

Dear Ropers,

Winter is no doubt upon us as we go into the final stretch of the Team Roping season. Or, is there even a season anymore? That answer depends on you individually. Although I think we all agree that it slows down to a certain extent, it is still a continuing season for many of us. I don't think the slow down is for lack of love for the sport, or at least for me it isn't.

However, there comes a time that a I as a producer/roper has to take time out to rope as well. As many of you know, I typically don't rope in my own ropings, and we typically don't produce ropings in October and December. There is a reason for this. I don't produce ropings in October, because I thoroughly enjoy going to the USTRC National Finals. I take the month to prepare for the Finals. It is a time when I get to spend a week with my father, son and this year my nephew. We all load up in the truck and make the 8 hour drive and enjoy a week of doing nothing but team roping. From the time we leave home until the time we return all we talk about is team roping.

In December, I don't put on ropings because I am getting ready to go to the World Series Finale. Another great don't miss event for a team roper. I also love going to the NFR and watching the best ropers in the business battle it out for 10 grueling days in Vegas. However, the biggest reason I don't produce ropings in December is because of Christmas. It is my most favorite time of year! There is nothing like spending a week at the ranch. Kind of a homecoming if you will.

Those around me know I love the sport of team roping. I love producing ropings. It is what I do. My life revolves around team roping. I officially took over in 1994 from my mom and dad and our humble beginnings in that little arena many of you here locally grew up around, and learned to rope in, north of Mora, NM. Eloy started putting on jackpots in 1974. I remember the days that we roped behind the rope barrier, had 400 teams on 20 head of steers (some years we roped heifers with plastic horns) my mom ran the books from inside the cab of the tractor (while selling burritos and sodas) perhaps pouring down rain, but we never faltered. Boy, that takes me back. Those were some good times but thank God for those visionaries that revolutionized the sport primarily through the handicap/number system. As a boy in 1974 and through my teen years, I remember competing against the professional team ropers at the time. There were no classifications back then. My dad always encouraged me that if I wanted to rope I was going to have to practice hard because that is what those guys were doing for a living. It wasn't every weekend that we bumped into those guys, but those experiences were something I will carry with me forever. I remember roping against Clay O'Brien Cooper at a roping in Bluewater, NM. He was 18 at the time. I was in total awe at how he roped all 8 steers with both of his partners at a local 8 head jackpot. I thought to myself, how is that possible! Well, we all know without a doubt that it is possible and we all appreciate what ropers have had to endure to win a world championship.

I thank God I have had my share of success in the arena as a roper and a producer. My fondest memory as a youth roper was when I got to rope with all the pros one day in Clayton, New Mexico, I fifty percented them as they call it. When you fifty percent them you have had a great day! I won first and second in the round and first, second, third and fourth in the average. That was 1978. I still have that little old Gist buckle.

Well, there's a bit of history for you. I hope I have not bored you to death. Here's the update as to what is going on in our circle of the team roping landscape. This weekend we will be producing a World Series Qualifier in Albuquerque, NM at the Bernalillo County Sheriffs Posse arena on 2nd Street. The only notable change is that the #9 on Sunday will NOT be a WS Qualifier. Denny has decided that there will not be a #9 next year. We will still have a #9 this weekend and it will be the same format as advertised but it isn't a qualifier.

In two weeks, November 25-27 (Thanksgiving weekend) we will be in Albuquerque once again. This time we will be producing a USTRC Qualifier. It will be held in the Horse Arena at the Fairgrounds also known as Expo NM. This is a full qualifier with all the cash and prizes. If you have not heard, USTRC will no longer be holding out any shoot out funds from the ropers pot. The roping will payback 2/3 in cash plus the producer paid for prizes. USTRC has made some changes that should put more money in your pocket at the local level and still have the large payouts at the Finals as they will be adding \$1,000,000 of their profits. This should be a good move for the sport in general. Come rope with us and experience it first hand.

As I mentioned earlier, we will be off the month of December except for the last day. We will be producing a World Series Qualifier in Clovis, NM on December 31st and January 1st at the Curry County Events Center. This is a full qualifier with all the divisions. Come kick off the new year at a great roping in a great facility.

Right after the first of the year we will be relocating our production efforts to Arizona. We have 15 events planned January through March. More about that next month.

Until then,

Good Luck and go get the Money!