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From the Editor's Desk





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Animal Kingdom wins **KENTUCKY DERBY**



Animal Kingdom won the 137th Kentucky Derby in Louisville for his first victory on dirt, delivering jockey John Velazquez his first Derby win in 13 tries after losing a favored mount.

In two of the most unlikely stories in Derby history, the 20-1 longshot colt won the American horse racing classic in only his fifth career start and Velazquez finally captured the Run for the Roses after having been set to ride favored horses for three Derby starts in a row only to lose all of them.

“Now I pick up this one and I win the Derby. It was meant to be,” Velazquez said. “It’s words you can’t describe.” Not since Exterminator in 1918 has a horse won the Derby after so few career starts and not since Needles in 1956 has a horse won the Derby after a six-week layoff such as Animal Kingdom had before starting in the 16th of 19 gates.

“I’m surprised,” Animal Kingdom

Jockey John Velazquez, riding Animal Kingdom #16 crosses the finish line on way to winning the 137th Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs

owner Barry Irwin said. "This horse was bucking a lot of history and it was not something we really expected. I'm overwhelmed." Animal Kingdom covered the 1 1/4-mile in 2mins 2.04secs at famed Churchill Downs, charging up the middle of the track over the final stretch to defeat runner-up Nehro by 2 3/4 lengths. Mucho Macho Man was third in a field of 19.

"At the 5/16th pole I knew it was meant to be," Velazquez said.

By capturing the opener in the US Triple Crown series, Animal Kingdom will try to become the first

horse since Affirmed in 1978 to sweep the treble that continues in two weeks at the Preakness and concludes at June's Belmont Stakes.

"This is an amazing horse," trainer Graham Motion said. "He's a very special horse and Johnny did a great job on him." Velazquez finished his strange journey to a Derby triumph after losing a chance to ride a favored horse for the third year in a row when Uncle Mo was pulled from the lineup on Friday because of intestinal and stomach problems.

But after Animal Kingdom's planned jockey,



The horses break from the starter's gate at the start of the 137th Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky.

Jockey John Velazquez, riding Animal Kingdom #16, celebrates winning the 137th Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs.



Robby Albarado, suffered a broken nose earlier in the week, Irwin and Motion made the decision to put Velazquez in the saddle in place of Albarado.

"I do really feel really bad for Robby," Velazquez said. "This is for both of us. I know you're not on it, but I know you're with me." Archarcharch, a winner in the Arkansas Derby tuneup race who started along the rail, was taken off the track in an equine ambulance after pulling up at the wire.

He suffered a leg fracture that was not life threatening and was set to have surgery later.

A record crowd of 164,858 jammed the historic oval to watch the equine three-year-olds battle.

Favored Dialed In, who went off at 5-1 odds, finished eighth after falling to last on the backstretch.

Animal Kingdom moved up on the outside coming off the last turn after Nehro made his outside move to challenge rail-holding Shackleford. Velazquez, a quick study on his new ride, let his horse dictate the action from there.

"We know the horses," Velazquez said. "We talk to the trainer and each other.

"I just let him find his way around. A good horse gets you out of trouble."

UNCLE MO SCRATCHED FROM DERBY

Uncle Mo, which had been the second favourite among Kentucky Derby oddsmakers, was scratched a day before the race from the line-up because of an intestinal disorder. Mike Repole, the colt's owner, announced the decision less than an hour before wagering began. His decision trimmed the field for the 137th running of the US dirt oval classic to 19 horses with Dialed In the early 4-1 favorite.

Uncle Mo, trained by Todd Pletcher, was set with 9-2 odds. While Repole and Pletcher still had a horse in the race with 20-1 long-shot Stay Thirsty, Uncle Mo had been seen as a top Derby contender for nearly a year.

"Honestly, I've never had a horse as good as Uncle Mo," Pletcher said. "To not make it here is a big letdown. I take it as a personal failure."

Pletcher collected his first Derby victory last year with a long-shot in Super Saver. The most worrisome thing for Repole and Pletcher has been that veterinarians are not exactly sure why the colt has lost weight, eaten little and shown elevated enzyme levels in blood tests. "They're baffled.

That's what gets us nervous the most," Repole said.

Uncle Mo's medical woes began after he finished third in last month's Wood Memorial, a race he was favoured to win. Medication helped Uncle Mo continue pre-Derby workouts and the horse appeared solid a week ago, Pletcher said.

But Uncle Mo's listlessness off the track caused concern. Three vets studied the horse and none said the colt could not run, but Pletcher told Repole after they departed that he did not want Uncle Mo to go on Saturday.

"We've got something going on inside that I don't know what it is. The best vets in the world don't know what it is," Pletcher said.

Pletcher defended the decision to enter the horse, which meant that Sway Away could not claim a spot in a field limited to 20. Sway Away would not be eligible to enter the field late because of Uncle Mo's withdrawal.

"We weren't trying to prevent someone else from entering. We needed every minute to try to figure this out," Pletcher said. "We ran out of time."

Nick Zito, Dialed In's trainer, said he was not pleased to see his horse's top rival pull out. "We all would have liked to see him run," Zito said. "It's devastating."

ARCHARCH RETIRES AFTER LEG BREAK

Archarcharch, a three-year-old colt that suffered a broken left front leg in the Kentucky Derby, will not race again, owner Bob Yagos said.

The decision was made after veterinarian Larry Bramlage discovered major cartilage damage when inserting pins to repair the Arkansas Derby winner's fracture.

The injury appeared to happen, Yagos said, when Archarcharch stumbled as he departed the starting gate. The horse finished 15th, defeating four rivals despite his condition.

Archarcharch, whose other victories included the Southwest Stakes, won three times in seven starts and earned \$832,744 for his career.

Animal Kingdom won the 137th running of the Kentucky Derby and will try to become the first horse since Affirmed in 1978 to sweep the US Triple Crown series by taking the Preakness on May 21 and June's Belmont Stakes.



ALBARADO TO GET SHARE OF DERBY PRIZE

Robby Albarado, the jockey who suffered a broken nose and missed his chance to ride Kentucky Derby winner Animal Kingdom, will receive a payout from the winning jockey and owner.

Barry Irwin, majority partner in the Team Valor International group that owns Animal Kingdom, says winning jockey John Velazquez has agreed to pay Albarado a share of his income from the victory.

Irwin says the owners will match the undisclosed amount of money that Velazquez gives Albarado.

With Animal Kingdom claiming a top prize of \$US1.4 million (\$A1.31 million), Velazquez's 10 per cent share as jockey was \$141,180.



PLUM PRETTY NIPS ST. JOHN'S RIVER IN KENTUCKY OAKS

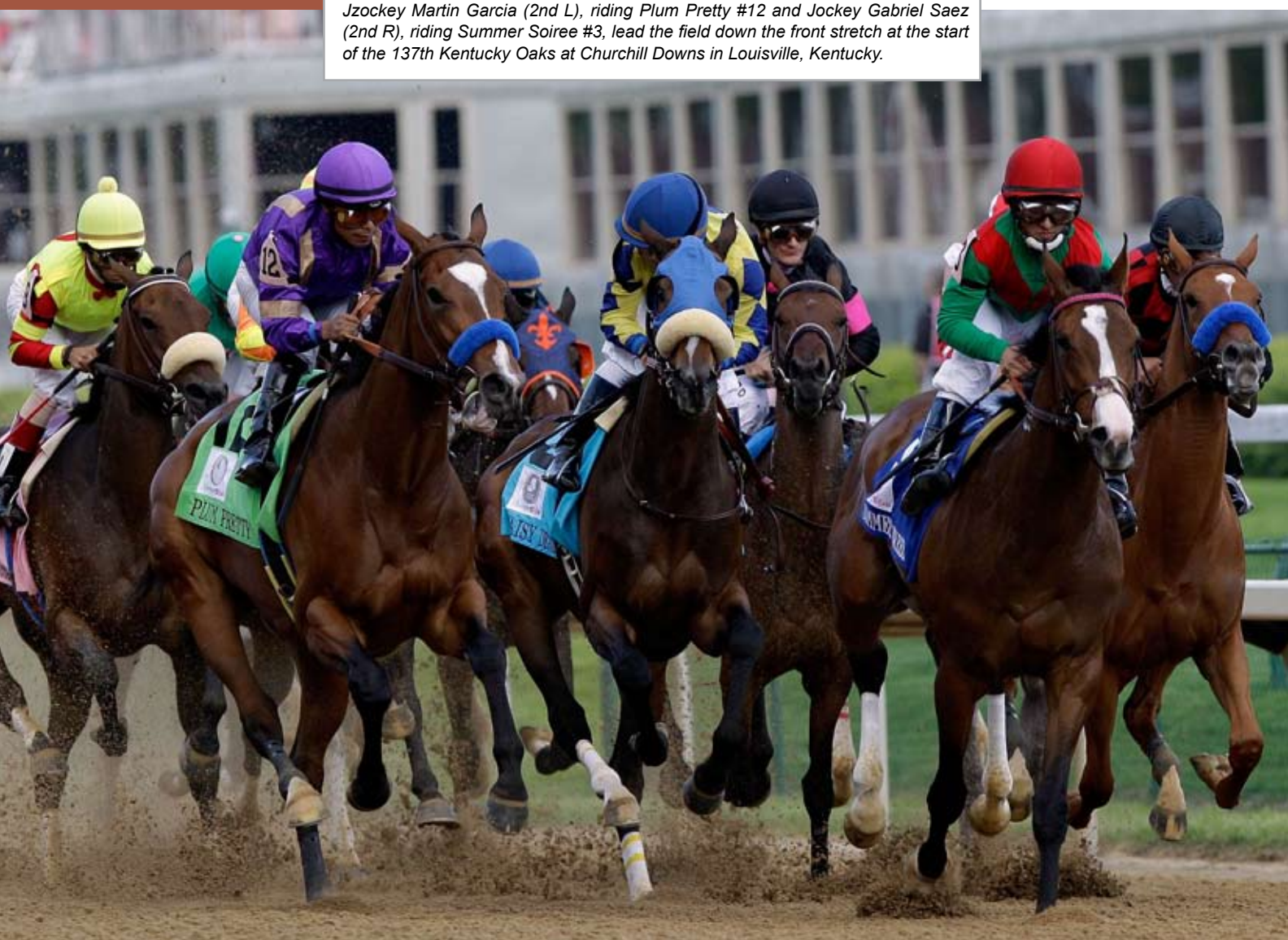
The first time Bob Baffert saw filly Plum Pretty, he turned to owner John Fort and asked him if he got the name right. "Did you say her name was Plum Pretty or plum ugly?" Baffert said with a laugh.

The way the trainer's blossoming star ran in the \$1 million Kentucky Oaks in Louisville, perhaps Plum Perfect would have been just as appropriate.

The filly and jockey Martin Garcia got Baffert's big weekend off to a rollicking start, taking charge at the top of the stretch then holding off St. John's River by a neck to give the Hall of Famer his second victory in the female version of the Kentucky Derby.

Baffert won the Oaks in 1999 with Silverbulletday but came up short in the Run for the Roses the next day when each of his three entries -- Prime Timber, Excellent Meeting and General Challenge -- failed to hit the board.

Jockey Martin Garcia (2nd L), riding Plum Pretty #12 and Jockey Gabriel Saez (2nd R), riding Summer Soiree #3, lead the field down the front stretch at the start of the 137th Kentucky Oaks at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky.





Jockey Martin Garcia (top), riding Plum Pretty #12 heads towards the finish line to edge out Jockey Rosie Napravnik, riding St. John's River #13 for the win during the 137th Kentucky Oaks at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky.

No trainer has won both the Oaks and the Derby in the same year since Ben Jones did it in 1952. Baffert will saddle Midnight Interlude in the Run for the Roses on Saturday as he goes for his fourth Derby triumph.

Not that Baffert was focusing on the Derby -- at least for a few moments -- after grabbing the lilies that go to the Oaks winner for the first time in a dozen years.

"It's been a long time between these with Silverbulletday and you have to really enjoy these moments, you never know when you're going to be able to enjoy them," Baffert said.

Though Saturday afternoon wouldn't be a bad time to return to the winner's circle. Yet Midnight Interlude will be hard-pressed to make it look as easy as his stablemate.

Plum Pretty stalked early leader Summer Soiree before Garcia moved her to the front as the 13-horse field turned for home. She surged to the lead and needed every bit of it to turn away a late bid from St. John's River.

Plum Pretty came in off a dominating 25-length victory in the Sunland Park Oaks on March 27, a win so emphatic Baffert joked she was posing

for pictures by the time the rest of the field was finishing.

The Kentucky Oaks presented a considerable step up in class, but the bay filly looked right at home in front of a crowd of 110,000, the third-largest in Oaks history.

Plum Pretty paid \$14.60, \$7 and \$4.60 while covering the distance in 1:49.50 for owner John Fort, who got into racing following an amateur polo career. It took him three years before he paid \$1,000 for a horse. Plum Pretty cost considerably more - he purchased her for \$130,000 in March 2010 - but Fort made sure it was money well spent.

When Baffert and Fort walked into the crowded paddock before the race, Fort turned to Baffert and told him they were going to win.

"He was more confident than I was," Baffert said.

St. John's River, however, made Plum Pretty earn it.

Jockey Rosie Napravnik nearly became the first female rider to win the Oaks following an expert ride aboard St. John's River, sending her mount



Jockey Martin Garcia (2nd L), riding Plum Pretty #12 and Jockey Gabriel Saez (C), riding Summer Soiree #3, lead the field down the front stretch at the start of the 137th Kentucky Oaks at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky.

to the rail to save ground after a rocky start before the two roared into contention in the deep stretch.

