

## About the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA), headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., is the largest and oldest rodeo-sanctioning body in the world. The recognized leader in professional rodeo, the PRCA is committed to maintaining the highest standards in the industry in every area, from improving working conditions for contestants and monitoring livestock welfare to boosting entertainment value and promoting sponsors. The PRCA also proudly supports youth rodeo with educational camps and financial assistance to young standouts preparing to enter the professional ranks, as well as supporting allied organizations such as Tough Enough to Wear Pink, Miss Rodeo America, the American Quarter Horse Association and the ProRodeo Hall of Fame.



Annually, the PRCA sanctions about 600 of the most elite multiple-event rodeos on the continent, in 37 states and three Canadian provinces – the cream of the crop among thousands of rodeo-related events that take place each year in North America. As a membership-driven organization, the PRCA works to ensure that every event it sanctions is managed with fairness and competence and that the livestock used is healthy and cared for to the highest standards. Here are some key facts about participants in ProRodeo and the PRCA:

**Fans.** ProRodeo attracts about 30 million fans, many of whom attend PRCA-sanctioned rodeos around the country annually. According to the Sports Business Daily, rodeo is seventh in overall attendance for major sporting events, ahead of golf and tennis. Fans can follow professional rodeo all year long through the PRCA's television coverage on Great American Country and the Pursuit channel, the PRCA's ProRodeo Sports News and ProRodeo.com as well as other rodeo-related media outlets.

**Competition.** Unlike most other professional sports, where contestants are paid salaries regardless of how well they do at a particular competition, cowboys generally pay to enter each rodeo. If they place high enough to win money, they probably make a profit, but if they don't, they've actually lost their entry fee and any travel expenses, so every entry is a gamble pitting the chance for loss and physical injury against the chance for financial windfalls and athletic glory. Also unlike most sanctioned professional sports, the hundreds of "playing fields" – rodeo arenas – of PRCA-sanctioned rodeos vary widely by locale. The size, shape, perimeter and roof/open top of an arena, as well as the chute configuration, greatly affect times for timed events and, to a lesser extent, scores for roughstock events. The differences are so significant that some timed-event cowboys own different horses for different types of arenas. For that reason, the most fair way to measure cowboys' success in competition across the varied settings is by earnings.

The total payout at PRCA rodeos in 2010 was \$39,870,303 – a \$2 million increase from 2009.

### PRCA Corporate Mission

*Establish the PRCA as the premier sanctioning body of rodeo in North America where rich traditions and values are experienced through the love of animals, competition, excitement and the western lifestyle.*

**Cowboys.** The PRCA's membership includes more than 7,000 cowboys and performers (including permit holders and contract personnel), the largest segment of the association's membership – more than 5,300 of who are actively competing. This membership segment includes a full range of contestants, from cowboys who compete in professional rodeo for a living, crisscrossing the country with their own horses or equipment, as well as those who work at other jobs during the week and compete in nearby rodeos on the weekends. The PRCA includes two \$3 million earners and more than 80 million-dollar earners, yet most of its competing members participate in fewer than 30 rodeos each year. Read more about individual athletes in the ProRodeo Cowboys chapter of this book.

**Permit system.** Cowboys who want to apply for membership in the PRCA must first obtain a permit card and then earn at least \$1,000 at PRCA-sanctioned rodeos; there is no time limit to "fill the permit."

Money won under a permit card counts toward circuit standings, but not toward world standings or rookie standings. World champions. "World Champion" is the most coveted title in ProRodeo. The sport's world champions are crowned at the conclusion of the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, based on total season earnings at PRCA rodeos across the continent, including monies earned at the Wrangler NFR (see the next section of this chapter). The PRCA crowns eight world titlists, each of whom receives a gold buckle and a specially crafted trophy saddle. The eight 2010 PRCA world champions had season earnings ranging from \$101,685 to a record \$507,921 for Trevor Brazile, who won three world titles that year. Read more about the reigning world champions in the 2010 World Champions chapter of this book.

