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MONTHLY

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SEPTEMBER 2014



KENTUCKY DOWNS

THE HORSEPLAYER'S TRACK

PREVIEW & INTERVIEWS



Horsemanship *for* **Horseplayers**



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The Horseplayer Monthly September Issue

Corey Johnsen Talks Kentucky Downs

In his first track visit, Kentucky Downs President Corey Johnsen bet \$2 to win on Power Reigh in the seventh race at Longacres and he paid \$5.40. Since then he has been a devoted fan/handicapper.

Prior to his senior year in college he groomed horses for a summer job at Centennial Race Track in Denver. He even wagered \$80 to win on a horse he groomed and won enough to pay for his remaining college tuition. Corey has qualified numerous times for the NHC Tournament.

HM: Kentucky Downs has ascended the last few years into a popular signal for bettors. What steps did you take that you believe were effective in attracting new business?

CJ: We want to be known as the "Horseplayers' Racetrack" at Kentucky Downs. To reach that goal it took a number of strategic initiatives. We started by lowering the takeout. Not only did we choose to use the lower takeout level in Kentucky, we lowered the takeout on our most popular wager, the exacta. At 18.25%, Kentucky Downs offers the lowest exacta takeout in North America. But, takeout is only part of the equation. Horseplayers are looking for value. We have worked very hard to make sure that our turf course is second to none in North America in terms of safety and consistency. Kentucky Downs offered over \$900,000 per day in purses and attracted full fields and quality racing. Our jockey colony was also second to none. We worked hard on offering more handicapping information over the internet and over our television signal. We will continue to improve that very important part of our marketing plan.

HM: Particularly the last two years your handle has been off the charts. Did you ever think this would happen so quickly and to this extent?

CJ: It has always been our goal to offer racing that makes a difference. I feel like we offered top quality, entertaining racing, and I was thrilled that North America's horseplayers responded.

HM: What feedback have you gotten from bettors and horsemen the last two meets?

CJ: Horseplayers and horsemen were very complimentary of our last two live meetings. They remarked that they could not wait until next year. I believe that more of that group will point their bankrolls and horses to our 2014 season, which begins Sept. 6.

HM: We've heard rumblings about increasing race days. Do you believe an increase in dates will hurt your field size, or do you think it will enhance your meet?

CJ: We have wanted to increase race days, but understand that we are part of the Kentucky horse racing circuit. We do not want to negatively impact the other tracks in the state and understand that the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission has to make difficult race date decisions every year. That regulatory body understands that Kentucky Downs would like to race more days, and I am comfortable they will grant us more days when the time is right.

HM: The past two years you have tried to improve your simulcast feed, with analysis, etc. Do you have any plans to try any other new things, presentation-wise for the vast amount of off track money which has entered your pools?

CJ: Our simulcast feed is critically important to our success. International Sound is our video company, and we are working with them to improve our graphics and overall video signal. Also, we plan to offer more handicapping information, with a daily preview by Gary West and John Lies prior to each day of racing. Finally, we want to offer more information via social media.

HM: You have always grass-roots marketed in and around Kentucky Downs. How has the on-track crowd been, and what's been working and not working? Any new plans for 2014?

CJ: In 2013, our live racing marketing plans made a difference. We don't charge an admission fee, so it is difficult to have an accurate attendance, but long-time observers thought we had the biggest crowd in recent history during one of our Saturday programs. We had many activities for families that were very successful. Coors sponsored a beer garden for adult racing fans. And, we cooperated with our Instant racing marketing plan to offer a mutuel voucher promotion that produced one of the most successful days in the history of Kentucky Downs.

We plan to add to our promotional schedule. On Sept. 9-10, we will host our Hall of Fame event which raises money for the Permanently Disabled Jockeys' Fund. It will include a golf tournament, VIP dinner and autograph session. We are going to combine that event with our annual handicapping contest, which will be held on Sept. 10, so those handicappers that can arrive a day early can attend the VIP dinner with the Thoroughbred Hall of Famers. The 2013 VIP dinner featured Gary Stevens, Chris McCarron, Pat Day, Eddie Maple and Randy Romero. Watching old races and hearing their comments was one of the most enjoyable nights I have ever witnessed in my many years in horse racing.

Kentucky Downs in the HANA Rankings

2. Kentucky Downs

Total Score: 3.31

Field Size: 9.96

Best Bets: Picking one, the 14% takeout pick 5; however, the whole betting menu scores the best in North America.

"The largest takeout decrease in North American history in 2012 fuels Kentucky Downs"



Kentucky Downs – photo from kentuckydowns.com

This southern Kentucky track with a short, boutique meet is making some serious noise and they are a fraction away from knocking their northern neighbor from the top spot. Mike Maloney, a professional horseplayer, sums it up nicely:

"Big fields and competitive racing are certainly part of the equation. But Corey Johnsen, unlike many track execs, understands it's good business to give your customers a fair chance to have a successful gambling experience. Do yourself a favor and check out Kentucky Downs."

Horseplayers have responded, in droves. 2011 handle was approximately \$900,000 per race card. In 2013, that number is approaching \$3,000,000.

More from Maloney on Kentucky Downs



By Mike Maloney

Kentucky Downs begins a five-day meet on Saturday, September 6 and value minded players are marking their calendars. September 10, 13, 17 and 24 are also live racing days at the Franklin, Kentucky, track.



All races are run on the European-style mile and 5/16 turf course which features an uphill stretch run. Competitive and full fields are common, and coupled with the lowest takeout rates in the country, create great value for the horseplayer. During last year's meet payoffs in the exotic pools were consistently higher than this everyday player expected (an unusual and pleasant surprise in today's racing environment).

Those inflated payoffs can be expected again this year due to exacta take at a low 18.25%, 50 cent pick five take at 14%, and no takeout above 19% on any bet.

But low takeout doesn't help unless we're cashing tickets so here are a few personal observations that hopefully will help our chances.

Keep close tabs on the Wayne Catalano barn. The "Big Cat" was red hot last fall at KD, and while his horses are generally shorter prices, they can be excellent keys and stand-alones in the exotic wagers (on a personal note it's great to see Wayne's health improving).

Luis Jurado is another trainer to watch; his horses tend to be medium to higher prices and are "must uses" for me. He can win at a price and also triggers some hefty superfecta payoffs when his bombs hit the board.

From a "race shape" perspective the sprints at Kentucky Downs tend to favor tactical speed. Route races require a stronger finish and can be won by deep closers when given a solid pace to run into.

One of my favorite things about KD is that while payoffs are excellent, I find the racing to be fairly formful and logical. And I love betting my money at a track where management provides a quality betting product at a reasonable price with a wagering format designed to fill the customer's wants and needs. Here's hoping those ideas catch on at all tracks.



KENTUCKY DOWNS

THE HORSEPLAYER'S RACETRACK

September 6♦10♦13♦17♦24
Live Turf Racing



- ◆ Lowest Takeout in North America and Exacta Takeout is the Lowest at 18.25%
- ◆ \$1MILLION Daily Purses
- ◆ Full Fields (9.96 in 2013)

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Pace Figures & Turf Racing



By [Craig Milkowski](#)

Turf racing is different from dirt racing. The pace is generally slower and a premium is placed on finishing power. Races are typically more bunched at the finish than those on dirt and synthetic surfaces. When the margins are closer at the finish, any small edge can help the bettor. Pace Figures can help provide that edge.

Race shape is a term used to describe the relationship of the pace to the final time. The pace is established early in the race and usually plays a large part in the outcome. If the horses go too fast early, off-the-pace types have an edge. If the horses go too slow early and reserve energy, those near the front have the edge. Of course the horses still have to have the talent to take advantage of a favorable situation.

Handicappers have come to realize that ground loss is often important in horse racing. However, all ground loss is not equal. Swinging wide into a collapsing pace is rarely a detriment. Losing ground during the first turn of a slowly run race is usually not much of a negative either. The converse of those situations is where an edge can be found. Horses losing ground on the first turn of a hotly contested pace are usually in big trouble, and the same can be said for those trying to rally wide into a slow pace. Those that run poorly in these situations can be forgiven. Those that run well can be upgraded. These situations occur often, and pace figures can help identify them.

These situations are a great start for any handicapper keeping a "Horses to Watch" list, both positive and negative. Experience has shown that hot-pace races tend to provide the best bets going forward. The G1 Belmont Derby Invitational chart is below and provides some examples. TimeformUS charts are used for pace figures, and Trakus is used to find ground loss. The race featured a 1.25-million-dollar purse for three-year-olds at 10 furlongs on the turf. The TimeformUS Speed Figure for each horse in the Derby is in bold and larger than the others. Past and future figures can be scrolled through easily. The pace figure for every horse at each call is shown beneath the position and beaten lengths.

The pace was hot, with Pornichet running off early and being chased by Gala Award and Bobby's Kitten. The pace figure after four furlongs was 141, and was still 128 after six furlongs, when the field was more tightly bunched. For routes up to 11 furlongs, the six furlong point is a good line of demarcation to see which horses have benefitted from the race set-up and which have not. Those within two lengths of a hot pace, or running in the top three, and those that lost ground have not had things go well. Ground loss can be found on Trakus. The line used will be losing 20

or more feet, or about 2.5 lengths, during the hot part of the race.

9	Mr Speaker C. McLaughy III	J. Lezcano 122 L 23-1	10 103	8 1/2 116	6 1/2 110	2 1/2 -	1 1/2 100	100 5th 1 1/4 m Aug 23	101	85 5th 1 1/8 m May 26
4	Adelaide (IRE) A. O'Brien	C. O'Donoghue 122 L 2-1	4th 119	4 1/2 124	3 1/2 113	1 1/2 -	2 1/2 100	108 1st 1 1/4 m Aug 16	102	100 2nd 1 1/8 m Jun 29
5	Flamboyant (FR) P. Gallagher	J. Rosario 122 L 19-1	7 1/2 109	6th 118	7 1/2 109	5 1/2 -	3 1/2 96	89 8th 1 1/8 m Aug 31	97	96 2nd 1 1/8 m May 26
7	Gailo Chop (FR) A. De Waertant	J. Auge 122 L 9/2	6 1/2 117	7 1/2 118	8 1/2 108	4th -	4 1/2 95	1st 1 1/4 m Aug 15	96	96 1st 1 1/8 m Apr 21
2	Sheldon J. Toner	J. Alvarado 122 L 35-1	9th 103	10 113	9th 106	8th -	5 1/2 95	103 3rd 1 1/4 m Aug 16	95	88 1st 1 1/8 m Jun 12
1	Toast of New York J. Osborne	J. Spencer 122 L 9/2	5 1/2 119	5 1/2 122	5 1/2 111	3 1/2 -	6 1/2 94	113 2nd 1 1/4 m Aug 24	96	106 1st 1 1/8 m Mar 29
10	Global View T. Proctor	G. Stevens 122 L 8-1	8 1/2 106	9 1/2 115	10 106	7 1/2 -	7 1/2 93	101 4th 1 1/4 m Aug 16	94	99 2nd 1m May 31
3	Bobby's Kitten C. Brown	J. Castellano 122 L 4-1	3 1/2 123	3 1/2 125	2nd 113	6 1/2 -	8 1/2 82	98 2nd 1 1/8 m Aug 08	87	103 1st 1m May 31
8	Pornichet (FR) G. Waterhouse	J. Ortiz 122 L 19-1	1 1/2 141	1 1/2 128	1 1/2 114	9 1/2 -	9 1/2 77	84 104 3rd 1m May 11	83 1st 1m Apr 17	
11	Gala Award T. Pletcher	J. Velazquez 122 L 15-1	2 1/2 124	2 1/2 126	4 1/2 112	10 -	10 73	97 1st 1 1/8 m May 26	83 6th 1 1/8 m Apr 12	

