

APHA Solid Paint Bred Competition-Searching for Solutions

One of the most complicated and divisive issues facing the APHA today is the Solid Paint Bred (SPB) quandary. More than 1/3 of registered APHA horses are Solid Paint Bred or Breeding Stock. As a result, historically, the topic of combining SPB with Regular Registry (RR) horses in breed show competition has been and remains a source of contention among many Paint Horse owners. In recent years, APHA has made an effort to give SPB's more opportunity for breed show competition by offering Solid Paint Bred classes. In so doing, a new problem arose with many APHA regional clubs around the country. It potentially becomes a burden to clubs to offer mandated SPB classes when SPB owners do not show up to show. By the same token, many SPB owners feel strongly that local and regional clubs and the APHA are not giving SPB's adequate opportunity to compete within the association, making the marketability of SPB's (no matter how well bred or trained) virtually non-existent. Many SPB owners that are competing have stated that they will show up either to find that their classes have been cancelled or that there are not enough entries in the classes to be pointed. As a result, SPB owners feel like the APHA's efforts are lacking in providing sufficient avenues for SPB's to be competitive on APHA breed show circuits. While many APHA members are indeed favorable to combining classes in an effort to give SPB's more opportunities, APHA Executives fervently hold to the belief that by so doing, the Paint Horse will lose its unique identity as a colored individual. It has always been APHA's contention that colored paints should indeed hold more value than SPB's and do not have a problem with SPB's not being as marketable as colored individuals. It has been quoted that some APHA members

believe that "SPB's provide a wonderful opportunity for Amateurs and Youth that cannot afford to purchase "open" horses, to still be able to own a world class individual at an affordable price". This conundrum is proving to be burdensome to Paint Horse breeders as well. It's little comfort to a breeder when they have spent \$2,000 & upwards for a stud fee, only to have to absorb a huge loss if that offspring happens to be an SPB. Most of those horses are basically forced to show outside of APHA breed show competition to a large degree. As a result, many breeders and trainers have no desire to invest the amount of money required training those individuals, making them even more difficult to market.

What is unfortunate with this entire scenario is that the SPB has become a liability to SPB owners, Paint Horse Breeders and to the Association as a whole. From this viewpoint, one can see that it becomes imperative for APHA Executives & members to figure out how to turn this "liability" into an "asset". Any business professional knows that in any endeavor, in order to be successful, one must either liquidate liabilities or find ways to turn the liabilities into assets. As it would be quite impossible to "liquidate" the liability of SPB's, it becomes extremely important for APHA executives and members to find solutions to the challenge of offering more opportunities for SPB's in show ring competition without compromising the standard of color that APHA wishes to adhere to.

One possible solution would be to create a Youth SPB Division and an Amateur SPB division and do away with Open SPB classes. APHA's philosophy that SPB's provide a great opportunity for Youth and Amateurs is a little hard to swallow in light of the fact that the majority of SPB classes offered are

geared toward special interests and are generally Open. APHA set themselves up for failure with SPB classes when they started out by offering only those classes on the open, specialized level, when they are basically marketing SPB's to Youth and Amateurs or to people who cannot typically afford to show on the "professional" level. A classic example of this happening is when people new to the association will buy an "affordable" SPB show prospect for their youth or themselves, only to show up at a show and discover that there are no SPB classes for them. Basically they are either forced to show at all breed shows or in specialized disciplines outside of the APHA, or in specialized Open SPB classes.

One problematic aspect to this proposal would be the burden of the number of classes that local clubs would be required to offer. A viable solution to that would be to require a pre-entry deadline for all SPB classes three days prior to the show. In turn, the show could drop SPB classes that do not carry a minimum 3 entries and it would put the burden on SPB competitors to prove to APHA where the need lies for Youth and Amateur SPB classes.

The next dilemma to address is the Open or Specialized individuals (the professionals). Rather than offer additional SPB classes to this group, offer some pointed Jackpot classes that are combined for Open. APHA could hold to their primary principle of keeping classes separate while offering some combined, pointed jackpot classes in which SPB's would not only have opportunity to show alongside their colored counterparts, but they would have also have the opportunity to earn Open points. In turn, RR horses would have the opportunity to compete in bigger classes for more points and more earnings. While APHA might have reservations about the possibility of an SPB attaining a "top open horse" position over colored counterparts, the

likelihood would be minimal. An SPB would have to be a pretty outstanding individual to attain that status, as SPB's would have the distinct disadvantage of not having as much opportunity to earn open points as RR horses; something that APHA shouldn't have a problem with given their current philosophy of giving colored horses primary recognition. While this may not sit well with some SPB owners, it is more beneficial than the current condition, as many Open SPB's are forced to show outside of the association.

This "system" would carry over to the World Show, making the "Challenge" classes have more entries with bigger purses. This is a win-win for APHA. Entries would increase on all levels. As a result, membership, registrations and interest would rise and APHA will still be able to hold to its unique identity by placing primary importance on the Colored Paint without arbitrarily completely delegating over 1/3 of its registry (SPB's) to being totally worthless on the market. Indeed, the SPB will have been transformed from a liability into an asset to this association and its members.

It is urgent that APHA Executives and members consider and weigh the benefits of a proposal of this nature; even if it is attempted on a temporary basis in order to gauge the potential successes or problems. There will be dissent on both sides of the fence, but it is critical for progress to be made in this area. Somewhere along the line, APHA executives and APHA members must find a way to meet in the middle and come up with a viable, working solution.

I would like to have at least 100 signatures from current APHA members before submitting to the General Show Committee. If you would like to have your signature placed on the proposal I have created, please email me with your name, ranch name & location.

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