

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

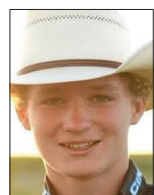
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Local cowboys off to junior high nationals

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian



Goodrich

PENDLETON — Four Columbia Basin cowboys and cowgirls will compete at the 15th annual National Junior High Finals Rodeo from June 23-29 in Huron, S.D.

Georgia and Handy Lieualen of Pendleton, Gator Goodrich of Stanfield and Degan Patton of Pendleton will compete on the

Oregon team. The event will feature 1,000 contestants from 44 states, five Canadian Provinces, Australia and Mexico. It is the world's largest junior high rodeo.

The top 20 in each event through the first two rounds will

compete in the finals June 29. Contestants will be competing for \$80,000 in prizes and \$200,000 in college scholarship money.

Georgia, who just completed the sixth grade at Sunridge Middle School, won the Oregon state titles in barrel racing, pole bending, and combined with her brother Handy for the ribbon roping state title.

Handy, who will be an eighth

grader at Sunridge, also was the state reserve champion in tie-down roping. He also will team rope at nationals with Adrian Steffen of Salem.

Gator, 14, who will be a freshman at Stanfield High School in the fall, won the state tie-down and goat tying titles, and was the boys all-around reserve champion.

He also placed second in rib-

bon roping, chute dogging, and third in team roping with Marcus Marriott of Molalla.

This is Gator's second trip to nationals. He placed in the top 10 in ribbon roping last year.

Degan, who will be an eighth grader at Sunridge, will compete in team roping and tie-down roping. He and partner Hamley Miller of Enterprise won the state team roping title.

Extended ProRodeo Tour benefitting cowboys



Photo courtesy of James Phifer/PRCA

Heppler steer wrestler Blake Knowles, seen here at the 2018 NFR in Las Vegas, has benefitted from an extended ProRodeo Tour schedule this year.

Heppler steer wrestler Blake Knowles had earned more than \$30,000 this year

By TRACY RENCK
ProRodeo.com

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Veteran steer wrestler Blake Knowles is experiencing the benefits of the expanded 2019 ProRodeo Tour with more than \$20,000 won at three Tour stops this season.

The Heppler cowboy is fourth in the ProRodeo Tour standings, which has helped push him to 21st in the PRCA-RAM World Standings with \$30,389.

"This year, the Tour became more of an inclusive thing than an exclusive thing," Knowles said. "We went from having 24 Tour rodeos over the course of last season to 55 this season. When you're rodeoing out here and trying to get to the NFR, your schedule will get you to most of those Tour events because we're trying to go to the biggest and best rodeos every single week. I've just been fortunate

enough to have good luck at Tour rodeos."

Knowles won the average at the Santa Maria (Calif.) Elks Rodeo, June 2, which was a Tour stop, earning \$3,170. He also earned \$10,375 at RodeoHouston in March and \$9,023 at the National Western Stock Show and Rodeo in Denver in January, both Tour stops.

The Tour features 55 rodeos showcasing the top cowboys and rodeos. It began in Denver, Jan. 17-27, and concludes with the Tour Finale on Sept. 5-8 in Puyallup, Wash. A year ago, the ProRodeo Tour featured 24 rodeos.

All cowboys eligible to compete in Tour rodeos have the opportunity to earn Tour points and qualify for the Tour Finale in Puyallup, which will take the top 24 contestants in each event.

The 24 competitors who reach the Washington State Fair Rodeo in Puyallup will have a chance at big money by advancing to the eight-man semifinals and a four-man finals Sept. 8. Those outside the top 24 will try to make up the difference elsewhere.

The ProRodeo Tour is heating up in the coming weeks with stops in Reno,

Nev. (June 21-29), Greeley, Colo. (June 26-July 7), Pecos, Texas (June 26-29), and Springdale, Ark. (June 26-29). The Reno Rodeo is the 18th Tour stop this season, marking the one-third point in the 2019 Tour season.