Against the setup - pace:

- Pornichet
- Gala Award
- Bobby's Kitten
- Adelaide
- Toast of New York

Against the setup - ground loss

- Bobby's Kitten 23 feet
- Gailo Chop 23 feet
- Global View 22 feet

All of the horses above could be considered as possible bets in the future. Handicappers must still handicap future races. A horse with a tough trip is not always worth a bet going forward, but many will be. Here is a quick review of how those above did when returning. Those that have not run back are omitted:

- Bobby's Kitten – Second at even money in the G2 Hall of Fame on turf at even money. He did improve his speed figure from an 87 to a 98.
- Adelaide – Easily won the G1 Secretariat at even money while improving his speed figure from 102 to 108.
- Toast of New York – Ran second in the G1 Pacific Classic on polytrack to the undefeated Shared Belief at odds of 8-1, increased his speed figure from 96 to 113.
- Gailo Chop – Returned to France and won the G2 Guillaume D'ornano Stakes at Deauville at 10-1 odds.
- Global View - Ran fourth to Adelaide in the Secretariat at 6-1 odds while improving his speed figure from a 94 to 101

Note that all the horses that ran back stateside improved their TimeformUS Speed Figure by at least six points. Almost certainly Gailo Chop improved his Timeform rating over his Belmont Derby TimeformUS Speed Figure as well. In today's game, last-race speed figures are a big part of the betting, and finding horses that will improve can only help the bettor who is looking for an edge.

The Sword Dancer at Saratoga on August 17th featured a very hot pace. The TimeformUS Pace Figure after the first half-mile was
(continued on next page)

a rapid 147, run by Imagining. Main Sequence was widely hailed for overcoming a bad start and rallying from last to win, but in reality, the poor start may have been a blessing in disguise.

None of the horses have run back as of this writing. Those that should be considered as pace plays going forward include horses within two lengths after a mile or those running in the top three. A mile is used for this longer distance because there is still a half-mile remaining. That group of horses consists of Imagining, Twilight Eclipse, and O'Prado Ole. Those that lost the most ground up to that point, according to Trakus, include Twilight Eclipse, Imagining, War Dancer, and Main Sequence.

A brief recap for finding these horses:

- A hot pace (denoted in red in TimeformUS PPs) in turf routes. Use the six furlong call in races up to 11 furlongs and the eight furlong call for races at longer.
- Horses to watch due to pace include those that were within two lengths of the lead or running in the top three.
- Horses to watch due to ground loss include those horses that lost at least 20 feet of ground up to the point mentioned above. Ground loss can be found via Trakus if available, or by reading Equibase charts and/or watching replays.

A few high-profile races were detailed, but these situations occur often in turf races at all levels. These races are fertile ground for finding horses that ran better than it looks in the past performances. Many will run improved speed figures next out, and that is a key to finding good bets at overlaid prices.

Craig Milkowski is the chief figure maker for TimeformUS. We had a more in-depth Q&A with Craig in our September 2013 Horseplayer Monthly, and that is available by clicking [here](#).

Quick Turf Stat #1

Maiden Claimers on Turf? The Unknown Is Not What It's Cracked up To Be

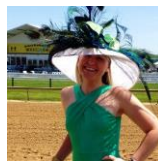
A horse trying the turf in Maiden Claimers with only a start or two sure is enticing. They just might be something on the green, right?

	P/L	Bet	Roi	Wins	Plays	Pct	Impact
Start 1	-449.80	1464.00	0.6928	48	732	.0656	0.6205
Start 2	-851.70	1864.00	0.5431	65	932	.0697	0.6599

In start one or two you're in a lot of trouble. (stats from the last two years).

It gets better over time. Horses in their fifth, sixth, and seventh start on turf in maiden claimers click through at about 13% with an ROI approaching 85 cents for every dollar bet.

Horsemanship for Handicappers



By [Melissa Nolan](#)

Often I hear and read handicappers thanking terrific paddock analysts like [Maggie Wolfendale](#) at NYRA for putting them on a big odds winner or talking them off an underlaid loser based on her comments about the pre-race composure and physical attributes of the runners in the field. Paddock observations from public and private analysts provide both simulcast and on-track customers valuable commentary into how runners look as they're being saddled and moving in the walking ring.

Unfortunately, many handicappers who did not grow up around horses or own any as adults have little background equine knowledge to draw upon so as to develop their own paddock and on-track observation skills. Furthermore, while it's one thing to read books such as *The Body Language of Horses* by handicapper Tom Ainslie and equine behavior expert Bonnie Ledbetter to gain some understanding of what ideal equine athletes look like, it's quite another to actively practice observing the horses pre-race. The more time one takes practicing and the more horses one sees, the more robust a knowledge base s/he develops from which to draw opinions on whether a horse looks ready for a peak effort today or instead in a declining phase of its condition cycle.

The goal with this piece to light that equine knowledge bomb within so that readers can start developing their own insights into equine conformation and basic horsemanship for the ultimate result of adding another weapon to the handicapping arsenal.

Right off the bat it should be made clear that *anyone* can learn the basics of what a healthy, blossoming equine athlete looks like pre-race as well as some traits to avoid without having ever touched or spent much time around horses. Just as one doesn't need a Ph.D. in Physiology to notice that the athletic physique of LeBron James is different than a vast majority of other forwards in the NBA. James's body structure is, in essence, freakish in the best possible way, and its biomechanics enable him to generate power and shoot with precision in a manner that's unique and very special. Another easily recognizable athlete with a "freakish" body composition is swimmer Michael Phelps, and even the most landlubber of observers can discern that Phelps's torso and arms are longer than most his competitors and are what enable him to efficiently slice through the water and swim with unsurpassed speed. Likewise, when looking at horses pre-race it is helpful to view the runners through a prism of them as equine athletes warming up on game day. With that mentality in

(continued on next page)

mind, keen observers are looking for specific physical or behavioral traits that communicate which runner has its “game face” on and is outwardly expressing its internal readiness.

Conformation is the physical makeup of a horse and affects strength, athletic ability, and movement. Certain types of conformation favor different kinds of movement while some conformational defects hinder a horse in the way it moves. While the horse’s physical attributes are critically important to its athletic ability to generate speed over distance, it is difficult even for an expert eye to evaluate conformation while the horse is in motion, at a distance such as in the pre-race setting. As it can be assumed conformation is sufficiently correct for all runners (else they would not even be able to make the races) of greater import to handicappers throughout pre-race observations should be to concentrate on the *condition* of the horses.



Ron the Greek is a horse who will tout himself and run great when he looks great – Melissa Nolan photo

The horse is an athlete by design and is built to move. As the horse moves, its internal systems collaborate together to produce movement, agility, speed, and endurance, all which can improve with fitness or decline from inactivity, illness, and overtraining. The current fitness of the equine is described as its *condition* and is a physical manifestation of well-being, strength, and overall athletic readiness. Horses in training move through phases of condition where muscle and respiratory strength increases with added work to a point of physical plateau and eventually declines whereby time and rest are required before the animal can successfully begin the cycle over again. *A horse’s condition cannot continue to increase past a certain point or remain at a high level indefinitely and that cyclical nature of fitness allows knowledgeable handicappers to find value in identifying what is not always discernible in PPs: horses who look as if they are physically appear ready for a peak performance this race day versus ones who appear to be on*

the decline.

The signs of top condition are similarly the attributes handicappers should look for in their pre-race observations. It should be noted that obviously not every horse in terrific condition and increasing fitness exhibits these signs or conversely that ones with these attributes are suddenly much faster than before and guaranteed to run big today. On the whole, though, horses often perform best when in top condition. Some positive behaviors and signs of peak condition useful for handicappers in their pre-race observations are as follows:

- Healthy, shiny coat. Dapples on the coat are the true sign of a horse “in bloom” and mean it’s in excellent health and currently flourishing.
- Relaxed stride; fluid movement.
- Obedience during saddling; responsiveness to handlers in walking ring.
- Energetic but not “flighty”--not “prancing” per se because impulsion is what we want, but being overly “forward” and pulling on handlers or overeager can be bad because it shows a lack of focus and wasted energy.
- Horse is being walked with other runners and not being sequestered away by itself.
- Stretching downward of the neck and shoulders, loosening muscles while showing eagerness.
- Bright eye; overall look of good health.
- Good weight--not overly fleshy (fat) or too thin (“ribby”); good muscle tone.
- While on the pony on the track: jogging alongside but not on a tight rein; “hobby horse”--shows playfulness/eagerness on his own, not because head is restricted or he’s nervous.

With time and practice, your eye will become sophisticated enough to discern which horses look great and which ones are candidates to toss. In my opinion, conditioning opinions are best when looking at the cheapest of horses or the classiest of horses. Often times it seems that in claiming races, the horses that look the best are often the ones who run the best and likewise with stakes horses.



Remember these tips next time you’re on -track or watching the simo feed and see if horses run to how you believe they look. I guarantee you will have success in time.

Happy ‘Capping!

Horse Racing is the Betting Side of Fantasy Sports

By The HANA Desk

With the NFL Season upon us, people who play Fantasy Sports are in high gear, drafting their teams. Fantasy Football, long ago a part of a geeky stats and football subculture, has gone beyond mainstream. The market is worth billions and information is at your fingertips. The culture keeps on growing and growing and with it, so do revenues.

How big is this market? Well, ESPN alone (one of many companies or media enterprises who run leagues) [has 14 million players](#). There are dozens of ESPN's, and sites like FanDuel where money change hands have exploded. This has now, as the article linked above alludes, caused some hand wringing by governments and others, because Fantasy Football had a carve out with 2006's Unlawful Internet Gaming Act of 2006 (the same carve out horse racing has gotten). This is gambling, no doubt about it.

The niche market, (that has clearly grown beyond niche) is a testament of the power of a medium, when intertwined with gambling.

While racing relies on betting revenues to pay for virtually everything, the NFL does not. The Fantasy Football medium gives football a conduit to encourage people to become football fans for life - to watch the games on TV, buy shirts, etc.

Thinking about that 14 million number at ESPN.com alone, as related to horse racing: That's about the number of people who watch the Derby every year.

The NFL has been pretty mum on the issue of Fantasy Sports (much like the wink-wink-nudge-nudge when it comes to gambling on straight up football games, office pools, or a parlay card as a casino near you). There are sites outside NFL properties who are "using" players and the league to host these games. Money changes hands, there's gambling going on. The NFL has not tried to block them, or charge for stats, or anything along those lines. They are a partner, albeit a silent one; one which the NFL doesn't only tolerate, but tacitly approves.

It can be argued that the NFL has done more for its sport with gambling and the 2006 UIGEA than horse racing has. It's easy to blame horse racing for this - and in some cases it's well-deserved blame - but racing is not in the same position as the NFL. It does not have TV contracts supplying revenues; it relies on betting for revenue - the same thing the NFL treats as a side show for its revenue.

