

Franco, Manuel: Born Dec. 19, 1994. From: Puerto Rico

He grew up in Puerto Rico and was passionate about baseball and dreamed only of becoming a professional baseball player—until he was told he was too small. He changed course and enrolled in the Puerto Rico Vocational Jockey School for two years and then moved to New York where he enjoyed almost instant success as a jockey.

In 2013 his horses earned just over \$4 million in purse money. In 2014 he doubled it. In 2016 his horses earned over \$10 million and he won his first Grade 1 race—on JOKING who he later rode in the B. Cup Sprint. A week after that he scored his second Grade 1 win on YELLOW AGATE in the Frizette.

Franco wrapped up the Aqueduct Jan. 1–March 31, 2018 meet with leading rider honors—his first leading rider title in New York.