

BSPS JUDGES CONFERENCE 2015

WHY DOES CONFORMATION MATTER ?

Jane Nixon MRCVS



The Conformation, Action & Type of Show Horse or Pony

is

Essential Part of Judging Process

**To help judges evaluate
a horse or pony**

allocation of marks

**determination conformation faults
unevenness/unsoundness**

Unbalanced conformation

leads to

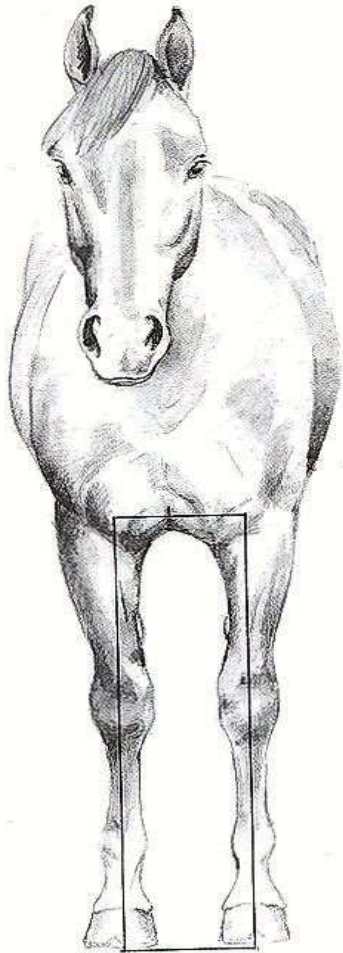
underperformance

lameness

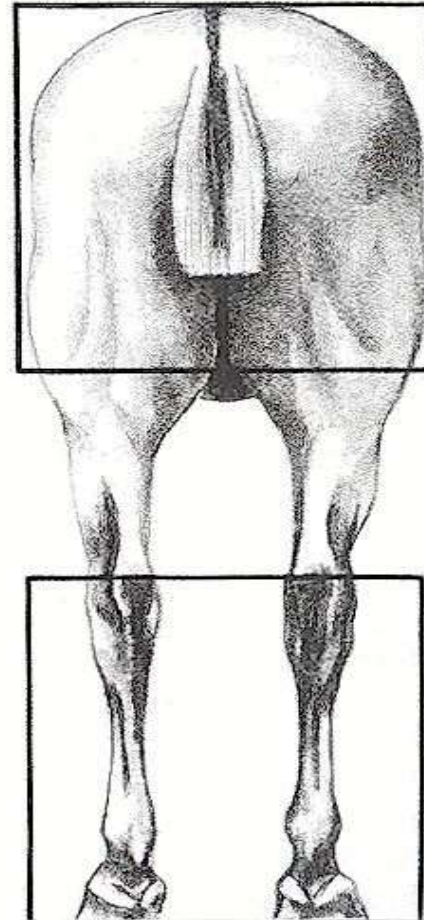
**For the
purchaser
producer
rider
leads to
waste of time , money
and
heart break !**

