

The Show Ring Farrier

By Lee Liles and Jim Ikers

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lee Liles is a show ring farrier specializing in gaited horses. He has written numerous articles for "The Voice Of The Tennessee Walker", and given shoeing clinics around the country. In addition to this he manufactures several farrier tools.

Consider this hypothetical yet very realistic situation: You have spent many hours and dollars preparing your horse for a big show. You've made the final workout and stand a very good chance of winning this all-important class. You're on the reverse and suddenly your horse throws a shoe. All your hopes and plans, not to mention the time and money invested, are down the drain for that show unless show management has employed the services of a competent show-ring farrier. The farrier is

charged with the responsibility of replacing the shoe within the allotted seven minutes, or the horse is excused from the ring. If the shoe to be replaced is a rear shoe or a shoe with very little padding, this is not a difficult task. However, if the shoe happens to have double or triple nailed pads with a band, then the task becomes complex. Obviously the farrier is under extreme pressure, since seven minutes is a much shorter time period than the 45 minutes taken to nail the shoe on at the barn. To

compound the problem, the show-ring farrier may be expected to shoe behind an inexperienced or amateur farrier. The show-ring farrier is, in effect, challenging all other farriers who may have shod before him. The show-ring farrier must be quick, efficient, able to remain calm under pressure, and above all, he should possess the tools necessary to complete the job in the allotted time. He should have an understanding with the show management as to his duties and the rules particular to show-ring shoeing. (Those rules are printed as a supplement to this article.) The show-ring farrier should also be able to decide if a shoe should not be replaced because of possible injury to a horse. The show-ring farrier should present a good image in the ring — he doesn't necessarily have to wear a suit and tie, but he should certainly be neat and clean. In addition, the farrier should be versatile, since it may be necessary for him to help repair broken equipment, help make adjustments, or even catch runaway horses. Although these duties are not official duties, they are sometimes necessary to insure that the show runs smoothly.

TOOLS

Proper tools are a must for the show-ring farrier. Because of the time element involved, the farrier will obviously not have time to return to the truck for tools. The following tools should be all that is necessary for completing a ring shoe replacement (Figure 1): A pair of heavy pull-off pinchers for worn shoes; hoof nippers to trim the hoof and repair broken toes; clinchers for replacing rear shoes (they also double as pliers) a pair of crease nail pullers for nails with sunken heads; and nail nippers and bolt biters for removing bands and hoof nails. A hammer, rasp, wire brush, clinch block, clinch cutter, pliers, and two screwdrivers (one large and one small) are more standard tools needed. Screwdrivers are necessary for splitting pads apart and tightening bands. A hoof knife and stall jack, which is a small portable anvil for straightening bent shoes, will also be necessary. Specialty items include an Allen wrench for quick-change shoes; a 3-8 x 7-16 open-end wrench for bands; small vise-grip pliers; a scribe punch; a 7-16 socket on a screwdriver handle to be used for hexagonal head nuts on bands; duct tape, which can be used to replace some shoes or help secure difficult shoes; and hand cleaner for quick cleanup after shoeing. Tools can be sprayed with WD-40 to prevent rust during rainy shows. Shoe strings for repairing tail braces and bridles, a leather punch for repairing broken equipment, plastic cable ties for repairing broken

