North American Sport Horse Breed Origin and Development

[adapted from Appendix C found in Legacy of Lexington and Standardbred Sport Horses]

There is a massive and common confusion in our modern day equestrian world about when and how our North American domestic breeds came into being. There are several factors operating in this muddle, one is our ‘collective amnesia’ about our original sport horse breed (Running Horse); other elements compound the problem, such as our unconscious assumption that a breed is ‘pure-bred’ and has a registry—neither of these are historically correct. Then on top of this mindset the effects of the ‘warmblood invasion’, where their ‘breeds’ and methods have been super-imposed on our pre-conceptions, the result is an utter disconnect with regard to our own equine history and traditions.

[American’s have always bred and competed a Hunter Horse, using performance testing like the point to point to try and condition the Hunter as seen in this circa 1800 Anderson woodcut—Library of Congress]

Although this may be tiresome to some of you, let me address these issues, and then provide a short explanation of our domestic sport horse breeds. Realize that it took me years of research and database building to unravel the mess and give myself a clear understanding. I can only hope what I determined will help you as well.

Let’s begin with a definition of sport horse: a population of horse selectively bred for performance in a particular sport or group of sports, normally with selection based on specific pre-potent bloodlines. Therefore there can be a performance standard, a type standard and a pedigree standard in most sport breeds.

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North America is blessed with many established breeds of light horse that are true sport horses. The story of how and when these marvelous breeds came into being has been absent from or slanted in our popular modern equine literature. Therefore most modern day equestrians are unaware that North America’s first domestic breed of horse was a sport horse, and that it did not go extinct until the early twentieth century, and it is the parent breed of all our best sporting horses of today, or the fact that America has always bred sport horses.

“The American Running Horse was America’s first domestic breed of horse. It was immensely talented and pre-potent, prized for its comfortable gaits (pace, rack, amble) and its agreeable temperament, its stamina, toughness and speed. It was both a sport horse and a riding horse. The Running Horse survived as a breed for three hundred years and left a modern day legacy of eight separate quality light horse breeds that are directly descended from it” (North American Sport Horse Breeder).

Let me quickly outline some points on the development of our first breed of horse that may not have been conveyed to you. In North America, the early Colonists were avid racehorse and Hunter Horse enthusiasts. And contrary to most modern day assumptions the breeders of our first domestic breed of sport horse (race and hunter horse) were extremely intelligent and educated persons who with the help of huge land grants provided for them, and armed with vast wealth of their own, they set about immediately to import the very best racing and hunting stock from the ‘old country’ with the aim of continuing the sports they loved in their new home. They imported from 1611 until 1660 the very best racing horses from Ireland and England, and it was their passion to breed wonderful racehorses and hunters from those imports. The imported race horse stock that were the base of own racehorse breed were not Thoroughbreds—that breed did not exist yet, they were English Running Horse and Irish Hobbies. Happily, our forefathers were very successful in this endeavor, and we, the North American sport horse breeders, four-hundred years later, are still reaping the harvest from their intelligent breeding procedures.

Because the first printing press did not make its way to the new world until 1700, all the earlier Colonial records and through the 18th century were hand written or printed with wood block engravings and impressions, and their stud records and correspondence were handwritten. It was the wealthiest settlers that bred racehorses, people of education and means, and they had immense libraries of their own, which they continually built with importations of the best volumes from England. For instance, in the Virginia colony it was the Governor and the plantation owners who bred the racehorses and hunters, but educated or not their records were hand written. Because of this most were lost over time, and we have to rely on court records, preserved correspondences, shipping manifests, wills and beginning in the mid or late 1700s newspapers, and only in some areas.
The breeding of our early racehorse was not done by ‘country bumpkins’, it was done by people of intelligence and education who fully understood how to breed selectively for their goals. And their results were spectacular. Even the common folk in our Colonies were literate, and the English public school system was in place almost immediately, and the New England Puritans and the Pennsylvania Quakers insisted on literacy, and surprisingly we find except on the frontiers, the children who attended those schools were already literate, as their mothers taught them how to read and write before they ever made it to the public school (“Colonial Education in America”). Remember, we even had a school of higher learning (Harvard University) by 1636. (Later immigrants from central Europe often did not have the advantage of a public school system in their own countries and so were not always literate—but our early Colonial settlers were generally products of the English school system). Even the 20th century equine historian John Hervey made the erroneous assumption that the early breeders were uneducated, undirected and sometimes illiterate, while actually the opposite was true.

