



Maryland High School Rodeo
Association, Inc.

Contestant and Parent Handbook

2023-2024

www.mdhsra.org

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the Maryland High School Rodeo Association (MDHSRA)! As the season begins this year, we are looking forward to an increase in membership and a season that provides quality rodeos for our membership. We hope to build a strong team to represent Maryland at both the Junior High and High School National Finals. This handbook will be a resource to our new and returning contestants but should not be viewed as an official rulebook. We encourage all parents, guardians, and student members to read this handbook thoroughly. Included is information about grades, financial matters and State and National Finals are explained. All of these subjects will be helpful to both our student and adult membership this season. The official rulebooks can be found online at mdhsra.org under the Rules and Bylaws section.

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

The purpose of the MDHSRA is to provide an activity for High School, Jr. High and Elementary School students and to promote the sport of rodeo, sportsmanship, and education while preserving our Western heritage.

ORGANIZATION:

MDHSRA is a member of the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA), and is organized under a constitution and set of bylaws that are available at mdhsra.org. The student members of MDHSRA are led by a set of Student Officers. The adult membership is represented by an Adult Board. This Board includes adult officers and at-large Board members. Both the Student Officers and the Adult Board are elected at the annual open state board meeting held each year during the State Finals or within 30 days of State Finals.

NHSRA RULEBOOK and MDHSRA BYLAWS:

Each Contestant is given a NHSRA rulebook when they join. The rulebook covers event rules, conduct rules, protest procedures, point systems, and miscellaneous rules. It is the responsibility of everyone to read and know the rulebook. This is probably the most important regarding re-runs, re-rides, protests and conduct. In the event the NHSRA Rulebook does not cover an event, MDHSRA will follow PRCA rules. In addition, MDHSRA has a set of bylaws available online at mdhsra.org that provide further details on how the organization is run.

PRODUCING RODEOS:

To produce a rodeo you need an arena large enough to run our events, a stock contractor, and a way to draw a crowd of paying spectators. Each stock contractor has their own fee schedule. If you have a facility in your area, please contact the State President or National Director.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS:

There are many duties and jobs that go on behind the scenes and in the arena. Most of this work is done by volunteers. MDHSRA always needs and welcomes volunteers. We will train anyone for any job. The following is a partial list of the many positions that need volunteers for each rodeo:

- Barrel and Pole Spotters
- Grand Entry Assistants
- Goat Handlers
- Gate / Admission
- Merchandise sales

Each rodeo, we will have a sign up for volunteers in the areas that are needed. We encourage our parents to help and get to know the kids of the association and in turn, we want the kids to meet the parents. **We ask that a member of each family volunteer at least (2 ½ hours) during the rodeo season.** For those families that have an able bodied family member and do not volunteer, we will ask you to make a \$75 donation to the association in the place of not volunteering. Please note, this does NOT help the rodeo run smoothly. All Volunteers must be in dress code if in the arena.

GROUND RULES:

Ground rules are established when the NHSRA rulebook gives room to each state for interpretation. For

example, in Barrel Racing, some associations count the alley way as part of the arena, where others do not. In those that do count the alley as part of the arena, forward motion must be maintained through the whole run (i.e. no circling your horse in the arena). Ground rules will be discussed at contestant meetings prior to each rodeo, which is why it is mandatory for each contestant to attend. States may have different ground rules, and **MDHSRA contestants must follow the ground rules of the host organization**. It is your responsibility to understand the specific ground rules of the rodeo you are attending. If a host state does not have an established ground rule and allows each state to choose (i.e. whether goats are flanked in goat tying), MDHSRA ground rules are then in effect. Ground rules are approved by the Adult Board. MDHSRA Ground rules include:

