

Henry tudors success in replacing richard

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How far was the success of Henry Tudor in replacing Richard III as king due to the events on the battlefield at Bosworth? Clearly the death of Richard at the battle of Bosworth in 1485 was the final contributing factor to his demise, but it had certainly been brought about by Henry Tudor's efforts and was undoubtedly not an event of simply sheer fortune for Tudor. It is the act of Richard breaking rank in a seemingly desperate final drive for victory that many cite as the reason for the succession of Henry Tudor, though it is the events prior to this that determine whether Richard was left with no other choice.

At the battle of Bosworth field, Richard seems to have had a larger number of fighting men than Tudor and also held the higher ground, however many contemporaries stated that the battle was largely a stalemate, suggesting that Tudor's preparations for battle had been successful, at least for the fact that he was able to hold his own against an opponent with greater numbers and a more preferable geographical position. It was not until Richard's fateful "suicide charge"; a charge with the aim of directly attacking the opposition's leader, rather than being explicitly suicidal.

Thanks to the Swiss-trained French mercenaries in Henry's garrison and their tactics never before seen on English soil and Thomas, Lord Stanley's last minute decision to support Henry, Richard was killed and Tudor took his crown. Thus Henry's success in replacing Richard of York as king of England, would not be as we know it had Richard not made the dramatic charge that resulted in his death, but whether the success would ever have occurred is still yet to be explored.

Henry's first real aspirations of reclaiming the throne of England ostensibly came about in 1483 following the quashed Buckingham rebellion. This uprising showed Henry the lack of support for Richard and between 1483 and 1485, Henry sent emissaries to build support for himself in England, before being forced to flee from Brittany to France where Charles VIII gave him 60,000 francs and 1,800 mercenaries (as mentioned previously). Clearly, Henry Tudor had not planned all this but it was a very fortunate series of events for him in the long term, as it gave him funding and an army for any invasion of England.

Furthermore, following Henry's arrival in west Wales, he managed to convince the prominent Welshman Rhys ap Thomas to betray Richard and fight for the Lancastrians, which dealt a great blow to Richard, who had relied on Thomas to hold off Tudor from England. As Henry advanced further into England, many hundreds of men joined his army, many through the encouragement of Sir William Stanley to do so. The means by which Richard had ascended to the throne, following the suspicious disappearances of King Edward V and his brother, and the lack of acknowledgement for loyal, leading noblemen, would have certainly added to the desire for another ruler.

This vastly increasing support for Henry aided him immensely in the battle of Bosworth and therefore they would have been there for any other battle in which a seemingly reckless assault decided the outcome; thus the success of Tudor replacing Henry would very probably have never occurred without this aid. To further this argument, the marriage between Lord Stanley, whom Richard relied heavily on but trusted little, and Tudor's mother, Lady

Margaret Beaufort, meant arguably the most powerful nobleman in England held some sort of allegiance to Henry.

At the battle of Bosworth, the army of the Stanley's simply acted as a spectator for the majority of the battle before finally siding with Henry once Richard broke rank; presumably Stanley saw this as a sign of weakness. Therefore we can clearly see that many people Richard had trusted to aid him, ended up siding with his enemy and marching against him. Despite many still arguing that Richard could have won the battle had he remained in rank, it is point that the Earl of Northumberland, one of Richards foremost army captains, had just refused to follow the orders Richard had made of him.

Thus even in his own army, Richard suffered betrayal due to the formidable opposition but also due to the discontent of his men who may have considered him a usurper to the throne in the first place and hence did not feel too uncomfortable in being ruled by Henry Tudor. Conclusively, Henry gained far too much support from men supposedly on the side of the reigning monarch, for Richard ever to retain his crown and avoid being replaced and the events on the battlefield at Bosworth were, in essence, the superior tactics of a more experienced assembly of soldiers and the final gasp of an ultimately doomed king.