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Success Story: Freeman

by Emily Riden, Jump Media



**David Blake and Freeman competing at Tryon International Equestrian Center.
Photo by Sportfot.**

In January 2016, the Pine Hollow team noticed something seemed off just before driving out of the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) with their horses. Stopping to check the horses before continuing off the showgrounds, Pine Hollow discovered Freeman, a promising and successful Dutch Warmblood, had swung his hind leg over the back of the trailer. Freeman's stifle had ended up squarely on one of the hooks used to secure the back door, lodging the hook into his stifle and into the femoropatellar joint.

Recognizing the extreme peril facing Freeman, Pine Hollow immediately called for

help from Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC), the official veterinarians of WEF.

"It took tremendous effort, creative thinking, and exceptional teamwork to free Freeman from the hook impaling his leg," said David Blake, Pine Hollow's internationally acclaimed rider and trainer. "PBEC sent several of their top vets to help us rescue Freeman. The team of vets is truly great."

Thanks in very large part to the help and determination of the vets, Pine Hollow and PBEC were able to free Freeman from the trailer door.

From there, Freeman was transported to the

nearby Palm Beach Equine Clinic, where he spent a few days trying to recover before it was agreed to pursue arthroscopic surgery on his femoropatellar joint.

"To be honest, it wasn't looking good at all for the first day or so Freeman was there," said Blake. "The joint was so severely damaged we didn't know if it could be fixed. Our only chance of fixing the joint was surgery, so we agreed we would try everything possible."

Dr. Weston Davis performed the surgery, after which Freeman remained in

PBEC's care while he regained use of the leg.

"The team did a fantastic job there and kept Freeman until he was ready to begin long-term rehab with James Keogh," said Blake.

When Freeman was finally ready to return home to Pine Hollow, Blake hoped at best Freeman would eventually be able to do light work and perform at a low level.

Freeman, however, continued to defy all the odds. Following the successful arthroscopic surgery and a very gradual return to work, Freeman is not only doing 'little stuff,' but has returned to jumping at the 1.40m level. On Saturday, August 27, at the Tryon International Equestrian Center, he jumped his first grand prix since the injury.

"He definitely defied all odds and



Freeman After recovery. Photo courtesy of David Blake.

expectations and came back to his level!" said Blake. "Regina Daniels, who works for me, did all the rehab riding with him, and she did a great job. She took him from walking and hand-walking, right back up to jumping little jumps. Regina spent a long time doing it, about a year, which I think was the key. When Freeman came back to me, we continued to build him up slowly back to the level he was at before."

Throughout his recovery and gradual return to work, Freeman was carefully and routinely monitored by the Palm Beach Equine team including Dr. Weston Davis and Dr. Richard Wheeler. The vets evaluated Freeman every couple of months and took periodic x-rays to assess if, or by how much, he was improving and what might be the appropriate level of work at the time for the gelding.

"It was important to make sure that we weren't pushing anything too soon," explained Blake. "What was really incredible to see develop and return over time was his muscle. After the injury, the muscle of his whole left side was like looking at a different horse from his right side. Now you look at him or stand behind him, and you wouldn't even pick a side."

"I think he wanted to come back, because his recovery has truly been remarkable," concluded Blake. "Touch wood, it's been a pretty quiet injury. I think the horse knows he was lucky. I can feel it. Funny, when he came back he was almost a different horse in his personality a little bit. I can feel that he's appreciative to be home, and he knows he's lucky. He's really trying to do everything that he can now to be good. I think he's found a new respect for life."

Health Care Reminder

Microchipping Your Horse *by Lindsay Brock, Jump Media*

As of December 1, 2017, the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) will require horses and ponies to be microchipped with an ISO 11784/11785 compliant chip to compete in classes that require United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) registration. The microchip verifies a horse's ID, which allows the horse to compete for points and prize money and to be eligible for certain USEF and USHJA programs and awards.

Here's how microchipping works:

Microchip implanting is safe, quick, and relatively simple. The chip is about the size of a grain of rice and it is coated silicon to help secure it underneath the skin midway down on the left neck in the vicinity of the nuchal ligament. Microchips are implanted by licensed veterinarians, who thoroughly sterilize the area of implantation before administering a local anesthetic at the insertion site.



