

WildThing brings the thunder to Gallup

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Strong crowds flock to electric atmosphere

The biggest bucking bulls facing off against some of the top riders from across the country in Red Rock Park, in addition to a bevy of top entertainment from the Gallup region. These elements allowed WildThing Championship Bullriding to garner a reputation as the “Number One Open Bullriding in the Southwest.”

The signature summer event ran from July 8-9. WildThing Coordinator Larry Peterson said they

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had a strong show.

“We had massive crowds [at WildThing]. We sold out on Saturday, and we were nearly full on Friday. The crowd seemed to have a lot of fun, and there was a lot of excitement at the park,” Peterson said July 13.

RIDER RECAP

The main draw of WildThing and the heart of the electric atmosphere of the show are the displays of strength and athleticism of some of the top riders in the nation attempting to ride the strong selection of bulls.

Peterson praised the efforts of the riders that brought the crowds. He spoke about how some riders came up just short in their battle for the top spot.

“We had Cody Jesus there, a big local favorite. He won WildThing three years ago. He had an awesome ride this year but just missed the buzzer,” Peterson said. “Then there was Travis Wemberly, last year’s WildThing winner, he was about a half-second away from winning too.”

Riders came from Oklahoma, California, Texas, Georgia, the Navajo Nation, and even Mexico. Ultimately, it was Navajo rider Guytin Tsosie who took home the champion’s buckle.

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The list of the top riders and their score is as follows:

Guytin Tsosie - 92

Tyson Tsinigine - 89

Sterling Furr - 87

Dakota Hill - 84

Wyatt Betony - 80

Cade Griego - 79

Luke Mackey - 79

Wingson Filza - 76

Wade Tuni - 61

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EVERYTHING ELSE

While the bulls and riders are the top billed event at WildThing, the crowds enjoyed the entertainment that has allowed the show to flourish for nearly 30 years.

“The wooly riding was great. Everyone loved it,” Peterson said. “The riders were all really good since they won their ride in. They put on a really good show for everyone and it went really well.”

Wooly riding, where young riders attempt to ride a sheep that runs across the arena, has been a staple for WildThing for years.

There was also the crowd-favorite Cowboy Poker, which Peterson noted was uploaded online to the video sharing service TikTok and has since been viewed over three million times. Moreover, he spoke about an international outlet contacting him after WildThing to ask about the sport, which many viewers may only know from TV shows and not realize is another staple event.

WildThing would not be complete without its trademark fireworks show, which was touted as being larger than ever this year. As previously reported, Peterson said the WildThing fireworks show would give people who were missing Gallup’s other fireworks displays the fun they craved.

“It was all strong, it was all good. The crowd really had a good time [with all of it],” Peterson said.

AN AVENUE FOR FUN AND SUPPORT

The effort that goes into organizing an event like WildThing is considerable in a good year, but proved especially difficult with world circumstances being what they are this year.

“[Everything is] kind of messed up for everyone. The logistics of putting this thing together have been really rough. Whether it’s working on stuff for the show or ordering stuff, it doesn’t matter what it is. Everything is just kind of messed up in the world. It was hard putting it all together because it is hard to get and deal with things,” Peterson said.

Despite all this, Peterson appreciates the staff who put in their best work to pull off the show they did. He also appreciates the community who come to WildThing each year and support not just the staff who work tirelessly for the visitors, but the other groups who help with the show as well.

Namely, Manuelito Children’s Home and Gallup Christian School. As noted previously, the home and school provide parking and concessions for visitors at WildThing, which has become the number one fundraiser each year for both of them.

“The [home and school] really did a good job with parking and concessions, which is fantastic. I like how everyone appreciates when they come to WildThing that they are helping both of them out with their biggest fundraiser,” Peterson said.

Peterson also gave a lot of credit to the various WildThing sponsors, without whom he said the

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show would not be feasible. He implores visitors to check out the sponsors and buy either their goods or services. A full list can be viewed on any poster for the show.

“[WildThing] couldn’t be here if it wasn’t for our sponsors,” he said.

The overall reaction to the show is perhaps best summed up on the WildThing Facebook page: It was WILD!

For more information on WildThing Championship Bullriding, including more photos and videos, visit <https://www.facebook.com/wildthing.bullriding> .