



# The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large

© 2015 Universal Uclick



from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick

## The Kentucky Derby

# Off to the Races

Do you dream of racing along a 1.25-mile oval track on the back of a 1,000-pound horse, expertly guiding it past competing racers to victory?

During the coming weeks, three horse races will captivate the nation for just a few minutes each. But the winning horses and jockeys will become part of a long history of horse racing in the United States.

Saddle up for a ride to the Kentucky Derby, the first event in the Triple Crown of horse racing.

The three-sided Triple Crown trophy is awarded to a horse that wins the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes in the same year.



## Ancient racing

People have been racing horses since ancient times in Greece and Rome. The ancient Olympic Games included chariot races and contests of horsemen riding without saddles, using their strength to stay atop the horses.

Chariot racing took place in a **hippodrome**, a large oval stadium with seating for spectators. (“Hippo” is the Greek word for horse; “dromos” is the word for course.)

## A popular sport

England’s first public track for horse racing opened in the early 1600s, and the sport was off to the races! Settlers in America continued racing horses, but usually only the wealthiest farmers competed. The first racetrack in the New World was in Long Island, New York. It was built in 1664 and called Newmarket.

Through the 1800s, hundreds more racetracks were built all across the United States.

Even in the earliest competitions, spectators and horse owners loved to bet on which horses would win the races. If their choice won, they would win all the money that had been bet.

## The Kentucky Derby

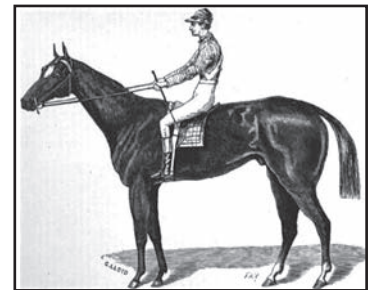
Kentucky became well-known for its excellent horses and racing events. Col. Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr., the grandson of the explorer Gen. William Clark, founded the Louisville Jockey Club and raised money to build a track there. The track, Churchill Downs, was named after Clark’s relatives, who donated the land for it.

The first race at Churchill Downs took place on May 17, 1875, 140 years ago.

Thousands of people cheered for the 15 thoroughbred horses as they raced around the track. The winner was Aristides, who finished the race in 2 minutes, 37 seconds.

The horse’s owner in that race received \$2,850, a huge sum at the time. Today, the winning horse’s owner receives more than \$2 million.

The Kentucky Derby is always held on the first Saturday of May. In 1945, because of World War II, the race was run in June instead.



Aristides



At the Puy du Fou historical theme park in France, horses and riders re-create an ancient Greek chariot race for modern-day visitors.

# Who's on the Track?

## The horses

In the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont Stakes, the horses are **thoroughbreds**.

This type of horse was created starting in the early 1100s, when British people mated three Arabian male horses (**stallions**) with many different female horses (**mares**) to create faster animals. All thoroughbreds can trace their ancestry back to one of these three Arabian horses.



One of the original three stallions that began the thoroughbred line, the Darley Arabian.

In the Triple Crown races, horses must turn 3 years old in the year the race is being held. Most of the racing horses are **colts**, or young males. Only three **fillies**, or young females, have won the Kentucky Derby. The last was in 1988.

## The jockeys

The riders during the race are called **jockeys**. They have a lot to do during their short time on the track.

Jockeys must encourage the horse to run as fast as it can and guide it around the other horses safely as it races around the track. Jockeys are not allowed to touch another horse or rider, and they can't intentionally steer the horse to block another horse.

Before the race, jockeys must weigh in, wearing their **silks**, or riding outfits, and carrying their saddle and other **tack**, or equipment. Their weight must be exactly 126 pounds (if riding a colt) or 121 pounds (if riding a filly). If a jockey is underweight, small weights will be added to the saddle cloth. The riders must weigh in again after the race to make sure nothing was changed.



A jockey weighs in after a race in Washington.

photo by Montanabw

Many jockeys have grown up around horses and have worked with trainers and other professionals. Some go to special schools to learn how to race horses.

Jockeys must not only learn about their animals, but must also understand how to manage their own weight and build their strength. "It's a spectacular feat to communicate with a horse that size," one expert said.

## Ready Resources

The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/1C90jLn](http://bit.ly/1C90jLn)
- [bit.ly/1GkbUeF](http://bit.ly/1GkbUeF)
- [toneway.com/songs/my-old-kentucky-home](http://toneway.com/songs/my-old-kentucky-home)
- [bit.ly/1GwWvob](http://bit.ly/1GwWvob)

### At the library:

- "Kentucky Derby" by Blaine Wiseman
- "Race Horses" by Michael Sandler



Try  
'n'  
Find

## Horse Racing

V	G	F	H	I	P	P	O	D	R	O	M	E	F	R
C	N	S	E	L	P	I	R	T	E	A	J	D	I	E
T	R	Y	K	C	U	T	N	E	K	R	C	C	L	N
N	Y	O	X	L	O	M	A	H	A	V	B	E	L	I
O	E	S	W	U	I	L	Q	C	B	K	G	Y	Y	A
M	K	S	R	N	Z	S	T	V	K	F	N	P	M	R
L	C	T	H	O	R	O	U	G	H	B	R	E	D	T
E	O	K	T	E	S	R	O	H	G	I	E	W	S	G
B	J	N	A	I	R	A	N	I	R	E	T	E	V	S

