo Clown Keith Isley

Other events of the evening included the **Tie Down Roping**, **Team Roping**, women's **Breakaway Roping**, and **Mutton Bustin'** for future cowboys ages 4 years or older weighing 55 pounds or less, who rode sheep to earn points.



### Tie Down Roping

After the rodeo, we went back to the Rodeo 8-Seconds Club where we listened to the music of **Cody Dell Akridge** with Steve Nesta two-stepping Debra around the floor, and then leading her all the way to the door with the band calling out to us, "Y'all come back real soon!"



### Future Rodeo Riders

The 2014 Mesquite ProRodeo schedule runs from May 30 until August 23. Visit their website [www.MesquiteRodeo.com](http://www.MesquiteRodeo.com) for information and ticket prices. Doors open at 6:30 pm, the rodeo starts at 7:30 pm and runs until 9:30 pm. Ticket Prices: Club Seats: Adults - \$62, Kids (3-12 years) - \$30, VIP Seats: Adults - \$36, Kids - \$18, Reserved Seats: Adults - \$30, Seniors (60+ years) - \$25, Kids - \$15, and Roping Reserved Seats: Adults - \$20, Seniors - \$15, Kids - \$10.



**Charging Bull**



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Read more about **Dallas, Texas** in the **Destinations** section.

For more information on **Dallas, Texas**, visit the website: [www.VisitDallas.com](http://www.VisitDallas.com).

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