

PAIR DRIVING 103

REIN ADJUSTMENT

BY HARDY ZANTKE

This issue's driving article is a reprint from *DrivingPairs.com* courtesy of Hardy Zentke. The website *DrivingPairs.com* is dedicated to, you guessed it, Driving Pairs. Hardy is also an ADS and USEF "R" Combined Driving Judge, FEI Combined Driving Judge and Para-Equestrian Judge. He has competed in pairs and 4-in-hands; served as Chef d' Equipe for many USA teams competing abroad. This is the third of a four part series on Pair Driving.



Joni Kuhn at Live Oak. Pics of You©

In my Article Pairs 101 I wrote briefly about the four basic rein adjustments. Let me explain a bit more the adjustment No 3 that I mentioned there, the necessary adjustments for the pair with one eager and one lazy horse.

We have, in almost every pair, one horse that is more eager than the other. Almost no pair has both working completely even. It's called "a willing pair", one is eager to work, and the other is eager to let 'em :-).

We need to take the eager one back a hole in the reins, which means at the same time that the lazy one is let out one hole in the reins. Here is how that works.



Valerie Daidah, Whip, and Nichole Thompson, Groom, with Tsjibbe and Jelle.
Forrest Bliss Photography©



Cassandra Adams driving Hijo and Marco with Groom Alejandra Morales. Photo by Valerie Daidah©

Let's assume our left horse is the lazy one and our right horse is the eager one. Now let's take the eager one back one hole in the reins. That means on our **LEFT** rein, we move the coupling rein buckle **BACK** one hole - which shortens the coupling rein which goes from the **LEFT** draft rein over to the right horse by one hole - and since the end of the reins aren't fixed in our hands, it also means that the draft rein to the left horse now got longer by one hole. So now we adjusted the **LEFT** rein for **BOTH** horses with this, left rein of right horse got shorter and left rein of left horse got longer.

Since we don't want to drive crooked, we now must do a similar adjustment on the **RIGHT** rein, only there we must do it in the **OPPOSITE** direction, e.g. the right rein buckle must move **FORWARD** one hole. That has the effect of lengthening the coupling rein, which crosses over to the left horse, and by the same token, of shortening the draft rein to the right horse.

So with that we now adjusted the **RIGHT** rein of **BOTH** horses accordingly. **NOW**, the left (lazy) horse has one hole longer

reins on both sides of his mouth, and with that has more room to step out a little more (which we still need to encourage with our whip that he does, but now we gave him the room for it), and our eager right horse has his reins one hole shorter on both sides of his mouth, so we keep him back in our hand more.

Our beginners in pair drivers: Please take your time to read this again until you clearly understanding it. This is one of the fundamentals in pair driving. It is better explained with drawings, etc. in many good books, like "The Principles of Driving by the German National Equestrian Federation" or "Max Pape: The Art of Driving". It is **VERY** important to always adjust the coupling reins on **BOTH** reins, never only one, as otherwise you would get your horses crooked.

As I explained briefly in Pair Driving 101 we have three different kinds of adjustments. The above is one of those three.