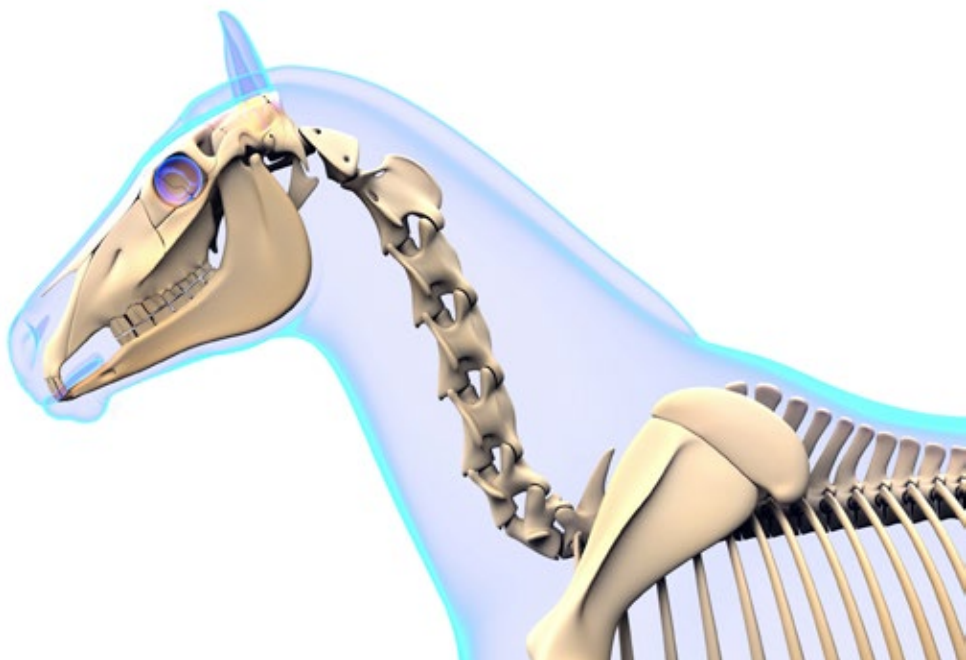
A 14-gauge needle is then inserted under the skin and into the ligament to inject the chip, which is assigned a 15-digit number. The procedure usually takes under 15 minutes and costs less than \$100.

In addition to competition requirements, microchipping is an important part of equine management and can be helpful in the following situations:

- 1. Theft** – If a horse has been lost and is suspected to be stolen, a microchip will be useful in quickly identifying the horse and returning it to its rightful owner.
- 2. Disaster** – Natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes often displace horses. If those horses are rescued by emergency shelters, scans for microchips will almost always be performed.
- 3. Loose Horse** – Loose horses that are retrieved by animal services will be scanned upon intake and can be quickly returned to their owner if microchipped.

Contact your veterinarians at Palm Beach Equine Clinic at 561-793-1599 for more information on microchipping your horse.

Understanding the Equine Neck With Dr. Richard Wheeler *by Emily Riden, Jump Media*



In the past, when a horse's gait has felt off or lacking in its usual impulsion, it was often assumed to be an issue of lameness. Now however, thanks to the improved diagnostics readily available at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC) and other top clinics around the world, veterinarians are able to more accurately pinpoint the problem area. Perhaps surprisingly, it's not always in the legs or hooves. With increasing frequency, the horse's neck is being diagnosed as the root of the issue.

The Anatomy of a Neck and What Can Go Wrong

In order to understand the problems that can arise in association with the horse's neck, it's important to first understand the anatomy.

The neck is composed of seven cervical vertebrae running from the head to the thorax, named C1 through C7, and each articulating with each other. The primary purposes of the neck are to move the head and to protect and transport the spinal cord and nerves, which run through the middle of the vertebrae.

Such a major role as the protection of the nerves and spinal cord can also come with some major risks and complications, with clinical signs of these problems generally presenting themselves either neurologically, as neck pain, or

as lameness in the front legs. These more specific symptoms may include:

- Ataxia or clumsiness – Ataxia is defined as the “lack of control of bodily movements”. In the case of an ataxic horse, you may begin to notice staggering, sudden loss of balance, or even an inability to remain upright. Ataxia is generally an indicator of a neurological condition or damage to the spinal cord itself, caused by either developmental issues, trauma, or an infectious disease such as equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM). Such neurological cases can often be the most debilitating.
- Lameness – You can think of the spinal cord and the nerves in the neck like an interstate, with the spinal cord itself acting as the major highway. As you are “driving” along the interstate, every so often there are little exits, which is where the other nerves come out. Should there be any impingement on the interstate or spinal cord itself, you're likely looking at more severe complications – much like an accident on the highway. Should there be impingement on the nerves coming off of the spinal cord, it will more likely present itself like an accident a little way off an exit – not affecting the interstate itself, but possibly causing problems that spread elsewhere. That

is where we see lameness issues arise.

