



- Spectator Admission \$5 per person
- Kids 12 and under are FREE
- Concessions and beverages are available on site for all to enjoy

2021 Race Schedule and Times

Friday February 5th

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Competitor Welcome Party
- Back Room of the Hotel Wolf
6:00 PM till close - Welcome Party - Back Room of Hotel Wolf
7:30 PM Calcutta - Back Room of Wolf

Saturday February 6th

9:30 AM Race Volunteer Safety and Rule Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at the timing booth)
9:45 AM Competitor Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet near starting gate)
10:30 AM Competitor Course Inspection
11:00 AM Races Begin - Buck Springs Race Track (Novice Division will run first)
8:00 PM Calcutta - Back Room of Hotel Wolf

Sunday February 7th

9:15 AM Race Volunteer Safety Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at the timing booth)
9:30 AM Competitor Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at starting gate)
9:45 AM Competitor Course Inspection
10:00 AM Races Begin - Buck Springs Race Track (Novice Division will run first)

Awards Party at the Hotel Wolf Back Room following the conclusion of the races on Sunday afternoon.
Winners announced and prize money will be paid out at the Awards Ceremony Party following the races.

GENERAL RACE DESCRIPTION DIVISION AND COMPETITION CRITERIA

A team consists of a horse, rider and skier and will get 1 run each day. i.e. a skier can not ski behind the same horse more than one time per day, a horse may only run 2 times per day and a skier can only run a maximum of 4 times per day ***OPEN 3-D All teams that do not consist of Novice and Youth. A team consists of horse, rider and skier, a skier can not ski behind the same horse more than once.

NOVICE/EXHIBITION CLASS (Beginners) Teams are considered to be, new to the sport, beginning level competitors riding horses that may not have speed enough to be competitive in the Open 3-D. A team consists of horse, rider and skier, a skier can not ski behind the same horse more than once. Youth - Non competitive fun run, one participant must be under the age of 18.

SKIER –OPEN & SPORT RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A skier can choose their division of competition.
- A skier may compete in only one Division, unless assisting with the youth division.
- A skier may compete up to four times in a day.
- All skiers must wear approved snow sport helmets.
- Any Skiers under 18, must have parent/guardian sign parental consent forms.
- Proof of insurance for minors is mandatory.
- Protective Eyewear and helmet must be worn during competition.
- Recommendations: It is strongly suggested that bindings be tested by a professional prior to skiing.

TIMING

- We utilize a 1.5 second split between divisions. All divisions are based on raw times (no penalty assessed) and thus ranked accordingly, penalties are then assessed, but only after the divisions are established. Team day one raw time is averaged with day two raw time, division splits set, then total penalties added to get the weekend overall time.
- Electronic timing via kick boards will determine the official time, if a skier fails to trigger the kick board, i.e. jumps the board, the result will be a no time. In the event of timing system failure, we have backup timing place, both hand and electronic.
- The timing judge's and starting judge's call is final.

RIDER –OPEN 3-D RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A rider may compete in more than one division, but must compete on a different horse in each Division entered. i.e. if a rider has 2 horses they may be entered in the same or different divisions, a horse may not cross divisions.
- All riders must be on time for their runs. Any rider that cannot be ready on time due to running to many horses or horse difficulty will be moved to the back of the order. Second failure to be ready on time will result in a DQ for that run.
- Riders have three minutes to begin their run, time starts when the race is called by the Starting Gate Judge. If the rider has not started their run (forward progression towing the skier to the start line) by the four minute mark then the team will be moved to the back of the order. Second failure to be ready on time will result in a DQ for that run. Riders can only enter 2 horses per division.

HORSE – OPEN 3D RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Horse can compete in only one Division.
- A horse may not run more than two times in a day. Unless competing in the novice division, which is non competitive by nature and design, race organizers have final say here.
- Use a standard western bit includes: 1. 8 1/2" maximum length shank. Shanks may be fixed or loose. If curb bit is used it must be free of mechanical device and should be considered a standard western bit. When a curb bit is used, a curb strap or curb chain is required, which must be at least 1/2" in width, lie flat against the jaw, and be free of barbs, wire, and/or twists. Recommendations: Leg protection (boots or polo wraps) and bell boots are recommended. Horses are encouraged to have a shoe that will increase traction (borium, calks, etc) but not required.