“Down the lane ... I’m thinking Girl Power in the Oaks,” Napravnik said. “It was such a disappointing loss but you can’t take anything away from the filly. She ran so well.” Just not quite enough to track down Plum Pretty. St. John’s River paid \$13.20 and \$7.20 to show.

“She ran her eyeballs out like she does every time,” said assistant trainer Robert Wright. “She ran a huge race, just ran out of ground.” Zazu, owned by Jerry and Ann Moss -- who also own retired superstar mare Zenyatta -- paid \$4 to show.

Joyful Victory came in unbeaten this year for trainer Larry Jones, who won the Oaks three years ago with Proud Spell. Jockey Mike Smith put her in prime position but she never fired.

“I rode her with confidence, had her clear going for home but just didn’t have enough horse,” Smith said.

Garcia did. He marveled at how quickly the formerly rambunctious filly has developed over the last few months.

“She’s been learning a lot,” he said. “When I got to the quarter pole I had so much horse when I asked her to go, she just give me everything, she take off.”

SHACKLEFORD TAKES PREAKNESS TITLE

Shackleford edged Kentucky Derby winner Animal Kingdom by three-quarters of a length for a wire-to-wire victory in the 136th Preakness in Baltimore and spoil the runner-up's Triple Crown bid.

Shackleford, an unfancied longshot who was fourth in the Derby, held off Animal Kingdom's charge from the outside down the stretch to claim the 1 3/16ths-mile showdown in 1min 56.21secs, with Astrology third.

"It feels amazing. I can't believe the run he made," Shackleford jockey Jesus Castanon of Mexico said.

Not since Affirmed in 1978 has a horse completed the American Triple Crown sweep by winning the Derby, the Preakness and next month's Belmont Stakes.

Animal Kingdom struggled with a sluggish mid-race pace after a quick start before finally finding a path to the front around the last turn.

"It was in my mind that was the only horse that was going to be able to come and get me," Castanon said.

But in a shorter race than the Derby, the chestnut colt did not have enough to catch Shackleford at the end.

"The horse ran a huge race. It was so close," Animal Kingdom trainer Graham Motion said. "I was hoping he was going to get there. It looked like he needed another 16th." Jockey John Velazquez could only watch in frustration as the



Jockey Jesus Castanon riding "Shackleford" celebrates as he crosses the finish line in first place in the 136th running of the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, Maryland.



Jockey Jesus Castanon riding "Shackleford" celebrates as he crosses the finish line in first place in the 136th running of the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, Maryland.

finish line arrived too soon.

"He lost a lot of ground in the backstretch," Velazquez said. "I had to bide my time to see where I was going to go. I thought I had a chance but I just had too much of a hole to make up." Motion could see halfway into the race that his horse, the betting favorite, was in trouble.

"I don't think there was anything Johnny could have done about it," Motion said. "That's where the horse wanted to run. I think it hurt him when they slowed the pace down in the middle of the race." Velazquez won the Derby for the first time in 13 tries on Animal Kingdom while Castanon had his own emotional tale, his father having passed away last November, six months before his son's first Triple Crown triumph.

"I know my dad was with me today," Castanon said.

Shackleford claimed the \$600,000 winner's prize from the \$1 million purse as well as a \$500,000 bonus based on tuneup events.



Jockey Jesus Castanon (L) and trainer Dale Romans (R) hold the trophy in the winners circle after their horse Shackleford won the 136th running of the Preakness Stakes.

CASINO MAGNATE STANLEY HO'S HORSE RETIRES

Macau tycoon Stanley Ho's champion horse Viva Pataca has retired after six years on Hong Kong's wildly popular racing scene and becoming the southern Chinese city's biggest money earner.

The nine-year-old Marju gelding retired this week after 44 starts for 13 wins, five seconds and 10 thirds and HK\$83 million (\$11 million) in prize money, a Hong Kong Jockey

Club spokesman confirmed Thursday.

This had been the first season that Viva Pataca had not won since he burst onto the racing scene in Hong Kong, a former British colony where horse racing is a hugely popular spectator sport. Punters can bet on the races through the Jockey Club.

Trainer John Moore said the gelding should be retired after finishing third in the Group One Champions And Chater Cup, a race he had contested for six consecutive years and won three times, the South China Morning Post reported.

"I wanted him to go out with some respect. It was clear that he is missing a cylinder or two now with his age and it would have been sad to see him race on," Moore told the paper. "We are awaiting confirmation at this stage but I'm hoping that he will be able to go to Muskoka Farm, a beautiful property just outside Sydney by the Hawkesbury River, and live out the rest of his days there in a nice green paddock," he added.

Moore described Viva Pataca as "not only the best horse I've trained, the flag-bearer for the stable, (but) he was the horse that showcased my approach to buying these European-tried horses," Moore said.

Viva Pataca won seven Champion Awards and was named Horse Of The Year for 2008-09, the Post said.

The horse had previously raced in the United Kingdom under the name *Comic Strip* before coming to Hong Kong, the Post said.



Darren Beadman rides "Viva Pataca" after finishing in second place in the Audemars Piguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup at the Sha Tin race course in Hong Kong. Macau tycoon Stanley Ho's champion horse Viva Pataca has retired after six years on Hong Kong's wildly popular racing scene and becoming the southern Chinese city's biggest money earner. The nine-year-old Marju gelding retired this week after 44 starts for 13 wins, five seconds and 10 thirds and HK\$83 million (11 million USD) in prize money, a Hong Kong Jockey Club spokesman confirmed.

RULER ON ICE SPRINGS BELMONT SURPRISE



Jockey John Velazquez aboard Animal Kingdom #9 breaks from the starting gate during the 143rd running of the Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park in Elmont, New York.

Ruler on Ice surged past Preakness winner Shackleford in the finishing stretch to win the 1 1/2-mile Belmont Stakes, giving jockey Jose Valdivia jnr the win in his first Belmont ride.

In a race billed as a rubber match between Shackleford and Kentucky Derby winner Animal Kingdom, Shackleford seized the lead out of the

gate as Animal Kingdom collided with another horse, nearly unseating jockey John Velazquez and falling out of contention.

In the end, it was the Kelly Breen-trained Ruler on Ice, who didn't run in the first two legs of US flat racing's Triple Crown, who emerged with the victory at the spacious Belmont track made



Jose Valdivia, Jr. rides Ruler on Ice #3 (L) to victory over Javier Castellano and Stay Thirsty #2 (R) during the 143rd running of the Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park in Elmont, New York.



The field in the third race passes the grandstand prior to the running of the 143rd Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park on June 11, 2011 in Elmont, New York.



Trainer Kelly Breen holds the trophy in the winners circle after his horse Ruler on Ice #3 won the 143rd running of the Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park in Elmont, New York.

sloppy by rain earlier in the day.

After the field turned for home, Ruler on Ice ran down the fading Shackleford and finished three-quarters of a length in front of Stay Thirsty, ridden by Javier Castellano.

Brilliant Speed, with Josel Rosario in the irons, finished third.

Ruler On Ice had been put up for the Kentucky Derby by his connections, but couldn't run because he didn't have enough graded stakes earnings.

At Belmont, however, the three-year-old gelding showed he belonged as he beat a field that included the top seven Kentucky Derby finishers.

Valdivia seemed as stunned as anyone by the feat.

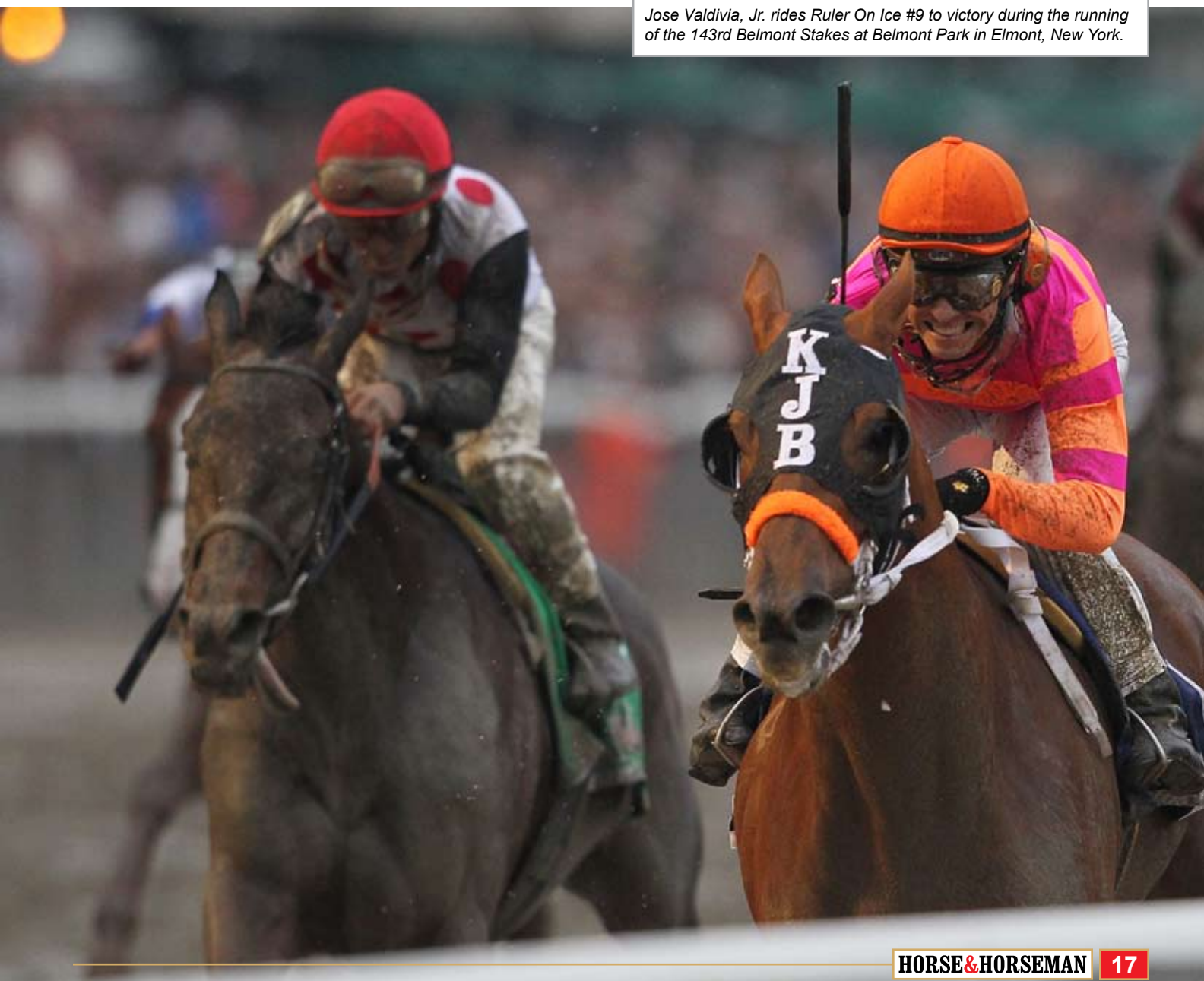
"I'm a couple of yards from the wire and I'm thinking, 'Oh my God, oh my God, I'm going to win the Belmont,'" the muddy and beaming jockey said.

"Ruler wasn't slowing down," Valdivia said. "It was a great feeling the last sixteenth of a mile." Lori Hall, who owns Ruler on Ice with her husband, George, was thrilled.

"It was amazing, because we really were



Jose Valdivia, Jr. rides Ruler On Ice #9 to victory during the running of the 143rd Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park in Elmont, New York.





Ruler on Ice #3 owners George and Lori Hall (L) hold the trophy in the winners circle with trainer Kelly Breen and jockey Jose Valdivia, Jr. (R) after winning the 143rd running of the Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park on in Elmont, New York.



A woman talks on the phone in the grandstand area after watching the ninth race prior to the 143rd running of the Belmont Stakes.

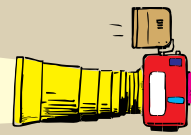
the underdog,” she said.

Shackleford settled for fifth behind Nehro and Animal Kingdom was sixth after an impressive ride by Velazquez, who was nearly pulled off Animal Kingdom when his mount clipped heels with Monzon out of the gate.

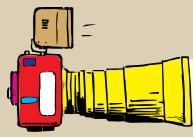
By the time he got his left foot back in the iron, Animal Kingdom was trailing the field, more than 12 lengths off the early lead established by Shackleford.

Ruler On Ice's unlikely victory makes it three years in a row that a different horse has won each of the Triple Crown races.

The last horse to complete the coveted treble of Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont was Affirmed in 1978.

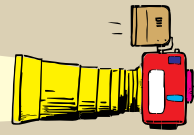


The German horse Brioni with Swedish driver Joakim Lovgren wins the trotting race Elitloppet at Solvalla trotting track outside Stockholm



Through the Lens





THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

Dubai Ruler Mohammad's gift to Queen is favourite to win Epsom derby

Carlton House, Mohammad's present to the Queen, is top favourite to win next month's Epsom Derby

Dubai: It all began at a British racecourse, when a mischievous horse refused to race — he would not enter the starting gates on the big day.

The consequence: The authorities slapped a six-month ban on the horse, Highland Glen, which

disqualified him from racing in the UK.

Highland Glen's embarrassed owner, Queen Elizabeth II, put him up for sale.

And, it was none other than His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-



President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who came to the rescue — he offered to buy the horse for a 'princely sum'.

Queen Elizabeth was surprised to learn that the purchase proposal had been made by her long-time associate, someone who shared her passion for the sport.

She could not sell the horse to Shaikh Mohammad as he was a close friend. The Queen, instead, elected to give him Highland Glen to honour their friendship.