AT MATURITY

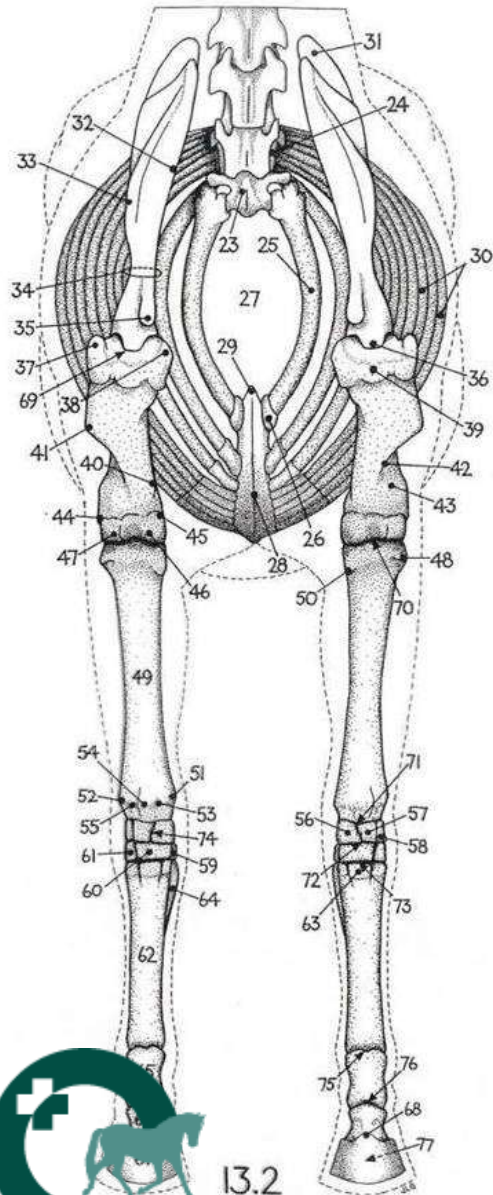
Balanced fore quarter



Balanced Hindquarter

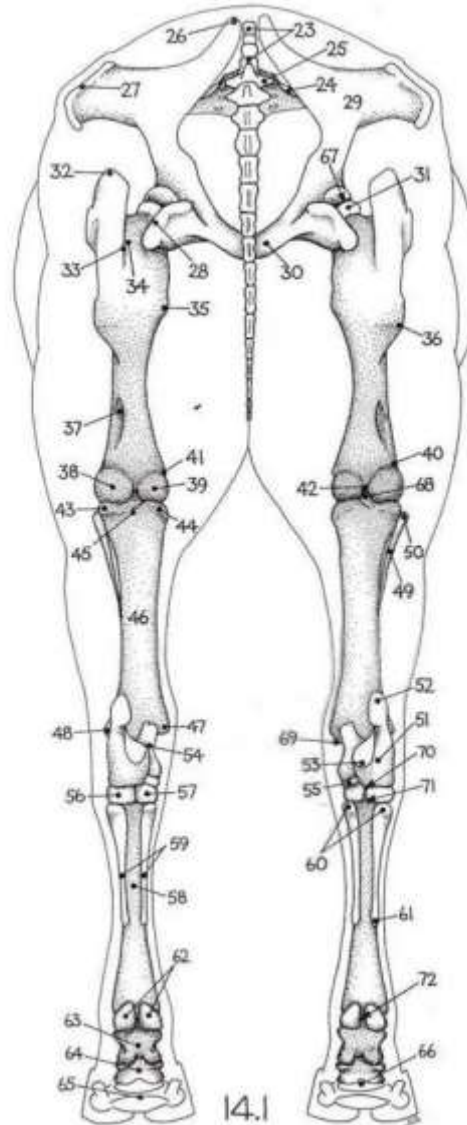


Fore Quarters



No collar bone

Hind Quarters



Bony Attachments

Conformation

> Soundness, ability, durability

- Based on underlying, genetically determined skeletal framework (eg Skeletal “top line”)
- Unalterable after maturity
- Can only be ‘managed’ by breeding

To facilitate good conformation

sensible breeding

review at birth

continuous good

management

ie feet balance

feeding

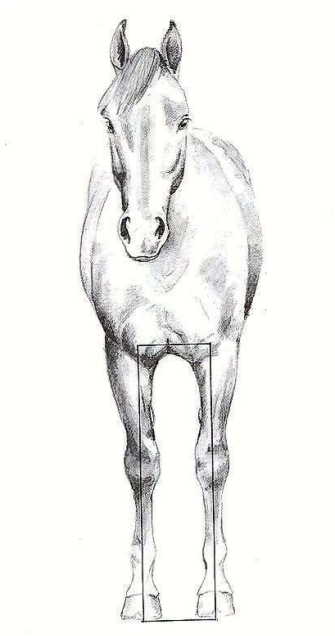
ground surface

Attention to detail from day 1

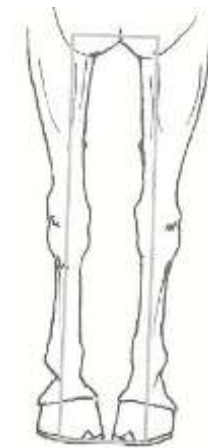
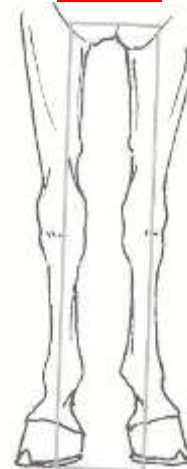
Producer/Farrier/Vet/Nutritionist



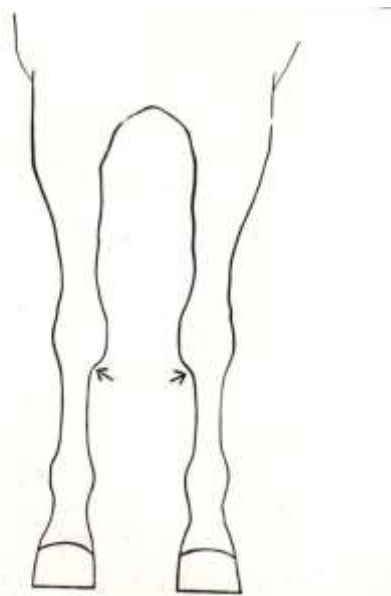
The Competition Horse conformational faults



