

# Horse races essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Secretariat (March 30, 1970 – October 4, 1989) was an American Thoroughbred racehorse that in 1973 became the first U.

S. Triple Crown champion in 25 years. He set race records in all three events in the Series – the Kentucky Derby (1: 59 2/5), the Preakness Stake (1: 53), and the Belmont Stakes (2: 24) – records that still stand today. He is considered to be one of the greatest Thoroughbreds of all time. In 1999, ESPN ranked Secretariat the 35th best athlete of the 20th century, the highest-ranking racehorse on the list. He ranked second behind Man o' War in The Blood Horse ' s List of the Top 100 U.

S. Racehorse of the 20th Century. Bold Ruler sired Secretariat out of something royal, by Prince Quillo. He was foaled at The Meadows in Caroline County, Virginia like his famous predecessor Man o' War. Secretariat was a large chestnut colt and was given the same nickname, “ Big Red. ” Secretariat's grandsire Nasrullah, is also the great great grandsire of 1977 Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew.

Owned by Penny Chenery, also known as Penny Tweedy, he was trained by Lucien Lauren, and mainly ridden by Canadian jockey Ron Turcotte, along with apprentice jockey Paul Feliciano (first two races), and veteran Eddie Maple (last race). He raced in Chenery's Meadow Stable's blue and white-checked colors. His groom was Eddie Sweat and exercise rider was Charlie Davis. Secretariat stood approximately 16. 2 hands (66 inches, 168 cm) tall, and weighed 1, 175 pounds (533 kg), with a 75-inch girth, in his racing prime.

Background The story of Secretariat began with the toss of a coin in 1969 between Penny Chenery of Meadow Stable and Ogden Phipps of Wheatley Stable. The coin toss the idea of Phipps, owner of Bold Ruler, and “ Bull” Hancock of Claiborne Farms as a way to get the very best mares for Bold Ruler, and when the toss went their way, to add well-bred fillies to their own broodmare band. Bold Ruler was considered one of the important stallions of his time. He had a fine balance between speed and stamina, and though he finished fourth in the 1957 Kentucky Derby at a mile and a quarter, he won the Preakness two weeks later at a mile and three sixteenths, and went on to win three major stakes at the Derby’s 10-furlong distance. After his racing career, Bold Ruler was retired to Claiborne Farms, but was still controlled by the Phipps family.

This meant that he would be bred mainly to Phipps’s mares and that few of his offspring would find their way to the auction ring. Phipps and Hancock agreed to forgo stud fees for Bold Ruler; instead, they would claim one of two foals produced by the mare he bred in successive seasons or two mares he bred in the same season. Who obtained which foal or even received first pick would be decided by a flip of a coin. In 1968, Chenery sent two mares named Hasty Matelda and Something royal to Bold Ruler, and in 1969, a colt and filly were the result.

Chenery and Phipps’s coin toss was held in the fall of 1969, in the office of New York Racing Association Chairman Alfred G. Vanderbilt II, with Hancock as witness. As stated in the original agreement, the winner of the coin toss would get first foal pick in 1969, and second foal pick in 1970. Phipps won the toss and took the weanling filly out of something royal. This resulted in

Chenery getting the colt out of Hasty Matelda. In 1969, Cicada replaced Hasty Matelda, but she did not conceive.

Both parties assumed something royal would deliver a healthy foal in the spring of 1970. This left Chenery with the unborn foal of something royal. On March 30, at 12: 10 a. m. , something royal foaled a bright-red chestnut colt with three white socks and a star with a narrow blaze.

By the time the colt was a yearling he was still unnamed. Meadow Stable's secretary, Elizabeth Ham, had submitted five names to the Jockey Club, all of which were denied for various reasons. Approval finally came with the sixth submission, a name Ham herself picked from a previous career association, "Secretariat". Two-year-old season On July 4, 1972, Secretariat finished fourth, beaten 17 lengths, in his first race at Aqueduct Racetrack when he was impeded at the start, forced to take up on the backstretch and then could not make up the ground. After that loss, Secretariat then won five races in a row, including three important two-year-old stakes races, the Sanford Stakes and Hopeful Stakes at Saratoga Race Course, and the Futurity Stakes at Belmont Park. In the Hopeful, he made a huge move, passing eight horses in 1/4 mile to take the lead and then drawing off to win by five lengths.

He then ran in the Champagne Stakes at Belmont, for which he ran as the favorite and won by two lengths. Following an inquiry by the racecourse stewards, Secretariat was disqualified and placed second for bearing in and interfering with Stop the Music, which was declared the winner. Secretariat then took the Laurel Futurity, winning by eight lengths over Stop the Music,

and completed his season with a win in the Garden State Futurity.

