



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Horse Won't Lope Under Saddle

I have a 7 year old QH gelding and my problem is he is currently being trained for barrel racing and does great on the pattern at a walk and trot, but if you ask for a lope he just stops, so I started all over and lightly kicking him but that didn't work so I got a crop and tapped his rear, he just bucked, so my dad suggested that we just walk around the arena and move up to a trot. That worked for about 4 rounds, then I asked for a lope with a kick, Rowdy stopped suddenly.

Back at ground one we walked to a trot then asked for a lope with a light tap of the crop and a heel kick, he stopped and stood confused, so I got off and put him on the lead and he did everything, even the lope. We went as fast as I could keep up on the ground. Worried it may hurt him we had a vet check him who said Rowdy was the picture of health so I got our other horse and decided to pony him. He did exceptionally, then, with a saddle, he still worked and did beautifully. Then I untied him from the other horse and just tried to ride him. It is almost like he doesn't understand the cue, and so I searched around and every site and person said the same thing I was doing.

If you can HELP me please let me know, I really thank you for your time, I am pushed for time with shows in August.

Thanks again,
The Holts

Hello,

Don't suddenly say LOPE, instead, push him through the trot and let him find it on his own. Get him in a round pen and push him through his gaits at liberty with and without the saddle. Watch for the difference. The saddle may be causing pain or he may just be in pain when he lope. Might need a chiropractor to check him out. If he'll happily take the canter in the proper lead smoothly several times in each direction, then get on and allow him to find it while being absolutely certain you are not in his mouth one little bit. Far too often we yell, "Canter" with our body position and leg and it freaks out the horse. They get nervous and cross-canter or buck or whatever. Often times we say "Canter," then pull back on the reins. So leave the reins alone. Hang onto mane if necessary and allow him to take a few strides with lots of praise. Next time you'll get more, then more, etc. Take off the tie-down if you're using one.

Let me know how it goes.
Safe Riding,