RIDE & TIE AND EQUATHON

50 years of Ride and Tie memories

The 50th World Championship has been postponed until next year
The sport was invented by Levi Strauss & Co. in 1971 to promote their rugged outdoor clothing. The brainchild of former Public Relations Director Bud Johns, the Levi’s® Ride & Tie was an endurance race featuring one horse and two runners. Drawing inspiration from historic accounts of two people who, by necessity, traveled vast distances sharing a single horse, one person rode while the other ran. The rider then tied the horse to a tree proceeding on foot. By the time the trailing runner reached the horse, the animal was rested and the process began again. Teams would travel over a cross-country course about 30 miles long. The endurance event boomed in popularity in the ‘70s, even attracting famous participants like actor Robert Redford. The first race was held in St. Helena, California on June 6, 1971.
1971--St. Helena-Sonoma, CA
1st place ..................................... Jim Larimer/Hall Hall/"Tabby"
2nd place ..................................... John Holden/Bill Posedel
3rd place ..................................... Don Dupont/Chuck Stalley
1st man-woman team .......................... Patricia Keffer/Michael Hill
1st two-woman team ......................... Susan Mosher/Karen Redd

1972--Alturas-Cederville, CA
1st place ..................................... Butch Alexander/Chuck Stalley/"Peanuts"
2nd place ..................................... Cary Brooks/Ken Williams
3rd place ..................................... John Holden/Bill Posedel
1st man-woman team .......................... Michelle Giessert/Willie Price
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Peanuts"

1973--Angels Camp, CA
1st place ..................................... Chuck Stalley/Butch Alexander/"Peanuts"
2nd place ..................................... Gordon Ainsleigh/Jim Larimer
3rd place ..................................... Bill Posedel/Ray Bartz
1st man-woman team .......................... Cory Soltaw/Judy Seitzer
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Fad Hair"

1974--Klamath Falls, Oregon
1st place ..................................... Gordon Ainsleigh/Jim Larimer/"Smoke"
2nd place ..................................... Glen Jobe/Ronald Kelley
3rd place ..................................... "Cowboy" Ken Shirk/Ken Price
1st man-woman team .......................... Martha Kloper/Peter Kloper
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Grey"

1975--Paso Robles, CA
1st place ..................................... Ken Williams/Don Roth/"Pathfinder"
2nd place ..................................... Glen Jobe/Ronald Kelley
3rd place ..................................... Dick Fonseca/Bodine Jackson Balsaco
1st man-woman team .......................... Martha Kloper/Peter Kloper
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Grey"

1976--North Star-at-Tahoe, CA
1st place ..................................... Chuck Stalley/Butch Alexander/"Mo Star"
2nd place ..................................... Don Roth/Ken Williams
3rd place ..................................... Jim Casper/Dick Fonseca
1st man-woman team .......................... Martha Kloper/Peter Kloper
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Tah"

1977--Olema, CA
1st place ..................................... Tom Laris/Ken Williams/"Grey"
2nd place ..................................... Mark Driscoll/Don Roth
3rd place ..................................... James Hurley/Garrigus Wallys
1st man-woman team .......................... Martha Kloper/Peter Kloper
1st two-woman team .......................... Dawn Damas/Mary Tiscornia
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Flying C. Kenya"

1978--Big Creek-Davenport, CA
1st place ..................................... Jack Garnett/Jim Larimer/"Smoke"
2nd place ..................................... Walt Schafer/Jim Remillard/"Saudy"
3rd place ..................................... Sherode Powers/Sruss Klieman/"Niko-Saracen"
1st man-woman team .......................... Alan & Mary Jensen/"Flying C Gaud"*
1st two-woman team .......................... Joyce Taylor/Joan Ulsy/"Pathfinder"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Niko-Saracen"

1979--Sunriver, Oregon
1st place ..................................... Jack Garnett/Jim Larimer/"Smoke"
2nd place ..................................... Bob Gilligan/Benny Martinez/"Rush Creek El Cid"
3rd place ..................................... Chuck Stalley/Butch Alexander/"Mij Khaleeta"
1st man-woman team .......................... Christine Mellick/Jan Root/"Hipoka"
1st two-woman team .......................... Terry Jensen/Merill Cray/"Flying C Kenya"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Hipoka"

