

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Making a smooth go of bull riding

Support personnel key to Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding event

By CARLOS FUENTES
The Observer

UNION — Blake West had a long day.

For most people, the Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding event at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show started at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 10, and finished a little over two hours later. For West, the event started at 8 a.m. and didn't finish until long after the bulls were done bucking and the crowd had gone home.

West, a Union High School graduate and Blue Mountain Community College rodeo coach, is a pickup man for bull riding shows — in other words, during every ride, he waits on horseback to steer the bull to the exit. He said he considered this year's show a success, which he attributes to the event planners.

"The guys here at the stock show do a great job. This is my favorite rodeo all year," he said. "It's like a family and high school reunion every time it happens, and I really do love it."

However, being a pickup man requires more than two hours of work. Throughout the day, West was constantly sorting, gathering and transporting livestock, all to ensure the main event ran smoothly.

Out of 39 bull riders, Payton Fitzpatrick and Ruger Piva tied for first place with scores of 84. Each of them earned \$3,388 for the win. Heavy favorite Derek Kolbaba, a Wallowa County native who now lives in Walla Walla, was scheduled to compete but was not in attendance.

According to Chad Hutsell, stock contractor,



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Bullfighting brothers Ryan Manning and Miles Barry, with Sean Peterson, taunt the angry bull White Noise away from a downed cowboy on Thursday, June 10, 2021, at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union. Bullfighters spend years learning how to manage adrenaline and fear while in the arena, allowing them to keep clear minds while facing down bulls.



Carlos Fuentes/The Observer

Blake West, the Blue Mountain Community College rodeo coach and a pickup man at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union, readies a lasso Thursday, June 10, 2021, during the Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding event.

none of this would be possible without endless hours of behind-the-scenes work.

"Everybody works hard, and they gotta love it to do it," he said. "Everyone that is here is passionate about the sport and wants the event

to go as best as possible, so that's why we work hard."

As many as 30 people worked to transport, sort and move the animals over the course of the day, including 46 bulls from various owners. According to



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Bullfighter Sean Peterson picks up his hat after donning protective gear and gets ready to enter the arena Thursday, June 10, 2021, during the Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding event for the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union.

Hutsell, everyone working at the rodeo helps each other throughout the event, from transporting the animals to releasing them into the arena to making sure that the bulls don't injure the riders.

For bullfighter Sean

Peterson, a Summerville native and 10-year bullfighter, the job seemed like a perfect fit.

"It comes naturally to me. I've always liked being

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Linebackers Club hands out scholarships

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Since 1983, the Pendleton Linebackers Club has awarded scholarships to Pendleton football players in honor of former Pendleton High School coach Don Requa.

This year, Tyasin Burns was awarded the Don Requa scholarship of \$10,000, while Sam Coleman was given the \$4,000 Alex Stuvland Scholarship and Blake Swanson will receive the Schindler-Bunch Scholarship worth \$15,000.

Pendleton Linebackers Club historian Tom Melton said recipients are chosen by a committee that includes Linebackers President Dennis Hunt and others.

"We get input from coaches, as well as a group of us who watch the games," Melton said. "We check with folks who are involved with the coaches and people at the high school."

While the three scholarships are for football players only, Melton said the organization is trying to build its coffers to offer a scholarship for female athletes.

"We all have daughters or granddaughters," Melton said. "We know there are some very good female athletes out there."

Swanson's scholarship is the only one of the three that is a one-time payment of the full amount.

Burns will receive \$2,500 each year for four years, while Coleman will get \$1,000 a year for four years.

Tyasin Burns

A shifty running back who came to Pendleton after Nixyaawii's co-op with Pilot Rock ended last year, Burns made the leap from 1A 8-man football to the 5A level look easy.

Burns helped the Bucks average 24.6 points a game and also starred on defense.

He was a first-team Intermountain Conference selection at safety and was a second-team running back.

During his junior year at Pilot Rock, Burns ran for 2,382 yards and 17 touchdowns and was named the Special District 3 West Player of the Year.

He was a first-team running back and linebacker, a second-team

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Buck have 5 named to 5A all-state softball team

Pendleton's Cary named co-Coach of the Year

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The accolades keep rolling in for the Pendleton softball team.

The Bucks had five players named to the 5A all-state team, and Pendleton's Tim Cary was named co-Coach of the Year along with Ryan Borde of West Albany.

Named to the first team



Cary



Garton



Lilienthal



Parsons



Samford



Taber

were senior pitcher Kylie Parsons, senior infielder Maria Lilienthal, and junior outfielder Chloe Taber.

Second-team honors went to junior pitcher Sauren Garton, while junior Ellie Samford was selected to the honorable mention

team as a utility/designated player.

"It's a nice honor for the girls to be on the all-state team," Cary said. "It means the other coaches take notice of what they have done. For me, it's an award I will accept on behalf of the

team and the staff."

Maddie Erickson of Wilson was named the Pitcher of the Year, while Presley Jantzi of West Albany was the Player of the Year.

Parsons threw 56 innings over 11 games and finished

with a 9-1 record. She scattered 22 hits, gave up five earned runs, struck out 74, walked 24 and had an ERA of .625.

"Kylie had a tremendous year," Cary said. "Both pitchers threw outstanding every time they stepped in the circle."

Lilienthal, the Bucks' third baseman, hit a team-high .545 on the year. She had 30 hits in 56 at-bats, including 20 singles, seven doubles and three home

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SPORTS SHORT

Report: Former Oregon State baseball coach Pat Casey could be headed to LSU

By NICK DASCHEL
The Oregonian

CORVALLIS — Former Oregon State baseball coach Pat Casey may be headed for LSU to replace retiring coach Paul Mainieri, according to a report.

D1Baseball.com reports it has sources claiming Casey, who won three national titles during his 24-year Oregon State tenure, has emerged as the leading candidate at LSU.

The Oregonian/OregonLive attempted contacting Casey for comment, but he did not respond.

Casey, 62, retired as coach in 2018, and has since worked in Oregon State's

athletic department as a special assistant to athletic director Scott Barnes. Casey is under contract at OSU through June 2022 and slated to make \$630,000 during the final year of his deal.

At the time of his retirement press conference, an emotional Casey was conflicted about retiring. Casey wasn't certain that he was finished as a coach, but said "my problem is what I expect out of my players on the field is what I expect out of myself. Right now, I'm not positive I can give them the same effort."

Casey was eventually replaced in 2019 by Mitch Canham. Oregon State recently finished its 2021 season when it lost in the Fort Worth Regional cham-

pionship game to Dallas Baptist.

LSU won the Eugene Regional on Monday, June 7, and takes on Tennessee in a three-game super regional this weekend.

LSU athletic director Scott Woodward has some familiarity with Casey, as he was previously AD at Washington during Casey's Oregon State tenure.

Casey's record at OSU was 900-458-6. Combined with a seven-year stint at George Fox before taking over at OSU in 1995, Casey has won nearly 1,100 games as a college coach. Under Casey, the Beavers won national titles in 2006, 2007 and 2018, and played in six College World Series.



Nati Harnik/Associated Press, File

Former Oregon State coach Pat Casey walks in front of the dugout in the ninth inning of an NCAA College World Series baseball elimination game against LSU in Omaha, Neb. D1Baseball.com reports it has sources claiming Casey, who won three national titles during his 24-year Oregon State tenure, has emerged as the leading candidate at LSU.