

SADDLE SCORE

■ **THE RODEO:** where hard men ride angry livestock, for points. Or chase it and tie it up, for points. Or fall off and get stood on by it, for no points. **RALPH** heads to Mt Isa's legendary annual rodeo to learn the ropes.

STEER WRESTLING

✓ **IF IT GOES RIGHT**
WRESTLING? Mugging, more like. The cowboy leaps off his horse onto the horns of a runaway 200kg steer and uses his momentum to flip it over. The clock stops when the steer is on the ground and all four hooves are pointing in the same direction.



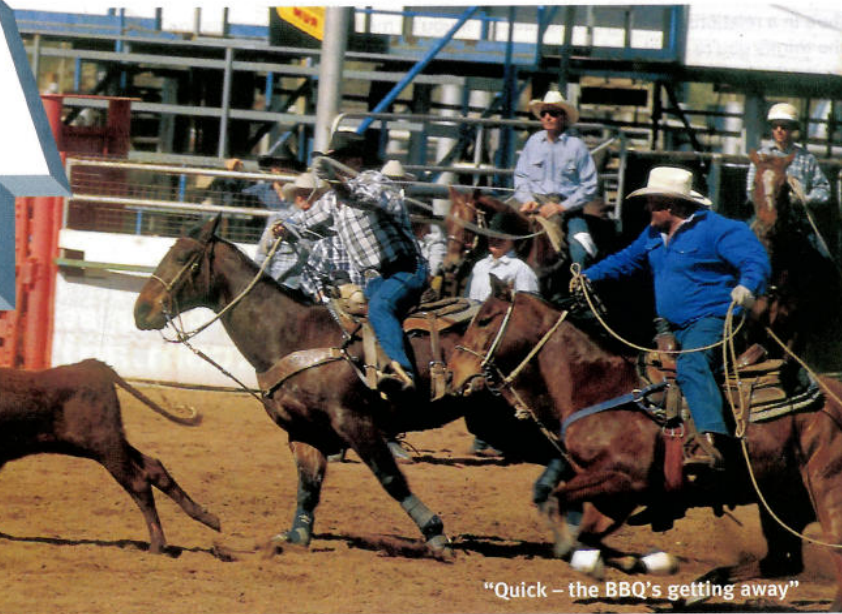
Mt Isa footy training



✗ **IF IT GOES WRONG**
THE cowboy can miss, or the steer remain upright and refuse to become just another street-crime statistic. If the steer doesn't go down first time, an 80kg cowboy is left trying to pull a 200kg steer to the ground. At Mt Isa, one bloke pulls one over directly on top of him. The next 10 frantic seconds look like one of those videos they make in liberal parts of Europe. Poor bastard doesn't get any points, either.

TEAM ROPING

✓ **IF IT GOES RIGHT**
ONE bloke (the "header") lassoes the calf's head, the other (the "heeler") lassoes both hind legs and ties his end round the saddle horn. Cue casual cowboy nods to each other and crowd.



"Quick - the BBQ's getting away"



✗ **IF IT GOES WRONG**
THE header could miss the fleeing schnitzel filler completely or, as often happens, the heeler only gets one hind leg. Cue tears, recriminations and a calf's unsettling laugh of triumph as he leaves the arena.

ROPE AND TIE

✓ **IF IT GOES RIGHT**
THE calf gets a short head start before a bloke on a highly trained horse chases, ropes it, jumps down and physically dumps it on its side like a roll of mooring carpet. He ties three hooves together with a bit of string and he's done. This should take less than 10 seconds.



"The secret is to tickle his tummy"



He'll veal that tomorrow

✗ **IF IT GOES WRONG**
EITHER the rope misses the calf; the string comes loose; or the horse starts dragging the helpless calf around in an amusing manner. The RSPCA has reservations about the long-term mental effect on the calf.