

Comparison of PSL and IALHA/USEF Breed Standards for the Lusitano Horse

The Association for Pure Lusitanos, the organization that registers all lusitanos worldwide (APSL) has a breed standard for the PSL that is defined in the studbook. IALHA (an American Andalusian registry, that handles the registration processes for the APSL) and USEF have a breed standard for Purebred and Half-Andalusian horses. The USEF and IALHA consider Lusitanos to a a division of the “Anadalusian” horse. This breed standard can be found in the USEF IALHA division on the web.

For IALHA - USEF Andalusian/Lusitano division classes, this is the standard used for placing Andalusian classes, which is where Lusitanos are to be shown under USEF rules. These classes then determine downstream awards, such as USEF Andalusian of the year and breeder of the year.

Because in IALHA/USEF licensed classes, Lusitanos are judged by a different standard than the one found in the APSL rulebook, they usually do not do well in these classes.

Having viewed years of IALHA/USEF shows results, there is a clear conclusion that Lusitanos do not excel in IALHA/USEF classes. But it is one thing to write that Lusitanos don't do as well, but I wished to document why. So, I broke down the components of each breed standard to see if there are significant differences between the two.

As the breed standards are not written in the same format, I used the PSL Breed standard (left column), then pasted in the matching parts from the USEF Andalusian standard in the middle column. Finally, I made a very basic assessment on the obvious differences (column 3). I did not try to parse terms that did not use similar phrasing. For the most part, I let the language of the breed standards speak for themselves to reveal the differences

My analysis shows that there are significant differences in the breed standards, as outlined below. Note that the exact wording of the breed standards were copied, the readers can make their own interpretations.

- (PSL) Ardent (passionate) temperament versus (Andalus) serviceable, docile.
- (PSL) Forward thrusting versus (Andalus) moving forward movement.
- (PSL) no winging allowed (by omission) versus (Andalus) excessive winging penalized (by omission winging allowed)
- (PSL) highly courageous and enthusiastic temperament versus (Andalus) temperate and hardy, serviceable and energetic, noble and docile (see 4)

- (PSL) Profile: subconvex versus (Andalus) straight or subconvex
- (PSL) Eye: elliptical (egg shaped), Versus (Andalus) triangular with a permanently raised eyebrow.
- (PSL) Eye: huge versus (Andalus) penalized for orbital arches protruding
- (PSL) Ears: Average length, narrow versus (Andalus) ears attached slightly lower on the side of the head but must stand up straight without a curl to the inside or falling to the outside. The size must be in proportion to the head.
- (PSL) No comment about “ultra” convex nasal profiles versus (Andalus) Penalized for the “ultra” convex nasal profiles.
- (PSL) with a narrow junction to the head versus (Andalus) nor a thick throat
- (PSL) Withers always slightly more raised than the croup versus (Andalus) height to croup not defined
- (PSL) Long and deep versus (Andalus) well sprung and oval rib cage
- (PSL) Slightly convex, well connected to the back and croup with which they form a continuous and perfectly harmonious line versus (Andalus) not defined.
- (PSL) relatively slight point of the hip providing the croup with an elliptical transversal section versus (Andalus) nicely rounded with a low set.
- (PSL) Relatively long and oblique pasterns versus (Andalus) The pasterns should be of medium slope and length
- (PSL) Dry shin bones versus (Andalus) Cannon bones are substantial
- (PSL) The angle of the latter members are relatively closed versus (Andalus) angle not defined

Why is this important? In the USA, USEF and IALHA validate a breeding program. If the Lusitano does poorly in USEF recognized shows, the awards and medals programs, this reflects on the owners, breeders and most importantly, the Lusitano. Whether intentional or not, the USEF breed standard is used in USEF licensed shows to promote the Spanish horse over the Lusitano horse.

A Lusitano that does do well in such classes, is not a good representative of the breed.

A breeder who did not know better, might try to breed to the American Andalusian standard and that would detrimental to the breed in the USA.