1. There is a 30-second time limit in the barrel racing and pole bending events for the contestant to get their horse in the arena. The judge will determine when this clock starts. Second call third calls will be made, after which if the contestant is not in the arena, the run is recorded as a no time.
2. If a contestant wishes to compete in a team roping event (Team Roping or Ribbon Roping), but does not have a partner, the non-partnered contestant may request a drawn partner for up to 8 individual performances throughout the year, prior to State Finals. Please note that most rodeos consist of 2 performances in a weekend. MDHSRA will assign a random drawn partner to compete with the non-partnered contestant, if one is available. In these circumstances, any points awarded to the non-partnered contestant contribute only to all-around points. A non-partnered contestant is not eligible for state awards or Nationals qualifications. Please see the image at the end of this document for more details.
3. All divisions (HS, JH and Mustangs) must flank goats during the goat tying event. At an out of state rodeo, if the host state allows each visiting state to decide whether goats are flanked for contestants, all MDHSRA competitors must then flank their own goats.
4. The 30-second rule is in effect for all roping events, steer wrestling, chute dogging and goat tying at all Maryland rodeos. The 60-second rule is in effect for the Mustang Division in these events.
5. For High School Breakaway Roping, we are requiring a bell collar catch. There will be a 10 second penalty for any other catch. High Schoolers may only carry one loop. Junior high and Mustang rules will remain the same as what is outlined in the NHSRA rulebook.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:

All Membership documents are available online at mdhsra.org under "Membership". Please follow the instructions carefully to ensure a smooth sign up. Generally, membership requirements include:

1. Must currently be attending school: grades 5-8 (Junior High), 9-12 (High School) or participating in an approved home school curriculum.
2. Must maintain a passing grade in 70% of your classes throughout the year.
3. Must be up to date with all NHSRA fees (see "DUES AND FEES" section for details)
4. Must be up to date with all Rodeo event fees and MDHSRA dues (see "DUES AND FEES" section for details)
5. Must participate in annual fundraisers (raffle tickets, 50/50's, bake sales, etc.).

DUES AND FEES

A CONTESTANT WHO HAS NOT PAID DUES OR FEES ON TIME WILL BE UNABLE TO COMPETE IN RODEO EVENTS.

NHSRA Membership Fees:

Every MDHSRA member must pay **NHSRA membership fees** by the first rodeo of the season.

- High School Division = \$175.00 per season
- Jr. High School Division = \$131.00 per season
- Mustang Division = \$75.00 per season.

High School and Junior High membership fees must be paid online through the NHSRA membership portal. Mustang fees may be paid by check, credit card, or PayPal prior to the first rodeo. Membership fees cover MDHSRA membership, NHSRA membership, Supplemental medical insurance, Subscriptions to The Times and Western Horsemen. Supplemental medical insurance is with Specialty Program Insurers who specialize in rodeo claims. The policy is a supplemental injury policy that can be used with other injury policies or by itself.

MDHSRA Annual Dues (High School and Junior High only):

In addition, MDHSRA HS and JH contestants must submit **annual MDHSRA dues** totaling \$250.00 throughout the season. The first installment of the \$125.00 is due by October 1 and the second installment is due by April 1. Members joining after November 1 are only responsible for the spring dues. Dues are paid directly to the MDHSRA treasurer and can be paid by cash, check, or PayPal.

Event Entry Fees:

Entry fees (for all divisions) are posted on the info sheet before each rodeo. Entry fees are paid before the rodeo begins and **MUST BE PAID ONLINE VIA EQUESTEVENT OR WITH CASH AT CONTESTANT CHECK-IN.**

Fines/Turn Out Process:

There are a variety of fines that MDHSRA may assess throughout the rodeo season or at a specific event. These fines are described below.