This racehorse birthed in our Colonies, the American Running Horse, has been the subject of group memory loss in our equestrian community even though it was still around into the early 1900s. Yet, it was a world renowned horse in its heyday, both as a top quality racer at both the pace and gallop, and later at the trot (1800s). In addition, it was the most prized saddle horse in the world, as it retained its pace derived intermediate gaits, and therefore was a far more comfortable mount to ride than a horse that only trotted at the intermediate gait. Plus the Running Horse pleased its breeders and owners by performing exceptionally well as Hunter Horses; hunting on horseback was part of the American cultural traditions, a culture brought with the first settlers from England and Ireland to our land.

This colonial breed was loaded with the traits of its parent Hobby breed: it possessed a gentle and willing temperament, and was incredibly hardy, plus it was loaded with both stamina and speed, and it was gaited. From this original American sport horse descend our best modern day light horse breeds. But because we have ‘forgotten’ about it and assumed all breeding done in Colonial times was ‘willy-nilly’ by idiots, we are at a loss to explain the origin of the excellence found in our modern breeds and when it was they truly emerged. Failure to recognize the original breed, has made the starting date of our modern breeds waiver around, instead of clearly identifying our breed’s birth by its true organization time, which would be when there was a conscious selection for type combined with specific performance and bloodline factors; instead most assume our breeds just sort of immerged out the colonial primordial soup.

Registries are a nineteenth century practice—prior to this era breeds were organized by breeding practices and performance standards. By the 1950-60s most North Americans had adopted the belief that all breeds were ‘pure-bred’ as we had by then long established registries for all our domestic light horse breeds. So entrenched was this mindset that I remember being instructed that the Hunter Horse (our true American ‘warmblood’) was a type, not a breed. But it wasn’t long after this that the European Warmblood invasion
began in earnest, and this caused more disconnect with our heritage, as their ‘breeds’ are not pure-bred either, yet they promoted them as true breeds—national breeds—the pride of their countries. Yet we did not make the intellectual leap that our Hunter Horse was every bit as much a breed as their ‘warmbloods’. Even though I was part of this generation of equestrians in the late twentieth century, I still am not sure how it was we did not classify our own Hunters as a true sport horse breed—even while they were competing against and often winning the medals in international sport competitions.

Thinking back on all this, perhaps the answer lies in the fact we always had Hunter Horses and then assumed everyone did, and so when introduced with these ‘new’ breeds, which were presented to us with so much hoopla, then we assumed they were a different new type—when in fact they were just heavy hunters. The reality of course is that the horse that can jump, achieve under saddle perfection, run with talent cross-country etc., has always been the same type, and the ingredients have always been the same: racehorse, pure bred or mixed with other breeds, in other words a Hunter.

Therefore, for your reference, let me list a brief description and the emergence date of our sport breeds for you. These dates were arrived at by carefully studying the intent of the breeders of the day and the implementation of an organized set performance standards and consciousness of sport bloodlines (see North American Sport Horse Breeder for more on this).

**Running Horse (RH):** This is our original saddle, hunter and racehorse breed. Even though we know that the first Governor of Virginia imported Hobbies for his own sporting pleasure in 1611, the evidence of an established breed came a little later. It is documented in the record of the Kings Council of Jamestown that all the members of the Council were already racehorse owners and most were also breeders. These breeders first tested their stock with sprint racing and within fifty years heat-racing as well. These horses were always used as Hunters; Virginia was overrun with eastern wolves back then.