Secretariat won the Eclipse Award for American Champion Two-Year-Old Male Horse and, in a rare occurrence, two two-year-olds topped the balloting for 1972 American Horse of the Year honors with Secretariat edging out the filly, La Prevoyante. Secretariat received the votes of the Thoroughbred Racing Associations of North America and the “ Daily Racing Form”, while the National Turf Writers Association chose La Prevoyante.

Only one horse since then, Favorite Trick in 1997, has won that award as a two-year-old. Preparing for the Kentucky Derby Secretariat began his three-year-old year with an easy win in the Bay Shore Stakes at Aqueduct. In his next start, the Gotham Stakes, Secretariat led wire-to-wire for the first time in his career. He ran the first 3/4-mile in 1: 08<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub> and finished the one-mile race in 1: 32<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub>, matching the track record. However, in his next start, he finished third in the Wood Memorial to stable mate Angle Light and Santa Anita Derby winner Sham, in their final preparatory race for the Kentucky Derby. His loss was due to a large abscess in his mouth.

Because of the Wood Memorial results, some were considering Sham the top pick for the Kentucky Derby. Sham was at the top of the list in the Louisville Courier-Journal and Times Derby Ratings on April 22, 1973. The Triple Crown The Kentucky Derby Churchill Downs bettors made the entry of Secretariat and Angle Light the 3-2 favorite in the 1973 Kentucky Derby. (Sham was next at 5-2. ) Secretariat broke last, but gradually moved up on the field in the backstretch, then overtook Sham at the top of the stretch, pulling away to win the Derby by 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lengths. Our Native finished eight lengths further back in third.

On his way to a still-standing track record (1: 59.2), Secretariat ran each quarter-mile segment faster than the one before it. The successive quarter-mile times were 25.1, 24.2, 23.2, and 23. This means he was still accelerating as of the final quarter-mile of the race. No other horse had won the Derby in less than 2 minutes before; it would not be accomplished again until Monarchos in 2001. Sportswriter Mike Sullivan said, in admiration: I was at Secretariat's Derby, in '73 . . .

. That was... just beauty, you know? He started in last place, which he tended to do.

I was covering the second-place horse, which wound up being Sham. It looked like Sham's race going into the last turn, I think. The thing you have to understand is that Sham was fast, a beautiful horse. He would have had the Triple Crown in another year.

And it just didn't seem like there could be anything faster than that. Everybody was watching him. It was over, more or less. And all of a sudden there was this, like, just a disruption in the corner of your eye, in your peripheral vision. And then before you could make out what it was, here Secretariat came. And then Secretariat had passed him.

No one had ever seen anything run like that – a lot of the old guys said the same thing. It was like he was some other animal out there. The Preakness Stakes In the Preakness Stakes on May 19, 1973, Secretariat broke last, but then made a huge, last-to-first move on the first turn. After reaching the lead with 51/2 furlongs to go, he was never challenged, and won by 2 lengths, again with Sham finishing second and Our Native third.

The time of the race was controversial. The infield teletimer displayed a time of 1: 55. The track's electronic timer had malfunctioned because of damage caused by members of the crowd crossing the track to reach the infield. The Pimlico Race Course clocker, E.

T. McLean Jr. , announced a hand time of 1: 54<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub>. However, two Daily Racing Form clockers claimed the time was 1: 53<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub>, which would have broken the track record (1: 54 by Canonero II). Tapes of Secretariat and Canonero II were played side by side by CBS, and Secretariat got to the finish line first on tape, though this is not a reliable method of timing a horse race at the time.

The Maryland Jockey Club, which managed the Pimlico racetrack and is responsible for maintaining Preakness records, discarded both the electronic and Daily Racing Form times and recognized 1: 54<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> as the official time. However, Daily Racing Form, for the first time in history, printed its own clocking of 1: 53<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> next to the official time in the chart of the race. On June 19, 2012, a special meeting of the Maryland Racing Commission was convened at Laurel Park at the request of Penny Chenery, who hired companies to conduct a forensic review of the videotapes of the race. After over two hours of testimony, the commission unanimously voted to change the time of Secretariat's win from 1: 54<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> to 1: 53, establishing a new stakes record. The Daily Racing Form then announced that it would honor the commission's ruling with regard to the running time. As Secretariat prepared for the Belmont Stakes, he appeared on the covers of three national magazines: Time, Newsweek, and Sports Illustrated.

