

Teamwork key to state championship

By Jim Cornelius
Correspondent

The Outlaws knew going into Oregon High School Equestrian Teams (OHSET) state competition that they had a clear shot at the gold in Team Penning.

“We knew we’re really good at this,” Sidney Sillers told *The Nugget*.

Sillers, Bailey Knirk and Savy Salisbury — all freshmen — lived up to their potential, winning the state competition handily among a field of 30 teams. Team Penning is an equestrian sport derived from ranch work, where cattle have to be separated out for transport or for doctoring. Three riders work against a clock to separate specifically identified cattle, guiding them into a pen. Over three go-rounds, the Outlaws team separated out eight cows in a total time of 141.71, nearly a minute faster than their nearest competitor.

The three riders rotated responsibilities in the three go-rounds — one entering the herd to cut out the correct cow, while the others cut away and blocked out the rest of the herd.

The work requires intense concentration.

“If you look away for a second, you’re going to lose it,” Sillers said.

Communication is paramount, and all three girls emphasized how well they work together.

“I feel like we just work really well as a team together,” Salisbury said. “We cooperate well.”

“Team Penning would probably have to be my favorite event in OHSET,” Knirk said. “I like that it’s a timed



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sidney Sillers, Savy Salisbury, and Bailey Knirk turned good communication, strong teamwork and a love for cow work into a championship trophy.

event and a speed event, too. I like working with my team a lot.”

Knirk emphasized that teamwork isn’t at a premium solely among the riders:

“It’s also your partnership with your horse,” she said. “Cow horses give you a lot; they work really hard for you. That’s important.”

Knirk rode her cow horse Winnie to the championship, while Sillers rode a bay roan quarter horse named Sophie. Salisbury rode a friend’s horse named Misty, because both of her horses are rescue animals that shouldn’t be placed under the stress of competition.

The team has been training since February, working at the Cascade Cattle Club and at a private ranch that provided cattle to work. Community support to provide training opportunities is critical.

“There’s not a lot of places you can practice Team Penning,” Knirk noted.

Salisbury is grateful for the opportunity to compete.

“I’m just really appreciative to be able to be in OHSET and to be in a town where it’s possible to do OHSET,” she

said.

Salisbury and Sillers plan to rest their horses this summer while continuing to improve as riders. Knirk is going into rodeo completion in barrel racing, pole bending, breakaway roping and goat tying.

All three express a particular love for cow work.

“It’s just so thrilling,” said Sillers. “You never know what’s going to happen.”

One thing that happened is an outstanding performance under pressure — and a state championship.

Keep your family safe from West Nile Virus

As the weather begins to warm up, health officials say it’s important for people to protect themselves from disease-carrying mosquitoes. One of the illnesses to avoid is the potentially deadly West Nile virus.

About one in five infected people may show signs of West Nile virus. People at risk of serious illness include individuals 50 and older, and people with immune-compromising conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

West Nile symptoms may include fever above 100 degrees and severe headache, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, shaking, paralysis or rash. People should contact their health-care provider if experiencing any of these symptoms.

Health officials are advising people to take precautions against mosquitoes to avoid the risk of infection, including preventing mosquito bites. West Nile is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

To prevent the spread of West Nile virus:

- Eliminate sources of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes. This includes watering troughs, birdbaths, clogged gutters and old tires.

- When engaged in outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, protect yourself by using mosquito repellents containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or Picardin, and follow the directions on the container.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.

- Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

In 2018, there were two human cases of West Nile virus in two Oregon counties: Harney and Clackamas. The virus was found in one bird, 58 mosquito pools — samples of about 50 mosquitoes each — and two horses. The virus also can be found in chickens, squirrels and dogs.



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