

Hunters capture critters for cause

By JOSIE MUSICO
Staff Writer

Four coyotes didn't have such a great weekend, but the trio of local hunting enthusiasts who now own their carcasses certainly did.

Dr. Jim Ridenour, one-third of J & J, the winning team from Terry County 4-H's Varmint Hunt, told the *News* it felt "Wonderful" to nail the local youth organization's first-ever 24-hour hunting competition.

"It's the best feeling in the world," he said.

Ridenour and teammates James McBee and 12-year-old Riley McBee hit the fields Saturday in search of the biggest, wildest and most howlin' coyotes they could find, and didn't stop until they found enough for a small pack.

"We just call and hope something comes in," James McBee said.

Second place went to team Felix Smartina, in which competitors John Watkins, Chris Watkins and Hunter Cullington shot three coyotes. Hunters Larry Wilson and Jay

Nistettev were awarded "Biggest Dog" after a coyote they caught weighed in at more than 30 pounds.

The 15 teams registered in the competition together

caught a total of 13 coyotes and one fox. Some of those groups consisted of local hunters, but others hailed from as far away as Ballinger, Seminole, Ker-

mit and even Phoenix.

"We had a great turnout," said event director and 4-H parent leader Cade Pharis.

The local 4-H club plans

to use the more than \$600 they earned from Varmint Hunt for their upcoming end-of-school-year trip to San Antonio.

Pharis said he formed the idea for the fund-raiser after testing his shooting skills in similar competitions, and that he plans to make it an annual event.

"I've hunted in these varmint hunts around the state, and I thought it would be a great way to raised for 4-H and give back to the kids of the community," he said.

Following Saturday's morning registration and noon kickoff, hunters load-

ed their rifles and headed for the fields. In accordance with contest rules, they could find and kill mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes and foxes. The met wrapped up by noon Sunday, then met back at the county showbarn for weigh-in and an awards ceremony.

Teams were awarded on a point system based on the number and type of animals harvested. For example, each fox they caught would give them two points, while a harder-to-find mountain lion would have been worth 10.



Local hunters (left to right) Dr. Jim Ridenour, Riley McBee and James McBee display one of the four coyotes they caught during the Terry County 4-H Club's Varmint Hunt. Their team, J & J, placed first in the 24-hour weekend hunting competition.

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This female chihuahua is currently available for adoption from the Brownfield Animal Shelter. For more information, call 637-2511.



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