[American Running Horse—Anderson engraving]

The sportsmen in the Rhode Island portion of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (once again the Governor and the Plantation owners), were performance testing their branch of this breed about seventy years later (~1690)—soon after it became known as the ‘Narragansett Pacer’. And the two populations of racers traveled by ship between the two breeding centers for racing, sales and breeding purposes. This breed spread to all the settled areas along with the sport of racing in all its forms (sprint to four-mile-heat racing, at the trot, pace or gallop) and hunting. The original sport horse breed of Running Horse continued on until the dawn of the twentieth century, when the last of its members were absorbed into its descendant breeds. This breed is the base of all our later sport horse breeds, including the American Thoroughbred. (You can read much more about the colonial development of the Running Horse in Standardbred Sport Horses).

**American Sport Horse (ASH)—aka Hunter Horse:** We know the earlier colonists were hunting on horseback in the early 1600s, there even were laws in place by the mid-1600s concerning the amount of bounties given for both the fox and wolf. Nonetheless, the documentation of selective breeding of mounts...
for use in the sport of hunting is found first in the correspondence of the plantation owners in the Maryland/Virginia Colonies by 1700.

These horses were either full Running Horse or based on the Running Horse with other breeds added for substance, height and style. Once again, originally this sport, and the intelligent selection for this breed, was restricted to the most privileged of our settlers; but by the late 1700s hunt clubs were widespread and the hunt sport mania had infiltrated the general populace and all those that had access to a fine Hunter-bred horse joyfully participated. Hunt Clubs had a main building with bedrooms for out-of-town guests, meeting rooms and dance areas. The grounds were set up with kennels for the hounds, and with areas for testing the horses, riding and jumping rings, a race track and a cross-country area with a steeplechase course (Fox Hunting in Delaware County Darlington), hunting was a national passion. The Clubs were gathering places where the sport competitions were located during the hunting off-season. The Hunts themselves of course were performed across various properties. (Read more about Hunt Clubs in North American Sport Horse Breeder).

It should be of interest to the American equestrian that George Washington, who later became the first president of our country, bred his own Hunter Horses before and after the Revolution. His letters reveal he added Barb (Lindsay’s Arabian) to his Running Horse base, as well as coach horse for substance, and after they began being imported (sometimes by him) after 1750 or so, he added Thoroughbred. Doesn’t that sport horse recipe sound a little familiar? That means our first president, even before he was a president, was breeding the same type of sport horse we breed today. And guess what? He was not alone in this. Every Plantation owner bred and kept hunters and hounds, it was a social custom and the hunt was a social occasion and visitors expected to be taken on a hunt and to be entertained afterward with feasts and dances. And here you thought the Europeans invented the modern sport horse! This custom was the same of the gentry of England and Ireland, and had been long established in their countries, and we, a colony continued on with it. After our Revolution all our traditions became the province not just of the gentry, but of any American who desired to take part, which resulted in the wide-spread Hunt Clubs mentioned above.

[Our first president George Washington was a superb horseman and sport horse breeder. Seen here riding to the hounds in the late 1700s, on a hunter he bred at his own farm—Hunting was an American passion—painting John Ward Dunsmore]
North American Sport Breed Origin and Development

When the new English Thoroughbred arrived in America (mid-1700s) it quickly became a prized cross for our native race-saddle horse because it was fast also and it added height to our much shorter Running Horse. This breed of horse has been continuously bred to our day, we called them Hunters until very recently, now we call them Sport Horses or even Warmbloods after the European influence, but the breeding philosophy and selection process is still the same as it was in 1700, and this is the concept that the modern American has been blind to: that we have been breeding our own ‘warmblood’ sport horse since 1700 continuously to this day—three-hundred years. The first Hunter registry was in America was 1918 and 1926 in Canada.

