

A bareback rider holds fast while competing Sunday in the 15th annual Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo.

MINDY SCHAUER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

RODEO DAZE

Cowboys compete in two-day event that raises money for South County charities.

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LEAVE THE STEERIN' TO THESE COWBOYS



Hunter Brown, 3, of Buena Park watches the festivities with his parents, Jennifer and Joshua, while attending his first rodeo.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MINDY SCHAUER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Thirty of the top rodeo cowboys competed for \$250,000 in prize money at the Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo this weekend. The two-day event has been hosted by Rancho Mission Viejo's O'Neill-Avery-Moiso family for the past 15 years to celebrate the early California rodeo tradition and pay tribute to the sport while raising funds for local charities. Proceeds from the annual event benefit South Orange County charities, including the Shea Center for Therapeutic Riding in San Juan Capistrano and CHOC at Mission Hospital. The group has donated more than \$1.5 million so far, it said.

ABOVE: Dakota Eldridge brings down a steer Sunday.

RIGHT: Zeke Thurston hangs on for the saddle bronc contest.



Tanner Milan grits his teeth while grappling with a steer Sunday, the second day of the 15th annual Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo.