



Jamie Theriot

Born: Jan. 30, 1979 in Lafayette, La.

Jamie Theriot's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 50

Stakes wins: 10

- Won his first four stakes at Keeneland during 2007 that included the Shadwell Turf Mile in October, his first career Grade 1 victory.
- Topped all riders at the 2007-08 Fair Grounds meet with 94 wins.
- Won the 2009 Hopeful (G1) aboard Dublin.
- Won the 2003 Oaklawn riding title.
- Won the riding crown at Evangeline Downs in 2001.
- Won six races at Churchill Downs on June 18, 2008, becoming the seventh rider to accomplish the feat. Had enjoyed five-win days previously at Lone Star Park, Oaklawn Park, Evangeline Downs and Fair Grounds.
- Finished third in the '08 Keeneland spring meet standings with 13 wins and tied for eighth during the fall meet. Also ranked fourth during the '07 fall meet with 12 wins.
- In 2008, finished third in the Ellis Park standings, tied for fourth at Kentucky Downs and in the Top 10 at both Keeneland and Churchill meets. In 2009, he finished second in the Fair Grounds standings and in the Top 10 again at both Keeneland meets.
- Won six races at Churchill Downs on June 18, 2009

Jamie Theriot followed a familiar pattern for riders from the Cajun region of Louisiana. First, he started early. "I rode my first race when I was 7 or 8 at a bush track," he said. "When I was five years old, I started riding a horse at the farm."

His father, Harold Theriot, galloped horses for 16 or 17 years and became a trainer. His parents still own the farm where he grew up. Larry Melancon is one of his uncles, and Calvin Borel is a second cousin. Eddie Delahoussaye is related to his father.

He galloped horses for his father after school. Early on, he'd ride the easy ones, the ones who weren't apt to run off. By the time he was 12 or 13, though, he was riding all of them without a helmet, and either wearing tennis shoes or going bare-footed. He said, "I wanted to be a jockey ever since I can remember."

Second, Cajun riders get their jockeys' licenses as early as possible. Theriot obtained his at age 16. "I rode one mount at Evangeline Downs when I was 16," he said, "and broke my leg." When he had recovered, he returned to riding at 17 at Delta Downs the following January.

He rode his first winner, Majestic Fleur, in 1996 at Evangeline Downs. His first stakes winner was Horse Fly in the 1997 Delta Downs Handicap for trainer Tommy Delahoussaye. He also won the Pelican State Stakes with Horse Fly in early 1998 at Delta Downs.

Jockeys whose styles he studied were Robby Albarado and Calvin Borel. "I hung out with them a lot," he said.

"There is a big plus starting out in Louisiana. We start at a young age at the bush tracks. You have very good riders, riding year-round in Louisiana and nearby, like Curt Bourque, Gerard Melancon and Steve Bourque. You learn a lot riding down there. And I think

that's why Louisiana riders have an advantage when they do leave because they are pretty seasoned when they leave Louisiana."

Third, a fair number of Cajun riders become very successful. Theriot stayed on the Louisiana circuit for five to six years. In his last year at Evangeline Downs, 2001, when he was leading rider, trainer Cole Norman contacted him about riding for him. Theriot expressed his interest, joining him at Louisiana Downs, and then going to Oaklawn Park, and on to Lone Star and Fair Grounds. He maintained that circuit for nearly five years. During that time, he was leading rider at Oaklawn in 2003.

"I had a lot of opportunities to come to Kentucky and I passed them up," he said. "I was scared to come here. I was riding for a good guy who had a lot of good horses and we won a lot of races. And he was loyal to me." He also had opportunities to head to California that he turned down.

In 2005, his wins included the Hot Springs Stakes on That Tat, the Lone Star Oaks on Victory Lap and the Evangeline Mile Handicap on Shaky Tour, all for Norman. He also won stakes for Steve Asmussen, Sturges Ducoing and Kari Craddock.

The following year, his stakes wins included the Jean Lafitte Stakes on Go Poppa Fooze, the Thanksgiving Handicap on Cort's P.B. and the Lyrique Handicap on Rich Fantasy. His mounts won 136 races during the year and earned \$2,793,626.

In the summer of 2006, he changed his mind about making a change and told his wife Dawn that he was ready to try Kentucky. He called agent Fred Aime in October, who told him they'd talk about it at Fair Grounds. That is where Theriot and Aime hooked up. Among the jockeys Aime had handled

previously were Eddie Delahoussaye, Pat Day and Randy Romero. "He's had all those Hall of Fame riders," Theriot said. "It's a blessing that I can have him. He's a big plus with getting me going here. He's well known and people like him and he knows how to get the job done. We have a great relationship and I think that we'll do very well in the future."

Aime told Jennie Rees of *The Courier-Journal* about Theriot: "I love him as a rider. His work ethics are exceptional, and he's got a magnetic personality. He's got all the tools working for him."

Cole Norman didn't want to see him go, but told him: "If you can't make it there, you'll always have a spot at home and you can come back and ride for me."

Theriot is grateful to Norman. "Cole is proud of me and a lot of credit goes to him. I got the opportunity to ride a lot of good horses for him. My name got out there and we had a lot of success together. So he's a big part of my career and getting it going."

In 2007, he won 13 stakes, including four at Keeneland—the Fifth Third Elkhorn (G3) on Ascertain (IRE), the JPMorgan Chase Jessamine on Wind in My Wings, the Perryville (G3) on Steve's Double and the Shadwell Turf Mile on Purim. The latter was the first Grade 1 victory of his career.

Theriot then had his first Breeders' Cup mount aboard Purim in the Mile (G1), but the pair finished 11th. He also won the Opening Verse (Therecomesatiger), the Nicole's Dream (Tax Refund), the Happy Ticket (Princess Deelite) and the Delta Express (Chief What It Is). For the year, his mounts won 172 races and earned \$5,641,523 to rank 38th nationally.

Winning the Kentucky Derby (G1) remains a dream for Theriot. "That's every jockey's dream come true to win the Derby," he said. "It'd be wonderful to ever get that. I just want to be very successful. My height is hard on me. I don't know how long I'll ride."

In 2008, he wrapped up his first riding title at Fair Grounds and won six races on June 18 at Churchill Downs, becoming the seventh rider to accomplish that feat. He won a total of 20 stakes, five of them graded, including two aboard Mr. Nightlinger, who provided him with another Breeders' Cup mount. The pair set a torrid early pace in the Turf Sprint of :20 3/5 for the first quarter before tiring.

Theriot also won Grade 3 races aboard Indian Chant (the Aristides), Closeout (Pucker Up) and Terrain (the Arlington-Washington Futurity after the original winner and runner-up were both disqualified) during the year. All told, he won 223 races in 2008 to rank 18th and his mounts earned \$7,239,310 to rank 25th.

Last year, he won 135 races, including 20 added-money events, and posted earnings of \$5.7 million. Highlights came via Dublin's win in the Hopeful (G1), Blame's victories in the Fayette (G2) and Clark (G2) and two other Keeneland stakes wins.