

## Paula Brown & Elektronik



### 2015 AERC Decade Team



*Photo © Becky Pearman*

**Rider's name:** Paula Brown

**Horse's name:** Elektronik (AKA Elec)

**Year of First Endurance Ride (first year in the decade):** 2006

**Region:** NE

**Current rider lifetime mileage?**

Endurance: 2,405

Limited Distance: 1,120

**Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?** My husband won Electronic in 2003 as a 3 year old in the Old Dominion Endurance Horse Raffle. He was donated by Tom Sayvetz of Asgard Arabians. Surprisingly, it was the second Old Dominion Raffle Horse that he won!

**What is your horse's breeding?** Russian Arabian, Statistic x Elskova, bred by Tom Sayvetz of Asgard Arabians in Ft Springs, WV

**Sex:** Gelding

**DOB:** 2000

**Horse height:** 15h

**Approximate weight:** 950

**Color:** Chestnut

**Why did you decide to purchase this horse?** We won him as a raffle horse!

**Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse?** Yes, 4 others

**How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?** 11 (owned/leased/ridden for others)

**Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities?** Not since starting endurance

**How many years have you been involved with endurance?** 20 years

**With horses in general?** 50 years

**What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested?** A very good friend of mine in Switzerland was an endurance rider and we met at a dude ranch in California. I went to the World Championships in Virginia where he was riding for Switzerland and was hooked. Then I crewed for the Swiss Team in the 1996 World Championships in Kansas and my friend's Swiss team won the Bronze on my other friend's leased horses from the U.S.! I was really hooked then. I love riding, crewing, helping manage rides, having fun with my endurance friends, and seeing old favorite places as well as new ones.

**How old was your horse when first started in endurance?** He started LD's as a 5 year old

**How many rides did you do your first three ride seasons?** With this horse 4-LD's (first season) and 8-50's (next two years).

**What mileage distance did you start with?** (25, 50, etc.) – LD's the first year, 50+ thereafter

**How long until you top tened or raced (if you did)?** Top Tened in nearly all LD's the first year as the Asgard Arabians make it so easy, passing multiple horses in each vet check due to phenomenal recoveries. He earned several Top Tens in 50's but I never "raced" – we just rode our own ride at a steady pace over the respective terrain.

**How much time off do you give between ride seasons?** 5 months as I work full-time and also volunteer as a Mountain Host at the local ski resort in winter.

**If you have done 100s, how much time off do you give after doing one?** Minimum 3 weeks

**If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one?** Have not done multadays

**Do you use any special type of tack or shoeing with your horse?** Nothing special on tack and still use steel shoes as boots have not worked well on him. Finding a farrier that has interest in endurance and willingness to listen/learn/try new things can be difficult.

**What kind of problems have you overcome with your horse?** Various minor injuries and lacerations, lymes/anaplasmosis, my own knee injuries, onset of tie-up/metabolic issues after lymes, farrier issues.

**Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse.** Completing my first and his first 100 mi ride at the

Old Dominion Endurance Ride.

**What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important?** You always need to learn new things. Even though you've had success for several years doing things in endurance as you learned them, maybe you can do better by considering updates or improvements that would benefit you and your horse as a team. Keep an open mind and open ears!

**What advice would you give to new riders?** Initially, (1) come to a ride and volunteer so you can learn about all aspects of endurance and gain knowledge/confidence. When I wanted to start in endurance, I called to volunteer for a local ride and was told that they didn't need volunteers. I couldn't believe it! I was bull-headed and went anyway – just to learn and meet people. So glad that the current AERC membership and leadership are focusing on welcoming new riders and providing a multitude of educational materials and workshops.

(2) Volunteer to crew with an experienced team so that you can learn efficient and effective vet check procedures (and everyone needs crew help!).

(3) Get to know all your horse's "normals" so that you know when he "isn't right" and you can head off a problem before it starts.

(4) Learn from all the knowledgeable and helpful vets and other riders. There are no stupid questions!

(5) Find a mentor to help you learn more at a quicker rate – a benefit to you and your horse.

**Looking back, what do you feel you did right?** Always strive to learn new things, ask questions, volunteer, meet new people, value your mentors and pass on what they passed on to you.

**What would you do differently?** Retire from working earlier!

**What was your highest goal for your horse, and did you achieve it?** Decade Horse and at least attempt a 100 mi finish – achieved both!

**Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours?** He is the most laid-back, sweet, talkative, curious horse I have. I always say he would make a great kid's horse – except at the start of a ride! That is not what I would characterize as my personality.

**What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most (50s, 100s, multadays, etc.)?** Due to my knees, 50's.

**In what ways has endurance riding made a positive influence in your life?** I've learned so much, I've developed relationships with my horses like I never have before, I've been lucky to travel to international endurance events, maintaining horses for endurance makes you an organized troubleshooter and planner, and I'm a better person for all that.

**Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?** I had basically the same nutrition program for all my horses for 18+ years and it worked great, until I had the first tie-up of my career. What a shock! I talked to everyone and they said my diets were spot-on and it must have been a weather fluke, but I ended up having to change his diet to a strict high fat, low carb diet at 14 years of age. I learned a lot, but I'm not yet totally confident I have it licked....

**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?** Yes. I had the first tie-up of my career 19 years after starting endurance. I was totally shocked. I talked to everyone around and they said my diets were spot-on and it must have been a weather fluke at the ride (very hot day pre-ride then freezing rain at the start of the ride). However, with a minor second tie-up I ended up having to aggressively change his diet to a strict high fat, low carb diet at 14 years of age. I read a lot, questioned everything, and learned a lot in the process! I also tried tie-up supplements pre-ride such as Azoturx. It's hard to evaluate the value of the supplements when you make drastic nutritional changes, but we completed our final year of decade rides with no tie-ups so we've made progress with all the nutritional changes involved. What a humbling experience....

**What kind of supplements (if any) do you use?** Myogard, Vit E. Have used Azoturx for tie-ups. Now using omeprazol when travelling as a preventative.

**Do you give any kind of joint products?** Cosequin ASU and Adequan

**Describe your electrolyte protocol.** Consistent dosing pre-ride and during the ride. Perform-N-Win in each feeding at the ride. Lite Now or Perfect Balance orally between long vet checks. At the vet checks before departing: Endurolyte or Omega Alpha Equicel-Lyte oral dosing.

**How do you choose which rides to attend?** Work dictates my possibilities unfortunately....

**Do you go to many rides outside of your region?** Not many due to work/time restrictions, but I have occasionally. I've even leased horses to do new rides in different regions. Had a blast!

**Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why.** Julie Suhr (just legendary! No other explanation needed), Potato Richardson (I'm going to beat everyone at the Tevis doing my way with no frills, just good horses), Dr. Jeannie Waldron (phenomenal endurance veterinarian) and Steve Rojek (exquisite horseman, true gentleman).

**Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them.** I did a lot of rides initially with Lynn Golemon, Wendy Mattingly, and Rosie Rollins. Lynn and Wendy had tons of international/national championship/FEI experience. I learned a ton from them and also when crewing for Grace Ramsey and Jan Worthington at national and international events. Emily Richardson has been a long-term trail partner for the last 15 years. We ride the same pace, we don't burn up the trail, and we make sure that we finish with healthy horses. Emily also earned her Decade Team Award and is still competing at 81 years young.

**In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?** Proven endurance lines, physical ability, structurally correct, and maybe another like Elek that's sweet and in your pocket vs. an athlete that's a handful as I get older.