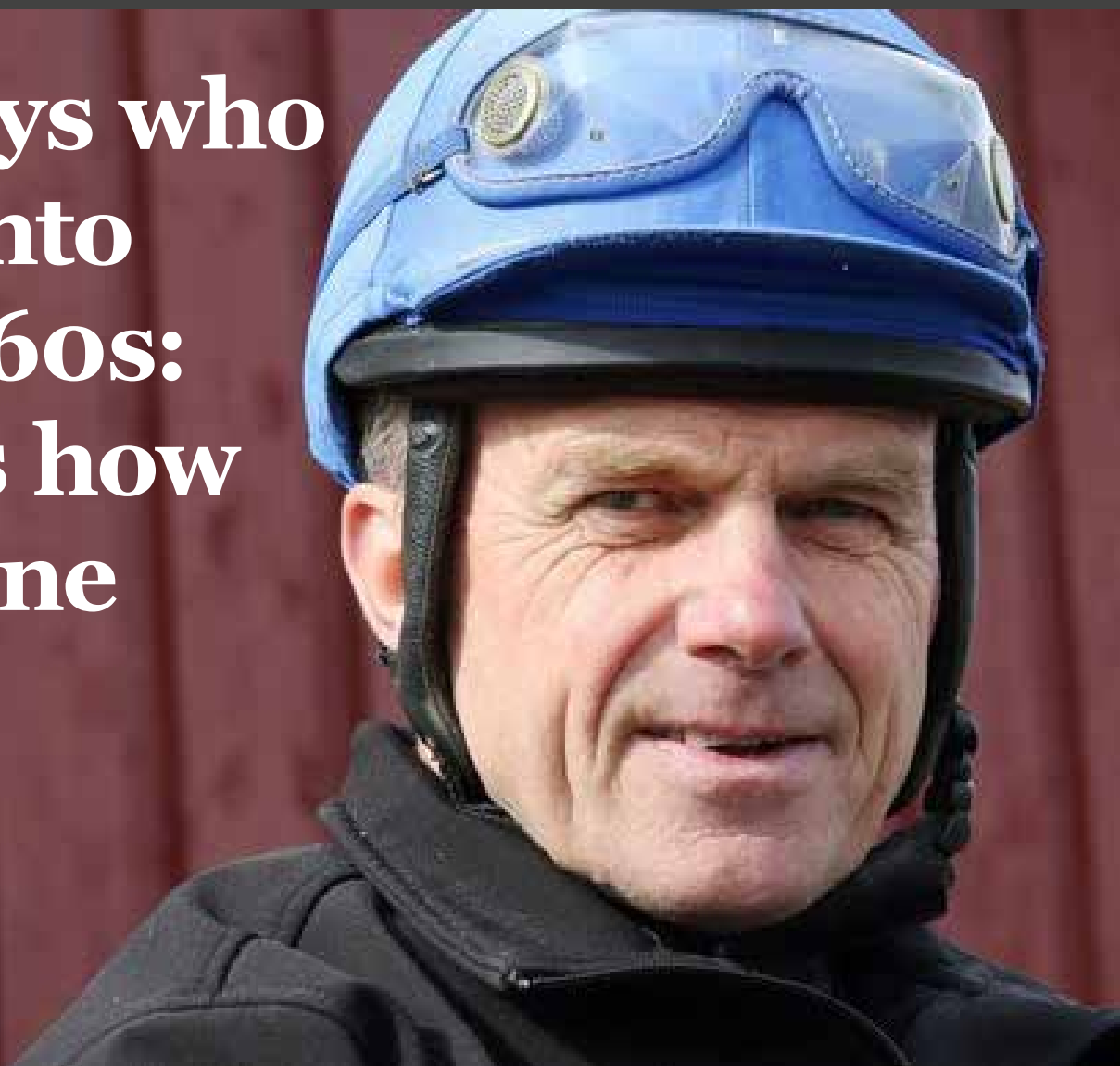


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# Trond Jørgensen's secret: how he kept on race-riding through five decades

Geir Stabell | September 17, 2018

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Cover photo: Mette Bugge

Jørgensen (spotted cap, against the rail) on Firello, the horse that kept him out of retirement. Photo: Vidar Kalnes

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*Who's the oldest jockey still active in Thoroughbred racing around the world? It's not 55-year-old U.S. Hall of Famer Gary Stevens, who is the oldest rider currently in the TRC Global Rankings top 500. It's not the famed Brazilian Jorge Ricardo, who has ridden more Thoroughbred winners than anyone ever (he's approaching 13,000). Ricardo will be 57 at the end of this month. It could, however, be great-grandmother Sue Martin, the subject of this article by Emily Shields last year. Martin, who is 64 now, was had two rides at Ellis Park in Kentucky earlier in the month, so she's still going strong.*

If there's anyone senior to Sue Martin and still in regular action, please let us know, and we can investigate.

One rider we thought it might be until recently was Trond Jørgensen. Then two things happened: first, Sue Martin reappeared at Ellis Park, and second he announced his retirement at the end of August - just a few days before his 62nd birthday on September 6. Until then, he may well have been the oldest active male rider in the world.

Jørgensen had a flourishing career as one of the top jockeys in Scandinavia for 45 years, and he had barely a break. How did he survive all that time close to the top of such a strenuous profession? He let Geir Stabell into the secret.

Trond Jørgensen was just 17 when he had his first ride. It was 1973, and he fell off. He picked himself up and he kept going – and he's done that ever since.

With more than 500 wins since at the 'once-a-week venue' of Øvrevoll in Norway, he went on to become one of the most sought-after riders in Scandinavia. And it stayed that way through five decades.

