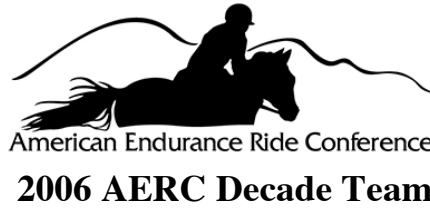


Mary Forrester & Copper Breeze



Region: NW

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? Before getting into endurance I bought a registered Arabian mare. I bred her to an unknown Quarter Horse stallion that had been used for ranch work. Copper Breeze is the result of that breeding.

What is your horse's breeding? CMK Arabian/Quarter Horse

Sex: Gelding

DOB: 6/6/91

Horse height: 14.2

Approx. Weight: 1050

Color: Chestnut

Shoe size: 1

Or, Easyboot size: 1 if they are old and well used, otherwise he needs a 2 with the heel strap made shorter.

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? Since I didn't have the money to buy a horse, and did have this one who seemed to have a lot of "go." I thought I could at least try him. I decided after a pretty hard ride on a hot day when he wasn't even in shape. His resting pulse half an hour later and standing in the sun with the saddle still on, was 36. He turned out to be the best endurance horse I have ever had.

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

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? 6 of my own and several that I have borrowed for a ride or two when I needed one, maybe about 10 times.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Since I work for a neighbor, Breezy gets to be a cow horse on a fairly regular basis, and he also works with sheep.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? About 30 years, starting when I was about 9 through my teenage years, then again starting about 1985. 16 years in endurance.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? While growing up I loved spending all day on my horse. I always wanted to see where the road or trail went, wondered what I would see if we climbed up that hill, etc. Endurance was an opportunity to spend all day on a horse, seeing new places. I learned that I am a bit competitive and that was fun, too. There is still so much to learn after all these years and I'm still learning about this horse that has carried me more than 6000 miles over endurance trails.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? He was started under saddle as a 3 year old, ridden very lightly for the next year, ridden more as a 5 year old on trails near home, and then entered in his first endurance ride as a 6 year old.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? First season 8 starts, 7 finishes, all 50's; the pull was for minor lameness. Second season 9 starts, 9 finishes, all 50's. Third season 12 starts, 10 finishes, all 50's except for one 75 which he finished. The two pulls were for tie-ups, both happened about 2 miles into the ride, one on a 50 and the other on his first 100.

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) 50 miles.

How long till you top tenned or "raced"? We found ourselves in the top 10 two times in the first season, (8th and 9th places), once the 2nd season and twice the 3rd season. Some of these rides were quite small, maybe 30 entries, so a top ten didn't mean much more than being a little bit ahead of the middle of the pack.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? After the last ride of our NW season, usually late October, the shoes are pulled off and the horses rest for 3 months. I start to ride a little as snow and mud conditions permit about the first of February and am ready to enter the first ride of the season at the end of March or first week of April.

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? He usually gets 3 weeks off after a 100, with just a short ride or two every week to keep him moving. Before the ride I don't do much different than I do between shorter ones. Riding in the slower 1/3 of the pack stresses the horse less than a faster ride, so being a slowpoke had its advantages.

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? About the same as with the 100's. At times I have done a 50 mile ride 2 weeks before doing a slow 100.

What kind of tack do you use? We have had some saddle fitting problems over the years so Breezy has some white marks on his back and a couple of small places where the hair doesn't grow back. For the last 3 years I have used an Orthoflex dressage saddle and Skito pad with a hole cut in the foam on one side so that there is no pressure on one of those bad spots. The condition of his back has not changed for the past 3 years. The girth is neoprene, it came with the saddle, and he has never had girth problems. I use a low port Kimberwicke bit, rope reins and an old leather headstall. The breast collar is zilco I think, but it looks like leather.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots? Steel shoes, Easyboots over them on very rocky rides and multadays. I rarely have pads put on him. The last time I did pad for a rocky ride I ended up putting Easyboots over the shoes for the 2nd day of the multiday.

What kind of problems have you encountered? The minor lameness pull in the first year was so minor it probably didn't even exist! (A vet story that I won't go into here). His major problem is tie-ups; he can't handle much green grass, grain, or beet pulp. The first tie up was one of those bad ones where the rear end of the horse is immobile. We had to have a vet and trailer rescue, and thankfully we were only about 2 miles out of camp on a road where they could get to us. When he has shown signs of other tie ups we simply turned around and I led him back to camp. His blood work shows no selenium deficiency even on the day of the tie up, so I have learned what not to feed him, and he is in a dry lot most of the time at home and lives on grass hay. He gets about 1 cup of whole oats a day with his vitamin supplement. Regular riding is also part of my control strategy.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? Wire cut below fetlock.

How did you work through it? Thankfully it happened in the winter, wasn't serious, and required minimal care. There was about a foot of snow on the ground, no flies, no infection, no bandaging required. I just disinfected it and used Schreiner's herbal formula on it for several days.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. He usually has a great day, so it is hard to pick one out.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? The day of the 1st tie up.