He had become a national celebrity. The Belmont Stakes Only four horses competed against Secretariat for the June 9, 1973, running of the 105th Belmont Stakes, including Sham, who had finished second in both the Derby and Preakness, along with three other horses thought to have little chance by the bettors: Twice A Prince, My Gallant, and Private Smiles. With so few horses in the race, and with Secretariat expected to win, no "show" bets were taken. Secretariat was sent off as a 1-10 favorite to win as a \$2.

20 payout on a \$2 ticket and paid at 20 cents more - \$2.40 - to place.

Before a crowd of 67,605, Secretariat and Sham set a fast early pace, opening ten lengths on the rest of the field. After the six-furlong mark, Sham began to tire, ultimately finishing last. Secretariat continued the fast pace and opened up a larger and larger margin on the field. CBS Television announcer Chic Anderson described the horse's pace in a famous commentary: "Secretariat is widening now! He is moving like a tremendous machine!" In the stretch, Secretariat opened a 1/16-mile lead on the rest of the field.

At the finish, he won by 31 lengths (breaking the margin-of-victory record set by Triple Crown winner Count Fleet in 1943, who won by 25 lengths), and ran the fastest 1 1/2 miles on dirt in history, 2:24 flat, which broke the stakes record by more than two seconds. This works out to a speed of 37.5 mph for his entire performance. Secretariat's record still stands; no other horse has ever broken 2:25 for 1 1/2 mile on dirt.

If the Beyer Speed Figure calculation had been developed during that time, Andrew Beyer calculated that Secretariat would have earned a figure of 139,



the highest he has ever assigned. Bettors holding 5, 617 winning pari-mutuel tickets on Secretariat never redeemed them, presumably keeping them as souvenirs (and because the tickets would have paid only \$2. 20 on a \$2 bet). Secretariat became the ninth Triple Crown winner in history, and the first in 25 years.

After the Triple Crown Three weeks after his win at Belmont, Secretariat shipped to Chicago, and easily won the Arlington Invitational at Arlington Park. He went to Saratoga, for the Whitney Stakes. Racing against older horses for the first time he was beaten by the Allen Jerkens-trained Onion, a four-year-old gelding. Onion led from the start and led Secretariat by a head on the final turn before pulling ahead in the straight to win by a length. A record crowd of over 30, 000 witnessed what was described as an “astonishing” upset.

He then won the inaugural Marlboro Cup against a field that included Secretariat's stable mate, the 1972 Derby and Belmont Stakes winner Riva Ridge, top California stakes winner Cougar II, Canadian champion Kennedy Road, Onion, Travers winner Annihilate ' Em, and the 1972 American champion three-year-old male horse Key to the Mint. Secretariat ran 1: 45.2 for 1 1/8 miles, then a world record for the distance In September, Secretariat returned to Belmont for the 1 1/2 mile Woodward Stakes in which he was matched against the Allen Jerkens-trained, four-year-old Prove Out. Racing on a sloppy track, Secretariat led into the straight but was overtaken by Prove Out, who pulled clear to win by 4 1/2 lengths. Following his defeat by Prove Out Secretariat was moved to turf for the Man O' War Stakes over (1 1/2 miles). He won by five lengths from Tentam, with Big

Spruce seven and a half lengths further back in third. Secretariat set a track record time of 2: 24.4? 5.

After the race, Ron Turcotte explained, “ when Tentam came up to him in the backstretch I just chirped to him and he pulled away”. Secretariat’s owner entered into a syndication deal that precluded the horse racing past age three. Accordingly, Secretariat’s last race was against older horses in the Canadian International Stakes over one and five-eighths miles at Woodbine Racetrack in Toronto, Canada on October 28, 1973. With Ron Turcotte out with a five-day suspension, Eddie Maple rode Secretariat to victory by 61? 2 lengths. After the race, Secretariat was brought to Aqueduct Racetrack where he was paraded before fans in his final public appearance.

Altogether, Secretariat won 16 of his 21 career races, with three seconds and one third, with total earnings of \$1, 316, 808. At age three, Secretariat was again named Horse of the Year, and won Eclipse Awards as the American Champion Three-Year-Old Male Horse and the American Champion Male Turf Horse. Honors and retirement Breeding rights were sold for Secretariat before he won the Triple Crown. As part of his first crop at stud, Secretariat sired Canadian Bound, who was the first Thoroughbred yearling racehorse ever sold for more than US\$1 million. At the 1976 Keeneland July sale, the auction bidding for Canadian Bound broke the \$1 million barrier, selling for \$1.

million, equal to \$6, 051, 754 today. Canadian Bound was a complete failure in racing, and for several years, the value of Secretariat’s offspring declined considerably. However, he eventually sired a number of major stakes

winners, including 1986 Horse of the Year Lady's Secret, 1988 Preakness and Belmont Stakes winner Risen Star, 1990 Melbourne Cup winner Kingston Rule, which broke the course record in Australia's richest race, and the 1994, 1995 winner of the G1 Pacific Classic, Tinnners Way, born in 1990 to Secretariat's last crop. He also sired General Assembly, which won the 1979 Travers Stakes at Saratoga while setting a still-standing race record of 2: 00 flat.

