

Zimbabwean born Shane Borland has made a name for himself backing and developing young horses for some of the UK's most illustrious yards. Having begun his equine career in polocrosse and later gone on to champion the world stages in reining, Borland has spent his life pursuing knowledge of exceptional horsemanship and refining his training programme accordingly. Over the next few issues, Shane will share the details of his successful programme with our readers, beginning with the programme outline



Photography courtesy of Shane Borland

Shane achieved great global success reining

From Fresh Filly to BPP

Producing performance horses

Being a life-long equestrian of many disciplines, I left my home in South Africa to move to the UK in 1996, in order to pursue a career training horses. My early years were spent participating in Pony Club events and playing polocrosse and polo, but I always dreamt and desired to become known more as a horseman rather than a pro player. It was this desire that would soon

see me choose a new direction within the horse world. This journey into the world of horsemanship led me to draw inspiration from the cutting and reining industries. In 2003 I decided to dedicate my competitive efforts towards the sport of reining and focused on pursuing levels of exceptional horsemanship and learning about the psychology of horses, importantly what

makes them tick in order to train them no matter what the discipline. My training programme is one which I have developed over the past 25 years, working with thousands of horses and their owners, having drawn inspiration from family members and some of the world's best horsemen and women.



The programme begins in the round pen

Philosophy

There are no short cuts in training horses, and it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to achieve good results and even harder work to keep the results coming. I have some key beliefs and pillars around which my training programme is based, which are as follows:

- Know your horse and the type of horse you are dealing with (this is difficult because this only comes with experience)
- Consistency is key – repeat, repeat, repeat
- Find the ‘starting’ point – it is not the same for all horses
- Never allow your horse to be scared of you or your equipment
- Always give your horse an option or a way out (this will build confidence)
- Imagination – always be willing to adapt the programme and change things up
- Keep an open mind, as no two horses are the same
- Never ask a question of your horse until you know the answers to your own questions
- Try and create a safe and relaxed environment for your horse to learn in
- Never be scared to seek help



Horses are introduced to riders in the arena

The Programme

The purpose of my series of articles is to share the outline of my programme and show you how we adapt it to start young polo ponies, taking you through the various stages, explaining what they are, how it works and highlighting the practical purposes behind them. With this programme I start an average of 50 horse per year, with 2018 having been our busiest year to date, having started just under 70 over the course of the year, the majority of which are two and three-year-olds. The programme lasts for six to eight weeks, although it can be adapted to suit individual horses and owner's needs. By the end of this period, my aim is to develop a horse that is confident, willing and safe to be around, with the necessary foundations in place to ensure a successful future in its intended discipline.

The six week programme is divided into three stages and areas of work.

- Round Pen
- Arena
- Outside

During each stage, concepts are introduced and built upon to ensure the smooth transition from one stage to another.

Concepts and lessons in the first stage are introduced within the confines of the round pen and are largely introduced from the ground with later stages involving exercises, which are under saddle and explored in the arena and out around the farm.

Round Pen (ground work)

- I. Establishing control of movement, direction and change in direction
- II. Desensitising and sensitising the horse to objects that have movement and sound
- III. Introduction to the snaffle
- IV. First introduction to weight and rider
- V. Preparation to first saddling
- VI. Bridle and biting
- VII. First ride

Arena

- I. First ride and passenger exercise
- II. Follow feel
- III. Suggestion

- IV. Corner confidence
- V. Go anywhere, any place
- VI. Introduction to stick and ball

Outside

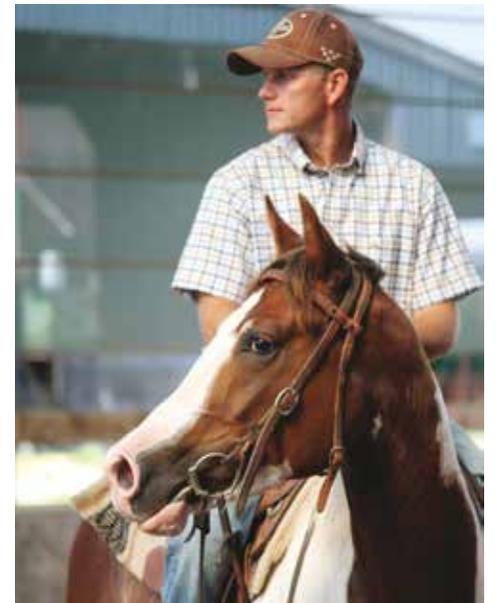
- I. Riding out alone and in company
- II. Learning sets
- III. Stick and ball

To Conclude

At the end of a six to eight week period, I aim to develop horses that are happy, healthy and confident in their work and that understand the lessons and concepts I have shared with them. I would expect them to do the following:

- Stand quietly when tied-up
- Stand still when being saddled
- Stand still when mounting and dismounting
- Can walk, trot and canter with good forward motion both in the arena and outside
- Can give and yield to bit pressure vertically and laterally when moving forward
- Can back-up
- Can ride-out alone and in company
- Accept the swing of the stick and connection with the ball

With these foundations understood and in place, I am confident in returning these young horses back to their owners.



Shane produces calm horses with the right polo foundations

In the next issue, Shane will delve deeper into the first steps of his six to eight week programme, looking at introducing a horse to the round pen.

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