Course Design

In designing our course our main focus is to provide a safe venue for horses, riders, skiers and spectators. We will have a straight track approximately 700' in length. Our track designers work with what mother nature gives us, and typically includes 3 jumps, Leadville style rings, and multiple ski gates. The skier is offset to the right of the horse and rider. Horses run on a prepared dirt track. Horse track safety is our top priority and our organizations have been preparing dirt horse race surfaces for over 38 years.

Snow Update!

We are experiencing a dryer than normal year here in the North Platte River Valley, but rest assured our track construction artist Richard Raymer has identified and secured every available pile of snow in our town. Our crew set up 9 strategically placed drift fences on site to capture all that mother has provided, and we are forever grateful to Dan's Trucking, Quality Landscape, Shively Hardware, The Town of Saratoga, Saratoga Aviation, Rod's Backhoe and RG Raymer Construction for the commitment to help haul snow for the event, without these dedicated local businesses this event would not happen.

Horse Boarding

Thanks to our local supporters and ranchers we have onsite horse boarding at the race venue. All boarding facilities have water available, please bring your own feed. Boarding is at no extra cost for participants and reservations are made when registering for the event.

For more information and complete rules, see www.saratogaskijoring.com



Winner Payout

With the support of the Carbon County Visitors Council and local sponsors we have raised \$6,000 to be used as money added participant prizes. Winnings will be split between rider and skier! All racer registration fees and money added will be paid back to competitors. We will pay day money to the winning team of each day, day money will equal the division registration fee.
*We reserve the right to change payouts as event finances dictate during the 2021 season due to snow haul costs and added costs of covid restrictions.

Open 1-D with \$2,750 Total Money Added

- 1st Place: \$1,375 plus 25% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 2nd Place: \$550 plus 10% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 3rd Place: \$412 plus 7.5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 4th Place: \$275 plus 5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 5th Place: \$137 plus 2.5% of Open Class Entry Fees

Open 2-D with \$2,250 Total Money Added

- 1st Place: \$1,125 plus 17.5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 2nd Place: \$450 plus 7% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 3rd Place: \$337 plus 5.25% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 4th Place: \$225 plus 3.5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 5th Place: \$112 plus 1.75% of Open Class Entry Fees

Open 3-D with \$500 Total Money Added

- 1st Place: \$250 plus 7.5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 2nd Place: \$100 plus 3% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 3rd Place: \$75 plus 2.25% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 4th Place: \$50 plus 1.5% of Open Class Entry Fees
- 5th Place: \$25 plus 0.75% of Open Class Entry Fees

Amateur/Novice Class with \$500 Total Money Added

- 1st Place: \$250 • 2nd Place: \$125 • 3rd Place: \$100 • 4th Place: \$75 • 5th Place: \$50

PARTICIPATION WILL BE HONORED ON A PRIORITY BASIS - REGISTER FIRST, RESERVE FIRST. ENTRY FEES WILL BE DUE AT SIGN-IN ON FRIDAY.

***COVID UPDATE - Due to limited seating capacity in our local restaurants, we strongly urge everyone to make reservations at your eating establishment of choice. The Hotel Wolf, Dukes, Saratoga Hot Springs Resort and Bella's Bistro are all open for business. If you are dining at the Wolf, please plan on making reservations well in advance as space will be very limited. A limited bar menu will be available in the back room.



X-treme Social Distancing

Saratoga Skijoring takes social distancing from 6 feet to 33

by Joshua Wood

Since March 2020, the term “social distancing” has become as much a part of the nation’s vocabulary as it has been a source of frustration for the postponement or cancellation of countless events. One event, however, is embracing the term.

When visiting the website for Saratoga Skijoring, the home page tells participants “All riders and skiers must social distance by exactly 33 feet”. With a 33 foot rope between a rider and a skier, it would seem that skijoring is the perfect COVID-season sport. Especially in the Cowboy State.

