Horse euthanized due to serious injury in Calgary Stampede chuckwagon races

A horse was euthanized due to an injury sustained in Saturday's chuckwagon races at the Calgary Stampede.

Chad Fike's team in the Calgary Stampede chuckwagon races Saturday evening. Image: Sportsnet.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, July 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Vancouver Humane Society (VHS) is once again speaking out against the Calgary Stampede's deadly chuckwagon races after a horse was euthanized due to an unrecoverable injury in Heat 8 of Saturday evening's races.

The Stampede confirmed that the horse, who was part of Chad Fike's team, suffered a leg injury and was later euthanized.

VHS Campaigns Director, Emily Pickett, says this incident is not an outlier. Since the VHS began tracking fatalities in 1986, at least 110 animals have died in the Calgary Stampede's animal events, 79 of which were in chuckwagon racing. "It's extremely frustrating to see the Stampede chuckwagon races proceed each year, knowing after decades of advocacy that another horse will almost certainly lose their life," Pickett said.

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>
> *Emily Pickett, VHS Campaign Director*

Despite minor changes attempting to improve the safety of the chucks over the years, horses have continued to die at an alarming rate. The VHS points to the fact that these changes, like reducing the number of horses on the track, fail to address the inherent risk factors of the sport: the close proximity of horses and wagons, the extremely fast pace, and the use of thoroughbred horses, who are typically bred for speed rather than skeletal

health.

After decades of advocacy, the VHS continues to hear from Stampede-goers who were not aware of the risk to animals. This year, the organization pointed to ad companies in Calgary that were complicit in hiding cruelty from the public by refusing to run animal welfare ads. Astral Media Outdoor (owned by Bell Media), Rogers Media, and RedPoint Media Group all backed out of advertising agreements with the VHS which would have informed the public about welfare concerns.

Chad Fike's team in the Calgary Stampede chuckwagon races Saturday evening. Image: Sportsnet.

“The Stampede has built a careful narrative claiming organizers care about animal welfare, but animals die almost every single year. It’s simply not worth the risk. If they truly cared, the so-called Half-Mile of Hell would be a thing of the past,” Pickett added.

Despite censorship of advocacy messages, public approval of chuckwagon racing continues to fall in the wake of near-annual incidents and a growing awareness about animal well-being. 59% of Canadians and 54% of Calgarians disagree with the use of horses in chuckwagon races, according to a Research Co. poll commissioned by the VHS in July 2024.

The VHS is asking that the rodeo and chuckwagon races be removed from the Stampede program to prevent more suffering and deaths. The organization is encouraging people to sign a pledge not to attend the rodeo and chuckwagon races and send a message directly to government decision-makers as part of its Rodeo Truth project, run in collaboration with concerned Calgarians.

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