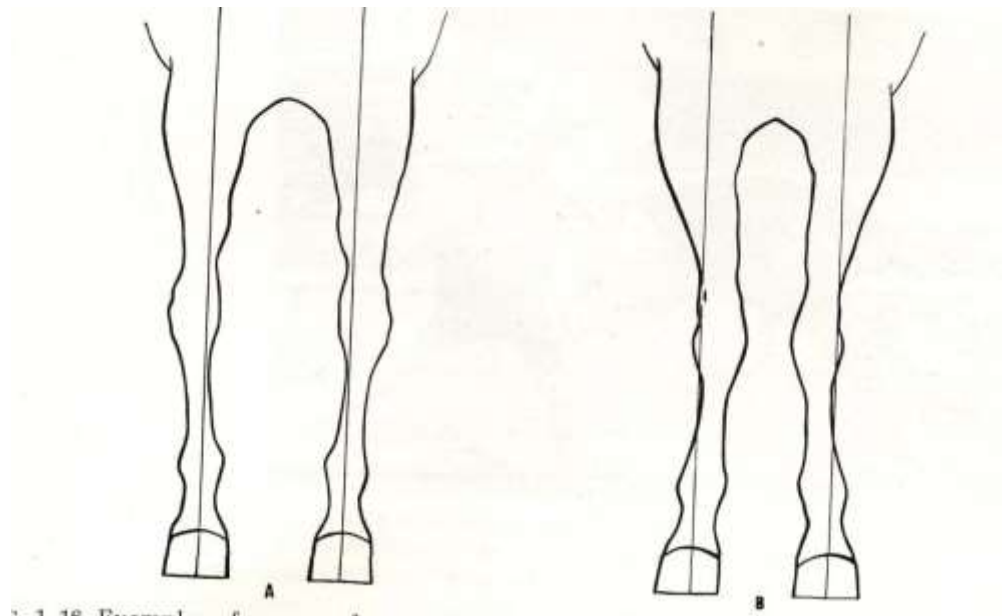
- **ALL rotational and angular limb deformities out 8/10 rule**



FAULTS PREDISPOSING TO SPLINTS



Offset Knees



Bow Legs

Knocked Knees



SPLINTS



LIMB ABNORMALITIES

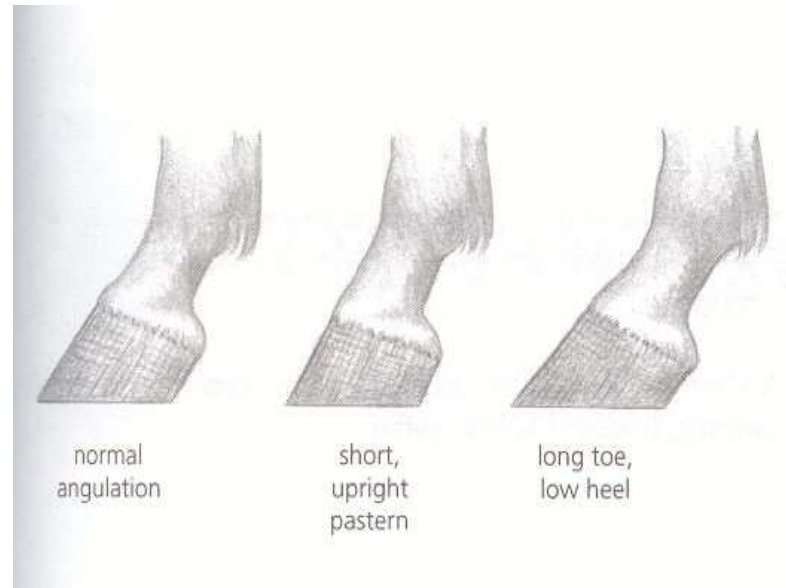
THE FEET

- **SLIGHTLY ODD FRONT FEET**
- **ESPECIALLY HEEL DEPTH**
- **NO HEEL SUPPORT**
- **WEAK HOOF CAPSULES**
- **SIGN OF LAMINITIS**
- **UNEVEN HEEL DEPTH → Uneven scapular height → Asymmetrical Shoulders re: saddle fit**

THE FEET

The hoof wall is modified skin (epidermis) thus

- It is constantly growing down from the coronary band
- Coincidentally worn down or trimmed
- The whole hoof as judged at weight bearing should be balanced front to back, side to side, to give level foot fall
- Should be trimmed to conformation of the individual limb
- It is subject to distortion by torque from action due to poor conformation and/or foot balance



The hoof wall will revert towards
inbalance within 20 minutes of
trimming unless the hoof capsule is
BALANCED



