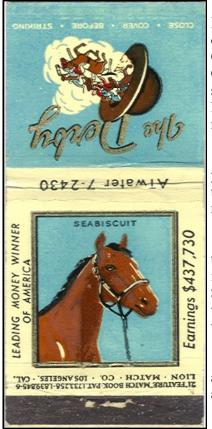# Seabiscuit: An American Legend

There are only two horses that I know the names of: Man O'War and Seabiscuit *[OK, I'm not counting Trigger and Black Beauty]*. Those are the two horses that were always talked about as I was growing up.

Seabiscuit became one of thoroughbred racings greatest legends at a time when the sport needed it the most. At age 2 he had raced a record 35 times with only 5 wins to his name. He went on to race 23 more times at the age of 3, capturing 9 of these outings, and then he won the race at Saratoga. By then, Seabiscuit was in the hands of trainer, Tom Smith.

Seabiscuit was tired and sore after all he had done in just 2 years at the track. The horse was 200 pounds underweight with a weary temperament. He raised hell at the starting gate, intimidated the grooms, nervously paced his stall, and refused to eat. Smith babied his new colt in hopes of Seabiscuit one day living up to his potential as the grandson of the mighty Man O' War. He put leg braces and bandages on Biscuit's legs, and equipped him with blinkers for training and racing to keep his mind on business. He also gave his colt a double sized stall complete with roommates, a stray dog named Pocatell, a spider monkey known as Jo Jo, and his lifelong traveling mate, a calm horse name Pumpkin. He chose Johnny Pollard to be Seabiscuit's new jockey. Between the care he received from both Smith and Pollard, Seabiscuit flourished. The once neurotic, skittish animal became easygoing and sociable. Towards the end of '36, Seabiscuit won the Scarsdale Handicap in track record time, and then went on to claim victories in two major races in California, just missing two world records in the process.

1937 began Seabiscuit's 4 year old season at Santa Anita, where he won his first race of the year. He then went on to run in the prestigious Santa Anita Handicap against 17 other competitors. Seabiscuit lost by a nose. Even so, the horse had started to become a celebrity. He raced on both coasts, winning ten major races and tying five track records while becoming the leading money winner for 1937. However, it was Triple Crown winner War Admiral that was named Horse of the Year.



The public clamored for a match race between the two colts, and Belmont Park offered $100,000 for battle between the two thoroughbreds in May. Both owners accepted but a flare-up in 'Biscuit's bad leg forced a cancellation. Once Seabiscuit healed he went on to win the Hollywood Gold Cup in California and smash the race's record along the way. In the fall of 1938, it seemed the big match race would finally happen— Pimlico Special, November 1. Seabiscuit sailed to a four-length lead, finishing in near world record time. This year, Seabiscuit claimed Horse of the Year honors.

By the end of '39, Seabiscuit had once again overcome leg problems. At 7 years of age, Seabiscuit was more than twice the age of some of his rivals, but the Santa Anita Handicap became the goal. He won the handicap while running the second fastest mile and a quarter in American racing history.

Seabiscuit was finished, though. In six years of racing, he had competed 89 times, winning 33 of these matches, finishing on the board 61 times, (more so in his later years), set 16 track records, and equaled another. Having won $437,730 in purse money, he was worth his weight in gold to the Howards, who had purchased him for a mere $7,500. it was time to retire. Seabiscuit was going home to Ridgewood Ranch.

On May 17th, 1947, the great and mighty champion suffered a heart attack at only 14 years of age. He was buried on a secret site on the ranch, with only an oak sapling to mark its location.