Livestock Judging

After a tough season, the livestock judging team still demonstrates the leadership and personal development characteristics of the department’s competitive teams.

Copy by Morgan Gadd

MORE THAN MEDALS

The West Texas A&M University Livestock Judging team faced a tough fall schedule, and although they would have liked better results, the team fought hard in its final season together.

After a fourth place finish at Ft. Worth in the spring looked forward to a competitive fall season.

The first contest of the season was at Butler Community College in El Dorado, Kan. offered the team a chance to get back into the routine of competition. The team finished 10th overall.

The following day, the team went to Wichita, Kan. for the Mid-American Classic where they placed ninth overall.

At the Tulsa State Fair contest on Oct, 4, the team placed 18th overall with no Classic where they placed ninth overall.

Wichita, Kan. for the Mid-American finished 10th overall.

The West Texas A&M University

Livestock Judging team enjoyed a great semester of competition at four rodeos, including one the team hosted in Amarillo.

The Women's Rodeo team started the season off by winning the Women's Team Championship at the Eastern New Mexico State University's rodeo held Sept. 18 to Sept. 20. Heather Knerr from Grass Range, Mont. won the women's all around and placed fourth in barrel racing and second in goat tying.

On the men's team, E. J. Bechthold from Booker finished sixth overall in the steer wrestling.

The teams travelled to Vernon College Oct. 2 to Oct. 4 where the women's team as well as individual cowboys and cowgirls competed well against some stiff competition.

The men's team placed sixth overall and Knerr finished second in breakaway roping.

On the men's team, Kelton McMillan from Canyon placed fifth in tie-down roping and Chris Bechthold finished fourth in steer wrestling.

The format provided for three days of quality entertainment but proved difficult for the host team as no WTAMU students placed in the Top 10 of any event. Perhaps not all was lost as the team could still win the best collegiate rodeo award, which includes a cash prize as well as other accolades the team can use to improve its position in college rodeo.

In the last rodeo of the fall season, both the men's and women's team did well and placed in the Top 10 at the Oct. 16 to Oct. 18 competition hosted by Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

For some WTAMU rodeo members, the finals are within reach.

The women's team finished fifth overall as Knerr finished third in the all-around. She placed sixth in barrel racing and ninth in breakaway roping. In addition, Ali Bilkey from La Huanta, Colo. finished fifth in breakaway roping.

The men's team finished ninth overall and saw strong performances from its members. Individually, Pyerce Harris from Canyon placed fifth in tie-down roping and Chris Bechthold finished fourth in steer wrestling.

Going into the spring season, the women's team is sitting seventh overall and Knerr is sitting eighth overall in breakaway roping and 10th overall in barrel racing and goat tying.

“We are doing great, we had a great semester, and have high hopes for many students to go to the NIRA College Finals in Casper in June 2015,” coach Raymond Hollabaugh said.

Focused on the Finals

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The West Texas A&M University Rodeo team partnered with Clarendon College and hosted the West Texas A&M University rodeo Oct. 9 to Oct. 11. The team hosts the rodeo every other year as part of its membership in the Southwest Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. The team was fortunate enough to use the Amarillo National Center, the same facilities that host the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeos each year.

The WTAMU team decided to use the “Pendleton Style” format as a way to entertain the audience and increase competition among the schools and individuals. The Pendleton Round-up, a rodeo held in Oregon each year, uses a modified start for its timed events. Both the livestock and competitors were given a running start before the judges began recording time.

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Rodeo
Dedicated to Succeed

WT Equestrian finished its fall season focused on returning to Nationals

Copy by Josi Reed

Redlands Community College Western Show

The West Texas A&M University Equestrian team began its 2014-15 season Oct. 4 and 5 with two western shows at Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla. For the second straight season, WTAMU was named High-Point team in both shows at RCC.

Additionally, three riders qualified for Regional competition based on their performances at the Redlands shows. Camille Graupman from Nacogdoches earned her points in Advanced Horsemanship. Megan Pirtle from Canyon earned enough points to qualify in Novice Flat and Berg qualified in Walk Trot. Kelsey Wilson from Edgewood, N.M. and Jenny Foil from McGregor both earned enough points to qualify in Walk Trot Canter, and Hannah Valigura from Austin qualified for Regionals in Novice Fences.

“This competition for the WT Hunt Seat team was a challenging one,” Love said. “Coach Swarthout and I are extremely proud of our athletes and their efforts. The finishes were not what they had set their goals for and, while it was a respectable performance, it will drive us to work harder and better prepare.”