1980--Big Bear Lake-San Bernardino County, CA
1st place ..................................... Joe Cannon/Barrie Grant/"Boomer"
2nd place ..................................... Jack Garnett/Jim Larimer/"Corky"
3rd place ..................................... Mark Driscoll/Bill Clark/"Toy"
1st man-woman team .......................... Chris Mellick/Jan Root/"God"
1st two-woman team .......................... Sprout/Sally Lewis Big"Red"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Royal"

1981--Nevada-California Border west of Reno
1st place ..................................... Dave Posten/Jim Howard/"Novajo"
2nd place ..................................... Joe Cannon/Barrie Grant/"Boomer"
3rd place ..................................... Jack Garnett/Jim Larimer/"Smoke"
1st man-woman team .......................... Chris Mellick/Jan Root/"Hipoka"
1st two-woman team .......................... Val LeBeau/Peggy Smyth/"Sienna"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Rush Creek II"

1982--New Almaden, CA
1st place ..................................... Tod and Con Wadsworth/"Jet"
2nd place ..................................... Chuck Stalley/Butch Alexander/"Havnik"
3rd place ..................................... Gary Polhill/Robyn Dubach/"Shad"
1st man-woman team .......................... Robyn Dubach/Jan Root/"Hipoka"
1st two-woman team .......................... Val LeBeau/Peggy Smyth/"Sienna"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Corky"

1983--Eureka, CA
1st place ..................................... Tod and Con Wadsworth/"Sur Abdi"
2nd place ..................................... Jim Larimer/Jim Howard/"Smoke"
3rd place ..................................... Chuck Stalley/Butch Alexander/"Havnik"
1st man-woman team .......................... Jon Root/Robyn Dubach/"Shad"
1st two-woman team .......................... Sally Edwards/Holly Beater/"Little Art"
Best-conditioned horses .................... "Havnik" & "Novajo"

1984--Park City, Utah
1st place ..................................... Tod & Con Wadsworth/"Jet"
2nd place ..................................... Ron Nehring/Jim Howard/"Ingie/"Pilot"
3rd place ..................................... Phil Wagner/Parker Davies/Mocha"
1st man-woman team .......................... Jon & Robyn Root/"Shad"
1st two-woman team .......................... Beverly Gray/Debra Pack/Unta"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Stormy"

1985--Foresthill, CA
1st place ..................................... Jim Larimer/Jim Howard/"Stormy"
2nd place ..................................... Sherode Powers/Russ Klieman/"Amon Tu"
3rd place ..................................... Jeff Winther/Chris Turney/"Comanche"
1st man-woman team .......................... Deborah & Dave Wacker/"Sokol"
1st two-woman team .......................... Val LeBeau/Peggy Smyth/"Sokol"
Best-conditioned horse ..................... "Stormy"
Laminitis; Hoping the Grass isn’t always Greener

By Brittany Kovar of Kansas State

It’s April in Northern Kansas, and as you look around you can’t help but appreciate how beautiful the green grass looks, with pastured animals seeming more content then they have all winter. For some equids though, this time of year does not come without problems. Lilly, a local Quarter Horse mare, like many others in the area, had spent her snowy winter in a stable with runs. She had recently been turned back out to graze pasture. Over the course of just a few days, the owners had noticed resistance to walk, and lameness that seemed to be affecting all of her legs. As the veterinarian walked to the barn with the owners, hearing Lilly’s history over the last few months, they quickly began to assemble the pieces of this puzzle. In this area, and nearly anywhere else in the country, it is a story we have heard many times.

