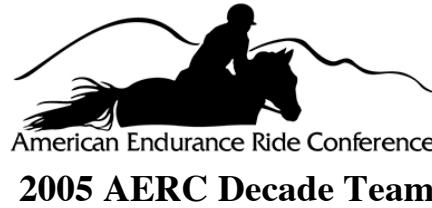


Marci Cunningham & Koztarr+/



Rider's Name: Marci Cunningham

Horse's Name: Koztarr+/

Region: Pacific Southwest

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? In 1989 I won a free breeding at the AERC Convention to either of Cheri Briscoe's stallions and I chose to breed to her stallion, Koszar, who was a son of the 1976 AERC Hall of Fame horse, Kosciusko.

What is your horse's breeding? Mostly Egyptian with a little Polish

Sex: Gelding

DOB: 4-22-91

Horse height: 15-1

Approx. Weight: 950

Color: Bay

Shoe size: 0 / Easyboot size: 1

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? He was bred to be an endurance horse.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? Eight or more

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? (if so, describe) No, other than trail riding on occasion.

How many years have you been involved with horses? 40 years

In endurance? 22 years

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? Back in the 1970's I read articles about endurance riding in Western Horseman magazine and thought it sounded like fun but I had no idea about how to find out more about the sport. By chance I met Jackie & Jim Bumgardner in the early 80's and they told me about some close by rides and encouraged me to ride the horse I already had, which was my appendix quarter horse hunter/jumper. I was hooked after my first ride and love that there is something in the sport for every rider, be they slow or fast. I also love the fact that horses are recognized for their mileage accomplishments and number of years in the sport.

How old was your horse when first started? 4 **First ride?** 5

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? First year- 4 50's, Second year- 5 50's and 1 60, Third year- 8 50's and 2 100's

What mileage distance did you start with? I rode Koztarr+/- in one 25 as a late 4 year old and started him in 50's as a 5 year old.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? I don't race and my only top tens are when there are ten or fewer riders.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? My horses usually get one to two months off from endurance rides between the end of November and early January, but I continue to ride year round.

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? Usually I give a couple of weeks off after a 100 but that is more for me than the horse. I try to do a 50 sometime during the month prior to the 100 and continue to do a training ride once a week.

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? I would answer this question the same as I did for 100's. In the summer of 2004 Koztarr+/- completed 600 miles of the 2004 XP riding 3 days per week, every other day, with the weekends off.

What kind of tack do you use? (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) I currently use a Sharon Saare saddle, skito pad, mohair girth and kimberwick curb bit along with breastcollar and crupper. I really like the beta material for headstalls and breastcollars.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots? Standard keg steel shoes and if it is rocky, easyboots over shoes.

What kind of problems have you encountered? I have dealt with saddle fitting issues which I think

have been solved with my current saddle and finally finding a good equine chiropractor. Koztarr+ is very girthy and I have to be very careful when I tighten the saddle or he will throw himself on the ground. This is very embarrassing when it happens at a ride!

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? After a training ride tumble, where the ground gave out underneath him while we were walking and we both somersaulted, he put his withers out but I didn't know it. It took the longest time and several chiropractors to figure out what the problem was. In the mean time I thought it was just a saddle fit issue, but it was the saddle pushing down on his "out of whack" withers which caused him discomfort. However I still have to be careful saddling him even though I know he is not in pain.

How did you work through it? Prayer, perseverance and searching for the right chiropractor, as they all told me his ribs needed adjusting except for the last one that examined him. He told me his withers were out and that he needed an adjustment at the poll to correct them. This chiropractor came out a couple weeks later to check on him at no additional charge and never had to adjust him after the first time. Koztarr+ was a changed horse after this.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. I would say the 600 miles of the 2004 XP were the best rides I have ever had. The country was beautiful even though it was hot, stark and unforgiving through the desert and green and cool in the mountains.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse. The worst day was at the Manzanita 75 in 1999. Koztarr+ didn't camp well the night before and consequently didn't eat or drink well. Ride day was hot and humid and although we weren't going fast we were going too fast for him. At lunch, after vetting though just fine, he started to colic back at the trailer and ended up with severe colic symptoms. It was the first time I had ever had a horse treated with fluids and heavy duty pain medication and I know it was my fault for not making sure he was more settled the night before. He wanted to be next to his trailer companion but I kept him at the trailer in his regular spot. Consequently he started the ride dehydrated and metabolically compromised even though it wasn't outwardly apparent. He survived and I learned a valuable lesson.