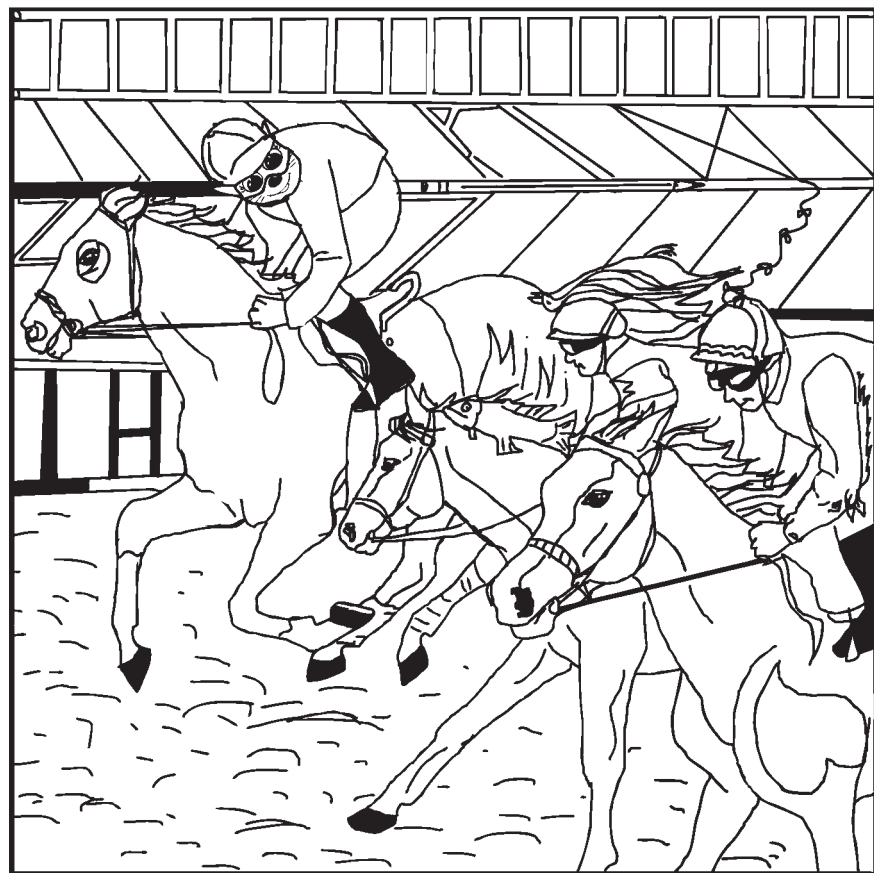
Words that remind us of horse racing are hidden in the block above. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: BELMONT, COLT, CROWN, DERBY, FILLY, HIPPODROME, HORSE, JOCKEY, KENTUCKY, PREAKNESS, RACE, SILKS, TACK, THOROUGHbred, TRAINER, TRIPLE, VETERINARIAN, WEIGH.



# Mini Spy

Mini Spy dreams of winning the Kentucky Derby! See if you can find:

- |                                     |                                   |                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> tooth      | <input type="checkbox"/> fish     | <input type="checkbox"/> kite     | <input type="checkbox"/> question mark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> horse head | <input type="checkbox"/> letter Z | <input type="checkbox"/> heart    | <input type="checkbox"/> bell          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bird       | <input type="checkbox"/> number 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> ladder   | <input type="checkbox"/> letter H      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pencil     | <input type="checkbox"/> letter T | <input type="checkbox"/> letter A | <input type="checkbox"/> word MINI     |



from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick



# Rookie Cookie's Recipe Rainbow Pasta Salad

## You'll need:

- 12-ounce package tricolor spiral pasta, cooked
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped broccoli (uncooked)
- 1/2 cup chopped carrots
- 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 20 green or black olives, halved
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped cucumber
- 1 1/2 cups light Italian dressing

## What to do:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Let cool for 10 minutes.
2. Chop vegetables and olives and add to cooled pasta.
3. Pour light Italian dressing over pasta and vegetables. Mix well.
4. Chill for 4 hours to blend flavors. Serves 10 to 12.

*You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*

from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick

# Meet Elizabeth Olsen

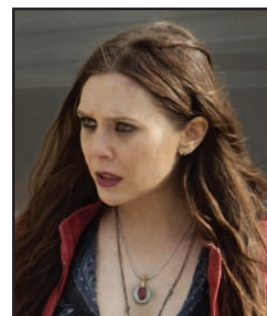


photo by Jay Maidment, © Marvel 2015

Elizabeth Olsen stars as Scarlet Witch and Wanda Maximoff in the movie "Avengers: Age of Ultron."