But Jørgensen plays that side of it down. "I do not think it's a great achievement to race at my age. But for the battle with the weight, I think I could go on till I'm 70," he said earlier this year.

Jørgensen has calculated that he has wasted about 1.5 tonnes in saunas over the years. He's on a small, sometimes very cold and seldom lucrative racing circuit, with limited opportunities. So what's been the driving factor? "The love of the game," he says.

He is only the fifth rider to have achieved more than 500 wins in the history of Norwegian Thoroughbred racing.

Jørgensen would be labelled "game, genuine, and battle hardened" if he were a racehorse. Like any other jockey, he has taken some knocks and heavy falls, "but I have been so lucky," he says. "I have never broken as much a rib, and this has, of course, made it easier to enjoy the sport for such a long time.

"I have seen several jockeys give up after injuries, and it's understandable. If you begin to have doubts, or lose your appetite, then race-riding is not a sensible occupation."



Jørgensen in the saddle at Øvrevoll earlier recently. Photo: Geir Stabell

## A question of ambition

Still, there must have been more to the Norwegian's incredibly long career than having been fortunate enough to avoid injuries. "Oh, yes, of course there is," he says, "and I firmly believe that having been not too ambitious has helped me to a long career.

"When I was young, there were many around me who wanted to push me across borders, to ride more in Sweden and Denmark, something I did, but mainly on horses shipped out from my trainers' yards. Janos Tandari and Walter Buick [father of William] began travelling from course to course in Scandinavia – spending a lot of time at airports – but such a life did not appeal to me. I have never had an agent and I have never called a trainer or owner trying to get a ride."

To say the man has been injury-free is not quite correct, as Jørgensen – Gary Stevens – was riding with a hip replacement later in his career. "Apart from some soft tissue damages, none of my falls caused serious injuries," Jørgensen says, "but wear and tear is something you can't avoid.

"For a couple of seasons, I was troubled by pain in my groin after racedays and it was getting worse. Finally I saw a doctor. My left hip was in pretty bad shape. But the operation went well and ten weeks later I was back at the races, winning on my first ride back."

Jørgensen began his career with Jacob Hveding Fretheim, one of the leading handlers in Scandinavia during the 1970s and 80s, and he was champion apprentice three years on the bounce while part of Fretheim's team. Active



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also as a junior footballer and cross country skier, he soon devoted all of his time to horses, "but doing other sports, like skiing in the winter and biking in the summer, has been very helpful to maintain fitness throughout my career," he points out. "I've always done what's fun."

### 'Take a break'

The season at Øvrevoll racecourse runs from April to December, and the winter break is another factor he believes to have been beneficial. "With the break, it has been easier to keep going, not just [because] I have had that to look forward to, but also because the body has been given a break from being constantly pushed, and starved. I have normally put on about 10kg (22 pounds) every winter. It's become tougher with age to get that weight back off in the spring, but it's been worth it. Without the winter break I would never have managed to stay active for so many years."

Having wasted the weight of three racehorses in saunas through his career,

Jørgensen, who stands 1.67m (5ft 5½ins), normally lost 2kg (4½ pounds) before each raceday in his younger days and his one-day record was losing over double that, while a few years ago he lost 8kg (nearly 18 pounds) in a week for one ride – in a run of the mill handicap.

Staying healthy has always been a priority. Never ever a cigarette, and hardly ever any alcohol. "Only I can look after myself," he reasons.

"I truly love the sport, the horses, and riding races," he says. "But for that, I would have given up a long time ago. I have been shocked to hear how some younger jockeys talk – often sounding like they hate everything about this job but the winning experiences. Winning big races, partnering champions, has been important to me as well, but I get the same kick out of riding a moderate handicapper who produces his career best on the day and puts big smiles on the faces of trainer, owner, and groom. That, to me, is so satisfying. As is being placed in an important race on a longshot."

### The horse that 'stopped me retiring'

An absolute longshot of a horse was instrumental in Jørgensen extending his career.

"I actually did retire for a few months in 1997," he says. "I felt tired and was fed up with the weight struggle, so I stopped racing but continued riding out for trainer Wera Torgersen. I was also acting as a steward at Øvrevoll.

"Wera initially needed help with a difficult horse called Muhab, which she had bought out of Are Hyldmo's yard. Well, long story short, later on she was standing him and the result of Muhab covering her own mare Fillippika resulted in the colt Firello, who became one of the best horses ever bred in Scandinavia. I realised his potential, and it soon dawned on me that I had a choice.

"Even if I rode selectively, I could not work as a steward and hold a licence at the same time. So I came out of retirement quite quickly. Firello was too big a temptation – he was a horse that

really should not be. Bred in Norway, by an unknown stallion, out of a mare his owner had also bred on her farm, he was to brush shoulders with the best imports.”

Firello’s sire, Muhab, was a useful sprinter in Norway, after being purchased from Peter Walwyn’s lot at the Tattersalls Horses December Sales in 1995. He had acted as a pacemaker to Bahri when the latter won the St James’s Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot the same year.

“As a juvenile, Muhab won twice and ran second to Annus Mirabilis in the Sommerville Tattersall Stakes. He was a son of Lyphard out of the Habitat mare Magic Slipper, who was a two-time winning half-sister to Fairy Footsteps and Light Cavalry. Still rated around the 100-mark, he looked a bargain when sold for 12,000 guineas at Tattersalls.

“He closed out his career with five wins and seven placings from 46 starts. He was no champion, but had an interesting pedigree and durability to match, making Mrs Torgersen decide to secure him as a future stallion for her own mares. Firello’s dam, Fillipikka, was a daughter of the Scandinavian champion Dalby Jaguar. She won 14 times from 75 starts for her owner-breeder-trainer.

