

MODEL HORSE RACING

Racing in Miniature

Setup your own racing yard and race your Breyer models- and they don't even have to leave your shelf once! Model Horse Racing is extremely similar to Photo Showing so if you are familiar to this, racing is going to be easy. If you are new to the idea of photo showing & model horse racing don't worry, learning how to is a cinch!

Imagine you are at the Newmarket racecourse-the home of racings. You reach into your pocket and find a couple of pound coins, so you decide you will try your luck and place a bet. You wander over to the betting booths but there is such a crowd of people that you cannot see the list of horses running in the next race. Eventually, you reach the betting booth window and randomly pick a horse to bet on. The man inside the booth processes your bet and hands you back a slip. You wander away from the booth with your fingers crossed, tightly. ☺



The above scenario is a bit like the "judging" of a model horse race. It does not matter what the horse's pedigree is or how (s)he did in previous races, the judge just picks one by rolling a dice or drawing cards out of a hat. When you enter a race meet, it is all to do with chance as everyone who enters has as much of a chance as the next in winning.

Why do people race models? It's fun! You will get to meet new people that enjoy model horses as much as you do. Your models will seem more like real horses when they have race records.

So how do you enter a race? It is simple.

Firstly: Create information on a piece of paper or card for each model. Second: Find a race meet, request the information and read the rules.

Third: Using your information cards you created, jot down the races you would like your models to enter.

We all have our own way of choosing the model we like. You might prefer the prettiest face, only bay coloured models, perhaps only one make of model, or you may just like the one that catches your eye that day. Collecting model horses is a good way of learning about real ones. As you discover more you may decide to collect a certain breed or type, such as Arabs, native ponies or stock breeds. If you do develop a preference it is always worth researching a breed's qualities and history, and if you can, go and look at the real thing! The more you know about horses in general, and your favourites in particular, the better you will be at judging a good model and finding breed or type faults on a bad one.

A good place to start is in books, and you can find references on the internet. For good, sound knowledge try contacting specific breed societies, who may be happy to provide information or tell you where to find it. If you can, go to horse shows and look at the different breeds (always ask if you're not sure!) or to your local stables, which will have a



good variety of mixed breed horses and ponies – and possibly a purebred to look at. It is useful to have some knowledge of breeds, as what might be desirable in one horse may not be in another. For instance, Shire horses have feathers and concave faces that would look completely out of place on an Arab!

If you would like to take your prized horses to model horse shows it is always useful to know which models belong in each class. If you know which model best suits the breed specification for thoroughbreds (for example), you are more likely to choose the most suitable thoroughbred model to take to the show. If you are not sure which class to put your model in, don't worry. Most show organisers don't mind you contacting them, or even asking for advice on the day. It is worth bearing in mind that when your model is judged at a show, even 'knowledgable' judges may vary in what they prefer in a breed. Never disturb a judge while they are judging, but afterwards most people will be happy to discuss with you why they chose the models they placed, and to give you friendly feed-back about your own horse. It may be hard sometimes to hear that the model you love best is not perfect, but it doesn't matter – YOU love it. Shows are great places to meet other model enthusiasts and to share your thoughts and ideas, and most of all to have fun.

And finally, remember: there is always more to learn – even the 'knowledgable' judge or collector is constantly discovering new things, and collecting model horses can help open your eyes to the world of real ones.

Useful Contact:

The British Equine Collector's Forum (BECF)

Newcomers' rep: Amanda Massara, 25 Grampian Grove, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2HJ, England.

www.worldofpaul.com/becf

The BECF encourage people across Britain to learn more and get the most out of collecting model horses. They produce leaflets and a newsletter, which provides hobby news and useful information. They organise shows and other events to encourage both new and old collectors to make the most of their hobby and to meet like-minded enthusiasts. Sometimes they arrange trips to places of equine interest such as stud farms. If you're not sure about how to go about learning more and showing your models, the BECF offer friendly advice and are a good place to start.