

FOUR OF THE SADDLE GAITS.

THE following are the four most essential gaits in what is known as a Kentucky saddle horse :

The fox-trot is simply a modification of the true trot ; and while it is not a true diagonal motion it departs from it simply in the fact that the forefoot touches the ground slightly in advance of the diagonal hind foot. It is perhaps the slowest of the distinctive or artificial saddle gaits, but it is above

all others an all-day gait, and a horse possessing it to perfection will perhaps

make a longer journey from sunrise to sunset under saddle than at any other gait. A horse can travel 75 miles a day at this gait and at night neither horse or rider will be seriously tired. The rate of speed is six to seven miles an hour for most horses. The horse, when going at this gait, should always be ridden with a loose rein, as he generally carries his head low.

The running walk is simply a modification of the trot, but the head is carried higher than in the fox-trot or the ordinary walk, and the hind foot takes the ground in advance of the diagonal forefoot, which breaks the concussion.

A closer rein is generally held here than in the fox-trot, and the pace is a faster one and may be carried to a three-minute gait before the horse is forced out of it. This is a more showy gait than the fox-trot, and in it the poise of the horse is such as to give him more of a climbing action in front. In the running walk the sound of the footfalls is not unlike that of the ordinary walk quickened, and the feet take the ground in the same order. It might be described as a variation of the true walk by imparting to it an elastic or bounding quality—in fact, a walk or a run, if such a contradictory description

is admissible. Trotters in harness frequently get away at this gait when started suddenly under a firm pull upon the bit before they settle to the true stroke.

The rack, or side rack, as it is sometimes called, is a modification of the true pace, in which the hind foot strikes the ground in advance of its leading forefoot. This gait admits of a wide range of speed, say from four miles an hour to faster than a three-minute gait. This is a favorite saddle gait with ladies and seems better suited to the side-saddle than any other. Few gentlemen like it as well as the fox-trot, though it is often used as an all-day business gait, and of the two is more readily taken by horses that have a natural pacing tendency.

The single-foot, or single-footed rack, cannot be classed as either a diagonal or lateral gait. It is exactly intermediate between a trot and a pace, or if you please is such an exaggeration of the fox-trot, as to bring it

half-way

to the rack, or vice versa. Each foot seems to move independently of association with either of the others, and the same interval of time elapses between each foot-fall. It is seldom seen in harness. It is a fast gait, generally not less than ten miles an hour, which can be increased to a three-minute gait. It affords the smoothest seat of all the gaits, because that portion of the animal which supports the saddle apparently glides evenly forward, while each quarter, moving separately, causes none of that bounding or jolting that accompanies the trot or pace.

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