

Riding By Reasoning

By MONTE FOREMAN
Illustrated by the Author

RIDING seems to be a very controversial subject — but should it be? For example, in this article, let us consider riding *only* for speed.

It is obvious that all race jockeys on both Quarter and Thoroughbred tracks ride basically alike; weight on their knees over the horse's shoulders with very short stirrups. Stirrups are hung in front of the cinch — not behind it as on the ordinary stock saddle. This keeps the jockey's weight forward when he stands up. While running he never sits back in an upright position.

This was not always the case; before 1900, jockeys rode long stirrups while sitting in an upright position. However, Fred Archer, England's leading rider before that time, is said to have stood up and crouched up along his mount's neck during finishes. Archer had very long legs, but rode a stirrup length used by the shorter boys which gave him the advantage of rising off his horse's back without much flopping. Raising up put Archer's weight a little closer toward the horses' shoulders enabling them to run faster.

The first "all-on-the-shoulder" rider was our American jockey, Tod Sloan. About 1897 he started using drastically shortened stirrups, got on the shoulders with his knees, crouched in the modern fashion, and booted home so many winners he became top rider of the world. This caused all other race riders to change to what is called the "Sloan monkey-on-a-stick," or American style. Sloan's method proved beyond all doubt that a horse could carry weight faster at any distance on its shoulders.

Oh, sure, this *new* idea of speed-riding caused a lot of indignation, but Sloan and others who copied him kept bringing in the most winners. That took care of the arguments!

For 50 years now no one has improved much on Tod's method. In any line of work or play some fellers are better than others. Got a little more brains, talent or know-how, perhaps. Earl Sande was one of these and top "monkey" for years. Today's most famous are Eddie Arcaro, Gordon Richards, Steve Donaghue, "Silent Shoe" Shoemaker (most winners in 1951) and Johnny Longden (over 4,000 winners and still getting 'em home fastest).

Among us boys who ride stock saddles is Hank Mills of La Junta, Colorado. Hank was a top jockey who led in winners until he got too heavy. Of all the rodeo pick-up men Hank has only one equal (Slim Whaley) when it comes to taking a rider off a bronc — and a nicer feller you'll never meet. Hank could give a lot of the inside dope on getting them there the "firstest."

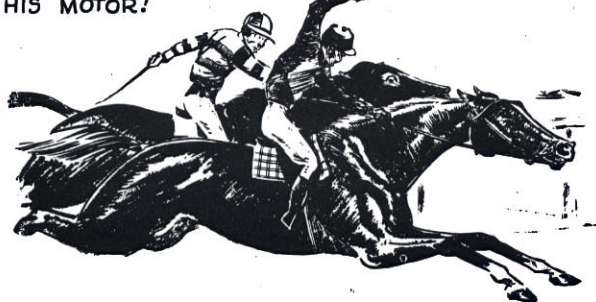
No, the "monkey" style for race riding is not comfortable for the jockey. It's work — hard work. His legs ache, cramp; get "Charley horses"; and his back makes like a case of twitching, St. Vitis, arthritis, and zero epizootic all erupting together. Finally his muscles get used to it, but there are still more pleasing positions for a feller to ride — all of them resulting in loss of speed.

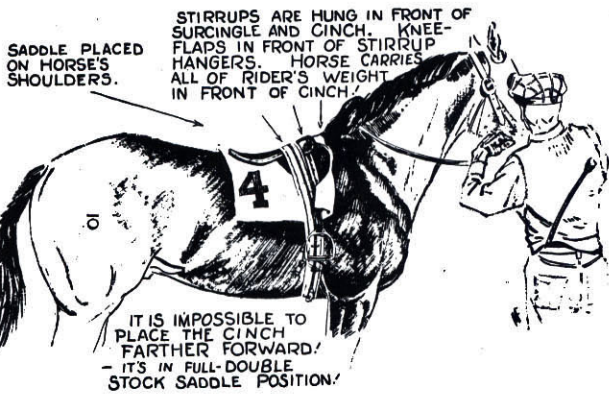
Until today, though, it boils down to the fact that any horse can carry a man faster and farther on his shoulders, provided the saddle is built for riding there as is the race saddle with its forward knee flaps. The closer you can get your weight to that place the faster he can go — and that holds good for all riders, whether they're building to a calf in a rodeo, trying to head one in the brush, getting up to get down on a steer, running barrels or racing a lame-brained button on a three-legged mule. *If you want the horse's top speed, get balanced where he can carry you easiest and fastest!*