IDEAL FOOT



FLARED FOOT



CLUB FOOT

Weak Conformation

will cause

feet inbalance

requiring constant correction

ODD FEET/HEEL DEPTH



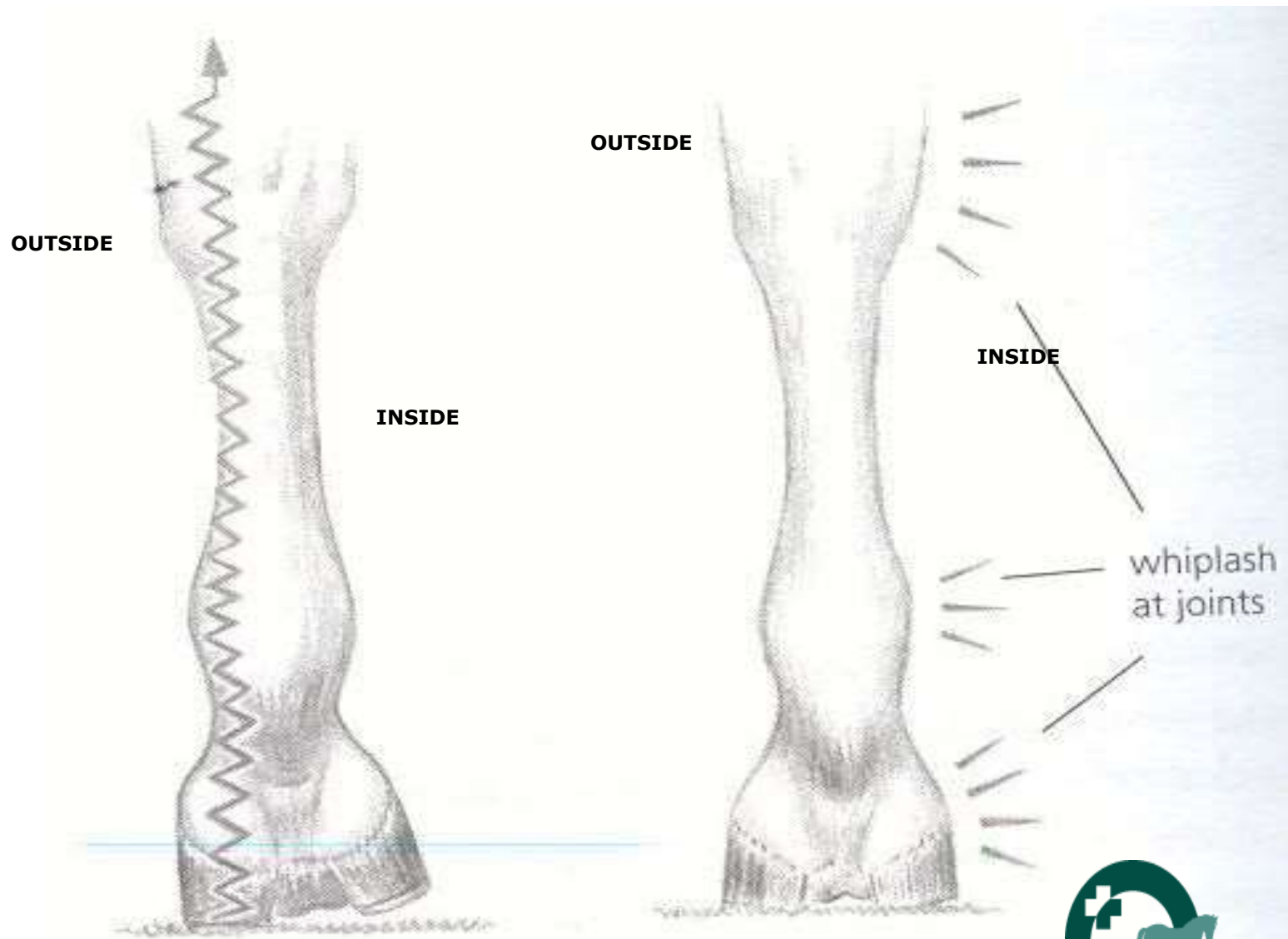
SHUNTED HEEL



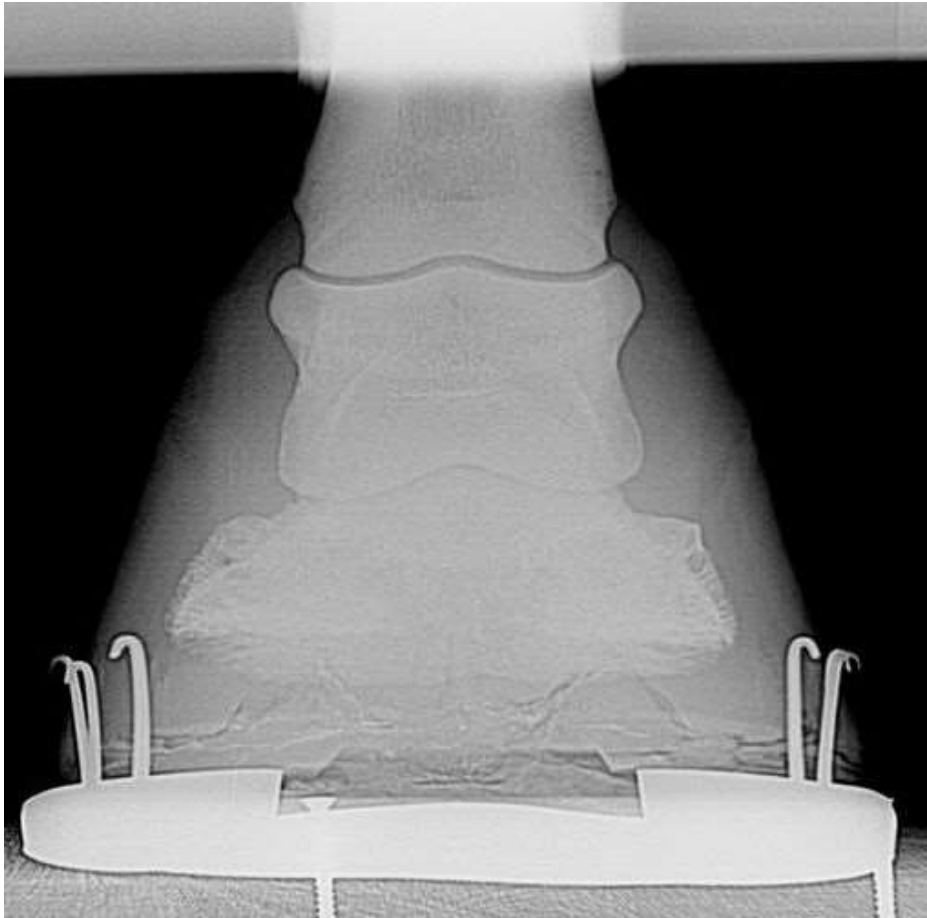
MEDIO- LATERAL INBALANCE



LEFT FORE FROM BEHIND



How to assess foot balance, left and right handed farriers



Well balanced foot



Unbalanced foot