Dazzled for Godolphin

Highland Glen was dispatched to Dubai to join Shaikh Mohammad's Godolphin stable. He left

behind his mischief on the shores of Britain.

In Dubai, he was a different horse. On his first start for Godolphin, he dazzled and won the InsideOut Trophy at Meydan racecourse in January 2010.

His performance pleased Shaikh Mohammad, who contacted the Queen's racing manager John Warren and offered a selection of four yearlings sired by his star stallion Street Cry at Darley Stud, as a reciprocal gift to the Queen.

One of the yearlings caught the Queen's fancy. She chose to name it Carlton House.

And this is where the other amazing story unfolds.

Carlton House, the gift by Shaikh Mohammad to Queen Elizabeth, is one of the most talked about horses and is the red-hot favourite to win next month's Epsom Derby, one of the oldest and most famous horse races in the world.

The Queen has never won Epsom, while Shaikh Mohammad has with Lamtara in 1995.

Elusive win

The Queen came closest to winning the Derby when Aureole finished second in 1953, her Coronation Year.

In an exclusive interview with Gulf News, Warren said she wants to lift the trophy on June 4, and three-year-old Carlton House could make that dream come true.

"Every racehorse owner wants to win the Derby. Her Majesty is no exception," he said by phone from Highclere Stud in Berkshire.

"She has had many horses in the race that did not win, so she is aware at this point of time, of the odds of winning.

"She's impressed with Carlton House's attitude and believes that he has what it takes to win a race like the Derby. But she's been in this business too long to take anything for granted. Anything can happen, but she's keeping her fingers crossed."



POUR MOI RUINS ROYAL DERBY HOPES IN THRILLER



Jockey Mickael Barzalona (L) pats his mount Pour Moi after winning The Investec Derby.

Pour Moi won the Epsom Derby to give trainer Andre Fabre his first winner in the blue riband of the turf on his 10th attempt and France's first since Empery in 1976.

The winner, ridden by 19-year-old Mikael Barzalona, came late to win at 4/1 and beat 25/1 shot Treasure Beach by a head while there was disappointment for Queen

Elizabeth II as her 5/2 race favourite Carlton House was three quarters of a length away in third.

Barzalona, the youngest jockey since Walter Swinburn also 19 rode the legendary Shergar to victory in 1981, rode a sublime race bringing the winner from way off the pace but nearly blotted his copybook by raising himself in the stirrups and waving



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II attends Derby Day, the second day of the Epsom Derby, in Surrey, southern England. The Queen's horse, Carlton House, ridden by Ryan Moore, is seeking to be the first Derby winner owned by a reigning monarch since Minoru won in 1909 for King Edward VII.



Jockey Mickael Barzalona (L) gets a kiss after winning The Derby horse race during the second day of the Epsom Derby Festival, in Surrey, southern England.

his whip in the air before the line.

Fabre, seven-times an Arc de Triomphe winner and 22 times French champion trainer, is a renowned hard taskmaster but he refused to criticise his teenaged rider.

"He won!" said Fabre.

"What surprised me about the winner was that he had two accelerations, first to catch up and then to go on and win.

"It is a pleasure to win this race with my young jockey - I couldn't be happier - it has not been a good track for me," added an unusually loquacious Fabre, who refuses to speak to his domestic press.

On his plans for Pour Moi Fabre said: "The plan now is for a summer break and to aim him at the Arc, subject to the owners agreeing.

"I wouldn't think he would run in the King George as that is a hard race for inexperienced three-year-olds." Michael Tabor, one of the winner's part-owners and also of the second, was delighted though

sad for the Queen, who was bidding to become the first reigning monarch to win the Derby since Edward VII in 1909 with Minoru.

"Obviously we wanted to win but if we hadn't I would have loved the Queen to have done so," said the former bookmaker.

"It's one of those things. It was Utopian one could say this victory." Another of the co-owners John Magnier, the mastermind behind the breeding industry's powerhouse Coolmore Stud, was also gracious in victory.

"I wish somebody else owned the third horse but that's racing," said Magnier, who welcomed the Queen on the final day of her visit to Ireland last month for a private viewing of Coolmore.

"Andre was confident over the last few weeks - said how he was going to run him - telling all the youngsters up in our box to



Jockey Mickael Barzalona celebrates on his horse Pour Moi after winning The Investec Derby, during the second day of the Epsom Derby.



Members of Britain's royal family Sophie, Duchess of Wessex (C) and Prince Phillip (R) look toward Prince Edward (L) on the balcony ahead of The Derby horse race during the second day of the Epsom Derby Festival, in Surrey, southern England. Pour Moi ridden by Jockey Mickael Barzalona won the race, Treasure Beach came second and race favorite Carlton House came third place. The Queen's horse, Carlton House, ridden by Ryan Moore, was seeking to be the first Derby winner owned by a reigning monarch since Minoru won in 1909 for King Edward VII.

back him - he was confident so thank you." Barzalona was unapologetic about his theatrics at the end.

"I don't know, it just happened.

"It's fantastic - it took Frankie Dettori 15 years to win his first Derby, and I've done it on my first ride, fabulous!" said Barzalona, who added holding the winner up had always been the strategy.

Carlton House - who had suffered a slight setback earlier in the week - had also been held back in the early stages by last year's Derby winning rider Ryan Moore, but encountered slight interference coming down Tattenham Corner.

However, he looked to have every chance as he and the Conor O'Donoghue-ridden Treasure Beach, trained by Aidan O'Brien,



Dancing Rain, (Foreground) ridden by jockey Johnny Murtagh crosses the line in first place to win The Investec Oaks race on Ladies Day, the first day of the Epsom Derby Festival, in Surrey, southern England.



Dancing Rain, (R) ridden by jockey Johnny Murtagh, crosses the line in first place to win The Investec Oaks race on Ladies Day, the first day of the Epsom Derby Festival, in Surrey, southern England.

gathered in long-time leader Memphis Tennessee, ridden by 18-year-old Joseph O'Brien.

Pour Moi, though, was reeling them in and Carlton House's chances weren't helped when he lost a shoe in the final furlong, but such was the momentum of Barzalona and the winner that little would have stopped them.

The day had started dramatically as controversial Irish jockey Kieren Fallon lost a court case to ride Recital in the Derby.

The British appeal court granted an order sought by Ibrahim Araci, the Turkish owner of another runner Native Khan, to prevent Fallon riding because he had pledged himself to ride his horse and then switched.

As it was the two horses could hardly be separated in the race as Native Khan finished fifth and Recital sixth.



**Previous 20 winners of Epsom Derby
(year, horse, jockey, trainer, owner):**

1990: Quest for Fame, Pat Eddery, Roger Charlton, Khalid Abdullah

1991: Generous, Alan Munro, Paul Cole, Prince Fahd bin Salman

1992: Dr Devious, John Reid, Peter Chapple-Hyam, Sidney H. Craig

1993: Commander in Chief, Michael Kinane, Henry Cecil, Khalid Abdullah

1994: Erhaab, Willie Carson, John Dunlop, Hamdan Al Maktoum

1995: Lammtarra, Walter Swinburn, Saeed bin Suroor, Saeed bin M. Al Maktoum

1996: Shaamit, Michael Hills, William Haggas, Khalifa Dasmal

1997: Benny the Dip, Willie Ryan, John Gosden, Landon Knight

1998: High-Rise, Olivier Peslier, Luca Cumani, M. Obaid Al Maktoum

1999: Oath, Kieren Fallon, Henry Cecil, The Thoroughbred Corp

2000: Sinndar, Johnny Murtagh, John

Oxx, HH Aga Khan IV

2001: Galileo, Michael Kinane, Aidan O'Brien, Magnier/Tabor

2002: High Chaparral, Johnny Murtagh, Aidan O'Brien, Magnier/Tabor

2003: Kris Kin, Kieren Fallon, Sir Michael Stoute, Saeed Suhail

2004: North Light, Kieren Fallon, Sir Michael Stoute, Ballymacoll Stud

2005: Motivator, Johnny Murtagh, Michael Bell, Royal Ascot Racing Club

2006: Sir Percy, Martin Dwyer, Marcus Tregoning, Anthony Pakenham

2007: Authorized, Frankie Dettori, Peter Chapple-Hyam, Al Homaizi/Al Sagar

2008: New Approach, Kevin Manning, Jim Bolger, Princess Haya of Jordan

2009: Sea the Stars, Michael Kinane, John Oxx, Christopher Tsui

2010: Workforce, Ryan Moore, Sir Michael Stoute, Prince Khalid Abdullah

2011: Pour Moi, Mikael Barzalona, Andre Fabre, Mrs John Magnier

Pour Moi (L), ridden by Jockey Mickael Barzalona, goes through the finish line to win The Investec Derby followed by Treasure Beach in second (C) and Carlton House (3rd R) in third place, during the second day of the Epsom Derby Festival, in Surrey. The Queen's horse, Carlton House, ridden by Ryan Moore, was seeking to be the first Derby winner owned by a reigning monarch since Minoru won in 1909 for King Edward VII.



FAME AND GLORY LANDS GOLD CUP GAMBLE

Jamie Spencer teamed up with his old boss Aidan O'Brien to win the Gold Cup aboard Fame And Glory in Ascot. Although the five-year-old colt had never run over the punishing two-and-a-half mile (4000m) trip before he was heavily supported in the betting markets before being sent off the 11-8 favourite.

Fame And Glory, winner of the Irish Derby in 2009, stayed every inch of the trip, however, and followed in the hoofprints of former stablemate Yeats who won four successive Gold Cups from

2006.

Spencer was the retained rider for the Coolmore-backed Ballydoyle yard for 12 months before he left O'Brien's stables in 2005.

"We're getting along a lot better now," joked Spencer afterwards.

"It was a great training performance by Aidan and I am privileged to ride the horse."

Fame And Glory had never run beyond 2,800m,



Jamie Spencer on Fame and Glory (L) wins The Gold Cup on the third day of the Royal Ascot race meeting in southern England



Britain's Queen Elizabeth arrives for the fourth day of racing at Royal Ascot in southern England.



Richard Hughes on Canford Cliffs (L) beats Olivier Peslier on Goldikova to win The Queen Anne Stakes on the first day of the Royal Ascot race meeting in southern England.

having won Group 1 races over 2,000m, 2,200m and 2,400m. On his latest start, he won the Seval Beg Stakes in Ireland and it was then that O'Brien believed that his five-year-old would last home.

"When horses have so much class they often stay and he did," said O'Brien.

"He was the ideal candidate for this race. I'm never confident, always hopeful, but he stayed a mile and a half at the top level and you just hoped he would stay this extreme distance." Richard Hills set a moderate pace on the guaranteed stayer Tastahil, but jockey Richard Hughes could not contain Geordieland, who had not seen

racecourse action for 643 days, and the pair went to the front with 1,600m left in the race.

As the field came out of Swinley Bottom, the famous bend at Ascot, it was up to Spencer to pull the trigger and Fame And Glory bounded to glory. Godolphin's Opinion Poll, ridden by Mickael Barzalona was second, while the French raider Brigantin, trained by Derby-winning handler Andre Fabre, was third.

"Jamie produced him at just the right time," added O'Brien. "He waited, and waited and asked him for one kick. It took three to four lengths off the field. Jamie had ridden him in two races (earlier

in the season) and was confident he would stay." Spencer enjoyed considerable success riding for Ballydoyle including Group 1 successes in the Tattersalls Gold Cup aboard Powerscourt and the St Leger on Brian Boru.

After he had left his retained position he also rode Excellent Art to victory in the St James's Palace Stakes in 2007.

"I was always a big admirer of Jamie," said O'Brien of their split. "He was a young little fella. Coming into a pressure group like ours cannot have been an easy step for him. I can probably be a little intense some times. I didn't blame him from running away from me." Fame And Glory will now enjoy a mid-summer break before a possible tilt at the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, in which he finished fifth behind Workforce last year.

Opinion Poll never looked like reeling in Fame And Glory despite a patient ride from Barzalona that was similar to his swoop on Pour Moi in the English Derby.

That day Barzalona came from last to first to win his first British Classic which prompted an

outrageous celebration involving the teenager standing up in his irons before he crossed the line.

"Opinion Poll finished very well, but not as well as Pour Moi," said Simon Crisford, Godolphin's racing manager. "Mickael put him to sleep at the back of the field and he picked up really well. We were hoping for that stand-up finish but it wasn't to be." It was a bittersweet day for the American challengers as Everyday Dave, trained by Wesley Ward, could only finish 11th in the Group 2 Norfolk Stakes won by Bapak Chinta.

Jeffrey Sanchez, the Puerto Rican jockey, enjoyed the experience of riding and was looking forward to partnering Judy the Beauty on Friday in the Albany Stakes before she was scratched from the race.

"It is a good experience for me to ride at Royal Ascot," said Sanchez, who won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies aboard Awesome Feather in November.

"I would like to come back next year, and maybe I will have a winner tomorrow."



Britain's Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip arrive for the first day of racing at Royal Ascot in southern England



Richard Hughes on Canford Cliffs celebrates after winning The Queen Anne Stakes on the first day of the Royal Ascot race meeting in southern England

BLAME ME, SAYS O'BRIEN AFTER SO YOU THINK'S DEFEAT

Trainer Aidan O'Brien took the blame after So You Think was beaten in the Prince Of Wales's Stakes by Godolphin's Rewilding at Royal Ascot.

So You Think was sent off the 4-11 favourite for the 2000m contest on account of his lofty reputation gained in Australia, where he accumulated two Cox Plates and finished third in the Melbourne Cup in November.

