

KNOWING THE STANDARDBRED AND ITS ROOTS

Although much attention is paid to the drivers and trainers of these magnificent animals, the Standardbred horse is the athlete of our industry and as such must always be treated with the utmost care and respect.

INTRODUCTION

The name Standardbred originates back to 1867, when the National Association of Trotting Horse Breeders agreed upon standards to define horses eligible to the Trotting Register, started by John H. Wallace, to record pedigrees of trotting horses. One of the rules was that a stallion was required to trot a mile in two minutes and thirty seconds or better or 2:35 with a wagon in order to be eligible for registration. After lengthy debates over what to name the new breed of trotting horse, the high standards required for entry into the registry led to the name **Standardbred**.

The ancestry of all Standardbreds has a direct male line to the imported stallion Messenger, an English thoroughbred that was brought to North America in 1788. The Standardbred owes its existence to a grandson of Messenger, the great Hambletonian.

The **Standardbred** began with trotters only, but pacers soon began to gain acceptance and in 1897 the first horse ever to break the two-minute mile was a pacer named Star Pointer.

BREED CHARACTERISTICS

There are two types of Standardbred, differentiated by their gait, the trot and the pace. A trotter employs a diagonal gait, moving his left front leg with the same motion of the right hind leg and the right front leg with the left hind. A pacer, on the other hand, moves both legs on the same side at the same time. Pacers are most often aided in maintaining their gait with equipment called hobbles, two loops through the legs on the same side attached in the middle, thereby forcing both legs to move in unison. A Standardbred may also gallop or run off-stride, but a Standardbred that goes off-stride must get back to his normal gait or may face disqualification.

It is customary to break the Standardbred to the harness and jog him during his yearling year. At two years of age (all Standardbred horses age by one year on January 1st) and after several months of jogging and training, a sound horse may be ready to qualify to race.



Trotter

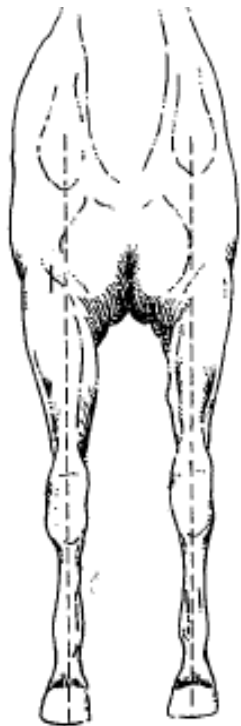


Pacer

Conformation

Inspecting a horse for good conformation at the time of purchase can save you problems down the road. Bad conformation will increase the chance of interference and lameness.