West Texas A&M University Hunt Seat Show

The WTAMU Hunt Seat team competed in its first shows of the season at the West Texas A&M University Horse Center Oct. 18 and 19. The Lady Buffs opened strong and were named High Point Team for the first show and Reserve High Point Team for the second show.

Reilly Millhauer of Argyle earned High Point Rider honors in the first show and the Reserve High Point Rider ended up in a four-way tie between WT riders Adalise Berg from Conifer, Colo., Emillie Gardner from Austin, Hannah Ellis from Grand Junction, Colo., and Madison McKenzie from Niswi, Colo.

On Sunday, Berg and Kelsey Gore of Louisiana State University tied for High Point Rider. The tie was broken on a coin toss that Berg lost, thus becoming the show’s Reserve High Point Rider.

Cana Fitzgerald from Penn Laird, Va. qualified for Regionals in Beginner Walk Trot. Kelsey Wilson from Edgewood, N.M. and Jenny Foil from McGregor both earned enough points to qualify in Walk Trot Canter, and Hannah Valigura from Austin qualified for Regionals in Novice Fences. The Regional Championship will be held at the WTAMU Horse Center in March.

“The competitions were a validation that the big goals our hunt seat riders set for this year are very attainable,” Love said. “Coach Swarthout and I are extremely proud of our athletes and their efforts. The finishes were not what they had set their goals for and, while it was a respectable performance, it will drive us to work harder and better prepare.”

University of Oklahoma Hunt Seat Show

The WTAMU Hunt Seat team traveled to Norman, Okla. to compete in its second show of the 2014-15 season Nov. 1-2. The team placed third in the weekend’s first show, finishing just one point behind the Reserve High Point Team, followed by a fourth place finish in Show 2.

Kayla Reeves from Canyon was named Reserve High Point Rider for the second show on Sunday. Two riders qualified for the Regional Championships. Gardner qualified in Novice Flat and Berg qualified in Novice Fences.

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West Texas A&M University Western Show

The western team finished out their fall semester by competing in two shows on November 22 at the WTAMU Horse Center. The western team won High Point Team for the first show, and took Reserve High Point team for the second show.

It was an exciting day for the team as well as for individual riders. Wright claimed the title of High Point Rider for both Show 1 and 2, while Graupman was named Reserve High Point Rider for Show 1. Four WT riders qualified for the Regional Championships. Josi Reed from Cave-In-Rock, Ill. qualified in Advanced Horsemanship, Kelsey Matthews from Morrow, Ark. qualified in Intermediate Horsemanship, and Ashlyn Tyk from Amarillo qualified in Beginner Horsemanship.

“This past weekend was a great success for the western team,” Love said. “The entire team really came together and hosted a top notch event that allowed our riders to perform.”

The hunt seat team will return to action Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 2015 at Texas State University. The Western Team will be showing at Texas Tech University Feb. 7 and 8.
Students with an interest in competitive shooting successfully started a new club at West Texas A&M University this fall. The WTAMU Trap and Skeet Club began because of student leadership and faculty support.

The club started largely because students Braden Graves from Floydada, Colton Meyer from Canyon and Rhett Proctor from Rocky Ford, Colo. approached Dean Hawkins, the head of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, with an idea to start a club that would encourage student participation in the shooting sports, both competitively and leisurely.

“He [Hawkins] said if we could find an advisor and if there was enough student interest, then we should start a club,” Meyer said.

John Richeson, assistant professor of animal science and Sam Ives, associate professor of animal science agreed to serve as faculty advisors for the club. The inaugural officers are: Meyer, president; Proctor, vice president; Lexi Pinkert from Levelland, treasurer; Ashley Adams from Amarillo, secretary; Graves, risk manager; and Payden Hales from Amarillo, public relations.

Not only did they find an advisor and students that were interested, the founding members also discovered community support for the club. The Amarillo Gun Club has offered its facilities to the club and its members as a place to hone their skills or just shoot a few clays for fun.

In addition, the Amarillo Gun Club has given the WTAMU club storage space at the range, supported the club through donations and will host a fundraising shoot Jan. 31 to assist the club. Both the gun club and the trap and skeet club are working to get a gun donated to raffle at the January event.

There are approximately 15 members in the new club, which plans to put a team or teams together and compete against other collegiate trap and skeet clubs. The team would compete in the Association of College Unions International events that include trap, skeet, five-stand and sporting clays.