- **NO-SHOW AND TURN-OUT FINES are \$25.00 per event per rodeo. This is in addition to entry fees.**
 - **NO-SHOW:** When a contestant is called in for a rodeo and fails to show up.
 - **TURN-OUT:** When a contestant is called in for a rodeo, comes to the rodeo but refuses to take his/her ride or animal.
- **BACK NUMBERS** are mandatory on rodeo grounds from 1 hour prior to the rodeo performance check in until the last contestant of the weekend competes. Back numbers are to be worn on the contestant's back. **1st Offense, \$25 fine. 2nd Offense, \$50 fine.**
- **DRAW-OUT:** (not a Med-Out/Vet-Out) must pay entry fees but will not be assessed a fine. A draw-out is when a contestant is called in for a rodeo and before the rodeo begins, discovers he/she cannot be at the rodeo. **The contestant must contact the Rodeo Secretary at least 24 hours in advance of the rodeo.** This lets us plan with the stock contractor and event personnel so that the rodeo goes on smoothly. **If you do not contact the Rodeo Secretary, the no-show fees and fines will be charged.**
- **MED-OUT/VET-OUT:** Your entry fees will be returned. Med-out is when a contestant or the contestant's horse has an injury or sickness that prevents them from competition in an event. The Arena Director must be notified before that event begins. To avoid losing points for the entire rodeo, a doctor's or vet's excuse must be presented to the State Secretary within five working days of that rodeo. If it is a visible injury, occurring at the rodeo, refer to the 2020-2022 NHSRA rulebook, page 35; Section: Contestant Disqualifications; #6. subsection c. RODEO, (2)(c) which states: "A contestant with a visible injury or illness may turn out of any event at a rodeo without a doctor's written excuse, provided notification of turn-out is authorized by a judge or National Director at that given rodeo. **If a contestant has drawn out with a visible injury, he/she must have a doctor's release to resume competition.**"
- **EVENT DIRECTORS:** Event Directors are to be on the arena floor at the time of your designated event. If for some reason you cannot be present you must find someone to fill in for you. Not

showing up for your event during the performance and in slack will result in a fine -1st Offense verbal warning, 2nd Offense \$10.00 fine. If a performance has slack and you do not show up for performance or slack, the fine is double (\$20).

All fees and fines must be paid before you can compete in the next rodeo!

TRIAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Anyone interested in participating in a rodeo is welcome to do so. A one- time only trial membership can be purchased for \$25. Regular event fees apply. Trial members are not eligible for points. Trial members may also participate in State Finals events, but are not eligible for year-end awards. Trial membership forms are available on the MDHSRA website.

GRADES AND ACADEMICS:

All MDHSRA members must be in good standing at school and must have passing grades in at least 70 percent of the classes taken or meet the state activity requirements. See the latest NHSRA Rulebook for more information.

MDHSRA recognizes **home schooling** as long as the student is meeting the guidelines for taking the qualifying and standardization tests that are required by the State. **All HS and JH Members must upload a report card to the NHSRA membership portal when they register for the new season, and again prior to April 1. Only official report cards (or official reports on home school letterhead) are acceptable. Progress reports will NOT be accepted. Mustangs should submit grades at both times to marylandhighschoolrodeo@gmail.com.** If a contestant lies or cheats about grades, they are disqualified for the rest of the season and they may be permanently expelled depending on the circumstances. This suspension means that the contestant will not be allowed in or around the arena. He or she may not work with or help any participant at a rodeo.

CONDUCT:

The NHSRA is very clear concerning contestant conduct. Please read the rules concerning disqualifications in the National rulebook. These rules apply to both contestants and their parents/guardians. All contestants are required to sign the Code of Conduct form at the beginning of each season.

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vaping, profanity, animal abuse, cheating, fighting and bad sportsmanship have no place in high school, junior high, or elementary rodeo. All of these will result in **disqualification** from an individual rodeo and/or from MDHSRA entirely.

Association with non-members or members that are using alcohol and drugs is considered the same as doing it yourself. Smoking or Vaping in the arena is not allowed by either contestants or adults. Arguing with judges and officials is not allowed by contestants, parents, guardians or family/ friends. In the case of illegal activity, law enforcement will be involved.

Social media is a part of our association. We maintain a Facebook group and an Instagram account that are monitored by the MDHSRA Board of Directors. Inappropriate comments/posting may result in disqualifications or further disciplinary action as determined by the MDHSRA Board of Directors

Contestants are responsible for their parents who are expected to follow the code of conduct rules as well.

APPEALS AND PROTESTS:

Any contestant wishing to appeal a decision must do so through the event director. **DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO A JUDGE or A TIMER.** Only contestants may appeal. We will not review videos and do not hear appeals on mark outs or rough stock scores. The MDHSRA will follow the latest NHSRA rulebook in handling hearings and appeals.

