

The Kentucky Derby

The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports



The state of Kentucky is famous for two things: bluegrass and horse racing. Kentucky is called the bluegrass state because of its rich soil and pastures covered in bluegrass. Bluegrass is a kind of grass that horses love to eat.

Kentucky has a lot of farms that raise racehorses. The state is also home to one of the most famous horse races—the Kentucky Derby. The racetrack is located in Louisville, Kentucky’s largest city. The race, which takes place each year on the first Saturday in May, is filled with fun events and traditions

The Kentucky Derby is often called “The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports” because it only takes two minutes for the horses to run around the track. While the race only lasts for two minutes, the festivities that go along with the Kentucky Derby last much longer than that.

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The Kentucky Derby Festival begins two weeks before the race with an event called the Thunder Over Louisville. The Thunder is one of the largest (and loudest) fireworks displays in the country.

Next is the Great Balloon Race, in which hundreds of hot air balloons take flight in a colorful display. The balloon race is a crowd favorite and brings spectators from miles around.

The next event is The Great Steamboat Race. The race takes place along the Ohio River from Louisville, Kentucky to Jeffersonville, Indiana. While two or three boats usually compete, the race always features the *Belle of Louisville*, a steamboat built and operated since 1914.

Many other events follow. The most notable of these is the Pegasus Parade, one of the country's largest parades.



Race day is always lively and full of tradition. People dress up to attend the race. Men wear suits and ladies wear big, fancy hats. Some of the hats are pretty wild. People love to talk about the hats.

After the race, the winning horse is led to the winner's circle and presented with a garland of roses. The garland, made up of more than 500 roses, is hung around the horse's neck and is why the Kentucky Derby is often called "The Run for the Roses."



The Kentucky Derby is an important horse race. It is the first race in the Triple Crown, a competition that consists of three separate horse races. To win the Triple Crown, a horse must win all three races in the same year. The first race is in Kentucky. The second race is the Preakness Stakes in Maryland. The third is the Belmont Stakes in New York. Very few horses have ever won the Triple Crown. In fact, only 12 horses have won the title since the competition began in 1875.