Her son, Firello, also won 14 times, from 53 outings. Jørgensen partnered him in all but two of these races. “He won all the main races for locally bred horses,” Jørgensen says. But he was also right up with the best imports. Together we managed to get second in the Oslo Cup.

“Firello was efficient from 1600 metres to 2000 metres, he set a course record over 2000 metres at Øvrevoll and at one point he was the highest-rated horse in Scandinavia. He started off as a top juvenile and just kept on improving every year. He was a fairytale.”

### **‘The best I ever rode’**

Firello is still going as a hack at the age of 18. The veteran jockey does not rate him as the best he has ever ridden, however. Classy imports like Oslo Cup winner Rheinsteel,

high-class sprinter Bal du Seigneur, and multiple middle-distance stakes winners Silvestro and Sand Ship all rate higher.

“I guess my answer would be Sand Ship, if asked which was the best I ever rode,” he says. “He was a complete racehorse. You could hold him up to put him close to the pace. He always delivered his best.”

Sand Ship was trained by legendary handler Terje Dahl, who Jørgensen rode for after leaving Hveding-Fretheim in 1986. Imported from France, where he had run a close second to Chercheur d’Or in the G3 Prix du Lys for Sir Michael Sobell and trainer John Cunningham Jr, Sand Ship became one of the best horses ever seen on the Scandinavian circuit. At the end of his career, he stood as a stallion in Norway, then relocated to Gestut Mercedes in Germany.

Sand Ship’s dam, Desert Nymph, ran third in the Irish 1000 Guineas and was a half-sister to nine other winners.

Jørgensen partnered the grey son of Ela Mana Mou to victory in the 1986 Oslo Cup, when he beat the Charlie Nelson-trained British raider Gorgeous Strike, and a week later the combination followed up with an impressive win in the Eclipse Stakes at Klampenborg Galop outside Copenhagen. “That was one of the most amazing feelings I’ve had on horseback,” Jørgensen recalls. “We came from last to first and he finished the race off like a sprinter.”

Following his first spell with Terje Dahl, Jørgensen joined Dahl’s main rival, Wido Neuroth, and one of the yard’s top horses, the former German-trained Wildvogel, became the horse who forced him to get down to his career lowest riding weight in 1987.

“Wildvogel was off to Baden-Baden for the [now G2] Oleander-Rennen,” he says, “and the weight was 53kg, one kilogram below what had been my absolute minimum, but I managed it and we won the race.”

Wildvogel, a son of Windlauf, thus became the first non-German trained winner in the history of this staying contest. He also won the G3 Gerling Preis and ran second in the G1 Aral-Pokal, though under German-based riders.

### **Beating Piggott**

Jørgensen’s career is missing two things, a jockeys’ championship and a win in the Norwegian Derby.

That was never champion rider is partly because of his selective approach, and no Derby win is down to tough luck with a couple of near misses, including a nose defeat on the colt Bi Majestic.

That said, he rode the same horse to victory in the 1992 edition of Jydsk Derby, staged on the provincial Danish course in Århus, and it became a race to remember. He won the race in style, while a certain Lester Piggott – brought in especially to ride the big favourite No Gravity – was back in third.

“That was great fun,” Jørgensen says. “The atmosphere at this small course was incredible, almost like a mini-Cheltenham. The biggest thrill, however, was to read the local paper the next day, seeing the headline Jørgensen upsets Piggott in Derby. I’ve got the cutting framed on the wall.”

The last few years, Jørgensen has combined race-riding with a job for a construction company and riding out for “two or three trainers a few mornings every week”.

### **Advice to young jockeys**

He never did get his jockey championship, but he beat them all for stamina.

“I have spent hours upon hours on horseback for about 50 years, and I will continue riding out for as long as my body agrees with it.

“My main advice to younger jockeys is quite simply, make sure you enjoy the riding, make sure you get time to relax, take breaks.

“Remember, if you want to be at the top, you have to push very hard, in every way. I never did that. I found out that I enjoyed my racing more by taking a laid back approach, something I don’t regret. I meet skiers in their 80s all the time, joggers too. The key is to adapt to your age, and how long you last depends very much how long you enjoy what you are doing. It’s all in the mind.”



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# Nothing to get excited about: the early days of two horses who changed the world

Amanda Duckworth | September 25, 2018

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Sunday Silence: "No one wanted him," says Arthur B. Hancock III, who raised him at Stone Farm in Kentucky. "When he [started] his stallion career, I called everybody in the world and no one wanted shares"

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*It was 1986. It was the time of Dancing Brave and Ferdinand, Lady's Secret, Oh So Sharp and Bonecrusher, of Bill Shoemaker, Steve Cauthen and Pat Eddery, of D Wayne Lukas, Tommy Smith and Henry Cecil. Sir Tristram was the dominant stallion down under, sons of Northern Dancer were about to claim the sires' titles of Britain and Ireland and the U.S. (Nijinsky and Lyphard respectively) and the jury was still out on a new innovation called the Breeders' Cup, which had just had its second edition.*

There was certainly no indication that two unremarkable foals who were born within a few miles and a few hours of each other over the course of one particular 24-hour period in Kentucky at the end of that March would prove to be anything out of the ordinary.

Yet they were to have what was then a barely imaginable impact not only on the Thoroughbred breed but also on the course of international racing over the next three decades, and probably way beyond.

Certainly Australian racing and the stallion shuttle industry, and the strength of breeding and racing in Japan were altered forever because of Danehill and Sunday Silence.





Danehill: "I don't actually remember him much as a baby," says Scott Walker, the yearling/training manager for Juddmonte in America

Amanda Duckworth went to find out what memories remain of the events of March 25 and 26, 1986, and what impressions the pair made in their early days.

