

HIGH SCHOOL RODEO

Baker students qualify for state rodeo in Prineville

State finals slated for June 8-11

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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A small herd of Baker High students have qualified to make their brand during the Oregon High School Rodeo Association's state finals rodeo June 8-11 at the Crook County Fairgrounds in Prineville.

Baker competitors who have qualified are Dysan Robb, Clark Norton and Winter Smith in cutting, Bryson Martin in bronc riding, and Colton Clark and Macey Moore in team roping.

They're members of the Eastern Oregon Rodeo Club.

"Most of them have been competing since they were maybe 5 or so," said Billie Deal, advisor for the Eastern Oregon Rodeo Club, a member of the Oregon High School Rodeo Association, an independent but school-supported rodeo league.

Cutting is conceptually simple — separating one cow from a herd of others. However, it's difficult in execution, requiring a rider and horse working in tandem.

Team roping has paired participants, a header and heeler, who must lasso a cow by its horns and feet respectively in the quickest possible time.

Bronc riding is the familiar rodeo event, requiring the rider to hold fast and stay loose atop a bucking, furious bronco.

While the students are part of a team, they compete as individuals against a statewide roster.

The Oregon High School Rodeo Association maintains junior, junior high and



Suzy Smith/Contributed Photo

Winter Smith competes in a cutting competition May 13, 2022, at Burns. Smith qualified for the Oregon High School Rodeo Association's state finals rodeo June 8-11 in Prineville.



Suzy Smith/Contributed Photo

Baker's Dysan Robb competes in a cutting competition May 13, 2022, in Burns. Robb is among the local rodeo competitors who qualified for the state finals rodeo June 8-11 in Prineville.

high school teams and supports students even beyond high school.

"When they reach seniors they can get rodeo scholarships to colleges around here, sometimes full rides," said Deal, saying that the more events students compete in

the more scholarships they may qualify for.

Preparation for the state finals rodeo is intensive, with some competitors performing in up to 14 rodeos. The top 20 in each event will compete at state.

The top four in each event

at Prineville will qualify for the National Finals Rodeo July 17-23 in Gillette, Wyoming.

Other competitors can move on to the Silver State International Rodeo June 30-July 7 in Winnemucca, Nevada.



Zack Kimball/Contributed Photo

Conner Norton is the top-ranked member of Baker High School's trapshooting club.

Baker High School trapshooters qualify for state event

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Almost two dozen members of Baker High School's trapshooting team have qualified to compete in a state tournament June 24-26 in Hillsboro.

Of the 34 Baker competitors, 23 will travel to Hillsboro, joining as many as 600 shooters at the three-day event.

Baker's leading hotshot is Conner Norton, with an average of 22.4 targets hit out of 25 per round, meaning he's cleaned up 89.6% of his targets for the season and currently stands in the top 100 statewide. He finished his last round with a perfect 25 targets on his second trial.

Joining Norton in the varsity group competing at state are Cris Schuh, second in team rankings with a round average of 22; Alex Wise, third at 21.5, and several others within

one point of Wise's average — Gage Hatfield, Jack Heriza, Ryan Brown, Seth Holden and Sam Nelson. Other varsity competitors who qualified for the state event are Joe Zikmund, Jaxon Ford, Matt Rabbourne, Jimmy Sullivan, Alex Jaca and Ethan Morgan.

Junior varsity qualifiers are Conner Martin, Remington Benson, Riley Hurliman, Ryan Hansen, Keegan Slobig, Ethan Whiting, Skye Smith, Jose Armenta and Charlie Boulter.

State will be a standalone tournament, meaning competitors won't be able to ride their current standings any further, but may still qualify for nationals if they perform exceptionally.

The team is expecting to be at the range on the last day, June 26. Their current standings will divide them into class categories, based on experience.



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