

Q - What physical attributes do you look for in an Arabian racing prospect?

Look for a race prospect which is a balanced, structurally correct individual. Look for a good length of rein and a sloping shoulder flowing into a well defined wither. Strong loins and well-defined stifles and gaskin will give you your engine. The hindquarters are where your propulsion comes from to get out of the starting gates efficiently. It goes without saying that straight legs and good sound feet are essential. When the horse walks it should give the impression of an easy moving athlete rather than a showy Arabian.

Q- Is there a difference in speed and stamina between a TB and an Arabian?

An Arabian is approximately 10 seconds slower than a TB. An average TB would do around 1:10 over 1200 metres against an average Arabian's time of around 1:20/1:23. However, faster times have certainly been recorded. The stamina and endurance capabilities of the Arabian are well known and over some of the longer distance races of 4000 metres would probably be faster than a TB.

Q- Is there any difference between the breeds as far as attitude to training and racing is concerned?

Arabians tend to be cleaner in the wind with greater utilization of oxygen than the TB leading to a more rapid recovery after work. The Arabian doesn't tend to go off its feed as some TBs do. Young TBs tend to be a bit wayward whereas the Arabians can take more pressure in training. They are the thinking person's horse, however, in Australia, they haven't been specifically bred for racing so don't have that innate will to win and need to be taught how to gallop.

Q - Does a jockey need to be aware of these differences?

Yes, they tend to be chasers rather than front runners and are often 'one-paced'. You will get this with endurance horses switching to racing and they have to be trained to develop a 'turn of foot'.

Q - Do the NARA Rules of Racing differ from the TB rules?

The NARA Rules of Racing mirror those of the TB industry with a few modifications such as the age of horses permitted to race and the use of the whip rule. These can be viewed on the NARA website. It is recognized that the Arabian matures later than the TB horse. On that subject, I feel that no real pressure should be put upon horses up until 6 years of age.

Q - Is there any difference between feeding either breed and what sort of costs are you looking at?

I feed both breeds pretty much the same ration, adjusting it for the individual. Plenty of hay and a basic natural diet. I do feed a lot of grain but I find the Arabians are less tolerant of cracked corn which can cause a bit of muscle soreness.

Q - Is there prize money for Arabian racing?

Yes, NARA is paying out modest but regular prizemoney which makes it viable to keep a horse in work and we have feature races every year that carry higher prizemoney.

Q – Racing bloodlines in Australia

Unlike most of the other Arabian racing countries, we haven't been breeding for racing in Australia so it remains to be seen which bloodlines will come to the fore in the years ahead. There will be interesting times ahead.