



Bullfighters and the Running of the Bulls

Although not a common sight, El Fandi, Rivera Ordoñez and Padilla have been some of the famous matadors, professional bullfighters, who have run with the bulls in the encierro in Pamplona, a mere 10 hours before facing them in the bullring. Wishing to feel the risk, they blend in with the crowd, going unnoticed except by a few friends and seldom without live coverage from the TV cameras lining the route. While fame and glory may await them in the afternoon, running with the bulls is a completely different game for them, but one that is no less dangerous. El Juli (Julián López Escobar) once remarked in an interview that he would never run with the bulls, saying *“in the Plaza de Toros I have control, but not so in the street”*.

Antonio Ordoñez, one of Spain’s most famous bullfighters and grandfather of Rivera Ordoñez and younger brother Cayetano, was one of the first contemporary bullfighters known to have often taken part in the encierro, the running of the bulls, in Pamplona. While it’s likely some of the earlier bullfighters would also have run with the bulls, there is no photographic record. Ordoñez would run as often as he could alongside some of his brothers, members of the Peña Oberena, which itself ran for the first time in 1941. Born in Ronda in 1932, he made his first public appearance as a bullfighter in 1948 and

in 1951, at aged 19, appeared in the bullring in Madrid. From his first appearance as a professional bullfighter in 1952, until his retirement in 1971, he rarely missed an encierro, and there were times, as can be seen in photographs from the '60's, when he helped out the pastores (herders), the eight men, who now wear dark green shirts with the word *PASTORES* emblazoned in white on the back, there to control and protect the animals, runners are on their own. He never, however, ran with the bulls on the morning he was to face them in the afternoon.

Another famous bullfighter, arguably the greatest bull-fighter of the century, who also wanted to experience the excitement of the run was Luis Miguel Dominguin. Chronicled in Hemingway's *"The Dangerous Summer"*, there also is an account in Enmanuel de Marichalar's book *"El Soplo en la espalda"*, *A shiver up the back*, or *"Le soufflé dans le dos"* in French, which relates how he entered the bullring holding a bull by its tail. Dominguin crossed the length of the arena dragged along by the bull, his heels dug into the sand, letting go only when the bull was about to enter the pens on the other side, something today that would be frowned upon and could cost a novice runner 3000€.

Other well-known bullfighters that have run in the streets of Pamplona were Antonio José Galán, "Paquirri", José María Manzanares and Luis Francisco Esplá. Most recently Francisco Rivera Ordoñez, Juan José Padilla or El Fandi (currently ranked the No.1 bullfighter in the world) have been seen running with the bulls.

Rivera, following the family tradition of both his grandfather Antonio Ordoñez and father "Paquirri", started running the bulls that he would later fight that day in the mid-90's. At first he was to be seen running in the Ayuntamiento, the Town Hall Square, where the run is short but fast, before moving to the end of Calle Estafeta near Telefonica so that he could run the final distance into the bullring with the lead bulls. His brother, Cayetano, a high-profile model for Loewe and Armani who took his *alternativa* on September 9, 2006, at the age when some bullfighters begin to think about retiring, was also seen running with the bulls before his retirement. He has subsequently returned to the bullring, fighting first in his hometown of Ronda during the 2015 season.

David Fandila, "El Fandi" not only has taken part in the run but did so with all the skill and experience of the most veteran of runners. He was seen on July 14, 2003 running close in front of the horns of "Descotado", a dangerous Torrestrella bull weighing in at 525 kilos, and he led the bull all the way into the ring in an encierro that lasted 4 minutes 9 seconds. There were two gorings that morning, one very serious for a young American from Florida. Few spectators realized at that moment that the runner with the blue polo was precisely the same bullfighter who would fight "Descotado" later that

same afternoon, for which he was awarded an ear. Curiously enough, as luck and San Fermín would have it, the same thing had happened on July 11, the previous year when he had a similar experience with an equally dangerous bull from the Jandilla ranch called “Dormidero”. Two runners were gored that morning.



Juan José Padilla, a bullfighter renowned in Pamplona for his daring in the bullring, especially with the Miura breed, was also keen on running with the bulls, even since he made his debut in the Monumental bullring in 1999. In 2005 he acknowledged in an interview that he liked to get there early so that he can “*talk to the minders of the bulls, the pastores, and get their advice.*” He stopped running with the bulls after a serious injury a few years ago cost him his left eye, but it has not stopped him from facing the same bulls in the Plaza de Toros to everyone’s amazement.