



Extreme Entertainment and Horsemanship — Craig Cameron's "Extreme Cowboy Race"

By [admin](#) On April 11, 2016 · [Add Comment](#)



Sally Addington with Ghost

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A Great Team!

The winner of this 2009 national competition, before a coliseum packed with thousands of cheering, screaming, fans giving her a standing ovation, was 57-year-old Sally Addington, on Ghost, a grade paint gelding with one black ear and a spot on his hind. (The full story [here](#))

She took the last of a four-bump jump series with no hands – her arms stretched straight out from her shoulders, reins dropped over the horn of her big Western saddle.

A short, stocky mom on an unregistered horse she trained herself and rode bareback at a dead run winning a national event? **It was Craig Cameron's "Extreme Cowboy Race" at Equine Affair in Columbus, Ohio.**

To get to the finals, Sally and Ghost had done everything a cowboy and her horse might need to do in the wild West, including racing at a dead run, roping a cow, carrying a sick calf, jumping into and out of water, walking through thick brush and trash, spins, bending low to pick something up, dismounting and remounting bareback, changing canter leads looping though a complicated pattern – even standing in the saddle to reach up high.

Gaining in Popularity

RFD TV viewers may have caught televised versions of this highly entertaining horsemanship extravaganza in the last three years. Viewers become instant fans, upon exposure to this entertaining contest of mental and physical **skills on and with horses that originated on Cameron's Texas ranch. The only entrance requirement is to be over 18 and pay a \$250 fee.**



From the Extreme Cowboy Association Archives

275 pounds – including a 20-year-old gymnast, a middle-aged woman just recovering from wrist surgery, a 65-year-old hearing aid salesman with a bad knee, and a bunch of cowboys and cowgirls whose ages and sizes fall somewhere in between.

What You Have To Do

The course: **When you hear “go” and the timer starts, run your horse around the arena as fast as it can run,** heedless of the screaming, clapping crowd, odd obstacles, unhappy calves in gated enclosures and an impressive speaker system loudly describing the activities.

- Grab a lasso from a gate, rope the faux calf head affixed to hay bales.
- Pick up a full water bucket from the top of one barrel and carry it to the next where you empty it.
- Walk your horse between two pens of long-horned calves through wood and trash.
- Jump three small logs — circling and changing leads three times.
- Run over to stop in a box, spin your horse one direction, then the other.
- Pick up a rope and drag a log through pylons.
- Dismount to pick up a 50-pound feed bag representing a sick calf.
- Remount and carry it on your horse to a marker where you set it down gently.
- Lope a figure eight — staying within marked boundaries.
- Go through a simulated water crossing.

Cameron calls it “a judged race through an obstacle course that is designed not only to push horse and rider teams out of their traditional “comfort zones,” but also to test communication between horse and rider and the horsemanship skills and athletic abilities of each competitor.”

Picture this race:

The horses — a 4-year-old spotted saddle horse, a couple of big bay Quarter Horse stallions, a Missouri Fox Trotter, a bulky Haflinger pony, a greying 21-year-old chestnut pony, a big blocky white horse with a black ear, a dun-colored mule, a couple sorrels with some Quarter Horse in them...

The riders – varying from 98 to over

- Continue flying lead changes through a “daisy chain” of cones as spectators scream “Ole” with each lead change.
- Jump three rows of drums.
- Bend down to pick up a tennis ball off a cone about a foot tall.
- Carry the tennis ball to a gate where a bucket is affixed high enough that you must stand on top of your saddled horse to put the ball in.
- Go through the rattling pipe gates over and through a “log jumble.”
- Dismount, remove your saddle, remount. (There’s a hay bale if you need it.)
- Race your horse around the arena bareback.
- Stop at the far end, dismount, lead your trotting horse to the center, crossing the finish line as quickly as you can.

Upping Your Score

While each of these skills was evaluated by experienced horse people on a 10-point scale, hot dogging garnered even more points.

Cracking a bullwhip during the race around the arena, picking up and swinging a tarp during the bareback run, picking up a dropped cowboy hat from the ground at a dead run, removing the bridle as well as saddle and **racing the arena in a halter, the cowboy jumping the barrels as he raced to the finish line, mounting from the horse’s right, asking the horse to lay down to mount, sidepassing from one obstacle to the next, sliding stops** – all added points and demonstrated the level of training and communication between horse and rider.

Competitors are evaluated by a panel of three experienced horse trainers. Judges award 1-10 points based on: **horsemanship, cadence, control, horse’s attitude, and overall execution. Horses and riders must complete each obstacle within a set time to receive points.** Uncompleted tasks are left behind as the contestant moves on to the next obstacle. Times are translated into points. The highest score wins. The top three finishers get cash and prizes.

Ready to try it?

Submit an application explaining why you’d like to compete with a check for \$250 and you may end up at one of the half dozen competitions held around the country each year.

Created by Cameron and Ryan Dohrn of HorseCity.com, the first races were held at Cameron’s ranch in Bluff Dale, Texas, in 2005. **The Extreme Cowboy Race™** airs on RFD-TV and is also available on HorseCity.com for those who do not get RFD-TV. For more information: <http://www.craigcameron.com/extreme.html>

This was my introduction into the versatile horsemanship competitions. **I’m happy to report that Sally and Ghost** went on to travel around the country, in her pickup pulling a two-horse trailer, from California to the East Coast where she won a huge Western saddle for taking first place out west. In 2016, Sally and Ghost were fourth in **Columbus, only because the big guy didn’t want to step into a plastic baby pool.** Let’s hope they keep winning when Sally has a 7 in her age, setting a great example for retirees everywhere!