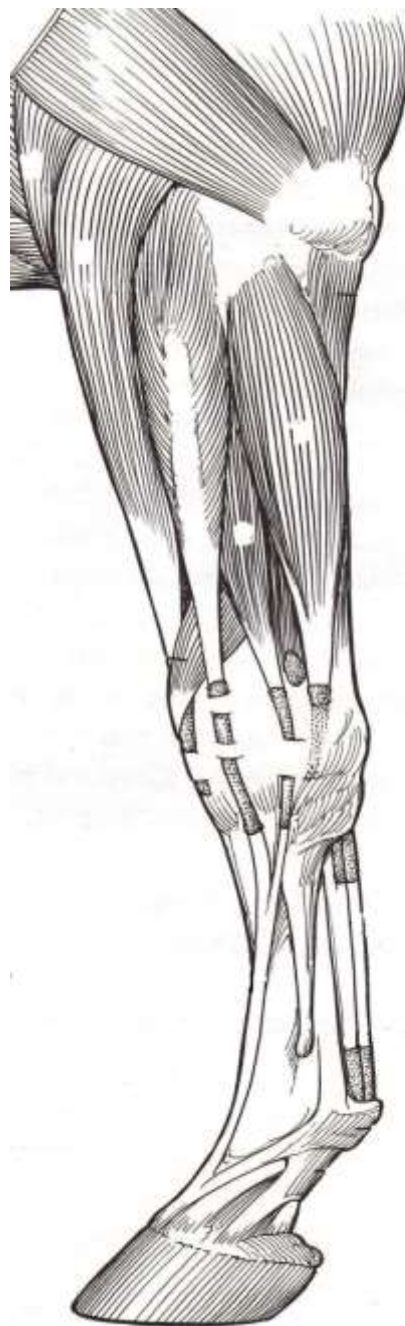
Long toe, upright pastern Ringbone



Quarter crack due to imbalanced hoof capsule

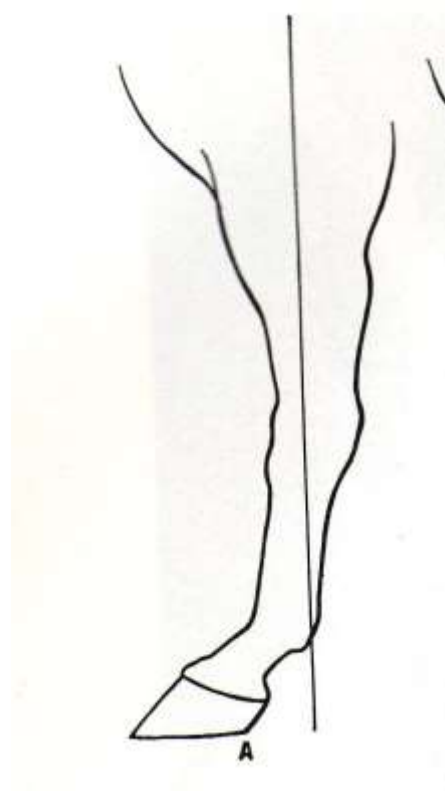


NORMAL



Nixon Equine Vet Consultancy

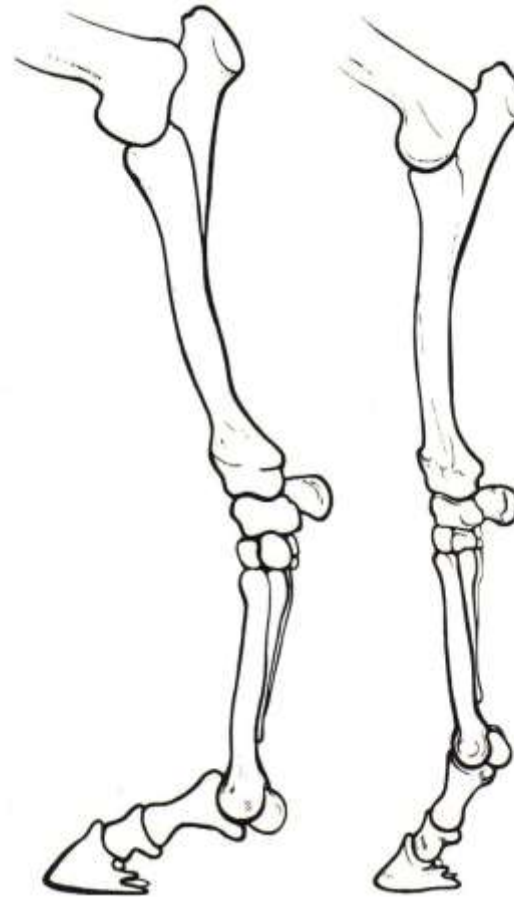
BACK AT THE KNEE



BACK AT THE KNEE

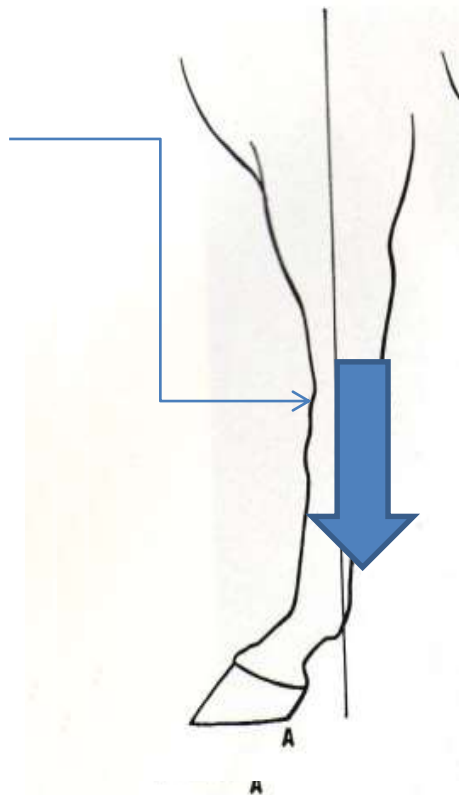
Back at the
Knee

Normal



Nixon Equine Vet Consultancy

Back at the knee
