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Champion Kelso is owned by Mrs. Richard du Pont.

Horse Racing—Sport of Queens

They'll be off and running next Saturday in the Kentucky Derby—and if history is any indication, watch the Thoroughbreds that carry the colors of elegant ladies

By JACK RYAN

THERE IS ONE pretty sure bet for the Kentucky Derby next Saturday—no filly will win. In 87 Runs for the Roses at Churchill Downs, only one female, Regret, has ever led the pack, and that was back in 1915.

But with that note, abandon any idea you may have that Thoroughbred racing is strictly a male domain—if anything, it has become a sport of queens, at least in the owners' circle. In the past 20 Derbies, 11 winners have been owned or co-owned by women.

Last year's winner, Carry Back, was entered in the name of Mrs. Jack Price, and an early winter-book favorite this year, Ridan, races under the colors of Mrs. Moody Jolley. She turned the horse over to her 23-year-old son LeRoy, who helped develop the colt, purchased for \$11,000, into a \$350,000 winner with plenty of races still to come.

Mrs. Price, whose Carry Back has won \$1 million so far, will be the first to admit she's a "nominal owner." Her husband, a silk-suited dynamo packed into a muscular 5-foot, 4-inch frame, made enough money to retire at 50 and devote himself to developing Thoroughbreds.

Blonde, cheerful Mrs. Price acts as a sort of official hostess: after a win, she accepts the trophy with gracious words while Jack hovers anxiously over his sweating horseflesh. At victory dinners, Mrs. Price sees that the social circles keep revolving while her husband huddles in a corner discussing promising yearlings. But she's also out at dawn with Jack to watch the exercises, and the experts give her credit for helping gentle Carry Back from the ill temper of his younger days and making him, in her own words, "just one of the family."

Another of Mrs. Price's duties was revealed last year after Carry Back won the Preakness. Newsmen asked Price if he had any bad moments during the thrilling

come-from-behind victory. "Not as much during the race as before it," he replied.

Ever since the couple started racing horses, Price explained, his wife, a notorious bad-luck better, had faithfully made "poison bets" on rival entries to jinx them. "As they were going to the post," Price said, "I asked Katherine if she had laid down her poison bets. She said no, she'd forgotten. I want to tell you I talked to her pretty hard right then and there!"

The lecture must have been taken to heart: Mrs. Price is back wagering poison bets, and Carry Back is still taking the big stakes.

Many of the women owners, however, take an active part in the buying, training, and racing of horses registered in their names. There's no glamour or glory here, just chilly dawn vigils clocking promising yearlings and long hours with veterinarians and trainers.

A GOOD EXAMPLE of the knowledgeable woman horse owner is Mrs. Richard du Pont III, who races Kelso, the Horse of the Year in 1960 and 1961. Mrs. du Pont is no newcomer to the world of fine horses. "I've been riding since my grandfather gave me a pony when I was a small girl," she says, "and riding is still my favorite exercise." She is mistress of the fox hounds for an exclusive Delaware hunt club, and her 23-year-old daughter Laura is a champion equestrienne.

"I can't remember when I first went to the races," she adds, "but I think it was when I was a little girl and was taken to Havre de Grace. How racing and tracks have changed since then!" After her marriage, Mrs. du Pont took up her husband's avocation, glider flying, and held the women's altitude record (her son is now an airline pilot). Mr. du Pont was killed in a California crash, and in 1953 his widow returned to her beloved horses.

"The 'thrill' with Thoroughbreds isn't just in winning,"

(Continued on page 16)

Ridan, owned by the Moody Jolleys (left), was given to son LeRoy (with wife, right), who made it \$350,000 winner.



Mr. and Mrs. Jack Price are winning big stakes with Carry Back, whose ill temper Mrs. Price had nipped in the bud.

