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Cowboy shooting starts Friday at Old F.E. Gold Camp

By **BOB ELEY** beley@newsminer.com | Posted: Tuesday, July 9, 2013 12:04 am

FAIRBANKS — The Golden Heart Shootist Society will host the 17th annual Single Action Shooting Society Alaska State Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting on Friday through Sunday at Old F.E. Gold Camp in Chatanika.

The Golden Heart Shootist Society is the home of Cowboy Action Shooting in Interior Alaska. SASS is the international governing body of the sport.

Contestants compete in categories based on shooting style and age. Competitors are as young as 13 and older than 80.

The competition starts at

1 p.m. Friday with side matches including a Bowling Pin Duel and the Cowboy Decathlon.

The Cowboy Decathlon involves whip-cracking, lassoing, knife throwing, tomahawk throwing and speed shooting with various firearms.

Saturday and Sunday features Main Match shooting from

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Spectators are welcome. Eye and ear protection is required for spectators in the active shooting areas, and is available for loan in the event tent. GHSS will have a greeter available near the large tent to help spectators get safety gear and find a good spot to observe the action.

The Golden Heart Shootist Society Range is at Old F.E. Gold Camp, 28 Mile Steese Highway.

In conjunction with the competition, there is a charity fundraising event in support of the Wounded Warrior Project.

Participants buy \$5 chances to shoot a double-blind marked target. The shot placed closest to the hidden mark wins a hand-made Damascus steel knife, crafted and donated by Wind Drifter, a member of the Golden Heart Shootist Society.

Spectators are welcome to participate, and will be able to use unique firearms including large bore “buffalo” rifles similar to those used by hunters on the Great Plains in the 1800s.

The charity shoot begins at the completion of competition each day, between 4 and 5 p.m.

Cowboy Action Shooting uses firearms or replicas of firearms designed before 1900, and typical of those used in the Old West years of 1860 to 1899.

The competition is for the fastest course of fire onto steel plate targets using two revolvers, one lever action rifle, and a shotgun of double barrel side-by-side, lever action or 1897 pump action.

Competitors create an Old West persona for themselves, dress in clothing of the period, and go by the “alias” name of the character they have created.

There are three other cowboy action shooting clubs in Alaska — Anchorage, Juneau and Soldotna.

The Golden Heart Shootist Society of Fairbanks is the longest established club in the state and has hosted the SASS Alaska State Championship since its inception.

The overall titles have been dominated for the past several years by Four Bucks in the men’s division and Bear Claw Becky in the women’s division, both from Anchorage.

Neither is available to defend their title this year, so the field is wide open.

There are 33 competitors registered for this year’s state championship.

The overall winners in both men’s and women’s divisions advance to the SASS Northwestern Regional Championship on Aug. 30 in Bend, Ore.

The competition is expected to be fierce with Diamond Mac and Poco Loco Louie, both of Fairbanks, trading first and second place finishes in local matches and Coho Cowboy, of Juneau, winning the men’s overall champion title.

Bear Claw Becky’s daughter, Sweet Valley Whiskey, won the women’s title at a recent regional match in Anchorage.

Contact the News-Miner sports department at 459-7581.