

A Cowboy Challenge

By Runt Rageth

Its evening, everyone is gathered around the chuck wagons, the campfire blazes away, alone coyote howls in the distance, while each cowboy readies his bedroll for the night. One of the top hands from the neighbors outfit boast on how well he roped today, the foreman from your outfit respectfully disagrees and brags on the men in his outfit. The next thing you know, a challenge has been issued and accepted. Thus came the beginning for rodeos and many other Cowboy Challenges and Traditions.

I think the competitive spirit lives within each and every cowboy or cowgirl. In this modern age all we need is a place and reason to turn that spirit loose. Craig Cameron's Extreme Races and Cowboy Challenges give everyone brave enough to mount up, a chance to compete among their peers and or heroes. Craig's helping keep the western lifestyle alive by having his races and challenges. The challenges are exciting for the spectators and they push the contestants to use all of their horsemanship skills to get the job done.

The Cowboy Challenge that was held at the Double Horn Ranch will be extremely entertaining for any audience and I promise you that each of the competitors on the two man teams pushed themselves to their physical limits for a chance to take home the Buckle not to mention a really big paycheck. Each team was made up of experienced horsemen with a wide range of skills and abilities.

The Brown Bandits were big, young and athletic guys which was a huge advantage over some of the more "seasoned" competitors. Cole and Bruce were both world class athletes and up and coming trainers in the Working Cow Horse and Polo World. Cricket (Bruce's dog) made sure they did everything right and stayed on track. It did not hurt that they have a pretty famous dad and uncle to show them the ropes. If you have not guessed both of the last names are Cameron.

A bronc rider/ranch hand and a horse trainer/team roper made up the Green Team. Both guys are seasoned horsemen even if they were a little wet behind the ears and everywhere else as far as that goes. Clint Hoepke and Greg Ganzkow both have been apprentices at the Double Horn Ranch giving them the exposure to what it takes to be a cowboy. I will say that the Green Team was not afraid to talk trash, when it came down to it, those guys were good.

When you have PBR and PRCA bull riding Legends, the likes of Jim Sharp and Ted Nuce making up the Bull Team, it makes you take a step back in awe. When you think about all the things these two guys have done, the reality sets in that you might just get your butt kicked. You have to tell yourself that if you do get beat by these two, it will be okay, because they are among the toughest men in the world. Both men are seasoned ranch hands and experienced horsemen. Notice I said seasoned not old, I do not want those two mad at me.

The Red Rangers are just a couple of average competitors. The 2015 National EXCA Pro Champion, multiple time EXCA world qualifier and Calgary Stampede Cowboy Up Challenge competitor, Chris Redden makes up one side. He has rode bareback bucking horses and still competes in numerous ranch rodeos. A seasoned rancher and experienced horseman, comes to win, have fun and the faster he gets to go the better. I grew up ranching and training horses. I competed in various events thru High School, College and into the Amateur Rodeos. Being the 2014 EXCA Pro World Champion and two times Champion of the Calgary Stampede Cowboy Up Challenge makes me no stranger to pressure. In the past, Chris and I have competed against each other, this time we got to work together and compete against everyone else.

I do not know how many nights Craig stayed awake to think up all the events for this Challenge, but it must have been a lot. Who in their right mind, would say “okay ride your horse into the pen, get off, run as fast as you can (through ankle deep sand), climb over a fence (that you can’t even see over), pick up a saddle and run up a hill (that seemed like two hundred yards), then try and shoot a target with a pistol and a rifle (like that will work)”. To make it worse all eight of us knot heads said “Oh that sounds like fun, let’s do it”. Of course it was on the day it was only 105 degrees in the shade.

Craig’s twisted mind was working overtime when he came up with the morning chores event. You tell me how you get fun out of digging a post hole, changing a flat tire on a trailer, carrying water buckets and scooping poop. I am pretty certain that none of us have ever done chores that fast in our lives. The rest of the events were creative, entertaining and plain out fun.

I can’t help but think that once viewers watch the first episode, they will be hooked and will have a hard time waiting to watch the next one. I hope the viewers get excited about the episodes to come and keep watching to see which team brings home the paycheck. Or they might be watching to see, if the eight of us knot heads, excuse me I mean competitors, follow Craig blindly over the edge of a cliff like a bunch of lemmings!

Congratulations to all competitors for a job well done. The competition and the comradery were world class. It really was a great group of cowboys to hang out with and compete against. Thanks to everyone who helped put on the Challenge and a huge “thank you” to the Sponsors. With their continued support these Challenges and the Extreme Cowboy Association can only get bigger and better. Thanks to Craig and Dalene Cameron for being such dedicated hosts and the use of their world class facility.

I am sure Craig is already lying awake at night again, thinking of what he is going to do at the next Cowboy Challenge.