Laminitis, also known as founder, is a complex disease process, and one that continues to be studied extensively. Many horsemen have heard of the term laminitis, and know the significance of it linked to lameness. More specifically, laminitis literally means inflammation of the laminae. Inflammation simply means redness, swelling, and heat are present, which is due to increased blood flow to that area. The laminae is made of two components. The sensitive laminae are innervated, have capillary blood flow, and attach to the coffin bone. The insensitive laminae are attached to the inside of the hoof wall without blood flow or sensory nerves. The sensitive and insensitive laminae interweave with one another forming an almost zipper like connection that keeps the bone portion linked tightly to the hoof wall. The deep digital flexor tendon, which attaches to the back (caudal) aspect of the coffin bone, contracts or shortens causing the hoof to bend backwards at the pastern joint, like it would when picking out hooves. It is the combined effort of the common digital extensor, on the front (cranial) aspect of the hoof, and the proper functioning of the laminae that counteract the natural pulling effect from the deep digital flexor.

Figure 1: The laminae (highlighted in pink) have two components; Sensitive and insensitive laminae that weave together. Additionally, you can see the deep digital flexor (white) attaching to the back of the coffin bone. It is the combined effort of the common digital extensor (yellow- labeled extensor tendon), and the proper functioning of the laminae that counteract the natural pulling effect from the deep digital flexor.

The laminae are located between bone, and the hoof wall, which are both very hard materials. The hard surfaces provide very limited expansion within the hoof if there is swelling. In fact, swelling there can actually lead to the opposite effect where the increased pressure will lead to complete blockage of blood flow where little to no blood flow can enter or exit those capillaries.

Just like the vague use of the term colic in equine medicine, laminitis has a similar reputation. As I described previously, it means inflammation, or increased blood flow to the laminae. However, that does not mean it tells us the source of the problem. For example, laminitis can be caused by a blockage of blood flow due to a sprain or stumble, a bacterial infection in the hoof due to cracks, trimming or nails, but it can also be due to bacterial products circulating in the blood. There are many causes for bacterial introduction into the blood stream, but diet and stress are two common contributors to excess acid production in the gastrointestinal tract. Horses, like Lilly, led back out to graze pasture consume grass that has higher carbohydrate content then their winter forages. This may seem obvious in our transition from winter hay supplements too fresh grass consumption, but can even be a problem depending on the time of day, with late afternoon/early evening grass being the richest due to photosynthesis products. This sugar rich feed can lead to acid production in the hindgut of the horse. If the horse is abruptly changing between feed types, like Lilly’s case, it can quickly lead to problems. The pH of the horse’s digestive tract is very important for bacterial flora regulation. Small changes in pH that carbohydrate diets create cause death of normal gut bacteria, proliferation of acid loving bacteria, and degradation of barriers between the intestinal cells. Bacterial products like connective tissue degrading enzymes, and endotoxins are able to leak into the blood stream and flow to the hoof due to the intestinal barrier’s destruction.

The horse’s body now recognizes these products in the blood stream, as far down as the level of the laminae, and knows that they need to be removed. In response, they send more blood flow to the hoof, contributing further to decreased blood flow in capillary beds. This is the reason that we can use the palpation of digital vein and artery pulses as indicators of laminitis. This increased blood flow to a space with limited ability to expand potentiates the problem by creating a stricture as described earlier. The increase of pressure contributes to significant pain in the front of the hoof which is why we see laminitic horses shift their weight to their heels. The hoof is completely supplied by capillary blood flow, and without the transport of those nutrients we are unable to repair the connective tissue in the laminae.
The laminae, or the wispy looking layer I’m pointing at in the photo, is forced to stretch when swelling persists in the hoof. You can see the increased length of the laminae, and wider shape of the right hoof trimming in comparison to the left hoof trimming taken from the same horse. This particular horse was affected by laminitis in only one foot.

The increased pressure forces the laminae to stretch further apart and contributes to lack of shape of the hoof. If not addressed, the stretching can lead to separation, or unzipping of the insensitive and sensitive laminae layers, which ultimately allows for the separation of the hoof wall and coffin bone. Without the connection of the laminae, the common digital extensor on the front of the hoof is not able to balance the strong flexing power of the deep digital flexor. In the worst of situations, this allows for rotation of the coffin bone within the hoof to the degree of puncturing through the sole. Most cases don’t escalate to this level, and can be addressed sooner to prevent this progression.

Radiographs to show the shifting of the coffin bone due to laminitis. There is a noticeable increase in angle between the hoof wall and coffin bone in the laminitic hoof.

