

HUNTING FOR A NEW FUTURITY...

THE ARABIAN HUNTER PLEASURE ASSOCIATION

by CHELSEA WESSON



It seemed to develop and grow almost overnight. In October 2016, the idea became reality during the U.S. Arabian & Half-Arabian National Championship Horse Show. The initial question and answer meeting held there helped to guide its direction, and the Arabian Hunter Pleasure Association (AHPA) was born.

With rapid interest and growth, President Samantha Hilliard and Vice President Chelsea Wesson gathered a Board of Directors in a hurry to help them create a sustainable program. The board, consisting of trainers Tom Theisen and Abe Cotton, amateurs Tom Hansen, Bitsy Jenkner and Cat McKenna, as well as Secretary Josh Schildroth and Treasurer Ashley Reimer, covers many areas all over the United States and Canada. This nine group-strong Board has been working diligently to establish criteria for all aspects of the association.

When one first thinks of an Arabian Hunter Pleasure Association, the Arabian Western Pleasure Association (AWPA) and the Arabian English Performance Association (AEPA) come to mind. All three have a very similar focus: to create futurity classes for Arabian & Half-Arabian horses that promote the breeding and training of horses in those disciplines. They also, of course, offer wonderful payback opportunities to the winners.

Beyond that, however, the AHPA differs. Unlike the AWPA and AEPA, the AHPA is not focused on stallion nominations and a stallion service auction, but rather, founderships. The association is offering for purchase, fifty Founderships. Being a Founder entitles one to a substantial discount in nominating

one Arabian and one Half-Arabian to the futurity each year. Founders may use the slots themselves, or can give them away or sell them at no extra cost. Founderships are \$5,000 and additional benefits are currently being worked out.

Also unlike the AWPA and AEPA, the AHPA will not do in-utero nominations. Any registered Arabian or Half-Arabian horse will be eligible to be nominated during their three-year-old year.

Though a hot button issue since its inception, the AHPA Board chose to go with three-year-olds for a variety of reasons; one being that this allows everyone a chance to see how each individual horse is maturing, giving everyone an equal advantage to evaluate each horse fairly. But the Board and those asked for feedback, also feel that the futurity should still require something of a gamble. It is fairer to all if no horse has had the opportunity to set foot in a Nationals show arena prior to nomination.

The AHPA also hopes that the program creates a growing desire to look for and evaluate more young horses as hunter pleasure prospects. Much concern has been brought to the board about horses that are started for western pleasure or saddle seat, but after a year or less of training, it becomes obvious that the horse was best suited for hunter pleasure instead. Now that hunter pleasure horses are eligible for a big money futurity of their own, the AHPA hopes that the appreciation of a hunter pleasure style youngster will become stronger.

The AHPA has established entry nomination deadlines for the program. In order to allow everyone more time in 2017 to find and nominate their prospects, the first deadline was extended into summer. The association hopes this will give everyone a chance to find the proper horses for the 2018 class.

AHPA ENTRY NOMINATION DEADLINES & FEES FOR 2017 (2014 Foals: horses to show in 2018)

July 15 (extended from normal deadline of March 15th)
Founder Fee: \$250
Non-Founder Fee: \$1,000
October 15 - Late Nomination
Founder Fee: \$2,000
Non-Founder Fee: \$3,000

AHPA ENTRY NOMINATION DEADLINES & FEES FOR 2018 AND BEYOND (2015 Foals: horses to show in 2019)

March 15
Founder Fee: \$250
Non-Founder Fee: \$1,000
July 15 - Late Nomination 1
Founder Fee: \$750
Non-Founder Fee: \$1,500
October 15 - Late Nomination 2
Founder Fee: \$2,000
Non-Founder Fee: \$3,000

The first AHPA Futurity classes will be held in 2018 at the U.S. Arabian & Half-Arabian National Championships in Tulsa, OK. If sections are needed, the classes will run as normal junior horse classes. The class judging specifications will be quality, performance, and suitability as a hunter, manners, and conformation using a five judge system.

For the finals, the horses will once again first work in a normal junior horse class. After the rail work, the horses will line up head to tail on each long side of the arena and strip their tack. Judges will walk the lines and judge each horse's conformation. Upon completion of this judging, each horse will be trotted in-hand out of the arena. The rail work will make up 80% of the judging, and conformation and suitability will make up the final 20%.

Both the Arabian and Half-Arabian Futurities will have a \$75,000 payback. The amounts awarded per placing is as follows:

PLACING	PAYBACK
10th	\$3,750
9th	\$4,125
8th	\$4,500
7th	\$4,875
6th	\$5,250
5th	\$5,625
4th	\$6,000
3rd	\$7,125
Reserve	\$11,250
Champion	\$22,500

Additional incentives and paybacks are in discussion for the winning horses. Nomination and Founding Member forms available at <http://www.arabianhunterpleasure.com/>

The AHPA is working on an exciting program that will feature the beauty and athleticism of an Arabian hunter pleasure horse. With already a large base of owners and horses competing in these classes, it should be a success for everyone involved in the breed. ■