Front view



Ideal conformation



Base narrow



Knock kneed



Toes in



Toes out

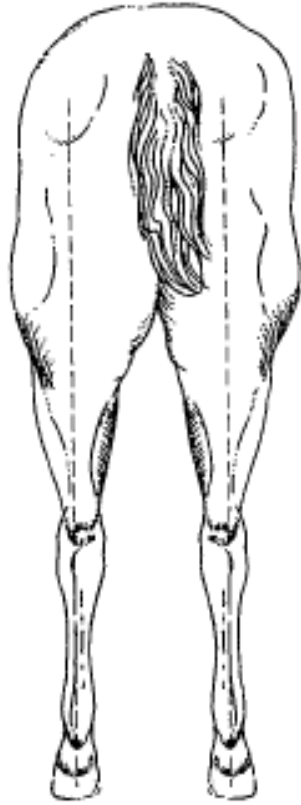


Bench kneed

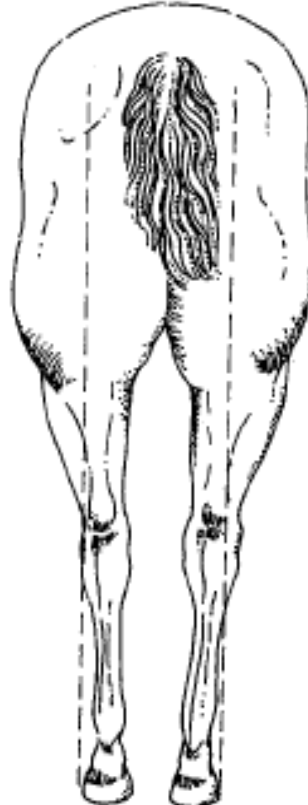


Bow legged

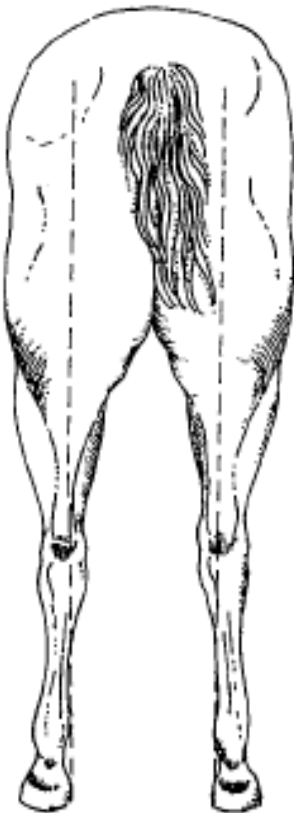
Rear view



Ideal conformation



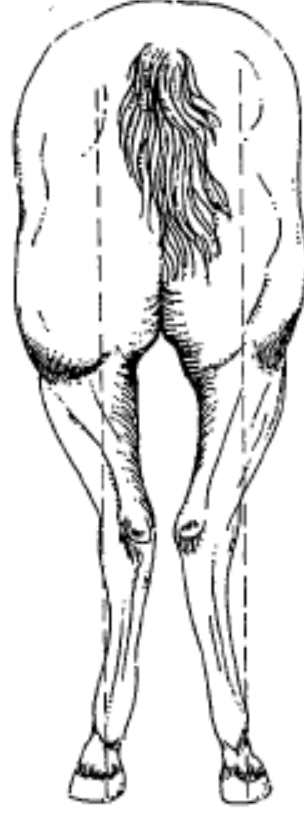
Stands close



Stands wide



Bow legged

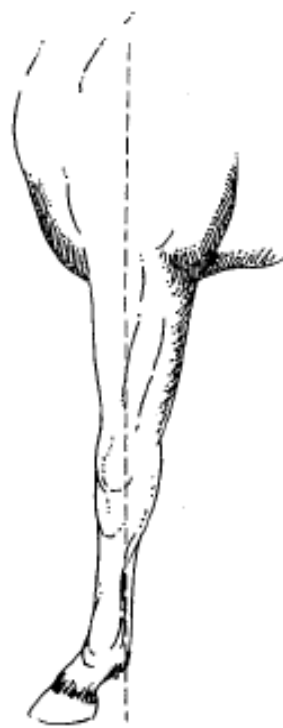


Cow hocked

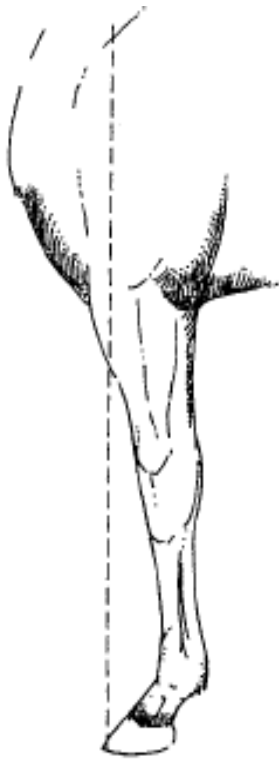
Front side view



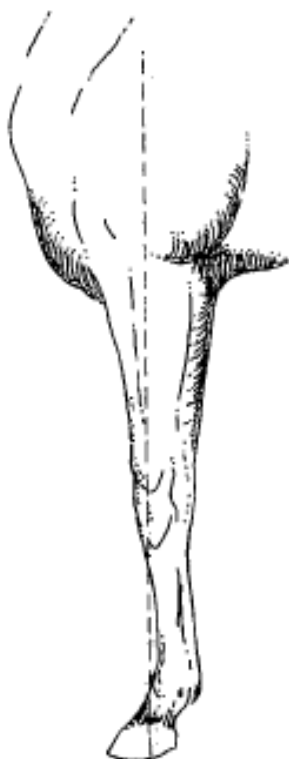
Ideal conformation



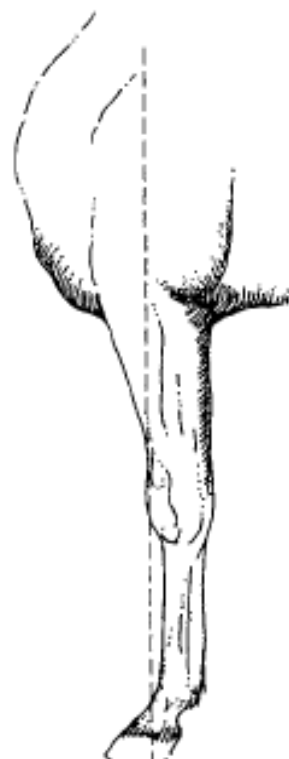
Camped out



Camped under

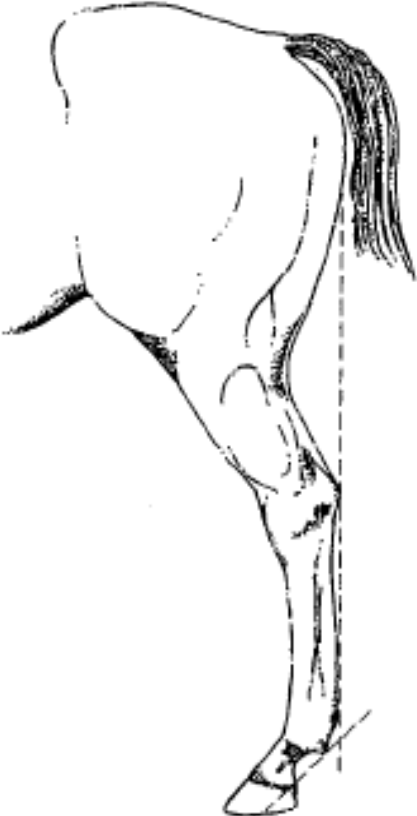


Buck kneed



Calf kneed

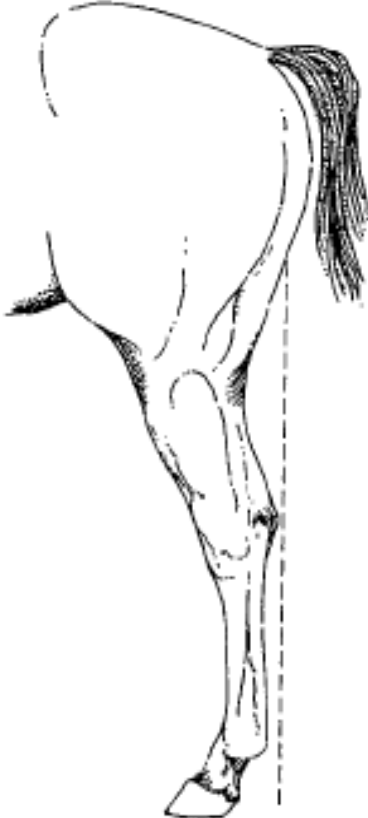
Hind side view



Ideal conformation



Camped under



Post legged



Camped out

VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF A HORSE

Head and leg markings help to identify individual horses. Each marking has a name and is universal among equine registries.



Star
connected



Strip



snip



Star and

strip



Star and connected
strip and snip



Few white hairs
on forehead, snip,
snip on lower lip



Blaze



Bald

Star: Small patch of white hair on the forehead

Strip: Thin narrow mark part way down the face

Snip: Small patch on the lip or nose. This may be either white or flesh-coloured.

Blaze: A broad white mark down the face, usually including the full width of the nasal bones, parts of the nostrils and upper lip.

Bald: White face, which may include the eyes, nostrils and upper lip.

Leg Markings



Coronet



Half-Pastern



Pastern



Pastern and part ankle



Ankle



Half-Leg



Leg



Full Leg



Heel

White markings on horses are present at birth and do not change as the horse grows older. White markings are always described starting with the head and then the legs, from the left front going around the horse to finish with the right front.