“When you look at the regulations and everything that everybody’s had to go through ... we’re pretty fortunate to be fairly spread out here in Wyoming. That’s allowed, at least, to have fewer restrictions than some of our neighboring states with more densely populated areas,” said Will Faust, co-organizer of Saratoga Skijoring and Lions Club member. “I think we’re lucky that we’re able to navigate some of the complexities that even our own state has put on us and we’re confident that we can hold a safe event and stay within the guidelines and parameters.”

The skijoring races in Saratoga, or rather just outside Saratoga, have always been unique compared to races in other places throughout the west. In places such as Pinedale, where skijoring has also taken hold as a winter pastime, the course is built either close to town or through town.

“One of my good friends organizes the Leadville race and they’re having to really change the format and the location of their race to meet the more stringent Colorado standards,” Faust said. “They usually do it down Historic Harrison Avenue, right

downtown, and there’s 3,000 people on either side of you but you can’t control who comes and goes because it’s the town.”

What gives Saratoga and the Lions Club a leg up over some of these other races, is the 80 acres owned by the non-profit philanthropic organization that are used each summer for the Platte River Rodeo and the Annual Saratoga Bullfest and had been used for nearly four decades to hold the annual chariot races.

“We’ve got control on a single point of entrance and a single point of exit out at Buck Springs (Arena) and so that lets us do the proper crowd control and limit the spectators if we get to that 500 limit and know that we’ve got 80 acres to socially distance,” said Faust.

According to Faust, he and the other race organizers have been paying very close attention to the health orders from Governor Mark Gordon and State Health Officer Alexia Harrist. On January 26, updated orders from the governor raised the limit on outside gatherings back to 500 following a previous limit of 250 people.

“We’ve been following that pretty closely. We’re excited that we’re not limited to 250 spectators but 500 spectators,” said Faust. “Looking at attendance in years past, we shouldn’t be bumping up against that 500 person threshold on a daily basis, which is good.”

In the past four years of the event, when the weather was good enough for people to travel but cold enough to keep the course maintained, final estimates put attendees at close to 400 people. With the updated health orders, this should allow Saratoga Skijoring to have some breathing room when it comes to attendance.

If there’s a silver lining to be



Photo by Dana Davis

Social distancing shouldn’t be a problem for the skijoring event at the 80 acre Buck Springs Arena February 6 and 7.

found in the effects that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on organizing Saratoga Skijoring for 2021, it’s that it has led to innovations that will likely be used going forward. Sarah Brugger, another event organizer, has initiated contactless registration and contactless liability waivers for participants.

“Sarah’s done a ton of work on that. Looking at our Saratoga (Skijoring) email ... there’s, I think, about 80 individual invoices,” Faust said. “So that’s 80 invoices that Sarah had to create, 80 emails that we get, 80 confirmations of those emails. So now we’re at 160, plus another 160 on the liability waiver side of things. It’s a tremendous volume for her to keep up with and to make sure that we’re not missing anybody on that.”

While event organizers are excited that Saratoga Skijoring will be able to take place this year, they do want both participants and spectators

to be aware that COVID guidelines will be enforced.

“We’re very cognizant of all the eyes in the skijoring world are staring at us this weekend. We’re the only race in the country that weekend. There’s going to be very little tolerance for somebody who maybe has an opinion on the regulations and doesn’t want to follow them,” said Faust. “It’s too important for our race to go smoothly, for people to be safe, for spectators to be safe, for competitors to be safe and to follow the rules so that Pinedale can happen, so that Gillette can happen, so that Buffalo can happen.”

Additionally, while 80 acres can certainly allow for plenty of social distancing, and spectators can watch the races from their vehicles, Saratoga Skijoring will be providing a digital option for those who want to see the races but don’t want to go out to Buck Springs Arena with a livestream available on www.saratogaskijoring.com.

“We’ve got a four person team coming up from Meeker, Colorado,” Faust said. “Millhouse has donated internet out at the track site so that we’ve got high speed internet.”

There will also be some slight changes to the races, though not their complexity, due to COVID regulations. According to Faust, the biggest change will be that teams can only run two horses per division, per rider.

“We had to say ‘Look, we want to make sure we produce a quality event’ and so we have paired that down and matched people up and making sure everybody who’s initially signed up has a chance to play. We’re down to about 125 races,” said Faust. “Our focus has always been on making it a team event, not a horse race, and so we want to have features and gate placements and obstacles and things that make the skier and rider have to go ‘Wait a second, this isn’t a fastest horse wins’.”