### Not so memorable March

Sunday Silence was the first on the scene. The son of Halo was born March 25, 1986, at Stone Farm in Paris, Kentucky, while Danehill was born a few miles away at Juddmonte's Kentucky farm in Lexington on March 26.

The list of champion horses bred by Juddmonte reads like a who's who of the turf, and Stone Farm has bred and/or raised additional Kentucky Derby winners Gato del Sol and Fusaichi Pegasus, as well as European champions Rainbow View and Air Force Blue, among others.

Three decades after the births of Sunday Silence and Danehill, their connections can be forgiven then for not

having crystal-clear memories of either arrival. The operations have a history of dealing with top-of-the-line horses, it was a long time ago, and both colts were born to good mothers, so there was little drama.

"As a foal, Sunday Silence really was just average," said Stone Farm's Arthur B. Hancock III, who raised and then later co-owned the future champion. "Nothing really stood out about him, as opposed to say Fusaichi Pegasus, who always looked like the best foal you ever saw.

"His dam, Wishing Well, was a nice, good mother. She was never a problem, and she was a multiple Graded stakes winner in her own right. She could run. I would say he got his attitude from Halo."

As far as Danehill goes, Scott Walker, who is the yearling/training manager for Juddmonte in America, has been with the farm for decades and worked with the son of Danzig.

"I don't actually remember him much as a baby," said Walker. "I had him then, but I can't really remember much specifically about him. Razyana, his mother, the way she was built, she was a real strong type of mare. A lot of her babies were all like him.

"She was a good mother, but she was a very strong-willed mare. When I say strong-willed, I mean you had to watch what you did around her because she was tough. A lot of her progeny was like that too, but they were good."

### Making memories

Although the births of both Sunday Silence and Danehill were seemingly unremarkable, it did not take long for them to start drawing attention to themselves.

"The first thing I really remember about Sunday Silence was seeing him out in the paddock when he was about a month or two old," said Hancock. "He

was out with about 15 other mares and foals, and one day I was watching them. Although he turned black, he looked gray as a foal, dark gray. All the rest of the foals were lying down or nursing, and he was just running in and out of the mares, making circles and doing figure eights.

"I called on the radio to the broodmare manager, Chester Williams, and I said, 'Chester, who is that grayish-looking foal in field 17?' He said it was the Wishing Well foal. I sat there on the hill for two or three minutes watching, and he never stopped running. That turned out to be Sunday Silence."

As a weanling, Sunday Silence became memorable for a far less pleasant reason. He contracted a virus and was on the brink of death, and it all happened on one of the biggest holidays in the country.

"He just had the worst diarrhea one morning, and we had to give him something like 20 liters of fluids," said Hancock. "It was Thanksgiving. Carl Morrison was the vet, and around 1 pm everybody wanted to go eat lunch. Trying to make light of a very bad situation, he said, 'Well you little son-of-a-bitch, if you are going to die, just go ahead and die. I am getting hungry.'"

"His illness was the damndest thing, and what struck me about it was that, as sick as he was, he didn't die. He just wouldn't. He refused, but that set him back, and he didn't look that great as a yearling."

## Making a mark

Danehill, on the other hand, started to make his mark as a yearling, but that didn't necessarily equate to popularity with those working directly with him.

"He was one of our top colts that year," said Walker. "I still have the sheet from when we rated him back then. I rated him personally, noting how much we liked him both before and during the breaking process. He was ranked third out of 21 colts that year."

Although Walker remembers Danehill as a colt who behaved himself, there wasn't exactly a line of eager riders hoping to get on is back.

"He did everything well and he moved well, but they just didn't care to be on him, not knowing who he was

at the time," said Walker. "Obviously, if they had known, they would have all begged to ride him. We had more riders that got on Arrogate than I can tell you. They came out of the woodwork.

"With Danehill, the riders didn't particularly like riding him because he was kind of uncomfortable. That's what I remember most about him. I think a lot of speed horses are like that — they don't have that nice, long beautiful stride. They are a little straighter in their hind ends, and so they are not quite as comfortable to ride."

As Danehill's talent became clear, his dam, Razyana, basically had a standing arrangement with Danzig in the breeding shed.

"When he got good, I think we bred her back to Danzig almost every time," said Walker. "We get one good one, and we stick with it a lot of the times. In her case, she threw five other stakes horses by Danzig. It's funny how some of them pass on genes like that, and some of them don't."

Group/Graded stakes-winning full siblings to Danehill included Eagle Eyed, Harpia and Shibboleth, while Anziyan was G3-placed and Quick To Please was stakes-placed.

As it turns out, Wishing Well revisited Halo multiple times as well, but Sunday Silence would be her only stakes winner.

## Future success

While Danehill was deemed one of the top of his crop, Sunday Silence failed to sell both as a yearling and as a 2-year-old.

On his way back to Kentucky after an unsuccessful trip to California to be sold as a juvenile, Sunday Silence's story almost ended again before it truly began. While traveling through Texas, the van driver had a heart attack and died. The truck overturned, killing some of the horses and injuring others.

Once they were racing, though, both Sunday Silence and Danehill became top-class runners. In America, Sunday Silence won the first two legs of the Triple Crown as well as the Breeders' Cup Classic during his epic rivalry with Easy Goer, while Danehill made his mark in Europe by taking the G1 Sprint

Cup and G3 Cork and Orrery Stakes after finishing third in the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket.

Coolmore, in partnership with Australia's Arrowfield Stud, privately purchased Danehill from Juddmonte for stud duty. Hancock, meanwhile, was only able to sell three of the available 40 shares in his 1989 Horse of the Year.

"No one wanted Sunday Silence," said Hancock. "People told me they wouldn't have him if I gave him away when he was a yearling, and when he came back here to start his stallion career, I called everybody in the world and no one wanted shares."