**American Saddle Horse (ASA):** This breed emerged when the breeders consciously separated a portion of our Running Horse stock and made their breeding choices to preserve the original excellent saddle horse traits of our racehorse that were being lost with excessive crossing in of the English Thoroughbred. This practice—our first foundation movement—began around 1800 by the intelligent breeders General Cooke, John Goode and others. The first documented performance test (horse show) was in 1817.

The American Saddle Horse was the preferred Hunter Horse west of the Appalachian Mountains because it was a comfortable ride, had great endurance and speed, and was a talented jumper that kept its head during the chase—[Kentuckians on a hunt, mounted on American Saddle Horses in late 1800s, the precursor to our modern saddle breeds. The American Saddle Horse was the preferred Hunter Horse west of the Appalachian Mountains because it was a comfortable ride, had great endurance and speed, and was a talented jumper that kept its head during the chase—engraving by Klepper from “Kentucky Fox Hunt” 1895]

The American Saddle Horse was the first choice as a cavalry mount for the Confederacy in the Civil War, and we find evidence of their service in the individual horses such as Gaines Denmark, who came home to found significant bloodlines in our saddle horse breeds. The registry for this breed was established in 1891. It gradually went extinct when the Tennessee population separated in 1935 to become the Tennessee Walker, and then the breeders in Kentucky retained the original stud book to develop their own strain separately—this became known as the Saddlebred (see below).

**American Trotter (AT):** This breed came about from selective breeding from those Running Horses that acquired a mid-gait of the trot, but retained the speed from their pacer roots. The first documented performance test for this strain was in 1818. Originally they were raced under saddle, but harness racing began to become more popular by 1840, both because a trotter was the preferred harness horse and after the Civil War because the northeast became the breeding hub of the trotter. It was mostly the harness horse for utility use in the northern urban areas as well, the saddle horse was seldom seen and so the harness discipline gained ascendancy over the ridden trot. The first registry was established in 1867. Later in 1879 the fastest of them were organized into the Standard register and a new breed began and the American Trotter gradually went extinct.
These horses were also prized as Hunters, all had a fine gallop and canter as well as their signature trot, even the English equine historian, Henry Herbert (Frank Forester) rode an American Trotter to the hunt (read more in *Standardbred Sport Horses*). A surprising amount of American Trotter made it into the European racers, and through them into their sport horses. Some of the highest rated warmbloods of Europe are being powered by American lines, the very same lines they ban today!

[The American Trotter, was renowned as both a racer and a sport horse, quiet, sane, sound and talented, its bloodlines are found not just in our sport horses of excellence but in the European warmbloods of today, even the great Alme SF carries American Trotter, and Galoubet A SF is 25% American Trotter. Pictured in this 19th century print are some of the greatest racers of their time, left to right: George M Patchen AT, Lady Suffolk AT, Princess AT, Ethan Allen MO (his mother was a jumper) and Flora Temple AT.]

**Morgan Horse (MO):** The Morgan was already recognized as a breed by 1820 and the breeders have been exceptionally organized and by 1840, according to AMHA, they further assembled and consolidated the descendants of Figure RH into a register. Their breeding criterion was to set the type of their foundation sire: Figure RH into their breed based on him. The Morgan Horse has continued on unabated as one of the oldest still existing sport horse breeds in America. However, not all branches were sport oriented because Vermont, which is where the breed originated, did not even have a racetrack, and the racing traits were seldom selected for there. But we find it is through the sons and daughters of Sherman Morgan especially (his dam was a Narragansett Pacer), and to a lesser extent from Woodbury Morgan (his dam was a Running Horse), that preserved and improved the racing speed at the mid-gait, both trot and pace. Some of those lines came down through great Black Hawk MO (trotter) and the lesser known Copperbottom RH (pacer)—all are found in the later Standardbred, the American Saddle Horse derivative breeds and Quarter Horse. Further north, the sporting Canadians bred a fine sport breed from the Morgan/Narragansett cross stock—see below.