This can be more difficult to pin down, but can often be due to pressure on the smaller nerves that pass through the openings in the vertebrae and supply the front legs. Arthritis of the articular facet joints of the vertebrae is another common reason for lameness, as anytime these joints become arthritic or inflamed, it can easily translate to the forelimbs.

- Neck Pain – This will often go hand-in-hand with lameness, as factors such as arthritis of the articular facet joints can lead to both symptoms. Other possible reasons for neck pain include trauma or inflammatory diseases.

Diagnosing the Problem

Neck problems, particularly those related to lameness, are generally diagnosed through a process of exclusion, first performing nerve blocks to or ruling out lower regions of the horse's body. Palpation of the neck, testing of the neck's movement, and full neurological exams may also be performed in addition to a full lameness exam, depending on the horse's symptoms.

Once other regions of the horse are ruled out as the location of the problem, veterinarians are now able to use diagnostic images such as radiographs, nuclear scintigraphy and standing CT scans to specifically locate problems in the neck like never before.

In years past, those diagnostic resources were left for last-ditch cases when veterinarians really could not pinpoint any other problems. Today, with the advent of more modern technology, better radiographs, better ultrasound machines, and the more advanced imaging of nuclear scintigraphy and CT scans, veterinarians are able to readily utilize advanced diagnostics to save time and money, and to find the root of the problem more quickly and accurately.

The neck is one of the areas that has most clearly benefitted from the progression in advanced imaging. While neck problems have likely been prevalent for some time, veterinarians are now finding those diagnoses more common, as they are able to more accurately locate the issue – particularly at clinics like Palm

Beach Equine Clinic. Often these issues will go undiscovered or undiagnosed in the field, but they can be identified at PBEC, thanks to the readily available imaging tools.

As an example, if arthritic factors are suspected, nuclear scintigraphy can be used to look for areas of increased bone turnover. On the resulting bone scan, veterinarians are looking for areas where there is an increased calcium uptake because the bone is actively remodeling. These areas will appear darker on the scan and are generally a good indicator of a boney injury or arthritis, with the darker "hot spots" often appearing above the articular facet joints.

Also new and groundbreaking for the diagnosis of equine neck problems is the use of a Computerized Tomography or CT scan, with the ability to scan a standing horse with light sedation on the near horizon which will be available at the clinic this upcoming winter season.

Treatment

Once a solid diagnosis is arrived upon, the

proper treatment protocols can be prescribed. Depending on the root of the problem, possible treatments may include shockwave therapy, regenerative therapies such as interleukin-1 receptor antagonist protein (IRAP) therapy or platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy, or one of the most common treatments, injections of the facet joints.

In the case of facet joint injections, veterinarians at PBEC are able to medicate under ultrasound guidance, guiding a needle into the joints and delivering corticosteroids or similar medication. Surgery is also an option as a final approach to severe complications.

In milder cases, treatments may also just call for increased time off, chiropractic treatments, or the administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications.

If you suspect any issues with your horse's neck, contact Palm Beach Equine Clinic any time by calling (561) 793-1599 to schedule an appointment.



Palm Beach Equine Clinic Veterinarians On-Call and Available as Hurricane Irma Approaches Florida

Hurricane Irma is making its way toward Florida, and Palm Beach Equine Clinic is ready and available to help horse owners prepare for and weather the storm. Owners are urged to put their hurricane emergency plans into action and take precautions to ensure their horse's safety before conditions worsen.

Hurricane Safety Tips Include:

- Clean up around the barn for debris that may take flight.
- Put a halter on your horse with a tag stating the horse's name/contact number in case they get loose for the duration of the storm.
- Ensure that horses have access to fresh water.
- Place feed/hay in an easy place to get to and off of the ground.
- As an owner, perform a physical examination of your horse the day before to make sure all is healthy and have a comparison for after the storm examination.

Palm Beach Equine Clinic is available for all emergencies 24/7. In case of an emergency, please call the main line at (561) 793-1599. Doctors will be on-call to drive to farms to assist or treat horses.

Lend a Helping Hand

In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, there are several ways members of the equestrian community can help. Click below to donate to American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and U.S. Equestrian Disaster Relief Funds.



[The American Association of Equine Practitioners \(AAEP\) Foundation's Equine Disaster Relief Fund](#)



[USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund](#)

Meet the Veterinarian

Meet PBEC Veterinary Dr. Michael Myhre

Dr. Michael Myhre was born into the equine veterinary field. His father, Dr. Grant Myhre, has led his own referral practice called Myhre Equine Clinic in Rochester, NH, since 1978. After working alongside his father since middle school, Michael, who hails from Milton, NH, believes he was always destined to be a veterinarian. Michael graduated from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine based in Ithaca, NY, in 2016, and he joined the Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC) team thereafter as their surgical resident to work under the direction of Dr. Weston Davis and Dr. Robert Brusie.

