

A11

WEDNESDAY
June 7, 2017

Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Life

SPORTS • OUTDOORS • CLASSIFIEDS



Too old to rodeo?

Kohlhepp, 46, set to compete June 17 in 'Broncs and Bulls'



George Kohlhepp takes a spin on a paint bronc in 2012. (Photo is the sole property of Mountain High Broncs and Bulls and is not for sale.)

IF YOU GO

The 14th Annual Mountain High Broncs and Bulls is held 2 p.m. at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds off Lewiston Highway in Enterprise.

Stock producer Bar X Livestock of Asotin, Wash., will bring both bulls and horses and Wyatt Bucking Bulls and Kelly Wyatt of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, will also provide bulls. Horses are a combination of broncs straight off the prairie and pro horses who have been on the ranch bronc circuit.

There will be mutton-busting, ranch saddle bronc riding, bull riding, the famous Wild Horse Race, \$100 the hard way and the Ring of Fire.

Wyatt Grahn of Ellensburg, Wash., will be the barrel man and clown and the Mountain High Broncs and Bulls Drill Team will also be performing.

Tickets are available at the gate or at Sports Corral in Joseph: \$12 adults, kids 11 and younger \$6. Visit mountain-highrodeo.com.

Sign up for mutton busting is at Wallowa County Grain Growers, 911 South River Street, Enterprise.

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Get ready to scream your lungs out! We've got a cowboy coming to the 14th Annual Mountain High Broncs and Bulls event June 17, at Wallowa County Fairgrounds that you can cheer on for any number of reasons.

It's Wallowa County's own George Kohlhepp — that would be Enterprise Police Officer George Kohlhepp.

Plenty of people know George from long before he was a peace officer. Kohlhepp grew up in the Idaho Snake River and Imnaha areas where his dad, Morris Kohlhepp, first ran sheep and then cattle all over what is now the Hells Canyon Natural Resource Area for rancher Wilson Wild.

George claims he was on his first horse at 20 months, an old bay gelding named Chief that was his babysitter and followed along gently wherever the rest of the crew went.

He looked for a little more challenge as he got older, and by age 12, he was wrapping his rope around bulls and getting a grip for bareback broncs.

George married at 20 and he and wife Morningstar have six children between them: Josey Ross, Dustin Clark, Destiny Clark, Jesse Kohlhepp, Daniel Kohlhepp and the newest edition, 18-month-old Jackson Kohlhepp.

Being a dad put an end to George's rodeo life for a while.

"I had responsibilities, and I couldn't afford rodeo and going out and running around and being a kid," Kohlhepp said.

But when he turned 36, his daughter Jesse said, "Golly Gee, dad, you should do that again," George recalls. "I said, 'I'm old, Jesse' and she said 'age is only a number dad.'"

George started back with ranch broncs at the Countdown to Chief Joseph Days Ranch Rodeo, riding for the Yost team in "2007 or so." When you land on your head a few times, the dates get a little blurry.

"I got bucked off," he added.

But that didn't dampen his enthusiasm, and he kept right on riding to a high point in 2012 when he rode on the Yost team again, with J.D. Brock of Imnaha riding for another team at the Countdown to Chief Joseph Days Ranch Rodeo.

"I'd been seeing J.D. since he was so high, and now he'd gone to the national championships and all and I said, 'I'd sure like to beat J.D. just once. I wanted him to have a great ride, do his best, and then I wanted to beat him.'"

See RODEO Page A18



George Kohlhepp as a flagman at Stockgrowers Rodeo.

Ribich captures national track honor in mile

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise High School grad David Ribich has become the only known national champion in Wallowa County's history after winning the 1500-meter race at the NCAA Division II track and field championships.

Ribich, who attends Western Oregon University, won with a time of

3:49.64. He went into the race ranked first in the nation at the distance.

Ribich, 21, and a six-time All-American in his sport, said he felt good about his chances going into the race, but still worked hard on strategy beforehand. Impetus was provided by knowing he was racing Southern Indiana's Bastian Grau, who won the indoor championship in the same race earlier this year.

"My ultimate goal was to position

myself somewhere in the front, and when Bastian made his move, I'd be able to quickly respond and hang on there and make it a race," Ribich said.

Sure enough, Grau flew around to Ribich's outside 700 meters into the race May 27 in Bradenton, Fla. The WOU athlete tucked in and told himself the race was his. It was.

See RIBICH Page A18

"HE ALMOST SOUNDED MORE PROUD OF THE DISTANCE MEDLEY WIN BECAUSE IT WAS A TEAM EFFORT. HE KEEPS GETTING BETTER, AND I DON'T THINK HE'S FINISHED YET. I'M SO PROUD TO CALL HIM MY SON."

— Micahel Ribich, David's father



David Ribich

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