In a thrilling tussle down Ascot's home straight, So You Think looked to have the race won but for a late and sustained surge by Rewilding, ridden by Frankie Dettori.

"It was more my fault than anyone else's that he got beaten and all I can say is that I am sorry," said a deflated O'Brien afterwards. "I think I

just didn't have him fit enough." Rewilding's victory was a fifth success for Godolphin in the Group 1 event, and Dettori's third after the Italian rode Fantastic Light and Grandera to victory in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

"It is sheer joy to see two great horses battle it out like that," said Dettori.

"Goldolphin and Ballydoyle are two great teams and we put our life and soul into the job. This is what we are here for; to have these kind of great races." There was a massive sting in the tail for Dettori as he picked up a nine-day suspension for using his whip with excessive frequency on Rewilding.

The stewards found the Italian hit the winner 24 times inside the final two furlongs and he will now be sidelined from June 29-July 7 - he misses the Coral-Eclipse at Sandown and the first day of the July meeting at Newmarket.

It is the second lengthy ban incurred by Dettori in the space of a few weeks after he was suspended

for 10 days for not riding out to the line on Blue Bunting in the Oaks at Epsom, being narrowly denied third place as a result.

That first ban kicks in on Friday meaning he'll miss the last two days of Royal Ascot.

Rewilding had enjoyed an 81-day layoff after winning the Dubai Sheema Classic at Meydan racecourse in March, and for trainer Mahmood al Zarooni the rest was a crucial factor in his colt's success.

Although it was Al Zarooni's first win at the Royal Meeting, he was quick to mention the involvement of Sheikh Mohammed, the ruler of Dubai, in the colt's preparation.

"I have to be honest it is not me who has trained this horse, but Sheikh Mohammed," said Al Zarooni.

"He always gives me instructions on how to deal



Britain's Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip arrive in the parade ring for the first day of the Royal Ascot race meeting in southern England.

with the horses, their training programmes and how to feed them. It was the Sheikh who first told me that Rewilding should run fresh." Rewilding's victory marks him down as one of the leading colts in the world, and bookmakers quickly installed him at 10-1 in the betting for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Longchamp on October 4.

Before then, Rewilding is likely to be seen out once again at Ascot for next month's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, and Simon Crisford, Godolphin's racing manager, highlighted that the Arc may not be the four-year-old's end of season target.

"I expect we'll look at the King George back at a mile and a half, but we will see what Sheikh Mohammed thinks," said Crisford.

"He really needs to have his races well spaced out so hopefully the King George will be about right. He could run in the Champion Stakes at Ascot in October, too." Earlier in the day Richard Hannon got Strong Suit's career back on track when he saddled the son of Rahy to victory in the Group 3 Jersey Stakes.

Last season Strong Suit had taken the Coventry

Stakes but had flopped badly on his seasonal debut when finishing sixth in the Greenham Stakes at Newbury behind Frankel.

Strong Suit was subsequently operated on to correct a breathing problem.

The victorious trainer said: "The breathing affected his confidence - the further he was going the more his throat was closing. I told everybody to have some money on him today and I should have had a couple of hundred quid on myself."

FRANCE'S IMMORTAL VERSE CROWNED QUEEN OF ASCOT

France dominated Group One Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot when Immortal Verse and Nova Hawk made it a 1-2 for Robert Collet and his son Rod.

The victory came on the back of Pour Moi's success in this month's Epsom Derby when Mickael Barzalona announced his considerable ability to the world with a last-to-first ride aboard the Andre Fabre-trained runner at Epsom.



Race horses run on the second day of the annual Royal Ascot horse racing event near Windsor, Berkshire, on June 15, 2011. The five-day meeting is one of the highlights of the global horse racing calendar.

Robert Collet had not sent a horse over the Channel to Royal Ascot for 25 years when Cash Asmussen rode Last Tycoon to victory in the King's Stand Stakes in the same white and green colours of winning owner Richard Strauss.

The hint was taken, too, as the French filly was backed down from a morning price of 12-1 into 8-1 before the gates opened.

"I am happy for two things," said the winning trainer's son, Rod. "My father beat me and it is always better to lose when it is your family. Everybody is happy and for me Ascot is a beautiful place to be."

It was a thrilling place to be for Robert Collet, also, as the 63-year-old trainer believed he has unearthed a racehorse of some potential.

"This is the best filly I have ever trained," said Collet senior. "Her best weapon is her turn of foot and she has proved she is a Group 1 filly." French rider Gerald Mosse anchored his mount at the back of the pack after the favourite Teolane had broken poorly. As the field came around the turn for home, Mosse used it like a slingshot to take the long route on the outside before holding off Nova Hawk and Barefoot Lady.

"When I pulled her out to challenge her reaction was quicker than I expected and we hit the front too soon," said Mosse.

"It was the first time that I had been on board but she did it really easily." Mosse won the Melbourne Cup on Americain in November and has been riding around the world as a freelance for over 15 years, most notably in Hong Kong.

Immortal Verse was his fourth Royal Ascot winner, and his second in the Coronation Stakes after he guided Gold Splash to victory in the 1993 race.

"The last good filly I rode in the Coronation was Gold Splash and Immortal Verse also has a fantastic turn of foot," said Mosse. "It is one of the best moments to ride a winner at Royal Ascot - it is known around the world and a dream to have a runner, let alone a winner at the top level."

There was further family celebration as Beachfire became Princess Haya Of Jordan's first Royal Ascot winner when William Buick, who had won the earlier King Edward VII Stakes on Nathaniel, partnered the four-year-old to victory in the Wolfreton Stakes.

Beachfire led home Lost In The Moment, owned by Godolphin, the Dubai-based operation founded by Sheikh Mohammed.

"In this case the wife has just beaten the husband and the husband is delighted. It means we are not all in big trouble," said the winning trainer John Gosden on the ownership of the two horses.

For good measure, the Sheikh's son, Sheikh



Hamdan, took the Queen's Vase with Namibian 40 minutes later.

The winner had to survive a Stewards' enquiry before keeping the 3,200m race, and the victorious trainer, Mark Johnston, also saddled Eternal Heart into third and Halifax into fifth.

"I'd thrown a lot of eggs into this basket and turning for home I thought everything was perfect because I had three in the first four," said Johnston.

"I thought Eternal Heart was going to win but then Namibian burst on to the scene."

Racegoers greet Britain's Queen Elizabeth as she arrives for the first day of racing at Royal Ascot in southern England



FRANKEL HOLDS ON TO GIVE CECIL ROYAL JOY

English superhorse Frankel crowned a thrilling few days for the newly-knighted Sir Henry Cecil by winning the St James's Palace Stakes on the opening day of the Royal Ascot.

Frankel justified his being sent off the 3-10 favourite - the shortest priced favourite in the race since 1947 - holding off the fast finishing Irish raider Zoffany to maintain his unbeaten status and add this prize to the English 2000 Guineas last month.

His Guineas win was based on a trail-blazing style, but Cecil had intimated a change in tactics and so it proved when Rerouted, also owned by Prince Khalid Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, went ten lengths clear in the early stages. As Rerouted rounded the bend, Frankel's jockey Tom Queally galvanised his mount into action and he caught

his pacemaker just before the pair entered the straight.

Queally kicked for home and caught his rivals napping, but Ryan Moore conjured a great late run from the Aidan O'Brien-trained Zoffany - who had only reappeared on the racecourse at the end of May after a long absence - but the winner deservedly hung on.

Excelebration took third under Adam Kirby.

Cecil wasn't ruffled at all by the manner in which Zoffany had reduced the gap in the final furlong and ridiculed suggestions that his horse only really stayed six furlongs.

"He settled really well," said 68-year-old Cecil, who was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II last weekend.

"At the final furlong he thought he had done enough. He was idling at the end.



Jamie Spencer on Fame and Glory celebrates winning The Gold Cup on the third day of the Royal Ascot race meeting in southern England

"The plan was to go just before the bend, and in the Royal Lodge (last September) the further he went the better he went. Now he is getting wiser and he felt he had the race won. Tom said he wasn't at all tired, which is good really."

Frankel's narrow victory will have caused palpitations for one punter, who just before the off placed £150,000 pounds on him to win £200,000.

BRAWL LOWERS THE TONE

An unseemly punch-up at the Royal Ascot races triggered concerns that the pinnacle of English high society was becoming over-run with vulgar "riff-raff".

With Queen Elizabeth II in attendance, an ugly brawl erupted at the prestigious racecourse, with drunk punters swinging fists, table legs and even £100 (\$160, 115-euro) bottles of champagne at each other.

On Ladies' Day, others looked on with horror -- and some with amusement -- as a gang of men in suits and ties did battle on the lawn by a Victorian bandstand.

Tables went crashing and jugs of iced drinks were sent flying as the punches flew.

One man rolled around the grass clutching his head while another desperately grasped the leg of a shaven-headed man who kicked him and then grabbed the prostrate man around the throat.

A uniformed military officer stepped in to sort out the mayhem and one man was seen being led away with blood down the back of his suit jacket.

Pictures of the shambles were splashed across several newspapers, many of which questioned whether the

atmosphere of Ascot was being tarnished by "a less distinguished breed of racegoer".

Besides the bloodshed, celebrity vice girls, men covered in tattoos and women baring plenty of flesh were in evidence.

Royal Ascot even has a drugs honesty box this year, whereby racegoers can drop off heroin, crack and other illicit substances as they enter the racecourse to avoid falling foul of the no-drugs policy.

"For 300 years, it has been the highlight of the summer calendar for the well-off and well-connected," said the Daily Mail newspaper.

"But these days, it seems, the enclosures and stands of Royal Ascot are becoming increasingly popular with a much less distinguished breed of racegoer." Veteran BBC racing commentator Peter O'Sullivan was quoted as saying the tattoos and bare flesh were "disrespectful -- not just to the queen, but to the horses."



Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh is pictured on the second day of the annual Royal Ascot horse racing event.

RELIABLE MAN MAKES IT SIX FOR DE ROYER DUPRE



Reliable Man won the French Derby in Chantilly to give his trainer Alain de Royer Dupre his sixth win in the classic.

Given a superb ride by veteran Gerald Mosse, he came late down the outside to deprive Bubble Chic in the final strides and prevail by 3/4 of a length to give the winning jockey his third win in the race but first since 1996.

"It's a special pleasure to have won this for the

sixth time," said de Royer Dupre, who last won it with Darsi in 2006.

"I was always quietly confident with this horse. He may not have had the race records of others in the race but he is a horse I have always had high hopes for.

"The ground too didn't give me too much concern as it has always got a little bit of give in the ground." Mosse was delighted to have landed

(2ndL blue) crosses the finish line and wins the 171st Prix du Jockey Club also known as the French Derby at the Hippodrome de Chantilly, northern France.



the race again after such a long time.

"It is a real pleasure to have won this race on this horse," said Mosse.

"I knew I was going to win 400 metres out. I dedicate this victory to the trainer as he has always shown confidence in me." However, it was the performance of the third horse home, favourite Beraan, which caught the eye as he completely missed the break under Christophe Lemaire and ended up just two and three quarter lengths off the winner.

At one point he was 15 lengths off the 15 other runners but with a sedate pace being set up front by Frankie Dettori on Casamento he was slowly

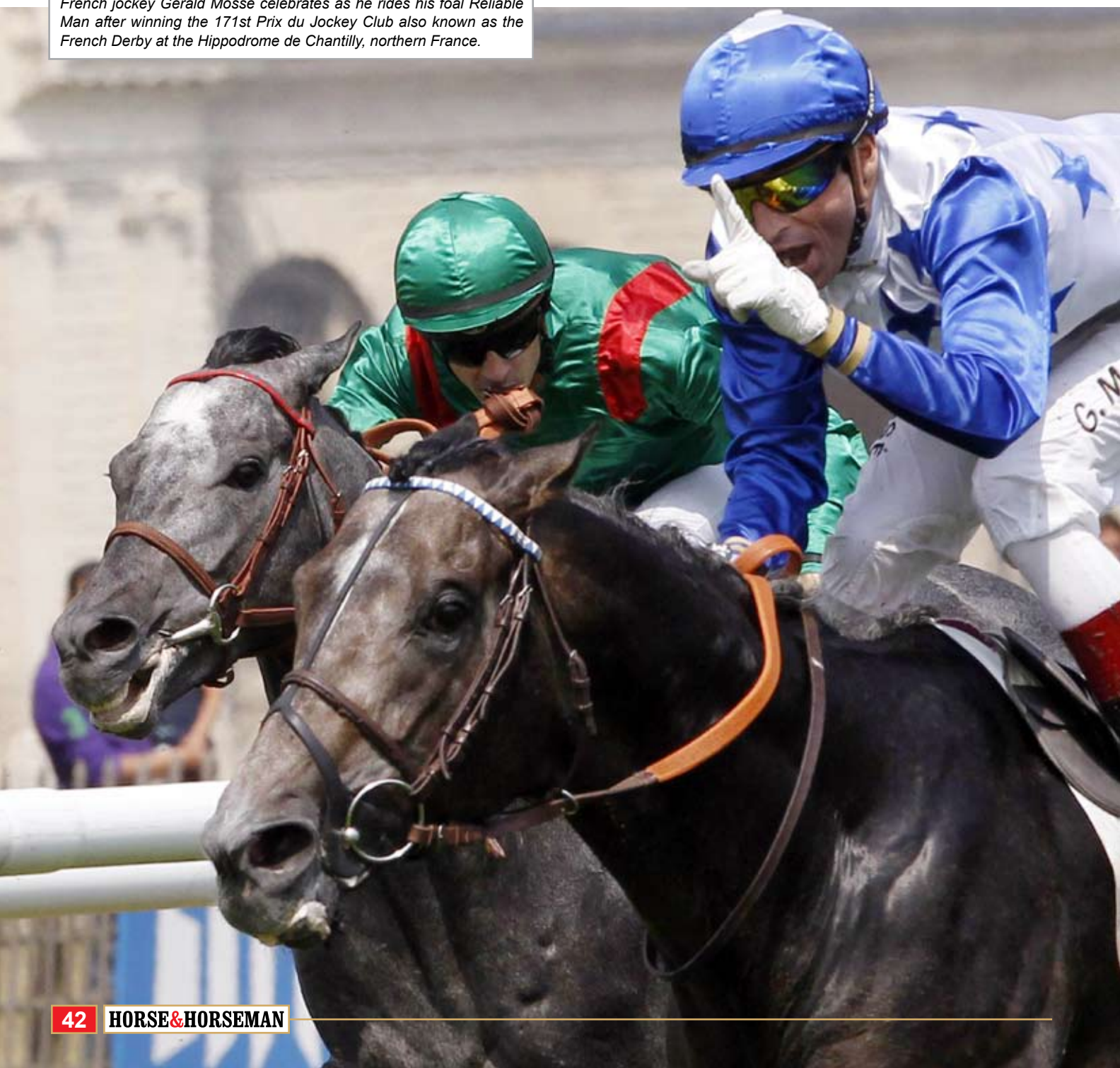
but surely able to tack onto the back coming into the final straight.

