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For the Red Bluff Round-Up

RODEO DREAMS

Cottonwood cowboy grew up attending Red Bluff Round-Up, now is a competitor

Red Bluff, Calif. (March 27, 2023) – A long time fan of the Red Bluff Round-Up is now in the arena as a competitor.

When James Banister was a kid, he was the one in the stands, cheering on his dad, as his dad steer wrestled at the Round-Up.

Now the Cottonwood, Calif. cowboy is in the arena, following in the footsteps of his dad.

The son of Jim Banister and Cindy Banister, he wanted to be a bull rider more than anything. He competed in junior high rodeo, but as a high school freshman, was small for his age. “My dad was worried that being a bull rider would not be in my favor.” So he sat out of high school rodeo competition for a year. The following three years of high school rodeo, he competed in the bareback riding, steer wrestling and bull riding.

Banister graduated from West Valley High School in Cottonwood in 2017, then spent a year at Cal Poly State. But school wasn’t a good fit for him, so he quit and went to work.

He became friends with five-time world champion steer wrestler Luke Branquinho, Los Alamos, Calif., and learned from him, as well as his friends Tucker Allen and Taite Stickler.

He’s competed at the Round-Up the last two years, and loves it. “It’s cool to go to these rodeos that I watched as a kid. I had this idea of wanting to rodeo, and now I’m actually doing it.”

Banister remembers imploring his parents to stay at the Round-Up, when he was a kid and his dad competed there.

Rodeo “was something I was surrounded by all the time, and it was something I never got bored with.” When his dad was done competing, the family would head home, before the end of the rodeo, “but my begging to stay was persuasive, and we’d stay.”

He juggles work and rodeo practice, working for a trail riding outfit and as a handyman at an inn, whatever he can do to earn money for entry fees. He practices at least four days a

week, depending on the weather, and is at the gym five days a week. “I try to stay in good shape and not get rusty,” he said.

Banister will make his steer wrestling runs on April 19 and 20, during slack competition, the qualifier for the rodeo performances.

Slack competition is free to the public and starts at 9 am on April 19-20 and at 10 am on April 21.

The 102nd annual Red Bluff Round-Up performances are April 21 (7 pm) April 22 (2:30 pm) and April 23 (1:30 pm). Tickets range in price from \$20-\$40 and are available online at RedBluffRoundup.com, at the Round-Up Museum (670 Antelope Blvd., Suite 1, Red Bluff) and at the gate.

For more information, visit the website or call the Round-Up Museum at 530.527.1000.

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Cutlines:

James Banister turfs a steer in the steer wrestling at the 2022 Red Bluff Round-Up. He dreamed of competing at the Round-Up as a kid and is now living out that dream. Photo by Crystal Amen.

James Banister slides off his horse to wrestle a steer at the 2022 Red Bluff Round-Up. The Cottonwood, Calif. cowboy attended the Round-Up as a kid and now competes at it. Photo by Crystal Amen.