Lilly, and many other horses, are living more comfortably after starting their laminitis management. If you have concerns about your horses hoof health or nutrition, be sure to consult with your veterinarian and farrier.

For references to this essay, please contact Lani Newcomb: give2bute@aol.com

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The Horse of Distinction award was established in 2009 to honor horses who have distinguished themselves in the sport of Ride & Tie by making a significant contribution to the sport. Horses must be nominated to be considered. Horses in the Horse Hall of Fame are not eligible. People who nominate a horse will receive a confirmation of their submission, and may later be contacted by one of the judges. The winner will be announced at the annual World Ride & Tie Championship in 2021.

Please submit entries to Steve Anderson 4710 Kingsway Anacortes, WA 98221-3210 or e-mail to steve.anderson1@juno.com

Instructions: Describe in 500 words or less why this horse should be a Horse of Distinction. Please consider: • Number of ride & tie championship races completed • Number of Ride & tie races completed (besides championships) • Number of different riders/teams the horse has competed with • Number of beginners the horse has introduced • Overall career mileage • Number of career years participating in the sport.

Include the date, your name and address, e-mail, phone, Name of horse you wish to nominate, age of horse, horse owners name and phone number.

Our Virtual Ride and Tie Season EXTENDED to July 5!

Feeling a little stir crazy and missing out on cancelled races? Join folks across the country for a virtual Ride and Tie and/or Equathon. This is a FUN event and a non-sanctioned, no-points event.

Sign up and more information is at: https://runsignup.com/quitnquarantine
The Ride and Tie Board of Directors has chosen to cancel the World Championships due to the Covid 19 outbreak. We are looking forward to making it an even more spectacular event next year. We hope this was not an inconvenience to anyone and we are looking forward to see all of you next year. Stay safe and healthy.
The COVID-19 virus is causing much concern in our nation and world. As you know, sporting events and other gatherings are being cancelled. Ride and Tie is in a unique position as our events are usually sparsely attended and do not take place in closed arenas. However, because travel is a part of Ride and Tie, we also must recognize that we must do all we can to limit the potential spread of the virus. For these reasons the Board of Directors is observing the following guidelines:

- Holding or cancelling a specific race will be at the discretion of the Race Manager, however, Race Managers should consult with federal, state, and/or local health officials before making a decision in either direction.
- Race Managers should discourage those who are traveling from high risk areas or who have general symptoms of the disease from attending/participating.
- Race Managers should encourage those who attend/participate to ensure their own safety via hand sanitizing/washing, etc.
- Race Managers who choose to cancel should inform Courtney Krueger, the sanctioning officer for Ride and Tie, as soon as possible of the cancellation. This is so he can cancel the insurance and ensure no expense is incurred.
My name is Courtney Krueger and I am running for a second term on the Ride and Tie board. I love serving as the Sanctioning Officer for our sport for the past three years. I have especially loved helping new Ride Managers navigate all they need to in order to put on successful rides. I have only been doing Ride and Tie for 8 years, but the sport has truly changed my life. I have a wonderful Ride and Tie family I wouldn’t have were it not for my involvement. My hopes and plans for Board of Directors for the next three years will be that we will continue to work hard to grow our sport including by strengthening partnerships with both regional and national Endurance riding bodies, strengthening our social media and internet outreach, and encouraging more races and competitors.

Alison Zeytoonian

My name is Alison Zeytoonian and I would like to be a Board Member for the Ride & Tie Association Board of Directors. I live in Smithfield, Virginia, with my husband and four horses. I started doing Ride & Tie in 2015 and was thrilled to combine my two favorite activities - riding and running. What I love most about Ride & Tie are the people. We have such a diverse group of members who are all doing a sport they love while encouraging and supporting each other and bringing along new members. As a bonus, my sister also loves Ride & Tie so races are an opportunity to spend time with her. Through Ride & Tie mentors, I’ve learned so much about my horses and ways to improve their conditioning, nutrition, endurance, and tack. I currently have 512 ride & tie miles, competed in one world championship, and managed one race. In 2017, I assisted with updating the Ride & Tie manuals and forms. Although fairly new to the sport, I plan to compete for many more years and would love the opportunity to serve and contribute to the organization. On weekdays, I am the Director of Environmental Programs for an environmental consulting firm, and on weekends I enjoy trail riding with my husband, running, hiking, and taking care of our farm.