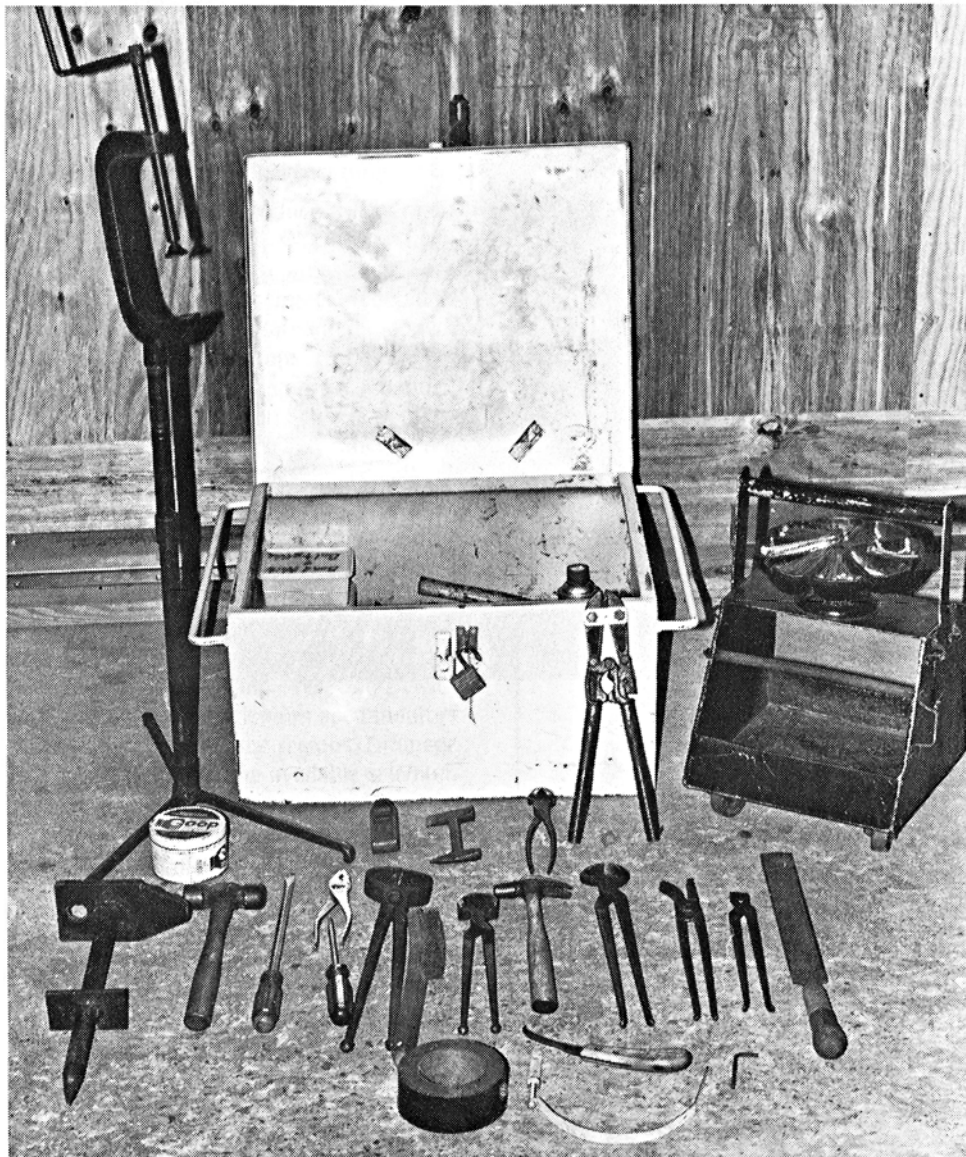


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

chains, and curb chains and bridles will be helpful. Beeswax is great for rubbing down a slick hammer handle during rain. A complete supply of nails, bands, and assorted bolts and sheet metal screws are more items needed. Also needed is a standing C clamp for working on the shoe (Figure 2). This may sound like a lot of equipment but, surprisingly enough, it can all be packed in a small tack box for easy transportation.

REPAIRING A CLEAN PULL

In a clean pull the pad and shoe are intact and the hoof is unharmed. To repair, simply separate the foot pad and make sure all the broken nails are removed from the hoof. It may be necessary to rearrange the foot pad if the nail holes are torn out. Nail the pad and shoe back on and, if necessary, nail straight through from the top of the foot pad for added security. Reband, and the job is complete. In a clean pull, if the foot pad remains intact, simply reclinch the foot pad and replace the shoe.

REPAIRING A BROKEN TOE

If a portion of the toe is broken off and remains attached to the pad, remove the heel nails, slide the foot pad back in place, and nail at the heel. Renail the shoe and reband, placing the band high on the hoof. If there is no room for heel nails, tape the foot pad and toe and then use a band.

TAPING

Black duct tape can be used to secure

shoes with pads in many cases (Figure 3). Place the shoe in the correct position and tape in a criss-cross or figure-eight pattern. Duct tape can also be used after a shoe has been replaced to cover nails, if time runs out before clinching. The tape will prevent injury by covering the exposed portion of the nail. Duct tape can also be used to help secure a slipping tail brace. For appearance, black duct tape is preferred over silver.