predisposes to check ligament strain &
inflammation of the knee joints



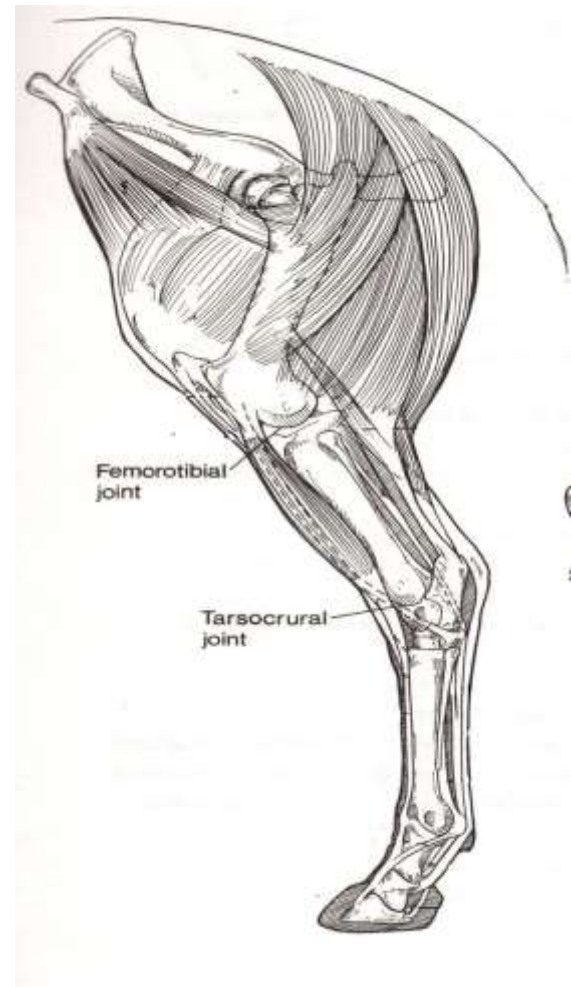
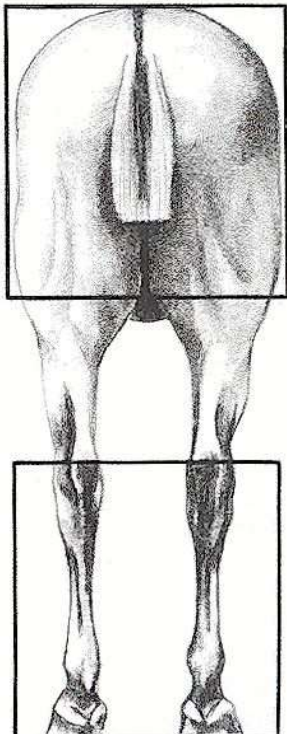
THE HINDQUARTERS

- The flatter the pelvis
 - → More muscle
 - → Greater strength and flexibility
- STRAIGHT HIND LEGS → Unable to come under the horse
- ACUTE HOCK ANGLE → Less able to carry weight
- TARSAL VALGUS → Risk of Pelvic fractures