Photos from this weekend’s event will be posted on Facebook @ewoodphotos

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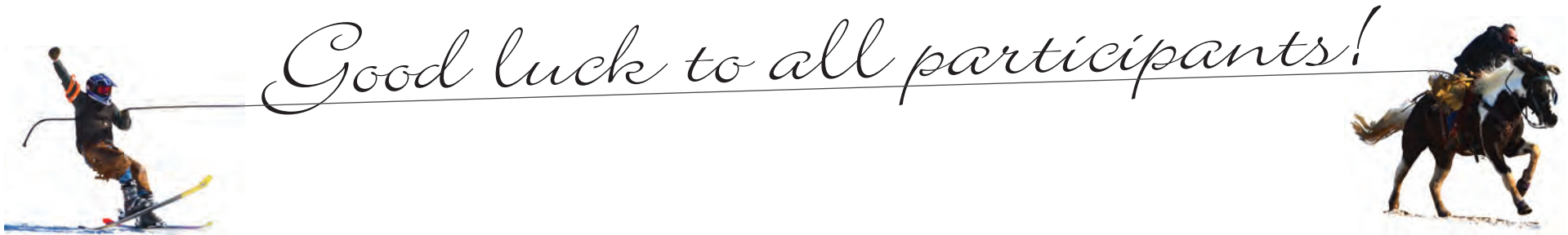
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Hoping for snow

Lack of snowfall means looking elsewhere for track material

by Joshua Wood

While skijoring has risen in popularity recently, Saratoga Skijoring will be entering it's 5th consecutive year this weekend, it likely hasn't taken long for spectators and participants to realize that there are three major things that the sport needs; skis, horses and snow.

This year, there will be plenty of the first two as event organizers shut down registration far earlier than in previous years. What seems to be lacking this year, however, is the cold, powdery, white stuff that is often found during winter in high elevations.

"We're not only dealing with COVID (coronavirus) but also a lack of winter here in south central Wyoming," said Will Faust, co-organizer of Saratoga Skijoring.

If Old Man Winter is around, he doesn't seem to be working very hard as Wyoming enters February and the Lions Club prepares to host the races this weekend. Very little snow, in fact, has been seen in the Valley in recent weeks. As of February 1, the high in Saratoga was 41 degrees Fahrenheit with a high of 46 forecasted for February 2. Cooler temperatures, however, are predicted to arrive before the skijoring races and bringing some precipitation with them.

Additionally, according to Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) data from the United States Department of Agriculture, the snow water equivalent currently at higher elevations such as North French Creek



Photo by Amanda Shepherd

Rod's Backhoe Service helps haul snow from the Platte Valley Community Center to Buck Springs Arena on Tuesday morning.

is at 89 percent of the 1981 to 2010 average and, as of January 31, at a depth of 61 inches.

Members of the Lions Club often begin work on building and perfecting the course out at Buck Springs Arena in the weeks leading up to the event. With little snowfall, that has left organizers looking high and low for course material.

"It's like we're burglars on patrol but we're looking for every snowpile in town," Faust said.

While there may be a lack of snowfall at the moment, that doesn't mean there's a lack of snow piles to choose from. According to Faust,

event organizers have been in contact with everyone from the Town of Saratoga to the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints about using snow piles accumulated in parking lots.

It isn't just the Lions Club working on their own, though. While the Town of Saratoga's Department of Public Works has agreed to let Saratoga Skijoring reduce their snow piles, local businesses have also stepped in to help. Randy Stevens, owner of Quality Landscape in Saratoga, and Danny McGuire, owner of Dan's Trucking, have both volunteered the use of equipment to move and haul

snow out to Buck Springs Arena. So, too, has Shively's Hardware and Rod's Backhoe Service.

Saratoga Skijoring, however, will work to provide the quality races they have come to be known for across the west. According to Faust, registration for the event jumped from 85 to 168 over the weekend of January 8 and teams will be coming as far north as the Idaho/Canada border and as far south as Oklahoma. The amount of registrants have also given the organizers an extensive wait list in case some teams are unable to make it.

