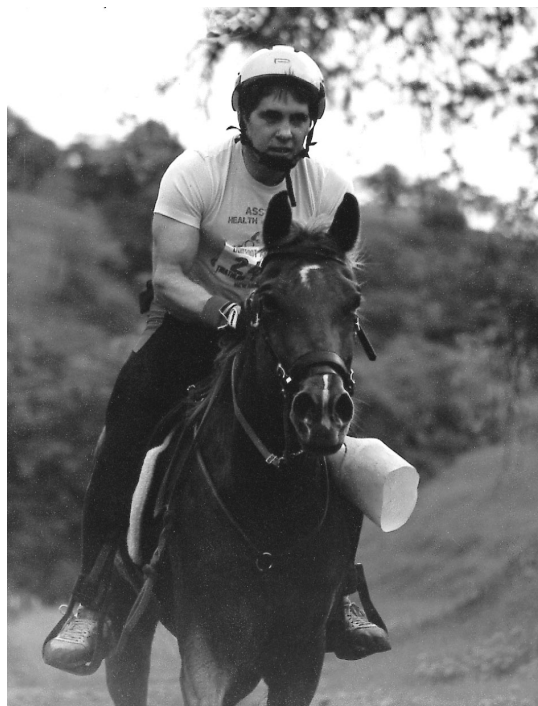


Mike Tracy & Aron Moon+//



American Endurance Ride Conference

AERC Double Decade Team



5020 Miles, 85 ride completions
First AERC ride: 1989 Region: W

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? There was an ad at the tack store in Hayward that my brother Dennis told me about. Kathy Hopkins had a horse for sale. I looked at him twice, he was \$400 and he looked great trotting in the arena. He untied himself, and picked up a water hose and shook it. He had a lot of spirit, so I decided to buy him.

What is your horse's breeding? Welsh pony & Arabian.

Sex: Gelding

DOB: March, 1983

Horse height: 15.1 hh

Approx. Weight: 900

Color: Chestnut

Shoe size: Size 1 front and 0 back

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Moon was the 1st horse. Our first ride was August 5, 1989, the Fireworks 50.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? One other. I got her from Sandy Rovane at the Carson River ride. Sandy was having trouble and was mad and said anybody who wants this horse can have it, so my crew took her, a beautiful 16 hand Egyptian mare.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Yes, NATRC, Competitive Trail and Ride and Ties. Moon won the 2000 World Championship Ride and Tie at age 17. In 2002 Moon's team was 13th after they got lost on the long course. Moon also competed in the Almaden Triathlon 2nd place in 1990 Dennis Tracy riding Moon to fastest horse time. In 1991 9th place and 4th fastest horse time. In 1992 8th place 3rd fastest horse time. In 1994 5th place 2nd fastest horse time 20 miles. 1:18 time with one vet check. In 1998 7th place 4th fastest horse time.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? Since 1989.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? My brother got me interested, he was doing RAT & endurance both. I went riding as a kid and wanted a horse when I grew up. Having a good horse and being successful has kept me interested. I enjoy the competition.

How old was your horse when first started? 4.

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

1989: Three rides, 150 miles.

1990: Nine rides, 480 miles.

1991: Six rides, 450 miles.

What mileage distance did you start with? We did one 25, got lost and did almost 50 miles. It didn't phase Moon so after that we did 50's.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? Our second season. Moon has an exceptional ability.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? November thru January.

If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one? One to two weeks off always on a 50, maybe 3 weeks on a 100. Moon has done 15 one day 100's.

What kind of tack do you use? Curb bit, Synergist, Choice of Champions pad, Sneakers footwear on all 4's.

What kind of problems have you encountered? Saddle and tack fitting problems and shoeing. Injury problems, 80 miles into Swanton we slipped in a bog and Moon scrambled on the rocks and hit his front hoof and cut his coronet band. I used gum (Dentyne) to stop the bleeding and wrapped a jacket that I cut up to fix the bleeding. Joyce Sousa and Judy Houle came along and gave me some vetwrap. Moon lost a lot of hoof and a had a crack, it took almost a year for it to grow out.

Moon used to get corns and had foot problems before we changed to sneakers.

He's had some diarrhea problems and has worked thru those issues.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse? The Grant Ranch ride when Moon was 6 he raced to the finish with 2 really good horses and he took off and won. He's also done that when he was 17 at a ride with 107 entries. We were in 2nd place and stopped to help Ken Cook who hit his knee on a tree. Moon doesn't like when horses come up from behind and try to pass when we are going in to finish, he throws it into high gear and flies on in. Another good ride that we had was the July 7, 1996 Race of Champions. One of the best 100's was the Churchill 100--the footing was great and Moon wanted to gallop most of the way. I broke a stirrup and Sandy Rovane gave me something to tie it up with. I had to change to a

different saddle during the ride. We were racing with 2 other girls and Moon blew them both away at the finish. One of the girl's horses didn't stop and kept going at the finish and she was knocked off the horse by a mirror on the door of a truck. Ouch.

