

by the HORNS

Billbrey Family Event Center hosts annual rodeo without a hitch

Since its founding in 1946, the Kansas State Rodeo Team at has built a proud tradition of excellence both in and out of the arena.

Kansas State hosted its 2026 rodeo at the new Billbrey Family Event Center, marking a major milestone for one of the Midwest's longest-running student traditions.

The K-State Rodeo went off without a hitch during mid February, bringing competitors from across the Central Plains Region to Manhattan for four days of competition and community events.

This year's rodeo was the first held inside the university's newly opened facility, signaling a new era for the program after more than 50 years in Weber Arena. The state-of-the-art center features a 3,000-seat indoor arena, livestock handling facilities and modern amenities designed to enhance both competition and spectator experience.

Partnered with the Midwest's best, K-State Rodeo Team, the event held various types of enjoyment for all ages including interactive games with the crowd, rodeo events and featured the Miss K-State Rodeo contestants to show off their talent.

Organizers planned themed nights throughout the weekend to draw in the surrounding community. Thursday evening served as 'Student Night', focusing on K-State students and the College of

Agriculture, while Friday's performance highlighted Cancer Awareness Night, encouraging attendees to wear pink. Saturday included a family-focused 'Kids Day' and an evening 'Pack the Billbrey' event, followed by Sunday's championship 'Short Go,' which doubled as Military Appreciation Day.

The rodeo served not only as a major competition for collegiate athletes, but also as a community event aimed to celebrate western heritage and connect students with the agricultural community in Manhattan. With expanded seating, upgraded facilities and a full slate of events, the 2026 K-State Rodeo drew in large crowds and ushered in a new chapter for the university's rodeo tradition. STORY BY LIBBY ZUCK. DESIGN BY ZARA THOMAS.

CARRYING THE POWERCAT FLAG
Miss Teen Rodeo rode through the arena to symbolize the transition of events. Multiple rodeo queens across Kansas were invited to present flags at the K-State rodeo.
PHOTOS BY MADDIE COULTER.



PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE,
pickup men remove the flank rope from a saddle bronc as they guide it out of the arena.

GRABBING HORNS,
a steer wrestler dismounts his horse. Steer wrestling is one of six timed events that collegiate rodeo athletes perform in.

LOADED IN THE CHUTE,
a bareback bronc waits for the riders rigging to be set.



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