Shadai Farm's founder, Zenya Yoshida, had purchased a 25 percent interest in Sunday Silence near the end of his racing career, and when the colt was deemed undesirable in America, Yoshida bought him outright and moved him to Japan.

The fact both stallions wildly exceeded expectations is well documented. Sunday Silence was the leading sire in Japan from 1995 (his first crop of 3-year-olds) through 2007 (five years after his death), and Danehill dominated the stallion ranks in Australia while also topping the charts in Europe, proving a shuttle stallion could have great success on multiple continents.

As it happens, the mighty stallions died within a year of each other. Sunday Silence's heart finally gave out in August 2002 after a battle with laminitis, while Danehill suffered a fatal injury while being hand grazed in May 2003.

Their influences live on, though, and for those who helped raise them, their accomplishments remain a point of pride more than three decades later.

"Danehill was highly thought of and well liked," said Walker. "It's hard to believe I still have that paper from when he was a yearling, but a few of the things I have run across through the years, I've kept, and that was one of them."

"All the stuff that happened to Sunday Silence, the sickness, the van wreck, I guess he was just meant to be," said Hancock. "It's miraculous, really, if you think about everything. It's just unbelievable."



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# How do so many jockeys survive when they're earning so little?

Paul von Hippel | September 09, 2018

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The distribution of jockeys' income is strikingly unequal, with 20 percent of riders earning 80 percent of all income

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*Life is good if you're an elite jockey. You ride the best horses in the best races, and you can earn a not-so-small fortune. But what of those at the other end of the scale? How do they fare? Here, in the first of two articles looking at the inequality issue among jockeys based in the U.S., Paul von Hippel, associate professor at the University of Texas, examines some key data. The second article is on Tuesday.*

In a 1957 interview with Mike Wallace, Hall of Fame jockey Eddie Arcaro acknowledged he'd made about \$2.2 million in his 25-year career — equivalent to about \$30 million today.<sup>1</sup>

However, Arcaro said, "There are 950 active riders in the United States, and I think the average rider doesn't make a living . . . The average rider probably makes about \$7,500 a year and, traveling with the family and everything, I actually don't believe he makes a living."

Incomes are at least as unequal today. The top few riders make up to \$2 million per year, but half North America's 1,559 Thoroughbred jockeys earn less than \$12,000 per year — equivalent to \$1,356 in 1957 dollars.

This isn't exactly a secret, but it's not something the racing business brags about, and it's a little hard to figure out from published data. Unlike other sports — football, baseball, tennis, basketball — racing doesn't disclose what its athletes earn. Instead of reporting what a jockey earns, racing reports how much prize money has been won by the horses under the jockey's saddle.

Jockeys get just a small fraction of that prize money. A simple rule of thumb is that jockeys get eight percent<sup>2</sup>, but that's only true on average. According to the Jockeys' Guild, the winning jockey gets ten percent of the first place prize money, and the second and third place jockeys get five percent of the second and third place prize money.

To put that in perspective, the average purse in a 2017 race was \$27,000 — with 49 percent for the winning horse, 24 percent for second, and 12 percent for third. So the winning jockey earned, on average, \$1,300 (ten percent of 49 percent of \$27,000). The average second place jockey got \$324, and the average third place jockey got \$162.

After third place, jockeys' pay depends on the state and purse. In Kentucky, races with purses of at least \$100,000 pay the fourth place jockey five percent of the fourth place prize money. (Fourth place horses win, on average, nine percent of the purse, though gamblers who bet on them are out of the money.)

## The elite fifteen

In poorer races, or for finishing worse than fourth, the jockey gets a mount fee of \$50 to \$110. The amounts vary across states, depending on what the Jockeys' Guild has agreed with each state racing association. But it wouldn't be a great distortion to act as though the Kentucky agreement applies nationwide.

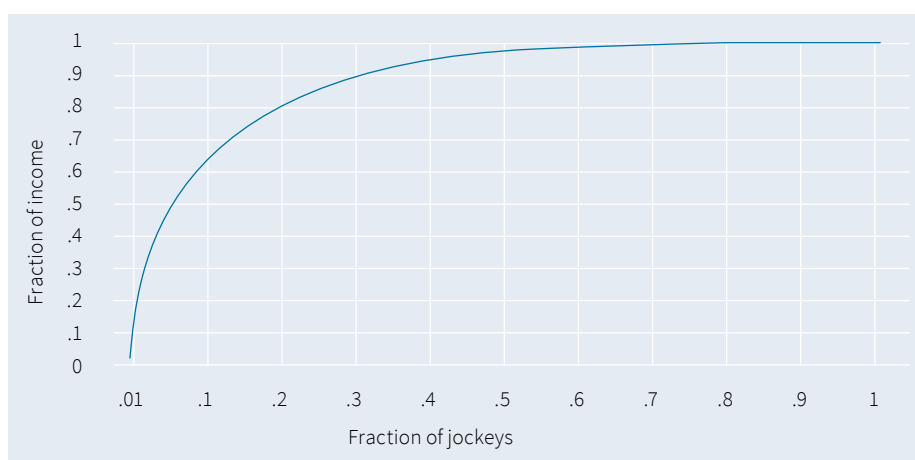
Under that assumption, we can approximate the cumulative distribution of jockeys' income. It's strikingly unequal.

In 2017, the bottom quarter of jockeys made less than \$1,200, the bottom half made less than \$12,000, and the bottom three-quarters earned less than \$59,000. On the other hand, the top ten percent earned more than \$155,000, the top five percent more than \$258,000, and the top one percent — just 15 jockeys — earned between \$729,000 and \$2.1 million.