UP 'TIL ABOUT 1900
ALL JOCKEYS RODE
WITH LONG STIRRUPS.
MANY SAT DOWN
WHILE RUNNING. TOD
SLOAN CAUSED 'EM
ALL TO CHANGE!



THESE BOYS FIGURED THEY WERE GETTING TOP
SPEED... WELL, THEY WERE UNTIL A "MONKEY-
ON-A-STICK" WENT BY 'EM! THEY WERE ONLY
IN "THIRD"... SLOAN HAD HIS IN "OVERDRIVE"
GOING FARTHER, FASTER AND EASIER ON
HIS MOTOR!



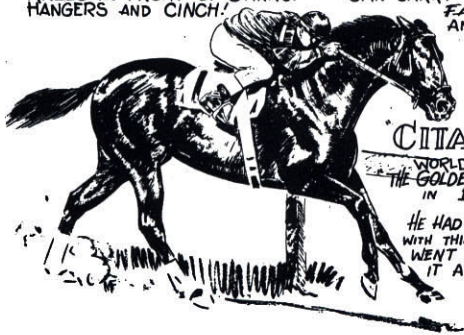


WHEN THE RIDER RAISES UP ALL HIS WEIGHT GOES ONTO HIS STIRRUPS AND KNEES. IT SURE AINT FOR COMFORT BUT IT GETS A LITTLE HIGHER OCTANE!



JOCKEY RIDING ON HORSE'S SHOULDERS. WEIGHT ON HIS KNEES IN FRONT OF STIRRUP HANGERS AND CINCH!

HERE'S WHERE CITATION AND ALL OTHER RACE HORSES CAN CARRY WEIGHT FASTEST AT ANY DISTANCE!



ISNT IT REASONABLE TO RIDE WHERE THE HORSE CAN CARRY WEIGHT FARTHER AND FASTER?.. ISNT THAT IN BALANCE WITH THE HORSE ?

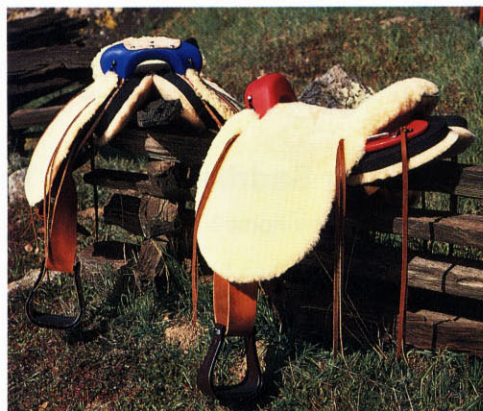
• BOZ SADDLERY •

The Famous BOZ Versatile Balance Rhythm Saddles

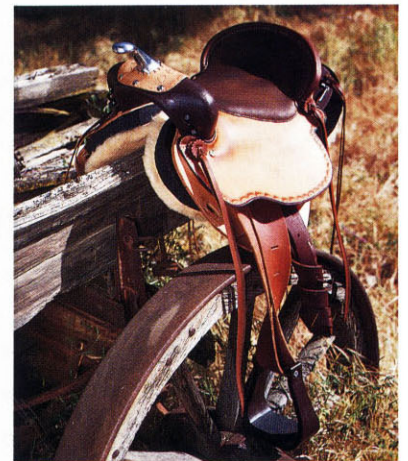
U.S. Patent No. 5,101,614



Full Western, Cutter or Roper (21 lbs.)



Race & Training — Slick or Swell Fork (15 lbs.)



Light Barrel Racer (18 lbs.)