

# Heppner teen racing prodigy

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(L-R) Brandy Stills, Hayden Rossi, Joseph Stills and Quenten Eugene standing in front of their giant checks at their home in Heppner. - Photo by Chris Sykes



Hayden in her car at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway getting ready to take off. - Contributed Photo

first race at Bremerton Raceway, clinched the Halloween Classic title in Boise, Idaho in 2022, and even participated in a race broadcasted on ESPN, showcasing her skills on a national platform. The National Hot Rod Association rewarded her exceptional driving with two Wallys, drag racing's most prestigious trophy.

The Stills' dedication to racing is evident, Hayden's mom, Brandy, dials in the car which means she puts a number on it if she doesn't trust the computer, and Joseph takes care of motor swaps, tire pressure, oil changes, and tune-ups, and the kids do the racing. The family works as a team, ensuring Hayden and her brother Quenten are ready to dominate the tracks.

In 2022, when Hayden was racing in Yakima, she came in and anxiously told her dad that she had hit a pothole on the track. However, upon further inspection, they discovered that her weight tank had flipped and fallen off, and she had inadvertently run over it. A weight tank is a crucial tool used for adding or removing weight, as racing rules dictate that competitors must not exceed a certain weight limit. Hayden's dad always weighs her before each race to ensure compliance with the weight restriction. Another time she experienced a malfunction in her brakes and was forced to rely on

momentum to finish the final part of the race. Laughing, Hayden's father said, "One year Hayden burned 8 clutches and blew up two motors."

When they go to races, they make sure to eat a very healthy diet. Hayden, in particular, consumes a lot of limes and salt as she tends to get dehydrated out on the track. Due to the long waiting time before she can race in full uniform, she often sits in the car for 45 minutes to an hour. After the race, her dad usually cooks BBQ in the infield.

Of course, racing isn't just about the money for the Stills. It's about pure enjoyment and love for the sport. The big checks Hayden wins are split 50/50, with half going towards necessary expenses like replacement parts, fuel, and food, while the other half goes to the kids. Racing is their passion, and they make sure to have fun as a family, with Joseph even stripping down the cars completely during the winter to prepare for the next season.

After taking a break from racing due to wrecking his car, Hayden's younger brother, Quenten is getting back on track. The Stills family knows that racing is not without risks, which is why they ensure that safety is a top priority. Hayden is outfitted with a fireproof helmet, shoes, gloves, and a full suit to protect her in the



Hayden with her racing helmet. - Photo by Chris Sykes



(R) Hayden wearing her Hans Device. (L) Fireproof safety boots. - Photo by Chris Sykes



Hayden showing her fireproof racing suit. - Photo by Chris Sykes

event of a crash. She also wears arm restraints and a Hans device, which keeps her head and neck stable and safe. Racing may be thrilling, but the Stills family understands that precautions are essential.

As Hayden looks to the future, she has her sights set on becoming a professional race car driver. With each race, she is honing her skills and gaining experience. Next year, she will be competing in the Super and Jr. divisions, where cars can reach speeds of up to 140 mph. Hayden's need for speed is undeniable, and her determination and talent are sure to take her far in the

racing world.

When Hayden isn't racing, she enjoys drawing and spending time with her friends. She loves chicken and dumplings, and her favorite singer is Zack Bryan. Surprisingly enough, her favorite movie is "Hairspray."

To catch a glimpse of Hayden's racing adventures, follow her Free Spirit Racing on Instagram and Facebook. She may be a Giant Killer on the tracks, but this young champion is just getting started. Watch out, racing world, because Hayden Rossi is coming in hot!

# Mustangs 'pass the torch' with new football tradition



(L-R) Landon Mitchell, Caden George, Cameron Proudfoot. - Photo by Ken Grieb

A new tradition has been started by Heppner Mustang head football coach Greg Grant. This year's senior football players wrapped the football cleats that they wore this season on the goalpost on the Mustang practice field. All the members of the Mustang football and junior high football teams were in attendance for the passing of the torch ceremony. Coach Grant talked about how these three seniors

were great teammates and leaders in the program. He then encouraged all the players present to follow these seniors' lead as they continued their careers at Heppner High School.

Each of the three seniors addressed their teammates on what it meant to them to be a part of the Mustang football program. They then offered advice on how to help keep the «Mustang Tradition» alive and well.



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# HHS Donkey Basketball Fundraiser



Heppner High School had their annual Donkey Basketball fundraiser on the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month. The fundraiser money goes to the Christmas giving tree/ adopt a family project to help families in need this holiday season.

Wishing Each of You a  
Wonderful Season of  
Thanksgiving!

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