



"We're brothers out there more than competitors."

RODEO

The **SPiRiT** of the **COWBOY**

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In 1890, Sylvester Wilson led five families over Teton Pass and into Jackson Hole. Shuttling the six wagons over Teton Pass two at a time, the settlers used three teams of horses to pull each wagon over the pass. The process took two weeks. The town of Wilson, at the base of Teton Pass, is named for the family.

Six generations later, the Wilson family still makes Jackson Hole their home and has contributed to the character and spirit of the community by running the Jackson Hole Rodeo, which is a three generation family tradition.

Rodeo in Jackson began when dude ranch guests sought out entertainment in an era without television or radio.

"Entertainment for the guests of Jackson is where it started and that is how it continues today," Philip Wilson, great-grandson of Sylvester Wilson, said. "We let them know this is part of the culture that we came from and that we live with today."

Philip served as director of the Wyoming High School Rodeo Association for 12 years and served for five years as President and

Chairman. He also spends his time working with the Wyoming Cowboy Church.

All members of the Wilson family work together to put on the rodeo and everyone has a job, whether it is caring for stock or running the concession stand. The family enjoys their togetherness.

"We probably have meals together more than any family does because we work together," Philip Wilson said. "We all say the blessing over the food together. We're all together. We're blessed to be able to have the family all together doing things that they all like to do."

The family atmosphere goes beyond blood relatives and extends to all rodeo participants.

"It's a close knit family atmosphere," Brandon Wilson, great-great-grandson of Sylvester

Wilson, said. "We're brothers out there more than competitors."

Sportsmanship and teamwork are essential to rodeo. Brandon Wilson calls it "the spirit of the cowboy," saying, "It's not one of those sports when you're out there and you hate the guy who's doing good. You want him to ride as good as he can. You're competing against an animal and everyone tries hard to make sure everyone has a fair chance. They don't try to take advantage of someone. You don't want to win cheap."

The 2013 rodeo season runs from May 25-August 31 at the Teton County Fairgrounds on Snow King Avenue. The rodeo runs rain or shine, the Jackson Hole Rodeo website proudly proclaiming, "You won't find any rain delays here, we're cowboys, no matter what the weather, we get the job done."

A sepia-toned photograph of a cowboy riding a bucking horse. The cowboy is wearing a white cowboy hat and a dark, long-sleeved shirt. He is leaning back, with his right arm raised in the air. The horse is white with dark patches and is bucking. In the background, there are spectators and a fence with some text, including "PAEDICS" and "O".

Rodeo EVENTS

BRONC RIDING:

Saddled or bareback, a rider attempts to stay on a bronco. This event was originally a competition in horse breaking skills. It has evolved to be a more stylized competition.

BAREBACK BRONC RIDING:

Cowboys ride a bucking horse with one hand only while leaning back with their spurs over the point on the horse's shoulders on the first jump when they come out of the chute and touch the horse on every jump. In order for the ride to be scored, riders must stay on the horse with the proper technique for eight seconds. Riders are judged for their spurring technique and control while horses are also judged on power, speed and agility with these two scores added for a total score.

BULL RIDING:

Known as "the most dangerous eight seconds in sport," riders get on a large bull and attempt to stay on for eight seconds, only touching the bull with one hand. Bullfighters (a.k.a. rodeo clowns) stay near to offer assistance if necessary.

BARREL RACING:

Racing as fast as they can, riders attempt a clover-leaf pattern around three barrels set in a triangle shape. At the collegiate and professional levels, this is mainly a women's event.

CALF ROPING:

Riders race to throw a lariat around a calf's neck, dismount from the horse and tie three of the calf's legs together.

BREAKAWAY ROPING:

A mounted rider throws a rope around a calf's neck and the time is called when the string connecting it to the horse's saddle horn breaks.

TEAM ROPING:

Two mounted riders rope a steer. One ropes the front of the animal, typically the horns, and another ropes the hind feet. This is the only event where men and women compete together at the professional level. ■