Dettori and Casamento were overhauled by Bubble Chic halfway down the straight and as he retreated he caused further problems for Lemaire and Baraan as they attempted to make their way through the field.

Bubble Chic looked set for victory under Ioritz Mendizabal as other favourites such as Irish 2000 Guineas champion Roderic O'Connor beat a retreat, while French 2000 Guineas hero Tin Horse rallied from the pack.

However, Mosse, rousing up all his experience, produced Reliable Man with the strongest of

French jockey Gerald Mosse celebrates as he rides his foal Reliable Man after winning the 171st Prix du Jockey Club also known as the French Derby at the Hippodrome de Chantilly, northern France.



finishes to edge out Bubble Chic.

Just behind there was an almighty battle to take third place and a cheque for nearly 200,000 euros to boot as Lemaire somehow got his recalcitrant favourite into the frame.

Beraan just nosed out English outsider Colombian while the brave Tin Horse was fifth.

Beraan's owner His Highness the Aga Khan was philosophical in defeat.

"He ran a cracking race given that he missed the break and showed real acceleration when he eventually got back to the others," said the Aga Khan, who has tasted victory in this race seven times.



French jockey Gerald Mosse celebrates on his foal Reliable Man after winning the 171st Prix du Jockey Club also known as the French Derby at the Hippodrome de Chantilly, northern France.

"He has done this before so it is not a total surprise. However he has plenty of other targets and the Grand Prix de Paris in July is one of them." The Aga Khan was to suffer further disappointment later in the day as his top class colt from last year Behkabad found one too good for him on his seasonal re-appearance in the Group Two Grand Prix de Chantilly.

The four-year-old colt - fourth in last year's Arc de Triomphe - looked to have the race in his grasp until Olivier Peslier produced Silver Pond to deprive him of the prize.

However, greater targets await Behkabad this season with probably next up the Group One Grand Prix de Saint Cloud with the Arc beckoning in October.

Smart filly Immortal Verse has a more immediate target with the Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot in just over a week.

She finally repaid the faith shown in her by trainer Robert Collet in winning the Group Two Prix Sandringham after a disappointing run in last month's French 1000 Guineas.



GOLDEN LILAC SHINES IN CLASSIC DOUBLE



French jockey Martin Guyon (L) rides Golden Lilac at the finish line to win the 162nd Prix de Diane horse racing, in Chantilly, north of Paris. Golden Lilac won the French Oaks (Prix de Diane) here today to complete a classic double having won the French 1000 Guineas.

Golden Lilac completed a memorable classic double in Chantilly as she landed the French Oaks (the Prix de Diane) to add to her French 1000 Guineas win last month.

In doing so she trumped her dam (mother) Grey Lilas who was placed in both for the same owner Baron Dietrich von Boetticher and gave the German a second successive classic double having won the French 2000 Guineas and Derby last year with Lope de Vega.

In pulling off the double she is the third filly to do

so this century with the last one Zarkava going on to win the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in 2008.

Von Boetticher, who has just four horses in training, said that would also be the aim for Golden Lilac.

"I have always dreamt of winning the Arc and without knowing what the trainer (Andre Fabre) thinks I want her to go for it this year," said von Boetticher.

The winner - giving Fabre his first Oaks winner since Nebraska Tornado in 2003 - was brilliantly





French jockey Martin Guyon riding Golden Lilac celebrates after winning the 162nd Prix de Diane horse racing, in Chantilly, north of Paris. Golden Lilac won the French Oaks (Prix de Diane) here today to complete a classic double having won the French 1000 Guineas.

ridden by Maxime Guyon to come home ahead of favourite Galikova, who was unable to end crack rider Olivier Peslier's drought in the race.

Outsider Glorious Sight was third under last week's French Derby winning rider Gerald Mosse, who was seeking a record sixth Diane win.

Guyon and Fabre were to make it a cleansweep of the four group races on offer as they won the next three on the card - all Group Threes - while 65-year-old Fabre had also won the opener, the lady riders event.

Guyon, who had been reduced to playing second fiddle to Fabre's rising star Mickael Barzalona

who stole the headlines in winning the Epsom Derby last Saturday, was ecstatic on crossing the line punching the air.

"I am living a memorable moment," said the 22-year-old, who had ridden the lead horse when Fabre had given Epsom Derby hero Pour Moi a gallop over the course last month.

"Last year I won the French Derby in the same colours and this year it is my first Diane.

"When you ride a horse like this it is a real pleasure. She has so much gas and I never doubted she would stay the extra distance compared to the Guineas.

"I have no doubt she will stay the distance in the Arc (2400 metres compared to the 2100 of the Oaks)," he added.

The owner's racing manager Crispin de Moubray, who was responsible for bringing him into racing in France, said that it had been a joy to watch.

"A great performance. She was always in the right place and was relaxed throughout," said the Paris-based Englishman, who outdid Guyon with his reaction shaking both his fists in triumph.

"A great filly." For Peslier it was further disappointment on a day when many expected the 38-year-old would end his drought and claim his 100th Group One victory.

However, despite being given a lead by a

pacemaker Polemique the Freddie Head-trained filly, half-sister to the legendary Goldikova, was caught napping by the winner three furlongs out.

Peslier managed to rally her in the final furlong but despite overhauling Glorious Sight it was not enough to reel in the winner, who remains unbeaten after five races.

"I followed the pacemaker but she was a little lost for pace," said Peslier, who was finishing in the minor placings for the eighth time.

"I thought that I would get third so I am satisfied with second. The winner will come but hopefully when these two meet again we will have our revenge."



French jockey Martin Guyon riding Golden Lilac, flanked by his owner Gestut Ammerland (R), celebrates after winning the 162nd Prix de Diane horse racing in Chantilly, north of Paris. Golden Lilac won the French Oaks (Prix de Diane) here today to complete a classic double having won the French 1000 Guineas

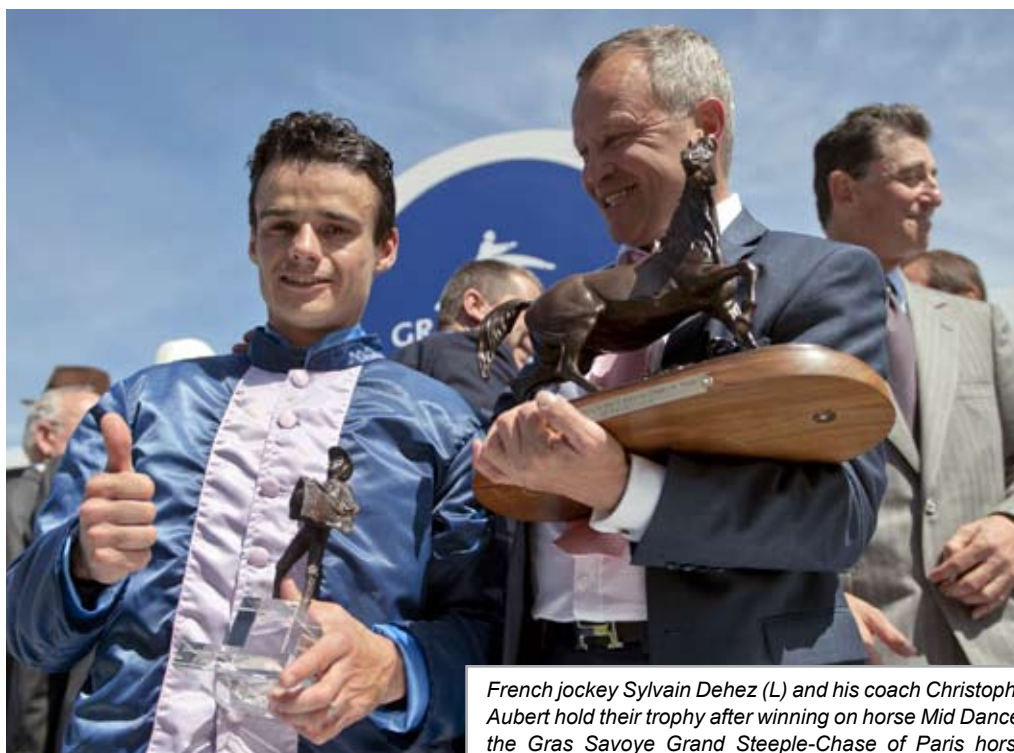
STEEPLECHASE



French jockey Sylvain Dehez celebrates on his horse Mid Dancer as they cross the finish line of the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.

The steeplechase is a form of horse racing (primarily conducted in the United Kingdom, Canada, United States, Australia, France, and Ireland) and derives its name from early races in which orientation of the course was by reference to a church[1] steeple, jumping fences and ditches and generally traversing the many intervening obstacles in the countryside. In Great Britain and Ireland the official term now used for the sport is National Hunt racing.

It is a term now used to refer to a distance horse race with diverse fence and ditch obstacles; the most famous of these is the



French jockey Sylvain Dehez (L) and his coach Christophe Aubert hold their trophy after winning on horse Mid Dancer the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing on at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.

Grand National run annually at Aintree Racecourse, in Liverpool, since its inception in 1836 (the official race was held three years later).

The Great Paris Steeplechase takes place at the Hippodrome d'Auteuil. This is the premier event of the French racing season due to the





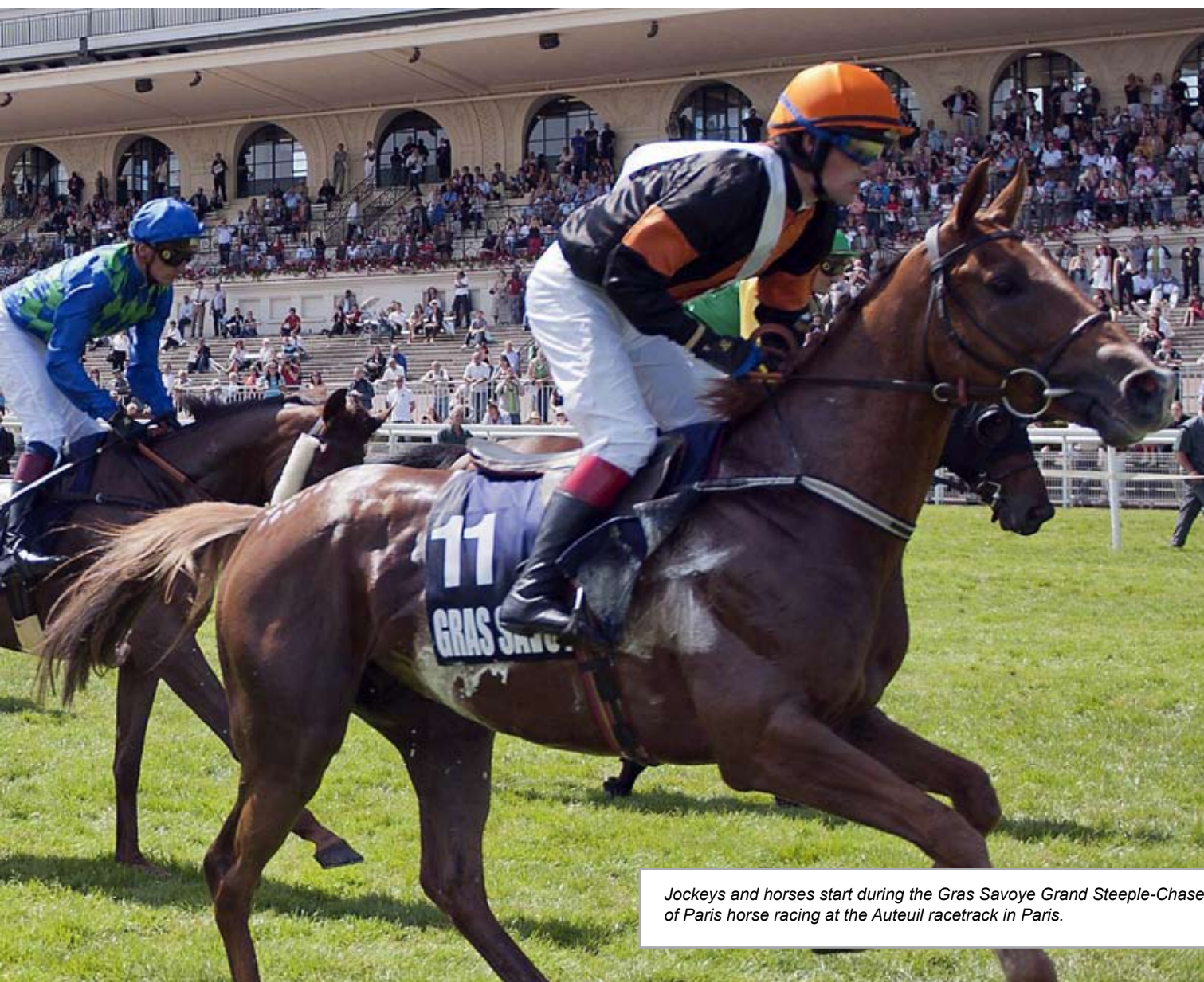
severity of its course and the spectacular size of the purse awaiting the winner.