Carrie Baris

My name is Carrie Baris, and I am again running for the board of directors. I have served one term so far, and have been the secretary for the last two years - a role I often fill because I am an English teacher. I began ride and tie in 2013, at the urging of my sister, and in November I topped 2,000 career ride and tie miles. Last season, I was able to compete for the first time on my own horse. I purchased Comet in March and was able to complete close to 200 miles with him. I am incredibly passionate about ride and tie, and have brought in several new competitors. I have traveled as far south as Florida, and as far north as Maryland to compete. Many of my closest friends I have met through ride and tie, and cherish the time I spend on trails with them - whether it be competing, trail riding, or running. I am happy to give back to an organization that has given me so much. (Photo by Sierra Holt Gerringer).
**What are Gastric Ulcers?**

Gastric ulcers are an erosion of the lining of the stomach that occurs due to acid damage. They are common in horses, and have a variety of clinical signs.

**Why do horses get gastric ulcers?**

In domestication, we took an animal that was built to graze continuously throughout the day and put it in a confined areas with an average of two feedings a day. That is not what horses' bodies are developed for. Horses have a small stomach for their body size, and constantly secrete gastric acid. This is why any horse can develop gastric ulcers.

Horses have two different areas of their stomach. The lower portion is glandular, and has cells which secrete gastric acid. These cells secrete acid, but they also produce materials to protect themselves from the acid. The upper portion of the stomach is the squamous portion, this is where the food mixing happens, and this portion has a thinner lining because it does not normally come in to contact with acid.

Both areas of the stomach can develop ulcers, but the mechanism is different between the two diseases. While there are over-arching similarities between the two diseases, alterations in treatment course and duration may be necessary due to the different disease mechanisms.

**Which horses get gastric ulcers?**

Any horse (or donkey) can develop gastric ulcers. They are more common in horses that are in work. Racehorses are most commonly affected, followed by endurance horses, and then English sport-horses.

**Clinical Signs, Diagnosis & Treatment**

The clinical signs of gastric ulcers are variable and include inappetence/poor appetite, poor body condition and weight loss, poor coat condition, behavior changes, acute or recurrent colic, poor performance, or no clinical signs at all. There is no correlation between clinical signs and presence or severity of gastric ulcer disease. A complete gastroscopy is the only definitive diagnostic test for equine gastric ulcers. A gastroscopy is a procedure performed by a veterinarian in which a special tube with a camera on the end (endoscope) through the horses nasal passages, through the throat, into the esophagus, and down into the stomach. A complete gastroscopy has to be performed when the horse has been fasted. If the patient is not fasted, feed will still be present at the bottom of the stomach and we cannot fully evaluate the exit of the stomach, which is the most common site for glandular ulcers. A complete gastroscopy allows the veterinarian to evaluate the location, distribution, number, and severity of the ulceration; this information is important for developing a treatment plan and monitoring progress.

Gastric ulcers will not resolve without treatment. The specific treatment for gastric ulcers depends on the location, distribution, and severity of the ulceration and differs from horse to horse. The overall goal of treatment is to decrease the acidity of the stomach. As veterinarians, our main method of decreasing acidity is to decrease acid production. In veterinary school we were taught the mantra “No acid, no ulcer”. Anti-acids are short-acting and relatively ineffective in horses. The two main drug classes that we use in horses to decrease acid production are proton pump inhibitors (PPI), such as omeprazole and H2 Blockers, such as ranitidine. The PPIs destroy a pump on the acid-producing cell, which stops acid production until the cell can build a new pump, H2 blockers blocks a receptor on the acid cell, but do not destroy it, so it requires frequent re-dosing to achieve the same acid-suppression as a PPI. This is why omeprazole is recommended over ranitidine. Approved omeprazole products (such as GastrogardÆ, UlcergardÆ) have been shown to be the most efficacious primary treatment for gastric ulcers in horses. While compounded omeprazole products are available, using them is not recommended. The compounded products are cheaper, but they are not effective because they lack the buffer formulation needed for the horse to actually absorb the medication. Depending on your horse’s individual case, your veterinarian may recommend medications such as Sucralfate and/or Misoprostol. Sucralfate is a medication which helps coat the lining of ulceration, which can help improve comfort and aid in healing. Misoprostol is a medication which can improve blood flow to the stomach, which aids in protection of the glandular cells. It also has an anti-inflammatory effect. It is important to adhere to your veterinarian's recommendations about the administration of the medications, as this will maximize the efficacy (and make the most of your money).