What was your most humbling experience? See above response.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? It is important to listen to your horse and your own gut instincts. Ride your own ride and have fun doing it.

Where does your horse live? I am fortunate to have my horses at home, turned out on 2½ acre irrigated pasture 24/7.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of it's life in? (pasture, w/ a herd, etc.) After weaning he was turned out in a 5 acre irrigated pasture with other horses. He stayed in this pasture until he was 4.

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses? He is a very consistent, go down the trail type of horse and very easy to rate. He has learned that his job is to get me to the end of the trail. I wish he was a better eater at lunch and along the trail, but we are working on that and seeing some improvement. He would much rather stay with his buddies than stop and eat by himself.

What advice do you have for new riders? When I started endurance riding there wasn't all the information that is now available through books and the internet. Today I think new riders think they have to spend so much time getting ready for their first ride that they never get to that first ride. My suggestion is to "just do it". I took my quarter horse to its first 25 mile ride having never ridden more than 10 miles at one time and we did just fine. I rode conservatively and we finished with an hour to

spare. Go out and have fun and don't worry about all the technical stuff.

Looking back, what would you do differently? I don't think I would do anything differently except pay more attention to my horse in the case of his two metabolic pulls. They were both my fault because I wasn't using my head or paying better attention to my horse.

What do you feel you did right? I think I have ridden him within his abilities and have never felt the need to ride my horse "close to the edge."

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? We are still working on the goal of 5,000 miles or more.

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours? He is laid back but doesn't like to be by himself and would much rather be around other horses. I am laid back also but enjoy being by myself.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? (multidays, 100's, 50's, etc.) I enjoy them all. Multidays are a great way to see different parts of the country and ride lots of miles, and 100's provide a great sense of accomplishment for me and my horse. 50's are the backbone of the sport.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I use endura-max electrolytes mixed with baby food carrots for palatability. I usually give one dose the night before a ride, again in the morning and at lunch if I think it is necessary. If the weather is going to be cold I don't give any electrolytes. It isn't humid where I ride so I would rather error on the side of caution in giving electrolytes. My mare, FM Moonshyne+/, received electrolytes only once in 3,000 miles and she did just fine.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? No, all my horses get alfalfa/oat cubes in addition to their pasture.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program (ie, changed from one hay to another, added something special) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? I started feeding Koztarr+/ Platinum Performance Equine supplement after the 2004 XP to help him put back on the weight he lost and I have kept him on it.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Platinum Performance

Do you give any kind of joint products? (Describe) Platinum Performance includes a joint supplement.

How far do you usually travel to rides? It depends on the distance of the ride. For 50's I usually don't have to travel farther than 150 miles. For some multidays I travel several hundred miles. I have a couple of 100's within 125 miles.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? If the ride is a multiday or a 100 I travel outside my region but with so many great rides within my region I don't need to travel far to get to a ride.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why. I admire Julie Suhr for her class and accomplishments, Dave Nicholson for his no nonsense approach to horse care and Kerry Ridgeway for his contributions to the sport.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. Jim and Jackie Bumgardner introduced me to the sport but my first trail partner was a good friend of mine, Dona Schilling, and we went to all of our early rides together in the 1980's. She had to quit riding 50's after a

car accident but still enjoys riding LD on occasion.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? I hope she is in my pasture waiting to be started. She is out of my Sierra Fadwah+/- daughter, FM Moonshyne+/-, and by Aul Magic+/-, a sire better known for his dressage accomplishments. Good conformation, a good mind and smooth gaits will be important traits in my next horse.

Add any additional comments or stories that you can think of: People just need to remember that endurance riding is a sport that is supposed to be fun. When it stops being fun and riders get too serious they need to find a different sport.