The first race took place in Auteuil on 25 May 1874, under the name of Grand National of France. There have been many alterations over the years, but, since 1981 the course distance has been reduced to 5800 metres, with 23 obstacles in all.

The race itself is preceded by the *Défilé des Drags*, a parade of magnificent horse-drawn carriages from Foch Avenue right

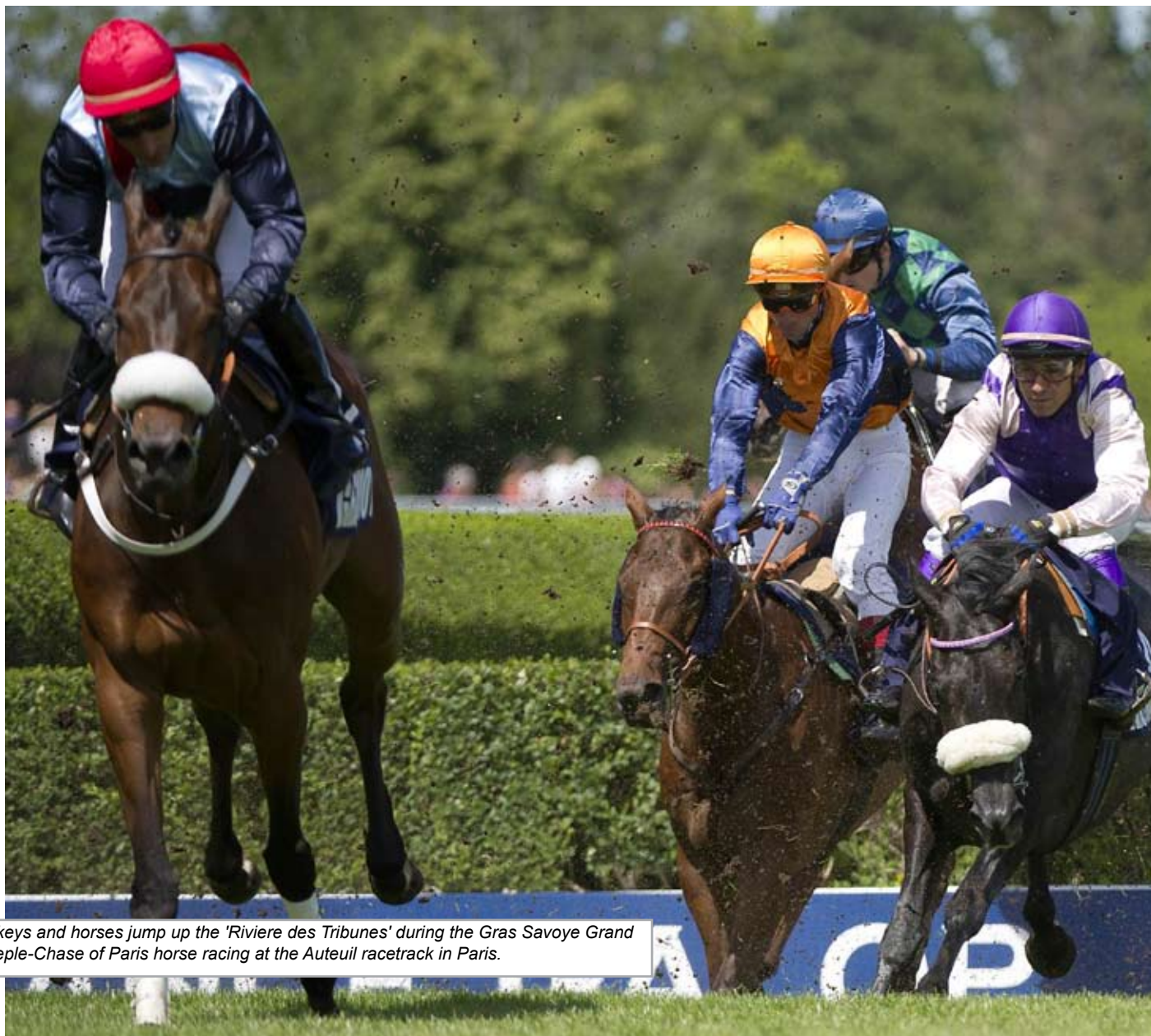


Jockeys and horses compete during the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.



Jockeys and horses start during the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.





Jockeys and horses jump up the 'Riviere des Tribunes' during the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.

FRANCE

French jump racing is similar to British and Irish National Hunt races, with a few notable differences. Hurdles are not collapsible, being more akin to small brush fences. Chases often have large fences called Bullfinches, a large hedge up to 8 ft (2.4 m) tall that horses have to jump through rather than over. There are also a larger number of Cross-Country Chases where horses have to jump up and down banks, gallop through water, jump over stone walls as well as jump normal chasing fences.

Unlike in most countries where the Thoroughbred is almost exclusively used for jump racing, many of the horses in French jump racing are AQPS (Autre Que Pur Sang), a breed of horse developed in France crossing Thoroughbreds

with saddle horses and other local breeds.

Auteuil in Paris is perhaps the best known racecourse in France for French jump racing.

HISTORY

The steeplechase originated in Ireland in the 18th century as an analogue to cross-country thoroughbred horse races which went from church steeple to church steeple, hence "steeplechase". The first steeplechase is said to have been the result of a wager in 1752 between Cornelius O'Callaghan and Edmund Blake, racing four miles (6 km) cross-country from Buttevant Church to St. Leger Church in Doneraile, in Cork, Ireland. An account of the race was believed to have been in the library of the O'Brien's of Dromoland Castle.

Most of the earlier steeplechases were contested cross-country rather than on a track, and resembled English cross country as it exists today. The first recorded steeplechase over a prepared track with fences was run at Bedford in 1810, although a race had been run at Newmarket in 1794 over a mile with five-foot bars every quarter mile.[2] The first recognised English National Steeplechase took place on Monday 8 March 1830. The 4-mile (6.4 km) race, organised by Thomas Coleman of St Albans, was run from Bury Orchard, Harlington in Bedfordshire to the Obelisk in Wrest Park, Bedfordshire. The winner was Captain Macdowall on "The Wonder", owned by Lord Ranelagh, who won in a time of 16 mins 25 seconds.



French jockey Sylvain Dehez holds his trophy after winning on horse Mid Dancer the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing on May 29, 2011 at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.



French jockey Thierry Majorcyrk on Remember Rose jumps up the 'Riviere des Tribunes' during the Gras Savoye Grand Steeple-Chase of Paris horse racing at the Auteuil racetrack in Paris.

BRITISH PRINCES PLAY POLO FOR LESOTHO ORPHANS



Britain's William, the Duke of Cambridge, plays polo for the Tusk Trust Team during a round-robin tournament of the Sentebale Cup at Cowarth Park, in Ascot. The tournament saw Prince Harry playing for a Sentebale team, William the Duke of Cambridge playing for the Tusk Trust Team and a third team, sponsored by Bin Drai Enterprises. The Tusk Trust Team went on to win the match.



Britain's William (L), the Duke of Cambridge, plays polo for the Tusk Trust Team during a round-robin tournament of the Sentebale Cup at Cowarth Park, in Ascot. The tournament saw Prince Harry playing for a Sentebale team, William the Duke of Cambridge playing for the Tusk Trust Team and a third team, sponsored by Bin Drai Enterprises. The Tusk Trust Team went on to win the match.

Britain's Prince William beat his younger brother Prince Harry in a charity polo match played in Windsor in aid of orphaned children in Lesotho.

The siblings led opposing teams in the Sentebale Polo Cup in pouring rain.

The annual contest was due to take place in Dubai earlier this year but due to the widening unrest in the Middle East at the time it was shifted to Coworth



Britain's Prince Harry plays polo during a round-robin tournament of the Sentebale Cup at Cowarth Park, in Ascot. The tournament saw Prince Harry playing for a Sentebale team, William the Duke of Cambridge playing for the Tusk Trust Team and a third team, sponsored by Bin Drai Enterprises. The Tusk Trust Team went on to win the match.



Britain's Duke of Cambridge (C) and Prince Harry (R) play polo during a round-robin tournament of the Sentebale Cup at Cowarth Park, in Ascot. The tournament saw Prince Harry playing for a Sentebale team, William the Duke of Cambridge playing for the Tusk Trust Team and a third team, sponsored by Bin Drai Enterprises. The Tusk Trust Team went on to win the match.

Park, near Windsor, west of London.

The event raises money for Sentebale, which Harry co-founded with Lesotho's Prince Seeiso to help orphans in the landlocked southern African country, which has been ravaged by AIDS.

Harry, 26, played for Sentebale against William, 28, who turned out for a Tusk Trust team, a conservation charity of which he is royal patron.

Sentebale means "forget-me-not" in the Sesotho

language and was chosen as a reminder of the victims of poverty and HIV/AIDS in Lesotho.

Earlier, the brothers attended a service of thanksgiving for their grandfather Prince Philip at Saint George's Chapel in Windsor Castle.

The service was held to mark the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II's husband, who played polo until he reached 50.

UNDERSTANDING FEEDS FOR THE BUSY OWNER

by: Stacey Oke, DVM, MSc

Providing a complete and balanced diet does not need to be complicated or a drain on time, energy, or finances.

Feeding horses can be a daunting and time-consuming task, particularly if owners attempt to optimize and maximize their horse's diet by unnecessarily introducing concentrates, vitamins, or other supplements. But providing a complete diet does not have to be time-consuming or expensive.

Step 1: Stop!

Horses require six nutrients in their diet: water, carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Except for most of the water requirements, almost all of a horse's remaining dietary requirements can be obtained from a single source: forage.

TIME-SAVING TIP

Pre-weigh 10- to 12-pound stacks of hay one or two days a week. This will allow you to quickly throw your horse a properly weighed feeding of hay on days when time is tight.

"Adult horses that are not involved in moderate to heavy work do not generally require grain,"

advises Eleanor Kellon, VMD, proprietor of Equine Nutrition Solutions in Pennsylvania.

In fact, Kellon suggests that many horses will maintain an appropriate body weight and obtain all necessary nutrients on pasture and free-choice hay alone.

The only exception to this rule is sodium.



According to Equine Extension Specialist Carey Williams, PhD, from the Equine Science Center at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, all horses require plain white salt, regardless of their feeding regime. The salt can be offered either free-choice as a salt block or as 1-2 tablespoons top-dressed if the horse does not care for the licks.

A mineral block (widely known as the "red block") is not essential, required, or recommended for the majority of horses because the levels of minerals (other than sodium) in the block are not at the level required by horses.



“In addition, some horses may consume a 50-pound block in a matter of days, which could cause problems with the mineral balance of their system,” explains Williams.

Step 2: Weigh your Hay

If owners wish to feed hay in a daily ration instead of free-choice, each horse requires approximately 1.5 to 2.5% of their body weight in hay per day. Therefore, an average 1,000-pound horse will eat approximately 20 pounds of hay on a daily basis. Since counting flakes or “eyeballing” hay is an unreliable estimate at best, the only way to know how much hay you are feeding is to weigh it.

Kellon recommends using a bathroom scale in the barn. Weigh yourself and then weigh yourself again holding the hay. Alternatively, an inexpensive fish scale can be easily used in any barn.

For horses that are on pasture and being fed a ration of hay each day, the amount of required hay to meet their daily energy requirements can still be determined easily. A horse on good-quality pasture 24 hours a day, seven days a week, will meet his full 2% body weight energy requirement. Therefore, if a horse is on pasture half of this time, one could assume that 1% of his body weight is required in hay, which is equivalent to approximately 10 pounds of hay for an average 1,000-pound horse. Similarly, if the horse is on pasture only one-quarter of the time, then 1.5% of his daily energy should be supplied

as hay (i.e., 15 pounds of hay per day).

Poll Results

How do you measure your horse’s feed?

- Use a coffee can or scoop and go by volume: 73%
- Weigh each serving: 27%
- Total responses: 1,786

The only complicating factor is if the pasture is overgrazed. If the pasture is grazed down approximately 50%, then a horse on pasture full time is likely only receiving 50% of his daily energy requirement. In this situation, an additional 1% of his body weight in forage (or 10 pounds of hay for an average 1,000-pound horse) will be required. Horses turned out on a 50% grazed pasture half of their time will, therefore, only be eating one-quarter of their daily energy requirement and will need to be fed three-quarters of their energy requirement in supplemental hay--approximately 15 pounds of hay for an average 1,000-pound horse.

Some equine nutritionists would argue these estimations on grass consumption during turnout are oversimplified. While there are few studies on pasture intake, there are estimates that horses can eat 0.5-1kg (1.1-2.1 pounds) of pasture dry matter per hour when they are turned out. Good quality pasture is usually higher in calories and other nutrients than hay, so they will often eat more than 50% of their requirements during a half-day turnout.