**Stock contractors.** All PRCA rodeo events involve livestock, and the care of those animals falls to the stock contractors who buy or breed them, raise them, feed them, watch over them, provide medical care when necessary, and transport them safely between rodeos and their home pastures. PRCA stock contractors agree to follow more than 60 rules providing for the care and humane treatment of livestock — the toughest standards in the industry — and constantly look for ways to improve their husbandry, knowing that best practices produce top-performing livestock. Read more in the PRCA and Livestock Welfare section of this chapter. **Judges.** There are at least two judges at every PRCA rodeo who have attended judging seminars and are trained to ensure that all rules of competition and livestock welfare are followed. During the timed events, each judge has a different role; during the roughstock events, the judges try to be on opposite sides of the animal and cowboy to watch foot and spur position, among other scored aspects of a ride that can be different on the two sides.

**Contract personnel.** The noncontestant personnel working a rodeo include the bullfighters, who help bull riders escape from powerful rodeo bulls; the barrelmen, clowns and specialty acts, who entertain the crowds; pickup men, who help bareback and saddle bronc riders dismount, then prepare and assist bucking stock to leave the arena; announcers, who call the action; arena secretaries, who handle extensive administrative duties; and timers, who operate the clocks for timed and roughstock events. Read more about some of these types of contract personnel in the Announcers, Clowns/Bullfighters/Barrelmen and Specialty Acts chapters of this book.

**Committees.** Local rodeo committees organize the PRCA-sanctioned rodeos held across the continent. Most are run by dedicated groups of volunteers who make the rodeos work from behind the scenes, procuring local sponsors for events, awards and programs; setting up safe facilities; staffing various functions and making the contestants and attendees feel at home. Many PRCA rodeos are highly involved in their communities in both service and fund-raising areas.

### PRCA Corporate Vision

*Position the PRCA as the global leader in producing superior rodeo events, products and services by developing innovations that pay tribute to one of the oldest sports in America.*

**Charities.** PRCA-sanctioned rodeos annually raise many millions of dollars for local and national charities, from college scholarships for local students to the national Tough Enough to Wear Pink campaign against breast cancer.

**FanZone.** The ProRodeo FanZone is the official fan club of the PRCA. Among the many membership benefits: access to an exclusive Web site with blogs, a forum, a photo gallery and a behind-the-scenes look at the world of ProRodeo; exclusive quarterly contests and giveaways for members only; and a welcome package containing a FanZone koozie, hat pin, lanyard and personalized membership card as well as items from PRCA national sponsors. Learn more at [ProRodeoFanZone.com](http://ProRodeoFanZone.com).

**Sponsors.** The PRCA's loyal national sponsors support all aspects of rodeo, from entire events like the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, the Ram National Circuit Finals Rodeo (formerly the Dodge National Circuit Finals Rodeo) and the Justin Boots Playoffs and Championships to the Montana Silversmiths gold buckles awarded to world champions each year. Read more in the PRCA National Partners chapter of this book. Sponsors help defray the costs of producing rodeos and support contestants in their efforts to climb the ranks of ProRodeo.

**Demographics.** The PRCA's nearly 4 million loyal attendees across the U.S are about 49 percent male and 51 percent female; 63 percent have household income of \$50,000 or more and 50 percent have children in the household. In surveys, 81 percent report that they have had a soft drink in the previous 30 days, 50 percent have had a beer in the previous 30 days and 95 percent have eaten at a fast food restaurant in the previous 30 days. ProRodeo fans come from all walks of life, but as a group, they are demographically similar to NASCAR fans, and are

likely to also enjoy hunting, fishing and camping. ProRodeo.com. The PRCA maintains a website with the latest news stories, cowboy blogs, world standings, rodeo results, cowboy and livestock bios, and tons of other information. The PRCA also has a Facebook presence. Read more on page 7.

**Television.** The PRCA showcases the world's best cowboys by televising the sport's premier events, including the Wrangler Million Dollar Gold Tour presented by Justin Boots, the Justin Boots Playoffs and Championships, Ram National Circuit Finals Rodeo, All American ProRodeo Finals, Champions Challenge, PRCA Xtreme Bulls Tour and the world-renowned Wrangler National Finals Rodeo on Great American Country (DISH Network 165, DirecTV 326).

Resources:

<http://prorodeo.com/prca.aspx?xu=1>