

= Paynter (horse) =

Paynter (foaled March 4 , 2009) is an American @-@ bred Thoroughbred racehorse notable for a promising three @-@ year @-@ old racing season that included a second @-@ place finish in the Belmont Stakes and a victory in the Haskell Invitational , cut short by a near @-@ fatal case of colitis requiring abdominal surgery , complicated by laminitis . Most experts believed that even if he survived , his racing days were over . His struggle for life , regularly updated via social media by his owners , gained him a large fan base and earned him the National Thoroughbred Racing Association Moment of the Year and Secretariat Vox Populi Award for 2012 . His surgery was successful , and innovative treatment for laminitis prevented harm to his feet , so he was sent to the Fair Hill Training Center for recovery and rehabilitation . In his four @-@ year @-@ old year , he returned to the track in June 2013 , almost eleven months after his 2012 Haskell victory , winning the first race of his comeback by 4 1 ? 2 lengths , then running in three more graded stakes races , placing second in two of them , demonstrating his ability to compete against top horses . In November , 2013 , he ran in the Breeders ' Cup Classic and following the race was retired to WinStar Farm to stand at stud beginning with the 2014 breeding season .

= = Background = =

Paynter is a bay horse with a white star on his forehead , a faint irregular snip on his nose , and a white left front pastern bred by Diamond A Racing Corporation of Kentucky . His sire is 1998 Breeders ' Cup Classic winner Awesome Again , and his dam is Tizso , who raced twice and is a full sister to the two @-@ time Breeders ' Cup Classic winner Tiznow .

Originally named MC 's Dream , Paynter sold for \$ 325 @,@ 000 at the Keeneland yearling sale . He was purchased by Ahmed Zayat 's Zayat Stables , LLC and was started under saddle by horse trainer J.B. McKathan in Florida . After completing basic training , Zayat 's adult son , Justin , selected Paynter , along with stablemate Bodemeister , to move on to the racing stable of trainer Bob Baffert . Paynter did not race as a two @-@ year @-@ old .

= = Three @-@ year @-@ old season = =

Paynter won his maiden race on February 18 , 2012 at Santa Anita Park . In an unusual move , he was taken directly from his maiden race to the Grade I Santa Anita Derby , where he had a troubled start and ran in sixth place before finishing fourth , 3 3 ? 4 lengths behind the winner . Viewed as not quite ready for the Triple Crown races , Paynter next ran in the Derby Trial , where , on a muddy track , he lost narrowly in the final furlong . In his first three races , he was ridden by Martin Garcia . His second win was in a 1 1 ? 16 mile allowance race on the undercard of the 2012 Preakness Stakes , when he was ridden by Mike Smith , who also rode Bodemeister in the Preakness later that day . Following Bodemeister 's second @-@ place finish in both the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness , Paynter was entered into the Belmont with Smith as jockey .

In the Belmont , Paynter led for most of the race until the final furlong when Smith came off the rail , allowing winner Union Rags to slip through and win by a neck . Paynter had already fended off two challengers during the race , and Smith had switched his whip from his right hand to his left in an attempt to fend off a late challenge from Atigun ; Smith considered his decision to be an error that cost him the race .

Paynter 's biggest win and first graded stakes win came in his next race , the 1 1 ? 8 mile , \$ 1 million Haskell Invitational at Monmouth Park Racetrack in July 2012 . Baffert 's assistant trainer , Jim Barnes , represented the stable at the race , as Baffert had cut back his schedule following a heart attack earlier in the year . Paynter went off as the even @-@ money favorite . Ridden for the first time by jockey Rafael Bejarano , he followed the leader through the backstretch , then took the lead at the far turn , beating five other horses to win by 3 3 ? 4 lengths . His winning time was 1 : 48 @.@ 87 , earning him a Beyer Speed Figure of 108 . The victory was also Baffert 's third win in a row at the Haskell and sixth Haskell win in his career . Paynter 's winnings of \$ 600 @,@ 000 put

him close to a lifetime earnings figure of \$ 1 million , at \$ 952 @, @ 224 , considered impressive for a three @-@ year @-@ old horse who did not race as a two @-@ year @-@ old .