DRESS CODE:

All contestants must be in rodeo attire at least one hour before a performance begins. You must stay in rodeo attire during the complete rodeo, even if you are not competing, until 1 hour after the rodeo. At MULTI-STATE rodeos, you must be in rodeo attire during the entire slack performance. Rodeo attire is:

- Western shirt with wrist length sleeves, cuffs and a collar,
- Western belt,
- Western jeans,
- Western boots,
- Western hat,
- Back number

The shirt must be tucked in – no short or cropped shirts. You may remove the belt while you are competing, and rough stock riders may roll up the sleeve on their riding arm while they are competing. Athletic shoes designed to look like western boots are not considered to be rodeo attire. **Your back number is part of your dress code. The back number must be worn on your back and visible at all times.** This means if you wear a jacket or vest, the back number must be on the outside. According to the latest NHSRA rulebook, the back number must be on your back when at the rodeo, on rodeo grounds or rodeo functions and at a motel. A back number will be assigned to you at the beginning of the year. If you lose a back number, there is a **\$10.00 replacement fee**. Anyone, including parents, who comes in the arena to help in any way, (including leading a rider into the arena), must be in dress code. Baseball caps, short sleeves, etc. are not allowed. The visitor will be asked to leave the arena and return to the spectator area. No alcohol or tobacco patches, stickers or advertising are allowed on contestants' attire or equipment.

CONTESTANT MEETINGS:

Contestant meetings are typically held before each rodeo. These meetings will be posted on the rodeo information sheet and are usually held 1 hour prior to the rodeo start, and are used to give out information about the rodeo, event changes or ground rules. It is mandatory that you attend the meeting if one is held. Attendance is taken, by roll call, at the start of the meeting. You must be in rodeo attire for the meeting. A **\$15 fine** may be given for **no shows and those not in dress code (unless otherwise approved by the State Secretary or National Director)**. No horses are allowed during the contestant meetings.

GRAND ENTRY:

All contestants with horses are encouraged to ride in the Grand Entry. You will be asked to carry a flag, if you are able. This event sets the tone for the rest of the rodeo and is a good way to show our sponsors how much we appreciate their support. The MDHSRA Queen/Student President is in charge of the grand entry. Please cooperate with our Queen/President. Only MDHSRA members are permitted to ride in grand entries except at Multi-State rodeos when the other states are participating.

EVENT DIRECTORS:

For each rodeo, the Student President will coordinate the event directors for each event. Event directors are responsible for overseeing each event and keeping track of times and scores. It is the event director's duty to be in the arena during the event for the rodeo/slack. The event director must know the rulebook for that specific event and must be present for a contestant to contest a call. **If the event director cannot be present for their event, it is their responsibility to arrange a suitable replacement and notify the Student and Adult President prior to the rodeo start.**

POINT SYSTEMS:

ALL rodeos that are MDHSRA sanctions will be pointed. If MDHSRA offers choices for rodeos that must be declared, MDHSRA will post the options and procedures at the beginning of the rodeo season.

*****CONTESTANTS HAVE 10 DAYS AFTER POINTS HAVE BEEN POSTED BY THE STATE SECRETARY TO SUBMIT A GRIEVANCE.**

The National High School Rodeo Association has implemented a point system to be used for the State Finals by all associations. Points for qualifying rodeos are explained in the NHSRA rulebook.

For State Finals: Points coming into the finals plus points for each go round and in the average determine the event champions and placings. Please direct any questions to your National Director.

STATE FINALS:

MDHSRA State Finals will be held in May. There are three go-rounds for all contestants in each event. The top four placings in the high school division and junior high division will receive awards and the right to compete at the National Finals.

There will also be awards for all-around cowboys, all-around cowgirls, all-around rookie cowboys and all-around rookie cowgirls. Mustang Division will also receive awards at this time. The Queens's contest will be held during State Finals.

A contestant must be in good standing, compete in 50% of the regular season rodeos, and compete in all three performances of the State Finals Rodeo to be eligible for Maryland year end awards. Contestants must ride in all three performances of the State Finals Rodeo and have competed in the event prior to State Finals Rodeo to be eligible for High School and Jr. High National Finals.

