

= 1973 Kentucky Derby =

The 1973 Kentucky Derby was the 99th running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs in Louisville , Kentucky . Secretariat won the Derby in a record time of 1 : 59 2 <sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> , 2 1 <sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> lengths ahead of Sham , while Our Native finished in third position . Of the thirteen horses that entered and started the race , all horses completed the event . The event was viewed in person by a then @-@ record crowd of 134 @, @ 476 , while also being broadcast both on television and over the radio .

In the days leading up to the race , Secretariat was seen as the favorite to win by many ; however there were doubts about him following a third @-@ place finish at the Wood Memorial Stakes two weeks prior to the Derby . In the wake of Secretariat 's loss , Angle Light and , in particular , Sham were the horses that were seen as the most likely to win the Derby , aside from Secretariat . Many sportswriters believed that the horses in the field possessed great speed and thought the course record would be broken .

Shecky Greene took the lead first and led for the majority of the first seven furlongs . Sham took the lead from Shecky Greene near the three quarter mile mark . As the horses entered the homestretch , Secretariat passed Sham in the final furlong and distanced himself to consolidate his lead . Secretariat would go on to win the Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes in the succeeding weeks , thus becoming the ninth horse to complete the Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing .

= = Pre @-@ race coverage = =

Thirteen horses entered the Derby , which could have at most twenty participants . Horse owners had to pay a final entry fee of \$ 2 @, @ 500 to have their horses officially entered . The field was larger than anticipated because of new entries following Secretariat 's loss at the Wood Memorial Stakes in New York .

The Wood Memorial had been the last prep race for three year @-@ olds before the Kentucky Derby . It was a 1 1 <sup>2</sup>/<sub>8</sub> mile contest held two weeks prior at Aqueduct Racetrack . Angle Light , whom groom Edward Sweat called a " very quiet horse , " won the race by a length ahead of Sham , while Secretariat finished in third , four lengths behind . Secretariat 's third @-@ place finish led spectators and sportswriters to question his ability and health ; but it was later thought that his performance in the Wood had been affected by a mouth abscess discovered prior to the race . It was his first defeat since he had finished fourth in his first race and had been relegated from first to second place because of an infraction during the Champagne Stakes , both of which occurred during his two @-@ year old campaign .

Secretariat was nonetheless the morning line favorite of the Derby entrants , despite losing the Wood . This was because he had been 1972 American Horse of the Year for a two @-@ year @-@ old campaign that featured seven victories in nine starts . Secretariat also won the two races he had entered prior to the Wood Memorial , the Gotham and Bay Shore Stakes . Sham 's trainer , Frank " Pancho " Martin , stated that Secretariat was the horse to beat and the only way to " knock " the horse was to beat him .

Sham , who had won the Santa Anita Derby , was seen as the most formidable challenger to Secretariat in the Derby because of his finish ahead of Secretariat in the Wood and his Santa Anita victory . Coming off the heels of the his victory at the Wood , Angle Light was seen as a threat to win . Angle Light was also trained by Lucien Laurin , along with as Secretariat , and thus Secretariat and Angle Light were coupled for betting purposes . Flamingo Stakes winner Our Native finished first or second in seven of his nine starts during the 1973 season , causing him to be named as a contender . Blue Grass Stakes winner My Gallant and Shecky Greene , who won the Fountain of Youth Stakes , were both trained in Chicago by Lou Goldline , which also resulted in their odds being coupled . Goldline said the two horses were similar and would do well at Churchill Downs because they both liked fast tracks . Impecunious , who was victorious in the Arkansas Derby , was initially entered in the race , but withdrew two days before because of a bruised heel . None of the competing horses had been sired by a previous Derby winner .

Florida Derby winner Royal and Regal had been suffering some problems with his feet going into

the race and was seen as a horse that could potentially be scratched before the race began . Shecky Greene , Angle Light , and Royal and Regal were thought to be the only horses in the field that had " appreciable early speed " and would challenge to be the leader out of the gates . My Gallant was to be ridden by Angel Cordero , but Cordero was suspended for ten days starting the day of the Derby for a rules infraction on a race on May 2 . Braulio Baeza was chosen to jockey My Gallant , after being dropped by the owners of Shecky Greene in advance of the race because they were unsure whether that horse would be entered in to the Derby . Larry Adams was ultimately selected as the jockey for Shecky Greene . With the speed of the horses entered , many thought that course record of 2 : 00 would be broken .

Chicago Tribune writer David Condon chose Shecky Greene to win the race because he felt the course was suited for him and because his great grandfather was Bull Lea , who sired three Derby winners . Condon picked Warbucks as his second @-@ place finisher because Warbucks ' trainer , Don Combs , trained the 1970 Kentucky Derby winner Dust Commander and his jockey , Bill Hartack , was " long overdue " for a win and would have Warbucks near the front . Gerald Strine of the Washington Post believed Sham could win the race if he allowed Shecky Greene or Royal and Regal lead the majority of the race and made a move towards the end . Strine picked Sham to win and My Gallant to finish second .