Paynter 's next race was scheduled to be the Travers Stakes on August 25 . With all three Triple Crown race winners for 2012 already retired from racing (all due to injury) , Paynter was considered a contender to become the 3 @-@ year @-@ old Horse of the Year if he continued to win races .

= = Illness and surgery = =

On July 29 , 2012 , two days after his Haskell win , Paynter developed a fever , pneumonia , and diarrhea . He was hospitalized at the nearby Mid @-@ Atlantic Equine Medical Center in New Jersey and then shipped on August 10 , 2012 to Belmont Park where he trained for several days . He was then shipped to Saratoga Race Course , home to the Travers Stakes , to recover further . However , he had no public workouts and missed the Travers . He was scheduled to be flown back to Baffert 's home stable in California on August 27 , but Paynter again developed a fever and diarrhea . He was sent to the Upstate Equine Medical Center in Schuylerville , NY where he was diagnosed with colitis , an inflammation of the colon . Paynter 's condition quickly deteriorated and was deemed life @-@ threatening . Ahmed and Justin Zayat began to tweet regular updates on his condition to the public . His care was supervised by Dr. Laura Javicas , an Equine Internal Medicine specialist . Her devotion to Paynter was admired by both Zayat and Baffert , who later said that Javicas should receive a special Eclipse Award . In turn , Paynter , normally characterized as an " aggressive " horse , was very cooperative toward his caregivers and accepted treatment without causing problems .

Paynter developed an infection at a catheter site and blood clots in his veins due to problems with his protein levels . He lost weight , and suffering from fever , colitis and diarrhea was given plasma and " aggressive " antibiotic treatment .

The medical staff were also worried , because a systemic illness with intestinal inflammation , such as colitis , is a common precursor to laminitis , a painful inflammation of the internal structures of the hoof . The staff had been using cryotherapy on his lower legs as a precaution . Although his blood test results and protein levels began to stabilize , he nevertheless developed laminitis in three of his feet on September 4 , ten days after he arrived at the center . The veterinarians treating Paynter put casts on his lower legs to support his feet . Most experts believed that even if he survived his racing days were over , and the Zayat family feared that euthanasia would be necessary .

After about three days , he seemed to be feeling better ; his blood work became normal and his diarrhea cleared up , but he still had low @-@ grade fevers . Against the odds , his hoof X @-@ rays came back showing no separation of the laminae , and no rotation or sinking of the coffin bone in any of his feet . Although the cryotherapy had not prevented laminitis , it might have kept it from becoming worse . On September 21 , the casts were removed from his legs . The laminitis treatment was successful and his feet were returning to normal , raising hopes that he could race again some day .

Paynter developed an increasing fan base as people followed the Zayat family 's social media updates , drawing comparisons to the struggle of Barbaro a few years earlier . Both Ahmed and Justin Zayat sent out regular tweets and the hashtag # PowerUpPaynter was used to help organize updates to the public . Paynter received handmade posters from children and hundreds of get well cards .

Because fevers and colitis were still a problem , Javicas performed ultrasound and found a problem area in his colon , thus surgery was required . Paynter was very thin by this time , weighing less than 900 pounds , and surgery was considered high risk . On October 2 , he was shipped to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine 's New Bolton Center (where Barbaro had also been treated) and saw Dr. Louise Southwood , a veterinary surgeon who specialized in equine intestinal medicine and colitis cases . The following morning , Paynter went into surgery and Southwood removed a 15 @-@ inch (380 mm) growth " full of puss [sic] and bacteria " from his intestines . Southwood explained , " we finally got to the bottom of why he was spiking the fever . "

Paynter came out of the surgery well and Zayat tweeted , " Just think about the resilience of this guy . " Baffert commented , " I can 't believe this horse is still alive . " Nine days later , a press release came out stating that Paynter was " cleared of any lingering symptoms of both [colitis and laminitis] , " and expected to fully recover .