NATIONAL FINALS:

If any of the top four placings cannot go to the NHSFR or NJHFR, we can "roll down" to eighth place to fill the slots. (Please refer to your National Rulebook to clarify questions). This has no effect on state standings or awards at State Finals. Travel monies are given to our national finalists based upon availability of funds. In the case we are able to award travel monies to contestants going to National finals, the money will be given at Nationals. If a competitor chooses to not compete in all events, for any reason other than a med-out or vet-out while at Nationals, they will be responsible for giving back that portion of their travel money to MDHSRA.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT:

Beginning in August 1995, approved safety vests are required for the rough stock events. Beginning 2014, industry approved helmets are required for both bull riding and steer riding.

Mouthpieces are mandatory in all rough stock events, steer wrestling and chute dogging events. A contestant will be subject to disqualification for failure to utilize proper safety equipment.

SEMINARS AND CLINICS:

MDHSRA provides a mandatory safety seminar each year for rough stock competitors. The seminar will be held in the fall or spring. If a member cannot be at the first safety seminar, he/she must notify the safety committee chairperson or National Director. The member can then attend the make-up safety seminar. Rough stock competitors must attend a safety seminar to be eligible to ride in the State Finals.

MEDICAL SUPPORT:

It is the policy of the MDHSRA to always have an EMT or higher qualified medical personnel on site at each rodeo.

FUNDRAISERS:

MDHSRA relies heavily on the fundraising efforts throughout the year. Fundraisers may include, but are not limited to: 50/50 sales, t-shirt sales, jackpot roping, barrel racing jackpots, etc. The MDHSRA is always open to new ideas for fundraising. Please contact MDHSRA Adult Board Members with any ideas.

Some MDHSRA fundraisers are mandatory, meaning that each contestant must raise a certain amount of money or pay the required amount themselves. For example, for a raffle fundraiser, the contestant must either sell a required 10 tickets at \$10 a piece or pay \$100 to MDHSRA, if tickets are not sold. For families with multiple contestants, MDHSRA requires participation from only two contestants.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Money from fundraisers and events directly benefits our contestants. Some of our expenses are awards, stock contractors, workers, insurance, advertising and operating expenses. If the money is available, the national finalists will be given travel money to help defer the costs of going to the National Finals. The money to finance all of these expenses comes from the entry fees, ad sales, fundraisers, donations and sponsorships.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Scholarships are available to qualifying students on both the state and national levels.

***State Level:** At the end of each rodeo year, MDHSRA awards scholarships to deserving members. **The application must be submitted by the advertised deadline for consideration. MDHSRA will advertise scholarship opportunities prior to State Finals.**

***National Level:** Any senior participating in the NHSFR is eligible for scholarship monies. Please see the Scholarship section of the NHSRA website for more details. The student applying is responsible for turning in the scholarship applications at Nationals, according to the instructions provided by the National Scholarship Committee. The National Director will be available for assistance when asked. You are responsible for having the National Director sign your application.

All event winners at the NHSFR receive a scholarship. It is held until graduation. Please see the NHSFR Website for more information and available scholarships.

