

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Staff photo E.J. Harris

Rodeo announcer Randy Corley watches Brady Nicholes of Hoysville, Utah, ride Duck Butter in saddle bronc riding on Wednesday in the new Farm-City Pro Rodeo Arena in Hermiston.

## New digs, same thrills

Bucking events excite, ropers struggle to open Farm-City

By ERIC SINGER  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Wearing a black long-sleeve shirt, time-worn jeans and bright, colorful chaps, Texas bareback rider Luke Creasy hunkered down on his horse to get ready to ride.

He was lined up to be just the third cowboy to break in the new Farm-City Pro Rodeo arena at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Events Center and wanted to give the interested crowd a good show. But he was also determined to get a high score to help assure him some money, as the Garland, Texas native sat No. 27 in the world and standings and in need of some money as the rodeo seasons turns toward the stretch run.

And Creasy checked off both of his objectives in exciting fashion, riding Calgary Stampede's Soap Bubbles for an 85.5 point ride to win the first performance in bareback and a \$100 dash-for-cash bonus. It was the second time that Creasy matched up with that horse, with the first coming nearly three years ago where he managed a 79 point ride.

"I busted out of (the chute) pretty hard, had a firm mark out and just started spurring away," Creasy said of his ride. "The horse

See RODEO/3B



Staff photo E.J. Harris

Ryan Botham of Heppner pulls down a 4.1-second time in steer wrestling on Wednesday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.



"It felt really good. I've been struggling the last few weeks and to get an 87 was the icing on the cake."

— Toby Collins,  
of Stephenville, Texas

Matt Shiozawa leaps from his horse during tie down roping on his way to a 11.3-second time in the second go if tie down roping on Wednesday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.

Staff photo E.J. Harris

Cowboys, rodeo board happy with new arena

By ERIC SINGER  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — When Farm-City Pro Rodeo announcer Randy Corley and his wife Michelle stopped by Hermiston in June to check out the new rodeo grounds, they were both surprised at what they saw. And what they didn't see.

"There was no grass or anything here June 2, I can tell you that," Corley said during media night festivities on Tuesday. "There were studs on the Chute 8 (building), no walls, we had concrete poured for seats but no bleachers, no fences were in."

However as Corley and his wife departed the rodeo grounds more than two months ago, he had no doubt that the Farm-City board would be able to work its magic and churn out the state-of-the-art facility they set out to build. When he rolled back into Hermiston this week, he was not disappointed.

"I'm not just sitting here bragging on this committee because I'm here," he said. "I bragged when I drove out of here when most people would have thought

See ARENA/3B

### Sports shorts

#### Falcons sign RB Freeman to five-year, \$41.25 million extension

ATLANTA (AP) — The Atlanta Falcons have agreed to terms on a five-year contract extension with running back Devonta Freeman, addressing one of the biggest issues for the defending NFC champions.

The two sides agreed to terms Wednesday on a five-year, \$41.25 million extension with Freeman, making him the highest-paid running back in the league in terms of the overall package. It includes a \$15 million signing bonus and \$22 million in guaranteed money.

During his three seasons with the Falcons, the Miami native has racked up 2,383 rushing yards, including back-to-back 1,000-yard rushing seasons in 2015 and 2016. His 3,175 total yards over the past two seasons ranks second in the NFL, behind teammate Julio Jones.



Freeman

"He's boring. You've gotta do better than that. If you're going to play that good then you gotta do something."

— Kyle Seager

Seattle Mariners third baseman joking about his younger brother and Los Angeles Dodgers shortstop Corey not choosing to wear a nickname or a creative name on the back of his jersey as a part of MLB's 'Players Weekend' on Aug. 25-27. Kyle is wearing 'Corey's Brother' on his jersey.

#### NFL to hire full-time officials

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL will hire up to 24 full-time game officials. The league will begin hiring between 21 and 24 full-time officials from among the current roster of 124 officials for this season.

Full-time officials will be hired at each of the seven officiating positions and may serve on each of the 17 officiating crews. They will work collaboratively with their assigned crews, the league officiating staff and the NFL's football-related committees during the offseason.

"NFL officials are always looking to improve, and we believe that additional time, particularly in the offseason, will be positive," said NFL Referees Association executive director Scott Green. "We're looking forward to working together with the league on this effort."



#### THIS DATE IN SPORTS

2008 — In Beijing, Michael Phelps begins his long march toward eight gold medals by winning the 400-meter individual medley in 4:03.84 smashing his own world record. The U.S. women's 400-meter freestyle relay team, anchored by 41-year-old Dara Torres, takes the silver behind the Netherlands' Olympic record effort. It's the 10th medal of Torres' career.

1980 — Jack Nicklaus wins his fifth PGA Championship with a record score of 274, seven strokes ahead of Andy Bean.