



Chapter 5

DECF The Rock Star

Lights! Camera! Action! The Rock Star loves to be in the limelight. They have the cool confidence to pull off feats that would leave most horses quaking in their horseshoes. They love the attention from beginning to end. They love to have an entourage following them around making sure everything is in order for their performance. They tolerate all the fussing that goes with getting them ready for the show, whether it is braids or bathing—whatever the sport dictates. Once they walk into the ring, the world is theirs. With daring speed, dazzling strength or perfect precision they perform to the absolute utmost of their ability—no holds barred. They love the competition. They expect the fans to be there with hands in the air cheering them on. When they walk out of the arena, a standing ovation would be fitting. It may not be the Olympics, but they have probably given an Olympic performance. If the only podium they stand on is the one in your heart, that is fine with this personality.

The DECF has a strong ego, bordering on cocky, but personable and charming enough to endear them to you. The world revolving around them is as it should be. Their feed schedule, their exercise program—they expect you to have that on the top of your to-do list. They like to come first whether it is in the arena or around the farm. They are near the top of the pecking order with their herd mates and expect to be there with you as well. They have endless

energy, which is most often positively expressed. Always eager and ready to go to work, they will meet you at the gate most days. They are curious and outgoing, definitely not shy, and will tell you how they feel about most things.

They love a challenge whether it is mental or physical. This quality results in them getting bored easily. Six days of schooling will really turn them off your sport. Because they are curious, variety is a key factor in training them. It also means that they are not your “fraidy cats.” If something startles or scares them, they will almost appear embarrassed to have jumped or acted flighty like those other lesser herd mates. This horse is your friend and noble companion. Most of what they do, they do for you and they love that you appreciate them. The Rock Star wants to live large and along the way enjoy freedom, fun and friendship.

Training

As a young horse going into training, you will be impressed with the amount of confidence that the DECF has. You will be challenged by their “big D”, as they will be testing whether you really are a dominant factor in their life. Some days they are “just too cool for school,” as a trainer friend expressed one day about a three year-old that she was starting. In general, they like to run the show, so initially setting the ground rules can have its challenges, although their willingness to learn and please will usually override that willfulness as long as you appreciate their effort. They must be kept physically active and mentally engaged. The trainer that can keep this horse’s ego and confidence intact through the initial training will be well rewarded down the road when he gets into his performance years.

This is not a horse to fight with over small issues at any age. He is friendly and engaging, seeking the relationship with you. He is willing to work with you on most issues.

Over-disciplining will get him worried or “on the fight” and you may lose your superstar. Do not allow him to push you around but do allow him a few of his own ideas. This is not the horse that needs to be told where to put every foot. He has his own confidence. Once he understands his sport or job, he will be only too happy to perform it for you. He may even show you some innovative ways on how it could be done bigger and better and faster. This is a horse to be listened to—he has something to say!

Once DECF’s have their training or careers in place, they make great horses for the amateur, junior or rider that is lacking confidence. This horse has enough confidence for both of you. He can be loved on extensively without taking serious advantage of you. As long as you are out there playing and performing with them and catering to their every wish, they will make a fabulous, trustworthy companion. They look out for themselves and will look after you. You will be able to leave him for the winter and when you climb on in the spring he will be safe, solid and happy to get back at it.

As a pleasure horse or trail riding horse, they will love to be the one that can lead the others through danger. Whether it is boggy ground, a high flowing creek, or strange animals on the trail, his first reaction is: “Step aside little lady, the Rock Star is here.”

Retirement is hard for this regal horse. Some decline rapidly when turned out to pasture. They have loved being in service, so they find it hard to slow down. When they are finished their active show career, being a family pleasure horse or trail riding horse may satisfy their needs for a few years. Keeping them going as long as possible may be best. Again it will be about listening to them. They will tell you how they feel. Some Rock Stars will be far too proud to be

the kid's horse. For them, remaining in their herd as the leader may be the healthiest option.

Careers

The Rock Star is found excelling in most competitive arenas. Their enthusiasm will tell you what sports they like. Don't just stick to one. They will be happier doing a wide range of activities as long as they know them well enough to be proficient at them. The rider's capabilities will ultimately determine the DECF's level of performance. They are not your perfectionists. But their egos say they like to be competent at what they do. They have difficulty in repetitive jobs or ones that require lots of schooling and not a lot of limelight. If this horse has come into your life, it is time to widen your horizons and go play!