Dues are $50 a year or $30 a semester and include a T-shirt and use of the Amarillo Gun Club facilities. In addition, dues will go to shooting supplies and competition costs such as entry fees and travel. Meyer hopes that between donations, fundraising and dues the only thing members will need to provide is a shotgun.

The inaugural members are mostly agricultural students, but the club is open to all students at WTAMU. If you are interested in learning more about the club or joining, call Colton Meyer at 806-584-5712.

The West Texas A&M University Stock Horse team finished as the collegiate Reserve Champions at the Stock Horse of Texas World Show in Abilene Oct. 31 to Nov. 1 in its only competition of the fall. The two-day competition consisted of events ranging from working cow horse to ranch trail.

The WTAMU team is made up of individual riders that compete in each of four events in a division that is based on experience. Individual scores are tallied after each day and used to determine the overall team champion. Both days WTAMU finished second behind North Central Texas College.

Highlights from the Day 1 show include: Luke Abraham from Canadian placed third in cow horse in the Non Pro division. Larami Stewart from Munday placed second in cow horse and ninth in reining in the Non Pro division.

In the Limited Non Pro division, Blane Thompson from Canyon placed fifth in cow horse. Jason Seymour from Olathe, Colo. finished fifth in pleasure and ninth in trail.

Crystal Drager from Brussels, Wis. placed second in reining and Kendra Smith from Johnson City placed eighth. Both ladies competed in the Novice division where Drager is currently sitting third overall in the point standings.

Day 2 proved to be another successful competition for the stock horse team as highlights include: Abraham placed second in cow horse and Stewart placed fifth in cow horse, eighth in trail and ninth in both reining and trail. Drager placed first in reining and Smith placed third overall, fourth in trail, and eighth in both reining and pleasure.

The team will have plenty of chances to compete next spring as their season will begin back in Abilene on Jan. 31. and competitions will continue in San Antonio, Lubbock, Vernon, Stephenville, Bryan, and Ardmore, Okla.

The Stock Horse team is advised by John Pipkin and coached by Marilyn Brandt, a graduate student from Andover, Ill., and Zeb Corvin, an WTAMU alumnus and owner of Corvin Performance Horses.
Tulsa State Fair
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“I am really proud of the team’s quality work and positive, teachable attitude,” coach John Pipkin said. “This contest provided an outstanding test to know what needs to be done to get ready.” The WTAMU placed first and second overall beating out 12 other teams including Kansas State University, Oklahoma State University and Texas A&M University.

Kelsay Singleton from Stephenville placed third in performance and eighth overall. William Wright from Louisburg, Kan. placed 10th in halter.

Grace Guyer from Kokomo, Ind. placed ninth in halter and second in reasons. Maral Otabachian-Howell from Trinidad, Colo. placed fourth in performance and Megan Pirtle from Canyon, placed eighth in halter.

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Singleton was overall champion of the contest that ended the team’s season as well as the individuals collegiate judging career. In their last competition, Guyer finished third overall, Dunsmore finished fourth overall and Wright finished fifth.

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This year’s team members are: Dunsmore, Hana Fellhauer from Manzanol, Colo., Guyer, Hansen, Jones, Matthews, Otabachian-Howell, Danae Parman from Channing, Pirile, Singleton, Nicholle Tieken form Shiner, Wright, and Leah Zadel from Johnstown, Colo.

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Logan Harkey ’14 received the 2014 Scholar American Honor by the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association for his excellence in rodeo and academic achievement.

The award only goes to about 40 or 50 student-athletes a year, so it was quite an honor for Harkey to be included, he said.

Harkey completed his bachelor’s degree last May and began a master’s degree at WTAMU this fall. He competed on the WTAMU Rodeo Team as an undergraduate student where he managed to make the collegiate rodeo finals last year.

The award requires students to maintain at least a 3.5/4.0 grade point average and make the college national finals.

Harkey competed in team roping and calf roping during his time on the rodeo team. The highlight of his collegiate rodeo career was placing 13th out of approximately 70 competitors in calf roping at the college finals.

In addition to his success, the NIRA selected “Fred,” Harkey’s horse, as the 2014 Men’s Horse of the Year.

Harkey still plans to rodeo between graduate classes, but admitted school has kept him from going to many rodeos this semester. His devotion to academics is half the reason he is being recognized after all.

“I know that rodeo is not always a good financial investment, so I decided to look for other ways to make a living and that is why I am here [WTAMU],” Harkey said.

Harkey said he is grateful for sponsors and others that support him. Custom Barns and Construction in Canyon, Hi Pro Feeds in Friona, and the Willard Rope Company in Rockwell currently sponsor Harkey.