However, racing clearly has not done enough. Handle is down, and continues to fall in 2014, this despite being granted a de-facto monopoly on wagering in the UIGEA. 14 million people are signed up in only one league this year, and come next Sunday the bulk of them will be watching Sunday Night Football, at the bar having a beer,

wearing their favorite players shirt or hat. They'll bring friends to watch and play with them, their families will grow up in the same culture and it's very likely that for generations they'll be watching football.

What can racing do with the 15 million or so people who will be watching next year's Derby, but will not make even a \$2 bet the next 364 days? What can get them interested week to week or month to month like a friendly Fantasy Football game does all across North America? That's racing's big question to solve.

Another Quick Turf Stat

Are Turf Running Styles Logical? You Bet!

Turf racing is not dirt racing, where in this day and age sprinters can win a lot of races, even at a distance. We expect our turf winners to sit and stalk and make one big run, to a potential victory and good payoff. The stats bear this out.

Running Styles on the Green (no First Time Starters)

By: Running Style

Value	P/L	Bet	Roi	Wins	Plays	Pct	Impact	
0	-4795.50	21282.00	0.7747	1217	10641	.1144	0.9878	E
15	-776.10	7292.00	0.8936	477	3646	.1308	1.1300	EP
30	-793.30	6938.00	0.8857	450	3469	.1297	1.1204	P
45	-6514.90	30572.00	0.7869	1878	15286	.1229	1.0612	PS
60	-9113.20	37938.00	0.7598	2229	18969	.1175	1.0150	S
75	-6136.30	22652.00	0.7291	1218	11326	.1075	0.9289	SS
90	-1630.10	4182.00	0.6102	106	2091	.0507	0.4379	U

Horses who are able to press the pace, or lie off of it, have an advantage. "EP", "P" and "PS" win more than expected (impact values above 1.0) and pay off better than expected as well.

Although pure "E" horses can be tempting, they win at less than expected.

Deep closers similarly win their fair share, but not as much as the odds say they should.



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Off The Turf Psychology and Betting Angles

Brought to you by horseplayersbet.com

Some decent opportunities come up when a race is taken off the turf. Sometimes, a tough turf race can become a race with just two or three possible winners. But keep in mind, the most obvious horse tends to lose more often.



There are many reasons for this. Horses can be trained differently going into a turf event. Shoeing becomes a factor if a horse's last race(s) were on the lawn, sometimes it means getting an unfamiliar farrier if a race comes off with little warning.

Main track horses generally outperform, but even that is deceptive, as they are dirt horses who are up against some grass horses, who may decide to try their luck on the dirt track. MTO's are definitely not automatics.

On dirt tracks, the horse that gets the lead in route races, tend to outperform their odds. This could have to do with the nonchalant mindset that could be created by horsemen, jockeys and everyone with input in a race that comes off the turf. Human nature seems to come into play, a trainer could be thinking, "this race was taken off the grass, but I pointed towards the turf, so now it is in the hands of fate." In other words, the trainer's strategy has been compromised to the point that pressure to come up with a new strategy isn't as great as there are enough built in excuses. It is tough to scrutinize a trainer when nature changes the track conditions.

This also leads to weight in distance races taken off the grass to become more of a factor. Horses tend to outperform their odds with apprentices on their backs in these races. Races with non-contentious pace will often favor lighter weighted horses.

Horses that run mainly on the turf, even with higher speed figures, tend to underperform dramatically when the

race is moved to the dirt (note: this isn't the case so much when moving to Polytrack), but because their speed figs are so high, the racing outfits are still tempted to let many of them run. Some of these horses will show the odd good dirt race, but that only creates more value on other horses in the race. Speed figures can be two-five lengths different that par for the turf race, when moved to the lawn, usually the longer the distance, the more the differential.

Here is the run down:

1. Try to avoid the favorite if possible from the first position.
2. Look for the early speed, especially in route races.
3. Avoid horses that have recently raced 70% or more of late on the turf.
4. In route races, discount horses that carry 122 pounds or more, unless there are more than 3 horses who also are carrying those amounts, and throw in horses with apprentices if it looks even remotely possible they can hit the board.

One final thought. If a race is reduced to three horses, and yes, sometimes two horses, no matter how strong your opinion is, skip the race. Not just when it comes to betting the race, but when it comes to horizontal wagers too. Think back, did you make any type of a score that had a three horse race in its sequence? Betting three horse races can only lead to one thing, and that is humiliation when you don't bet the winner.

Quick Turf Stat #3

Paying Attention to the Obvious Can Pay on the Turf

"Give me a fit, in form favorite and I will show you an overbet animal."

That sounds logical – obvious form and talent should be noticed by the crowd, and when the crowd notices something, we don't want to be with them.

Over the last couple of years, these horses are anything but bad favorites. A horse in form, with decent recent works on the turf (non-first time starters) win more than 37% of the time as the chalk and return almost 93 cents on the dollar.

Sometimes as horseplayers we look for that "sneaky" horse to key, and when they end up favorite with big steam from coast to coast we end up having no edge at all. The fact is, often times we just have to depend on good old-fashioned common sense.

Identifying a Sucker Horse

By Rich Nilsen, Agameofskill.com

Owning and managing race horses is much like any other business. You are always looking to capitalize on favorable situations and increase revenue when the opportunity presents itself. When a racing stable has a sharp racehorse, they look to take advantage. A horse that just won impressively at the \$25,000 claiming level, for example, should usually be stepped to \$35,000 where he can compete for a higher purse and stay "protected." A stable does not want to lose a horse that is potentially worth \$30-35,000 for anything less than that. Unless, of course, there is a reason back at the barn that we, the handicappers, don't know about.

This is exactly what transpired in the last race of the 2014 Saratoga meeting. Shankopotamus had not just won for \$25,000 but he also beat a key race field in the process. He did so in fast time, from start to finish, and earned an 88 BRIS Speed Rating. Both the second and third place finishers returned to win their next outing, including a horse named Street Shark that my friend Steve Harner owns in partnership. Street Shark returned to romp in a very tough \$58,000 race only a few days before at odds of 9-1.



Saratoga - photo by [Penelope P. Miller, America's Best Racing](#)

Shankopotamus was being dropped into a \$16,000 claimer, bottom of the barrel for Saratoga, despite his last solid performance at the \$25,000 level. Now some could argue that the current connections had claimed him for \$12,500 in June and so they were "out" on the horse and, thus, not at risk of losing money. That's true, but that is not how a smart stable operates. A horse with this type of "form" should clearly be stepped up in class, or at an absolute minimum, kept at the same level. Knowing about Street Shark's performance exiting the July 23 race,

I could not possibly understand why the horse that beat him was suddenly being dropped in class. Dropping the six-year-old gelding in for only \$16,000 was a huge red flag. Shankopotamus layed over this field ... assuming he was 100 percent, or close to it.



But Shankopotamus wasn't 100 percent, not even close. A mature gelding, competing at the claiming level, should have lots of races during the course of the year. Shankopotamus had only raced six times in 2014, another huge red flag that all was not well back at the barn.

You don't have to have owned horses like I did for 10 years to smell a rat. If you owned Shankopotamus, who had just stepped way up in class off the claim and won over a strong field, would you risk him for only \$16,000? Would you do that just to try to win a race at Saratoga, when you had already won a race there? Would you do that when there were plenty of opportunities within the next week or so at Belmont Park? The answer to every question is "of course not."

Shankopotamus barely made it to the far turn when he pulled up at odds of 7/5 in the finale on Labor Day. He walked off the track OK for new trainer Gary Sciacca.

Interestingly, leading claiming trainers Rudy Rodriguez and David Jacobson (who previously trained Shankopotamus) made claims in this race ... but on runners not named Shankopotamus.

Rich Nilsen is the founder of the educational website Agameofskill.com, where you can read the first two parts of this series along with other daily handicapping features.



Payoffs!? You're Talking About Payoffs!?



By [Mike Dorr](#)

"We're just trying to win the game!"

A common refrain I've seen on Twitter recently, spurred by the popularity of both the Saratoga and Del Mar meets, is "X [Exotic Bet] payoff amount seemed a little light". Many culprits are to blame: the sharps, the computers, the \$0.50 or \$0.10 minimums, the obscene takeout. The only bet avoiding this fate seems to be the low takeout Pick-5s that accompany the day's first [flat] race in both New York and California. Many players consider it the best bet in the game - I am one of them.

Still, there are dozens of exotic bets each day that are not the Pick-5 and their payoff math seems to confound even seasoned horseplayers. Perhaps that group especially has seen exotic pools diminish as a source of value over time, another side effect to the macro trends driving horse racing. The culprits identified above are all legitimate if not the biggest reason exotic payoffs appear slim these days. Let's look at an example of what might happen on an exotic bet in this modern era.

7-horse race, 18% takeout in the Win Pool - 3 logical (evenly-matched) horses, 4 longshots. The odds board looks like:

Alpha Red 2-1
Beta Orange 2-1
Gamma Yellow 2-1
Delta Green 30-1
Epsilon Blue 30-1
Zeta Indigo 30-1
Eta Violet 30-1

You are certain from your handicapping that the three faves are going to make up the trifecta and you're excited to get a 30-1 shot in for 4th of your superfecta. Your \$1.00 superfecta ticket (1-3/1-3/1-3/4-7) costs \$24. The race runs exactly to your script - 2-3-1-6. You do some quick math in your head ($2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 30 = \240 - \$40 for takeout) --> \$200 BOOM!

The Race is Official - the \$1 superfecta payoff flashes - \$18.24. You turn to your friend - "Man, that superfecta came up light..."

What happened? Well, math happened, and several things about this hypothetical race show why payoffs can

often look small.

It's obvious, in retrospect, what happened to our dumb-luck player - he projected the win pool odds of a longshot of 30-1 to be the same for any given place in the exotics. However, the probability for any one of the longshots to be in the superfecta is a little over 25%. There's a 100% chance that at least one of them will. So, instead of 30-1 for 4th, he's getting maybe 5-2. You wouldn't play four horses at 5-2 each in the win pool.

In the first three slots of the trifecta, there were only 6 combinations of horses; there were just 4 outcomes for the 4th spot - at no takeout, payoffs would only be \$24.00 for a \$1.00. Take 24% off the top, and he has lost money on his ticket.

This may be a "perfect storm" case of bad betting, but it does highlight several reasons why exotic bet payoffs are shrinking, both in reality and perception. Today, I'll look at what I think is the biggest issue; Part 2 in the next issue will deal with the other culprits (takeout, minimums, computers, etc.)

Field Size is a Bigger Factor in Exotics than Straight Bets

In HANA's Track Ranking metrics, takeout is the biggest factor in a high ranking and field size is second (takeout is about 40% more important, in the algorithm, for the three of you interested). For exotic players, however, field size may actually be the much more important factor.

A very popular theory about exotic bets is that they mitigate high takeout because you make 2+ bets but only have a single takeout (this theory is mostly applied in Pick-X wagers compared to a win parley). Thought of another way, an exotic bet can improve your price per opinion, meaning for an exacta bet you pay one takeout for your opinion on the winner and one for your opinion on the second place horse.