Furthermore, the naïve buyer is looking to IALHA and USEF to advise them on making a sound investment and for buying advice. They will use the USEF breed standard as a guideline in horse buying. Buyer beware is obvious but it is also obvious, that this will create a situation whereby people buy a horse based on a standard that does not fit the breed. This is not fair to first time buyers.

| PSL Breed Standard “(PSL)” | Purebred and Half-Andalusian horses breed standard, including “Lusitanos” (USEF) “(Andalus)” | Obvious Differences between the standards |
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| <p>1. TYPE: Of middling weight (around 500 kilos); medium shaped, sub-convex (rounded in shape), with a square shaped silhouette.</p> | | |
| <p>2. HEIGHT: measured at withers using a measuring stick at age of 6: - female horses.... 1.55 m (15.1) - male horses 1.60 m (15.3)</p> | <p>The height at the withers varies from 15 hands to 16.1 hands with an occasional individual under or over.</p> | |
| <p>3. HAIR: The most frequently found are all shades of grey and bay.</p> | | |
| <p>4. TEMPERAMENT: Noble, generous and ardent but always gentle and long suffering.</p> | <p>The horses are temperate and hardy, serviceable and energetic, noble and docile. They learn rapidly and participate intimately with the rider.</p> | <p>(PSL) Ardent (passionate) versus (Andalus) serviceable, docile.</p> |
| <p>5. MOVEMENTS: Agile, high stepping, forward thrusting, gentle and very easy to ride.</p> | <p>Movement: elevated, extended, harmonious and cadenced with roundness yet always moving forward. Penalized for Movements displaying poor elevation, irregular tempo or excessive winging.</p> | <p>(PSL) Forward thrusting versus (Andalus) moving forward. (PSL) no winging allowed (by omission) versus(Andalus) excessive winging penalized (by omission winging allowed)</p> |
| <p>6. APTITUDE: A natural tendency for concentration, well disposed for High School exercises and highly courageous and</p> | <p>Their principal service is as a mount, with great ability for “alta escuela” (dressage and airs), bullfighting, light teams or</p> | <p>(PSL) highly courageous and enthusiastic versus (Andalus) temperate and hardy, serviceable</p> |

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| <p>enthusiastic in “gineta” (combat, hunting, bullfighting, herding, etc) exercises.</p> | <p>carriages and with special conditioning for handling cattle running in range conditions</p> | <p>and energetic, noble and docile (see 4)</p> |
| <p>7. HEAD: Well proportioned, of medium length, narrow and dry, relatively unpronounced lower jaw and relatively long in cheek with a slightly sub-convex profile and upwards curving forehead (over eyebrow bones) huge elliptical, live, expressive confident eyes. Ears are of average length, delicate, narrow and expressive.</p> | <p>The head should be in proportion to the overall size and weight of the horse. It should be rectangular in shape, and of medium length, with a long jaw that is not overly pronounced. Profile: straight or convex, nostrils are elongated and arched. Eyes: large, lively, showing a kind and alert expression, their shape is triangular with a permanently raised eyebrow. The ears are attached slightly lower on the side of the head compared to other breeds, but must stand up straight without a curl to the inside or falling to the outside. The size must be in proportion to the head. Mares sometime have longer, narrower ears. Penalized for Concave frontal nasal profiles and the ultra convex nasal profiles and Excessively large heads, forehead too wide and flat. Eyes bulging or round, orbital arches protruding. Nose square and wide, nostrils round.</p> | <p>(PSL) Profile: subconvex versus (Andalus) straight or subconvex</p> <p>(PSL) Eye: elliptical (egg shaped), Versus (Andalus) triangular with a permanently raised eyebrow.</p> <p>(PSL) Eye: huge versus (Andalus) penalized for orbital arches protruding</p> <p>(PSL) Ears: Average length, narrow versus (Andalus) ears attached slightly lower on the side of the head but must stand up straight without a curl to the inside or falling to the outside. The size must be in proportion to the head.</p> <p>(PSL) No comment about “ultra” convex nasal profiles versus (Andalus) Penalized for the “ultra” convex nasal profiles.</p> |
| <p>8. NECK: Of average length, arched with a slight hairline, with a narrow junction to the head, broad at the base and perfectly positioned in respect of the shoulder blades rising from the withers without any marked depression.</p> | <p>The neck should be of medium length, solidly built and lightly arched with neither a heavy crest nor a thick throat.</p> | <p>(PSL) with a narrow junction to the head versus (Andalus) nor a thick throat</p> |
| <p>9. WITHERS: Well defined and long, with a smooth transition between the spine and neck,</p> | <p>Withers should be prominent, moderately wide, and muscular. The shoulder should be long,</p> | <p>(PSL) Withers always slightly more raised than the croup versus (Andalus) height to croup</p> |

