

After pageant comes wait for crowning

By Sam Dieter

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With the competition completed, the judges have only to make a decision as to whom to crown for the Thomas County Rodeo Pageant.

In all, seven girls competed for one of three titles at the pageant. Ariel Severson and MaKayla Hoffman are competing for queen, Faith Edwards, Jamie Nemechek and Abbey Schmeiser are all after the princess title and Emeline Hutton and Lizzie Cornell want junior princess.

The current queen is Jennifer Schwanke, the current princess is Kortney Bredemier, and the current junior princess is Tylor Todd.

The winners will be announced at 8 p.m. Monday, July 30, at the beginning of the Kansas Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Rodeo.

The contestants, as well as the current queen, princess and junior princess, will be in the grand entry procession for the rodeo, said pageant organizer Brandy Todd, Tylor's mother. At the coronation, the current royalty will enter the arena escorted by their fathers, and the contestants will be escorted by boys from area 4-H clubs.

"They will be introduced and the constants will be introduced," Todd said. "The new royalty will take over from that point on."

Todd said that the actual competition, which took place July 14, covered many areas of knowledge.

"You know, these girls have had to study, they've had to ride, it's a lot of work," Todd said. "What a lot of people don't know is that a pageant is a lot of work."

The girls first showed up at the 4-H Building at 9:30 a.m. in their fanciest western clothes for the modeling portion of the competition. They stood before a crowd of about 40 people while delivering – and sometimes stumbling over – a rehearsed speech.

Closed interviews on the subject of rodeo were held at 1 p.m., also in the 4-H Building. The competition came to a close at 5 p.m. with the horsemanship competition at the small arena on the fairgrounds. Girls had practiced for several weeks, learning the reining maneuvers they had to run their horses through:



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Skill at riding played a big part of the queen competition July 14, as Jamie Nemechek demonstrated.

run-downs, steps, rollback, circles and pivots. Each one finished with the "queen's run," a lap around the arena, waving at the crowd.

Competing for the title of queen this year were MaKayla Hoffman, 14, and Ariel Severson, 18. Faith Edwards, 15; Jamie Nemechek, 13; and Abbey Schmeiser, 12, all hope to become the princess. Lizzie Cornell and Emeline Hutton, both 10, are competing for junior princess.

Jennifer Schwanke, 18, is the reigning queen, Kortney Bredemeier, 15, is the current princess and Tylor Todd, 9, Brandy Todd's daughter, is the current junior princess.

Schwanke said she spent her year as queen attending community events, including stick-horse races and pony rides at preschools, and promoting the Thomas County Rodeo at other events. She described the pageant as a good character builder.

"It's a really good way to get involved in rodeo and represent a great sport, and then get involved with your community at the same

time," Schwanke said. "It's fun because you get to exchange stories, you get to tell people about your title, and they get to tell you about what they did."

The pageant is sponsored by 5-S Feed and Livestock, S&T Internet, Sew Cute, Donelan Jewelry, Ferma Garrett, Fotogirl Photography and Peoples State Bank.



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