

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Jack Bentz, of Crane, rides to victory Saturday in the saddle bronc event at the Heart of the Country Rodeo

Crane cowboy shows 'heart'

Jack Bentz posts an 85 to take first in saddle bronc at Helix Heart of the Country Rodeo

By **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

Jack Bentz won't soon forget his first time in Helix.

The Crane cowboy scored an 85 to take first place in the saddle bronc event to open Saturday's 19th annual Heart of the Country Rodeo, hosted by the rural Eastern Oregon town. "This is my first time ever being in this town," said Bentz, 21. "It's been fun. This is a well-put-together rodeo."

Bentz walked away with a handmade belt buckle, a framed Heart of the Rodeo poster, a custom Riggan bag, a cowboy hat from the Pendleton Hat Company, and prize money collected from the rodeo pool.

But this is far from his first major accomplishment in an arena. In just three years as a professional saddle bronc rider, Bentz has already won the Idaho Cowboys Association Rookie of the Year title, and has qualified for the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas for the last two years.

This year, he has his sights set on the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston and the Pendleton Round-Up.

"This is a huge confidence-booster," Bentz said of his Helix win. "This is good for me. Hopefully, I can keep this momentum going into the summer."

In the long round, Bentz' 85 score edged out Paradise Valley, Nevada, brothers Joe and Sam Harper, who each scored an 80.

Bentz didn't fare quite as well in the final-round shoot out, where he earned a 71. Joe Harper took the bonus \$500 cash prize with his score of 79.

Hermiston native Seth Hopper held the top spot on the leaderboard for the meat of the calf roping event with his 8.87-second time, but couldn't tie down his calf in the second round. Cooper Mills of Centerville, Virginia, who finished at 9.19 seconds in the first round, roped his calf in 10.19 seconds in round two for a combined 19.38 final time to take first place.

Local ropers Trent Sorey of Pendleton and Jason Minor of Ellensburg, Washington, also competed in the event, but could not out-rope Mills.

Just one cowboy was able to finish in the bull riding event. Austin Covington of Omak, Washington, scored an 82 to take the first and only prize awarded for the event — all of the other competitors could not stay atop their raging bulls, receiving no score.

But the life of a rodeo cowboy is one lived on the road, and the 21-year-old Covington was well on his way to his next competition in Cooley City, Washington, before he could be presented his prize package, which included a \$1,200 check.

Tenley Woollard was the day's youngest champion. The 11-year-old cowgirl took the top spot in the barrel racing event, finishing at 16.27 seconds. This year was Woollard's fourth at the Helix rodeo, and it was her first as a winner.

The proud rider said it felt "really good" to finally take home the first-place award, which included a Heart of the Country belt buckle and framed poster.

Funds raised at the rodeo went directly back into the community, benefitting local scholarship funds and organizations.

"This was probably one of the better rodeos we've had here, both in overall attendance and stock," said rodeo president Jarod Campbell. "Of course, there's always things to tweak. We're a nonprofit organization. Everything we do here benefits the community. That's what sets us apart from these other rodeos."

STATE TRACK

RAIN CAN'T STOP MAHER'S QUEST FOR GOLD



Photo courtesy of Ben Lonergan
Pendleton's Lane Maher (center) competes in the finals of the 300 hurdles Saturday at the 5A Track and Field State Championships in Gresham. Maher won the event in a time of 38.75 seconds.

Pendleton junior wins 300 hurdles, second in 110s

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
East Oregonian

Lane Maher was not going to let a few rain drops ruin his day.

The Pendleton junior ran a personal best 38.75 seconds Saturday to win the 300 hurdles in the pouring rain at the 5A Track and Field

Championships at Mt. Hood Community College.

"I was thinking about it all day, and knew I had to go fast," said Maher, who broke his own school record in the event. "I was telling myself all day I had to run a 38 to secure first place, and I did that. I crossed the finish line with a big ol' smile on my face."

Earlier in the day, Maher finished second in the 110 hurdles in

a personal best time of 14.73.

Dylan Murray of Willamette won the title in a time of 14.36.

"That was kind of a surprise because of the conditions," Maher said of his time. "Just trying to contribute to my team."

Pendleton coach Larry Brizendine said he did not know how the races would turn out because of

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GOLDEN GIRL

Romero wins 3A state javelin title with a throw of 144-11

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
East Oregonian

Jazlyn Romero knew from her first throw that Saturday would be a good day at the 3A State Track and Field Championships.

The Hermiston junior opened the javelin competition with a throw of 135 feet, 3 inches, and finished the event with a toss of 144-11 to win the state title by more than 15 feet at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma. "My body felt really



Photo courtesy of Michael Nejara

Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero won the javelin title Saturday at the 3A State Track and Field Championships in Tacoma. Romero had a winning throw of 144 feet, 11 inches.

good, and once I got warmed up, I was fine," Romero said. "I was really excited. Madi (Wilson) was like, 'It's go time. Are you ready?'"

Romero is the first Hermiston athlete to win an individual state title since the Bulldogs moved into the WIAA at the start of the school

year.

The Hermiston dance team won a state title in Show in March.

"It's a big day for her," Hermiston coach Emilee Strot said. "When she got her award, they announced she was from Hermiston, Oregon. People were excited, and others had no idea why we were there."

Romero scratched her second throw in the finals, but any one of her other five throws would have won her the title.

"She had a great series," Strot said. "Her best of the year."

Kennewick's Madeleine Gebers finished

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Hall of Fame Packers QB Bart Starr dies

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
The Associated Press

Bart Starr was an ordinary quarterback until teaming with Vince Lombardi on the powerhouse Green Bay Packers teams that ruled the 1960s and ushered in the NFL as America's most popular sport.

The quarterback's graceful throws helped turn a run-heavy league into a passing spectacle, yet it's a run for which he's most famous: the sneak that won the famed "Ice Bowl" in 1967.

Starr died Sunday at age 85 in Birmingham, Alabama, the Packers said. He had been in

failing health since suffering two strokes and a heart attack in 2014.

Starr is the third of Lombardi's dozen Hall of Famers to die in the past eight months. Fullback Jim Taylor died in October and offensive tackle Forrest Gregg died last month.

"A champion on and off the field, Bart epitomized class and was beloved by generations of Packers fans," Packers President Mark Murphy said in a statement. "A clutch player who led his team to five NFL titles, Bart could still fill Lambeau Field with electricity decades later during his many visits."

The Packers selected Starr out of the University of Alabama with the 200th pick in the 1956 draft. He led Green Bay to six titles, five NFL championships and wins in the first two Super Bowls.

"Bart Starr was one of the most genuine, sincere people I knew," NFL Commissioner Roger Godell said in a statement. "He personified the values of our league as a football player, a family man, and a tireless philanthropist who cared deeply about helping at-risk kids. Above all, he was a wonderful human being who will be remembered for his kindness and compassion."



Jeffrey Phelps/TownNews.com Content Exchange

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