



## Little Britches Rodeo – It’s All About Our Kids

–Story By: Kimber Solberg, NLBRA Executive Director

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It’s always been about kids and to that degree Little Britches Rodeo hasn’t changed much during its 54-year history. It’s now an association dedicated to kids ages 5 to 18, who are lucky enough to live a life that many of us just dream about – one that involves horses and competing in the great sport of rodeo.

Rodeo is a family “business” and no one understands that better than the families who compete in Little Britches Rodeo. To be an active NLBRA member, it takes a family. Parents, guardians, aunts, uncles, friends and even grandparents are dedicated to providing the best possible experience for their kids. And this happens in a variety of ways, including finding great horses, roping a bale of hay for hours, being in the practice pen, attending professional rodeo clinics or taking lessons, and of course hauling down the highway to the next Little Britches Rodeo.

When you get to a Little Britches Rodeo your family instantly grows to include those who have hauled in for the same rodeo. It’s one of the strangest and yet one of the best things about rodeo. Your

competition becomes your best friends. In today’s age, it is sometimes hard to find support, especially when you’re the “new kid on the block”, but in Little Britches our new comers and their families remark how welcome they felt the very first time they went to a rodeo. A family new to the NLBRA is the Custer family from Arizona. “Everyone there, the announcer, the judges, the other contestants and those sitting in the stands were cheering for my kid,” said World Champion Bull Rider Cody Custer. “And, then I realized that they weren’t just cheering on my kid, but every kid who entered the arena. It was a great experience and we look forward to being members for many years to come.”

Little Britches Rodeo is designed to help the children progress as they mature. Our youngest contestants, who can join on their fifth birthday, are known as the Little Wranglers. This division is combined for boys and girls ages five to seven and they compete in four events -- barrel racing, pole bending, flag racing and goat tail untying.

The Junior Division, for boys and girls 8 to

13, is broken into events for boys and events for girls, but there are two events, team roping and ribbon roping, where they can compete together as a team. Junior boys events are: bareback riding, bull riding, flag racing, goat tying, breakaway roping. Junior girls events are: barrel racing, pole bending, breakaway roping, goat tying and trail course.

The Senior Division, for boys and girls 14-18, is also broken into separate events except team roping, where teams can be made up of two boys, two girls or a boy and a girl. Senior Girls compete in the same events as Junior Girls and the Senior Boys compete in the same events as the professionals, including: bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, tie-down roping, steer wrestling.

Little Britches Rodeo's slogan is "Where Legends Begin" and it's true, Little Britches Rodeo has helped to produce some of the top professional cowboys and cowgirls including: Ty Murray, Butch and Rope Myers, Kyle Hughes, K.C. Jones, Kristie Peterson, Marlene McRae, Shali Lord, Cimarron Gerke, Todd Suhn, and many more.

We hope you make time to watch these young athletes every Wednesday night. We thank our sponsors, especially RFD-TV, EZ Up TV and Outdoor 123 for seeing our vision of growing the National Little Britches Rodeo Association, while bringing you the viewer great family programming.

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The NLBRA, a 501-c-3, is unique providing a single set of rules for the more than 265 NLBRA franchised rodeos across the country. Whether a contestant competes in Minnesota, Arizona, Colorado, Mississippi or any of the other 15 states he/she can rest assured that the rodeo will be held to the standards set forth in the Official NLBRA Rulebook. Contestants across the country are competing at the NLBRA franchised rodeos during the year to hone their skills and accumulate points, which count towards the National Little Britches Finals Rodeo. The National Finals Rodeo is the culminating event where more than \$150,000 in prizes and scholarship money is awarded to deserving youngsters.

Little Britches  
 Premieres each  
 Wednesday on

“Where Legends Begin” and it’s true . . .

NLBRA photos from the 2005 National Little Britches Finals Rodeo, provided by 3 Lazy J Photography.