

Ryan Dant, an 8-year-old from Carrollton, Texas, had a dream come true on Nov. 16 when he met Hall of Fame rider Pat Day and several other members of the Churchill Downs jockey colony.

Accompanied by his father and several family members, the youngster, who is battling Hunter's Disease, a rare genetic disorder, spent a day at the races, hosted by trainer Walter Bindner.

The jockeys dressed Ryan in silks and full jockey attire and he carried a whip given to him by Day.

He later got to stand in the winner's circle with

Day who won the third race.

Before the races started, Ryan, whose life expectancy is 15 years, stood with Day and the other riders as track chaplain Dan Powell gave his usual prayers for the rider and included a special one for Ryan.

Ryan was back at the track the next day checking out the horses in trainer Bindner's barn.

Hunter's disease is a condition in which deposits collect in cells because of a lack of an enzyme that blocks such activity. As the deposits accumulate, the organs weaken and eventually fail.

The Dant family holds a benefit golf scramble and auction each year to raise money for the Ryan Foundation, which funds research on Hunter's Disease conducted at UCLA.

Donations to the Ryan Foundation can be sent to: Ryan Foundation, 3917 Alto Ave., Carrollton, Texas 75007.

Further information can be obtained by calling (214) 632-RYAN.