Head markings are sometimes described by shape, colour and location and with additional terms like faint, irregular and connected.

Leg markings are described at the highest point of the leg covered by white. No white markings are noted if only the hoof is white. Additional terms are also used for leg markings like higher, lower, inside, outside, extending, descending, part, interspersed grey hair and with black or dark spots.

Other than the white markings, Standardbreds are identified by a freeze brand or lip tattooed with an assigned registered number. All Standardbreds are parentage verified by DNA testing or blood type.

Colour

Bay: Varies from a light yellowish tan (light bay) to a dark rich shade, almost brown, and between these a bright mahogany (blood bay). Bays always have a black mane and tail, and usually black points, except for any white markings.

Brown: Between dark bay and black in shade, characterized by brown coat of low brilliance and brown cast to hair on body, mane and tail. Often marked by fine tan or brown hairs on the muzzle or flank.

Black: The body coat, mane, tail and points are composed of uniform black hairs, with fine black hairs on muzzle.

Chestnut: This ranges from a pale yellow-red and a bright red (sorrel) to a dark liver colour and includes between shades of brilliant red-gold and copper. The chestnut colour appears in the mane, tail and legs, which are not black on a chestnut horse.

Roan: Red or strawberry roan is a reddish mixture of chestnut or brown hairs thickly interspersed with grey or white; blue roan is a bluish tinged mixture of black and white hairs thickly interspersed.

Grey: Mixture of black and white hair. Grey horses are black at birth. The grey starts to appear in a few weeks and continues to become more dominant with age.

White: White horses are very rare; a white horse has white hair and pink skin. These horses are born white, with blue or brown eyes, and remain white for life.