In the modern era the sport bloodlines of the Morgan were isolated and performance tested from 1906 until 1950, when the Morgan was selectively bred and tested for the ultimate in cavalry performance. The testing used was under saddle work (dressage), show jumping, cross country tests and a three-hundred
mile endurance ride—a far more severe trying and culling process than any other sport breed I know of was put through. The lines forged in that program are also top sport sources for the breeder today. The first stud book was (Linsley’s) in 1857 and was followed by Battell’s in 1894.

Canadian Pacer (CP): There is tremendous confusion around this breed because no registry was ever formed, and no stud books have ever surfaced, and it became trendy at one point to call any pacing racehorse a “Canadian”—which has muddied the waters more. However, this population of racehorse was definitely a breed of its own by around 1830-40, and a premier racing breed by 1850, and the name aside, it raced at both the trot and the pace. Obviously being a top rated Hunter it cantered and jumped as well. For lack of documentation I assigned a ‘date of birth’ for it in my original book of 1830.

[The first steeplechase held in North America was in Montreal in 1834—the horses that were ridden were not Thoroughbreds (there were very few of the Thoroughbreds in Canada at that time), what you see pictured here is the Canadian Pacer and other Running Horses. The Canadian Pacer was a first rate sport horse created largely from the Morgan-Narragansett Pacer (RH) cross. Magazine engraving of event published that year].

When I wrote North American Sport Horse Breeder I thought the Canadian Pacer was formed by importations of Running Horse stock from America and also from the Nova Scotia portion of Canada, crossed onto its light farm breed of the Canadian Horse, and I assumed that the horses in the first steeplechase were Thoroughbred based Hunters. But with further investigation I discovered the strains that became the racers and ridden sport horses were largely of Running Horse, especially the cross of the Narragansett Pacers with Morgan horses, which is a very similar strain to the best Morgan families, and these horses became the preferred sporting horse of Canada.

The Canadian Pacer was a fantastic Hunter Horse, as you see above in the illustration, read the full history of this important sport breed in Standardbred Sport Horses. By 1850 it was a top quality racehorse that competed as an equal with the American Trotter and Pacing Running Horse all across North America, and
all three of these racing breeds were absorbed into the later formed Standardbred Register, as well as the American Saddle Horse and its derivative breeds.

**American Thoroughbred (TB):** the origin of this breed is very muddled, mainly because of the lack of knowledge and recognition of our first rate Running Horse racehorse breed, and earlier historians (like Hervey), somehow not quite understanding that the English Thoroughbred wasn’t in America until right before the Revolution, and so they didn’t recognize the racing done before this time was our own American racehorse breed.

It was only in 1868 that S. D. Bruce’s stud book came out, with its clear requirement of at least five generations of strictly English Thoroughbred ancestry (GSB registered stock), along with the acceptance of the required performance breed test of the ‘classic race’ standard: one to two-mile ‘dash’ races. Therefore it was only in 1868 that this population of our racehorse became a separate breed of its own. The great Lexington RH 1850 for instance is not a Thoroughbred. The ‘Thoroughbred’ was an English organized breed (1670—although the term ‘Thoroughbred’ was only assumed one-hundred years later in the mid-1700s which is when the performance standard of the ‘classic race’ was also adopted) and we could not call our racehorse a “Thoroughbred” until it met the breed requirements mentioned above.

The American Thoroughbred arose from not just English Thoroughbred stock, but from our amazing Running Horse; and it proved so fast, sound and stamina loaded that when it traveled to England and Europe in the mid-1800s, it proceeded to win in flat racing, steeple-chasing and jumping. Even with relatively few horses that were brought over, it is a fact that by the 1880s our new Thoroughbred had conquered all the European classics, and then its offspring being bred there were doing the same. The overwhelming superiority of our breed so frightened and shocked our English cousins, that they reacted by banning our breed for thirty-six years from the stud book (Jersey Act) to keep us and our bloodlines from taking over the breed. (Read all about our incomparable American Thoroughbred, with its amazing performances, and the bloodlines that have been concentrated these world stars in *Legacy of Lexington*).