Step 3: Evaluate Body Condition

The only way to determine if your horse is being fed enough (or too much) using the forage-only approach is to properly evaluate body condition.





“In my experience, many owners either overfeed their horses because they like their horses overweight, or they are not familiar with what a healthy weight looks like,” explains Kellon.

Just like in human medicine, obesity in horses is detrimental. Overweight horses are unable to dissipate heat during strenuous or prolonged exercise, and they can become resistant to the effects of insulin. This, in turn, is thought to contribute to the development of laminitis. Further, overweight horses find infrequent work (e.g., the weekend ride) challenging due to the extra body weight they carry.

Kellon suggests a horse is considered overweight if:

- The ribs are difficult to feel even with firm digital pressure;
- There is a bulging, “cresty” neck;
- The withers are rounded and only the tip of the spinous processes are easily felt or they are covered in fat;
- The girth makes an indent in the horse’s fat when tightened;
- The saddle makes an indent in the fat on the horse’s back;
- The shoulder blade of the horse cannot be easily seen and is not distinguishable from the neck, shoulder, and body of the horse.

- The area surrounding the tailhead is bulging and feels soft, or;

- The inner thighs touch each other more than a quarter of the way down the inner thigh region when the horse is standing square.

Ideally, horses at an appropriate body weight have ribs and hip bones that are not visible, but they are easily felt.

Exceptions to the “Forage Only” Rule

Adult horses that typically require an

additional source of calories to maintain an appropriate body condition are those with higher energy demands, such as competitive horses, broodmares, or the infamous “hard keepers.” A horse might also lose condition if he has problems with teeth that require veterinary attention or if he’s low in the pecking order in his herd situation and simply is not getting enough to eat. Horses falling into this latter category can be separated from the herd and fed an additional ration of hay each day.

Even if only poor-quality (not moldy) hay is available, the daily energy requirements for most horses can still be met to maintain an appropriate condition without the addition of concentrates. Williams advises that if only poor-quality hay is available, then a basic multivitamin/mineral supplement should be fed to the horse on a daily basis.

For owners uncomfortable with feeding poor-quality hay or if hay is either prohibitively expensive or unavailable, then forage substitutes such as beet pulp without molasses, hay cubes, pellets, or bagged hay chaff can be considered. Again, switching to a forage substitute does not necessitate the addition of concentrates!

“For horses that are not maintaining their condition on their current diet, the first step is to simply increase the amount of forage,” suggests

Williams. Increasing the amount of forage by 2-5 pounds per day gradually over the course of two to three weeks may be sufficient, assuming the horse is cleaning up his hay. If the horse is losing condition and not cleaning up his hay, then an additional source of energy will be required and concentrates should be considered.

How to Use Concentrates

The first step in adding concentrates to a horse's diet is to visit a local feed store to determine what kinds and brands of products are available. For average adult horses, a basic pelleted feed or sweet feed (i.e., concentrates mixed with molasses to improve palatability) containing 10-12% crude protein and 3-10% fat is sufficient.

"The most important consideration when introducing a concentrated food is to keep feeding the exact same amount of forage and increase the amount of concentrate extremely slowly, which necessitates weighing the concentrate," emphasizes Williams.

TIME- AND MONEY- SAVING TIP

Simple, inexpensive multivitamin/mineral products are available either in pelleted or powder formulas. Feed the recommended dose each day to horses only when good-quality hay

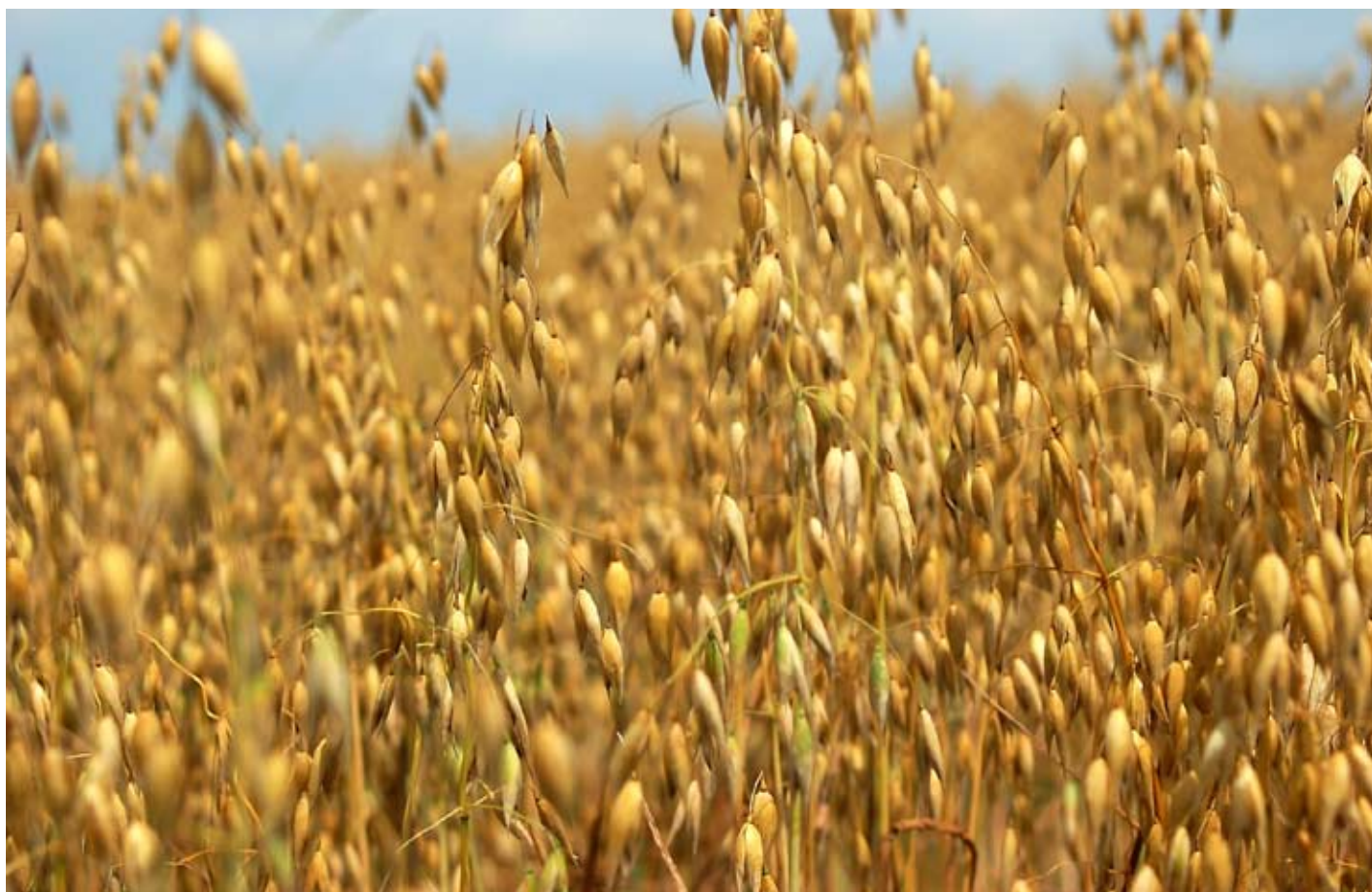
is unavailable.

She recommends starting with 1 pound of concentrate per day, divided into two or three feedings. The amount of concentrate fed can be increased by a half-pound every two to three days. No more than 6-8 pounds of concentrate should be fed per horse per day, and definitely no more than 3-5 pounds at any single feeding.

Kellon advises that if the expected results are not achieved after adding concentrates according to the manufacturer's recommendations, the owner should consult his or her veterinarian.

One additional product worth mentioning is the complete feed. Complete feeds are pelleted or extruded food products that contain forage, protein, oils, vitamins, and minerals. While complete feeds contain all of the required energy and essential nutrients, horses fed complete feeds consume their ration very quickly, leaving the remainder of the day with nothing to do.

"Horses are grazers by nature and normally spend the majority of their day eating," explains Williams. Feeding complete feeds, which are not intended to be supplemented with hay or other types of forage, leaves too much time for horses to partake in "other" activities, such as cribbing and additional destructive behaviors.



Fashion & Fitties





Indian Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai-Bachchan attends the 162nd Prix de Diane horse racing, in Chantilly, north of Paris.



Members of Britain's royal family, Kate, Duchess of Cambridge (L) speaks with Princess Eugenie (R) on the balcony ahead of The Derby horse race during the second day of the Epsom Derby.



Former England football player Gary Lineker's wife Danielle Bux watch a race on the first day of the annual Royal Ascot.



A woman poses in her hat on Ladies Day, the third day of racing at Royal Ascot.



















QUEEN TOURS IRISH RACING CENTRE AS VISIT TONE LIGHTENS

Queen Elizabeth II indulged her passion for horses as her historic visit to Ireland took on a lighter feel after two days laden with reconciliation and symbolism.

The British monarch was shown around the National Stud in Kildare, the heart of Ireland's rich tradition of racehorse breeding, and was later treated to a cultural celebration of Irish singing, dancing and fashion.

The sovereign, who breeds racehorses herself, saw a trainee jockey demonstrating a racing simulator in a visit which ushered in a more relaxed second half to her historic four-day trip.

On Wednesday, the queen expressed regret and "deep sympathy" to the victims of Britain and Ireland's turbulent shared history in a speech seen as a barometer of relations between the neighbours.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip follow Lady Chryss O'Reilly while visiting the Irish National Stud, one of Ireland's top horsebreeding centres near Dublin.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth walks with jockey Johnny Murtagh (L) while visiting the Irish National Stud, one of Ireland's top horsebreeding centres near Dublin.

She said it was “impossible to ignore the weight of history” and those who lost their lives could never be forgotten.

The carefully-weighted words added to the theme of reconciliation in the first visit by a British monarch to Ireland since it gained independence in 1922.

She has laid wreaths in memory of fighters for Irish independence and Irish soldiers who died fighting for Britain in World War I, and visited Croke Park, the site of a massacre by British troops in 1920.

“It is a sad and regrettable reality that through history our islands have experienced more than their fair share of heartache, turbulence and loss,” the queen said in her keynote speech.

The queen added: “To all those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past I extend my sincere thoughts and deep sympathy.” A non-political figure with little de facto power over her governments, it is not within the sovereign’s role to deliver apologies, but British newspaper The

Times said it came “as close as anyone could have dared hope”.

Simon Coveney, Ireland’s agriculture minister, said the queen’s visit had been a welcome tonic for a country still suffering from the collapse of its once-booming economy.

“Ireland hasn’t had a whole lot to be positive about over the last two and half years. This week is a really positive good news story in a really significant way and we should be cherishing that,” he said at the National Stud.

He revealed that the queen had requested to meet young people on Thursday -- most of the visit has taken place in emptied streets amid high security due to of fears of attacks from dissident republicans opposed to the Northern Ireland peace process.

“The request before coming here was the capacity for informal discussion, particularly with young people. She wanted that,” Coveney said.

Opening up the possibility of future visits to race meets, he said Queen Elizabeth would “certainly



Britain's Queen Elizabeth speaks with Chryss O'Reilly during her visit to the Irish National Stud in Kildare, Ireland. The Queen is on the third day of a four day state visit to Ireland which is the first state visit by a British monarch since Ireland's independence.

be welcome from my perspective”.

The queen has had a lifelong interest in horses and still rides at 85.

Clearly in her element, she chatted with farriers and trainee jockeys and was shown some of the finest stallions at the stud farm, including Invincible Spirit, who commands fees of 60,000 euros.

Ireland is the world's third largest thoroughbred breeder, and racing and breeding are very much a staple of Irish life, not to mention its economy.

National Stud chief executive John Osbourne escorted the Queen around the facility.

“It’s of immense historic significance, not just because of the issues that were dealt with on Wednesday,” he told AFP.

“This is about normal sporting stuff. We’ve always had good healthy relationships. Today was her demonstrating what everyone has known for a long time: that the vast majority on both sides have always been friends.” In the evening, the British embassy hosted its own celebration of the visit.

Some 2,000 guests were treated to a show of British and Irish fashion, Irish dancing and singing, and readings from key Irish literary works.

Ireland has mounted the biggest security operation in its history with 10,000 police and troops guarding the queen due to the threat from republican extremists.

However demonstrations have rarely hit triple figures and have failed to derail the visit.

Euston Park – A Landscape Made For Riding Pre Ride for the World Championship 2012

HH Sheikh Mohammed wins 160 km ride and gets trophy from Sheikh Hamdan

Heidi

July 24th saw the pre ride for the coming World Championship Endurance Riding in 2012. Everybody should be looking forward to taking their horses over these fields and rolling grasslands where riding seems to be a dream, even for endurance riders!

The loops are going through beautiful estates, farmland and also water crossings.

There is some tar road, some gravel and little stony ground. Soft hills have to be climbed and the horses took them easily... at least the good ones.



Water point, the riders from the Emirates together

Many of the top riders were not there to compete, reason would have been that from the continent it is quite expensive to go to England, Ferry transfer and then again some time to reach Thetford the main town near Euston Park.

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai won the 160 km endurance race at Euston Park.

By this success he was qualified for the Endurance World Cup 2012 which will take place in August next year again at Euston Park.

Euston Park is not too far away from Newmarket the world famous place for yearling auctions of English



Thoroughbreds. The smaller airports like Luton are close, compared to Heathrow, from where it takes 2 to 3 hours to reach Euston Park on very good roads and highways.

Facilities in Euston Park are adequate to the beautiful settings, some improvements will for sure be made esp. concerning the media working area and the paddocks at the arrival gate. The Vet Gate is marvellous and I think it is a good idea not to separate the different lanes by ropes As we could see before in Lexington where

they separated the lanes with wonderful flower pots ... none was destroyed by horses' hooves!

