



North Dakota State Fair 2026 Ranch Rodeo

GENERAL RULES

1. Contestants must wear long-sleeve shirts, cowboy hats, and boots.
2. No smoking or alcohol in the arena.
3. **No unsportsmanlike conduct will be tolerated.** This behavior may result in disqualification from future events & is at the discretion of the Ranch Rodeo Coordinator(s) or North Dakota State Fair staff.
4. No roughing or abusing stock. Judges' decisions are final.
5. Cattle must be behind line before the whistle blows.
6. Cattle must cross the line before the animal can be roped. Once cattle cross the line they can be roped anywhere in the arena. (Even if it returns to the starting area)
7. Contestants must not interfere with the other team or they will be disqualified, this is under the discretion of the judges on ropes hitting each other.
8. Contestants cannot carry a spare rope on the saddle.
9. If an event is stopped because of an accident or injury, there will be a 30-second penalty and teams will restart lap and tap.
10. If the contestant is unable to compete due to injury, the team must use existing members only or compete with three members.
11. When two teams are competing head-to-head, teams do not have to sort behind the line, but they cannot rope the steer until it crosses the line. Must not interfere with the other teams designated steer, if a team member is purposefully interfering with other teams designated steer their team will be disqualified.
12. Any illegal head catch; rope must be thrown away immediately or be DISQUALIFIED.
13. Entry fees must be paid before the first event or the team will not be allowed to compete.
14. All Stock will be drawn for and posted before the rodeo. (Contestants will know what stock they compete on before Rodeo)
15. Only 2 contestants from each team may cross the line and line out after steer. Other team members must remain far enough back not to interfere with opposing teams' lead ropers. Only after your own teams lead roper throws and misses and that roper pulls out or pulls up, can another team member move into position rope.
16. When one team catches their animal, all of the OTHER team members can move in, and the whole team can chase their animal.
17. If the rope rule is in place contestants must throw down their rope before, or as they are dismounting. Failure to throw down rope will result in a 30-second penalty.

A team meeting will be held at 6:30 pm before the rodeo. All teams are required to attend. All team members must pay for entrance onto the fairgrounds.

Each team will receive ONE trailer pass. This is NOT negotiable.

SCORING AND PRIZES

- All participating teams must enter all events to be eligible for prizes
- Events include Trailer Relay Race (Championship night ONLY-Thursday), Trailer Loading, Team Mugging, Range Branding, & Wild Cow Milking
- Points will be awarded as follows if there are 12 teams.

○ 1 st – 12	○ 5 th – 8	○ 9 th – 4
○ 2 nd – 11	○ 6 th – 7	○ 10 th – 3
○ 3 rd – 10	○ 7 th – 6	○ 11 th – 2
○ 4 th – 9	○ 8 th – 5	○ 12 th – 1
- The team accumulating the most points will be the champions.
- If a team gets a no time or DQ they will receive 0 points.
- The total winnings payout:
 - The top 5 teams will receive a cash payout. The payout amount is based on the number of teams, with a maximum of 18 teams. Champions will receive four (4) jackets, four (4) buckles in addition to the 1st place cash payout.
 - We're also awarding a special buckle to the Top Hand — the standout cowboy or cowgirl of the Ranch Rodeo!

NDSF Ranch Rodeo Championships Events and Rules

Trailer Relay Race

1. Two trailers, each with 4 saddled and bridled horses loaded in the trailer, with the tailgates latched in the arena. All team members are in their respective pickup cabs with ALL doors closed completely, OR all 4 contestants standing around the front of the Pickup (in front of the WINDSHIELD) with BOTH HANDS on the HOOD.
2. The time will start when the arena director blows the whistle. All contestants race out of the truck and unload their horses from the trailer.
3. The first rider makes a lap around the arena with the baton. The rider must ride outside the barrel on the other end of the arena. They must exit & enter their designated area between the trailer and their barrels. When the rider reaches the designated area behind the trailer (the area may be marked by barrels, cones, or chalk line), the Contestant, hands the baton to the next rider, and so on...
4. Contestants can load their horses as they finish their laps. Time will stop when all contestants have completed a lap, loaded their horses, and returned to the pickup. All riders must be in the pickup with ALL of the doors shut, OR Time will stop when all 4 contestants return to the front of the Windshield with BOTH HANDS on the HOOD.
5. No contestants will be standing, mounting, or dismounting outside of their own barrels or Cones. If a contestant rides inside the opposite team's barrel, the team will be disqualified.