The Competition Horse conformational faults

Quarters width should be parallel with thighs

HINDLEG



NORMAL
HOCK

HOCK CONFORMATION



Cow Hocks
Pre-dispose to
Pelvic Fractures

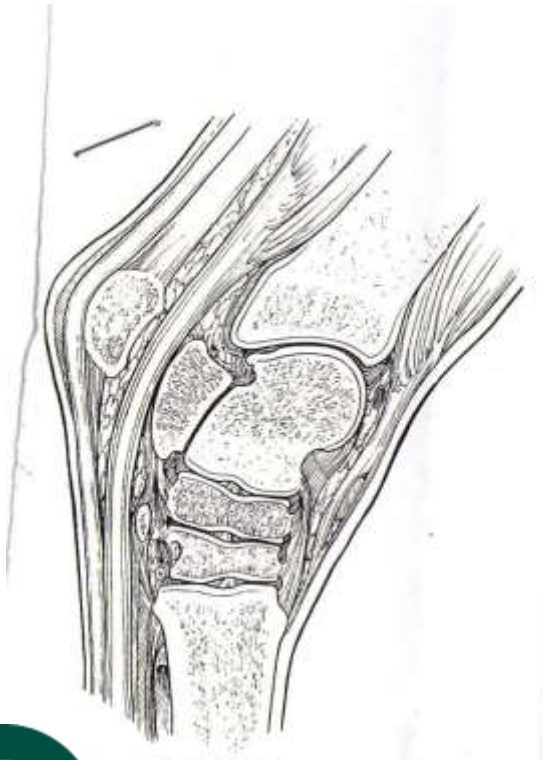


Sickle Hocks
Pre-dispose to
Curbs

Cow hocks > fractured pelvis



ANATOMY



CURB

APPEARANCE



DEFINITION OF A CURB

- COMPLEX OF SOFT TISSUE INJURIES ON BACK OF THE HOCK JOINTS
- CONFORMATIONAL BONY ABNORMALITIES AND/OR INJURIES MAY MIMIC AND CONTRIBUTE EVENTUALLY TO CURB FORMATION
- CAUSING UNDER PERFORMANCE AND LAMENESS

