

= Easy Jet =

Easy Jet (1967 ? 1992) was an American Quarter Horse foaled , or born , in 1967 , and was one of only two horses to have been a member of the American Quarter Horse Association (or AQHA) Hall of Fame as well as being an offspring of members . Easy Jet won the 1969 All American Futurity , the highest race for Quarter Horse racehorses , and was named World Champion Quarter Race Horse in the same year . He earned the highest speed rating awarded at the time ? AAAT . After winning 27 of his 38 races in two years of racing , he retired from the race track and became a breeding stallion .

As a sire , he was the first All American Futurity winner to sire an All American Futurity winner , and went on to sire three winners of that race , and nine Champion Quarter Running Horses . Ultimately , his ownership and breeding rights were split into 60 shares worth \$ 500 @,@ 000 each ? a total of \$ 30 million . By 1993 , the year after his death , his foals had earned more than \$ 25 million on the racetrack .

= = Early life = =

Longtime Quarter Horse breeder and racehorse owner Walter Merrick of Sayre , Oklahoma , bred Easy Jet from two future AQHA Hall of Fame members , Jet Deck and Thoroughbred mare Lena 's Bar in 1967 . His dam , or mother , Lena 's Bar , had produced a small number of other offspring , but Easy Jet was her last ; she died shortly after he was weaned , or removed from his mother 's milk . Both of his parents were descended from Three Bars , who was the sire of Lena 's Bar and the grandsire of Jet Deck 's dam . Easy Jet is one of only two horses in the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame to have both parents in the Hall of Fame ; his two grandsires , Moon Deck and Three Bars , are also in the Hall of Fame .

Easy Jet was of sorrel color , a light yellowish @-@ red . When fully grown , he stood about 15 @.@ 3 hands high (63 inches ; 160 cm) and weighed about 1 @,@ 300 pounds (590 kg) . He had a large star and a stripe on his face .

Of Easy Jet 's stamina and busy training regimen , Merrick said , " I guess he ate at night ; I don 't know when else . It was unbelievable the amount of energy he had " . Training for the race track generally begins when a horse is a long yearling ? between one and a half and two years of age . Easy Jet was so easy to train that Merrick decided to oversee the training himself rather than send the horse away to a professional trainer . In a practice race at the ranch , Merrick matched the yearling against Jet Smooth . Although his elder brother had the advantage of previous race experience , Easy Jet won the 350 @-@ yard (320 m) race . Easy Jet 's performance prompted Merrick to enter him in a yearling race at Blue Ribbon Downs , which the colt won by more than a length .

= = Racing career = =

Easy Jet raced for two years , starting 38 races . He won 27 of his races , came in second seven times and third twice , and placed below third only twice , with race earnings totaling \$ 445 @,@ 721 (approximately \$ 2 @,@ 716 @,@ 000 as of 2016) . He earned an AQHA Superior Race Horse award along with his Race Register of Merit . A Superior Race horse must have earned at least 200 AQHA racing points by winning races , and even more in stakes races . A Race Register of Merit is the lowest level of racing award earned from the AQHA , and is gained when a horse attains a speed rating of 80 in a race , whether or not it wins the race . His best speed rating was AAAT , which was the highest grade awarded at the time he was racing . Over his two @-@ year career , he won 12 stakes races , and placed second in four and third in one .

In 1969 , his first official year on the track , he won the All American Futurity and eight other stakes races . In winning the All American , he led from the start on a sloppy , muddy track . His jockey , Willie Lovell , explained that he needed to do very little to win : " In the stretch , when I saw Easy Jet had it , I let him run his own race . All I had to do was just sit there and let him roll . " His time of 20

@.@ 46 seconds to cover 400 yards (370 m) was remarkable considering that three days of rain before the start of the race had turned the track into a muddy quagmire . At another stakes , the Ribbon Futurity at Sallisaw , Oklahoma , Easy Jet won by three @-@ quarters of a length and set a new track record of 16 @.@ 92 seconds for 330 yards (300 m) . The only time in 1969 he did not finish first , second , or third , he had issues in the starting gate , false @-@ started , broke some teeth loose against the front of the gate , and was struggling to stand up again when the gates opened ; he still managed to finish fifth out of ten horses .

At the end of the 1969 racing season , he was named World Champion Quarter Running Horse , Champion Quarter Running Stallion , and Champion Quarter Running Two @-@ Year Old Colt by the AQHA . He was also the highest money @-@ earning horse and only the fourth two @-@ year @-@ old to be named World Champion . During his first year of racing , he started 26 times , won 22 and placed (came in second) in another three . Most two @-@ year @-@ old Quarter Horses race on average under five times in their first year of racing , and the average for all ages is just over five starts per year . Many people criticized Merrick for starting Easy Jet so often . Merrick said , however , " You had to run him about once every ten days or he 'd have got so high you couldn 't hardly stand to be around him . As long as we were going to run him , we figured we might as well make it count for something . " Despite all of the starts , Easy Jet had enough energy to be difficult to handle ; in this respect , he was considered high @-@ spirited rather than mean .

