



Julien Leparoux

Born: July 15, 1983 in Senlis, France.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Single.

Julien Leparoux's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 48

Stakes wins (6)

- Leading rider in North America in 2006 by wins with 403.
- Eclipse Award-winning apprentice rider of 2006.
- Finished eighth in earnings with \$12,491,316.
- Leading rider at Keeneland in the spring (in a tie with Rafael Bejarano) and fall of 2006.
- Leading rider at Churchill Downs (spring 2006).
- Leading rider at Turfway Park (winter/spring and fall 2006).
- Won six stakes at Keeneland in 2006, including the Juddmonte Spinster (G1) on Asi Siempre.
- Won his first Grade 1 race when piloting Gorella (Fr) to victory in the Beverly D Stakes on Aug. 12, 2006.

French-born Julien Leparoux is off to a dazzling start as a jockey in the United States. He won 403 races during 2006, to top all North American riders, while his mounts combined to earn nearly \$12.5 million, good for an eighth-place ranking. He was the overwhelming Eclipse Award selection for leading apprentice rider.

He won with 23 percent of his 1,740 mounts and had an in-the-money percentage of 51.

Leparoux grew up around racing in Chantilly, France, and when he reached age 18 began working at the racetrack. "I did everything—groom hot-walk and exercise horses a little bit."

From an early age, he knew he wanted to become a jockey and began riding show horses before he was a teen-ager. His father, Robert, who had been a jockey and then an assistant trainer up until his death in 2003, stressed the importance of Julien finishing his schooling first, which he agreed to do.

He came to the U.S. on Jan. 29, 2003, to work as an exercise rider for fellow countryman Patrick Biancone, who took him under his wing.

Leparoux began his riding career at Saratoga in the summer of 2005 and won his first race on Aug. 18 with Easter Guardian in his third mount. His initial agent, Doc Danner, had him riding at Belmont, then Turfway, Churchill Downs and Turfway. Steve Bass, a former jockey, took over handling his book at Turfway.

In his first mount at Turfway in September, he rode Ball Four to a second-place finish in the Kentucky Cup Classic (G2). Biancone established him as his first-call rider in November when Gary Stevens retired.

He finished fourth in the standings at Turfway Park's holiday meet and ended the year with 28 wins from 161 starts, 22 seconds, 16 thirds and earnings of \$524,680.

Leparoux then proceeded to eclipse the record for victories at Turfway's winter-spring meet that began on Jan. 1, 2006. With his 151st win, he broke the previous mark

set by Rafael Bejarano in 2004 of 150. Second-place jockey Willie Martinez had 41 wins to that point. It also placed him atop the national jockey standings for victories.

His first stakes victory came on Feb. 11 at Turfway aboard the Helen Pitts-trained Cat Quatorze in the Likely Exchange. His second quickly followed, on March 18, with Ball Four in the Tejano Run Stakes for Biancone.

Leparoux concluded the Turfway meet with his first riding title, based on 167 wins from 529 mounts and earnings of \$1,634,764. His winning percentage was an impressive 32 percent. He won five races on a card six times during the meet and he won six races four times.

Moving to Keeneland for the spring meet, he won his first two races on April 8. During that meet, he also won his first two Keeneland stakes races—the Lafayette on Likely and the Appalachian on Lady of Venice (Fr).

Likely won the Lafayette by nine lengths for owners Morris Miller III and Thomas Van Meter II, running the six furlongs in 1:09.32, while Lady of Venice captured the one-mile Appalachian on the turf by two and a quarter lengths for owner Martin Schwartz.

He and Rafael Bejarano shared the riding title with 17 victories apiece as Leparoux became the first apprentice in track history to top the standings.

Agent Steve Bass told Matt Graves in the '06 Keeneland fall program: "People were saying let's see what happens when he gets to Keeneland. Well, when he got to Keeneland, he stepped it up. He went to the next level. I'd have been happy to just finish in the top five at Keeneland."

He also was the leading money-winning rider during the meet with \$932,033.

On Kentucky Oaks Day at Churchill Downs, May 5, he won the first two graded races of his career, the first coming aboard Man of Illusion (Aust) in the Aegon Turf Sprint Stakes (G3) and the second aboard Stream Cat in the Crown Royal American Turf Stakes (G3). He won five other stakes during

the Churchill meet, including the Fleur de Lis Handicap (G2) with Happy Ticket, and the Regret Stakes (G3) on Lady of Venice.

At the conclusion of the meet, he had won his first Churchill title with 87 victories as he became the first apprentice since 1949 to accomplish that feat.

Gorella provided Leparoux with his first wins in a Grade 2 race and a Grade 1 race when she won the Just a Game Handicap at Belmont on June 10 and then the Beverly D at Arlington Park in August.

Though he didn't win a stakes race during the Saratoga meeting, he still won 28 races, the most ever at the upstate track for an apprentice.

By the time he returned to Keeneland in the fall, after having won the fall title at Turfway with a record 38 wins, he had lost his apprentice allowance on Sept. 25.

He won the fall title outright with 30 victories. They included the Spinster on Asi Siempre, his second Grade 1 triumph, and the First Lady (G2) on Gorella.

"It was a perfect trip," he said of Asi Siempre's victory. She's been training really well on Polytrack and won easy today."

As for Gorella, he said: "She's a very good filly. Today she was a little bit fresh. That's why she didn't win by 10 (lengths), I think."

He also won the Bryan Station Stakes on Kip Deville and the Rood & Riddle Dowager on Louve Royale (Ire) during the fall meet.

Back at Churchill for the fall meet, his streak of titles at Kentucky tracks ended with a sixth-place finish, but he did win the Cardinal Handicap (G3) on Sabellina. Other graded wins during 2006 came aboard Cosmonaut in the Arlington Handicap (G3), Belgravia in the Hollywood Prevue (G3) and Grande Melody (Ire) in the Dahlia Handicap (G2) at Hollywood Park.

Though 16 of his stakes victories during the year were for his mentor, Biancone, he also won stakes for Helen Pitts, Andrew Leggio Jr., Dallas Stewart, Michael Lauer, Wally Dollase, David Vance, Richard Dutrow Jr. and Charles Simon. He traveled from coast to coast with other stops in between at Lone Star Park in Texas and Prairie Meadows in Iowa.

Hall of Fame trainer Nick Zito told Matt Graves about Leparoux: "He's terrific. He rides with a lot of intelligence. He lets the horse do the running. He's got all the tools. He's got soft hands. He's got a tremendous background and work ethic, and the situation with Biancone is different. He should be around for a long time."

His agent told Jennie Rees of *The Courier-Journal*: "He handles himself very well with people, and he rides a very, very clever race. He lets horses run away from the gate, and he places them. And then he sits still, and he watches. If somebody goes outside, he goes inside. Or somebody goes inside, he goes outside. He knows how to cover all bases."

