

Jim Rogan & WJ Beezar



AERC Decade Team



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6045 Miles, 103 ride completions
First AERC ride: 1988 Region: SE

Tell us about your horse. What is your horse's breeding? Sire: El Khazar, AHR 0088871; Dam Bunny Bee, IAHA-1A 0335838 I think he has Bask in his sire's line.

Sex: gelding

DOB: 7/12/81

Horse height: 15'2"

Approx. Weight:

Color: Bay

Shoe size: 01, maybe. Don't know for sure.

Why did you decide to purchase this horse (or if you didn't purchase, why did you choose to use this horse in endurance)? I started riding in 1987, at age 37. It was part of my mid-life crises. Took hunter jumper lessons for a year and then started my show career competing against teenage girls. I was horrible. Dirty tack, a collection of hand me down riding clothes, a horse beyond my ability, I provided fodder for all those young girls. My ego was being continually trampled and I was not having fun. Heard about endurance riding through a mutual friend, and went to a ride in southern Indiana. Shocked that people talked to me and offered advice to an obvious newcomer, I felt at home and decided to give up the show ring, and take to the trails. Before my first ride I had never ridden on trails through the woods. I decided to find an Arabian horse to ride, and my riding instructor arranged a trade with a friend of hers in Ohio. I traded my grade hunter jumper to a young girl who was attempting to make a hunter-jumper out of an Arabian. Beezar like most Arabians over-jumped fences and tended to be uncontrollable. I traveled up to Ohio to test ride Beezar. He ran away with me in the ring, but I just liked the look of the horse. He seemed like a fun horse to be with and the young girl did a marvelous job teaching him ground manners.

Conformation and what attributes to look for in an endurance prospect were beyond my comprehension. I simply liked the horse and we traded. I was lucky and by chance found superior distance horse.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes, a 25, and a few competitive trail rides.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? 4.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Yes, I bet on thoroughbreds and consider myself an above average handicapper.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? Involved with horses past 17 years, endurance past 15.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? See above. Keeping interested in endurance is complicated. It is a time consuming and expensive hobby. Truck, trailer, farm, travel costs, hay, etc. devours our disposable income. My wife has sacrificed many things for me to ride over 6000 miles, and without her support I would not continue. I have enjoyed the partnership of riding with my 6000 mile horse. I feel to a certain degree that we are a team. I enjoy the solitude of training rides at LSD, and learning new areas of horsemanship. My day job involves sitting behind a desk, and dealing with emotions and problems of people. Endurance riding offers me a complete mental escape from my job and its stresses. My wife and I like 95% of the people we have met in Endurance riding. We consider them our true friends and they are a reason we continue in the sport. Another reason is the physically taxing aspect of the sport. It forces you to dig way down into your physical and mental reserves; an experience foreign to most people in modern life. During and after a ride I look at my endurance friends and feel a certain degree of kinship that collectively we are one tough outfit.

How old was your horse when first started? 7. First ride? 8.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons?

1988, first season, one 50 mile ride.

1989, second season, five 50 mile rides.

1990, third season, 8 50 mile rides.

What mileage distance did you start with? 1987 started with competitive trail rides of 25 miles, and a few 2 day 25 miles rides. First endurance ride was 50.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? My horse's first top ten was in his 4th season.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? 3 to 4 months.

If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? Beezar has done 100's off of three weeks rest from prior 100, but I prefer a month off after a 100 miler regardless if the next race is a fifty or 100. After a 100 mile race, I give Beezar 2 complete weeks off. No riding at all. Third week I may do a 15 mile trail workout, and throw in speed work. I am a devout believer in interval training; repeat gallops up hills. Once the ride season begins, most of my training involves interval workouts, with just a few long slow distance rides.

If you have done multiday, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? Same as above.

What kind of tack do you use? My saddle I had made for Beezar by David Stackhouse. It's sort of a modified all purpose hunter-jumper type saddle. Saddle pad, I use Cloud Nine products. Girth is just a plain cord girth. I use a Kimberwicke or D ring snaffle bit.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? I changed my shoeing about 4 years ago to use Natural Balance shoes to increase my horse's breakover. I rarely use pads. I feed my horses Biotin daily, train over rocky conditions and consider pads a problem waiting to happen. I carry an Easyboot with the philosophy that if I carry one, I'll never have to use it. Beezar has only lost one shoe in his 6000 miles of competition.

