Winter clinics hone rodeo skills, faith in Christ

Youths keep up rodeo skill in winter while worshipping

By KATHY CORGATELLI NeVILLE For Farm & Ranch

Before there were indoor riding arenas, riders and horses took a respite until spring. But today, riders can saddle up all year long.

Some teens interested in rodeo events are taking advantage of being able to practice all winter. Organizers of a summer Bible Clinic found it was so popular among young children they added a weekly practice every Tuesday night from November to March.

For 13 years, the Southeastern Idaho Rodeo Bible Camp has been held in Twin Falls to help competitors perfect their skills in rodeo and their walk with God, too. The new weekly practices aim to do the same.

Clinicians help kids during the summer camp and the weekly practices, while pastors lead devotionals.

One of the organizers, Pastor David Kite of Blackfoot, says meeting more frequently is important in a number of ways. He is the pastor of Blackfoot Southern Baptist Church and the pastor of Cowboy Churches in Idaho Falls, Blackfoot and Pocatello.

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“The summer camp is real important to our kids,” Kite said. “But we are concerned about the rest of the year, too.”

Riley Clemens of Blackfoot, left, coaches his son, Riley, on a bucking machine at the Christian Timed Event Clinic at the Mill Iron Arena on Weeding Lane in Blackfoot. The clinics are held every Tuesday night from November to March. Kathy Corgatelli Neville / for Farm & Ranch

The opportunity to ride and practice rodeo skills indoors during the winter months and worship, too, is a draw, Kite said. Young riders are helped with their roping and riding by members of the Idaho State University Rodeo team in Pocatello and mentored by area pastors. The weekly practices are held at the Mill Iron Arena on Weeding Lane in Blackfoot and begin each week at 6:30 p.m., and conclude at 9 p.m.

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The rodeo clinics, called Christian Timed Event Clinics, help kids improve their roping, barrel racing and pole bending skills. Teens can practice on two different mechanical bucking machines, too.

The clinics are open to youths between the ages of 13 and 19. They are encouraged to bring a parent or guardian with them to practice. The clinics are free, but when cattle are used there will be $10 charge per youth.

Jessica Partner of Pocatello looks forward to the weekly sessions where a devotional is held before each practice. A regular at the summer Rodeo Bible Camp and at the Cowboy Church in Pocatella, she welcomes the extra time to practice. Jessica crouches in team roping, breakaway roping, barrel racing and pole bending on the Highland High School Rodeo team. She is endeavoring to earn a college rodeo scholarship.

“It’s always nice to have different practice opportunities and have godly influences and teachings, too,” Partner said.

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