

CJD Ranch Rodeo

Quail Run ranch team comes out on top



With plenty of dust flying and ropes spinning, the ninth annual Chief Joseph Days Ranch Rodeo on June 25 in Joseph again offered the finest in true cowboy tradition.

The ranch rodeo — featuring working cowboys and cowgirls doing day-to-day ranch work — is a fundraiser for three \$1,000 annual scholarships given to a student from each of Wallowa County's three high schools. Scholarship winners this year are: Deni Van Winkle of Joseph, Zoe Sallada of Enterprise and Emily George of Wallowa. The first day of the two-day event included a trail ride followed by a barbecue dinner featuring live, silent and Calcutta auctions and a raffle for a 1911 .45-caliber pistol, which raised \$1,700 toward the scholarships.

Several teams were formed prior to the event and the public was allowed to "purchase" the teams during the Calcutta auction Friday. From the rodeo's opening event — team branding — each team worked its way through doctoring, sorting and roping. In a repeat from last year, the Quail Run Ranch team came out with top honors, winning the first three events hands down and a handy \$1,080 check to split between members Barry Qualle, Mel Coleman and Brady Black. Qualle thanked his sponsors for the win.

"They've sponsored us here since the beginning."

He also credited his team members for their performance.

"I couldn't have picked any better than those two guys," he said.

The 5S Ranch team, with members Fred Steen, Erik Steen and Rawley Bigsby, won the team roping event and took second place with a purse of \$810. First- and second-place winners in each event took home \$200 and \$100, respectively, in addition to their winnings.

Tonya Vaughn won the ladies steer stopping, a separate event from the team competition. And the rodeo wasn't complete without its

annual stick horse race in which about a dozen children competed in two separate classes. The rodeo awarded a shining gold dollar to each child who participated.

The saddle bronc event, also separate from the competition, paid off for one local cowboy. J.D. Brock, who had to settle for second place at the recent Mountain High Broncs and Bulls Rodeo, was not to be denied. After finishing first in the long go-round with a 79-point ride, Brock beat out two other finalists with a stunning 82-point ride for a 171 total and the entire purse of \$543.75.

Brock cowboys for the 40 Ranch (Morgan Family) outside of Troy. He competed for the ranch in the team competition. The saddle bronc rider said he competes in rodeos whenever he can, but he doesn't practice.

"I'm too old to practice," Brock said. "I'm either going to make it or not. I'm comfortable in my career saying I'm as good as I'm going to be."

Brock was happy with the horses he drew, but said his experience made the difference.

"I've been on quite a few ... you learn as you go down the road, and I've always tried to surround myself with better hands than me, so I was always learning."

Brock's nearest competitor, Kode Prag, scored 143 on his two rides, and cowboy Dustin Denton came in third with 76 points after being bucked off in the final round.

Local cowgirl Abby Sales, who competed for Lazy TX Land and Cattle, tried her hand at the bronc riding but was bucked off on a very tough horse. Her efforts paid off later, as she walked away with a set of her own spurs and a \$100 gift certificate as she received the "Best Cowgirl" award.