It's that dynamic that shows why exotic bet payoffs are especially susceptible to field size. Let's compare a race with eight runners to one with seven:

Win Pool: eight outcomes vs. seven, a decrease of 12.5% in the options the betting public has in a race

Exacta Pool: ($8 \times 7 = 56$) outcomes vs ($7 \times 6 = 42$) outcomes, a decrease of 25%

Trifecta Pool: 336 outcomes vs 210 outcomes, a decrease of 37.5%

The total potential outcomes matter very much because the win odds do not reflect the probability of a horse rounding out an exotic bet, like in our bet above. Longshots in larger fields (9+) will continue to provide large multipliers nearer to their win pool odds.

If you ask yourself the question "Is this vertical exotic bet likely to payoff near a multiple win pool odds?" subtract five
(continued on next page)

from the race's field size, and only play verticals where positions required is less than or equal to the difference, i.e.

Field Size six or less - payouts won't be multiples

7 - Exacta only

8 - Exacta/Trifecta

9 - Exacta/Trifecta/Superfecta

In horizontal bets, the situation is the same. A Daily Double with two seven-horse fields has 24% fewer combos than two eight-horse fields. Even the prevalence of a single short field in a horizontal bet can hurt payoffs - a 10-horse field paired to a six-horse field has only 60 potential combos vs. two eight-horse fields getting 64.



Why I'll Be Playing Exotics at Kentucky Downs

Kentucky Downs had last year the largest average field size in North America - with 1 more runner they would have cracked 10 horses per race. Of course, turf racing generally has more participants, but Kentucky Downs has been diligent about filling its gates. Moreover, they have very few short fields which means almost every race and race sequence can produce value for the bettor.

They are the best example of how to use slots/instant racing money to boost purses while simultaneously providing low takeout rates on bets. Their exacta takeout is the lowest in North America - if their handle and pool size grows by another 30-40% this meet, they will almost certainly take the top spot in HANA's rankings next spring.

They offer every bet at the lowest minimum and roll Daily Doubles and Pick-3s. While low minimums allow for increased spreading on tickets, that impact tends to increase the payoffs on chalky sequences but depresses payoffs where multiple longshots hit. Low minimums keeps the taxman away from more payoffs too.

If you haven't yet played it, I suggest giving Kentucky Downs a try. If you come for live racing, I highly suggest staying in Nashville and making a long weekend out of it. And send me a line if you come to town.

Mike will have part two of this column in the next issue of the Horseplayer Monthly.

The State of Summer Meets

Inherent Industry Barriers Stifle the Long-Term Potential of Summer Meets



By [Jerod Dinkin](#)

Mankind/womankind cannot live so cynically as to believe that physical interaction is no longer important in the post-modern era. In our sphere of influence, Twitter, Facebook, online contest sites, and ADWs are the reality of the times and what will sustain the sport moving forward.

Cyberspace is replacing physical space, but one cannot and will not subsist without the other. Namely, the sport won't grow in cyberspace without positive experiences cultivated on track, at a horse farm, at a yearling sale, or some other physical venue, and at least for the time being (until Instant Racing takes over the world) the races are still run over a track, outside, on good ol' fashion dirt and grass that God created (homage to Nick Zito).

As the summer winds down and the boutique meets come to an end, I'm reminded of how nothing in racing can replicate the on-track experience of a quality summer meet; the sights, sounds, and atmosphere of Del Mar with a laid back deco style and a fashionably late post time to match; Saratoga, with a nostalgic carnival motif, tree lined paddock, and a facility that rivals Fenway Park or Wrigley Field in terms of historic charm in the world of sport; and Arlington Park, a quality facility with top notch customer service providing a memorable experience. These summer locales provide a great family atmosphere and vibe that will help catalyze such memories and should cultivate new support to the game over time.

With all of the competition available at this juncture vying for the precious entertainment dollar in an uncertain economy, the significance of the summer racetrack destination cannot be overstated. We need to make sure the sport remains a part of the entertainment conscious of a typical non-racing fan so when it comes time to decide where to go this weekend or next, "the track" is considered along with the theme park or a day at the zoo. There is no doubt that the sustainability of the sport moving forward is largely based on appropriate pricing of the product as a gambling pursuit; a business that will involve a majority of its dollars wagered online. This is the reality of a 21st Century world where horse racing holds no special advantage in the pantheon of gambling activities as

(continued on next page)

it did in much of 20th Century. Quite on the contrary; we're too expensive and overly fragmented into small groups where the norm involves a precarious power struggle. John Q. Onceameetsaratogaguy ("J.Q.O.") decides he loves going to the Spa so much that he will become a regular bettor through an ADW to continue his interest in the game. Here are said barriers to entry that J.Q.O. must now go through:

1. **Reside in a state where it is legal** (sorry Alaska, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Utah): 24,000,000 people aged 18 and older reside in these seven states.
2. **Successfully research available ADWs:** After looking at all of the possibilities (which involved calling friends and extensive "googling"), he decides the best service with the most features is "XYZBets.com.net.org", but it isn't available in his state. After more careful analysis, he realizes there is only one option, "ABCWagers.com" which is inferior to most other ADWs. As a consumer in the year 2014, he wonders why there isn't more choice. It strikes him as a bit monopolistic or at the least "anti-capitalistic".
3. **Takeout:** Now that he is funded and ready to bet, he becomes inquisitive about how horse racing stacks up to blackjack and sports betting, his current preferred forms of gambling. J.Q.O. looks up the track takeout (<http://www.horseplayersassociation.org/sortableratins.gs.html>). He thinks to himself, good Lord, that can't be right, it must be a mistake – those numbskulls at HANA have at all wrong. How can a business subsist charging customers those rates? Subsequently, J.Q.O. finds out that some major circuits are actually increasing takeout and one even overcharged bettors above and beyond the current legal rate.
4. **Perception:** J.Q.O. recognizes some of the big name trainers from his experiences at the marquee tracks and from watching the Kentucky Derby on TV, but never knew much about them beyond the two minute human interest pieces used to kill two hours of coverage (you know, instead of showing really good Grade I races that occur prior to the marquee events). He is despondent in finding out many of them have a list of medication infractions that make Ben Johnson look clean.
5. **Rewards:** J.Q.O. isn't a huge bettor, but does get some nice perks out of his casino betting. He looks into the rebate rules of his ADW and finds he can get about \$5 back a month and perhaps some free PPs once and awhile.
6. **Consistency:** J.Q.O. places a wager and watches a race where he is holding a correctly structured ticket that will yield a \$250 profit from a \$5 bet. This is one of the

many reasons why he is excited about horse racing – few other pursuits afford you the ability to invest a relatively small amount of money to win a relatively large amount (and unlike the lottery, have a realistic expectation to win)! However, the inquiry sign is flashed and his temporary excitement has evaporated as his horse has been taken down. This is perplexing to J.Q.O. as the same level of interference did not yield a disqualification in the exact same situation yesterday at the very same track. He looks into the rules used by the Stewards to formulate their decisions because with all this money at stake for the bettors and the connections, surely there are uniform rules for what happens within the field of play (you know, like in every other sport on the planet). He finds nothing but a tax write-off. Speaking of taxes....

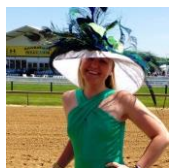
7. **Central Governing Body:** J.Q.O. wonders why the Commissioner hasn't addressed a number of these items. Surely the head of this sport would be taking prudent measures to ensure the integrity of the game isn't compromised. Goddell wouldn't put up with this.

Some of the barriers to entry are legal and/or political in nature and out of the control of the industry. However, to the customer it's irrelevant; the bottom line is they cannot access the product. Imagine if Apple could only sell I-Pads in 43 states? This is precisely what the industry must deal with; not an easy task.

With respect to takeout, I often hear the counter argument that most patrons of a summer meet like Saratoga (and many OTB customers as well) have no idea what takeout is or how it impacts their wallet. This is entirely true. The yearly or even bi-weekly or weekly customer at Del Mar or Saratoga is unlikely to care. Regardless of the takeout, within reason, these folks will make Del Mar or the Spa a semi regular destination. However, this mindset is so inherently flawed and self-fulfilling that it boggles the mind. We need the customers who have good experiences at the track (like J.Q.O) to become regular customers in the ADW world, the future of betting. Given the laundry list of difficulties (only some of which are listed above), this is increasing unlikely and why the sport is in decline. Further, even if the typical OTB patron isn't consciously aware of takeout, he or she will be keenly reminded of it when they are broke.

However well intended, any marketing strategy that isn't centered on competitive pricing for the bettor is a losing long term proposition. This is pressing issue number 1 and 1A and is relatively simple to correct. This is of paramount importance and unlike many of the impenetrable factors that hamper growth - this is **controllable** (with any sort of leadership and pragmatic thinking). The concerts, food truck festivals, ostrich races, Weiner Dog Derbies, and the like are irrelevant if any new customer gained through these endeavors fails to become a regular betting customer; a goal which is unbearably difficult with an uncompetitive, usurious rake, in addition to some huge barriers to entry.

Reflecting on Tom Durkin's Career



By [Melissa Nolan](#)

Tom Durkin is the only full time NYRA announcer I've ever known. Yes, Johnny I. does a fine job during the winters at Aqueduct and during an occasional substitute stint, and I don't want to detract from that but my racing heart...my heart knows Durkin.

Every seminal moment I can recall in New York racing in my lifetime has been narrated by Tom. I'm not that old so I know it may seem juvenile to be so affected by the tenor and tone of the man's voice but to me, Tom IS New York. Belmont Stakes? Yep. Triple Crown on the line? Been there, called that. "It's a filly in the Belmont"? Indeed that too. In fact, Tom called with aplomb the exact race that made a racing fan out of me: the [1994 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies](#). I've basically been raised by Tom Durkin's calls and today marks the end of an era.



Tom Durkin bids farewell and thanks the "fans and horseplayers" at Saratoga last weekend - photo by [America's Best Racing](#)

I heard someone describe his call in the 2004 Belmont with Smarty Jones going for the Triple Crown ("...and Birdstone wins the Belmont Stakes.") as horse racing's "Casey at the Bat because of the way he handled the situation with appropriate and professional disappointment. I thought that was brilliant and indeed there was no joy in Elmont that day as Smarty Jones had run flat. No one could have struck a more perfect tone that day in my mind than Mr. Durkin. It was a defining moment and he set the mood that afternoon.

Tom Durkin to me is an absolute legend in this sport—professional, funny, articulate, wise—and I know that though without ever having had the pleasure of meeting him. His calls (literally) say it all.

In Kentucky, broadcasters here can't help but eventually get compared to the venerable Cawood Ledford, the longtime football and basketball play-by-play announcer of the Kentucky Wildcats. He's the benchmark for class and vocal elegance in the field of broadcasting in KY and throughout the country. In my eyes, Tom Durkin is the Cawood of horse racing—nothing else like him out there and a true measure by which future race callers strive to become.

Sure, Tom has made some mistakes, but who amongst us hasn't? But for every Tale of Etaki or Mine That Bird oops there are thousands of "[She is indeed Rachel Alexandra the Great!](#)" and "[A picture is worth a thousand words but this one is worth five million dollars!](#)" and other calls that will stand the test of time.

Above all I'm thankful that I got to hear Tom my entire life and he is in my eyes New York racing personified. He's the pinnacle of the sport and brought all its participants innumerable hours or joy just through his words. That's a beautiful thing and Tom and his family should be very proud of the impact he's made on American horse racing.

