

## Schleese Saddle fitting Lecture and Demonstration

May 14, 2022

Thirteen people brought their lawn chairs and attended the saddle fitting lecture put on by Schleese Saddlery under the manicured and very cool, breezy covered arena at Topsider Farms. A big thanks to Schleese who are headquartered in Ontario, Topsider Farms owned by McKenzie Mull and Michelle Voorhees who was managing that day. Also to Charlie Sokolov, a Schleese Client Services Manager, and her mare Rosie who patiently permitted to be used as a demonstration horse.



Schleese prides itself on their ability to fit riders and horses comfortably. The differences between male and female anatomy as it relates to the position in the saddle were explained. Saddles that were invented for men (think cavalry) have not changed until relatively recently to accommodate the female anatomy (think wider hips, longer thighs). We learned that men can ride in anything but women need a different saddle to be comfortable.



Saddles that were much more thoughtful when horses were needed to make war and get from point A to point B became less thoughtful and more disposable with the advent of mass production. Some of the principles of saddle making that accommodate the horse's motion were lost for a while.

But Schleese is dedicated to bringing them back in the saddles that they make



Rosie became a chalk board while the equine muscles that are supposed to support the saddle were traced out and the anatomical parts which are NOT supposed to be involved with the saddle were also pointed out.

Scheelse does like to custom fit each horse and rider if possible but will work with other makes of saddles if they are adjustable. Many saddles consist of foam panels and cannot be reflocked although some will allow you to change the tree at the withers. Schleese trees can be manipulated in an instrument that will spread or narrow the tree and contain wool flocking only.

We were able to see an actual saddle fitting while Rosie got her dressage and Western saddles re-fitted and Charlie rode after each adjustment. Charlie gave us her take on each adjustment and one could see the Rosie liked things better, more willing to go forward or easier in the canter transition.

And what about the pros who ride many different horses each day? Well, Schleese makes a saddle called "the Pro", a saddle that averages the measurements of most horses (not shetlands to drafts, no) especially for that purpose.



We all might go home and take another look at our saddles after this. I do have a Schleese and I use mine on a daily basis and since I only have one horse to ride, I can fit it to him and I enjoy knowing that if he is not very cooperative that day, at least it is NOT the saddle.

