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## Sol Neelman *More Weird Sports*

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 Brandy Rettig  
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### Weird, weirder, weirdest. New works from the sports universe of Sol Neelman

In this third volume of his series *Weird Sports*, Sol Neelman revisits the joy and community surrounding people's love of nontraditional sports. They include surreal competitions like: Barbie Jeep racing, log riding, redneck fishing, medieval rugby, cheese rolling, lightsaber fencing, mochi lifting, and live monster wrestling. Many of these events are more performance art than competitive sport, a celebration where a participation trophy is the ultimate medal of excellence.

All *Weird Sports* aim to achieve the same goal: bring together like-minded, creative, and active humans, often in costume and usually with cheap beer in hand. As it so happens, this photo collection wraps up right at the very start of the pandemic, creating an unintentional time capsule of life and laughter before the world came to a halt.

#### From the text by **Brandy Rettig**:

*We've been led to believe, mostly by people who are no fun to hang out with, that the pursuit of joy is a frivolous endeavor, something best put aside until the bills are paid and the dishes done. Sol Neelman has no time for such nonsense. His photographs remind us that everyone was put on this planet not to toil, but to celebrate. We are meant to race along snowy slopes wearing furry animal costumes, cartwheel across grassy hillsides in pursuit of 9-pound wheels of Gloucester cheese rolling along at 65 mph, and cling to the trunks of a giant Japanese firs as they careen down the side of a mountain. More Weird Sports makes clear that joy is an essential part of life, an absolute human need that builds community, strengthens relationships, and keeps us going no matter what. Flip through Sol's wonderful photographs and you'll find yourself ready to crash through a five-foot wall of PBR tallboys on a motorcycle, hollering*

*"OH YEAH!" at the top of your lungs as exploding torrents of beer shower onlookers. Go ahead and grab a helmet. The dishes can wait.*

**Sol Neelman** (b. 1970) is a failed prep athlete turned sports photographer from the wonderfully weird suburbs of Portland, Oregon. After squeaking by with a journalism degree at the University of Oregon (Go Ducks!), Sol launched his photography career in 1996 with a humanitarian agency in what was then called Yugoslavia. The following year, Sol returned to Oregon and landed a gig with the community paper in McMinnville. In 2000, he split to photograph for the Beaver State's largest paper, *The Oregonian*. He was part of the team that won a Pulitzer for the paper's Breaking News Reporting in 2007 right before exiting for a freelance career. Since then, Sol has traveled the world chronicling some of the weirdest sports on Earth. In that time he has cheated death on a 60-foot forklift, been knocked unconscious by a bronco at a prison rodeo, and tumbled off a ski lift overloaded with furrries. Oh, he also covered the Olympics once or twice.

Sol's work has graced the pages of pretty much every publication worth reading, from *National Geographic* to *ESPN* to *The New York Times*. It even appeared in *Penthouse* (long story), which is probably better than Sol appearing in *Penthouse*. Advertising clients include one or two companies you might know of, including Nike, adidas and Clif Bar.

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