

Lumberjack show a hit at county fair

By Mark Fischenich

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GARDEN CITY — A couple of guys who were college students last spring became celebrities at the Blue Earth County Fair Sunday, just as they do every time they perform in the All American Lumberjack Show. Carl Rick of Onalaska, Wis., and Jimmy Anderson of Stillwater raced across floating cedar logs, ran through an obstacle course brandishing chain saws, climbed trees before firing up the saws and teamed up with volunteers from the audience on a two-person manual crosscut saw.

The athleticism and showmanship were enough to get the crowd, divided by master of ceremonies Jamie Fischer into rooting sections for Rick and Anderson, cheering for their man and chanting for the other guy to fall. And when it was all over, kids scrambled to pick up the dinner-plate-size wood slabs sliced off of logs as souvenirs — asking Rick, Anderson and Fischer to sign the wood.

Fischer figures the event is appealing to people partly because of ESPN's broadcasts of lumberjack championships.

“A lot of people have seen this on TV,” he said. “They’ve never seen it live.” This weekend, they did. And they also got to do it. Connie Long of Mankato was volunteered by family members to team up with Anderson on the crosscut saw. But she was totally in the spirit, doing some trash talking just before the sawing started. “You’re going down,” Long yelled at Rick and his audience teammate, a guy named Andy. “Down!” Afterward, Long, who came up just short of beating

Rick and Andy, said the event has a lot of the stuff that children love.

“It just draws the kids,” Long said. “The noise, the competition part of it, and it’s something different that you don’t see every day.”

The crowd heard customized saws that barely seemed to notice the wood that they were ripping through, heard about the specialized shoes the lumberjacks wear for the log-running events and watched Fischer use a chain saw to carve a doll-sized four-legged chair in under two minutes.

The whole event, sponsored by Kwik Trip, was free of charge, wrapped up in a little more than 30 minutes and left the crowd in smiles — especially the kids with the autographs.

Two hours later, Rick and Anderson were ready to go again and Fischer was working to fire up a new crowd: “Is everybody ready for a lumberjack show?”



Jimmy Anderson of Stillwater sprinted across the cedar logs, and back again, in 8.1 seconds to win the boom run during a lumberjack show Sunday at the Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City. Matt Gorrie