

Smith, Mike (HOF 2003): Born: Aug. 10, 1965. From: Roswell, New Mexico.

Mike's father was a jockey and Mike grew up wanting to be one too. It was when Mike was 7 years old and he watched Secretariat win the Kentucky Derby that he knew, for sure, there was nothing else he wanted to do in life more than become a jockey. Mike began riding at bush tracks in New Mexico when he was 11 and in 1982, at age 16, he became a professional jockey riding at recognized racetracks. Rode in Arkansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Kentucky, and Minnesota in 1983.

Eclipse Award winner as outstanding jockey in 1993 and 1994. Also was national leader by money won in both years. Suffered major injuries in two separate spills in 1998. In March 1998 he was out for two months with a broken shoulder, and a spill in August 1998 resulted in a broken back; Smith wore a body cast for months, but made it back to riding during the 1999 Gulfstream meet. Incorporating a strength building workout routine (specifically to build muscle in his back to support and secure his spine) is what enabled him to safely ride again and his physical fitness regimen, to this day, includes weight training, circuit training and running (in the Sierra Madre mountains when home).

Was presented with the 2000 George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award, the highest honor bestowed by his peers. Other major awards include ESPN's 1993 ESPY Award for outstanding jockey, and the 1994 Mike Venezia Award, given by the New York Racing Association for outstanding citizenship and sportsmanship. Was named recipient of the Big Sport of Turfdom Award for 2010 from the Turf Publicists of America.

Moved his tack to Southern California in 2001 (after spending the bulk of his career in New York, where he had been located since 1989) and inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in 2003.

Won the Triple Crown with Justify (trained by Bob Baffert) in 2018. Owns 2 Kentucky Derby wins (Giacomo 2005; Justify 2018), 2 Preakness Stakes wins (Prairie Bayou 1993; Justify 2018), and 3 Belmont Stakes wins (Drosselmeyer 2010, Palace Malice 2013 and Justify 2018). Is the winningest jockey of Breeders' Cup races with 22 wins.

Breeders' Cup: First B. Cup mount came in 1990 for Bill Mott at Belmont Park (2nd at 33-1). In 1992 he won his first B. Cup race and by 1997 he had won 8 B. Cup races. Two dry spells followed with no B. Cup wins from 1998—2001. In 2002 he won 2 B. Cup races and then another dry spell followed, this time for 5 years. Biggest B. Cup day ever was in 2013 when he won 3 of the B. Cup races: Mizdirection repeating in the Turf Sprint, Outstrip in the Juvenile Turf, and London Bridge in the Marathon. Smith won the B. Cup Juvenile Fillies in 2015.

Among Smith's most popular Breeders' Cup wins was Zenyatta's victory in the 2009 Breeders' Cup Classic, making her the first female to win the race ... Zenyatta was undefeated in 19 career starts prior to the 2010 Classic. Smith rode the superstar mare in 17 of her 20 races. Also rode another female Horse of the Year – Azeri in 2002.