My most favorite was the Tevis when Moon was 18 years old and we finished 13th, in 2001. I had a lot of horse left.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? When Moon was 6 or so he fell off the Western States trail during the Western States 60, and it was too steep to get him up. I had been riding with Pat Fredrickson who stopped and tried to help, but her efforts were futile as we were too far down the side; she left to go get help. I got in a boat and tried to bring him down river so we could get him up. He started kicking so I jumped off and grabbed his halter and dragged him to the shore, he finally stood up and was all right. We still had to get farther down to get him back up to the trail, so we got him tied up with another boat and put life jackets on him. Moon stopped kicking and became an anchor to the boat, so the guy in the boat got scared and threw the rope in. A third boat comes along the river and the guy says he's got a long line, climb up to the trail and call him up so we tried that with a 100-yard rope. We got Moon up and right near the top and just then he tripped and flipped head over heels, falling down all the way back into the river. I thought he was dead and I swore I was never going to do the sport of endurance again. When I got back down to the water I saw Moon standing up in the water looking at me. I got real scared. I took his life jackets off, and tied him to a tree. It's now getting late and nearing dark. I start praying, and then got worried and went out to the tree branches along the shore and broke the branches down and made a path to get Moon down it. I said, "Moon come on baby we gotta get outta here", and led him down to one spot that was a little sandy and was a 20 foot sinkhole. We got him on the ropes and swam him across it like a fish, then got to the other side and Moon climbed up to the top of the trail like a goat and as he got up there immediately appeared a whole ton of people to help with the rescue. Moon turned out to be sound, so I saddled him back up and rode him down to the river crossing in the ride. I got off and walked him across the river and told Moon that if the water got any higher up than the stirrups we were going to turn around and go back. We made it to the finish at Robie Point, where I was known as "The man from the American River!"

What was your most humbling experience? Running in the top ten overall but in first place by an hour in the National I.A.H.A half-arabian/anglo-arabian division. Fell into a creek at 86 miles, cut Moon's right front hoof at the coronet band. August 28, 1999 at Swanton was not a good day.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? I believe in riding your own ride. A lot of people get caught up in the race and override their horses. Riders need to Ride their horse within it's own ability, and use it's strongest points. We need to be aware of the conditions we are putting the horses in and don't take advantage and abuse the horse beyond what their limits are. I always look for the best footing and ride the horse (faster) on the softest part of trail, and slow down over the technical and rocky terrain. I think about how everything on the trail affects my horse, he's my best friend.

Where does your horse live? 4 acres of pasture with a shelter.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life in? He was in a pasture.

What are your horse's strengths? Moon has a 17.5 mph trot, he has a tremendous ability to do well no matter what and suck it up. He is a good eater and drinks well. I carry food with him to feed along the trail. ***Weaknesses?*** He's Welch and has a very thick coat, I just recently clipped him for the first time and it seems to help. He has had problems with his feet with corns and heel bruising.

What advice do you have for new riders? Ride your own ride, don't worry about who else is in the ride with you. Get more experience before just going out and racing. Your horse will never last if you race. It is a lot harder to hold Moon back but he has done a lot of competitive trail rides where he has to control himself.

Looking back, what would you do differently? I would have used rides as training less often and would have done more training rides beforehand. I would do more longer slow distance.

What do you feel you did right? Right? More like wrong, I made every mistake in the book! I had the wrong saddle, I had the wrong shoer, the wrong shoes, etc. One time the shoer put borium on the horses shoes before Tevis. To say that Moon just has the heart of a lion is an understatement. We have managed to work thru each problem successfully.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? 5000 miles. Yes, we got it at Silver State, 2003! I'd like to get top ten at Tevis. 13th is the closest I've come.

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours? He's very alert and is very observant. He's very aware of his surroundings. He's independent, and very competitive ñ we both are, which can be a negative.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? 50's.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I've tried everything in every possible way you can think of. I believe that you are losing sweat and you need to replace electrolytes. I think I have over-electrolyted. I use Enduralytes and put extra calcium and magnesium in it. This helps him with thumps, that he's had a couple of times. I don't electrolytes unless he's drinking. There is a fine line with this stuff and a lot of variables, is it hot, cold, humid.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? I used to use wheat bran. I now feel that beet pulp is better. I've been using BP for the last couple of years and really like it. You have to be careful to get it soaked well and use it right away so it doesn't ferment.

I feed Moon Purina Strategy. I used to give dry cob. I don't like to feed a lot of sweet feed.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? I use platinum performance and MSM, and vitamin C. I also have been giving Moon, for the past 15 years a product called Muscle Amino Complex in gelatin capsules. Its one of thoes products that both human and horse can use. It has all of the essential amino acids. I put it in his grain before I ride. I like it so much that I started giving Pro-Burst during the rides a few years ago.

Do you give any kind of joint products? Glucosamine powder and MSM.

How far do you usually travel to rides? As little as possible! I've been all over the country from South Dakota to Utah to New Mexico and Nevada and California.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why?

Julie Suhr, I like her. She has done exceptionally well and knows about being a team with her horse.

Joyce Sousa, she stopped and helped me at a ride once and really knows what she is doing about riding.

Maryben Stover because she has helped me a lot and taught me a lot and she gets juniors started in the sport.

Also, I need to give credit to my farrier Mike Deleonardo, Vet Roger Bruce and Chiropractor Dr. John Red Eagle Valenzuela.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? No.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? The same attributes that Moon has -- good conformation and a lot of heart.