What kind of problems have you encountered? Sore back was main problem. Started to send Beezar to horse chiropractor in 1992, and with chiropractic treatments he found a new gait. He developed a wonderful ground covering extended trot. The first two years he had repeated chiropractic treatments after every race, and then just an adjustment at the beginning of the season and another during the summer. I also started acupuncture treatments. Finally, teeth. I use a horse dentist who uses various routers and tools while the horse is under tranquilizer. The dentist uses the router to shave and fine tune each tooth so the horse's jaw fits together as closely as possible. The goal is to make the horse stand up straight and not to lean to one side or the other. After repeated dental treatments Beezar began to soften on his stiff side. I have done all this under the direction of Judith Shoemaker, a vet from the east coast who makes bi-annual trips to Kentucky. Through her expertise Beezar has remained competitive and placed 10th at age 21 in the 2002 AERC 100 mile championship.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? Sore back.

How did you work thru it? See above.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse? It was 50 mile ride at Big South Fork in early September 2002. The ride is in northern TN, the terrain and humidity was a close second to the expected ride conditions at upcoming AERC championship ride, and this to be my final tune up. My plan was to maintain a strong and steady pace throughout the race and to work the hills. WE came into the first vet check, pulsed right through and passed a number of horses. I took Beezar over to the small space my wife scoped out for us, and since it was a hot and humid day, as he munched hay, I continually sponged his back with water. He is a big boned horse, being ° thoroughbred, and I found bathing him during the rest period of the vet check prevents him from spiking on his CRI later in the race. Anyways, I immediately noticed Beezar kicking his hind leg and becoming agitated. I couldn't understand what was bothering him and then in struck me. It was ground bees. They were everywhere. All over him and me and stinging us at will. As with most vet check areas we were surrounded by people and horses, but Beezar was standing right over the nest so it was only us who were being attacked. All this happened in an instant. Beezar looked at me and his expressions said, "Jim, get me out of here." I grabbed a lead rope, hooked it to his bridled and at a slow trot he followed me as we weaved our way through other horses and people. The bees were still on him as we trotted through the crowd. I took him up to a water trough, grabbed a bucket and threw water on his underside where the bees were and then started hitting the bees with my hand and a towel. He just stood there until the bees left. If he had bolted when first attacked by the bees he would have run over people, buckets, other horses, it would have been pandemonium. I like to think that Beezar recognized the danger in bolting and had the confidence in me to extricate him from the danger. I was never so proud of my horse. We went on to finish the ride, placing in 11th a few seconds behind the 10th place finisher.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? My very first 100 mile ride, at Land Between the Lakes, in southwest Kentucky. 23+ hours. I was completely unprepared. No light, insufficient amount of electrolytes and horse feed, hay, people food, water, etc. Fortunately a group of riders waited for me after dark so I could ride with them and finish the race. They provided my horse and me with food water and all the things I didn't bring, and through their good graces Beezar finished the ride.

What was your most humbling experience? Falling off my horse at the finish line last June as a result of rider carelessness.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Ride your own ride. Stick to your pre-race strategy, so that your ride is within your horse's ability and training. Know your horse's strong and weak points in a race and take advantage of his strengths and ride to minimize his weaknesses.

Where does your horse live? I have 3 horses, a 3 stall barn and run in shed. The horses graze in 16 acres of Kentucky Bluegrass and fescue pasture located in Boyle County, Kentucky on the southwest fringe of the Bluegrass area of Central Kentucky. In the summer I keep my horses in the barn during the day to escape heat. The horses stay out all night in spring, summer and fall. Starting in November and through March I bring horses into barn each day, feed them a handful of grain, check for injuries, etc, and then turn them out. They stay outside all winter, without blankets, and if weather turns foul, they come into the run in shed part of my barn.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life in? For first two years Beezar stayed at a hunter-jumper barn, with turnout, until I bought my farm. Turnout was with a herd.

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses? Strengths are a big ground covering walk, and three varying speeds of trotting. Beezar is an extremely good up hill horse and he passes horses at a walk going up hill. He has developed a very efficient sense of pace, and will keep going the same speed over the flat or rolling terrain. He is also just a tough horse. Bruises, cuts, bad steps, he will work through on a ride and finish sound.

