What’s Happening: Espinoza Returns!

Beloved, Triple Crown winning, Hall of Fame jockey Victor Espinoza returned to the saddle for the first time on January 5, 2019. Before July 22, 2018, this wouldn’t have been news, but on that day, at Del Mar, the horse he was on suffered a fatal breakdown, and Espinoza hit the dirt hard, fracturing his C3 vertebra in the process. It was unclear if he would ever ride again, and his depression as he worked his way through the pain of the injury itself, and the process of rehab and physical therapy, was well documented. Photos of the usually ebullient, clean cut Espinoza showed a bearded, sad individual dealing with what might have been a career ending injury as best he could. Espinoza has been known for his good humor, availability to the press, and charitable endeavors, especially with ill or injured children, so his injury hit the racing community particularly hard.

Espinoza is riding again! He worked his first horse, St. Joe Bay, five furlongs at Santa Anita yesterday for John Sadler, and the joy of the racing community was evident every moment he was on the horse. Commentators on TDN suggested it won’t be long before Espinoza is riding regularly again, though he is still getting regular physical therapy and working out to return to his best form. All we can add is, welcome back! Espinoza has been dearly missed.