

ON THE PERIMETER,
a K-State Rodeo Team member
and her horse walk back to the
other end of the arena after
competing in an event.

FROM A DISTANCE,
two rodeo queens watch
the event happening in
the arena, ready to help
if they are needed.

ON THE BACK OF A HORSE,
a K-State Rodeo Team member
tries to stay on for 8 seconds for
a qualifying ride. PHOTOS BY
WITTNEY HAMMEKE.



THE RODEO

SPURS & STETSONS

K-State rodeo team has a spirited year competing and educating the public.

In the heartland of Kansas, where prairies stretch as far as the eye can see and the spirit of the cowboy runs deep, there exists a dynamic community of students who epitomize the grit and determination synonymous with the rodeo lifestyle. Meet the Kansas State University Rodeo Team - a tight-knit group of individuals whose passion for the sport transcends the arena, weaving its way into the fabric of their academic and personal pursuits.

At the helm of this spirited collective stands Chancy Johnson, a steadfast leader and President-Elect of the rodeo team. Growing up amidst the dust and hooves of a cattle operation, Johnson's journey into rodeo was as natural as the prairie wind.

"I grew up on a cattle operation...They started entering me in youth rodeos by the time I was 3 or 4 years old, and I have been hooked ever since," Johnson said. His upbringing instilled in him a profound appreciation for the bond between man and animal, a sentiment that permeates his leadership style and dedication to the team.

Joining Johnson in the pursuit of rodeo excellence is Abby Muck, a spirited competitor with a passion for the equine world. For Muck, rodeo is more than just a sport; it's a way of life deeply rooted in her family heritage.

"My parents and friends helped me get into roping and rodeo... That's when I really developed a passion for it," Muck said. With dreams of delving into the field of reproduction and genetics in cattle and horses, Abby's journey embodies the seamless fusion of tradition and innovation that defines the rodeo community.

Rounding out the trio is Stuart Rose, a seventh-generation rancher whose connection to the land runs as deep as the roots of the prairie grass. For Rose, rodeo was not merely a hobby but an intrinsic aspect of his upbringing.

"Growing up ranching wasn't just a hobby, it was our whole lifestyle," Rose said. His journey from the branding pen to the rodeo arena exemplifies the enduring spirit of the cowboy and the indomitable perseverance that defines the rodeo team.

Together, Johnson, Muck, Rose and their fellow teammates form a

formidable force within the collegiate rodeo circuit, competing in events throughout Kansas and Oklahoma. Despite the challenges they face, including limited access to facilities, the team's unwavering dedication and camaraderie have propelled them to remarkable heights of success.

"We constantly face issues caused by misinformation...We try to create a positive image of the rodeo team by representing rodeo with pride and a good attitude," Johnson said.

Beyond the arena, the KSU rodeo team endeavors to share their love for the sport with the wider community, engaging in educational initiatives aimed at dispelling misconceptions and fostering appreciation for rodeo heritage.

"The main aspects that were highlighted during our educational sessions were the origin of the cowboy and how they spent countless hours tending to their herds," Johnson said. "We also discussed each of the events in rodeo and how they have evolved over the decades.

While the team enjoys educating others about their passion and lifestyle, there can be some bumps in the road.

"Educating other people about rodeo who don't know about rodeo is very difficult," Rose said. "But to bring it up and educate them by starting back at ranching I feel like it helps give a better understanding as to why we do what we do and where the love and passion comes from as we do what makes us happy."

As they saddle up for the challenges that lie ahead, the Rodeo Team stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of the American West - a legacy of perseverance, passion, and pride that continues to gallop across the prairies and into the hearts of all who dare to dream.

"Over the years, I have noticed a lot of misinformation being shared about the sport of

Rodeo," Johnson said. "This is why it is important to share what rodeo truly is to the younger generations so they can grow up with the right ideas. We are very passionate about what we do, so it is so much fun to go out into the community and educate about what we love most!" STORY BY TYONI WILLIAMS. DESIGN BY KENDRA KEMP.



WITH THE ROPE TAUT, a rodeo competitor competes for the fastest time in tie down roping during the Sunday portion on Feb. 18, 2024. PHOTOS BY WITNEY HAMMEKE.

IN THE CROWD, a member of the K-State Rodeo Team talks to fans in the stands and asks for donations.

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THE RODEO

WORK ORDER

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Job # 3800 School Kansas State University

Special Instructions

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