In 1970 , he started 12 times , and won five times , placed second four times , and earned third place twice . His only unplaced finish was in the Rainbow Derby finals , where he came in dead last . Before he started racing that year , he stood at stud to a full book of mares , breeding as many mares as his owners would allow , which limited his racing time . During the Rocky Mountain Quarter Horse Derby at Centennial Park in Denver , Colorado , on October 4 , 1970 , which Easy Jet won without ever relinquishing the lead , the stallion became the highest @-@ earning Quarter Horse racer of all time , with earnings of more than \$ 440 @,@ 000 (\$ 2 @,@ 681 @,@ 097 as of 2016) . At the end of the year , he was named Champion Quarter Running Stallion and Champion Quarter Running Three @-@ Year Old Colt .

= = Retirement and career at stud = =

Before his retirement from racing in 1970 , Easy Jet had already started standing at stud , returning to the track only after the breeding season . In 1971 , his first foals arrived . His offspring began racing in 1973 and soon put Easy Jet on the AQHA Leading Sires of Race Winners list . With their success , his stud fee , or the cost of breeding a mare to him , rose from \$ 2 @,@ 000 (approximately \$ 11 @,@ 700 as of 2016) in 1971 to \$ 5 @,@ 000 (\$ 26 @,@ 653 as of 2016) in 1973 ; by 1980 , it was \$ 30 @,@ 000 (approximately \$ 86 @,@ 200 as of 2016) .

In 1971 , Merrick sold a half @-@ interest in Easy Jet and his full brother Jet Smooth to Joe McDermott , and five years later , in 1976 , the partners sold Easy Jet to the Buena Suerte Ranch for \$ 3 @.@ 57 million (approximately \$ 14 @,@ 845 @,@ 800 as of 2016) . Later , after two of the partners in the ranch died unexpectedly , Merrick re @-@ purchased Easy Jet and bought a controlling share in the ranch . In 1980 , the stallion was syndicated for \$ 30 million (approximately \$ 86 @,@ 159 @,@ 100 as of 2016) , a record amount at the time . The syndicate had 50 shares , each costing \$ 600 @,@ 000 (approximately \$ 1 @,@ 723 @,@ 200 as of 2016) . The oil bust of the 1980s , and changes in US tax laws affecting horse operations , led to financial problems for the horse market in general and the syndicate , which led to financial difficulties for Merrick and resulted in many changes of ownership for Easy Jet until the death of the champion in 1992 .

After retiring to stud full @-@ time , he had a very successful career . He became the first All American Futurity winner to sire another winner when his daughter Easy Date won the All American Futurity in 1974 . Easy Date was later named 1975 World Champion Quarter Running Horse . He also sired Pie In the Sky , the 1979 All American Futurity winner , and Mr Trucka Jet , the 1985 All American Futurity winner . More than 1 @,@ 500 of his offspring earned their AQHA Race Register of Merit , and nine became World Champion Quarter Running Horses . Besides the horses already mentioned , the champions include My Easy Credit , Extra Easy , Easily Smashed , Easy Angel ,

Easy Move , and Megahertz . His foal Sunset Gallant Jet was the 1979 and 1980 AQHA High Point Cutting & Chariot Racing Co @-@ Champion . At various points in time , Easy Jet has led the AQHA 's lists of All @-@ time leading sires of sires , All @-@ time leading sires of Register of Merit qualifiers , All @-@ time leading sires of stakes winners , and All @-@ time leading broodmare sires . In March 2008 , he still led the list of All @-@ time leading sires of Quarter Horse racehorses by winners , and on the corresponding list ordered by earnings , he ranks fourth . As a broodmare sire , or maternal grandsire , of racehorses , Easy Jet led the All @-@ time leading lists by winners in March 2008 , and the same list ordered by earnings had him second . As of 2008 , his offspring had earned over \$ 26 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 on the racetrack . In total , he sired 2 @,@ 507 foals in 25 years of breeding .

Easy Jet was euthanized in 1992 due to laminitis , a disease of the hoof . He was buried in his paddock on Walter Merrick 's 14 Ranch near Sayre , Oklahoma . Merrick was unable to bring himself to see the horse before he was put down . He said , " I couldn 't go , I just couldn 't see him like that . He was too good a friend " . Easy Jet was inducted into the AQHA Hall of Fame in 1993 .

= = Pedigree = =