



Race HORSES



by Michael Sandler

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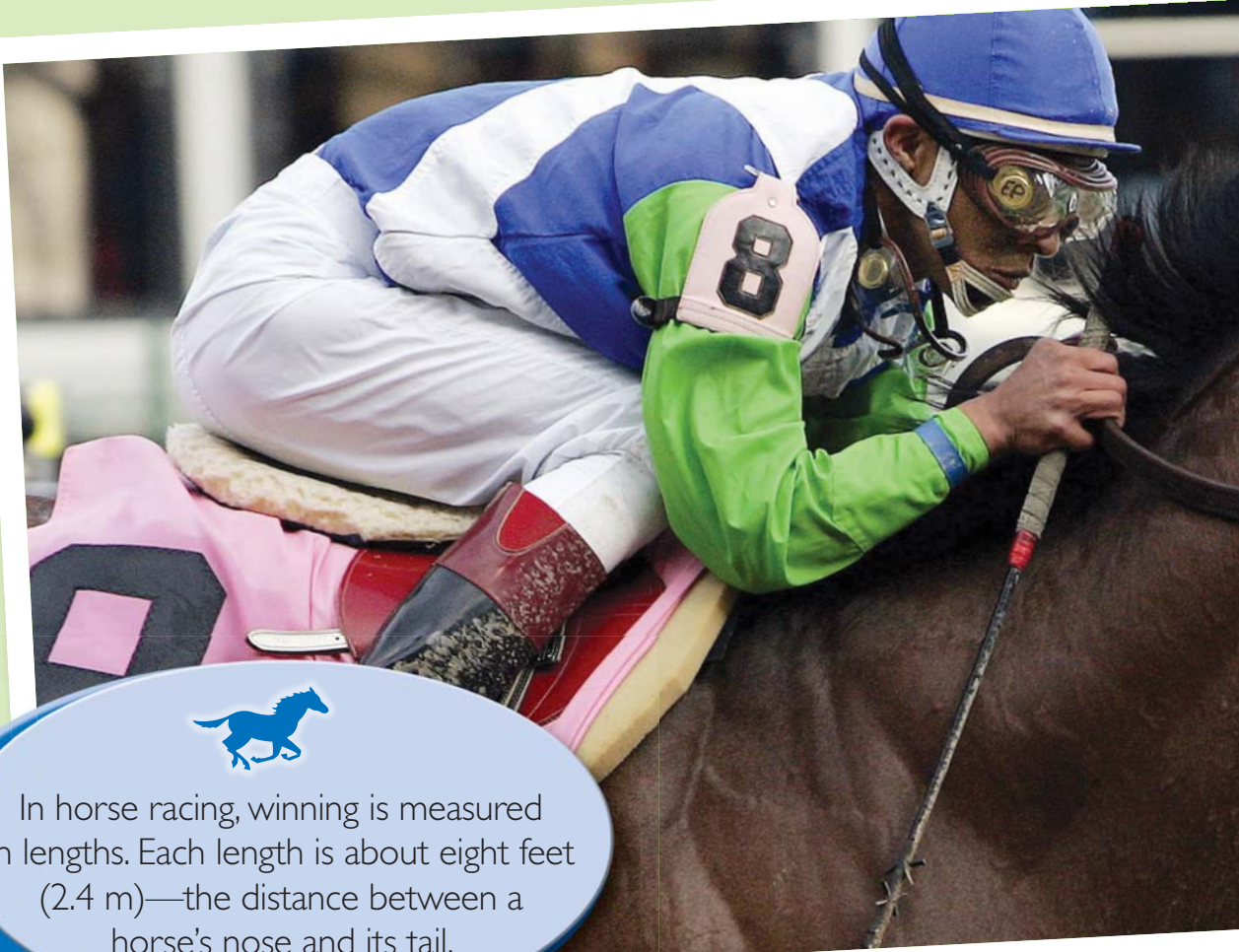
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All Eyes on Barbaro

The air felt electric. The eager crowd, jammed into the stands, couldn't wait for the 2006 Preakness to begin.

Fans focused their binoculars on one horse—Barbaro. The big chestnut-colored **colt** had **galloped** to a win in each of his first six races.



In horse racing, winning is measured in lengths. Each length is about eight feet (2.4 m)—the distance between a horse's nose and its tail.

Weeks before, Barbaro had shown his talents at the world's most famous horse race, the Kentucky Derby. He ran strong out of the starting gate. He moved steadily through the pack of 20 horses. Then, he rocketed in front to victory.

The Preakness was almost as big a race as the Derby. Would Barbaro be able to do it again?



Barbaro finished the Kentucky Derby in Louisville, Kentucky, with a lead of 6 ½ lengths. It was the biggest victory in 60 years!

A History of Horse Racing

Horse racing is a contest between two or more horses to see which one is fastest. Racing horses isn't new. In fact, it's one of the world's oldest sports.

In about 1500 B.C., people in Asia and North Africa raced horses. Hundreds of years later, **spectators** packed the **Circus Maximus** in ancient Rome. There, they watched horse-drawn **chariots** roar around the **track**.



A Roman chariot race

By the early 1600s, England's first public track opened in London. The sport became so popular that English settlers brought horses and racing to America. At first, wealthy farmers would challenge neighbors to **competitions** between their fastest animals. Soon, regular Saturday races became popular events.



Before there were tracks, early American races could take place just about anywhere.



The first track in America was built on Long Island, New York, in 1665. It was called Newmarket.

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About the Author

Michael Sandler has written numerous books on sports for kids and young adults. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, with fellow writer Sunita Apte and their two children Laszlo and Asha.

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Race HORSES

And they're off! It was the start of the 2006 Preakness. All eyes were on a big chestnut-colored colt named Barbaro. Weeks earlier, he had shown off his talents and won the world's most famous horse race, the Kentucky Derby. The Preakness was almost as big a race as the Derby. Would Barbaro be able to gallop toward victory again?

Horse racing is one of the world's oldest sports. Look inside to learn what it takes to become a racehorse and how these incredible animals risk their lives to become champions.



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