HINDLEG CONFORMATION FAULTS



Straight
Hocks

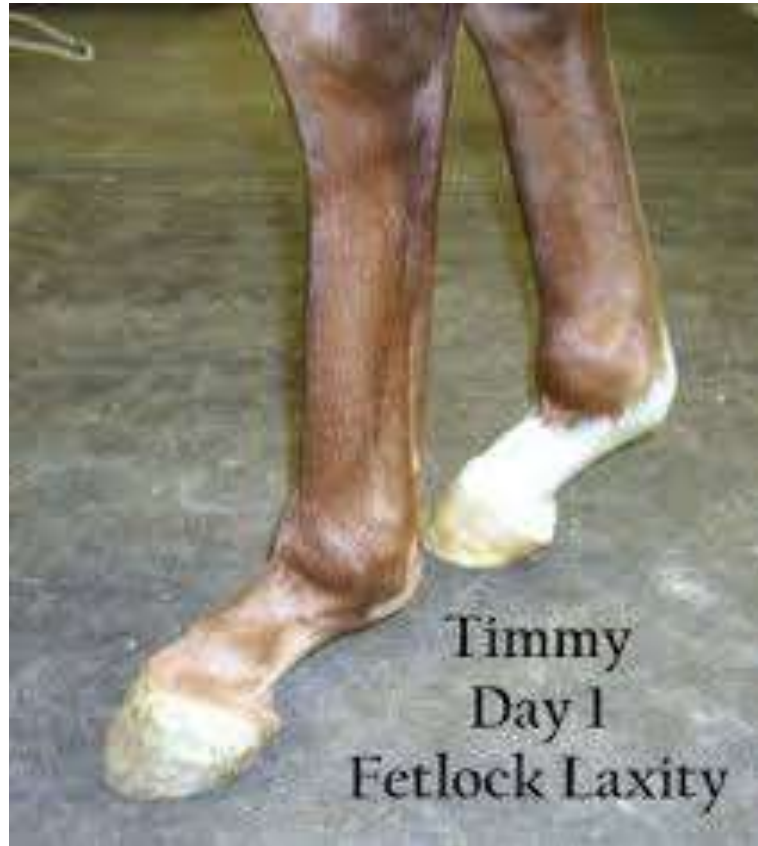
PREDISPOSED TO HIGH
SUSPENSION DISMITIS

AS SEEN IN ANDULASIAN
AND PASAFINOS



Over extended fetts
sessamoiditis
sess lig strain
susp desmitis

Over extended[soft] fetlocks



Articular and non articular windgalls



LONG HIND TOES

cause
more
overall
problems
than
front feet
inbalance



Conclusion

**balanced conformation
to prevent specific lesions**

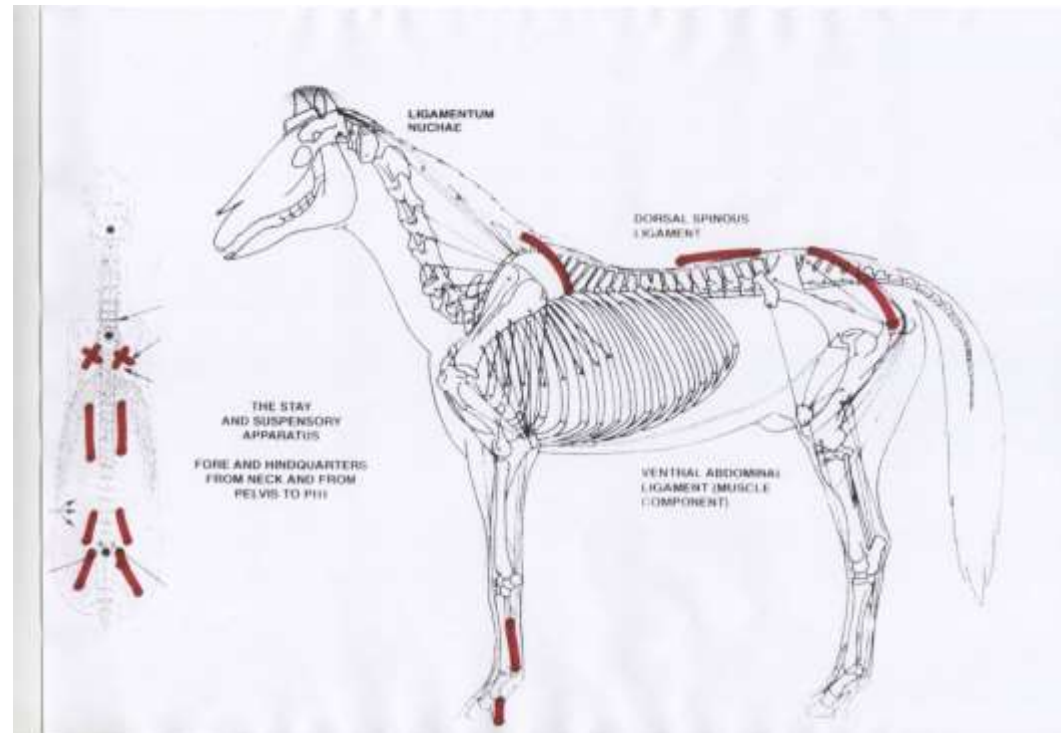
Examples of conformation faults causing multifactorial problems in the Competition Horse



- **Heel of one front foot deeper than the other**
- High heeled foot → ↓ Shoulder blade → Poor Saddle fit
- ↓
- → Suspensory ligament pain → Uneven loading of back

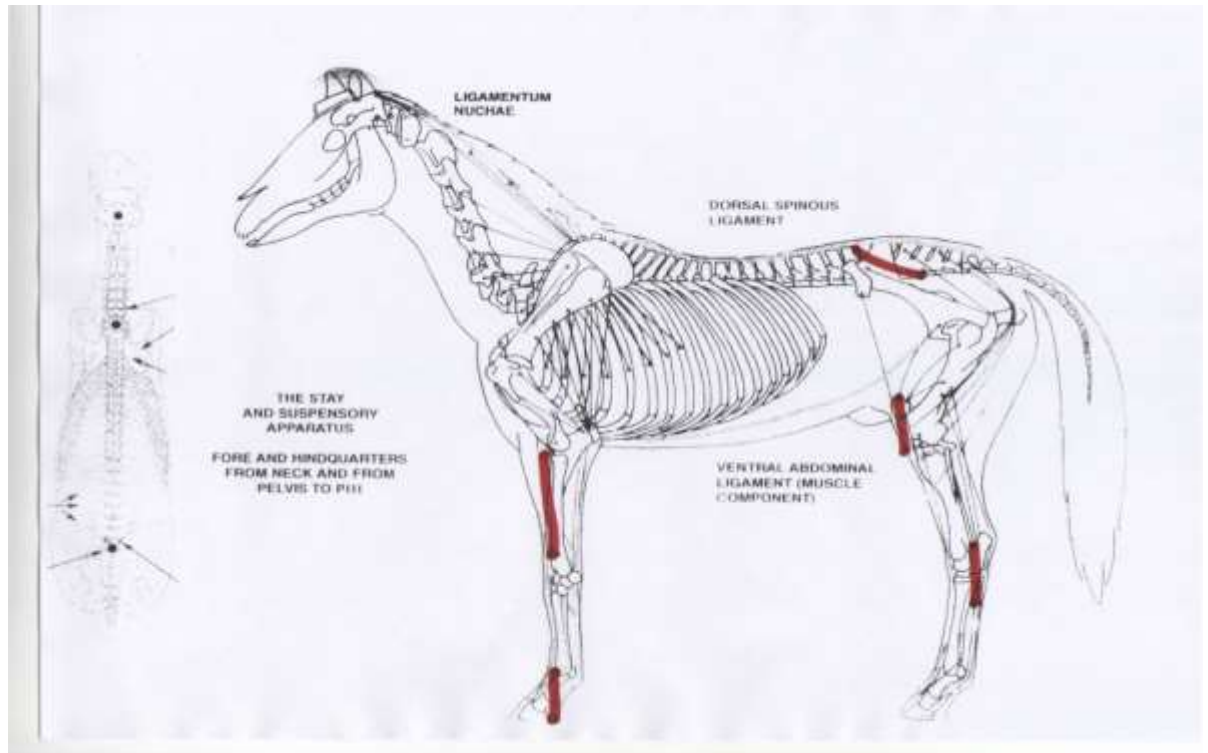


**UNDER
PERFORMANCE**



- **Straight hind leg conformation →**

- Upward fixating patella →
- ↑ Gaskin MM → Asymmetrical pelvis
 - → SI Pain
 - → ↓ Impulsion
 - → Forehand M M
 - → Foreleg lameness



AVOID & MARK DOWN

- *IN FRONT AND BEHIND :-*
- *ODD FEET*
- *OUTWARD ROTATING LIMBS/FEET*
- **BEFORE** *looking for lumps and bumps*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE?

www.nixonequinevetconsultancy.com

- please phone **07713342416** anytime