Another way to see inequality is to look at the share of income earned by different fractions of jockeys. Jockeys' incomes follow



The figures in the vertical axis show the lowest-paid jockeys at the bottom (0 to .1 being the lowest-paid ten percent) and the highest at the top (.9 to 1 being the highest-paid ten percent). The horizontal axis is the amount earned, showing the highest-paid riders earning \$1 million or more



The vertical axis indicates the percentage of income earned, and the horizontal axis the percentage of jockeys earning it. So, the point on the horizontal axis showing .06 (six percent of jockeys) meets the vertical point of .5 (50 percent of income)

the 80/20 rule, with 20 percent of jockeys earning 80 percent of income. But incomes are even more concentrated at the high end. The top 6 percent of jockeys earn half the income. The top 1 percent of jockeys earn over 20 percent of income.

The most common index of inequality is the Gini coefficient, which for jockeys was .77 in 2017. That's considerably higher than the income inequality among major league baseball players, who had a Gini coefficient of .62 (and a minimum wage of \$535,000) in 2017. But perhaps it's not fair to compare the incomes of all jockeys to the incomes of major leaguers. A lot of jockeys are effectively minor leaguers, who race infrequently on small tracks.

If baseball data included minor leaguers, its pay would be more unequal (and lower). Still, it may be inevitable for income to be more unequal in a sport that depends on prize money — like horse racing, tennis, or

boxing — than in a sport like baseball, where athletes collect a salary.

The distribution of jockeys' incomes has changed very little in this century; the only increase has come at the very high end, and that hasn't even kept up with inflation. In 2000, the Gini coefficient was .75; the median income was \$11,901 and the 95th percentile was \$216,000 (\$312,000 in today's dollars). In 2017 the median income was \$11,629 and the 95th percentile was \$258,307; the Gini coefficient was .77.

Not much about jockeys' incomes has changed since 2000. And perhaps not much has changed, except for inflation, since Mike Wallace interviewed Eddie Arcaro in 1957.

1 \$2.2 million in 1957 is equivalent to almost \$20 million today, but Arcaro made most of his money before 1957. Before adjusting for inflation, I assigned his \$2.2 million in winnings to 1944, which was near the peak of his career, between his two Triple Crowns.

2 In Arcaro's interview with Wallace, Wallace assumed that Arcaro got ten percent of his horses' prize money, and Arcaro didn't correct him. I don't know if ten percent was an accurate figure in 1957, but it would be an overestimate today.



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# This is where you'll see who racing's next star performers are likely to be

Charles Hayward | September 26, 2018

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Prize stallion: Kitten's Joy, pictured with Ken Ramsey, is currently the eighth-ranked sire in the world. Photo: YouTube

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*Here at Thoroughbred Racing Commentary, we are about to celebrate the second anniversary of the launch of our TRC Global Rankings. For the uninitiated, this is a comprehensive system producing a weekly set of standings for each of four categories - jockeys, trainers, owners and sires - based on results of Graded and Group races in all major racing countries around the world over a rolling three-year period.*

They are unlike any other rankings in Thoroughbred racing (not that there are any equivalent worldwide standings in the case of jockeys, trainers and owners) in that they are based on performance rather than on prize money, number of wins or any other metric. And, significantly, they are designed to be predictive, often flagging up a performer on the rise well before anyone else has realised.

Those of you who have been taking notice of the movements in the TRC Global Rankings over the past 12 months, for instance, will have spotted



## TRC Stallion Ranking for Kitten's Joy



Rank From	Rank To	Frequency
1	5	0
6	10	37
11	15	20
16	20	5
21	25	5
26	30	17
31	35	26
36	40	11
41	45	7
46	50	19
51	55	24
56	60	25
61	65	12
66	70	23
71	75	4
76	80	5
81	85	6

some time ago the burgeoning advance of Godolphin trainer Charlie Appleby, who is now ranked second in the world, alongside Bob Baffert, and is closing impressively on long-time #1 Aidan O'Brien. The rankings also identified UK-based Irishman Oisin Murphy, now up to #11, as a world-class jockey well before that fact started to dawn on the industry at large.

Another classic example is Ken Ramsey's stallion Kitten's Joy. It has taken the world a long time to cotton on to what followers of the TRC Global Sires' Rankings have known for quite a while. Kitten's Joy is one of the finest stallions in the world.

I read with great interest a fascinating article by Nancy Sexton in her Racing Post column, Bloodstock Week, on September 20, in which she cited that Ramsey, in the fall of 2017, was increasingly frustrated with the lack of respect commercial breeders were showing

for Kitten's Joy. He said he was contemplating moving the stallion to Europe.

It is easy to understand his frustration. At the Keeneland September Sale of 2017, Kitten's Joy yearlings returned an average sale price of \$114,464 against a \$100,000 stud fee.

However, John Sikura, of Hill 'n' Dale, had a plan. According to Sexton's article, Sikura bought a 50 percent interest in the stallion that fall, moved him to the Hill 'n' Dale farm in Kentucky, and reduced the stud fee to \$60,000. That resulted in a full book of mares for 2018.

And this was only the beginning. Through last weekend, Kitten's Joy's offspring had accumulated \$15 million in purse earnings in 2018, according to The Blood-Horse, making him the highest-earning U.S.-based sire and the third highest non-Japanese stallion in the world (behind Dubawi and Fastnet Rock). He is ahead even of Galileo.

In the current TRC standings, Kitten's Joy is the #8 stallion in the world, with only the late Scat Daddy (#3) ahead of him among U.S. sires.