What was your most humbling experience? Being trailered back to camp with a tied up horse. I had missed all the subtle signs and pushed him to trot up a hill when he wanted to canter, thinking it was just attitude and adrenaline.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Every horse is an individual and need to be watched to make sure their needs are met. Some need more TLC than others. Go slow, especially with a young horse, keep watching the horse's attitude, way of going, water and feed intake, etc. Enjoy the scenery on the trail, but keep an eye on the time because some difficult and technical rides don't allow much time for sightseeing. Sometimes the trail is poorly marked and I've spent a lot of time backtracking where I missed a marker, or sometimes I am too busy visiting or gawking to see a plainly marked trail. On some rides I have needed to trot at any opportunity even if it was just a hundred feet at a time, just to finish before the time ran out. A couple of times I rode too slow and almost didn't finish, so had to really push in the last few miles, something I would rather not do. Our usual pace for a 50 is about 8 hours. I don't ride the longer distances any differently than the 50's.

Where does your horse live? 1 acre pasture with very sparse vegetation and no level ground so he has to

climb a hill for food and go back down it for water. He lives at home, outside in all kinds of weather since I have no stalls and really don't want any. In a wet climate I would have to change that but it works where I live on the dry side of Oregon.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life in? Small herd, large rocky, hilly pasture.

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses? He is competitive but controllable and he has fun out there. He is very strong and just keeps going like the energizer bunny but isn't good on the steep downhill's. His major weakness would have to be his diet problem.

What advice do you have for new riders? Go slow for longer than I did. It's too easy to get caught up in the fun and go too fast. Do I follow my own advice? Not always, but I try.

Looking back, what would you do differently? No top 10's the first year, although I don't think it hurt him, it might have if I had kept doing them. I should have thought to check the saddle when the white spots showed up. They were the result of a saddle that needed some major work and I was thinking that a new pad would solve the problem. His back wasn't sore after a ride and so the white places didn't show up right away, and by the time I made the saddle inspection the damage was done.

What do you feel you did right? Went slow most of the time. Kept changing saddles and pads until we found something that worked.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? Goals keep changing but to get over 5000 miles was one of the biggest. And now we have over 6000! My current goal is just to keep him competing for a few more years, maybe do less rides per year and try to get another thousand or two. As long as he is having fun we will keep going.

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours? He is pretty mellow but finds ways to entertain himself sometimes at my expense. He can spook really hard sometimes at nothing or at cardboard beside the road, a funny looking stump or rock. I have found myself draped over his neck a few times and he will stop and let me get back into the saddle and not try to run away. I'm sure he is laughing. A few times I have hit the ground and he has been easy to catch. After dark he seldom spooks at anything, maybe because by then he just wants to get back to camp. I do think we are a lot alike, mostly fairly easy going, but hadn't thought about it before.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? 50s and multadays. I am tired enough after 50 miles, but can do it again the next day and the one after that.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. In cool weather I don't electrolyte at all on some rides. In hot weather I give a dose the night before the ride, the morning of the ride, and if he drinks well I give small doses through the day. The vets usually give him high marks for hydration, and if they don't then I give a half dose of electrolytes to get him drinking more, and will keep giving them in low doses after every drink. He has hardly ever needed that.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? No, according to most people it shouldn't work.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program? I had to make major adjustments when he started tying up. People kept telling me that a horse couldn't do so many miles on grass hay and almost no grain, but he does. Now that beet pulp is everywhere, I have to be careful how much of it he gets during the ride because I recently learned that it can give him a problem.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? I alternate between Horse Guard and Equerry's Plus, both manufactured for the northwest where we have very low to nonexistent selenium in the soil so therefore none in our locally grown feed.

Do you give any kind of joint products? Breezy has been getting Corta-Flex, an herbal joint supplement for the past year. It seems to help him, he stands looking more comfortable when in the pasture. I give him a dose of it about 3 times a week just for maintenance, and give him time for it to clear his system before a ride. After a ride I start giving it to him again.

How far do you usually travel to rides? 200 to 300 miles each way

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? none

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

Only three?

Sue Summers. She rode a whole loop in the dark, faster than she needed to on a horse she was going to take to an international competition, to help a friend and I finish a shorter distance on time. My friend had been having major problems with dehydration and we had lost a lot of time. Sue got us through it. We ride for different Northwest teams and were having a close competition that year and she helped us anyhow.

Dennis Summers because he runs as many of the miles as he rides. His horses always look good at the finish and he finishes with a good attitude. In fact, I think he always finishes.

Annerose Carlile, because in all the years I've done endurance, I've never met and ridden with anybody who tries harder. She has often been quite sick on the trail but kept riding way beyond when most people would have said enough, and sometimes when it would have been much better for her to stop, but if it had been her horse having the problem she would have pulled without hesitation. That's endurance!

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. During my first two years in endurance I had the privilege of conditioning with Hanne Hollander. We also sat and talked for hours about how to do endurance rides, feeding, equipment, and of course, horses. I met Hanne in a snowstorm, she was just arriving at her practice hill, we exchanged phone numbers and I went home. Hanne went riding.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? Good feet and legs, body substance for feed, heart and lung capacity, good withers and back, a willing attitude, not inclined to buck and run, and not too spooky.