

Team plans special tribute to fallen cowboy

By KAREN CAMPBELL
Press Reporter

On Friday night of UT Martin’s Rodeo Week the stands should be a bit brighter to behold. Fans are encouraged to “Orange Out for Wyatt” and wear the school color and a favorite of Wyatt Cole, the rodeo student-athlete, who died Feb. 10 after a car accident near Martin.

In a night of tribute to the 20-year-old known to be a free spirit and true cowboy, team members, family, friends and rodeo visitors will get a glimpse of the young man and the sport he loved. The evening’s activities include a collection of donations for the newly-established Wyatt Cole Memorial Scholarship and teammates sharing a bit about his short, but adventurous life.

Team members will be sporting memorial bands designed by UTM rodeo leadership and Anita Allen of Monograms and More (who also creates the T-shirts each year). They will also be donning an element the crowd won’t see but will help keep Wyatt close to their hearts as his mother Isabella has taken one of the familiar long-sleeved shirts he was known for and crafted squares that can be sewn inside the team members’ vests.



Cole, a junior from Owenton, Kentucky, was majoring in agricultural business and in his second season with the UT Martin rodeo team.

Katie White, booster club president for the rodeo, explained that after Wyatt’s funeral, Wyatt’s father Greg pulled a few of the UTM team representa-

tives aside with a specific request about the planned tribute. In a nod to Wyatt’s big, bold personality, he said, “I want a nice tribute. But I don’t want to cry.”

As a result, while the tradition of having a riderless horse will be carried out with Wyatt’s horse and Wyatt’s saddle, the conclusion of the tribute will

reflect the quirkier traits of the cowboy.

While she doesn’t want to reveal the planned conclusion of the tribute, she does acknowledge it’s “pretty cool” and involves George Strait’s “Cowboys Like Us” which includes the lines: *Cowboys like us sure do have fun*

*Racin’ the wind,
chasin’ the sun
Take the long way around
back to square one
Today we’re just outlaws
out on the run
There’ll be no regrets,
no worries and such
For cowboys like us.*

Cole advanced to the finals of three collegiate rodeos during the 2018-19

season, representing UT Martin in team roping at Missouri Valley College and in steer wrestling at both Three Rivers College and Murray State. He accumulated team points in each of his steer wrestling performances, including a career-best third-place finish in average (13.6 seconds) at Murray State.

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