

## SPONSORED FEATURE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Jacob Bulotti gets ready to ride the backcountry. Photo by Kendall Nelson

# JACOB BULOTTI

## *Student competes as uphill racer*

BY JONATHAN KANE

Jacob Bulotti, a senior at Wood River High School, loves adventure and trying new things.

"If I see something that I'm interested in, I want to go and try it out," he said. In particular, this applies to working with horses and racing snowmobiles.

"I got into ranching a few years ago. I was really inspired by the movie 'Buck,' to work with and train horses. So I shadowed a horse trainer and used the techniques featured in the movie."

It's building a relationship with the animal that Jacob finds special.

"There's a real trust and a bond there, especially in the way that horses can sense you. It's so satisfying to get over an obstacle with a horse, even if it takes all day. Like teaching it to walk backwards by just shaking the lead rope."

His own horse, Cheyenne, was one of his first projects.

"She's tame now, but when I first got her, we nicknamed her 'crazy eyes,'" Jacob said with a laugh. "She didn't like being bossed around, so her eyes would get really big when you worked with her."

Jacob's new passion is racing snowmobiles in what is called hillclimb racing. Instead of going down the hill, like skiing, the competitors race up it. Last year was his first competing as an uphill racer.

"I race in the Rocky Mountain Hill Climbing Association," he said. "I was inspired because the circuit came here last year at the Minnie Moore Mine [in Bellevue]. It's Klim the Mine."

In his first race he finished 12th out of 25 entrants.

"I didn't make it to the highest mark on the hill," Jacob said. "Basically, you are doing a slalom up a

hill on a sled and you are judged by your time and how far up you can go. You get two runs and you take your best time and distance. It all depends on how tall the mountain is."

There are four classes of competitors – juniors, semi-pro, pro and women.

"I raced in the juniors and in my first year I qualified to go to the world championships in Jackson Hole, Wyo.," said Jacob. "It was really fun and a very cool experience. I was so surprised that I made it and I was really stoked. It inspired me and made me want to do better in the sport."

To Jacob, the sport is extremely technical.

"You have to get the sled on an even plane and keep it level. You are not really using the handlebars, so it's all about weight positioning. The whole thing is super-technical. It's pretty scary but a real adrenaline rush."

Jacob's first time on a sled was when he was 5 years old, in the Baker Creek parking lot on his father's 900 Polaris Dragon.

"It was deep snow and I ended up getting stuck and building a deep trench," he said. "My dad thought it was pretty funny, except that he had to wade into the snow and come get me."

"I really love backcountry skiing where you can travel 20 to 30 miles into the wilderness. Being in beautiful country with the excitement and the adrenaline rush – every day gets better."

**Editor's Note:** *Anyone who would like to recommend a Blaine County School District student for The Weekly Sun's "Student Spotlight" feature should contact Jonathan Kane at [jkjonkane@gmail.com](mailto:jkjonkane@gmail.com).*

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