As you can see from the chart above, he has been a world top 60 stallion for most of the last four years. And his ranking has been climbing remorselessly for two and a half years. In March 2016, he was as low as #85, but by September 2017 - the time of Ramsey's lament - he had risen to become the world's 12th-ranked stallion. The table on the right shows how many weeks (Frequency) he has spent in the various ranking ranges - for instance, he has been ranked between 6 and 10 on 37 different weeks.

In 2018, there have been many brilliant performances by Kitten's Joy's offspring. Two recent winners include the John Gosden-trained Roaring Lion, the best 3-year-old in Europe and recent winner of the G1 Juddmonte International and the G1 Irish Champion Stakes, and Oscar Performance, trained by Brian Lynch and recent winner of the G1 Woodbine Mile.

## Kitten's Joy offspring with two or more Group/Graded wins since 2011

Horse	W	R	SR	G1	G2	G3
Stephanie's Kitten	9	22	41	5	3	1
Oscar Performance	7	11	64	4	0	3
Hawkbill	6	18	33	2	2	2
Big Blue Kitten	6	23	26	4	1	1
Roaring Lion	5	9	56	3	2	0
Taareef	5	13	38	0	2	3
Divisidero	4	18	22	2	1	1
Camelot Kitten	4	15	27	0	2	2
Oscar Nominated	3	20	15	0	0	3
Sadler's Joy	3	14	21	1	2	0
Kitten's Dumplings	3	10	30	1	1	1
Kitten's Point	3	12	25	0	0	3
Csaba	3	12	25	0	0	3
Banned	3	5	60	0	2	1
Catapult	2	7	29	0	2	0
Bobby's Kitten	2	10	20	1	0	1
Real Solution	2	11	18	2	0	0
Admiral Kitten	2	11	18	1	0	1

Scat Daddy was a versatile stallion with Group/Graded stakes winners in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. He was the sire, of course, of this year's Triple Crown winner, Justify. The joint third-ranked U.S. stallions are current #11s Quality Road and Curlin, who was moved to Hill 'n' Dale in September 2015, when Sikura bought a 20 percent interest in him. Keep in mind that Kitten's Joy is a 17-year-old who had been producing consistent stakes winners for a number of years and there is strong evidence that Kitten's Joy is a G1 sire of sires.

The reason that I found Nancy Sexton's article regarding Ken Ramsey's frustration with his breeding experience so interesting is that there are many theories and bloodstock advisors on stallion matings and another group of bloodstock advisors on yearling purchases. How come they consistently overlooked Kitten's Joy? They clearly weren't paying enough attention to the TRC standings.

Kitten's Joy's performance as a stallion has consistently been undervalued by the current market indicators for the majority of his stallion career.

It is our firm belief that the performance data generated for the TRC Global Rankings has business applications across all four performance categories: Sires, Owners, Trainers and Jockeys. Despite the growth of the international scope of Thoroughbred racing, before the TRC rankings were introduced, this was the one major sport that did not have any world rankings in these categories based on specific performances.

TRC Global Rankings use Racing Post Ratings (RPR) data to provide accurate interpretation and analysis of the performances of jockeys, owners, trainers and sires in about 1,450 Graded and Group races around the world every year.

An individual's position in the rankings depends entirely on how well

their respective representatives have been running. RPRs for each race are used to help calculate the merit of every performance of every runner in each of the races. TRC Global Rankings are different and more powerful than those of other sports because they are designed to be predictive. Like other ranking systems, such as those for tennis and golf, they are an objective, critical assessment of past results intended to reflect the current relative performance of the racing participants.

However, and more importantly, TRC Global Rankings are equally forward looking and use machine-learning techniques to understand what is important in projecting a competitor's future success. This last point is the most crucial to appreciate: TRC Global Rankings continually test their own ability to predict the next set of Group and Graded race results and attempt to minimize the number of so-called ranking violations taking place in the future.



## Annual breakdown of Kitten's Joy's Group/Graded wins since 2011

Year	W	R	SR	G1	G2	G3
2018	13	71	18	5	5	3
2017	19	107	18	4	7	8
2016	15	91	16	3	4	8
2015	12	94	13	5	1	6
2014	9	110	8	3	1	5
2013	14	111	13	6	3	5
2012	2	52	4	0	1	1
2011	8	49	16	1	5	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>38</b>

## World's top sires by G1 wins since 2011

Rank	Sire	W	R	SR	G1	G2	G3
1	Galileo	310	1938	16	121	59	130
2	Deep Impact	194	1749	11	54	56	84
3	Dubawi	209	1203	17	51	66	92
4	Scat Daddy	128	713	18	50	34	44
5	Fastnet Rock	154	1405	11	44	54	56
6	Tapit	126	833	15	35	46	45
6	High Chaparral	92	847	11	35	16	41
8	Street Cry	95	784	12	31	27	37
9	Medaglia D'oro	108	787	14	30	30	48
9	Savabeel	71	710	10	30	16	25
11	More Than Ready	102	783	13	27	28	47
11	Kitten's Joy	92	685	13	27	27	38
11	War Front	87	630	14	27	27	33
14	Montjeu	67	469	14	26	15	26

In sum, TRC Global Rankings are not some abstract exercise in playing with numbers. They are focused on a single, simple objective: to find the optimal arrangement of competitors in each category, so that when two ranked individuals meet in competition, we think that we know who is more likely to win.

The primary goal of Thoroughbred Racing Commentary when it was launched was to provide insightful journalism and analytical content for the rapidly growing interest in international Thoroughbred

racing and breeding. We believe that the TRC Global Rankings are a major contribution to the broader understanding of international racing.

They were the brainchild of Paul Roberts, of Turnberry Consulting, who did the early conceptual development and planning of this ambitious project. The mathematics and the algorithm that drives the rankings each week are the work of racing technical analyst James Willoughby.

