

Holdless Runnerbeasts

A Brief History

Although not a breed recognized by the BeastCraft Hall, you will be hard put not to find a single BeastCrafter not impressed with this essentially unnamed and unrecognized breed of Runner. The Holdless Trading Bands and Wanderers needed Runners that would be powerful enough to pull their wagons and Vardos so the smaller bands wouldn't be dependent on Burden Beasts for pulling and Runners for riding. And to not put too fine a point on it, the Wandering Bands in particular found little beauty in Burden Beasts.

With selective breeding they managed to breed the best qualities of both types of beasts into their Runners. Strong and sound, they can singly or in teams pull wagons that traditional traders use Burden Beasts for with sure-footed ease. They have a smooth gate and sloping back with strong chest and withers, which makes riding, especially bareback, comfortable for both beast and rider. Docile, even-tempered and intelligent, they are quite easily the gentlest Runner on Pern.

Of course the Wandering Bands of Pern also bred into them flash and style to match their own tastes. The breed is marked by the long, luxuriant manes and tails as well as the long feathering hair along the back of the legs from the knee joints to the hooves, as well as around the hooves. Although all colors and

variations are present, the vast majority show piebald (black and white) and skewbald (brown and white) as the most common. When viewed in motion these Runners are sights to behold, especially running, with their long manes and tails as well as the feathering on the legs flowing behind them like banners.

Although the large Holdless Trading Bands still employ Burden Beasts to pull the heavier wagons of trading goods, they consider it a mark of prosperity to have these Runners pulling their personal Vardos, and the Wandering Bands tend to use the Runners exclusively. Because these Runners are a source of pride and commerce to the talented breeders among the Holdless Wanderers and Trading Bands, the BeastCraft Hall has yet to acquire a breeding population from them, and until we do they will never be a recognized breed. There is a saying among the Wandering Bands:

"Wanderer gold does not chink and glitter, it gleams in the sun and neighs in the dark."

Quick Facts For Holdless Runnerbeasts

- The head should be straight, handsome and in proportion to the rest of the horse. The forehead should be broad and the muzzle, jaw and cheek should be generous. The mouth should have a level bite and the eyes should be quite bold, open and set well apart.

- The neck should be compact, but not too short and should be generously muscled including the crest (stallion's necks should be particularly well muscled and crested).
- The entire body should be short and compact with ribs well sprung to barrel shape.
- The shoulders should be ample, powerful and sloping. The withers should be of average protrusion or height and should be encased in plenty of muscle and flesh. The chest should be powerful, well muscled and not too broad or narrow. The back should be short, straight, well covered in muscle and flesh and slope gently upwards towards the croup.
- The hindquarters should be very generous, well rounded, broad and powerful with a well-muscled high croup. The second thigh should also be very generous, quite long and well coupled to good straight powerful hocks. The hind legs should be well boned and muscled.
- The forelegs should be powerful and not too short. There should be a good length of well-muscled forearm and generously boned shins. The knees and hocks should be well developed and of generous dimensions but should be in balance with the proportions of the horse.

- The hooves should be well shaped, neat and of a size capable of carrying the frame of the horse without stress.
- Leg hair/feathering is a characteristic and decorative feature of the Holdless breed. This is especially prominent in the heavier ones, however the amount of leg hair/feathering present may vary considerably.
- The mane and tail should be luxuriant and capable of growing to a substantial length.
- There is no breed standard and size can vary, however the average height tends to be between 14 to 15.2 hands (4.7 to 5.7 feet) at the withers and between 78.6 to 121.5 stones (1,100 to 1,700lbs).

Glossary of Terms

One Hand = 4 inches

1 Stone = 14 lbs