Thank you, Mr. Durkin, for your dedication, passion, and professionalism for the Greatest Game Played Outdoors. You've made it here and you could've made it anywhere, but you gracefully shared your talent with racing and brought excitement, poignancy, and happiness to multiple generations of its fans. While you will be missed, you will never be forgotten.

Tom, you're a true legend in this game and a verbal genius at the mic. Enjoy retirement and Godspeed in your future pursuits. Cheers to a life well lived and a job well done!

 [dana byerly](#) @superterrific · Aug 31

Can honestly say I'm not convinced I would've fallen so hard for racing if Durkin wasn't the NY caller, both cerebral & dramatic [#ThanksTom](#)

👍 3 🌟 8 ...

 [Larry Collmus](#) @larrycollmus · Aug 31

First met Tom Durkin in an elevator at the Meadowlands. I was 19. Told him I was going up to see Dave Johnson and he took me to the booth.

👍 4 🌟 16 ...

 [Ray Paulick](#) @raypaulick · Aug 31

"That person I owe inexpressable gratitude to is you, the racing fan, the horseplayer. Thank u for it all. Thank u for everything." -Tom Durkin

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Brett Weiner holds on in DerbyWars \$100,000 Game

After outgunning 132 other entries over 29 races at Saratoga and Del Mar in the \$100,000 contest on Labor Day weekend, Brett Wiener (BWiener) held a \$19.10 lead over second-place Lawrence Kahlden (StPeteLSU64) with one race to go, the Yellow Ribbon at Del Mar. On the line, a \$50,000 first place prize, with \$20,000 for second and \$10,000 for third.

Leaderboard		
THRU 29 of 30 RACES		
1	bwiener (3)	\$169.50
2	stpetelsu64 (1)	\$150.40
3	sfdan (1)	\$149.30
4	oreo (1)	\$141.50
5	Toga (1)	\$136.80
6	masterofpic... (1)	\$133.30
7	moomeyer (1)	\$126.70
8	guggie (1)	\$126.50

Prize Distribution:	
1st	\$50,000.00
2nd	\$20,000.00
3rd	\$10,000.00
4th	\$5,000.00
5th	\$4,000.00
6th	\$3,000.00
7th	\$2,500.00
8th	\$2,000.00
9th	\$1,750.00
10th	\$1,750.00

Kahlden would need at least a 5-1 shot, with a good place price to overtake the leader. But he also had to worry about getting lapped from behind, with Daniel Fischer (SFDan) just \$1.10 behind in third, and two others within \$14.00 of him. And the Yellow Ribbon board didn't present many opportunities to go for the win.

Runner		M/L	odds
Stormy Lucy	1	(5)	5
Need You Now (IRE)	2	(15)	17
Bunairgead (IRE)	3	(20)	42
Heat Du Jour	4	(12)	9
Cozze Up Lady	5	(4)	9/2
Wishing Gate	6	(7/2)	5
Parranda	7	(3)	9/5
Winning Rhythm	8	()	
Miss Serendipity (9	(4)	9/2

Kahlden ultimately went with #9, Miss Serendipity, the 9/2 eventual winner of the race, while Wiener went with #4, Heat Du Jour at 9-1, seemingly the lowest-priced horse that could overtake him in first.

Kahlden said, "I know many wonder why I took the nine since I couldn't win with him. I thought maybe if I get one

tick up in the gate maybe it could happen. But this horse was on my watch list. I have been waiting for him to run in the same kind of spot as his last race. So I was excited when I knew he was in the last race of the contest. Then I told my wife - I can't win with him but can hold second. I said I have two choices. Play him for \$2k to win and try to win the contest with another horse. Or just play him in contest, get second and maybe get lucky with odds going up. She talked me in to keeping him. She said if he wins, can any other horse get you in to first? I said no, so she said I would be stupid not to play the winner. And it turned out to be a \$10k decision."

Miss Serendipity would go on to win the Yellow Ribbon at 9-2. Kahlden earned \$16.40 for the selection, but could only come \$3.70 short of first place. But the selection did save him \$10,000 by holding onto the \$20,000 second-place prize, as Michael Tanzer (Oreo) also had Miss Serendipity, and charged into third-place, ending up with \$157.90.

bwiener							
Race	Horse	#	Prize	Race	Horse	#	Prize
1	SAR - 5 Upgrade	1	--	16	SAR - 4 Signature Cat	4	--
2	SAR - 6 Emotional Kitten	4	--	17	SAR - 5 Shimba	1	\$2.20
3	SAR - 7 Diannestillworks	2	--	18	SAR - 6 Where's Danny	2	\$9.70
4	SAR - 8 Alexahente	3	\$10.90	19	SAR - 7 Whateveryouwant	7	--
5	SAR - 9 Mr. O'leary	1	\$15.30	20	SAR - 8 Wizardly	1	--
6	SAR - 10 Winter Dawn	6	--	21	SAR - 9 Storm	5	--
7	DMR - 3 Educating	2	--	22	DMR - 2 Jimmy's Date	4	--
8	DMR - 4 Kimnjet	1	--	23	SAR - 10 Capital City	1	\$42.20
9	SAR - 11 Rap D'oro	2	--	24	DMR - 3 Wanstead Gardens	7	\$14.60
10	DMR - 5 Tiz Kissable	2	\$5.80	25	DMR - 4 Global Magician	8	\$6.60
11	SAR - 12 Saratoga Heater	11	\$27.00	26	DMR - 5 Camryn Kate	1	--
12	DMR - 6 Song To You	1	--	27	DMR - 6 Awesome Diamond	11	--
13	DMR - 7 Oscar Party	7	\$4.80	28	DMR - 7 Back Off Buddy	7	\$12.80
14	DMR - 8 Grandstand	1	\$5.60	29	DMR - 8 Sweet Sunshine	5	\$12.00
15	DMR - 9 Talco	4	--	30	DMR - 9 Heat Du Jour	4	--
Total							\$169.50

The two-day contest was challenging and a lack of longshots kept scores low. Wiener's winning total of \$169.50 was less than \$85 per day with 15 races each day.



Brett Weiner

"It was a real "grind", said Wiener, who has won numerous DerbyWars contests and currently sits in the top 5 of the NHC Tour. "But I love the challenge of the contests. I don't care if it's a \$40 Head 2 Head or for \$50 Grand! "It was our ninth anniversary today, so that was a good present. If I lost I might have "heard about" the wasted time."

He was up for the challenge on Monday, as he also won the [DerbyWars](#) \$15,000 Labor Day game as well - making his total for the weekend nearly \$60,000!

The 411 on In-Race Betting

A Fascinating Way to Gain New Customers

"Satisfied customers are not likely to increase your sales. Satisfied customers are not likely to push you and your colleagues to stay ahead of the competition. One day, in fact, the competition will pass you and the satisfied customers will quietly leave."

Your growth will come instead from the dissatisfied and unsatisfied. The dissatisfied know they want a solution, but are not happy with the solution they've got. The unsatisfied are the folks who do not even realize they have a problem that needs solving. That is why focus groups are often so useless. The people you really need to hear from are the great unwashed, the people who are not even looking at you. That is where you will find the customers you need when your current line becomes obsolete."

- Seth Godin from *Free Prize Inside, The Next Big Marketing Idea*

I was getting ready to start my work day this past winter when I got a message from a friend. It went something like, "1:54.81 will hold up here and you're getting 3-5. There's no one left that was even close to that time the last time these girls raced on the Sochi track."

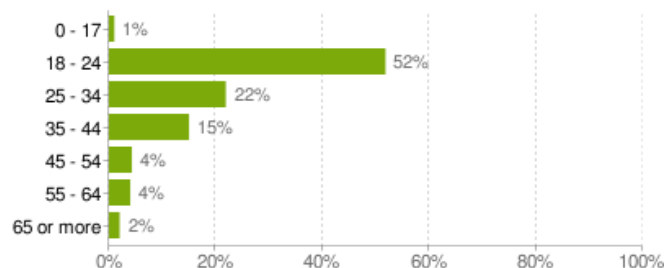
My immediate response was, "What is he talking about?" until I realized he was betting the women's speed skating final taking place at the Sochi Winter Olympics. And he was doing it while the event was going on. It's called in-running betting, mostly made popular by British betting exchange Betfair, but also utilized in Las Vegas and offshore books for sports like football. It's a new form of wagering, and it certainly – in this new connected world – is here to stay. In-running betting does not only happen with popular human sports, as women's speed skating markets can surely attest, it's also in use for Thoroughbred racing and has been for some time. A few years ago the great Black Caviar raced a short five furlong affair in Australia and she, and she alone, had \$40 million traded on her to win; most of it at about 12 cents on the dollar (in decimal odds this is 1.12. In North American racing odds it would be near 1-9). A fair portion of it was bet while the short 55 second race was being run. Black Caviar broke well but seemed to be not quite as keen as she usually was. This prompted bettors – on laptops and desktops at home, iPads or iPhones or Blackberry's at the track – to start letting her price out a notch. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were passing through cyberspace and cell phone towers as she rose from 1.12 to 1.25 to 1.33 to 1.45. As she approached the wire, her lead diminishing in every foot of turf, her nostrils flaring with her equally game opponent bearing down on her, she rose to 1.90 as the wire finally came. It was very close. Was she beaten? Another several hundred thousand traded on

her while bettors and fans awaited the result of the photo; yes, megabucks were still humming, betting on a photo. The backers at 1.90 (almost even money) were rewarded, because the photo sign was removed and the strapping black racemare was still undefeated.

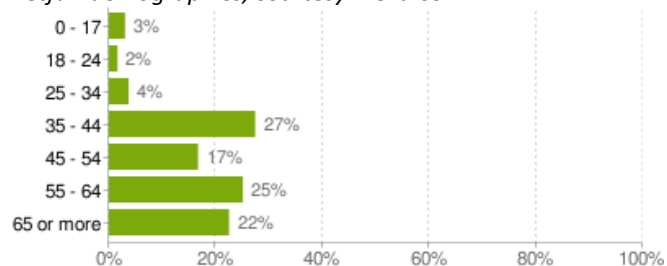
This could not have happened even ten years ago; maybe even five. But it's happening today, even in a sport that has lost market share the last ten years – harness racing. Josh Nelms, is a regular participant in the in-running Australian pools. From his blog "In-Play Analysis of Australian Racing", he writes:

"Harness racing is still the premium in-play product. Due to the fact it will take approximately two minutes to run a race there's so much time to get set or get off. I only wish it would increase its exposure. It's a winner for everyone."

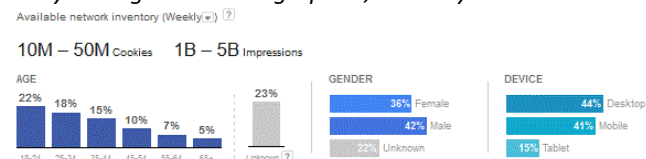
At harness tracks in Australia, in-play wagering makes up about one-quarter of the total handle that's bet before the event. That's significant. What might be most interesting – but probably not shocking by any means - is that the users of the exchange are younger than your average racetrack patron.



Betfair demographics, courtesy Alexa.com



Daily Racing Form demographics, courtesy Alexa.com



Target marketing demographics, Betfair exchange, courtesy Google web ad planner

It should not be overly stunning as well to see how younger players are enjoying the sport of horse racing: Through smartphones. According to smartinsights.com, a digital marketing website, from the fourth quarter of 2012

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when compared to the fourth quarter of 2013 – only one year’s time – average monthly mobile phone use via apps has increased from 22 hours to 29 hours. Users who purchase or consume products via their mobile phones was also up markedly, by almost one third.

