

PRESQUE ISLE DOWNS

RACING NOTES

By Kevin Decker
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Presque Isle Downs Review and Preview October 9, 2026

The Journey of a Jockey

This past week, apprentice jockey Taylor Kingsley won her 40th career race. The milestone meant she was no longer a double bug apprentice, meaning that she would carry two additional pounds going forward, but five pounds less than the full-fledged jockeys in the non-stakes races until her apprenticeship ends.

She has chosen a profession that can be financially and personally rewarding, exciting, and dangerous... sometimes all at the same time! For those wishing to pursue a career as a jockey, obviously there are certain physical limitations that must be met, specifically weight. Most full-fledged jockeys, known as journeymen, need to carry between 107 to 115 pounds to ride in just about every type of race put on by the racetrack. If a jockey cannot, they will not make weight and will not get mounts. Those that can physically make the weight can move on to the next step: Jockey School.

There are five places where one can learn the trade of becoming a jockey: The North American Racing Academy in Lexington, Kentucky, which is part of a two-year degree program with the University of Kentucky; Escuela Vocacional Hipica in San Juan, Puerto Rico which is located on the grounds of Camerero Racetrack; The British Racing School in Newmarket, UK; Laffit Pincay, Jr Technical Jockey Training Academy in Panama; Brazilian jockey schools in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Most aspiring riders start between the ages of 16 to 22. There is quite a learning curve, namely having to control a thoroughbred weighing over a half ton that travels at a top speed of more than 40 miles per hour. Strength and balance are necessities. Also, the ability to recover quickly from falls is needed, because those will happen. Aspiring riders will work horses in the morning for trainers at racetracks and training centers. This rapport helps build relationships to trust between the trainer, jockey, and horse.

When the time comes to start riding in races, many jockeys use an agent to help book their mounts with trainers. At first, the apprentice jockey will carry ten pounds less than a full-fledged journeyman jockey, known as a triple bug for the number of asterisks in the program next to the weight carried.

Once a jockey gets their fifth win, they lose one of their bugs and become a double bug apprentice jockey with a seven-pound weight allowance. It is also when the rider has exactly one year as an apprentice before becoming a full-fledged rider, unless the jockey does not reach 40 wins, in which case they may continue with a five-pound allowance for an additional year.

After their 40th career win, and before the anniversary of the fifth win, they lose another bug and carry a five-pound allowance as a single bug rider. They will carry this until that one-year mark of the fifth win, at which point they have become a journeyman jockey.

Live Racing This Week

The \$100,000 H.B.P.A. Stakes for fillies and mares three-years-old and upward at one mile and seventy yards is the feature race on Monday's eight race program. This coming week, live racing will now take place Monday October 12 through Wednesday, October 14 with post time at 3:30PM.



PRESQUE ISLE DOWNS
CASINO

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