Will Cubs' Derrek Lee capture triple crown?

Over the past few years, major league baseball and horse racing have raised the expectations of their enthusiasts about what they consider their sports' triple crowns.

In baseball, a batting triple crown is when the batter has the highest batting average, hits the most home runs, and drives in the most runs (runs batted in, or RBI).

In horse racing, a 3-yearold thoroughbred horse has to win three races within five weeks: the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes.

There have been only 11 triple crowns in horse racing going back to Sir Barton in 1919. Well-known winners include War Admiral, Whirlaway, Citation, Secretariat, and Seattle Slew. Seabiscuit, subject of the popular movie, defeated War Admiral in match race to become the idol of many World War II racing fans. But he didn't win a triple crown.

The baseball triple crown has been accomplished only seven times since 1878 in the National League and in the American League, established in 1900, only eight times.

Two players, Roger Hornsby of the National League St. Louis Cardinals and Ted Williams of the American League Boston Red Sox, have won the triple crown twice. Hornsby won in 1922 (BA of .401, 42 HR, and RBI of 152), and again in 1925 (BA of .403, 39 HR, and RBI of 143). Williams won in 1942 (BA .356, 36 HR, and 137 RBI), and repeated a victory in 1947 (BA .343, 32 HR, and 114 RBI).

Since baseball was integrated in 1947 by Jackie



Robinson, the only African-American to win the triple crown has been Frank Robinson, who won the American League title in 1966 after being traded by the Cincinnati Reds to the Baltimore Orioles. His winning scores — 49 HR, 122 RBI and a .316 BA which is the lowest batting average for a triple crown winner.

Carl Yastrzemski, a Boston Red Sox outfielder, was the last American League triple crown winner in 1967, with 44 home runs, 121 runs batted in and a .326 batting

With baseball's All-Star Game over, Derrek Lee, Chicago Cubs first baseman, has the National League teams wondering if he can become the first batter to win the triple crown since Joe Medwick in 1937, who had 31 home runs, 154 runs batted in and a .374 batting av-

Lee was acquired several years ago from the 2003 World Series winning Florida Marlins, and he began this week leading in two categories — batting average, 369 and home runs, 32.

A batter has to depend on his teammates to get on base for him to win the RBI title; so far this year, the Cubs haven't been getting on base to be knocked in by Lee. He is second in runs batted in behind Milwaukee's Carlos Lee, 83-81.

Barry Bonds, the San Francisco Giants outfielder

hit 73 homeruns in 2001, but Larry Walker of the Colorado Rockies won the batting title with a .350 average and Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Curbs won the RBI title with

iams, won the batting average title in 2002 and 2004 with .370 and .362 averages respectively but not the home runs or runs batted in titles either year.

Chicago's Lee's chances to become the first triple crown winner since Medwick or Yastrzemski will depend on how the Cubs fare against St. Louis in their division when they play 11 times at Wrigley Field. At this time, the Cardinals lead the NL Central Division by 11 games over Houston and

12 over Chicago, with 64 games to play.

Back out on the race track, Affirmed's victories over Alydar in the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont in 1978 was the last time a 3-year- old horse won horse racing's coveted triple

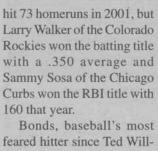
Starting with Silver Charm in 1997 and ending with Smarty Jones in 2004, six horses have won the first two crowns only to lose in the Belmont Stakes with the spectators hoping for a triple

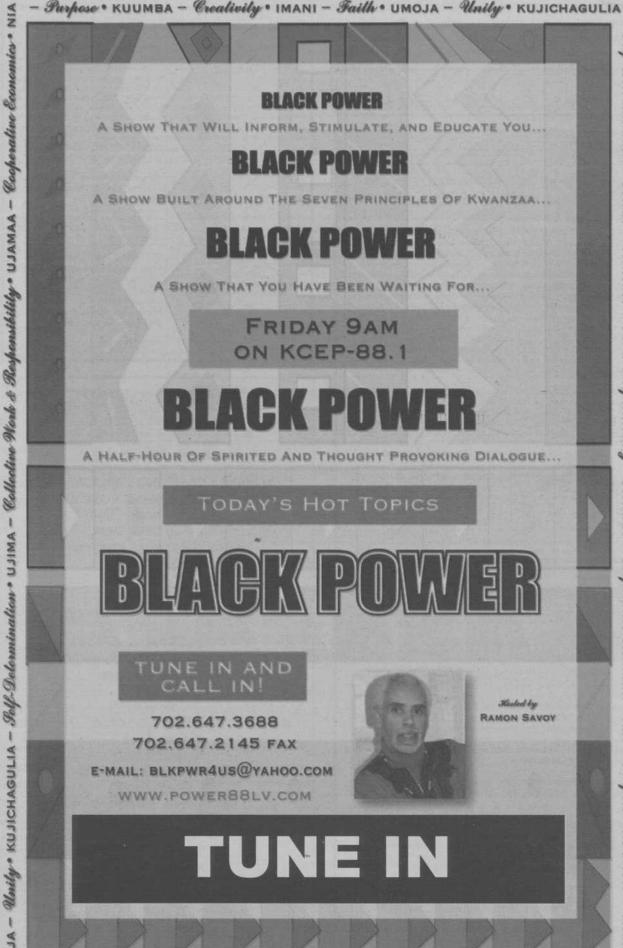
This year the order was reversed with Giacomo winning the Kentucky Derby and Afleet Alex winning the Preakness and Belmont races. Others who won the last two races and not the Derby include Native Dancer, Nashua and Dam-

A triple crown is a tall mountain to climb in either sport - baseball or horse racing. Fans, though, still hope each year to see it hap-

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Hopkins' fight appeal denied by regulators

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) - Bernard Hopkins' appeal of the split decision that cost him his undisputed middleweight championship to Jermain Taylor was denied, Taylor's pro-

Taylor defeated Hopkins in their bout in Las Vegas on July 16 with two judges awarding the fight to the challenger and one to Hopkins.

Hopkins appealed the decision to the Nevada State Athletic Commission, but David Itskowitch of DiBella Entertainment said Friday at a rally for Taylor that the panel had denied Hopkins' plea.

Taylor, a native of Little Rock, stood in the back of a red convertible, wearing a white blazer and flashing a big smile as he passed by adoring fans. A crowd of 5,500 packed an amphitheater in 101-degree heat on what Arkansas first lady Janet Huckabee declared to be "Jermain Taylor Day."

A rematch between Taylor and Hopkins is expected in December. Taylor will need some time for a head cut to heal before he can return to the ring.