Weakness is downhill. His conformation is not suited for downhill going. On any steep hill I dismount and walk down on foot. Also due to his size and big boned chest he has trouble tolerating hot and humid conditions of Southeast. However, he has never been pulled for metabolics. At vet checks if humid conditions exist, I continually sponge him with water so that his core internal temperature does not over heat. I also have to back off pace.

What advice do you have for new riders? Start at the back of the pack for the first ride or two until both your horse and you become comfortable with the entire race procedure. A relaxed horse is a key to successful completion. Too much chaos and excitement make it very difficult for a new horse. Work on flexibility with your horse, and transition from trot to gallop, trot to walk so that your horse realizes that you as the rider is the brain of the team.

Find a good blacksmith.

Looking back, what would you do differently? Would have started interval training earlier.

What do you feel you did right? Again I think it was just blind luck. When I first started riding Beezar I was a very nervous and a novice rider. My overriding concern was stopping. I used a double rein Tom Thumb Pellham bit. Because I was a novice rider and very concerned about falling off and becoming

injured, I went slow the first 3 years of his endurance career. In hindsight this allowed the horse to develop physically and mentally, before I felt comfortable in asking him to speed up the pace.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? Qualifying for and completing a FEI race. Yes.

Describe your horses personality? How is it like or unlike yours? Beezar is a pleasure to be around. His stable manners are impeccable. He waits for his feed, doesn't throw temper tantrums, and is a very kind horse. He doesn't chew fences, destroy tack or step on your feet. He is just a perfect gentleman. In races he responds to the rider's thoughts, be it speed up, slow down, or turn, and after a number of years of training can be ridden with a loose rein. He has a competitive side of his personality, and in races will increase his gait on his own to catch horses in front of him.

Whether or not his personality is like or unlike my personality, I'll pass on the answer.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? No preference. Each ride has its enjoyable points.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I use Kerry Ridgway's formula of 2 parts light salt and salt and 1 part dolomite powder mixed in water. The last few years I have started using pro-bi.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? Yes. I feed a high fat, beef pulp based feed manufactured by McCauley Brothers in Versailles, Kentucky. This feed was developed to put weight on horses, and I believe it is a superior product. In competition I feed about 4 lbs daily which is not very much. I also use McCauley Brothers Rice Bran oil for extra fat. For my hay I use grass hay with a little clover in it.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program (i.e., changed from one hay to another, added something special) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? Over the years I changed feeds to arrive at the above feeding program.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Biotin, another product from McCauley Brothers has my horse's feet looking like the feet of a yearling. I use ABC plus and ABC free choice minerals. I believe the combination of my feeding and supplement program and the Kentucky Bluegrass pasture keeps my horses looking youthful, lively and healthy.

Do you give any kind of joint products? Yes, I use ABC joint jolt, and have used other joint products off and on for the last 10 years for Beezar.

How far do you usually travel to rides? I like to keep travel time less than 8 hours. Usually will travel one or two rides per ride season to Michigan to escape the Kentucky humidity. This involves stopping on route and spending the night.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? Yes. Attend rides in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois or Michigan.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why? Connie Caudill. In my opinion Connie is the model for an endurance rider. She is knowledgeable about all aspects of endurance riding and horse care. She loves the sport and gives of herself in many aspects, from managing rides, helping new riders, serving on the AERC board, and just being a good friend to all.

Jim Baldwin and Dane Frazier. Two vets whom I hold in utmost esteem. Like Connie Caudill they freely give their time and energy to the sport. Both Jim and Dane continually strive to better the sport and to insure the safety and well being of our horses. They have a realistic outlook on the needs of the horse in competition, and judge all horses fairly, and with integrity.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. No, Jeanie Miller, formerly of Ohio, now residing in Michigan, did get me started correctly. I knew absolutely nothing about endurance riding and she was kind to point out the need for electrolytes, blankets, etc.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? I would seek a knowledgeable person's opinion about conformation, and look for a horse that had a willing personality if that's possible. You spend so much time with a horse, I think that you have to enjoy the horses company to be a successful team.