

Popular Wild Horse Racing back again

Prepare yourself for the wildest event in rodeo



Shankman, mugger and rider work as a team. -File Photo.

The popular wild horse race will be back again at the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Friday and Saturday. For those who haven't experienced wild horse racing it's worth a trip just to see the fun and excitement.

How it works:

A Wild Horse Race team consists of three people, positions are known as shankman, mugger and rider, and none of the positions are any easier than the other.

The event works like this: The stock contractor loads the chutes and the horses are closed into individual chutes. As soon as this is accomplished the contestants and a

representative draw numbers from a hat. The number drawn applies to the chute in which they will put halters on their horses. Halters are made of heavy leather with sheepskin lining to protect the horse from injury. A team cannot win if the horse is accidentally injured, so it is important not to afflict injury to the horse. Many of the halters have leather handles making it easier for the mugger to get ahold of the halter instead of grabbing the animal. The lead shank is a maximum length of 16 feet and made of cotton/hemp or braided nylon. Usually the shanks are 1" – 2" in diameter. The shanks being

of a large diameter decrease the chance of injury to both animal and contestant.

Now that all is ready, it's time for the excitement to begin. The whistle is blown, the chute gates are opened and the spectators do not know which way to look. Amongst all the chaos, the shankman holds the horse in a position so that the mugger can move up the shank and grab the horse by the halter. The next moment, the rider sets the saddle on the horse and secures it by the quick cinch. This cinch has a quick release built in so that it may be quickly removed if a problem occurs. The rider climbs aboard the horse and stays on the horse until it crosses a pre-designated finish line. Most arena races have an imaginary line between the fence and a barrel. The finish is approximately 30 – 35 feet long. In arena races the winning team usually crosses in 30-40 seconds, while other less fortunate teams may take up to the two-minute time limit. Prepare yourself for the wildest event in rodeo.

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Dinner provided by: Heppner Chamber of Commerce