

Fight club owner gets promoter's license

First card will be a fundraiser for Willamina schools

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member and lifelong fighter Billy Bobb has attained professional status as a mixed martial arts promoter.

His gym, the Dog Pound in the old Sheridan bus barn by Deer Meadow, has been home to about 30 fighters in recent years, but with Bobb's state-awarded promoter's license, granted in mid-March, the Dog Pound is ready to rock and roll.

"We've been involved with MMA for a number of years," said Bobb.

Three years ago, when local fighters trained at Willamina High School in off hours, the team took fighters to the Roseland Theater to fight in Portland.

"Paul Hasslen had his first fight there, and it started growing," said Bobb.

Willamina Middle School wrestling coach Ray Carpenter, himself a state champion wrestler from Willamina, trained Hasslen.

Now, to start off his professional promoting career, Bobb has set up a match at his old stomping grounds, Willamina High School. The card will include up to 15 fights on May 14. Dubbed "Fight For Our Schools," the event is a fundraiser for cash-strapped Willamina schools.

Doors open at 6 p.m. and the fights start at 7.

"If they all go three rounds," said Bobb, "you've got a long night."

Support for this fight card comes from Spirit Mountain Casino and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, among others.

The Dog Pound name comes from the locker room at Willamina, also called the Dog Pound, which is a takeoff on the Willamina mascot, the Bulldog.

A lot of state championship wrestlers come out of Willamina, said Bobb, "and that's the perfect background for MMA fighting."

Mixed martial arts fighters come from a range of fighting backgrounds, he said, including wrestling, jiu jitsu, kung fu, karate, boxing, kick-boxing or any conglomeration of all those different styles.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Billy Bobb, owner of the Dog Pound gym in Sheridan, has recently received his state-awarded promoter's license, which gives him professional status as a mixed martial arts promoter.

If you go

Fight For Our Schools

When: Doors open at 6 p.m. Saturday, May 14; mixed martial arts fights begin at 7 p.m.
Where: Willamina High School, 1100 N.E. Oaken Hills Drive
Ticket info: 971-237-5959

"It just started growing and people wanted to join," said Bobb.

Tribal member and Forest Patrol Officer Jake McKnight, another professional MMA fighter from the area, sometimes practices at the Dog Pound, Bobb said, though he is affiliated with the Chaos gym in Salem.

"Jake McKnight started taking fights as an amateur. That got everything started. He's the pioneer for this area," Bobb said.

Others at the Dog Pound are following in his footsteps.

Bobb's promoter license comes through the Oregon State Athletic



Billy Bobb, Tribal member and owner of Dog Pound, right, coaches Jacob Williams, one of the fighters at the gym, in between sparring matches at the Sheridan gym on Wednesday, April 20.

Commission, a division of the Oregon State Police. It required the gym to pass a full background and financial check and requires that Bobb be insured with a \$10,000 bond. He also pays a \$100 annual

fee to the Boxing Commission, he said.

Between licensing regulations and gym costs, including a cage, Bobb estimates he has already invested \$20,000 in the effort. ■

We can help relieve your pain.

Dr. Ashley Nunley
Chiropractor
 at the
CTGR-Portland Office
 4445 SW Barbur Blvd. Suite 101
 Portland, Or 97239
Tuesdays only
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Call Lisa and make your appointment today
503-235-4230

Tribal members with Skooum health plan
 make your appointment now, start feeling better today.

Ad created by George Valdez

K-12 Parent Committee meets

The monthly K-12 Parent Committee meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month from September through June. Meetings are held in the Youth Education Building from noon to 1 p.m. Lunch is provided. RSVP if you are planning to attend to toni.mercier@grandronde.org or call 503-879-2101. ■

Event marks opening of Portland satellite office

The Tribe will officially mark the opening of the new Portland satellite office from 2 to 5 p.m. Friday, May 6, at 4445 S.W. Barbur Blvd., Portland. Light refreshments will be served and Tribal members can tour the facility. ■