

Tribal member heading to National Finals Rodeo

By Brent Merrill

Smoke Signals staff writer

Grand Ronde youth Marcel Allen has earned his way to the 2015 Indian National Finals Rodeo being held in Las Vegas, Nev., on Nov. 3-7.

Allen, who turned 16 in August, will head to Las Vegas after qualifying for the Junior Bull Riding Competition, which will be held at the South Point Equestrian Center.

Allen, who stands 5 feet 2 inches tall and weighs 110 pounds, has competed in seven rodeos this summer and won three of those events, including the two Western States Indian Rodeo Association events held June 27-28 during Pi-Um-Sha Days in Warm Springs.

Allen also won the Indian Rodeo Association's event in Wadsworth, Nev., on Aug. 1 and finished the season as the top-ranked junior bull rider in the association. Those results qualified Allen for the National Finals event.

According to Lonnie Austin, who teaches junior bull riding in Wills Point, Texas, the bulls Allen gets on can weigh as much as 1,200 to 1,800 pounds.

"It's a tough sport," said Austin. "The riders are matched with the bulls based on their ability and the bulls are rated on a one- to 25-point system."

Austin said the bulls in the nationals will be rated in the 17- to 20-point range.

"I've been doing really good this year," said Allen, who clearly does not lack confidence in his ability to get on a bull and give it his best effort. "The fact that I'm going (to nationals) is pretty cool."

Allen said when he is in the shoot getting ready to make his ride, he clears his mind.

"Honestly, if I could use an analogy, it's like waiting to be shot out of a cannon," he said.

Marcel said when he is on the bull for those eight seconds, it's wild.

"It's amazing and it just feels like I'm in my own world. It's like riding a tornado. It's like having a tornado in your hands."

The Western States Indian Rodeo Association is comprised of Native American contestants from Oregon, Nevada, Idaho and California.

The Indian National Finals Rodeo event has been around since 1976 and it united several regional Indian Rodeo Associations throughout the United States and Canada when it was formed. The National

Finals Rodeo currently has 11 regions in North America.

Contestants from as many as 75 Tribes compete in this national event for \$1 million in prize money in eight major categories.

Rodeo is a family affair for Allen and looking back, everything got started for him after spending a week riding a bucking barrel at his grandfather's home in Warm Springs.

Allen's grandfather is Francis "Toba" Scott and he is a member of the Warm Springs Tribe. Allen was 10 at the time and usually spent his youthful energy skateboarding and grass dancing – activities he still participates in today.

Allen placed third in this year's Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow's teen grass dance category and according to Desiree Allen, his mother, he placed for the first time at the age of 6 at the Gathering of Nations Powwow in Albuquerque, N.M.

"They had me on it (the bucking barrel) that whole week," said Marcel of his grandfather and his cousin. "I signed up for a rodeo a couple of weeks later. I just like really ended up liking it."

"He (Allen's grandfather) just explained everything to me," said Marcel. "He taught me everything I know."

Marcel's first time entering a rodeo turned out not to be the best experience for him.

"I got on my first calf when I was about 10, it wasn't good," remembered Marcel. "I got kicked in the face and stepped on right here" as he pointed to a spot on his chin and jawline. "I don't know what it was, but I kept going. I loved it."

Desiree said a small, but dedicated family contingent travels to all of Marcel's rodeo events. She says her brother Israel "Iz" Scott of Warm Springs and her mother Debra Scott – who is a Grand Ronde Tribal member – make as many events as possible to support her son.

Marcel is also the grandson of Grand Ronde Tribal Council member Cheryl A. Kennedy and the great-grandson of Cordelia Kneeland. Marcel pins a prayer cloth he



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Marcel Allen, 16, qualified for the 2015 Indian National Finals Rodeo taking place Nov. 3-7, in Las Vegas, Nev. He will be competing in the Junior Bull Riding competition.



Photo courtesy of Amber Yates

Marcel Allen competes in a rodeo in 2013.

received from Kneeland to his vest every time he rides.

"My family is my biggest support," said Marcel. "Everyone has my back and my mom supports everything I do."

Marcel, who attends school at Winema High School Completion Program at Chemeketa Community College in Salem is a protégé of former professional bull rider Myron Duarte. He has attended a bull riding school taught by Duarte at Branton's Arena in Jefferson for a few years now.

"You can tell a kid that wants to do it and Marcel has always wanted it. He tries hard," said Duarte, who spent 20 years as a professional bull rider. "Bull riding is a tough sport

and a mind game. What it takes is being able to block out the fear and just focus on what you do – the techniques.

"That's what I teach at my school is techniques and a positive attitude. From day one he showed up for practices and he asked a lot of questions. You can tell a kid that wants to learn because they ask questions and you can tell a kid that is doing it because someone else wants him to do it."

Duarte said Marcel is in for a whole new world when he gets to Las Vegas in November.

"It's a new atmosphere," said Duarte. "It's going to be a big change and he will be getting on a different caliber of bulls. You have to show up and be prepared and have determination to get results."

Duarte said he is proud of Marcel for what he has achieved this year.

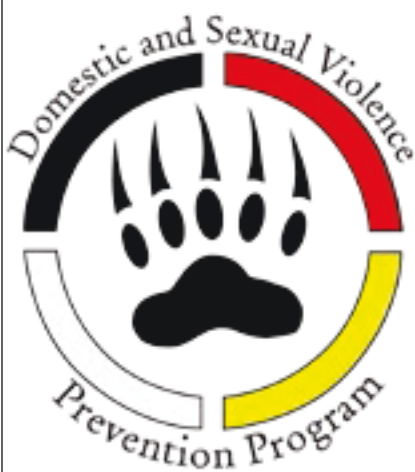
"Anytime you qualify it's a big deal because you had to work for it and be good enough to qualify," said Duarte. "At every level that's quite an accomplishment."

To help Marcel attend the Las Vegas rodeo, his family is selling squares for \$10 each and a drawing will be held once all the squares are sold. Marcel will get \$500 and the winner of the drawing will get \$500.

If you would like to buy a square, contact Desiree at 503-837-9372. ■

Feasibility study for swimming pool

On July 28, 2015, Tribal Council passed an Authorization to Proceed, authorizing a feasibility study for the proposed community swimming/fitness pool in Grand Ronde. The feasibility study is not an approval to build the project in Grand Ronde, but rather an approval to research and explore the possibility of building a swimming pool. The feasibility study will gather information including, but not limited to, conceptual designs including size, required facilities, the market and service area, estimates for site preparation work and development and construction costs, funding options and projected operational costs. Once the feasibility study has been completed, the General Manager's Office and staff will present the results of the feasibility study to Tribal Council for their review so they can then in turn solicit feedback from Tribal members. The decision to complete the feasibility study responds to the input and opinions expressed at the June 3 Community Input meeting, which included that Tribal members needed more information about cost and impacts to the Tribal budget. If you have any questions regarding the feasibility study and timelines, please contact Rick George, the Planning Department manager, at 503-879-2112. ■



S.E.L.F.

A Trauma Informed Group Curriculum

Every Tuesday 5:30-7:00

Community Center Building

Conference Room- East Entrance

Contact:
Anne Falla @ 503-879-1660

A domestic and sexual violence support group focusing on survivors of trauma and their journeys to emotional and psychological wellness.