Elizabeth, 26, grew up in Sherman Oaks, California. Her older twin sisters, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, are both actors. She also has an older brother and a younger sister and brother.

She began making films with her friends when she was in kindergarten, and also appeared in her sisters' movies and videos. When she was 7, she began taking acting classes, as well as ballet and singing lessons. She studied drama in high school and college.

Elizabeth has acted in several movies, including "Godzilla." She loves playing volleyball. She supports charities such as Oxfam, which works to end poverty and hunger.

from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick



from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick

# Victor Espinoza

**Gus Goodsport's Supersport**



**Height:** 5-2

**Age:** 42

**Hometown:**  
Mexico City,  
Mexico

It is often said that good things come in small packages. At 5-foot-2 and 112 pounds, 42-year-old Victor Espinoza is small in stature, but he is a giant in the sport of thoroughbred horse racing.

Victor was born in Mexico and was the 11th of 12 children. Even as a child, he loved horses. By age 17, he was driving a bus to pay for jockey school. He moved to the United States in the mid-1990s and quickly became one of the sport's most successful jockeys. Among his more than 3,000 race victories are two wins in the Kentucky Derby and two in the Preakness. Last year, he rode California Chrome to wins in both races and took home the ESPY award as the year's top jockey.

Victor donates 10 percent of his winnings to pediatric cancer research at the City of Hope hospital in Southern California.



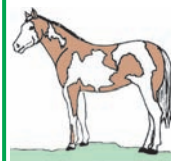
from The Mini Page © 2015 Universal Uclick

# Mighty Funny's Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

**Harold:** What kind of horse does a ghost like to ride?

**Harriet:** Night mares!



**Hermione:** Why is it hard to identify horses from the back?

**Hortense:** Because they keep switching their tails!



**Helen:** Why did the horse scold its colt?

**Hilda:** For misbehaving!



# Race Day

When race day arrives at Churchill Downs, there have already been months of planning to make sure everything goes smoothly. Up to 160,000 people will watch the race from the stands and from the **infield**, or the area in the middle of the track. Millions more will watch “the most exciting two minutes in sports” on television.

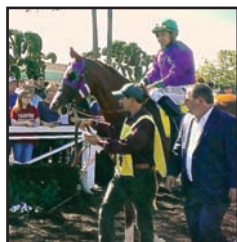
## Horses get ready

When horses turn a year old, they begin working with a **trainer**. They learn how to come out of a starting gate and run around the oval track. Young horses must get used to having a saddle and rider on their back and a bit in their mouth.

Race horses will usually start competing at age 2. Horses might run in only 10 to 15 races per year. The competitions are hard on their bodies. **Veterinarians** keep a close eye on horses and look them over carefully before and after every race.

**Grooms** get horses ready to train and race and cool a horse down after its workout. They may check a horse’s hooves and take care of tack.

Before a race, the groom puts the **bridle**, or headgear, on the horse. He or she may wrap the horse’s lower legs with bandages for support.



**California Chrome is led by his groom, Raul Rodriguez.**

photo by Montanabw

## Derby traditions

- The Kentucky Derby is also called the Run for the Roses. A large garland of roses is laid over the winning horse’s back after the race.
- The trophy awarded to the winning horse is 22 inches tall and sits on a base made of jade. It is decorated with a golden horseshoe.
- Since 1921, the song “My Old Kentucky Home” has been played as the horses come onto the track.
- Many women at the Kentucky Derby wear large, colorful hats.

## Jockeys get ready

After weighing in, jockeys meet their horses and climb aboard. They walk and trot the horse around on the track to loosen up muscles and nerves.

## Into the starting gate

Horses and riders move to the starting gate and enter their stalls. Some horses get fidgety in the gate and may kick.

## And they’re off!

Horses must all start at the same time. If one breaks through the gate early, they all have to start over.

The Kentucky Derby uses an electronic timekeeping system along with timekeepers with stopwatches.

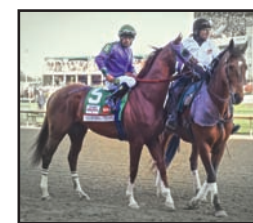
*Look in your newspaper for information about the upcoming Kentucky Derby and other horse races.*



**Secretariat**, shown here after retiring from racing, is one of the most famous thoroughbred racehorses of all time. He won the Triple Crown in 1973 and set track records in all three races, running the Kentucky Derby in 1 minute, 59.4 seconds. His records from 42 years ago still stand.

## Meet some famous racers

• California Chrome won last year’s Kentucky Derby with a time of 2 minutes, 36 seconds. The winning jockey was Victor Espinoza.



**California Chrome**

photo by Bill Brine

• Monarchos won the Kentucky Derby in 2001. He was the second-fastest horse in history, with a time of 1 minute, 59.9 seconds.



**Monarchos**

The Mini Page thanks Chris Goodlett, curator of collections, Kentucky Derby Museum, for help with this issue.

## The Mini Page Staff

Betty Debnam - Founding Editor and Editor at Large   Lisa Tarry - Managing Editor   Lucy Lien - Associate Editor   Wendy Daley - Artist