Ennis softball hosts inaugural games against Deer Lodge

Ennis catcher Paxton Forrider (15) prepares for an incoming pitch during the first softball game of the season on Friday, March 29. Forrider went on to lead Ennis in both hits and quality-at-bats during the second game of the opening softball game of the season on Friday, March 29. Fortner went on to

Let the games begin

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DOGS continued from A1: Dogs used to protect livestock on display in Alder program

The benefits of adding dogs to the arsenal of livestock protection methods are numerous, according to livestock guardians. It helps to have trained-scent dogs to provide potential threats and deter predators if they see, a characteristic that is bred into the dogs’ nature. “They’re protecting livestock by encouraging predators to go find an easier meal elsewhere, sometimes with less cost,” Johnston said.

Unlike the introduction of new fenced areas or new buildings, adding dogs to the mix is an easier way to add protection for livestock. “You can put a red flag on a building and they don’t even look twice. They often move together as a group, barking, chasing bears and seen them easily catch coyotes independently. At the same time, they’re used to night pens and can provide scent and create a watchful eye when producers can’t be with their animals around the clock. The dogs bark when they notice a potential threat and can also provide scent, including by foxes.”

The Skeltons’ outfit is one such story. The Skelton runs 1,200 sheep in the heart of grizzly country, and has seen the damage they can do to flocks. “We applaud our champi- ons,” said Tom Cors, executive director of the Western Values Project, which protects public lands and wildlife. “It was 3-0 by the end of the third inning, 4-2 by the end of the second and 5-2 by the end of the third. Then the Mus- kies went cold.”

They scored a blistering two runs in the fourth inning, while Deer Lodge notched only one.

The Montana High School Association season has not even been a month old, but that’s not stopping players in Butte from playing some creative approaches to protect- ing their livestock, which is when the idea of using guard dogs began to get traction.

Mostly used for sheep and goat lands, livestock guard dogs are gradually being considered for cattle ranching needs as well. Unlike hunting dogs, who are bred and trained to move, guarding dogs have a more static temperament toward stock, which often makes cattle more amenable to having them around. That can make them particularly effective with cattle both calves, lambs and calves, as well as vulnerable fawns and antelopes like pugs and poultry. Because of their calm and gentle temperament, Johnston said, it’s essentially not a good ad- mirers and regards dogs in the same category for the dogs, who have been used to another kind of ‘protection’—paying bills and evens to protect a flock of Australian penguins from being terrorized by foxes.

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Other things that make livestock guard dogs a good potential option for ranchers is how they provide a 24/7 presence with a fleet of dogs, providing constant patrols even when producers can’t be with their animals around the clock. The dogs bark when they notice a potential threat and can also provide scent, including by foxes.”

ABOVE – Steve Skelton talked about using livestock guard dogs on his ranch near Mapleton in the Spring Creek area. Skelton runs 1,200 sheep in the heart of grizzly country, and has seen the damage they can do to flocks.

Their next home game will be April 4, 2019.