



Gregg Ryan on "Close to Glory"

Photo by Wally Johnson

CANTON, N. Y. — It is like a high school quarterback winning his first game and dreaming of playing in the Super Bowl... or at least that is the comparison St. Lawrence University sophomore Gregg Ryan drew between his initial steeplechase race and the future possibility of riding in the most famous of such events... England's Grand National.

But Ryan, who candidly admits that he would be unable to make St. Lawrence's Equestrian team, made his debut in steeplechase racing a somewhat unique and definitely memorable experience.

Riding in the Genesee Valley Hunt Races, Ryan was thrown as his horse, Close to Glory, caught his forelegs on a jump and went down. With both horse and rider undamaged in the mishap, Ryan remounted and rode to a second place finish in the event.

"Everyone was amazed at the conditioning of the horse... he's a very good horse, but if we hadn't gone done and did win the race it would have been an upset. It was my first race, and I'm quite inexperienced at it. The novelty of the whole thing was finishing second despite doing down."

The word has gotten out, and

through his father John P. Ryan of Tryon, N. C., Gregg was invited to compete with his horse in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup Races Nov. 8.

"I'm quite optimistic and I'm looking forward to it", said young Ryan. "People heard how the horse did and want to see it run again... it hasn't won since 1978, and it is starting to gain confidence."

The horse is a thorough-bred and a former flat track racer.

When a flat track horse doesn't make it as a racer or loses some of its speed, and it has the proper attitude, it is taught how to jump and becomes a steeplechase mount. Close to Glory is a nine year old which hadn't won in two years and was purchased at Saratoga at the end of the summer.

Ryan brought the horse with him to St. Lawrence and set out to prepare for his first sanctioned steeplechase.

Mrs. Cobb (SLU director of riding Marilyn Cobb) has been great with helping us with the conditioning program.

"Most schools with riding programs are simply interested in the equestrian aspects, but Mrs. Cobb was the trainer for this

race and really helped us out.

"Training a horse in this atmosphere really shocked a lot of people...but it is a credit to the school and its riding program that it could fit in a race horse and then condition it as well as Mrs. Cobb did."

Cobb gives Ryan a lot of credit. "It meant a lot of hard work on Gregg's part", said the SLU riding director, who has led the Sains to national championship in Equestrian competition. "I set up a program and he stuck to it, riding every day, and after a two — or three-mile gallop it meant a lot more work, because it takes a long time to cool one of these horses down."

Ryan is a former wrestler for St. Lawrence, and even that figured into the steeplechase. "I had to lose a great deal of weight as a rider for the competition, getting down to 152 with saddle and boots and the rest of my tack thrown in...the wrestling training helped in that area."

Ryan has always ridden a great deal, and used to show, but stopped five years ago. "I got into other sports," he explained, including football and wrestling.

"Than I got a summer job at Fairview Farms working with training yearlings, and then I had a job at Saratoga and got interested in the racing world. When we bought Close to Glory at the end of the summer, the steeplechase was the next step."

Following the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup races is the Colonial Cup, a \$75,000 race which is one of the top in this country.

"I won't go for it this year...I'm not ready for that kind of competition, but I am hoping to work with Jerry Fishback, the three-time top American Steeplechase Champion during January Interterm, and maybe in the future..."

And also maybe in the future lies the Grand National...the "Super Bowl" of steeplechase races. — Wally Johnson

Meet Nov. 18th

The Piedmont Audubon Society will meet Tuesday, November 18, 7:30 p.m. in the Art Center, Spartanburg.

A thousand pounds of beef on the hoof turns into less than a hundred pounds of sirloin, T-bone, club and porterhouse steaks.

The Cosmic Reporter

"The Planets in November"

By Tim Linder

All of the naked-eye planets will be visible this month. Mars is the only planet that can be seen in the evening sky. Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn are all quite close together in the morning sky. Also the bright stars Regulus and Spica will be nearby making the morning sky a beautiful sight just before sunrise. Here's where to locate the planets in November:

MERCURY can best be seen at mid-month. At this time it will be about 17 degrees above the southeastern horizon before sunrise. Reddish Mercury should be easy to spot with the naked eye and will be near the star Spica.

VENUS, at magnitude -3.5 is the brightest planet in the morning sky. Venus rises about three hours before the sun and is high in the southeast at sunrise.

MARS is now in the constellation of Sagittarius and is of magnitude 1.5. Red Mars may be a little hard to locate since it is very low in the southwest at sunset. Use binoculars and look for Mars about 20-30 minutes after sunset.

JUPITER is the second brightest planet in the morning sky and is of magnitude -1.4. During November Jupiter will be located high in the east at sunrise and will be to the upper right of brighter Venus. With the aid of a telescope Jupiters cloud belts and four brightest moons can be seen.

SATURN is now of magnitude 1.2 and rises about four hours before the sun. Saturn will be very easy to locate during November since it will be just to the lower left of Jupiter. On November 16 Saturn and Jupiter will move to within three degrees of each other and they will stay at least this close together for the next nine and a half months. On three occasions during this time these two planets will move to within one degree of each other. Jupiter and Saturn only come close to each other once every 20 years so this triple conjunction is quite rare. Saturns rings are no longer seen edge-on and they are now becoming visible again through small telescopes.

That's it for this week, HAPPY STARGAZING!!!!!!

Yarns having unusual or fancy effects are often called "novelty" yarns.