

# Pamplona battles camera craze by bull run daredevils

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Spanish authorities are cracking down on dare devils who shoot camera footage even as they risk their lives by running with half-tonne fighting bulls at the annual San Fermin festival.

Police routinely stop people carrying cameras from taking part in the electrifying early morning runs, in which crowds of people are chased by six fighting bulls and six steers through the streets of the northern city of Pamplona.

Those caught using a recording device during a bull run can be slapped with a fine ranging from 600 euros to 60,000 euros (\$800 to \$80,000) depending on the level of danger they are deemed to have provoked.

Police have fined "six or seven people" so far this year for filming during a bull run during the week-long festival, including a British man who got a 650-euro fine on Tuesday, said Pamplona city councillor Gabriel Viedma who is responsible for security.

"Bringing a camera to film or take a picture produces behaviours that generate danger. People stop running to take a picture or to let the bulls go by," he said.

Despite the police measures each day dozens of people can be seen carrying digital cameras, sometimes on a mast, and camera-equipped smartphones as they take part in the daily early morning bull runs, a highlight of the July 6-14 fiesta which dates back to the Middle Ages.

## Posting dramatic images

Recording devices have gotten smaller and more lightweight over the past decade making it easier—and more tempting—to bring to a bull run.

At the same time the rise in the popularity social media sites like Facebook has provided a ready outlet for runners, most of them dressed in white with red scarves, who want to share the dramatic images taken along the winding course through Pamplona's narrow cobbled streets.

YouTube features dozens of videos taken by Pamplona bull run participants in recent years using wearable GoPro cameras, which allow action sports enthusiasts to record their exploits as they experience it and easily post the images online.

It was much easier for the authorities to spot video cameras when they were bigger, said Pamplona city councillor Fermin Alonso who is responsible for cultural activities including the fiesta.

"It has become much more complicated to detect them," he said.

## Screams in pain

Last year a 20-year-old American student, Patrick Eccles, who brought a cameraphone to a bull run was gored in the stomach and had his spleen removed.

Pictures showed him being pierced by a bull's horn as he screamed in pain, with one hand grasping one of the bull's horns and the other hand clutching a black cameraphone.

"When I started out it was rare to see, now there are cameras everywhere," said American lawyer Peter Mulligan who has come to Pamplona to run with the bulls each year since 2004.

"It's dangerous. People with a 200 dollar camera are more concerned with protecting their camera than protecting themselves."

People who use a camera during a bull run are putting other runners in danger, not just themselves, said Juan Pedro Lecuona, a 41-year-old father of four who has run with the bulls in Pamplona every year since 1989 and who was gored in 2010.

"Everyone wants to immortalise the moment that they took part in something that is unique in the world. But you stop running and you don't realise that you are blocking someone's path," he said.

"People have not gotten it into their heads that you can die in a bull run."

Fifteen people have been killed since records started in 1911, most recently in 2009 when a 27-year-old Spanish man was gored in the neck, heart and lungs.

Dozens of people are injured each year. Most injuries are not caused by bull horns but by runners falling, or being knocked over or trampled by the animals.

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