

HORSE RACING

Interviewed: May 11, 1976

Tape 88, #1

JOCKEY: Mr. Jack Davis,  
442 Garden City Road,  
Richmond, B. C.

David Stevenson - Researcher

- Began in racing in 1937-38 at Brighthouse Park at the age of 17.
- He worked with horses long before that, walking horses for 35¢ a piece, then he galloped horses for exercise at 75¢ a piece which was good money in those days.
- Racing was still popular during the depression - huge crowds used to attend, they came over on the inter-urban they had three cars that were hitched together.
- The Brighthouse track was the fastest track in North America; it was a beautiful track with trees and lots of room.
- Started racing as a jockey in the Bush tracks: Alberta, Kamloops, Vernon, and rode a few at Brighthouse and then went to the prairies.
- And then I began to get over-weight and incurred several injuries - a sore back, ribs and busted ankle.
- He used to go to California in the winter to gallop horses and break colts.
- His record was not that good as a jockey to become a jockey.
- You start walking horses and cleaning out stables.
- If you are light enough, you can become an exercise boy and if you are liked by an owner, you get a contract to ride his horses.
- You are an apprentice until you have enough wins and then you "lose your bug".
- 105 - 107 pounds is a good weight for a jockey.
- Nowadays there is a Jockey Guild; in the old days you were on your own.
- The Guild provides medical protection and negotiates prices for the jockeys.
- There are two Guilds: one for America and other for Canada.
- Jockeys who go to race in the States join the Guild there.
- Today jockey mounts are \$25.00 - \$27.00 for riding plus a percentage if they win.

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- There are many different factors involved in winning: first of all is the mount ... it has to be good, plus your ability as a rider.
- Jockeys have agents who hussle the mounts for him.
- Lansdowne track was not as fast as Brighthouse but there were better facilities.
- Brighthouse estates was bigger ... from the present Municipal Hall right down to River Road while Lansdowne was only 80 acres.
- Exhibition Park track has no comparison to Lansdowne ... it is shorter for one thing and a mile track is better for racing.
- He used to own and train horses as well.
- He trained for Mr. Gordon, all grey horses, Blue Mood.
- He bought a horse who was crippled, hoping to build him up but he didn't turn into anything.
- He recalls Nels Jensen who also raced horses, as well as the Gilmores, Cline Hoggard, and the McKim brothers who had several farms.
- He now works as a valet for three or four jockeys.
- A valet looks after their equipment and their needs.
- B. C. horses have improved over the years ... they are bit bigger now and finer bred.
- A horse's disposition is largely determined by its parents.
- It is important to train colts, in a gentle way, not teach them any bad habits.
- You start by putting a bit, the mouth, and driving him from behind to teach him how to turn, then you put a saddle on him, and then you put a rider on him ... eventually they get used to it.
- It takes about three months to get a horse trained. You can not rush them.
- A thorough-bred horses has more determination than a "cold-blood horse".
- Horse racing is a very popular sport and has spread to Japan even.
- Recommends Billy Marsh as a good person to interview, his son is training horses today.