This was empirically noted in Betfair’s 2014 Annual Report, “The mobile channel continues to show strong progress, with revenue up 68%.”

How would this model work, say at a smaller track in North America? Would it work? I think, if done correctly, it could. Let’s look at it through a crystal ball:

“Georgian Downs Extreme Day” is back, and the first race is the two mile trot, with 14 entrants. Instead of a win pool odds board, there is an exchange where buyers and sellers can choose the horses they like, or do not like. The market makers assure liquidity, and one would hope, partnerships and interest have aroused the betting customer enough to create the volume needed for the exchange to work. There are people still betting win tickets at the windows, but they can choose a market price (where they are filled immediately and get a ticket with a locked in price) or a limit order, by choosing their odds.

When the race goes off, the market gets started. The pre-race favorite from the nine post gets shoved out four-wide and settles in dead last. The four, the second choice, gets the lead easily. At home or at simulcast centres the feed shows the odds tick down on the four to 8-5, while the pre-race chalk rises to 12-1, as bettors make their bets. The six has second-over cover, and several other horses are in contention. Those horses tick down a notch, too. Past the mile and a half marker, the chalk who has toiled in obscurity near the back of the bus suddenly makes a sweeping move. It seems the pace has taken its toll on the leaders and his charge is fresh. His price plunges in an instant, as smartphones and computers send in their bets. In the middle of the Georgian homestretch, the horse is home. His price falls to 1.01. Race over.

If you think such a scenario is unlikely to ever occur, think again. Last July in a race in Australia, this exact same thing happened with a horse named Splitzer.



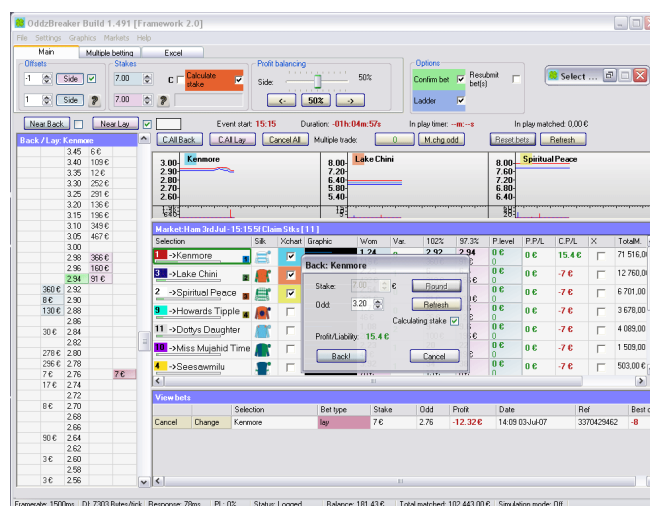
Splitzer, who was a short priced favorite before the race

began, broke slow and settled last in the field of 14. After spiking to 12-1 with thousands of dollars traded, he circled the field and won the race.

“The people you really need to hear from are the great unwashed, the people who are not even looking at you.....”

This form of betting, if you speak to a traditionalist, might be met with a blank stare. Current bettors want to make their superfecta bet and cheer that home; they don’t mind what racing has been serving them. However, that’s not really relevant, and it won’t affect them in anything but a positive way. For example, win betting could still be done in the system with an added bonus: A price is locked-in, so instead of watching their odds change after the bell – a long held complaint in small pool harness racing – they get what they pay for. Exotic wagering remains untouched.

The biggest boost is from the “people who are not even looking at you.”



Sample of software used to play in-running betting by sophisticated gamblers. Stats geeks seem to like it.

People often complain racing is too complex to learn. They have a point. What 25-year-old wants to study a program with numbers they don’t understand, to bet horses he or she does not know, and to likely lose money doing it? It’s like selling root canals. I know nothing about NASCAR racing, but I was watching awhile back and could see that the #4 car of Kevin Harvick was moving really well. While some of his opponents were plagued with a shaking chassis on the turns, his car was smooth as glass, and to steal from horse racing jargon, he “looked live.” If I could’ve bet him in the race at that point I would’ve, even though I am a complete newbie NASCAR fan.

It’s not hard to envision the same thing with in-running harness betting. You don’t have to be Pittsburgh Phil to notice what horse is traveling well at the half mile pole. It’s not difficult to notice that the horse on the lead has a good chance to hold on if the pace is slow; or the horse coming from off the pace in fast fractions has a chance. You don’t

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need form cycles, or trainer change notes, or statistics to play a race in-running. For people who are intimidated by racing, this might be a perfect tonic.

The market expands further, when we include the statistics geeks and computer modellers. Those betting characters who are a significant part of the half a trillion dollar skill-game gambling market love numbers, and the thrill of figuring out the win percentages and related betting returns at each points in the mile is something they'd crave.

"One day, in fact, the competition will pass you and the satisfied customers will quietly leave....."



If I told you that in a few years hence (past all the gambling laws, infighting, and all the rest that plagues the sport in trying new things) racing could deliver a system that gives added excitement with bells and whistles like a slot machine, reduces down time between races, makes each race a unique betting event, could attract a technologically savvy younger audience by allowing them to use their smartphones and tablets to bet, and that attacks the scourge odds that change after the bell, you'd think we were looking at a game changer. I'd have to agree with you.

This article, in part, was originally published in Trot Magazine.



Why Big Day Revenue Gains Work

And What It Says About Horse Racing

In April, CDI raised takeout at their flagship track, Churchill Downs. It was suspected at the time by many industry analysts that this was a way to grab more money from two big days - The Derby and the Oaks - to make the bottom line look better to shareholders.

Those analysts were probably correct. In the World Cup, if ticket prices were doubled if Brazil made the final, revenue would be increased. Derby and Oaks day would see a gain over a regular day at the track, too. It's common sense, really.

Why would it work for those days?

When casual fans go to the racetrack, they expect to lose. On big days like the Derby or Oaks, it's a once a year occurrence. Those days, Joe from Queens, or Susan from Lexington say "I am bringing \$500 to the track to take a shot at the Derby". They don't bring only \$400 because the rake was raised. They aren't bet sizing or looking at longer term ROI. They are just bringing what they planned, fully expecting to lose it all.

While those folks are good for Churchill (or other tracks on big days with lots of casuals), what they are saying about horse racing drives a stake into its heart as a gambling game.

Joe and Susan are saying this is a game (handicapping) that cannot be beaten. They don't care if the takeout is 18% or 22% because they don't plan to come back. They don't plan to buy a DRF book to learn the art of handicapping, read the Horseplayer Monthly for tips, or go out of their way to come on a Tuesday for the regular races. They drink mint juleps, lose all their money and go home.

Churchill, and other tracks who wish to, can happily raise takeouts on big days and probably escape unfazed. However, when they choose to do the same thing in the other 364 days, they are hurting the game of handicapping in untold ways. They are saying to Joe and Susan and everyone else, "you're right. This is a sucker game. But thanks for your cash. We'll see you next year."

I was vacationing with an old friend who used to play the races as a youngster. He's a fund manager now, busy with 12 hour work days and two kids, so he doesn't have a lot of time for horse racing. He asked me if horse racing was still hard to make money at. I told him yes, and relayed that takeout was even being raised, not lowered, to make it even more difficult. He said "the math isn't there to begin with, and they tilt the wheel even more against you?"

No business can grow like that; especially a gambling business. The horse racing industry needs to understand that to have a thriving gambling game, at least some winners must be sent home to come back tomorrow. They must have a chance to win, or at least perceive they have that chance; to tell others about the opportunity of the game. Until that happens, racing will be relegated to trumpeting increased "EBITDA" one day a year with blaring headlines, while in the fine print everyone knows how bad the other 364 are.



A Harness Racing Whodunit



By [Garnet Barnsdale & Mark David](#)

Last month I promised you a follow-up piece to my August column. Guest columnist Mark David, handicapper/bettor/ex-trainer provides you with the sequel to that column here:

Last month Garnet Barnsdale discussed seeing what isn't on the program, and how to make money from that. There are many ways to see what isn't on the program. But, many can do that. The sharp betting public aren't fools. WEG and NYRA bettors, among other players, are very smart and astute. You aren't going to catch much that they won't either.

The following is the story of how I figured out that Hall Bro was a likely suspect to win the 10th race at Mohawk on August 19th, 2014. A horse race is really a story. A story of many horses, trainers, drivers, owners and they all come together to create a new story. Much like a TV show. Each week, there is a new episode.

"In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups: The police who investigate crime and the district attorneys who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories."

That is the classic opening to *Law & Order*, one of my favorite shows. The main reason for that is they show you the process behind the drama. I love the drama too, but it's the process. The little things. The detective work. The backroom deals. The motivations. Digging up the clues that begin to add up as you chase them. As we know, some clues don't add up and they lead you nowhere. They show you that as well. It really is a microcosm of what the serious handicapper does.

A big part of how the detectives figured out who the criminal responsible for the crime was to figure out who had the means, motive and opportunity to commit the crimes. They then showed you how they went about sorting out the suspects to come to a conclusion on who was "good for the crime." Just like many handicappers, many times two very competent detectives will come to different conclusions. But, there can only be one actual guilty party, and there can also only be one winner in the race. As they say in the paddock, that is why they race the

racers on the track.

Figuring out the winner of a horse race is very similar. In the average race on the WEG circuit, you have 10 suspects. Most times, you can eliminate four or five who don't have the means, a couple who don't have the opportunity, and that leaves you with four or five who have both of those. Then, it boils down to motives and past history. That is what I will discuss here.

It is easy to catch a criminal when his footprint is all over the crime. You don't have to be a sharp detective to figure out the husband killed the wife when all the signs point to him. A woman on the side, bloody evidence, a pack of lies, a set of coincidences that add up. Anybody can figure out whodunit in that scenario. You aren't going to get value winners in a scenario like that.

But, nobody sees everything, and the majority don't take the time to see what the trained eye of some do see. When that happens, and they bet enough to control the pool, that creates value. It doesn't happen often. But it happens. Like being a diligent detective, it takes hard work and it isn't glamorous. It's just plain nose to the grindstone work.



How do you find such horses?

In many cases, that comes from a horse that has come from a new track and the locals don't know him well. Or, they knew him before, but he has come back changed, either for the better or worse. This sort of scenario sets up an even bigger potential overlay. Not only is the pertinent info not on the program, it isn't even obvious to the more experienced bettors. They don't even consider it. Often times, when the horse races elsewhere, off the big circuit, the big bettors don't even bother with them. That was the exact scenario where Garnet caught Southwind Indy at Grand River. You do see that with many two-year-olds, but in reality, most of us don't have the time to scout out these types. And there isn't much to go on anyway. You can get lucky and spot it, as Garnet and I did that night Southwind Indy got a raw deal, and then be present the

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next time he races, but that is rare.

Let's start with what are some of the things that are actually relevant to finding decent overlays and making the kind of money that justifies the effort it takes to get them. We aren't talking about getting lucky here. We are talking about taking simple info and applying it to wagering pools that aren't reflecting that. In layman's terms, we are talking about huge potential overlays. Not all of these will come through. Nor do they have to. As long as enough do, the spread is more than large enough to turn a healthy profit.

