

HOW THIS PONY BOUNCED BACK

Thanks to Palm Beach Equine Clinic

WORDS: TORI BILAS/JUMP MEDIA

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They say “no foot, no horse.” It may be an old adage, but it proves just as true today. Many intricate structures compose the animal’s foundation, and the overall health of the hoof is paramount. So, what happens when a portion of your horse or pony’s hoof is suddenly missing?

Owners Josh and Laura Gross found themselves in this predicament when their barn’s owner, Ayriel Italia, called them to say that their daughter’s Welsh pony had cut herself and needed immediate medical attention. While in the paddock, Blue Melody had gotten her left hind hoof underneath the gate and suffered a serious laceration.

“We were initially frantic without more information,” says Josh Gross. “We consider Melody a family member, and her rider is an eight-year-old.” The novice horse-owner parents had been learning the ropes of equine health and care through supporting their young daughter Saylor’s passion for horses. They turned to the expertise and guidance of Italia and trainer Shanna Sachenbacher, who immediately called veterinarian Dr. Kathleen Timmins of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

Upon arriving at the barn, Dr. Timmins saw that Melody had an approximately two-inch-wide section of her hoof missing.

“A full thickness portion of the lateral hoof wall and the coronet band had been completely excised,” says Dr. Timmins. “It was a deep wound that exposed the sensitive laminae of the hoof. Thankfully, a thin section of the weight-bearing portion of the hoof distal to the laceration was spared, and the wound did not go deep enough to communicate with the distal interphalangeal joint or the coffin bone.”

The sensitive laminae are an interlaced network of connective tissue, nerves, and blood vessels beneath



3/10/21



3/15/21



3/18/21



4/1/21



6/8/21

Only four weeks after the injury, Blue Melody was deemed sound enough to resume work.

INNOVATIONS

the hoof wall. This highly-vascular layer attaches to and protects the coffin bone. Injuries to the coffin bone or joint structures can be devastating, often with long-term effects on the horse's soundness and on the development of the hoof. In Melody's case, Dr. Timmins found the laceration to be "more bark than bite," as it did not affect those critical structures. Although Melody would likely have some degree of abnormal hoof growth from the damaged coronary band, Dr. Timmins had an encouraging prognosis for the pony.

"Dr. Timmins was so responsive that by the time we arrived at the barn to fully learn what had happened, the wound was already cleaned and wrapped, and we were told that Melody would make a full recovery," says Gross.


After an initial assessment and treatment of the wound at their barn, Melody

was brought to Palm Beach Equine Clinic so that she could be observed and receive comprehensive medical care. Intravenous antibiotics were administered, and the laceration was thoroughly cleaned and bandaged with an added frog pad to support the hoof. Melody progressed well and was able to be discharged only 48 hours later. Along with a lesson in proper cleaning and wrapping of the wound, Dr. Timmins gave Melody's owners and caretakers antibiotic and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications. She also recommended a biotin supplement to aid in healthy hoof growth and advised that Melody would benefit from a few weeks of shoes with clips, which would provide lateral support to the section of the hoof wall that lost integrity.

With a full team supporting Melody's recovery, the injury and medical care become less daunting to the Gross family.

Only two weeks after the laceration, the wound showed great improvement, and Melody was able to be shod and very lightly worked. Four weeks after the injury, Melody received the green light from Dr. Timmins to resume full work with Saylor in the saddle.

"Dr. Timmins' responsiveness and calm demeanor made all the difference," says Gross. "She put our minds at ease, took great care of our extended family member, and helped her get back on her feet (hooves!) more quickly than we expected."

Injuries to horses' legs and hooves can be unnerving. Having a veterinarian immediately assess an injury and determine if it affects any vital structures is crucial for recovery. 

In case of an equine medical emergency, do not hesitate to call the veterinarians of Palm Beach Equine Clinic at 561-793-1599.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO
Sophia Welniak & Samantha Dodd
on a successful 2020-21 show season
Best of luck at Pony Finals!



"Confetti"



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