Learn more about Dr. Myhre:

What is your background with horses?

I grew up in my father's practice. He would bring me along to see outpatients and cut colics at 2 a.m. When I was in high school and college, I would work there during the summers as a technician. I kept learning from him and when it was time to decide what I would do, I applied to vet school.

We had some lesson horses at home and taught some therapeutic riding, so I rode on the trails occasionally, but I knew I was always supposed to be a veterinarian.

Where did you complete your undergraduate degree?

I attended Ithaca College in New York and studied computer science. It is a pretty unusual

undergraduate degree for a veterinarian, but I did not want to go the traditional route of getting a biology degree. Computer technology is now involved in a lot of veterinary medicine – so much of what we do is going through computers, so it is an asset to have that degree.

I still took all the biology and chemistry classes at the same time, and I finished in three years. At that point, I applied to Cornell University and was accepted.

What led you to Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC)?

I came here because it is the best residency program in the country. I have a big case load and get to work on the best horses in the world. I started on July 1 and what I like the most is the diversity in cases. We have seen hunters, jumpers, dressage horses, and race horses. I have done everything from condylar fracture repairs to MRIs, nuclear scintigraphy, x-rays, and even colic surgery on a miniature horse. PBEC stays at the forefront of technology with a new standing surgery pit, standing MRI machine, and paperless medical records.

What goals do you have for your veterinary career?

After my three-year residency at PBEC, I plan to move back to New Hampshire and work at my father's practice.



What can we find you doing when you're not working?

I am pretty much always working, but my girlfriend is a neurology resident in Manhattan, so I try to visit her as much as I can, or I take advantage of living in Florida and go swimming.

Name one thing most people wouldn't know about you?

I rowed for the Ithaca College crew team and while I was in vet school, I was an assistant coach for the Cornell University team.

Celebrate Your Favorite Palm Beach Equine Clinic Veterinarians During Second Annual National Equine Veterinarian Week



The 2017 National Equine Veterinarian Week will be held September 17-23, and SmartPak has developed a way for horse owners, barn

managers, trainers, and others to publicly thank equine veterinarians who have made a difference in their horses' lives and recognize the important contributions of equine veterinarians to society.

Here's how you can participate:

Submit videos, photos, and stories of your favorite Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarians at www.SmartPak.com/NEVW and by posting on the social media channel of your choice using the hashtag #EquineVetWeek.

Deadline: September 17th

What's New

PBEC Pharmacy Product Feature

EquiShield CK Rinse



EquiShield CK Rinse is a topical antiseptic spray specifically designed for horses, dogs, and cats. Special features include the ability to connect directly to a hose for easy spraying

Active Ingredients:

- Chlorhexidine 2%,
Ketoconazole 1%

Ask your veterinarian about EquiShield CK Rinse, or click here to contact the PBEC pharmacy.

Where in the World are PBEC Vets during September?

Dr. Allendorf will be traveling from the Hampton Classic Horse Show to HITS Saugerties for the \$1 Million Grand Prix, the American Gold Cup at Old Salem Farm in North Salem, New York, and finally the Rolex Central Park Horse Show in New York City.

Dr. Dubynsky is headed to the Split Rock Jumping Tour in Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Wheeler will be at Tryon International Equestrian Center in North Carolina.

Monthly Giveaway

Don't miss your chance to win in the Palm Beach Equine Clinic Monthly Giveaway! At the beginning of each month, PBEC will announce a special prize that will be given away. Participants will have the whole month to register [HERE](#). At the end of each month, we will draw a random winner and announce the winner on Facebook.

This month's product giveaway is a supply of Calming Cookies™ and Calming Powder from T.H.E. Equine Edge valued at \$137. Calming Cookies™ contain a blend of natural vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to improve general health and well-being. L-Tyrosine is used to produce the neurotransmitter serotonin, which helps a nervous or anxious horse to focus and feel confident without affecting the ability to compete. For those who prefer it as a top dress, Calming Powder is available. T.H.E. Equine Edge calming products help to take the edge off, remain focused and calm the mind without dulling the body. Provide peace of mind during thunderstorms, loading them into their trailers or stable, vet or grooming visit, or any situation that causes anxiety, stress or fear. Both products are USEF and FEI compliant.

