



Squaw Butte Back Country Horsemen

PRESIDENT'S CORNER October 2015

For some time I kept hearing this, excitement, that Pari-mutuel races were coming to Emmett. Not quite knowing what this, excitement, was I thought I'd check it out. Might be fun.

Entry was reasonable enough and came with a program. So far so good. There were seven races with four horses per race. Seemed simple enough. Betting booths were all busy, for a small town there seemed to be a pretty good turn-out. Pop-corn and beer appeared to be the big winners.

Inside the program are stats on each horse to help you determine which to bet on. Since this didn't appear to be in English my bets were all, look at the horse and guess. There was a guessing pen where you could view the horses prior to each race. I squeak when I walk, so my bets were of the bragging rights variety and not monetary.

I had been to horse races before, but they were all big tracks and the animals so far away you couldn't tell a Bay from a Saint Bernard. Emmett's was a lot nicer, up close and personal. Kind of the red-neck of horse races. Ya know, feels more like home.

All but two races were mad dashes of three hundred to three hundred and fifty yards. The gates open and it's a blur to the finish line not much room for error from beginning to end. The other two races were once around the track. To me these were more fun. Both times two or three horses running neck to neck to the final end. So close you had to wait for the results to be posted on a board across the track.

All in all the races seemed to be a success and Emmett made a great showing for their efforts. The finale was to be a spectator race. A horse relay race from the Shoshone-Bannock Indians. Originating at Fort Hall over one hundred years ago.

There were 3 teams. Each team had, 3 horses and 4 team members. 1 rider, 1 catcher (mugger) and 2 holders. Each rider, bare-back and only a leather loop around the horses neck, makes one lap around the track while the rest of the team waits at the start against the out-side rail. When each rider makes his lap he will then approach his group, dismount his horse and jump on another horse, without assistance, and make another lap. This is done until all three horses have completed their lap.... Seems simple enough.

The problem being, when they all come in they are all at the same time, at least for the first lap. Then it's like herding cats. Indians and horses everywhere. This horse moves that horse, this Indian jumps on a horse to just slide over one and under another, yet somehow thru the dusty mayhem and Indian and a horse pop out to start another lap just to come round and do it again.

This is my kind of racing. The figure 8's of stock cars. These individuals are either extremely brave or totally crazy. Either way it is a site to see. I am also pretty sure what looks like mayhem to me is under control to them. I am glad I went and if others were not able, they missed something.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2jpn13-J2g>

Be safe and have fun
Bill Holt-President-SBBCH