[Born during the Jersey Act when our Thoroughbred sport horses were forced to stay at home, this is the champion jumper Holystone, a son of Man O’ War, photo courtesy of Keeneland Library]

If you have bred European warmbloods in this country for any length of time you have heard continuously that the American Thoroughbred is a poor choice for sport horse breeding stock, the usual explanation given is that it built downhill and is a sprint-only breed. Perhaps the WBFSH member registries are confusing our Thoroughbred with our wonderful Quarter Horse breed, which indeed was selectively bred from Colonial times to be a sprint racer.

Our much maligned Thoroughbred is a genetic warehouse of not only immense speed, but it is also contains *the greatest distance racing genes in the world*—selected for and proven by heat-racing, setting world records that have *never* been beaten since. And contrary to the repulsive dogma spewed at us
continuously, it is the highest rated Thoroughbred in the world, and provides 25% of the world’s stamina bloodlines. We can see then that those American hating European registries that pass on these lies, know little or nothing about our breed, and have forgotten their own draft horse base stock carries our American racehorse in their own best bloodlines, both our galloper and our trotter. Here is the truth: without the real sport breeds (English and American) that the Europeans poured into their draft horse base, the European warmblood breeds would not be able to do anything but pull a plow. I say this because after forty years of the relentless put-down of American breeds by these invasive registries, our own equestrians now believe and repeat this garbage as if it is fact, having trusted the officials of these organizations to be truthful, when in fact their aim has been to destroy our sport horse industry and replace it with their own, and unfortunately when the psyche of our own equestrians has been violated to the point that they believe the invader’s propaganda over our own history, then it is time some of us seniors stand up and put a stop this.

Our American Thoroughbred is one of the greatest sport horse breeds in the world, not only the leader in racing and breeding statistics, but it holds a tremendous reservoir of jumper traits, not only those arriving from its English Thoroughbred lines but it carries some of its own developed here in the States. It is one of the main foundations of our true American sport horse of today. (Read what a blessed resource our own Thoroughbred is for sport horse breeding in Legacy of Lexington).

**Quarter Horse (QH):** Our Quarter Horse, *the most popular breed in the world*, was always a dual-purpose breed, both a sprint racer and a cattle-working stock horse. It specialized from the original Virginia sprint and pacing Running Horses and the saddle stock developed from them, with the addition of Morgan, English Thoroughbred and the tough mustang blood of the plains. By the time the classic distance branch of our Running Horse fixed its breed criteria to become “Thoroughbred”, our sprint racing branch of Running Horse was centered beyond the Mississippi River, and was, along with its branch that worked on ranches, a breed of its own; therefore **1868** is an appropriate date for the true birth of the Quarter Horse. The registry was formed in 1940. Our Quarter Horse, while most often found in the western sports that it excels at, is also a formidable Hunter Horse, and several Quarter Horses have been winning international jumpers, like Almost Persuaded and the Hall of Famer: Nautical. Sport is in the American breeds because it has always been a sport horse, and no matter which of many its many talents it is being used for, it always carries the base sporting genetics that can be developed for our modern Olympic style sports.

[Our racehorses and hunters traveled to Europe and beyond, and improved or birthed sport breeds wherever they went. This is Caunis On, a Swedish Standardbred, easily jumping four feet—this mare paired with her rider/trainer Jessica Jakobsson is out there winning right now (2016)]

**Standardbred (ST):** When John Wallace opened his Standard Register **1879** to gather all those American Trotters, and the fast trotting lines of the Morgan and Canadian Pacer trotters that could go a mile in 2:30 or under; it was then that the Standardbred was born. It later in **1891** it
took in all the fast pacing racers—Running Horse and Canadian. Already a prized Hunter Horse, it has gone on to provide some of the most powerful sport lines in the world.