With that wait list, Faust

said that Saratoga Skijoring could conceivably increase the number of races from 120 to 150 or 160 but that it would tax both their volunteers and their track.

"You're running races for six, seven hours and you're wearing your volunteers out and if the weather is warm you're beating your track up," said Faust. "We know that we can run 120 races in about three hours."

While Puxatawny Phil will have already made his prediction about spring on February 2, it looks like there may be plenty of snow and cool weather for the 5th year of the Saratoga Skijoring Races.

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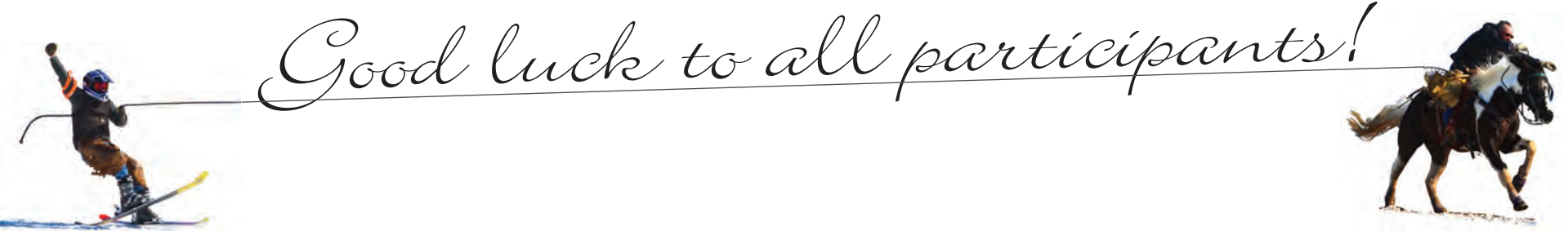
**Registration is
Friday at 5pm.
Calcutta is Friday at
7:30pm & Saturday at
8pm. Awards will be
Sunday after the races.**



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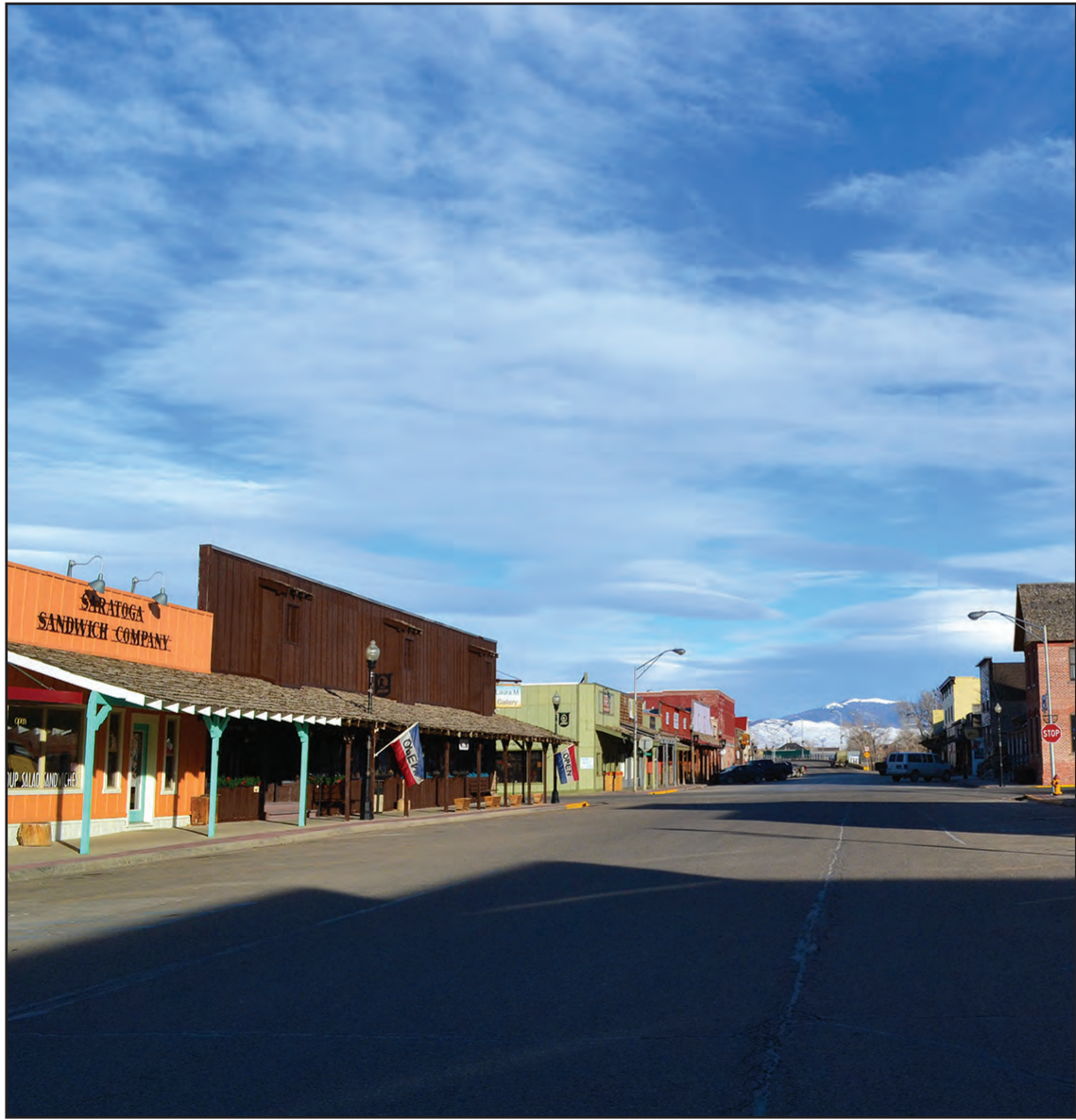
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What to do on a Saturday night