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| always slightly more raised than the croup. In fully grown males it is covered in fat but is always clearly visible through the shoulder blades. | broad, well sloping and powerfully muscled. | not defined |
| 10. CHEST: Medium, deep and muscular. | | |
| 11. RIBCAGE: Well developed, long and deep, with ribs obliquely arched into the spinal column, providing a short, full flank. | Ribs are well sprung and oval | (PSL) Long and deep versus (Andalus) well sprung and oval |
| 12. SHOULDER BLADES: long, oblique and muscular. | The shoulder should be long, broad, well sloping and powerfully muscled. | |
| 13. BACK: Upright, leaning horizontally providing a smooth union between the withers and loins. | The back should be of medium length, straight and horizontal. | |
| 14. LOINS: Short, broad, muscular, slightly convex, well connected to the back and croup with which they form a continuous and perfectly harmonious line. | The loin shall be broad, short and strong. | (PSL) Slightly convex, well connected to the back and croup with which they form a continuous and perfectly harmonious line versus (Andalus) not defined. |
| 15. CROUP: Strong and rounded, well proportioned, slightly oblique, identical in length and breadth, convex, harmonious profile and with a relatively slight point of the hip providing the croup with an elliptical transversal section. The tail follows the curve of the croup and is comprised of silky, long and abundant hair. | Croup should be gently sloping and nicely rounded with a low set, thick tail fitted following the curvature of the croup. Viewed from the rear the tail should be carried straight, hips should be strong and rounded, | (PSL) relatively slight point of the hip providing the croup with an elliptical transversal section versus (Andalus) nicely rounded with a low set. |
| 16. MEMBERS: Muscled harmoniously inclined forelegs: Upper leg is upright and | Forearms should be large, well muscled and in correct proportion to the width of the | (PSL) Relatively long and oblique pasterns versus (Andalus) The |

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| <p>muscular; Dry broad knee; Dry shin bones with well defined tendons; Dry relatively large fetlocks with smallish joints; Relatively long and oblique pasterns; Well formed, shapely and proportioned hooves without being excessively open and slight coronet; Short and convex buttock; Muscular, shortish thighs pointing in such a way as for the patella to be positioned on the same vertical line as the point of the hip; Longish leg, positioning the hock in line with the vertical part of the buttock; Broad, strong and dry hocks; The angle of the latter members are relatively closed.</p> | <p>chest. Cannon bones are substantial, slightly longer, lean and in proportion to the horse's height.</p> <p>and there should be a well muscled thigh and gaskin of medium length. Hind leg cannon bones should be of proportioned length and clean tendons. The hock should be straight and well defined. The pasterns should be of medium slope and length and be well flexioned. Hooves are round and of proportionate size.</p> | <p>pasterns should be of medium slope and length</p> <p>(PSL) Dry shin bones versus (Andalus) Cannon bones are substantial</p> <p>(PSL) The angle of the latter members are relatively closed versus (Andalus) angle not defined</p> |
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