Note: If the baton is dropped inside the exchange area any team member may hand the baton to the rider. If it is dropped outside of this area, the rider must retrieve the baton himself. The baton MUST be passed in the exchange area.

Trailer Loading

1. All cattle in the arena will be numbered prior to the rodeo. All cattle will be held at one end of the arena with the trailer parked at the opposite end.
2. When the whistle is blown, the team will chase steer across the line before roping. Once the steer has crossed the line it can be roped anyplace in the arena. (Even if it returns to starting area) Then steer can be roped and loaded in a designated trailer. The door of the trailer cannot be opened until the steer is roped with a legal head catch.
3. Must have a legal head catch. Illegal head catches must be thrown away immediately, if not thrown away immediately, the team will be disqualified.
4. Time will stop when the tailgate is latched with only the designated steer in the trailer. No team members or horses can be in the trailer for the time to be called. (Rope may be left on the steer)

Note: Cattle will be pulled or pushed into the trailer.

- *No excessive abuse to the cattle will be tolerated. Teams will be disqualified if this rule is not followed.*

Team Mugging

1. Any number of members may be mounted for the event. Cattle are held behind a starting line. All stock in the arena will be numbered and a designated number will be announced. Time will start when the whistle is blown.
2. When the whistle is blown the team will chase the steer across the line before roping. Once the steer has crossed the line it can be ROPED or BULLDOGGED anyplace in the arena (even if it returns to the starting area) then the steer can be mugged. (Thrown down) If the steer is roped, it must be a legal head catch. Illegal catches must be thrown away immediately, if not thrown away immediately team will be disqualified.
3. Any contestant can rope the designated steer but only 1 rope may be used on the steer. The other contestants will wrestle the steer down and tie any 3 legs together. Must be a three-bone crossed tie.

Note: No more than 3 legs can be tied. Roper can't trip, bust, or drag the steer.

Note: Steer must be STANDING when contestant touches steer.

4. Time will stop when the contestant finishes their tie & calls for time. The steer must stay tied for 6 seconds; Judge will start a 6-second countdown after all team members clear themselves from the steer. Steer must stay tied for 6 seconds or the team will be disqualified. NO team member can touch steer after the 6-second countdown has begun. If anyone touches steer before 6 seconds are up, the team will be disqualified.
5. If there is an illegal catch, the rope must be dropped immediately, steer must be roped again until a legal catch is made.

Range Branding

1. All team members must be mounted. All cattle will be numbered and held behind starting line.
2. Time will start when the whistle is blown and the team will chase the designated steer across the line before roping. Once the steer has crossed the line it can be roped anyplace in the arena. (Even if it returns to the starting area) Legal head catches only, if illegal catch, the rope must be dropped and roped again until a legal catch is made.

Note: Contestants can immediately apply mark or brand if the steer is lying FLAT on its side if it is stretched, (Contestants do not have to throw tail or push down the steer to apply mark or brand, but the steer must be flat on its side from being stretched).

3. Or the steer will then be headed THEN heeled, and laid on either side. A contestant will make a mark between the eyes using a colored marker while the steer is lying FLAT on its side.
4. Time stops when the branding iron is placed in the bucket by the Judge.

Note: If the brand is applied before the steer is laid FLAT on its side, the team will be disqualified.

Wild Cow Milking

1. There will be numbered cows in the arena behind a starting line.
2. When the whistle is blown the team will chase the cow across the line before roping. Once the cow has crossed the line it can be roped or mugged anyplace in the arena. (Even if it returns to the starting area)
3. Catch as catch can. The team may use as many ropes as needed.
4. The other members will stop the cow and milk it into the bottle. The bottle will then be taken to the designated area (box) by a team member.
5. The flag will drop when the member enters the designated area.
6. Bottle must be Ran to the designated area on FOOT.

Note: There must be enough milk in the bottle to be poured out by the judge (one drop is not enough). No roughing of livestock will be tolerated.

**A meeting will be held prior to the start of each Ranch Rodeo at 6:30 p.m.
All teams are required to attend.**