



**Thunder
Mountain**
pro-rodeo

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Part of the Cowlitz County Events Center

Bullfighter

What do you get when you cross a funny guy with a painted face, spandex shorts, and oversized pants classed against a rank bull? In this sport we call rodeo, this would be bullfighting at its best.

In rodeo's early days, clowns were entertainers first, protectors of the fallen bull riders second. But in today's sport of professional rodeo, protecting bull riders from serious injury or death is no joking matter. Bullfighters are dead serious about saving the cowboy, and often will place their own lives in jeopardy.

Because a bull will charge a horse and rider and make every effort to attack and injure anyone in their way, pick-up men cannot be used in the bull riding event. When a 2,000 pound bull decides to go on the rampage, these clown-painted matadors appear to play with the animal, and once a cowboy is on the ground, this distraction allows the cowboy to escape the best way he can to the nearest fence railing or open gate. The men in the funny outfits have honed their skills and methods of distracting bulls, and they know how to get into the bull's face. They can often make the difference between a successful bull ride and a tragedy, all this while entertaining the audience.

Highly trained athletes, Bullfighters combine the courage of a commando, the instincts of a prize fighter and a degree of highly tuned professionalism that comes from knowing that a wrong move or momentary lapse of concentration could result in major injury in front of thousands of people.