

Show Camp Student Text – Draft

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Woodchopping off to a saw-some start!

By Eden and Arabella

The woodchopping and sawing competitions take place from the August 9 to August 16 in the Ekka Woodchop Arena.

Competitors of all ages from right across Australia compete in a variety of events, hoping to win part of a prize pool of over \$140 000.

At the Ekka this year, there were over 1600 entries to compete in the Underhand, Standing Block, Tree Felling, Sawing, Team Relay, and combination events.

Competitors set up their block, mark lines on their log where they are going to chop, and choose an axe or saw. The winners are judged by whoever finishes first.

“Having a good, strong core and strong arms and legs doesn’t hurt, but if you don’t know how to do it technically, it makes it a really long time,” said Madeleine Edwards, woodchopping competitor.

Handicap events are also held, where competitors start at different times, depending on how many events they’ve won.

Normally there are eight competitors in each race, which are sometimes called ‘dummies’.

The Brisbane Show Camp is a joint program of The Department of Education Queensland and The Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland. The camp is conducted by the Brisbane Urban Environmental Education Centre.



Standing Block Underhand

“We’re very much friends, but we are very competitive,” said Wayne Graham, a woodchopping judge.

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The Ekka is hosting eight national titles this year. These are the 325mm Standing Block, 350mm Underhand, 325mm Tree Felling, 300mm Standing Block Hard-Hitting, Women's 275mm Underhand, Women's 325 Single Handed Sawing, Open 450mm Double Handed Sawing, and the Jack and Jill 375mm Double Handed Sawing.

Standing block is an event in which an individual cuts a scarf in one side of the log, and then one on the opposite side, slightly higher than the first.

In Underhand, the competitors stand on top of the log and use a downward motion to chop the log in half as quickly as possible.

In Treefelling, the axemen work their way up the pole by cutting small pockets and inserting a wooden board with a metal shoe on the end, climbing onto it, and repeating as they make their way to the top. When they get there, they cut the block on top of the pole.

People cannot agree on when the sport started. Some say it was in 1870 in Ulverstone, Tasmania, when two axemen made a \$50 bet as to who could fell a tree first. Others believe it started in the 16th century Basque Country, when a man chopped ten logs and ran a marathon to be allowed to propose to his future wife.

The first ever woodchopping championship was held in 1891, at Bell's Parade, Latrobe, Tasmania. Later, the site was selected to be the home of the Australian Axemen's Hall of Fame and Timberworks.