



February 16, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

Extreme Cowboy Race co-creator to hold clinic at Stampede Park

CALGARY – The Calgary Stampede is taking equine events to extremes this summer. But even the most daring cowboy needs a little guidance.

During the 2010 edition of The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, a new event — the Calgary Stampede Cowboy Up Challenge, which showcases the all-new sport of Extreme Cowboy Racing — will be taking centre stage in the Pengrowth Saddledome.

And none other than Craig Cameron, the famed horseman and Texas-based co-creator of the wildly popular Extreme Cowboy Race, will be in Calgary from March 19 to 21, 2010 to teach the finer points of this challenging and demanding equestrian sporting event.

The Craig Cameron Extreme Cowboy Race Clinic and Demonstration will be held at the Corral on Stampede Park, with a clinic for registered participants on Friday, March 19 as well as Extreme Cowboy Race exhibitions and practice rounds for public consumption on Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21.

“In July, we’ll be holding the first Extreme Cowboy Race in Canada, and we’re trying to develop a Canadian talent base and some awareness for this event,” says Tracey Foster, Agriculture Programming Coordinator, referring to the inaugural Calgary Stampede Cowboy Up Challenge, slated for July 10 to 12 in the Saddledome. “Craig Cameron founded the whole Extreme Cowboy Race concept, so we thought there was no better way to spur public and competitor interest than to bring him up for a clinic and demonstration.”

Extreme Cowboy Racing, a timed and judged event, demands both horsemanship and speed, and challenges both horse and rider with an obstacle course that may include such challenges as moguls, bridges, log crossings, tunnels, cowboy curtains, roll backs and water crossings, among others. Judges award points for each obstacle, on a scale of one to 10, based on criteria such as horsemanship, cadence, control, and overall execution. Horse-and-rider teams are required to complete each obstacle within a predetermined time period to collect points.

“It’s probably about the most fun you can have on a horse. It really is,” says Cameron, who’s known as the “cowboy’s clinician” and is based in Bluff Dale, Texas. “Almost every (equine) event out there is specialized. I thought, well, if it’s about quote-unquote natural horsemanship, why don’t we come up with something we do every day on the ranch? An event where we have to show our stops and our turns, where we drag a log, get off and off the horse, cross water, trailer-load the horse?”

“These are things we do on an everyday basis, out on the ranch,” adds Cameron, “that really show a well-broke horse and a good rider. In other words, a good team.”

The rigours of Extreme Cowboy Racing are designed to push horse-and-rider teams out of their traditional comfort zone, and put communication to the test.

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The sport has certainly struck a chord. During 2009, its first season of competition, the Extreme Cowboy Association (EXCA) staged 70 events in 22 American states, from Hawaii across to Maine. Its first world championship, held in Topeka, Kansas, in mid-December, drew competitors from coast to coast.

"It has an incredibly strong following in the U.S. It's really catching on," says Foster. "And we're excited about the long-term potential of Extreme Cowboy Racing at the Calgary Stampede. There's no limit to where this could go."

As for Cameron's clinic in March, the lifelong rancher and former professional bull rider promises participants the valuable horsemanship tips that he disseminates across North America 44 weeks a year, and that have earned him the American Cowboy Culture Awards Committee's esteemed Working Cowboy of the Year award in 2002.

"Any good horseman is always trying to get better," says Cameron. "You'll really get in the saddle, and get a chance to go to work. We work on everything — getting a handle on the horse, problem solving, bit fitting, trailer loading. And these clinics are fast moving. Anybody interested in learning and getting better, well, shoot, that's the place to be.

"We'll also be teaching you how to get ready for the Extreme Cowboy Race," adds Cameron. "It's about getting ready with your horse, but also preparing mentally and physically. The idea of having a horse is to have some fun, so we have a lot of fun out there as well."

The Craig Cameron Extreme Cowboy Race Clinic and Demonstration will also feature a full slate of demonstrations for the public on Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21, which marks a busy weekend on Stampede Park, with several events — including the Acreage Lifestyles Show — being held on the grounds.

For clinic information, and for a full public schedule, please visit www.stampedeagriculture.com

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit www.calgarystampede.com.