

ROYAL ASCOT

To make it a truly Royal Ascot, Her Majesty the Queen, wearing lavender blue and a straw picture hat, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, drives down the course in the Royal tradition set nearly 150 years ago by her ancestor, King William the Fourth. This is the first Ascot since Her Majesty's accession.

Fashion, as always, takes pride of place even over the racing, and the ladies turn out in their finest of finery. Hats are on everybody's mind. Big hats - small hats - some nearly as big as your head. Grey topers are the rule for men - with exceptions of course. But there's no more time for fashion-spetting as the Ascot Stakes is soon to begin. The crowds leave the enclosure and make for the grandstands. The jockeys, too, are taking their seats.

Leaving the paddock after having a close look at the horses, the Queen, with the Duke, Princess Margaret and the Duke of Norfolk, makes her way to the Royal Box. A big field with plenty of good horses among them lines up at the start. And there they go on the tough two-and-a-half mile course. Almost at once MONTEZOL takes the lead on the rails with HILALI a close second. Placing at this stage doesn't matter a lot - they've still got a long way to go. Past the stands for the first time, it's still MONTEZOL well in the lead and going fast.

Round the bend and into the country, MONTEZOL's beginning to weaken and NOURREDDIN and VIDIVICI move up to challenge. Lester Piggott brings CRUDWELL up as they turn into the final straight. THE MASTER CUTLER is out in front now but VIDIVICI turns on the pressure and comes up with the leaders.

The straight run up to the post is the real testing ground for stayers. But out of the middle of the pack comes FLIGHTY FRANCES and Doug Smith's bringing her up past VIDIVICI. CRUDWELL's there and he's coming in for a fighting finish, but FLIGHTY FRANCES draws ahead and it looks as though she's going to make it. And at the post FLIGHTY FRANCES wins with CRUDWELL and VIDIVICI second and third. Doug Smith, the man who put the flight into FLIGHTY FRANCES, brings her into the unsaddling enclosure. To her owner, Mrs. F.B. Jackson, goes nearly £3,000 in prize money.