BANDS

Broken bands are easier to replace than to repair. The showing farrier should carry several extra bands for replacements. If the shoe is thrown, do not try to replace the shoe with the band attached. Remove the band and replace it with a new one. Vise-grip pliers or square-head nuts that lock against the band can be used for tightening.

THE TIME-OUT

According to the official rules of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association, the rider must go to the center of the ring for a time-out when a shoe is thrown. The time-out starts when the farrier enters the ring. The time allotted for replacing the shoe is seven minutes, although an additional three minutes may be allotted if the shoe is lost. The judge is responsible for timing unless an official timer is present. To make maximum use of allotted time, several hints may prove helpful:

1. The exhibitor and groom should get the horse to the shoeing area as soon as possible.
2. The groom or rider should remove the action device and clean the leg and hoof.

3. The cast shoe should be taken to the farrier immediately.

4. The horse should be kept under control.

5. The exhibitor and groom should stay near the horse and help the farrier whenever possible.


If extensive damage has been inflicted to the hoof the horse should be returned to the barn to prevent further damage. Exhibitors should, however, check with the center ring before leaving, since eligibility and qualifying requirements differ from show to show.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Check all equipment before the show.
2. Tighten bands before each show. Replace weak bands or band bolts.
3. Don't be afraid to reset before a show and use new pads if needed.
4. Check for loose lead and for broken hind shoes before the show.
5. Most important — if you cast a shoe during the show and it is replaced, pull the shoe immediately after the class. The horse will need to be reset, since the time allotted in the center ring is not ample for a complete job.

SUPPLEMENT

Reprinted from *Official Rules for Judging and Exhibiting Tennessee Walking Horses*. Rules I, Part II, Section II — Farrier.

Every show should have a farrier available during all performances. He shall report promptly when called to the ring to make repairs during the class. A farrier may not officiate in any class in which he is an Exhibitor. 

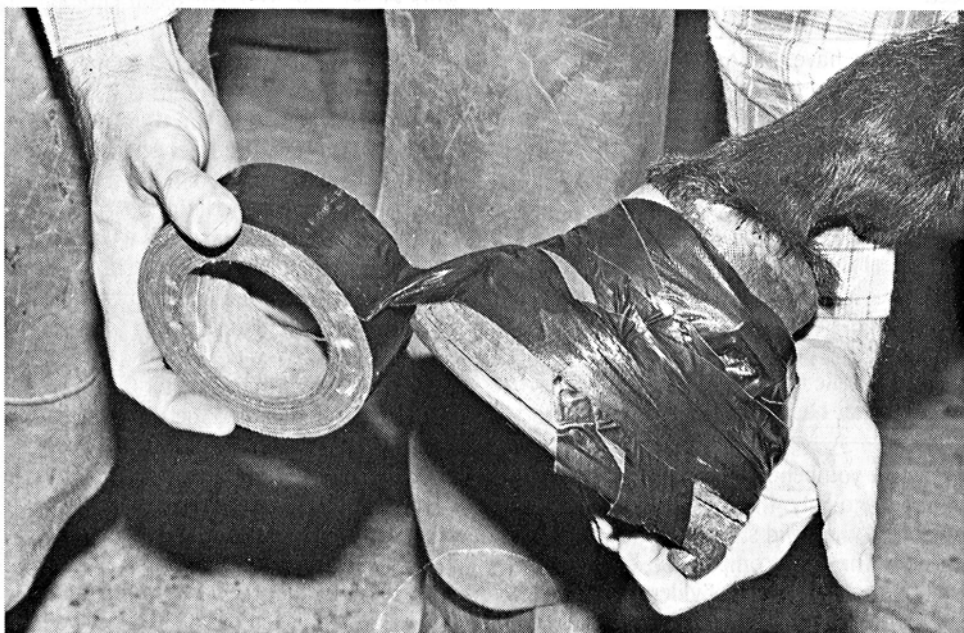


Figure 3.

Photos by Jim Ikers