= = Event details = =

Derby officials set the official post @-@ time at 5 : 40 PM EDT . It was broadcast over television and radio through CBS and WCBS , respectively . Win Elliot served as the commentator for the pre @-@ race coverage , while Ray Haight announced it for the third consecutive year . All horses competing weighed 126 pounds . The prize money for the race was set at \$ 198 @,@ 800 . The first through fourth placed horses received \$ 155 @,@ 050 , \$ 25 @,@ 000 , \$ 12 @,@ 500 , and \$ 5 @,@ 000 , respectively . The weather during the Derby was clear and the course conditions were fast .

The official attendance of the event was 134 @,@ 476 , of which 70 @,@ 000 were estimated to be in the infield of Churchill Downs . This surpassed the previous Derby record of 130 @,@ 564 ; however the record lasted only a year as the 1974 edition attracted 163 @,@ 628 spectators . Dwight Chapin of Los Angeles Times and author Timothy Capps credited the increased attendance due to Secretariat 's loss at the Wood .

= = Race summary = =

Twice a Prince reared in the starting gate , which delayed the start . Out of the starting gate , Shecky Greene set the pace for the field , while race favorite Secretariat started in last place . Exiting the gate , Sham hit his mouth against the gate and subsequently bumped into Navajo before gaining proper stride . Sham briefly took the lead around the quarter @-@ mile marker , but Shecky Greene quickly retook the lead . Beginning the first turn , Secretariat had moved ahead of only two horses ; however , in the next quarter @-@ mile Secretariat moved into sixth position . A half @-@ mile in , Shecky Greene maintained a three length lead over Gold Bag , but his pace had slowed compared to the first quarter . Sham remained close to the front of the field within the top four for the first half of the race ; he moved into second position as the field reached the half @-@ mile post . At the three @-@ quarters post , at the start of the homestretch , Shecky Greene began to fade and Sham overtook him to move into first going into the final furlong . Secretariat , who had passed his competitors on the outside throughout the race , overtook Sham in the final furlong and pulled ahead , finishing 2 1 ? 2 horse lengths in front of Sham . Our Native took third and Forego , who went on to win multiple Eclipse Awards as an older horse , was fourth .

Secretariat 's winning time of 1 : 59 2 ? 5 and last quarter mile in 23 seconds were both records for the Derby . In addition , he had run each quarter @-@ mile faster than before , with times of 25 1 ? 5 , 24 , 23 4 ? 5 , 23 2 ? 5 , and 23 seconds . Sham maintained his stride and crossed the line in second place , eight lengths ahead of third @-@ place finisher Our Native , who had lost ground on

the final turn into the homestretch . Sham also broke the previous course record with a time of 1 : 59 4 7 5 . Shecky Greene , who led for most of the race , finished in sixth position .

= = Result = =

= = = Payout schedule = = =

\$ 3 Exacta : ( 10 7 4 ) \$ 21 @. @ 60

\$ 3 Quinella : ( 10 7 4 , 4 7 10 ) \$ 17 @. @ 70

= = Analysis = =

The win in the Kentucky Derby marked Secretariat 's third win in the four races he had run as a three @-@ year old . After the race , jockey Ron Turcotte stated , in response to Secretariat 's last place start , he " just dropped my hand on him and let him run his own race . " With Secretariat 's victory , trainer Lucien Laurin had his second consecutive win in the Derby , as Riva Ridge won in 1972 . Turcotte accomplished a similar feat as he had ridden Riva Ridge , marking the third time a jockey had won in the Derby in consecutive years .

When Secretariat pulled alongside Sham , Sham 's jockey , Laffit Pincay Jr . , felt Sham had a lot left , " but that other horse was just too much . " Pincay stated that in future races , he planned to " wait a little longer before making my move . " Donald Brumfield , Our Native 's jockey said Twice a Prince kicked Our Native in the hoof and body while rearing in the starting gate . This forced Brumfield to dismount and adjust the saddle , delaying the Derby 's start . Despite this , Brumfield stated he did not " want to make excuses , everything considered , my horse did fine . "

Betting on the ten races held that day at Churchill Downs totaled to \$ 7 @, @ 627 @, @ 965 , breaking the previous single @-@ day record for American horse racing events of \$ 7 @, @ 164 @, @ 717 . Off @-@ track betting on the Kentucky Derby reached \$ 3 @, @ 050 @, @ 194 , which was included in the previous record total .

Secretariat went on to participate in the Preakness Stakes two weeks later , where he finished in first . Sham was second , again , by a margin of 2 1 7 2 lengths . Three weeks after the Preakness , the Belmont Stakes featured a five @-@ horse field . Secretariat won by 31 lengths with a time of 2 : 24 for the mile and a half , both course records in their own right . Through his combined victories at the Belmont Stakes , Preakness Stakes , and Kentucky Derby , Secretariat became the ninth horse to complete the Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing , and the first horse since Citation in 1948 , ending a 25 @-@ year period without a Triple Crown winner . Secretariat 's times in all three Triple Crown races were course records and still stand to this day .

= = = Endnotes = = =