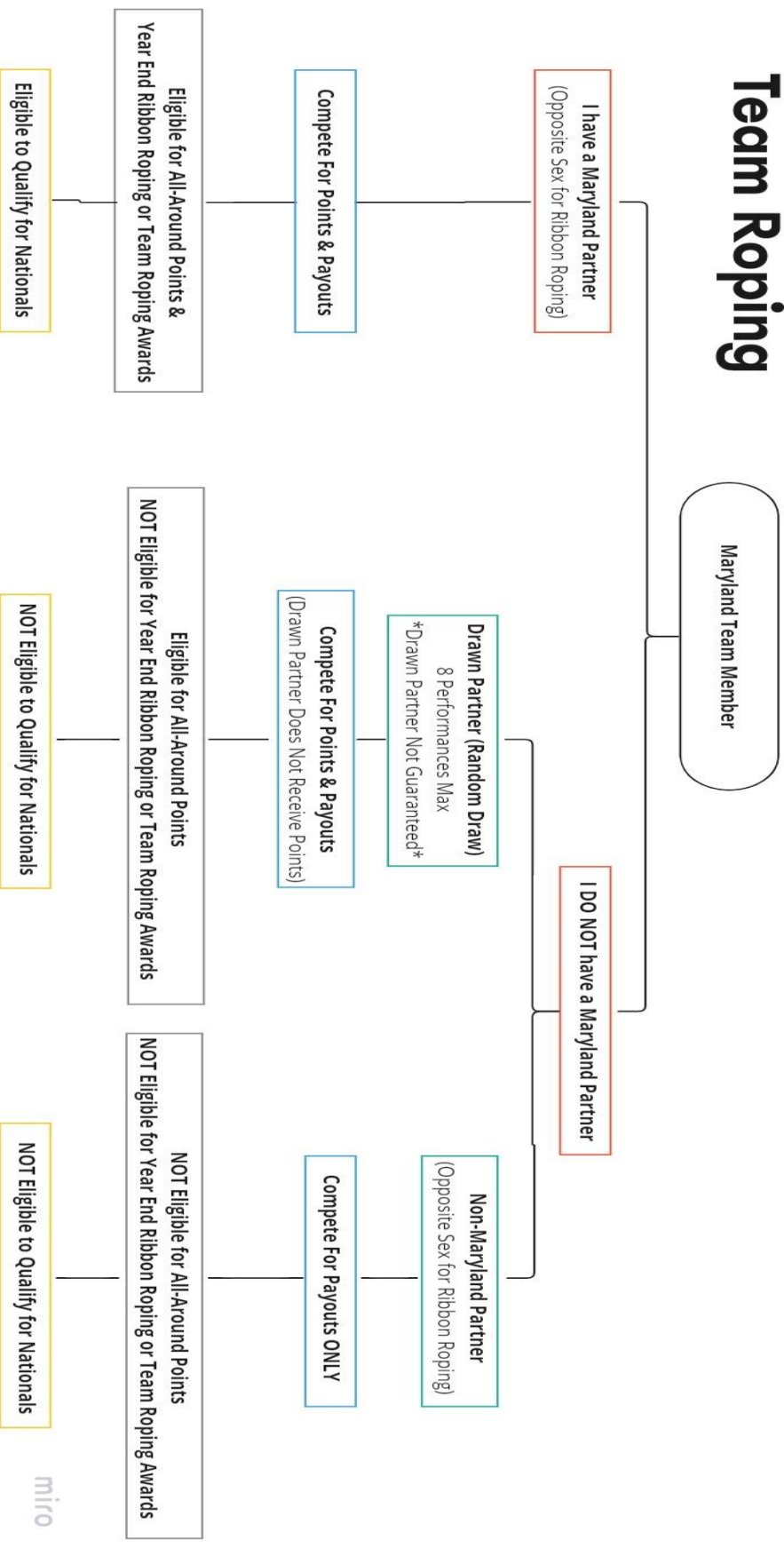
FEEDBACK:

As a 100% volunteer organization, MDHSRA relies heavily on the involvement of contestants and parents to make each rodeo successful. We welcome feedback on how the organization might improve over time. Any contestant or parent is welcome to attend the monthly board meetings and listen to the old and new business discussed by the Adult Board. Please contact the state secretary to add an item to the monthly meeting's agenda. If you would like to speak to a board member, telephone numbers are available on the MDHSRA website under 'contacts'. Please remember that each board member is a volunteer and has full time jobs and families. Therefore, if you need to call a board member, please be respectful of board member's time. Any voicemail will be returned within 24-48 hours.

THE FUTURE:

MDHSRA is growing each year. These are exciting times to be involved in the sport of rodeo, especially with the high school rodeo. Our contestants are the future of rodeo and the furthering of Western Heritage. As we grow in numbers, we will grow in ability. With increased membership and a higher level of competition, we should see our teams improve each year, as well as our ability to offer more money, scholarships and awards.

Ribbon Roping & Team Roping





I hereby attest that I have read the Maryland High School Rodeo Association, Inc. Contestant and Parent Handbook. I understand and am aware of the contents of this handbook.

Contestant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Good Luck this season!