

America's Richest Race

A CRY OF "They're off!" will send a crowd of 100,000 surging to their feet next Saturday to watch the 83rd running of America's horse-racing classic, the fabulous Kentucky Derby.

The Derby is the oldest consecutively run race in America, started at Louisville's Churchill Downs in 1875. Through wars, depressions, and assorted squabbles, the Run for the Roses has gone on.

Much of the credit for this enviable record goes to the late Col. Matt Winn. He first saved the race in 1902 by transmitting his enthusiasm to a group which invested \$40,000 to lease the grounds and buy the grandstand.

The track was built on land owned by a pioneer Louisville family, the Churchills, and was known as the Louisville Jockey Club for its first 11 years. Then an enterprising sportswriter dubbed it Churchill Downs, and the name stuck.

That first race in 1875 was won by Aristides in a little more than 2½ minutes over a 1½-mile track. The horse won \$2,850. Last year Needles covered the 1¼-mile distance (it was shortened in 1896) in slightly more than two minutes to bring home \$123,450. That makes the Derby the richest single race in the U. S.

Nearly every great horse in American turf history has his name painted on one of the panels along the top of the stands, signifying a Derby winner. A notable exception was Man O' War—he never raced in Kentucky. Citation, the first horse to win a million dollars in prize money, captured the Derby in 1948, adding a handsome \$83,000 to his take-home pay for the year.

Although World War II delayed it a month in 1945, the Derby is traditionally held the first Saturday in May. Spectators pay anywhere from \$3 for standing room in the infield to \$300 for private boxes. They figure it's well worth the price to see the year's greatest three-year-olds compete in the year's greatest race.



The late Col. Matt Winn worked hard to maintain the Derby as the oldest annual race in U.S.



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Sam Snead

enjoys a Viceroy with another golfing great, National Open Champion Cary Middlecoff. Says Sam: "Swell to discover a really smooth-tasting cigarette, isn't it?" Says Cary: "You bet! That smoother Viceroy taste is tops!"



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