

# Beduino

By Richard Chamberlain



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the right kind of  
Thoroughbred.

BEDUINO, AT NEXT MONTH'S AQHA CONVENTION in San Francisco, is going into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame. It's about time. The industry's most influential Thoroughbred sire since Three Bars finally is recognized for being, well, the most influential Thoroughbred sire since Three Bars.

Granted, there is a lot of Thoroughbred blood in the Quarter Horse. But not any ol' Thoroughbred works. Only the right kind of Thoroughbred, with the right kind of blood, actually complements the fastest breed of horse on earth.

Beduino was the right kind of Thoroughbred.

Bred in Mexico by Justo Fernandez Avila, whose family owned Hipodromo de las Americas racetrack in Mexico City, the gray stallion (whose name translates loosely as "brute") was foaled in 1968. Now at age 6, Beduino is a close-coupled, heavily muscled son of Romany Royal out of Jo-Ann-Cat, a daughter of Rejected out of a mare by the great South Texas match racer Depth Charge.

"My horse can beat the best horse in the world," Fernandez told Ronnie Banks, one of the top jockeys in the States. "I'll pay all the expenses if you bring a worthy opponent to Mexico. And I'll put up \$50,000."

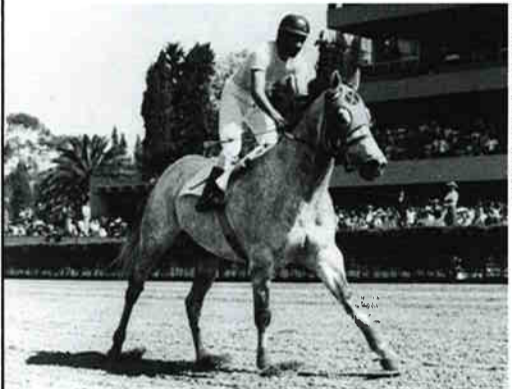
Banks smiled. That was an offer hard to turn down. And Banks already had a foe in mind: the 4-year-old Azure Te (TB) gelding Come Six, who had set quarter-mile track records of :21.55 at Ruidoso Downs and :21.47 at Centennial Racetrack near Denver and had been a champion in each of his three seasons at the track.

Banks checked with owner Mildred Roe, a rancher at Wimberly, Texas. Roe agreed, and Come Six was put on a small plane at Pomona, California. While the owner, Banks, trainer H.C. "Bubba" Werner and jockey Luke Myles took commercial flights to Mexico City, the horse was accompanied by Steve Rothblum, a Los Alamitos jockey who for the trip was in charge of the horse, his groom, farrier and a few others. They flew first to Mexicali — where their plane was sur-

rounded by uniformed police with drawn automatic weapons. The aircraft rental company had failed to notify the Mexican authorities that Come Six's original plane had been grounded by mechanical problems, and when the unidentified aircraft showed up in Mexican airspace, the authorities thought they were drug smugglers. A phone call to Fernandez cleared up matters. The plane refueled and went on to Mexico City, where Come Six and his entourage were escorted to Hipodromo.

Race day was February 24, 1974. Billed as a showdown between two nations, the event packed the track with 50,000 plus spectators in spite of there being no pari-mutuel wagering on the two-horse match. But there were plenty of side bets, with the Mexicans covering all the wagers laid on Come Six by dozens of high-rolling Americans — including \$40,000 by motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel. The reported total: more than \$1 million.

The huge crowd roared as the two horses came on the track. Sharp and ready, Come Six



Beduino goes to post for his match against Come Six.

had on his best game-day face. But most of the Americans were getting their first glimpse of the horse already a national hero in Mexico. Beduino was nearly dragging his two handlers — one with a shank on each side — as he pranced, snorted and tossed his head. Beduino simply was magnificent.

"My God," thought Rothblum, "I bet against this horse?"

Fernandez had given the Americans their way on everything — he even paid their hotel and bar bills. It was agreed that the horses would use the 4 and 7 posts, with Come Six's connections allowed to pick at the last moment so there would be no claims that the

lanes had been prepared differently. Banks was at the gate, which the starter would not trip until Banks made sure that Come Six was settled and ready. Banks and Myles agreed that their champion ran best near the rail, so they picked the 4.

*Bang!!!* They're off, Come Six out like a cannon shot, so fast that Beduino's jockey, Manuel Zavala, was surprised. Beduino's back hooves slipped and the horse fought for his footing as Come Six blew away up the track.

At 100 yards, Myles felt alone on Come Six, and he had not yet gone to his stick. Another 100 yards, and the rider picked up movement in the corner of his right eye. Myles cracked his whip, once, twice, three times. Halfway through, Beduino reached Come Six's shoulder, and with 200 yards left to go, the two were dead even. For another 100 yards, neither gave quarter. Beduino then began to inch ahead, and 80 yards from the line, he hit another gear, drew off and left the American champion in his dust.

Come Six never gave up. Indeed, the gelding equaled his own best track record — but Beduino won by a length in :21.3.

*Yeaabb.* The brute was a pretty nice horse. Beduino was that kind of Thoroughbred. ■