= = Rehabilitation and awards = =

Following surgery , Paynter quickly started to regain his weight , putting on 35 pounds in the two weeks between his surgery and being sent to Fair Hill Training Center 's Equine Therapy program on October 15 for rehabilitation . Nonetheless , he arrived at Fair Hill weighing only 912 pounds . At Fair Hill , he started out with hand @-@ walking and grazing , later being allowed short periods of exercise in a round pen . He had access to treatment in a horse @-@ sized hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber , an underwater treadmill called an AquaPacer , equine massage therapy , electromagnetic therapy , and use of a cold saltwater spa . By November 15 , he was close to 1 @,@ 000 pounds and was allowed free daily turnout in a paddock . His normal temperament returned as he began to buck and kick during turnout . He also developed a taste for red peppermint candies , strongly preferring them over green spearmint ones .

On December 26 , Paynter was selected as the winner of the 2012 Secretariat Vox Populi Award . Penny Chenery , owner of Secretariat , for whom the award was named , said " Paynter 's popularity stems from his ability to battle and exceed expectations , making him the perfect choice as the recipient of this year 's Vox Populi Award ... After seeing firsthand the devastating effects of this disease , I am even more convinced that the industry must continue to diligently fight laminitis . The progress we have made to date clearly benefited Paynter ? a beautiful colt with a tremendous spirit . " In January 2013 , Paynter 's survival and recovery was voted the " Moment of the Year " by the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) in a field of 12 nominees , and the horse 's connections were given that honor at the annual Eclipse Awards .

= = 2013 : Comeback = =

On December 29 , 2012 , Paynter was shipped from Fair Hill back to California , where he resumed race training with Baffert . When he left Fair Hill he weighed 1022 pounds and was described as " full of himself . " Both Southwood and Javicas believed that he could recover completely . While numerous horses recovering from colitis and abdominal surgery have been able to return to their previous levels of competition , Paynter 's successful recovery from laminitis was the biggest factor in his ability to resume racing . He began jogging on the track on January 5 , and had his first official workout on February 26 . On June 14 he was entered into a 7 @-@ furlong allowance race at Betfair Hollywood Park . Ahmed Zayat said , " He has shown so much courage , so much tenacity . I just want to let the horse do the talking . "

Paynter carried 124 pounds , the co @-@ highweight of the eight horses in the race . Bejarano returned as jockey . It was the horse 's first start on a synthetic surface . He started from starting post position two at odds of 2 ? 5 . Paynter led from the start , clocked the first quarter mile in : 22 @.@ 68 and the half mile in : 45 @.@ 67 . At six furlongs , he was 2 1 ? 2 lengths in front , running that distance in 1 : 06 @.@ 56 , and continued to increase his lead over the other horses . He won by 4 1 ? 2 lengths , finishing in 1 : 21 @.@ 86 , and earning a Beyer Speed Figure of 114 , the best of his career . Justin Zayat said , ? I thought I was winning the Kentucky Derby , ? and Baffert stated , " He is just an incredible , phenomenal horse , I can 't believe he is back . He 's just a great horse ... He went from being 99 ? 1 to survive to 1 ? 9 to win ... I got emotional watching . It ? s an amazing story . " Paynter handled the race well and came out in good shape .

Plans were made for Paynter to run additional races before the Breeders ' Cup Classic in the fall . His next race was the San Diego Handicap at Del Mar on July 27 , 2013 . Shortly after his arrival at Del Mar racetrack in early July , Paynter was profiled on TV , showing that his usual temperament was back to normal , as the camera showed him attempting to nip Baffert . Running for the first time on a different synthetic surface , Polytrack , in the grade 2 race , Paynter was the 3 ? 5 favorite , and

at 122 pounds carried the most weight . After running close to the pace and taking the lead in the homestretch , he lost by a half @-@ length to a late @-@ running horse , Kettle Corn , at the finish . Jockey Bejarano believed the polytrack surface was a factor in his loss . " He never seemed comfortable out there , I felt like I had plenty of horse , but he just wasn 't liking what he was doing ... he didn 't have enough at the end . " Nonetheless , purse money for his placing put him over one million dollars in lifetime winnings .