While downtown Saratoga appears sleepy in this photo, it will likely be far more active this weekend with Saratoga Skijoring.

Photo by Dana Davis

With no concert for Skijoring Saturday, event organizers encourage patronage of local businesses

by Joshua Wood

To the joy of countless skijoring fans, the annual Saratoga Skijoring will be able to take place this year, though with some changes. Many of those changes are to the races themselves and are a direct result of health regulations.

One of the biggest changes, however, is what typically occurs after the races on Saturday night. While the Saratoga Skijoring races have been known for their complex courses and their quick race turnarounds, one of the other features that have helped draw spectators and participants is the concert typically held at the Platte Valley Community Center.

In the past, this concern has been headline by acts such as Chancey Williams and the Younger Brothers Band and Patti Fiasco. This year, however, the Great Hall of the Platte Valley Community Center will be closed and no musical act will help top off the first day of races.

According to Will Faust, event co-organizer, the discussion about whether or not to include

a concert began in August 2020 and a shortlist of bands were on notice in case it appeared that a Saturday night musical event was possible.

“We just saw it as a non-starter with the rise in cases, especially here in the Valley, and whether or not we could have pulled it off safely was immaterial (compared) to we wanted to be respectful to everyone’s different opinions on this throughout town,” said Faust. “Even if we could conceivably pull off a 200 person concert with limited entry in a certain sized space, we thought it would have been poor optics.”

With an eye toward longevity, the decision was finally made to postpone the concert for 2021. While unfortunate, one of the benefits for this year’s event is that the money normally spent on music and rental of the Great Hall has been spent to increase accessibility for Saratoga Skijoring in the era of social distancing.

Though there won’t be any music at the Platte Valley Community Center this year, event organizers are

encouraging those in Saratoga for skijoring to enjoy the other things that the Valley has to offer. This includes not only visiting local restaurants and bars, but taking in the warmth of the Saratoga Hot Pool.

“I think this event is maybe even similar to the ice fishing derby; it’s a reason to bring people to Saratoga in a time that is especially challenging for certain businesses in our local economy that have borne the brunt of this,” Faust said. “So, we’re excited to be able to pull it off this year and put people in hotels and put people in the restaurants and the eating establishments and filling up with gas and buying stuff at the grocery store.”

With organizations such as the Carbon County Visitors Council putting more focus on events in the “shoulder season” between Labor Day and Memorial Day and local businesses still struggling with the effects of the coronavirus, an encouragement from Saratoga Skijoring may just be the extra bump to help the Valley economy in an especially downtime.

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