"I've looked at my win percentage as far as how many rodeos I've attended and how many I've placed at, and it's not really where I want it," Knowles said. "But good for me, I've done well at big Tour rodeos. That's helped in a couple ways: No. 1, it has helped in the world standings because when I have won, I've won good amounts, and secondly, going along with that is getting some Tour points racked up."

"The Tour finale in Puyallup is always a great rodeo and a tremendous opportunity that time of year to make good money. If they go head to head, a Tour event and not a Tour event, I'm going to go to the Tour event and try and secure my spot in Puyallup because I understand how important that's going to be."

Knowles has qualified for the Wrangler NFR four times — 2009, 2011, 2015 and 2018.

U.S. defeats rival Sweden 2-0, finishes atop group

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

LE HAVRE, France — The United States faced its toughest test of the Women's World Cup and the defending champions were again dominant Thursday night, beating Sweden 2-0 to serve up revenge against the fierce rivals that stunned the Americans in the last Olympics.

Lindsey Horan scored within the first three minutes, the fastest goal of this tournament. The United States went up 2-0 on an own goal off Jonna Andersson in the 50th minute that gave the Americans a tournament-record 18 goals in the group stage. The U.S. did not concede a goal for the first time in group play.

"We needed this next level and we responded to that. That's the ignition we needed," U.S. coach Jill Ellis said.

Already assured a spot in the round of 16 before the game, the United States finished atop its group and will head to Reims to face Spain on Monday. Sweden will play Canada in Paris.

The meeting was the first tournament game between the two teams since the quarterfinals of the 2016 Olympics. The Swedes bunched in on defense and advanced on penalties after a 1-1 draw, handing the United States its earliest-ever exit from the Olympic tournament. Former U.S. goalkeeper Hope Solo called the Swedes "cowards" for the defensive stand, a comment that effectively ended her career with the U.S. team.

"We've been part of some very big games against them, and we haven't beaten them in a major tournament in a while. So it feels good that we can go into this tournament and we can play well against a quality side and get a result," defender Becky Sauerbrunn said.

The United States pounced on Thailand in its opener, winning 13-0 and drawing criticism for celebrating every goal even when the game was well in hand. The Americans had a more staid performance

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Pelicans take Zion Williamson with No. 1 pick in NBA draft

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — Zion Williamson plays with force and ferocity, a Hulk in hightops who looks as though he'd never show a soft side.

Draft night proved otherwise.

Williamson was the No. 1 pick of the New Orleans Pelicans — a surprise to nobody who watched basketball this past season. But afterward he couldn't hide his emotions, even though he along with everyone else knew what would happen Thursday night.

"Because I love the game of basketball," he said. "You can hear people say things like, 'Oh, that it was likely I was going to go No. 1.' But I guess you don't know until you actually go through it. Hearing my name called and I was able to make it on

stage without a tear, shake the commissioner's hand, but in the interview my mom was standing beside me, and my emotions just took over."

There might be tears of joy in New Orleans, too, after the Pelicans were able to get the Duke powerhouse who is considered one of the most exciting prospects in years.

The 6-foot-7, 285-pounder compiled a college career worth of highlights into just one season, becoming the third freshman to be voted player of the year by The Associated Press.

His assault on the rims made him a favorite of college basketball fans, but his game is more than just dunks. Williamson averaged 22.6 points and 8.9 rebounds while shooting 68% from the field.

Wearing a white suit, he hugged members of his family and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver after

his name was called first at Barclays Center.

Williamson will step into an open position in New Orleans, which recently agreed to trade All-Star Anthony Davis, the last freshman to win the AP award, to the Los Angeles Lakers.

"I'm going to do anything to win. I'm just going to do anything to win," Williamson said.

The Memphis Grizzlies also quickly addressed a positional need by taking Murray State's Ja Morant with the No. 2 pick. The Grizzlies agreed to trade Mike Conley, their longtime point guard, to Utah a day earlier.

They got a good replacement in Morant, who led Division I with 10 assists per game as a sophomore

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AP Photo/Julio Cortez

Duke's Zion Williamson, right, poses for photographs with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver after being selected by the New Orleans Pelicans as the first pick during the NBA basketball draft on Thursday in New York.