Steve Cauthen

2023 NKFF Banquet Keynote Speaker

Steve Cauthen, the son of a trainer and a farrier, grew up in Walton, Kentucky, around horses, which (along with his small size) made horse racing a logical career choice.

The career of Steve Cauthen was a study in the unprecedented. In 1977, Cauthen set a North American earnings record of more than $6 million while still an apprentice, and he also reigned that year as the champion rider in wins with 487. He surpassed this the following year.

Cauthen, as a teenager, partnered with Hall of Fame horse Affirmed through arguably the most dramatic of Triple Crown sweeps in 1978.
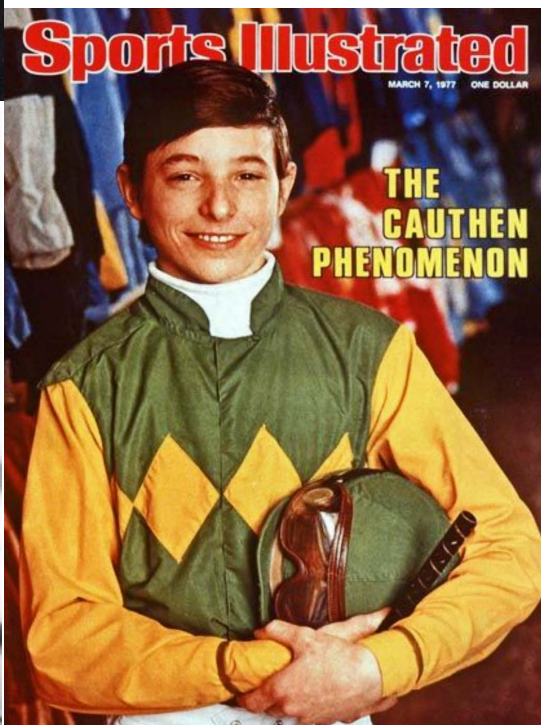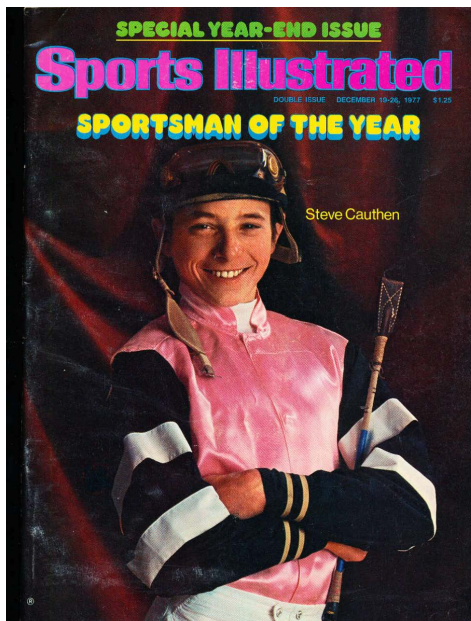
After that, he was called "The Six Million Dollar Man" and "Stevie Wonder." Cauthen won numerous awards, including Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year, Sporting News Sportsman of the Year, Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year, and ABC's Wide World of Sports Athlete of the Year. In the same year, he won the Eclipse Award for Outstanding Apprentice Jockey and the Eclipse Award for Outstanding Jockey.

Cauthen moved to Europe, where he so effectively adapted to different riding styles that he was England's champion jockey in 1984, 1985, and 1987. He won the historic Epsom Derby on Slip Anchor in 1985 and Reference Point in 1987 among his total of 10 wins in English classics. His other English classic wins came in the St. Leger (1985, 1987, 1989), Epsom Oaks (1985, 1988, 1989), 2,000 Guineas (1979), and 1,000 Gunieas (1985).

Traveling frequently, Cauthen became the first rider to win the combination of the Irish Derby, French Derby, Italian Derby, Epsom Derby, and Kentucky Derby. He also won the storied Ascot Gold Cup, as well as the Champion Stakes, Eclipse Stakes, Hopeful Stakes, United Nations, Grosser Prix von Vaden Baden, and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes. Other notable races won by Cauthen include the Whitney Handicap, Hopeful Stakes, Sanford Stakes, Futurity Stakes, Laurel Futurity, San Felipe Stakes, Jim Dandy Stakes, United Nations Handicap, Ascot Gold Cup (twice), Middle Park Stakes (four times), and Grand Prix de Paris (twice).

Cauthen won 954 races in North America and 2,794 worldwide.

Steve Cauthen resides in Verona, Kentucky where he runs a stud farm.

Sports Illustrated

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

Steve Cauthen

Sports Illustrated

THE CAUTHEN PHENOMENON

I don't psyche myself up. I psyche myself down. I think clearer when I'm not psyched up.

— Steve Cauthen