There were 6 loops all together and the distances were 38, 29, 30, 20, 23, 20.

72 horses and their riders started in the 160 kms and after the 3rd loop they were down to 46 participants, the others were mainly lame. Could it have been the horrible rains of the days before which made the ground deep and heavy to run on?



Sultan Zainal Abidin King of Malaysia



The Emirate Riders coming "home" successfully

Salman Ali Al Sabri on EO Rakam of Emaar Stables was leading till after the 3rd loop with an average speed of 24 km/h, then he disappeared and other UAE riders took over. After gate 3 the first 16 riders were from UAE, among them one from Sri Lanka and one from Saudi Arabia. Riders from 16 nations competed and in the end only 4 nations were in the finish, 1 from Spain, 1 from Great Britain and one from France, the other 8 were from UAE.

A wonderful endurance day, no injuries, all well and the weather was amazingly supporting the tiring sport for horse and man.

HH Sheikh Mohammed received the award from his son Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince, who also took part in the race and then was asked by the organising committee to present the trophies to the winners.

HH Sheikh Mohammed was champion, riding

his horse Pony Express with a timing of 7:40:06 hours at an average speed of 20,86 km/h

Saeed Sqr Mohammed Al Ameri on Pappo came second in the race at

7:40:07 hours and average speed 20,86 km/h

Shaikha Maryam Omar Al Qassimi riding Nadirha Du Breuil finished third in

7:40:08 at an average of 20,86 km/h

Mohammed Al Adhat, Deputy General Manager of Dubai Equestrian Club, congratulated HH Sheikh Mohammed to his victory and the achievements which qualified him for next year's World Cup Race.

The pre ride for the World Championship next year was a full success.

Altogether 65 riders, among them Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the King of Malaysia Sultan Zainal Abidin, and some



Saeed Saqr Al Ameri with Pappo



prominent riders from Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Morocco too part in this race.

The riders were happy about the ground, the markings of the loops, and – what seemed new: the road difficulties, like big stones, holes, bends were all marked with colours, so that no horse should stumble. All for the horse's welfare, which is an important aim for the FEI (Federation Equestre International) in their manifest.

Also, the vet check has to prove the horse's good health to that point that it should be "fit to continue", or it would be eliminated. Those are quite tough rules, sometimes very difficult for the rider to accept, but it is in the name of the welfare of the horse.

So, Euston Park was another good example for the acceptance of endurance riding as a serious horsesport. And if you see the well prepared "marathon" horses, you can see in their eyes that they enjoy running, the Arabian breed is made for running The drinkers of the wind.



HH Sh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum with his riders



After more than 140 kms

THE PALIO IN SIENA

Which is known locally as Il Palio di Siena or simply Il Palio, is a folk festival based around horse races.

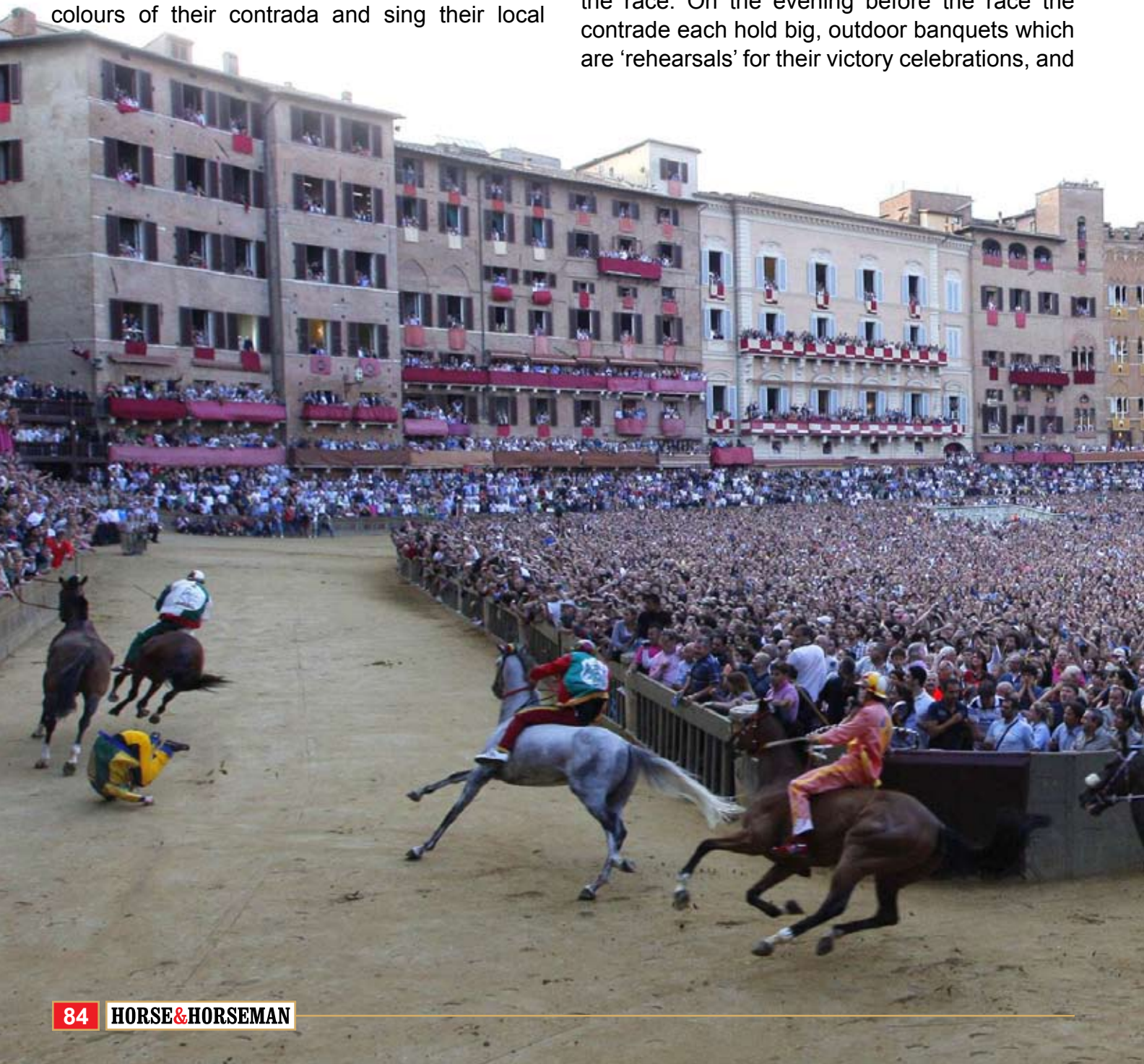
Held in the Italian city of Siena on 2nd July and 16th August every year, the much-anticipated Palio di Siena has taken place since 1656.

Representatives from ten of the city's seventeen wards, or contrade, take part in the race and are dressed in colourful costumes that represent their contrade.

They race on horseback around the Piazza del Campo to the cheers and encouragement of some 50,000 spectators, who often wear the colours of their contrada and sing their local

anthems. The winner is the first horse across the finish line, whether or not its rider is still on it – it's not uncommon for riders to fall from their horses during the 90 seconds that it takes to complete the course.

Preparations for the race are taken seriously and each contrada spends a lot of time and money trying to ensure that they will win. There is also considerable rivalry between the contrade and intense competition for who gets to ride in the race. On the evening before the race the contrade each hold big, outdoor banquets which are 'rehearsals' for their victory celebrations, and









which are attended by about 25,000 people in total. Banquets are held after the race as well, whether the contrade won or not.

After the horses receive blessings at churches

in their contrada, they and the crowds all converge on the Piazza del Campo for the 3 hour pre-race pageant, and the race itself. The pageant includes a parade with people dressed in brightly-coloured medieval costumes, floats,





bands, horses and chariots. In the four months before the first Palio in July, each contrada puts on a parade to celebrate their patron saints, and the horses are chosen for the race.

Siena is beautiful, compact city in the hills of Tuscany in the north-west of Italy. The medieval centre of Siena with its many fine buildings and traffic-free winding lanes is a World Heritage Site. To the north of the city is the Chianti region with its spectacular views, vineyards and numerous historic towns, and to the west are nature reserves and the coast.

The Event

The Palio is a pretty complex event that has gained additional rules through the centuries, as well as traditions and customs, many which only members of the contrada are aware of. Below

is a highlight of some of the main rules and traditions of the Palio, which should be useful in better understanding the event.

The Palio horse race takes place twice a year, one the 2nd of July (Palio of Provenzano, in honor of the Madonna of Provenzano) and on August 16th (Palio of the Assumption, in honor of the Virgin Mary's Assumption).

During this special occasion, the main square in Siena, the Piazza del Campo, is prepared for the race as the ring around the square is covered with tuff clay.

Ten out of the seventeen contrade take part in each race: seven are those that did not participate in the previous race on that day, while the other three are drawn by lots.

The Palio actually takes place over 4 days, the

race taking place on the fourth day. The first day is for the "Tratta", or the drawing of the lots and assignment of the horses to each of the Contrade.

Before the official race there are 6 trial runs or heats, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The fifth trial, the one run the evening prior to the official Palio, is called the "prova generale" or general trial while the last which takes place the morning of the race, is called "provaccia" or bad trial given the little effort the jockeys put into it in order to avoid tiring the horses too much. The jockeys always mount their



horses without a saddle.

The Palio prize is called "Drappellone" or large drape, a large painted canvas each year designed and created by a different artist and which the winning contrada displays in their contrada museum.

The day of the Palio

On the day of the Palio race the city is in full turmoil and the entire day is dedicated to the event.

Around 8 a.m., in the chapel next to the Palazzo Comunale, the Bishop





and checks that the assigned positions are respected. The first 9 Contrade take up their assigned positions in the area between the two ropes, while the last one, the tenth, enters this area at a running gallop thus signaling the start of the race.

If the start is not considered valid (this is the case if the jockeys are not in their assigned spots), a shot goes out to signal the jockeys to get back into place. This starting phase within the "Mossa" is more complicated than it seems, as the space is small and the horses are right next to each other. Rivalries run deep within the Contrade and competition is high and the worst result is to see the "enemy" Contrada win the race. The wait for the start of the race can thus be extremely long and last into twilight.

If all goes well the start of the race can occur at any time. The horses must run three laps around the Campo, overcoming



dangerous points such as the very narrow curve of San Martino where collisions between the wall and between horses have led to many falls in the past (the reason why many animal activists oppose the Palio).

The first horse that crosses the finish line, even if he arrives without his jockey, wins the race. The winning Contrada receives the Drappellone, as the victorious Contrada members head towards the Church of Provenza (after the July race) or towards the Duomo (after the August race) for the "Te Deum" or prayer of thanks.

Suggestions

The Palio represents without a doubt a unique opportunity to live the warmth and passion of the city of Siena. If you have the opportunity of attending, do not pass up on this chance to experience such a passionate and special celebration.

It is possible to attend the race for free from the center of the Piazza del Campo. We suggest you arrive at least by 4.30 p.m. if you want to try to find enough space to enter into the piazza (unless you want a prime location along the side of the race track, these spots are taken by morning, particularly those near the Mossa and the Gaia Fountain). Drinks are sold within the piazza but

there are no public toilets. We recommend taking your own water bottles and drinks and at least a baseball cap to protect yourself from the sun and heat. Given the large amount of people that get packed into the piazza and the heat, we highly advise against taking small children into the piazza to attend the event.

More comfortable positions from which to watch the Palio exist around the Piazza and prices vary. To buy your tickets in the bleachers or on the balconies that face onto the Piazza, try contacting the APT in Siena to find out more information or try directly contacting the residents of the homes facing the piazza. These often also offer refreshments that include typical Siennese sweets.

HORSE DIES IN PRACTISE AHEAD OF SIENA'S PALIO RACE

Siena's famous Palio horse race has been plunged into fresh controversy just a day before it is due to be held, after a horse died in agony during a practise run.

The animal slipped and fell as it was rounding a bend on the course, which runs around Siena's main square, the Piazza del Campo.

The tragedy prompted animal rights groups,

which have long criticised the pageant as cruel and barbaric, to urge that Saturday's race be cancelled.

Veterinarians were called to try to save the horse but its injuries were too severe and it reportedly died of cardiac arrest and shock.

Its death means that there will be one less 'contrada' or medieval district of Siena, contesting Sunday's race.

Each district is represented by a symbol, including a dragon, a she-wolf, a snail, a panther, a ram and a giraffe.

PALIO HORSE RACE BANNED FROM HERITAGE STATUS BECAUSE OF CRUELTY CLAIMS

The death revived the debate over the tradition, which dates back in its current form to the mid-17th century.

One of Italy's most prominent animal rights organisations, LAV, called for the Palio to be scrapped and for the opening of an independent investigation into the accident.

"We believe the Palio should be suspended as

a sign of respect," the organisation said in a statement.

The race had been "stained with the blood of another innocent victim".

But authorities in Siena said the event would continue as normal.

Siena's Palio, the most famous of several historic horse races held in Italy, takes place twice a year – on July 2 and Aug 16.

Tens of thousands of spectators watch bareback jockeys hurtle three times around the dirt-covered, cobblestone Piazza del Campo.

Since 1970 around 50 horses have died after falling, colliding or being trampled in the breakneck race, which normally lasts less than two minutes.

The last fatality was in Aug 2004, in an accident that was captured live on national television.

Last year Italy's tourism minister, Michela Brambilla, angered Siena by suggesting that the Palio is as cruel as bull fighting and should be outlawed.



