

Michelle Payne

Jockey and Horse Trainer

Michelle Payne is one of Australia's most admired public figures, and she is celebrated for her groundbreaking achievement of becoming the first and only woman to win the Melbourne Cup in 2015 aboard Prince of Penzance. Her victory, against odds of 100 to 1, captured the hearts of Australians and established her as a national icon.

Beyond her historic win, Michelle has excelled as a highly successful horse trainer, jockey, and author. Raised on a farm in Miners Rest, near Ballarat in Central Victoria, she is the youngest of ten children. Despite the tragic loss of her mother in a car accident when Michelle was just six months old, she was drawn to the world of horse racing, a path that was shared by many of her siblings.

Michelle's career has not been without significant challenges. At 18, she suffered a serious fall during a race at Sandown in 2004, resulting in a fractured skull and bruising to her brain.

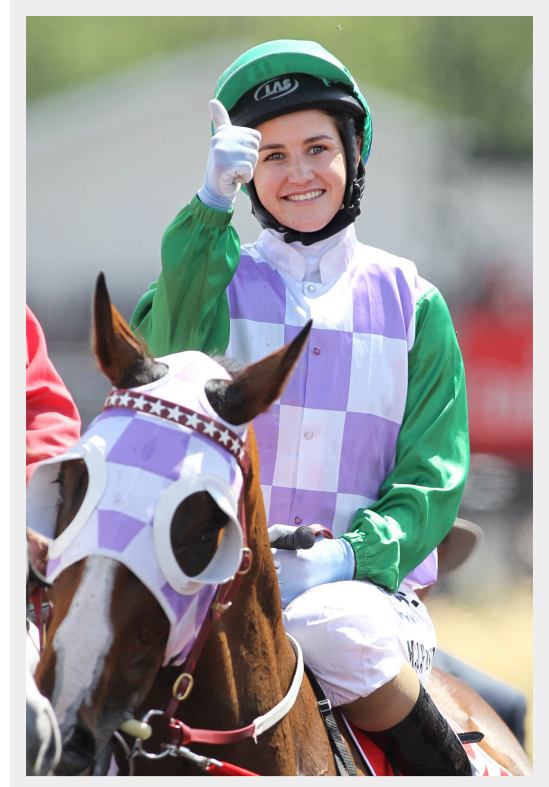
Further falls in 2012 and 2016 led to life-threatening injuries, but her resilience and determination saw her return to the sport each time, inspiring many with her strength and perseverance.

Her impact extends far beyond the racing world. In 2016, she was awarded the prestigious Don Prize for Most Inspirational Australian Athlete at the Sport Australia Hall of Fame Awards, alongside several other accolades, including Sportswoman of the Year and the Women of Style: Sport Award. Michelle and her brother Stephen were also honoured as Queen and King of Moomba.

In recognition of her contributions to horse racing, Michelle received the International Longines Ladies Award in 2017, and in 2022 she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM).

She also released a bestselling memoir, *Life As I Know It*, in 2016, and her life story was brought to the big screen in the 2019 film *Ride Like a Girl*, which became the highest-grossing Australian film that year.

In 2021, Michelle's Melbourne Cup victory was voted the most significant moment in Sport Australia Hall of Fame history from a shortlist of 20 iconic sporting events over the past six



decades. Today, she continues to inspire through her successful training operation at Nottingham Farm in Ballarat and her new venture on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

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