[The world record holder for Olympic Gold medals in show jumping is Halla HE, a german-bred trotter. Her sire Oberst is a full American Standardbred, her dam a French Trotter/TB cross—archive image]

This breed is a powerful resource for the breeder of sport horses, it contains tremendous jump bloodlines—still powering jumpers worldwide even while being banned as a not-allowed cross in the international breed associations that are members of the WBFSH (see Standardbred Sport Horses for the complete history and proven bloodlines for Olympic style sport).

**American Saddlebred (SB):** When the Tennessee branch of the American Saddle Horse breed separated to preserve its ‘running walk’ gait in 1935, the American Saddle Horses who could trot as well as do its pace derivative gaits retained the American Saddle Horse stud book, changing its foundation sire list to those that reflected its own strain, and thus became its own breed; eventually Gaines Denmark ASA was made the sole foundation sire. The Saddlebred has gotten a bad reputation for use in Olympic style sport, with most assuming the extreme selection for the high stepping show horse version is all there is. In fact, the Saddlebred is a tremendous resource, it still carries the bloodlines that made it top Hunter and Jumper and has provided several individuals for our international jumper team in years gone by, but it has also proven dressage lines (see North American Sport Horse Breeder for some of those and visit www.saddlebredsporthorses.net for modern sources).

[Brown Hal RH, one of the Tennessee bred pacers, that excelled as a Hunter Horse, a saddle horse and finally as a winning racer and stallion.]  

**Tennessee Walker (TWH):** In 1935 the breeders in the Tennessee region removed their strain of horses from the American Saddle Horse registry by forming their own registry to preserve and promote their ‘running walk’ gait- thereby signaling the separation of strains of American Saddle Horse into its descendant breeds. Bald Stockings RH (Tom Hal RH-Copperbottom RH) was the strong foundation. The main bloodlines that became the Walker were also the prized bloodlines for the Confederacy in the Civil War, and for the Hunter Horses. So sure footed and fearless that fox hunting was regularly carried on at night— with very few accidents. The horse that became the TWH and the Standardbred were some of the greatest Hunter Horses there has ever been. The TWH is lately making a name for itself in dressage, and contrary to some of the hasty scientific literature published on the gait-keeper gene, that proclaimed that all gaited breeds have a poor canter, in fact the TWH has one of the highest rated canters in the world, besides its
signature running walk, its normal gait is a perfect 3-beat canter and counter canter (see Standardbred Sport Horses for more on this subject).

Missouri Fox Trotter (MFT): The breeders in the Missouri region selectively bred their own version of the American Saddle Horse to preserve and promote its ‘fox trotting’ gait, so 1935 works for them also—their registry opened in 1948. Long valued for their comfortable gaits and sweet disposition, making them a preferred pleasure and trail horse, the Fox Trotter riders are discovering their breed is a natural jumper.

The breed list above is those North American breeds that are directly descended from our original Running Horse—listed in order of their establishment. They are all sport horses, some of them truly centuries old.

Most of our sport breeds also carry large measures of our Heroic Era racers (four-mile heat racers) in their background as well, indicating their original sport genes have been refined and tested at the highest level and that there is a genetic affinity in our domestic breeds because of the common first rate sport lines in all their backgrounds; these are the soundest and best sport genetics in the world and all our breeds are loaded with them. Your own selective breeding practices can bring the power of those sport performers of yesteryear to the fore in each of these breeds quite easily once you understand the genetic importance of specific ancestors. And crossing these breeds, if done judiciously, can also build up tremendous background power in true sport performance.

However, realize that if you breed warmbloods in the States, that aside from some American Thoroughbred that may be grudgingly allowed in, none of our other sport breeds are allowed crosses or bloodlines—even while those same breeds carry many of them in their lineages already. You should be aware it is a different story in Europe itself, because there it is somehow okay for them to use our breeds when they see fit (pull up the pedigree of Regina Z or even Galoubet A SF (the highest rated jumping in bloodline in the WBFSH ratings). (See Market Share on this website and Standardbred Sport Horses for more discussion on this hypocrisy).