

# Puerto Rican Jockey Legend Matos Dead at 91

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Photo: Joe Bruno Historical Archive

## **Mateo Matos aboard Camarero**

Former jockey Mateo Matos, the regular rider of Puerto Rican Triple Crown winner Camarero, died in Puerto Rico Feb. 19. He was 91 years old.

Matos was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico on Sept. 21, 1922. He began his career as a jockey in October 1943, during the golden age of horse racing in his native country, and won his first race March 1, 1944.

Considered to be one of the best Puerto Rican riders of all time, Matos won 1,374 races, including 54 stakes, and was the country's leader in the jockey standings eight years in a row between 1947 and 1955. But he was best-known for his

partnership with Camarero, who established the current world record of most consecutive wins for a Thoroughbred racehorse with 56 straight victories from April 1953 to August 1955.

Matos retired from racing Jan. 11, 1961, after finishing sixth aboard his last mount at El Comandante Racetrack in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

After his retirement, Matos dedicated his life to his family. He was inducted in four halls of fame: Puerto Rico's Sports Hall Of Fame, the country's Horse Racing Hall Of Fame, the Sports of Rio Piedras Hall Of Fame, and the Sports of Santurce Hall Of Fame. On October 15, 2002, the Senate of Puerto Rico honored him for his contributions to the sport in Puerto Rico.

"Matos is an icon of Puerto Rico's horse racing industry," Puerto Rican horse racing analyst Joe Bruno said. "He led Camarero to win so many races, creating a big impact for the good of the sport in mid-fifties. He was such a charismatic person. Everyone related to horse racing had big respect for his figure and for what he done, helping to improve the industry in our country. We will miss him."

Matos is survived by his wife and two children; funeral arrangements are pending.