**Glandular Ulcer Risk Factors:**
1) Exercise > 5 days a week
2) Inexperienced/lower level horses are more at risk

**Squamous Ulcer Risk Factors:**
1) Stress (transport, change in management, race/competition
2) Intermittent Fasting
3) Illness
4) Confinement to a stable
5) Intense Exercise/Training
6) High Carbohydrate diet
It is recommended to administer omeprazole 60-90 minutes before a meal (the stomach acid is needed to activate the drug), and 60-90 minutes apart from any other medications, especially Sucralfate. Omeprazole and sucralfate will both bind to each other, as well as other medications, so it is better to give them separately. If your horse is diagnosed with gastric ulcers, be prepared for a long course of treatment, with the minimum average course of treatment being 28 days for a typical case.

Practical Preventative Measures:

- Make sure your horse always has access to water. If you live in a cold environment, consider filling plastic jugs with salt water and leaving them in the trough, or other means to keep the troughs from freezing.

- Do not feed horses straw.

- Provide access to turn-out, avoid extended stall confinement. If horses are stalled, make sure they can visualize or interact with other horses.

- Limit your ridden exercise to 4 days a week or less. Horses exercised 5 days a week or more are at increased risk of developing ulcers.

- Consider adding 1/4 cup of corn oil to your horses diet. The corn oil helps decrease acid production and increases blood flow to the stomach.

- Feed more frequently or consider feeding in a hay net. For horses with ulcers, continuous access to good quality grass pasture is recommended. If that is not feasible then free choice hay, or frequent (4-6x a day) feedings.

- Feed grain and concentrates sparingly, and avoid sweet feed.

- If you give electrolyte solutions, give them in water or as part of a mash. Oral paste administration of electrolytes has been shown to increase risk of ulcers, but electrolyte administration in water or grain does not.

- Consult your veterinarian before administering NSAIDs such as Phenylbutazone (“Bute”) or Banamine, especially for a prolonged or repeated administration

- If your horse is prone to ulcers, talk to your veterinarian about preventative measures such as prophylactic doses of omeprazole during times of stress.

Don’t give yourself an ulcer stressing about your horse! Reach out to your primary veterinarian about any questions regarding ulcer prevention or treatment for your horse.

For references to this essay, please contact Lani Newcomb: give2bute@aol.com

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Farewell to Boyd Zontelli  5/5/1933-2/12/2020

Those of you who knew him, knew what an incredible man he was. His life was fascinating. He was born into an Italian family in Minnesota in a small mining town (where he developed his love of horses) and then moved to Hollywood at a young age to pursue acting where met and befriended a few of the legends of the time. He had lots of acting roles and Burt Lancaster recommended him to John Ford. John Ford wanted him to co-star in a John Wayne movie and tried to sign him but he ultimately decided to pursue another path. He did, however, maintain his friendship with Steve McQueen and they were motorcycle riding buddies until Steve’s passing.

His love of animals, particularly horses, is what drove him. When he spoke about horses his eyes would light up. He was kind and gentle and offered a new way of riding that was not typical in the horse world. He proved to everyone that his way, to show love and kindness and respect to the horse, was the winning way. He won the Tevis Cup three times and still holds the record. He was both a kind and gentle man but also a badass. He is a true Legend. The world will not be the same without him.