If you have any desire to learn the many applications that may serve your interests or business in

Thoroughbred racing, I strongly recommend you read How the TRC Rankings work, which is written by Willoughby. The TRC Global Rankings have serious application for anyone working in training, owning, breeding, syndicate management, racing media, race-office management and handicapping.

The TRC rankings content can be linked to directly from the home page of our website or clicked on right here. We are always interested in any questions, suggestions or content regarding any aspects of the rankings.

# What They're Thinking: Eimear Mulhern: young people should be involved a lot more in organising racing

Eimear Mulhern | September 18, 2018

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Eimear Mulhern: "I would include a number of young, smart, intelligent people on all boards and committees that govern and stage racing." Photo: the phoenix.ie

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*As chairman of the Goffs sales company for the past 13 years and owner of Abbeville Stud in County Kildare, Ireland, Eimear Mulhern is one of the leading figures in the European bloodstock industry. Among her many other roles, she is also a director the French sales company Arqana, a director of Horse Racing Ireland, a committee member of Irish Thoroughbred Marketing, and a council member of the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association.*



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Her husband was the successful businessman and racehorse trainer John Mulhern, who died in 2010, and her father was Charles Haughey, who served three terms as Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) between 1979 and 1992. He died in 2006.

### Who do you think is the most important figure in the history of racing around the world?

Vincent O'Brien. His talent for spotting horses and training them laid the foundation for the success of the Irish racing and breeding industry as it is today. I would also include his son in law, John Magnier, who has created a global empire that is unsurpassed. In particular, their development of the Northern Dancer bloodline has given Europe arguably the most successful stallion line ever in the history of the modern Thoroughbred in this part of the world.

### Which is your favourite venue and race (anywhere in the world)?

This is a difficult one as there are so many wonderful racecourses and

race days. I sit on the committees of Leopardstown and the Curragh, so Champions Weekend is very special and huge highlight for us in Ireland. Internationally, it is hard to beat Arc Day in Paris, the Tuesday of Royal Ascot or the Breeders' Cup. And I must agree with Anna Seitz's comments on Richard Duchossois of Arlington Park. He is the best racecourse operator in the world in my opinion.

There are so many wonderful races, but I think my favourite would have to be the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

### What is your fondest memory in racing?

Flashing Steel winning the Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse in 1995. He was owned by my dad, trained by my husband and, as Prime Minister, my father had been instrumental in saving the race track from closure. So a very emotional day for all. He was ridden by Jamie Osborne, which certainly added to the celebrations afterwards!

### What do you see as the biggest challenge racing faces today?

Making involvement in racing more accessible and attractive to the next generation.

### If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?

It would be to involve young people in the planning and administration of racing and associated race-day events. I would include a number of young, smart, intelligent people on all boards and committees that govern and stage racing.

It seems to me that, certainly in this part of the world, these organisations are comprised largely of people over 50 and often male. It is very difficult for this demographic to adequately understand and effectively communicate with the modern young person. A blend of wise old heads and the enthusiasm, creativity and communication skills of young blood, I believe, would be ideal.

# TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS

## The Thoroughbred Racing Industry's ranking system

**Available at [thoroughbredracing.com](http://thoroughbredracing.com)**

Thoroughbred racing has its rankings of the world's leading horses and the world's best races, but the sport is devoid of meaningful classifications of the humans involved, the jockeys, the trainers, the owners.

After two years in development, Thoroughbred Racing Commentary (TRC) filled that void with the creation of TRC Global Rankings. Updated weekly, this is the only system in the world that assesses the accomplishments of every jockey, trainer, owner and sire.

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# TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



23 September 2018

## Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1119
2	Mike E Smith	USA	1076
3	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1061
4	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1051
5	Mirco Demuro	Japan	1050
6	William Buick	Great Britain	1047
7	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1044
7	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1044
9	Javier Castellano	USA	1032
10	Joel Rosario	USA	1026
11	Oisin Murphy	Great Britain	1022
12	Flavien Prat	USA	1020
12	James Doyle	Great Britain	1020
14	Kerrin McEvoy	Australia	1019
15	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1017

## Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1095
2	Godolphin	Australia	1072
3	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1044
4	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1043
5	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	Great Britain	1034
6	WinStar Farm Et Al	USA	1027
7	China Horse Club Et Al	Australia	1021
8	Head of Plains Et Al	USA	1015
9	H H Aga Khan	France	1014
10	Hajime Satomi	Japan	1012
11	Patrick Kwok Et Al	Hong Kong	1009
11	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1009
13	Al Shaqab Racing	France	1004
14	Niarchos Family	France	999
14	U Carrot Farm	Japan	999

## Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	A P O'Brien	Ireland	1084
2	Bob Baffert	USA	1074
2	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1074
4	Chad C Brown	USA	1065
5	John Gosden	Great Britain	1056
6	Darren Weir	Australia	1039
7	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1026
8	Saeed bin Suroor	Great Britain	1023
9	A Fabre	France	1022
10	Chris Waller	Australia	1021
11	Mark Casse	USA	1005
12	A S Cruz	Hong Kong	1003
12	J Size	Hong Kong	1003
12	Todd Pletcher	USA	1003
15	Jerry Hollendorfer	USA	1000

## Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1085
2	Galileo	Ireland	1077
3	Scat Daddy	USA	1055
4	Frankel	Great Britain	1053
5	Deep Impact	Japan	1045
6	I Am Invincible	Australia	1033
6	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1033
8	Kitten's Joy	USA	1032
9	Dark Angel	Great Britain	1026
10	Snitzel	Australia	1025
11	Curlin	USA	1024
11	Quality Road	USA	1024
13	Ghostzapper	USA	1020
14	Fastnet Rock	Australia	1018
14	Medaglia D'oro	USA	1018