

49/73

ST. LEGER

Ascot weather greets the season's last classic - the St. Leger - Britain's eldest and richest race. Sweltering thousands pack Doncaster's Turf Moor. The crowd's big talking point is how America's Johnny Longden would do in this, his first big race in England.

For the first time for many years, the Derby winner is not in the Leger field, and not even racegear No. 1 - the Aga Khan - quite knows what to make of it. Champion jockey Gordon Richards - several times a Leger winner - again carries much of the public's money, but any one of the 16 entries can sweep the prize. With ROYAL FOREST out of it, Gordon is up on KRAKATOA, while his American opposite number - Johnny Longden - mounts MON CHATELAIN. Note his typical American style with short stirrups.

Away on a mile-and-three-quarter race for the season's biggest prize! ROYAL EMPIRE, MUSIDORA and LONE EAGLE head the field as they race out into the country. The Princess Royal closely follows the race's progress as the field passes the three-quarter mile post. ROYAL EMPIRE still leads. LONE EAGLE is pressing hard with MARVEIL II and MUSIDORA well placed.

Rounding the bend, it's still ROYAL EMPIRE in the lead - but only just. LONE EAGLE, No. 15, is making up ground and slowly jockey BILL CARR forges his mount ahead. LONE EAGLE now makes the running but with only a furlong to go the lead changes again. RIDGE WOOD pushes ahead and jockey Michael Beary races away from the field to reap home winner by three lengths.

DUST DEVIL - the Aga Khan's choice is second. RIDGE WOOD's success is a triumph for that veteran among jockeys - Michael Beary. He keeps his age a secret, but the knowing ones say that he is half a century older than his mount. Only one bookie is complaining. With the winning odds 100 to 7 the joke is on the punters - once again.