By Marla Cooper (Boyd’s daughter)
“This horse is vet student lame.” The comment, meaning that the horse has a significant enough lameness that even we should be able to see it, stings a little, but only because it has truth to it. The horse is trotted in-hand up and down the arena while a group of veterinary students stare and try to determine if the horse is lifting her head while she steps forward on her left or right front foot. As a veterinary student planning to practice large animal medicine, I know how important being able to accurately detect subtle lameness will be to my future patients, but the ever-present goal seems to be more elusive than I had hoped. Much of the practice that I have had comes from the vet checks at endurance races where I have both ridden with and crewed for friends. Outside these events, during training and off-season, the horse owners are the first line of defense when it comes to detecting lameness, because a veterinarian is unlikely to get to evaluate your horse for lameness unless you suspect something is wrong. While some people seem to have a natural gift for detecting when a horse is lame, most of us must work at it by practicing analyzing each part of the gait to see if there is any asymmetry.

As I watch the horse trot back towards our group, I repeat to myself, “Down on sound”. Although technically a horse lifts its head as it places a sore front hoof on the ground to reduce the amount of weight the leg must catch, it often appears to observers as though it is dropping its head as it places its sound foot. This horse I am watching consistently lifts her head each time her left front hits the ground, which surprises those of us who had noticed a slight swelling in her right front leg and were expecting her to be lame in that leg. This level of lameness is classified by AAEP as being a grade 3, which means that while the horse is not obviously lame at a walk, it is consistently lame while trotting. A grade 5 is the worst, meaning the horse is essentially not weight bearing on one leg. A grade 0 would be no detectable lameness.

The next horse they bring in for us has actually been presented for “poor performance”, and even our instructor doesn’t know yet if there is a lameness going on or not. As we watch this horse trot, I decide that his front end looks fine, so I focus my attention to the hind end which I find much more difficult to evaluate. A horse’s mid pelvis lifts twice during each stride of trotting, once when it pushes off with its left hind leg and once when it pushes off with its right hind leg. In a sound horse these lifts should be equal in magnitude. The points of a horse’s hips also rise and fall alternately and, if the horse is sound, equally. As I watch this new horse trot away, I have a slight feeling that something may be off in the back end, but I am not particularly confident in this analysis. The horse is then tucked up and ridden by his owner. With mild lameness an asymmetry of the gait may not be apparent until an extra level of ‘stress’ is added. This stress may be a hard surface, a rider, a tight circle, etc. If adding this additional stress makes the horse consistently lame, it is considered a grade 2 lameness, but if it is still only sometimes showing asymmetry, it is only a grade 1 lameness. This is why it is important for both you and your veterinarian to examine your horse that otherwise appears sound while they are working. By watching them under these higher stress conditions, injuries can be detected earlier and will likely have a better outcome.

As the rider and horse move around the ring at a trot and then a canter, I watch the stride length of the horse carefully. Another asymmetry that you may be able to see on a lameness evaluation is when the horse doesn’t extend one leg as far forward as the corresponding leg on the other side. However, as far as I can tell the horse I am watching has consistent stride lengths. At this point the veterinarian informs us that the horse does indeed have a mild left hind leg lameness. I watch intently as she tries to point out and describe what we should be seeing, but I cannot convince myself that I actually can see this horse’s lameness. I feel better, though, when she says that she has seen horses compete at Olympic levels with more obvious asymmetries.

Unfortunately, simply being around horses won’t make you or I better at detecting lameness; it is something we have to actively practice and think about while we watch horses move. I know I will be taking every opportunity I have during my last year and a half of veterinary school to improve my skills at detecting lameness, and I am sure that no matter how many years I practice as a veterinarian I will continue to improve my skills, and there will always be something new to learn about lameness evaluations. I hope you will join me in making the most of every opportunity to learn and improve ourselves so that we can do our best to keep our equine friends happy, healthy, and sound.

Credits: In addition to the friends, professors, and local veterinarians who have helped me learn about lameness, the website https://lamenesstrainer.com/ with its great explanations and fun lameness ‘video games’ has particularly helped me with understanding hind-end lameness.