1) A horse loses momentum.

This is something many bettors only vaguely understand. Sure, they understand when a horse is behind a stopper, or gets a shuffle. That is easy to see and most catch that. But what about the horse that briefly loses his or her momentum, and because of that, loses a race where they were likely top two? That happens a few times a night, and the incident is usually very brief, less than a second in a two-minute mile, but more than enough for most horses to severely compromise their chances. Horses aren't cars or robots. You can't just start them up, slow them down, and press the accelerator again on a dime. Anyone who has ever driven a racehorse at speed understands that. The good drivers certainly do and try not to be in that position. But, it does happen. The sharp bettors notice it and look at this type of horse if they are spotted correctly the next time because the price is sure to be inflated. Their form suggests top two in their previous race, but their program performance indicates they weren't very competitive. And if happened to happen twice in a row, you get an even bigger price. That is rare, but it does happen. Many times, this type of horse was a beaten chalk twice in-a-row, scores at 7-1 or higher, and the bulk of those who jumped off their ship are kicking themselves for doing so. They usually then go back and notice what happened after they have missed the boat.

Hall Bro had just this kind of trip in his start prior to the August 19 engagement. "Solid effort. Left hard, retook, let the favorite go, got out late and then was coming on good but ran out of racetrack." That was my comment in my trip notes that I keep on every race at WEG. Obviously, I had Hall Bro as a serious play the next time. I expected him to be right back in that overnight, non-winners class, and possibly bring 5-1. I didn't expect him be entered in a Sire Stake and bring a much bigger price. If you watched that race, you would see he had lost his momentum, and the driver just waited for room and was happy to be second. He wasn't going to beat the winner at that point, and he wasn't even driving him hard enough to try.

2) A horse gets shut off when he is making a move.

Many catch this when it happens up near the lead, or just behind it. But what about the horse that has it happen when they are sitting seventh or worse? Most don't

consider it a factor, because many of these horses finish well back and the average bettor figures they were no good either way. But, that just isn't the case. Once a horse gets shut off like this, if they have shown in the past that they are good enough in the first place, and have some recent form on top of that, it creates a monster overlay next time. In many cases, the driver will stop driving the horse altogether because they know the race is lost because of it. To some, this shows that the horse was no good. But, in some cases, it is the exact opposite. The horse is or was good, and since all is lost, the driver simply shuts the horse down and saves them for the next week, or brushes them up enough to keep them going, but doesn't push the horse enough to show a solid finish. Not the one that the horse would have had anyway. There are usually one or two of these types of horses on any given card. Very hard to spot, but they are there.

This was just the exact trip Hall Bro got on July 1st at Mohawk in a Grassroots race. Again, he had the nine-hole (which he was to have on this night also). He got away last and was looking to get into the flow when Waterside Light ran in front of him and another. In spite of that, he carried on and was making a big three-wide move on the final turn. At that point, another horse, The Optimist, was also making his move, but made nasty break and Hall Bro and others had to fan wide to get around him. Some got by that. Hall Bro didn't. He was about seven-wide in a flash, and by this time all hope was lost. The driver just drove him evenly to finish well, nine lengths from the winner. After that, he was taken back to Trois Rivières, where his trainer is based and nearer to where his owner lives.

For the next month or so, he beat up on lesser Trois Rivières foes, until he had maxed out that opportunity. In his final start before returning to Mohawk for the overnight, he was a solid second to Atomic Million AM, a horse who had won a few Ontario Sire Stakes. Clearly, he was still good and maybe even had improved.

I watch Trois Rivières, and had bet Hall Bro a few times there. I knew he was very sharp and as good as any he was facing on this night. Others probably never watched any of his Trois Rivières races. That gave me the edge to see what wasn't on the program.

Another angle is when it seems a driver wasn't fully driving the horse to win in the stretch. I viewed Hall Bro's previous overnight as possibly that type of drive. But we don't all see the same things when we watch, as I noted before on the two detectives. Lucky King seemed to be a horse that got that kind of drive the previous start before he met Hall Bro this night. But, I didn't see it that way. Garnet did see that with Lucky King. I didn't. We differed. I thought he was a horse that was a bit tired and couldn't keep the hole closed. Garnet thought he was a horse that maybe wasn't being driven all out because he had a stakes engagement coming up.

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In the Harnessplayers' Journal, the author pretty much agreed with me - "was treated to a ground-saving trip last week, but he lacked staying power and wound up finishing off the ticket." But many agreed with Garnet, and made Lucky King the second choice at 2-1 on this night.



3) Was the driver driving the horse full out or beating him to make him go?

Many in Hall Bro's race fell into this category. I find the next time that they are used up. Nothing left in the tank. Horses, like people, only have so much energy. When you tire them out, over time, they lose their sharpness and can't compete at the high level and pressure that race horses are subjected to. You see the results of that in the last eighth of most races when they get out-finished. Cluster Hanover, a horse in this race, and Hope For Badlands, were two such horses.

4) Horse can't make the turns and will be worse on a smaller track.

Or, conversely, they are great on the half mile or five-eighths tracks because they get around them much better than the big track horses, but when back on the big track, they lose that edge and the horse that lost two lengths to them on every turn now beats them by a length instead of loses to them by a head. I thought Shadios met this criteria, to some extent. And so did Andreous Kardia, a horse that many have noted has a lot of trouble on the turns. The 10-hole would be enough to mute any chance he had of getting home first.

Shadios on the other hand is very handy and gets around great. Driver Billy Davis had noted in his previous starts that the horse was much more competitive when he makes the front and cuts his own mile. It was easy to see on the program that in his last few starts he had employed that strategy successfully. It was also easy to see for me that he wasn't going to get that trip this time, and if he was, he was going to pay a heavy price. He had just set the track record at Hanover because he is so handy, and that meant, in addition to an impressive 1:50.3 score at WEG before that, that he was going to be the even money favorite. False favorite, in my eyes.

Cluster Hanover is a horse that was good...as a two-year-old, and to some extent, was still pretty good early into his three-year-old season. He was even thought of as a Gold

Series type horse. By the time this race had come up, that hope was gone. He was barely even a Grassroots horse. But here he was, back in with them. He is another that has to either be on the lead or right behind it. He simply won't work for it.

It should be noted that all of these factors are not noted on the program. You have to see them. See what isn't there. I was confident I had. And that I had a likely suspect, Hall Bro, to take them down.

I noted in my handicapping group on Facebook before the race that Hall Bro would need some luck from the nine-hole. Obviously, he wasn't going to get away near the front like last time. He was more likely to get the same trip as the previous Sire Stake, but hopefully without the interference and road trouble. He needed a speed battle. And with Shadios, Cluster Hanover and Hope For Badlands in the mix, among others, that is exactly what he would get. It set up perfect for him, and a few others.

So, here is how I viewed the suspects before the race:

Lack of means: Shadios (racing style). Cluster Hanover (trip and form). Sentosa Island (class and soundness). O K Gladiator (class).

Lack of Opportunity: Andreious Kardia (10-hole and handiness). Hope For Badlands (trip). VIP Bayama (class)

Means and Opportunity: Lucky King (tired and trip).

I should note that I was surprised at the big price I was getting with Hall Bro. He was the 9-2, fourth choice on the morning line, and in the program, Ken Middleton had picked him second with a high recommendation behind Shadios, who I saw as going against a major trip bias. I was getting 16-1. That was a major overlay in my view. Due to all the factors above. I jumped on it.

That left me with two horses who could win the race and had the motives to do so. Hall Bro and O K Galahad. I could easily make a case for both of them. I was tempted to play them both. But, as I mentioned, Hall Bro was the one I settled on. That almost backfired, but in the end, Hall Bro got the trip I thought he would, the speed battle between Cluster Hanover and Hope For Badlands killed them both off and left Shadios first-over and parked out, while the others were okay but not good enough or not close enough.

The speed battle materialized; they were down to the half in :54.1 and Shadios was first-up into that, and was not going to clear. The others had gotten up close and were going to clog the flow. O K Galahad was second-over and looked like he could win it. Hall Bro got the same trip as the previous Sire Stake, but this time he advanced exactly as before, without all the interference. He was again four-wide on the turn, but had not been stopped or lost his momentum.

Coming to the wire, it was clearly either going to be Hall Bro or O K Galahad, and Hall Bro got the win by about a head. Again, it's the little things that bring the value. And they aren't on the program.

Quick Hits

August Handle Finishes Down

Bloodhorse.com had the details on August handle, which declined by .37% compared to August 2013. The article said, "According to Thoroughbred racing economic indicators released Sept. 4 by Equibase, total pari-mutuel wagering on U.S. races in August was \$1,140,783,727, down about \$4.26 million when compared with August last year.

The trend this month, which features top meetings at Saratoga Race Course and Del Mar, matches the trend this year that has seen wagering-per-race increase but total numbers fall, in part, because of that reduction in races. Total wagering on U.S. races this year is down 1.72% to \$7.54 billion. Wagering per race is up 2.2% this year to \$263,177, but a 3.76% reduction in total races to 28,656 has contributed to the overall decline in total wagering."

To read this article in its entirety, please click [here](#).



Del Mar & Saratoga Also Show Handle Drops

Not immune to the overall trend, both Del Mar and Saratoga finished down compared to last year. According to [bloodhorse.com](#), Del Mar was down 7.3% in average daily handle while Saratoga [showed](#) a 2.6% overall drop on their all sources handle. There was some good news for Saratoga, though, as on-track handle was up by 2%.

Beyer: Horseplayers Are Making a Difference on Takeout

Noted horse racing columnist Andy Beyer penned some thoughts regarding the low takeout pick-5 in southern California and the HANA-supported boycott of Santa Anita a few years back.

Writing for the *Washington Post* and the *Daily Racing Form*, Beyer said, "The pick five's success since it was introduced in the state in 2012 is due to two player-friendly features: a 50-cent wagering unit and a 14 percent takeout rate. It is arguably the most attractive bet in horse racing, and it has been adopted in other jurisdictions, notably New York. But the evolution of the pick five in California holds significance for the entire racing industry because it is closely tied to a crucial issue: takeout."

The article also contains quotes from HANA's Jeff Platt. To read the article in full, please click [here](#).

RIP Ron Rippey

All of us at the Horseplayers Association of North America and horseplayers everywhere were saddened to hear of the passing of Ron Rippey, the 2006 National Handicapping Champion and all around good guy. To read a tribute to Ron from David Gutfreund, please click [here](#).

Report on NYRA Takeout Debacle Released

The long-awaited report on NYRA over-charging takeout on bettors was released in August by the Inspector General of the Empire State. The report says that many NYRA officials, including the former chief executive officer and legal counsel "missed several opportunities" to discover the overcharge and that bettors ended up losing out on \$7.4 million. For more information, please click [here](#).

Judy Wagner Named to NTRA Board

Horseplayers now have a voice on the National Thoroughbred Racing Association's Board of Directors. Wagner won the 2001 National Handicapping Championship, and was the first woman to accomplish that feat.

"I want horseplayers to feel that they are being treated fairly in all ways," Wagner said in a column on DRF.com. "I'm not an expert on the technology side, but I know it's not a good thing for the game when all this money gets bet late and a horse goes from 3-1 in the gate to 3-2 on the backside. That's a cause of concern for the players. Whatever needs to be done to restore a sense of fairness is important to me."

