

## How My Love Affair with Horse Racing Began

As was the case with many things in my life, I was introduced to horse racing and Del Mar by my older brother Monroe. Like my father, Monroe became a professional building contractor. He made a lot of money in his business dealings, but he had a major financial Achilles heel—a weakness for the track and betting on the races. He would attend the races at Hollywood Park and frequently he would take me and one of my young friends along with him before I was even in high school.

Like Del Mar in the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood Park was a celebrity playground where all the stars and their wives, girlfriends, and lovers went to play the ponies and have a good time. Warner Brothers studio founder Jack Warner created the Hollywood Turf Club whose members boasted such big and well-known names as Bing Crosby (when he wasn't busy trumpeting the glories of Del Mar), Walt Disney, Darryl Zanuck and many more. Even though I was too young to bet, I loved going to the track with my big brother. I found it to be a world even more exciting than that of boxing at the Olympic—the eager bettors, the thundering hoof beats of horses rounding the turn and vying for position as they entered the home stretch. I thought Monroe always won—because that was what he told me, and I was too young to know any better.

Monroe and I continued to visit the track together over the years, including our annual journey to Del Mar on Labor Day weekend. By the time we were both adults, Monroe was married, but I was divorced so I always brought a different woman along to soak up the glamorous environment and get a taste of what it was like to win at the races. Monroe and I also liked to duck across the border to Agua Caliente just to spice things up a little. Caliente introduced a bet known as the “five and ten” where you had to pick five consecutive winners on one ticket. Even though this was a considerable long shot, one day Monroe hit it and got paid an

astounding \$37,500 (especially astounding when adjusted for inflation). Unfortunately, this enormous but extremely lucky win really set the gambling hook in Monroe, who spent the next several years unsuccessfully trying to replicate his big score. After many years earning a very good living as a building contractor, his love for betting on horses eventually caught up with him and he was forced to go broke.

Stories like these have inspired me to write this book. When done emotionally or unwisely, gambling can send you to the poor house (or out into the streets). However, if you do your homework and go about it as you would a business, you can do quite well, as I have done. In just a few short chapters you will discover the techniques that I have employed to such a great advantage, and will end up with a fun and lucrative hobby as opposed to being a person who loses everything in search of the proverbial pot of gold at rainbow's end. After all these years, I still enjoy gambling, but now I bet exclusively on horse racing and boxing. I frequent the Sunset Station Casino in Henderson, a neighborhood casino/hotel that caters to locals and where I maintain an excellent relationship with the staff, receive free ("comped" in Vegas terms—short for "complimentary") rooms and meals, and even have a dedicated parking space in my name.

I've always enjoyed gambling for the feeling of accomplishment, the success that comes from applying proven principles, and walking away a winner. As I will share in greater detail, I study, research extensively, and only make bets I believe have a high probability of cashing in.

I've owned five horses over the years. I currently have a piece of Achiever's Legacy, and before that I owned Loose Line. Interestingly, even though I own Achiever's Legacy, I usually don't bet on her. Why? Because she doesn't meet the betting criteria I'll share with you soon. That being said, she did win \$100,000 in a seven furlong handicap race at Del Mar during the November session.

My well-respected trainer, Jerry Hollendorfer, is a man in his late 60s. He started with inexpensive horses at Northern California tracks like Golden Gate and Bay Meadows. He initially attracted investors at five thousand dollars a share but because his horses were winning regularly, he started attracting richer investors. I like Jerry; he has extensive knowledge of horses, their condition, and what it takes to prepare them for a race. He looks for horses with respectable breeding and takes a piece of the action in exchange for reducing his fees. He has to believe in the horse and likes Achiever's Legacy, which was a contributing factor in my decision to invest.

Most people who bet on horses want to cash in a big ticket with a small bet, so they'll wager on exotics like trifectas and exactas and pick-threes and pick-fours. If you don't know what those are, check out the next chapter. I won't usually bet that way. My strategy is to pick out one horse that meets my wagering criteria, and then bet on that horse to win or even place. I don't bet too many horses; in fact, sometimes I'll only bet on one horse during an entire afternoon at the track. Most people lose because they bet for the action or the entertainment value rather than focus on winning. They'll bet every race, hooked on the excitement and dreams of a big payoff on a relatively small wager. I approach betting on horses much more thoughtfully, sticking to my strategy and not wasting money chasing an adrenaline rush. I'm going to give you a lot more specifics, but as an overview, when I handicap horses I take into account the trainer, the jockey, the horse's past performance, its recent workouts, and a great deal of other data. You have to know that some trainers don't race horses to win immediately; they like to give their horses a couple of races before they actually put them in a field to win. Wouldn't you like to know that before you plunk down your hard-earned money? If you want to

win, you should. If you really want win at the track like I do, you must do your homework and bet with your head, not your gut.