For references to this essay, please contact Lani Newcomb: give2bute@aol.com
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Board Member: Susan Smyth (2022) susansmythjackson@gmail.com 916-316-2096
Board Member Emeritus: Steve Shaw (lifetime) sshaw@pacbell.net
Board Member Emeritus: Mary Tiscornia (lifetime) MLT580@aol.com
Head Veterinarian: Greg Fellers gefellers35@gmail.com
Ride & Tie sponsors are much appreciated! Their contributions, both monetary and in-kind, greatly assist our nonprofit organization. Six levels – Signature, Gold, Silver, Bronze, Supporting and Platinum— are available for sponsors, with categories ranging from award sponsorship to advertising discounts. For further information on Ride & Tie sponsorship opportunities or to sign up, please contact the Board of Directors at bod@rideandtie.org.

**Ride & Tie and Equathon Sponsorship Program**

**Supporting Sponsor ($100-$249)**
- Ad in Ride & Tie and Equathon Newsletter and on the Sponsorship page
- Placement on Ride & Tie website on Sponsorship page

**Bronze Sponsor ($250-$499)**
- Ad in Ride & Tie and Equathon Newsletter and on the Sponsorship page
- Placement on Ride & Tie website on Sponsorship page
- Use of the representation that the sponsor is an “Official Sponsor of The Ride & Tie Association”

**Silver Sponsor ($500-$999)**
- Ad in Ride & Tie and Equathon Newsletter and on the Sponsorship page
- Placement on Ride & Tie website on Sponsorship page
- Use of the representation that the sponsor is an “Official Sponsor of The Ride & Tie Association”
- Sponsor banner, if provided, will be displayed at the Regional and World Championships

**Gold Sponsor ($1,000-$1,999)**
*In addition to the Silver Sponsor:*
- Consideration for a Regional Championship Award Sponsorship representation

**Signature Sponsor ($2,000-$2,999)**
*In addition to the Gold Sponsor:*
- Consideration for a World Championship Award Sponsorship representation
- Consideration for use of the phrase “Official PRODUCT of The Ride & Tie Association”

**Platinum Sponsors ($3000 or more)**
All of the above

**Sponsorship Categories**

**Award Sponsorships** – Sponsors can apply their products or brand to one of the annual Ride & Tie and Equathon awards. Their brand will be represented wherever the award is displayed throughout the year (on the R&T website and in newsletters).
- Annual Awards

**Program Sponsorships** – We can create programs that are geared around our membership that companies can sponsor and apply their brand.
- New Member Discount Sponsorship
- Multi-Year Membership Discount Sponsorship
- Education Program Sponsorship

**Event Sponsorships** – Sponsors can participate directly with our R&T managed events like Regional and World Championships.
- Regional Championship Sponsorship
  - Title Sponsor
  - Best Condition
- World Championship Sponsorship
  - Title Sponsor
  - National Awards Dinner
  - Programs and other printed material
The Ride and Tie Association and AERC have formed Ad hoc committees specifically to look into developing easier ways of Ride Managers to put on Ride and Tie events concurrently. These discussions will also explore how we might develop closer joint marketing initiatives, simplify memberships and possible joint membership services. There may be ways to include RAT horse miles in endurance statistics.

This committee is made up of:
From AERC, Tim Worden, Lisa Schneider, Mike Maul, Michael Campbell, and Naomi Preston

From Ride and Tie, Janice Heltbridle, Steve Shaw, Lani Newcomb, and Sara Boelt.

Hopefully these discussions can lead to many new opportunities. Things like automatic ride and tie entry into most AERC Endurance Rides, and include new venues for sanctioned ride and tie events with lower costs. Who knows what mutual benefits can occur, and what new trails may open. But this is a start. All developments will go through the RAT Board and will be shared with RAT members for discussion. May we get more events, participants, horses and a bigger family!

By Steve Shaw
Learn from a Mentor

Mentors are a group of people dedicated to growing the sport of Ride & Tie by introducing (or re-introducing) people to the sport. Located throughout the country, mentors are the Association’s “local experts.” They are available to answer questions, give advice about what to wear, how to prepare to successfully finish a race, provide opportunities to practice ride & tie, and help team newcomers with experienced people.

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Check out our new R&T store.
https://squareup.com/store/ride-and-tie
“Curiosity will conquer fear even more than bravery will.”
— James Stephens. Photo by Susan Smyth