

Stem Cell "Magic"



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It all began nearly two years ago when we decided to begin showing horses after an almost 20-year hiatus from the sport. We began our search, and about six months later we stumbled upon a gangly two-year-old paint horse named "Consider the Source." When I saw him, I knew he would fit right into our family. He had a big goofy head, lips too big for his face, and he just loved to be in your lap; hence the nickname, "Goober".

After a few weeks here at home, we sent him off to the trainer's. We had never considered hiring a "trainer" before, but with all the new changes in the industry we thought it would be best to have him professionally trained. That decision ended up almost costing Goob his life...

The trainer worked with him from November of '06 until his first show in February of '07. Goober seemed to be doing great; winning in Showmanship and Walk/Trot! His only mistake was that he was having a tough time keeping collected at the lope. He grew from 14.3 hands to a staggering 15.3 in just a few months' time. The trainer continued to push him harder and harder. It wasn't until he began developing sores on his mouth, constant back problems and the first signs of pinning ears when ridden that we started questioning her tactics. Then the weight loss and the ulcers ensued. All we could think was how can someone do this to a horse? All they want to do is please us, and look what is forced upon them. We abruptly

removed Goob from training, and spent months dedicated to bringing him back to a happy and healthy growing boy.

This story would be at its end except for the constant signs Goob kept giving us. He was a joy to be around, happy and playful, until we returned to the showplace where his trainer had pushed him past his young limits. Just leading Goober into the ring for Halter Class changed him instantly.

Concerned it was something major, we whisked him off to Iowa State Veterinary Hospital for a full lameness exam. After only three hours, surgery was advised. They inserted a camera scope in one side of his hock and a surgical tool on the other. Through the exam window, we watched in horror as the scope found severely damaged cartilage, and in some spots, bone on bone! The surgeon came out and advised us to not





to wake him, due to the amount of damage. But Goob was a member of our family, and we were not willing to give up the fight that easily!

We were advised about stem cell therapy, where a horse's own cells are used to regenerate tissue. It was worth a shot!

Goob subsequently underwent fat cell removal surgery, and those cells were then flown to Vet-Stem Regenerative Veterinary Medicine Lab, where they created stem cells from the harvest. The stem cells were injected into Goob's damaged hock, in hopes that it would help to rebuild and re-grow the cartilage. We just wanted him

to have a pain-free life, happy and living out his years with us! And that's where we are today.

Goob is now standing at 17.1 hands high and doing well! There are moments when we find him running and playing as if he were two years old again and not having a care in the world.

UPDATE: 10/5/08 - Goob returned to the show ring on August 14th. To our delight, he was happy and seemed to be glad to be strutting his stuff again. Of course we are just entering the Halter classes and

Walk/Trot class to see how the hock will do. He won all his Halter classes and placed 2nd in the Walk/Trot under all judges!!! Never dropped a hip or short stepped once.

Per the advice of the surgeon, we'll keep going until we get a sign. So two weeks later, off to NEISCA Labor Day Weekend Show we went. There, he not only acted like a kid again, but received Reserve Grand Championship in Halter!!! He never went off his feed, never twisted his tail or took a lame step.

We are so happy to report that so far so good!! And only a few months ago, we were advised to euthanize!

He is growing again and still amazes us every day with his warm personality!

The Moral of the story is this: *Always trust your gut!!*

Pay attention to your horse when he is trying to tell you something. When there is problem, your horse will let you know in the only way he knows how. When you see signs, stop! Don't let the intrigue of winning ribbons blind you or it could be too late.

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