

SPORTING LEGENDS: STEVE CAUTHEN

SPORT: HORSE RACING

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1976 - 1991

Steve Cauthen (born May 1, 1960 in Covington, Kentucky) is an American jockey.

His parents, Tex and Myra, were nomadic newlyweds who earned a living from dabbling in the sport of kings. Buying, breeding, owning and training - the Cauthens tried their luck at anything that involved horses.



Not all of their schemes made money, and they were broke more often than not, but the lifestyle was in their blood. Soon after Steve's birth the family were on the move again, but the sight of their newborn baby crawling onto a busy highway during a roadside stop prompted them to find a place to try and settle.

Myra bought a ranch in Oklahoma, but that soon went the way of most of their racing dreams, so it was back on the road for another two years. In 1965 the family finally settled on a 40 acre farm in Walton, Kentucky.

Twelve years later Steve Cauthen was to put both himself, and Walton, firmly on the horse racing map. The minimum age for a professional jockey in America is 16, so unlike Lester Piggott - who was riding winners as a 12 year old - Steve had to be content with fighting imaginary battles during his early teens.

It took until 1976 for the young American to get a chance to prove his skills, but the wait was well worth it. Just 17 days after coming of age he rode his first winner, and by the following year he had steered an incredible 487 horses to victory - earning himself a record \$6 million in prize money.

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Steve Cauthen's amazing success made him a poster-boy for American Horse Racing.

He duly went on to win the American Triple Crown in 1978, but a bust-up with trainer Laz Barrera led to a bad patch and he went the next 110 rides without a single win.

Then British businessman Robert Sangster stepped in and offered Cauthen a contract to race in England. Despite predictions that he would fail, it did not take him long to settle.

He won his first classic, the 1,000 Guineas, soon after his arrival and went on to win two successive Jockeys' Championships in 1984 and 1985. Cauthen also became the first American in 65 years to win the Derby when Slip Anchor romped home in 1985.

He was voted the prestigious George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award in 1984 that honors a rider whose career and personal conduct exemplifies the very best example of participants in the sport of thoroughbred racing.

A second Derby win came two years later, this time on Reference Point, and Cauthen went on to finish the season with an astonishing 197 wins.

Cauthen was England's champion jockey three times, and won English classic races nine times, including the Two Thousand Guineas, the Epsom Derby twice, and the St. Leger Stakes three times. He also won the Irish Oaks three times and in 1989 rode European Horse of the Year, "Old Vic" to victory in the 1989 French Derby and the Irish Derby. In 1991 he won the Derby Italiano.

After he finished his riding career, he returned to Kentucky, where he is an executive at Turfway Park, the nearest major track to his hometown. Cauthen was inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in 1994.

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Scott Burton's Final Thought

Steve Cauthen was totally fearless as a jockey, and his dynamic riding style helped him to achieve incredible degrees of success.

Always a risk-taker during races, Cauthen would take every available opportunity to close down his opponents and overtake them at dangerous angles.

Successful from a very young age, Cauthen's career was extremely consistent, and he always represented his native USA with great pride. Whilst possibly not a household name, in my opinion Steve Cauthen deserves to be considered as one of the best all-round jockeys of recent times.



Steve Cauthen's horsemanship skills were legendary.