Andrew Beyer has said General Assembly's speed figure in that race was one of the fastest in history. Like Secretariat in the Belmont, General Assembly never duplicated that performance in the races that remained on his schedule. Secretariat was retired at three years old and General Assembly at four. Ultimately, Secretariat sired as many as 600 foals. There has been some criticism of Secretariat as a stallion, due in part to his perceived inability to produce male offspring of his same caliber. However, he turned out to be a noted broodmare sire, being the maternal grandsire (" desire") of 1992 Horse of the Year and successful sire A.

P. Indy, Secretariat's grandson through his daughter Weekend Surprise, and sired by another Triple Crown winner, Seattle Slew. AP Indy is the sire of 2007 Belmont Stakes winner Rags to Riches, the first filly to win at Belmont since 1905. Secretariat is also the desire of the great stallions Storm Cat (by Storm Bird), through his daughter Terlingua, herself an excellent race mare, and has Gone West, through his daughter Secrettame.

Secretariat is also the great-grandsire of Giant's Causeway through his grandson Storm Cat and daughter Terlingua. Secretariat's genetic legacy

may be linked in part to the likelihood that he carried the “ x-factor” (a trait linked to a large heart, carried only on the X chromosome) and thus, a trait Secretariat could only pass on via his daughters. Death In the fall of 1989, Secretariat was afflicted with laminitis—a painful and often-incurable hoof condition. When his condition failed to improve after a month of treatment, he was euthanized on October 4 at the age of 19. Secretariat was buried at Claiborne Farm in Paris, Kentucky, given the rare honor of being buried whole (usually only the head, heart, and hooves of a winning race horse are buried, and the rest of the body is cremated). A necropsy revealed his heart was significantly larger than that of an ordinary horse.

An extremely large heart is a trait that occasionally occurs in Thoroughbreds, linked to a genetic condition passed down via the dam line, known as the “ x-factor”. The x-factor can be traced to the historic racehorse Eclipse, which was necropsied after his death in 1789. Because Eclipse’s heart appeared to be much larger than other horses, it was weighed, and found to be 14 pounds (6. 4 kg), almost twice the normal weight. Eclipse is believed to have passed the trait on via his daughters, and pedigree research verified that Secretariat traces in his dam line to a daughter of Eclipse. In the 20th century, the heart of Phar Lap was weighed and also documented to be 6. 35 kilograms (14. 0 lbs. ), or essentially the same size as that of Eclipse. At the time of Secretariat’s death, the veterinarian who performed the necropsy, Dr. Thomas Swerczek, head pathologist at the University of Kentucky, did not weigh Secretariat’s heart, but stated, “ We just stood there in stunned silence.

We couldn't believe it. The heart was perfect. There were no problems with it. It was just this huge engine. Later, Swerczek also performed a necropsy on Sham, who died in 1993. Swerczek did weigh Sham's heart, and it was 18 pounds (8.

2 kg). Based on Sham's measurement, and having necropsied both horses, he estimated Secretariat's heart probably weighed 22 pounds (10.0 kg), or about two-and-three-quarters times as large as that of the average horse.

Posthumous recognition On October 16, 1999, in the winner's circle at Keeneland Race Course in Lexington, the U. S.

Postal Service honored Secretariat, unveiling a 33-cent postage stamp with his image. ESPN listed him 35th of the 100 greatest North American athletes of the 20th century, the highest of three non-humans on the list (the other two were also racehorses: Man o' War at 84th and Citation at 97th).

Secretariat was inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in 1974, the year following his Triple Crown. In 2005, he appeared in ESPN Classic's show "Who's No. 1?" In the list of "Greatest Sports Performances" (by individual athletes), the horse was the only nonhuman on the list, with his run at Belmont ranking second behind Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game. On May 2, 2007, Secretariat was inducted into the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame, marking the first time an animal received this honor.

A new award created in 2011 titled "Secretariat Vox Populi (voice of the people) was presented by Penny Chenery to the first honoree, the 2010 Horse of the Year, Zenyatta. This annual award will acknowledge the horse that brings the most excitement and attraction to the sport. Pop culture

Secretariat, a Disney live-action film written by Mike Rich and directed by Randall Wallace, was released on October 8, 2010. The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson features a pantomime horse named Secretariat.