



As equestrian athletes advance in their careers, it's important they have the right equipment to be successful—from show clothes and spurs to tack. As the Official Western Saddle of IEA, **Bob's Custom Saddles** is committed to helping young riders progress by providing opportunities for them to acquire those tools for success.

Bob's Custom Saddles provides saddle certificates to winners at post-season IEA events. These certificates have allowed IEA winners the opportunity to upgrade to a full-fledged show saddle if desired, while ensuring sizing and the style of the saddle is best for them as well.

"We at Bob's Custom Saddles believe youth programs like the IEA are the future of the equine industry," Chris Weaver, vice president of Bob's Custom Saddles, said. *"That's why we choose to put our sponsorship in areas of the industry that support youth riders and novice horses. We're all about promoting the future of the industry."*

Founded in 1977, Bob's Custom Saddles are hand-crafted by artisan saddle makers who have been honing their craft for generations. Bob's Custom Saddles stands behind its products emphasizing quality, craftsmanship and performance.

For IEA riders, the performance might have stood out if you've ridden a Bob's at an IEA competition; or if you or your coach own one. High performance is at the base of what Bob's Custom Saddles does every day.

At the base of all of its saddles, Bob's Custom Saddles emphasizes "rideability," meaning each saddle will help improve the ride and connection with the horse. The majority of this concept comes from a close-contact principle, meaning the saddle allows the rider contact at every point of their body instead of lifting the rider away from the horse. From there, Bob's Custom Saddles can adjust fender placement, skirt cut-up and seat to make the saddle as advantageous as possible for the respective discipline.

"Ride-ability to Bob's Custom Saddles is to help the rider sit in the proper position for the discipline they're riding," Weaver said. *"We put ride-ability in all of our saddles, from barrel saddles to equitation show saddles to reining saddles. It is meant to help the rider perform better."*

Bob's Custom Saddles offers appropriate saddle models for both horsemanship and reining competitors. While it is possible to have a saddle function well for both events, Bob's Custom Saddles does offer models that are specialized for each event.

"We do have a few reining saddle models that function well for the horsemanship, like the Bob Avila or Randy Paul models, but if someone wants something

different out of a reining saddle; or a saddle specifically aimed to help them perfect their horsemanship, we can do that too," Weaver said.

Horsemanship riders may benefit from the California seat, which is an equitation-style seat with higher rise through the front of the seat that provides more hold for the rider. Plus, Bob's Custom Saddles offers an equitation fender placement that is advantageous for horsemanship riders—allowing riders to align their legs directly underneath them for their horsemanship position.

Bob's Custom Saddles is well known for its reining saddles and the large variety of models they offer. Weaver explained that while they do frequently overlap as far as what may be appropriate for horsemanship and reining; someone may like to ride the reining in a flatter seat while another person prefers the high-rising California seat. Seat rise does not have to be dictated by the discipline, but rather can be what each rider prefers.

Since Bob's Custom Saddles makes both horsemanship and reining saddles, or those that can function for both events, they are a popular choice for IHSA and NCEA collegiate equestrian teams and their coaches. As IEA riders consider college options; there's a good chance you'll be riding a Bob's at collegiate competitions and during practice in the future.

Close-contact feel and closeness to the horse is another important element of ride-ability that Bob's Custom Saddles strives to put into each of its saddles. Bob's Custom Saddles starts with close-contact trees and then its saddle makers hand-lay each ground seat to get the rider as close to the horse as possible.

"Everything we do in the design and construction of our saddles is meant to help the rider," Weaver said.

It's this performance factor that has attracted so many professional riders to Bob's Custom Saddles over the years. In the National Reining Horse Association Open Division alone, Bob's Custom Reining Saddles have been ridden to earn more than \$20 million. Top NRHA professionals including Bob Avila, Duane Latimer and Tim McQuay all have chosen to ride a Bob's during their careers.

AQHA and APHA professionals have also ridden Bob's Custom Saddles to World Championships in many of the western performance events. Bob's Custom Saddles is a unique custom saddle maker in that it has made saddles for every major western performance discipline including reining, cowhorse, barrel racing, team roping, western pleasure and ranch versatility.

For more information about Bob's Custom Saddles, please visit www.bobs-customsaddles.com. The team at Bob's is happy to help with any questions and to help you design your new saddle. ★★

