

Utah

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SPECIAL 8 PAGE PULLOUT



SUMMER GAMES

UTAH SUMMER GAMES • CEDAR CITY, UTAH

Athletes Enjoy Triathlon Challenge

BY STEPHEN VINCENT

The decision of whether to run triathlons came easily for Todd Sheeran. Growing up in athletic family, Sheeran was familiar with the events involved in the triathlon.

"My dad is a big distance biker," Sheeran said. "My mom does the marathons, so I'm hoping I got the cross between them."

On June 16, Sheeran and his mother, Linda, competed in the triathlon during the Utah Summer Games at Sand Hollow Reservoir. Like the Sheerans, the other athletes competing that day did so because they enjoy the challenge of the triathlon. And, also, like the Sheerans, they try to train whenever they can make time in their busy schedules.

Triathlons consist of three events: swimming, biking and running. Participants can either run the short course (0.75 mile swim, 20-kilometer bike ride, five-kilometer

run) or the regular course (1.5 mile swim, 40-kilometer bike ride, 10-kilometer run).

The June 16 event started at 7 a.m. with the swim across Sand Hollow Reservoir. Next, the participants pedaled along the roads that circle the lake before returning to park their bikes and begin running. The triathletes said the Sand Hollow course is a good one because of its difficulty.

"It's a fast course, but the asphalt's hard," said triathlete Jeff Winger.

Linda Sheeran she finds the hill on the bike ride to be challenging, but she enjoys the test.

"It kind of adds some interest," she said.

To successfully complete the demanding course, athletes need to be prepared for the race, which means hours and hours of training.

See **Triathlon**
page 6



Photo by STEPHEN VINCENT

A cyclist pedals past the Sand Hollow Reservoir during the Utah Summer Games Triathlon on June 16 at Sand Hollow Reservoir.



Photo by MICHAEL WELSON

Matt Anderson rides a bareback bronc in last year's Wendy Wood Memorial Rodeo. The rodeo takes place in conjunction with the Utah Summer Games closing ceremonies.

Professional Cowboys to Participate in Closing Ceremonies Rodeo

BY COBY MILLETT

The Utah Summer Games opening ceremonies have exciting performers, the Hall of Honor and an amazing fireworks display, but the closing ceremonies bring excitement to the crowds with tough cowboys, amusing rodeo clowns and their own fireworks display.

While the closing ceremonies have included a rodeo for years, this year's rodeo will be the first time the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association has participated in the Utah Summer Games.

The PRCA will bring professional cowboys and stock to the closing ceremonies, also known as the Wendy Wood Memorial Rodeo. Some of the cowboys and stock can also be seen later this year at the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

The stock at the event will be from Diamond G Rodeos owned by Steve and Cindi Gilbert. Diamond G Rodeo has placed one of

its bulls in the NFR every year they have been a stock contractor for the PRCA.

Diamond G bulls are also ridden on the Professional Bull Riders tour. The NFR and PBR are the most elite professional rodeo circuits in the sport.

This year, the Wendy Wood Memorial Rodeo bull riding event will bring a lot of excitement because of a bull named White Magic. White Magic is currently rated in the top five in the PRCA. The bull is yet to be ridden in 14 attempts in 2007.

The rodeo will also feature Tommie Turvey and bull fighter Boom Boom Johnson. Turvey's act is one you do not want to miss.

Turvey has trained horses to do things most people have never seen. His show is a combination of amazing horsemanship and entertainment. He trains the horses to be an active participant in the show.

See **Closing**
page 6

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Photo by MICHAEL NIELSON

Brittney Cropper competes in the break away competition during last year's Summer Games closing ceremonies and Wendy Wood Memorial Rodeo.

Closing

Continued from page 1

Renn and Marie Zaphiropoulos will have their English Shire horses hitched up and on show as well. The English Shire breed of horse is one of the largest horses breeds in the world. One single horse weighs about one ton and is capable of moving a five-ton load. Yet the shire horses are gentle and easily trainable. Their size and ability to follow commands can only be described as amazing.

The rodeo is named after former Cedar City resident Wendy Wood, daughter of Marilyn and Matt Wood. Wendy was injured in a horse riding accident was she was five years old. The accident left her with a weakness on her right side and head injuries. The injuries took some of Wendy's physical abilities to compete in rodeo away, but none of her spirit or love for sport.

After the accident Marilyn and Matt continued to be involved with rodeo with their other children, and though Wendy couldn't participate, her parents couldn't keep her away.

"We were still scared because of the accident and her injuries, but we decided it wasn't fair for her to be left out of rodeo because of it," Marilyn said.

The Woods set out to find a horse she could ride and found "Rainbow Lightning". Rainbow Lightning may not have looked like much but an ordinary horse to others, but he was an amazing horse for Wendy.

"When we bought him we thought it would be docile enough for her to ride, but we didn't know how good she would be," Marilyn said. "He could do anything you wanted him to do, but when Wendy was riding him they had a connection."

When the two of them would ride, Rainbow Lightning could sense when Wendy would begin to lose her balance and slow down so she could reposition herself on the saddle. The bond between the two of them was so good that Wendy was able to begin competing in the Little Britches Rodeos.

Wendy was part of the first closing ceremonies rodeo at the Utah Summer Games, but just before the second rodeo — only two weeks after graduating from Cedar High School — she passed away. The Cedar City Rodeo Committee subsequently decided the rodeo should be named after Wendy because of her love for rodeo.

"Wendy was everything rodeo is about. She loved it," Marilyn said. "She cheered for everybody, and they all cheered for her. She talked with everyone and loved being a part of rodeos."

This year's rodeo should be best one yet because of the quality the PRCA will bring to the event. The rodeo will take place Friday, June 23, and Saturday, June 24. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children less than 10. Fireworks will follow the rodeo on both nights, and the ceremonies closing the Utah Summer Games will take place on Saturday.