



VIDEO ONLINE SHOWS

By Dj Sproat



New Virtual / Online Event Available!

Many of us are now becoming familiar with the photo-type of Online horse show, such as IMBA's own Online Morab and All-Breed Horse show www.OnlineMorabShow.com. These shows are becoming increasingly popular and well-attended. They offer people an excellent way to show-off their horses and have some fun. Of course, it is recognised that these shows are simply judging photographs – quite literally a “snapshot in time”. They cannot fully show what a horse or rider can really do or how they perform. Such shows are best suited to conformation and halter classes. Yet, even then, the horse is judged at a standstill. There is no fully satisfactory method to demonstrate how it moves or carries itself.

The most obvious way to address this need is through video-type shows. With the proliferation of video clipping and video websites, like YouTube, this would seem an easy and natural next step. One might have expected people to be flocking to participate. And while a few video-type horse shows made an appearance, few seemed to quite catch-on. Fortunately, there have been a couple of excellent exceptions. One of these is the International Performance Horse Development Association www.IPHDA.com.



This group is entering its second year of offering online video-type events. Their focus is on the

“broke horse”, defined as a horse that 1) Waits for its rider's cues, and 2) Willingly accepts and follows those cues. The group was created with two goals – to allow riders to learn the basics of training and riding a Performance Horse through educational competitions, and to allow Trainers and owners a place to show case their young horses, and create a market and purpose for all levels of Performance Horses. Their events are targeted toward learning how to achieve a broke horse, and demonstrating one's progress towards that goal. They do this through a series of testing levels from easy to advanced – each with a specific set of elements and degree of difficulty. Each level has several pre-set patterns available, and one is assigned for each scheduled competition.

The competitions are run, entered, and judged online. They say on the website - “All a person needs is a horse, and a friend with a video camera, to compete in an IPHDA event” As with photo-type shows, no trailering, no risk, no stress, no weather worries (if it rains, make the video another day). Each horse/rider team makes a video of themselves, performing the required test, and then uploads it to YouTube. It is judged and scored, and feedback delivered. The videos and comments are made available online at the IPHDA website so everyone can review and learn.

As Rod Miller, the president and founder of IPHDA, told me, “The idea that an event like PHD would be beneficial to many people wanting to enter and or advance in the performance horse world came from my early and continued attempts at training my own horses. I realized that the more steps I skipped or hurried through in a horse's foundation training, the harder the event-specific training process became. I knew what I wanted to train my horse to do. I had learned from clinicians and professionals how their programs were structured to achieve my training goals. The only thing left was a way to tell how well did each step in the program

have to be developed before advancing my horses training?”

Significant credibility is afforded to these events, due to the quality of judges engaged such as performance horse trainer, Todd Sommers, from Texas, USA, and well-known coach and clinician, Lindsay Grice, from Ontario, Canada. Interest in this group has been very enthusiastic and growing. Members are located across the US with two of the most active groups in Texas and Alaska. There are also a number of members in Canada, as well as in Europe (Germany) and Australia, for truly international activity.

People choose what level they wish to begin competing. They elevate out of that level to the next, once they achieve a certain minimum score, at a set number of events. Tack can be English or western, probably even saddleseat or sidesaddle, if one wished. Flashy clothes and other fancy appointments do not count. Complete details of the rules and current patterns are available at the IPHDA website.

On the surface, it may sound rather like Dressage, or Reining. It is; and it isn't. The tests do have many similar types of elements, yet one is not trying to achieve a reining horse or a high-school dressage horse. Instead, the goal is to have a horse that is willing to do the basic movement one may associate with dressage, such as lateral motion, or with reining, such as a stop. Yet the lateral movement does not need to show great reach or impulsion, simply a reasonable response to the request. And the stop does not need to be a fancy slider, just calm and compliant.

Since much of the point of Online showing is to be able to compete without leaving one's home ground, the IPHDA recognises that everyone may not have the best facilities or working area. They make recommendations for the size of arena and type of footing. However, allowances are made for a variety of conditions, including ground, where stopping quickly may not be a good idea, or even possible.

What makes this group truly unique is their flexibility and willingness to incorporate new ideas and input. In response to such feedback, they have created two entry options in the shows for 2009. One is the Jackpot category that awards a cash payback. The other option has a lower fee and no cash award. They have also added Virtual Practices, where one can submit video of a test, and get feedback on one's progress. And they recently indicated an intention to put together some Trail class-like patterns for people to try for fun. In addition, they have started to encourage live events, in areas with a number of members who might like to get together to make videos of rides or practices.

The IPHDA and its events look to be a great deal of fun and a very useful activity for the horse and rider. After all, as Miller has said, who wouldn't want a “well-broke” horse? And, if you have one, how could you resist the chance to show him off? I'm looking forward to giving it a whirl this year, just need to save up for a video camera, and find that willing friend.

The IPHDA show season starts in April and will have a V Show every month, with a final Championship show in October. For more information, please visit www.IPHDA.com.

The following additional information is taken from their website:

IPHDA is committed to:

Helping members develop willingly guided horses

Offering competitive divisions for all horse and riders

Using current technology to bring the educational event of PHD to anyone anywhere in the world

IPHDA events include Virtual shows, Virtual practices and local live events.

Virtual shows:

Because our events are based on a black and white, right or wrong, type of judging instead of different degree's of right or wrong we are able to fairly assess an exhibitor's performance on videotape. This allows us to hold shows online. The exhibitor rides the selected pattern for that month's V show, at a place of their choice, someone video tapes the ride; they then upload the video to the Internet and enter our show. We have cash paybacks for the winners, and chances to win many awards, just for entering.

V practices:

V Practices are set up for the riders that do not have ready access to trainers in their area. Using video and the Internet, IPHDA and participating clinicians offer each V Practice participant critiques and tips. V Practices are like personalized training videos. Live events: can be as small as two people getting together to video tape each other, in order to enter a V show or V practice, or a group of members holding regular practice and video sessions, or a club hosting an IPHDA event and hiring judges.

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