Paynter next went east to run in the Grade I Woodward Stakes at Saratoga on August 31 . Five of the horses in the initial seven @-@ horse field , including Paynter , were previous Grade I stakes winners . Paynter drew post position 5 and was the second favorite at 3 @-@ 1 odds on the morning line . However , following the scratch of a speed horse , the oddsmaker revised his figures to make front @-@ running Paynter the 2 @-@ 1 favorite . On race day , over a sloppy track , another horse , Mucho Macho Man , scratched and only five horses went to the post . Paynter had a bad start , hitting the left side of the starting gate . Although he ran second for part of the race , he finished last in the field . Justin Zayat said after the race , " [Paynter] never got a hold of the track . We ? ll be back another day . " Baffert concurred , stating that the horse was " fine " , but had been troubled by the poor break and by mud hitting his face .

Paynter 's next race was the Grade I Awesome Again Stakes at Santa Anita on September 28 . He started from the seven post with his former rider , Martin Garcia up . After running in the middle of the pack and going five horses wide coming into the stretch , he finished second to Mucho Macho Man . His placing was viewed by sportswriters as proof that he could run against top competitors . Baffert said Paynter was still " a bit rusty , " but the trainer was happy with Paynter 's race . He was entered in the Breeders ' Cup Classic , on November 2 . Before the race , he had a very strong workout and Baffert said that Paynter was " a monster " and " back to top form " , and Ahmed Zayat stated , " Paynter is a horse like no other ... The fact that he 's even competing in the Breeders ' Cup is miraculous . " Though he finished 7th out of 11 horses , with Mucho Macho Man winning again , Paynter finished ahead of a fellow Awesome Again son , the stakes @-@ winning favorite Game On Dude .

After the Breeders ' Cup , Paynter was retired and shipped to WinStar Farm to begin his stud career . His initial stud fee was set at \$ 25 @,@ 000 for the 2014 breeding season . Anticipating his arrival , WinStar commissioned a unique , colorful 20 feet (6 @.@ 1 m) long graffiti @-@ style mural , created by Louisville street artist Braylyn Stewart . The artwork featured the slogan " Paynter : Awesome Heart , " and was surrounded by quotations about the horse and assorted references to his racing career . The decision to use graffiti art as a promotional tool was to reflect Paynter 's toughness and " street fighter " image . Artist Stewart also expressed hope that the artwork would help put graffiti art in a positive light and encourage young people to " get involved with the arts . "

= = Racing statistics = =

= = Pedigree = =

Paynter was sired by the Canadian @-@ bred Awesome Again , winner of the 1998 Breeders ' Cup Classic . At stud , Awesome Again has sired many stakes winners including Ghostzapper , who was 2004 Breeders ' Cup winner and 2004 Horse of the Year , and two @-@ time Santa Anita Handicap winner Game On Dude , another Bob Baffert @-@ trained horse . Paynter is closely related to 2013 Preakness Stakes winner Oxbow ; the two horses share the same sire and are out of full sisters . Both horses have pedigrees outcrossed for four generations , with very little inbreeding , 4x5x5 to Northern Dancer .

Paynter 's dam is Tizso , a full sister to Tiznow , who was 2000 Horse of the Year and won the Breeders ' Cup Classic twice . Tizso 's dam , Cee 's Song , is credited with raising the respect breeders have for her female breeding line , Thoroughbred family 26 , as one of the top distaff lines in America . Five full siblings out of Cee 's Song were either race winners or the dams of race winners : Paynter 's dam Tizso and Oxbow 's dam Tizamazing both foaled stakes winners , and

Tiznow , Tizbud and Tizdubai all won stakes races . Another Cee 's Song son , the gelding Budroyale , was second in the 1999 Breeders ' Cup Classic .