

Working with a Club Foot

By Dave Farley

When asked to work on a horse with a club foot, take extra time to evaluate the whole horse. Look at the horse from all angles. Watch the horse as it takes a couple of steps; this can help you see where the foot cannot take stress. A horse will protect himself just as you do when hurting. Learning this and understanding the lame horse is mandatory for a farrier to have a successful, positive shoeing experience. Doing anything less is simply application, not correction.

The condition of the foot, the way the horse stands and your shoe modification ability will help determine the end result. With all this in mind we worked on a club foot case recently. This particular horse, a six year old gelding, has what I feel is a grade three club foot (on a 1-5 scale). Apparently the club foot condition has been with this horse



Above: Right Front Foot



Above: Left Front Foot

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since it was a foal. This horse found it difficult to stand square or under himself before shoeing.

In **photo 1** you can see the dish in the hoof wall is at or just below the coronary, a grade 3, whereas a dish at or just above the end of the toe would likely be considered grade 1 or 2. This club foot, as seen in **photo 2**, has very straight medial and lateral walls, versus only medial or lateral. Look closely at **photo 3** and you can see hoof growth at the heel is approximately twice as much as the toe growth. There is separation of the wall from widest area medial to widest area lateral shown in **photo 4**. The bars are starting to close in or point towards the frog as you can see in **photo 5**. If the end of the bars are not opened as I did on the right (I simply use a rasp and knife) they will start to pinch and narrow the frog.

There are several other factors that contribute to this horse's lameness. Look at **photos 6 and 7**. Notice the pronounced side bone. **Photo 8** shows a prolapsed sole that is painful, making it impossible to have a normal stride. Also notice the degenerative sole growth just in

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The Natural Angle

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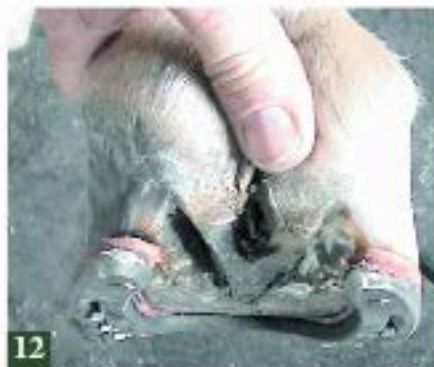


front of the frog. This is from osteomyelitis or infectious bone.

Photo 9 is the lateral x-ray showing the remodeled bone and poor quality of the bone. The toe crack in **photo 10** has also been the site of drainage from abscesses due to micro fractures from the distal end of the coffin bone.

With all this in mind I decided to modify a shoe to do several things. Rocker the shoe both toe and heel to allow for ease of break over and landing, add a leather rim pad to raise the pro-lapsed and painful sole off the ground and fit the shoe more medial to center the frog while putting the hoof support closer to the center of the leg (**photos 11 & 12**).

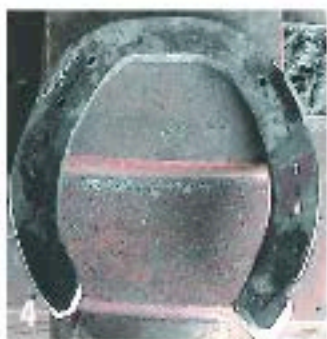
Before applying this shoe it was almost impossible to pick up the left front. After application of the modified shoe to the right I was then able to shoe the left. I also applied a thicker rim pad to the left front to raise that side allowing the right foot and leg to be more square and weight bearing. You can see in **photo 13** that the left front is much wider than the right, a result of bearing



T H E T O O L C O R N E R

Shoe Modification - The Trailer


This is one version of a trailer used to provide lateral support on the hind foot. The first step is to provide some additional length on the outside branch by offsetting the shoe in the toe (**photo 1**). You can then forge the trailer (**photo 2**). Check your fit before making the final finish on the belt sander (**photos 3,4**). The view from behind and the lateral view give you a good look at the support that is provided with this modification (**photos 5,6**). ■



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2004 INDUSTRY EVENTS PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

2004 is on the horizon and the first two months of the year provide a number of educational opportunities. Contact the organizers of these events for more details - and remember that continuing education is one of the best ways to increase your earning power.

Bluegrass Laminitis Symposium

The "Symposium" will once again be held in the Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky. The 2004 dates are January 15-17. This program goes far beyond laminitis in the topics that are discussed each year. Always an intense educational event, this year should be no exception. The featured speaker for the 2004 program is Jean-Marie Denoix, DVM, a veterinarian and researcher from France who was a big hit at the 1999 AFA Convention. Denoix's topics will include the anatomy of the foot and a presentation on tendon and ligament injuries in the foot. The event will also include the first major trade show of the year. For more information contact the International Equine Podiatry Center at 877-462-6742.

The International Hoof Care Summit

This is a new program that will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio February 5-7. Advance promotion of the program

indicates there will be a mixture of lectures, panel and roundtable discussions and "classroom" sessions. There will be farrier and veterinarian presenters as well as a trade show. The event is organized by the American Farrier's Journal. You can contact them at 262-782-4480 for more information.

The American Farrier's Association Convention

The most diverse and largest show of all, the annual AFA Convention, will be held in Rochester, NY February 25-28. Rochester was the convention site in 1998 and proved to be a very "friendly" location. All events, including the competition, hands-on and lectures are located in buildings adjacent to one another. Speakers for the convention include farriers Dave Farley, Doug Butler, Doyle Blagg, Jeff Rodriguez and Cornell's Michael Wildenstein. Also included in the speaker lineup are veterinarians Dan Haussler and Betsy Keller.

A new twist to the competition will be a Jack Benny Class. If you're under 60 you need not apply! And a special guest will judge this class, Mr. Edward Martin, a long time supporter of the AFA.


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