To read the rest of the DRF piece, please click [here](#).

Possible Federal Oversight of Horse Racing Stalled Out

It was reported by the DRF that Greg Means, a principal in the Alpine Group who represents the racing industry in Washington, is not optimistic that progress will be made in any potential federal takeover of the horse racing industry due to the current climate in Washington.

Means, who is also a key cog in the NTRA's push to get the tax code for wagers changed added on that front, "The rule is outdated, it's archaic, it's anachronistic, and it doesn't reflect today's environment," Means said. "We've got a path to try to get this changed without Congress having to pass a bill."

To read the DRF article in full, please click [here](#).

Meadowlands Pleased with First Meet at New Facility

Officials at Meadowlands Racetrack announced strong handle numbers for the first meet at the "New Meadowlands. According to a release on-track handle averaged \$287,040 and all-sources export handle averaged \$2,507,761. Those numbers are not final for the year as The Meadowlands will be staging a fall meet when they host the Breeders Crown and the TVG Free-For-All Championships. For more information, please click [here](#).

The Back Page

Turf Stats Pack

Turf Favorites 2013-2014 by Track

TRACK	PLAYS	WINS	WIN PCT	WIN IMPACT	WIN ROI	PLACES	PLACE PCT	PLACE ROI
ABT	13	7	0.5385	1.6389	1.05	10	0.7692	1.1
APX	469	160	0.3412	1.0385	0.8791	263	0.5608	0.9241
AQU	91	28	0.3077	0.9365	0.8907	49	0.5385	0.9319
ATL	45	18	0.4	1.2174	1.0867	28	0.6222	1.1044
BEL	545	158	0.2899	0.8823	0.7836	263	0.4826	0.8267
CBY	206	58	0.2816	0.8571	0.7272	110	0.534	0.884
CDX	174	54	0.3103	0.9444	0.7966	83	0.477	0.7589
CNL	160	61	0.3813	1.1605	0.9594	89	0.5563	0.93
CRC	147	52	0.3537	1.0765	0.8558	76	0.517	0.8136
DEL	183	59	0.3224	0.9812	0.8596	96	0.5246	0.912
DMR	135	40	0.2963	0.9018	0.8356	71	0.5259	0.9333
ELP	180	66	0.3667	1.1161	0.9256	100	0.5556	0.905
EVD	199	59	0.2965	0.9024	0.7417	90	0.4523	0.7344
FEX	38	7	0.1842	0.5606	0.4355	16	0.4211	0.7118
FGX	182	66	0.3626	1.1036	0.9462	102	0.5604	0.9184
GGX	346	123	0.3555	1.082	0.846	199	0.5751	0.9121
GPX	700	251	0.3586	1.0914	0.9621	389	0.5557	0.9289
HAW	50	15	0.3	0.9131	0.818	22	0.44	0.732
HOL	192	73	0.3802	1.1572	0.9125	120	0.625	1.0013
HOU	88	29	0.3295	1.0028	0.817	58	0.6591	1.0591
IND	214	72	0.3364	1.0238	0.8921	111	0.5187	0.868
KDX	50	20	0.4	1.2174	1.19	32	0.64	1.196
KEE	91	29	0.3187	0.97	0.9451	44	0.4835	0.8775
LAD	330	107	0.3242	0.9867	0.7573	176	0.5333	0.8247
LRL	117	35	0.2991	0.9103	0.7658	58	0.4957	0.8714
LSX	201	63	0.3134	0.9538	0.7796	117	0.5821	0.9587
MED	50	16	0.32	0.9739	0.822	25	0.5	0.813
MNR	160	62	0.3875	1.1794	0.8525	91	0.5688	0.8463
MTH	271	80	0.2952	0.8985	0.7727	132	0.4871	0.8232
PEN	159	45	0.283	0.8613	0.7509	74	0.4654	0.8204
PHA	102	46	0.451	1.3726	1.1716	67	0.6569	1.0868
PIM	195	56	0.2872	0.8741	0.7918	88	0.4513	0.7754
RET	41	15	0.3659	1.1136	0.8098	23	0.561	0.8817
RPX	124	43	0.3468	1.0555	0.9468	71	0.5726	0.9972
SAR	316	102	0.3228	0.9825	0.9013	162	0.5127	0.9052
SAX	423	119	0.2813	0.8561	0.7319	208	0.4917	0.8167
SRX	68	17	0.25	0.7609	0.6088	30	0.4412	0.6794
SUF	92	28	0.3043	0.9262	0.7446	44	0.4783	0.7462
TAM	326	100	0.3067	0.9335	0.8061	169	0.5184	0.8744
TUP	257	111	0.4319	1.3145	0.9473	171	0.6654	0.9782
WOX	238	68	0.2857	0.8695	0.7313	105	0.4412	0.7303

Top Turf Trainers 2013-

UDM	PLAYS	WINS	WIN PCT	WIN IMPACT	WIN ROI	PLACES	PLACE PCT	PLACE ROI
MAKER MICHAEL J	493	121	0.2454	2.1469	0.8873	200	0.4057	0.837
BROWN CHAD C	421	109	0.2589	2.265	0.9929	188	0.4466	0.9935
CLEMENT CHRISTOPHE	417	84	0.2014	1.762	0.8626	156	0.3741	0.9049
CATALANO WAYNE M	309	79	0.2557	2.237	1.0597	120	0.3883	0.8864
MOTION H GRAHAM	465	77	0.1656	1.4488	1.0739	146	0.314	0.9262
PROCTOR THOMAS F	401	77	0.192	1.6797	0.8519	147	0.3666	0.9177
ASMUSSEN STEVEN M	344	70	0.2035	1.7803	0.7189	110	0.3198	0.7125
PLETCHER TODD A	389	70	0.1799	1.5739	0.7138	136	0.3496	0.7635
HOLLENDORFER JERRY	400	67	0.1675	1.4654	0.6217	141	0.3525	0.7489
MOTT WILLIAM I	401	58	0.1446	1.265	0.6656	110	0.2743	0.7115
WARD WESLEY A	281	57	0.2028	1.7742	0.8995	99	0.3523	0.8594
SADLER JOHN W	345	55	0.1594	1.3945	0.8058	105	0.3043	0.7596
ONEILL DOUG F	400	54	0.135	1.1811	0.704	105	0.2625	0.8346
SHEPPARD JONATHAN E	355	53	0.1493	1.3062	0.6211	113	0.3183	0.8068

PISH DANNY	249	52	0.2088	1.8267	0.8992	76	0.3052	0.7253
BROBERG KARL	239	50	0.2092	1.8302	0.7573	90	0.3766	0.7818
STIDHAM MICHAEL	237	48	0.2025	1.7716	0.7979	96	0.4051	1.0376
CONNELL KATHLEEN	265	45	0.1698	1.4855	1.1132	75	0.283	0.9883
DIODORO ROBERTINO	204	45	0.2206	1.9299	0.8716	81	0.3971	0.8527
SERVIS JASON	181	45	0.2486	2.1749	1.0583	79	0.4365	1.1185
MATZ MICHAEL R	193	40	0.2073	1.8136	1.4679	65	0.3368	1.085
ROMANS DALE L	291	40	0.1375	1.2029	0.7124	80	0.2749	0.7995
RICE LINDA	260	39	0.15	1.3123	0.7948	76	0.2923	0.8733
MCGAUGHEY III CLAUDE	207	37	0.1787	1.5634	0.9164	74	0.3575	0.9386
PLESA JR EDWARD	206	37	0.1796	1.5712	0.8733	64	0.3107	0.7544
FAWKES DAVID	225	37	0.1644	1.4383	0.9138	70	0.3111	0.912
CASSE MARK E	287	34	0.1185	1.0367	0.6503	77	0.2683	0.85
MCMAHON HUGH I	191	34	0.178	1.5572	1.0277	64	0.3351	1.0817
CIBELLI JANE	181	34	0.1878	1.643	0.8497	61	0.337	0.7939
MCLAUGHLIN KIARAN P	158	33	0.2089	1.8276	1.4826	54	0.3418	1.1222
ROBERTSON MCLEAN	190	33	0.1737	1.5196	0.9211	67	0.3526	0.9505
LYNCH BRIAN A	176	31	0.1761	1.5406	0.9426	65	0.3693	1.0705
SILVA MIGUEL ANGEL	202	30	0.1485	1.2992	0.5856	55	0.2723	0.7042
MCFARLANE DAN L	159	30	0.1887	1.6508	1.067	58	0.3648	0.8984
PUYPE MIKE	181	30	0.1657	1.4496	0.7575	57	0.3149	0.763
AMOSS THOMAS M	125	30	0.24	2.0996	1.0424	52	0.416	0.8696
MOREY WILLIAM E	122	29	0.2377	2.0795	0.941	50	0.4098	1.0689
TROMBETTA MICHAEL J	223	29	0.13	1.1373	0.667	65	0.2915	0.7823
BRUEGGEMANN ROGER A	93	28	0.3011	2.6342	1.0957	40	0.4301	0.9602
GRANITZ ANTHONY J	172	27	0.157	1.3735	0.8651	44	0.2558	0.6936
MCPEEK KENNETH G	186	27	0.1452	1.2703	0.7126	56	0.3011	1.0038
NESS JAMIE	169	27	0.1598	1.398	0.5808	49	0.2899	0.6284
SMITH HAMILTON A	151	27	0.1788	1.5642	1.5073	40	0.2649	1.0914
DWOSKIN STEVEN	190	27	0.1421	1.2432	1.0695	48	0.2526	0.8205
BLOCK CHRIS M	198	26	0.1313	1.1487	0.7035	52	0.2626	0.7056
WEAVER GEORGE	193	26	0.1347	1.1784	0.7749	50	0.2591	0.8223
CHAMBERS MIKE	86	26	0.3023	2.6447	0.8	36	0.4186	0.7186
CONTESSA GARY C	219	26	0.1187	1.0384	0.8963	46	0.21	0.7744
ROUSSEL III LOUIE J	137	25	0.1825	1.5966	1.0015	45	0.3285	0.8051
MILLER PETER	199	25	0.1256	1.0988	0.6769	53	0.2663	0.7045
SHERMAN STEVE M	94	24	0.2553	2.2335	0.8521	41	0.4362	0.8362
RHONE BERNELL B	179	23	0.1285	1.1242	1.0665	51	0.2849	0.9182
FAUCHEUX RON	94	23	0.2447	2.1408	0.8574	40	0.4255	0.9415
RIVELLI LARRY	112	23	0.2054	1.7969	0.754	40	0.3571	0.7701
CALHOUN W BRET	142	23	0.162	1.4173	0.7289	43	0.3028	0.7644
PINO MICHAEL V	98	23	0.2347	2.0533	1.1776	34	0.3469	0.8628
RYAN DEREK S	110	22	0.2	1.7497	1.4345	37	0.3364	0.9755
BROWN BRUCE R	177	22	0.1243	1.0874	0.9079	35	0.1977	0.6799
MITCHELL MIKE R	75	21	0.28	2.4496	1.3427	31	0.4133	1.1587
KIRBY FRANK J	173	21	0.1214	1.0621	1.026	39	0.2254	0.7335
DAVIDSON M BRENT	167	21	0.1257	1.0997	1.1431	47	0.2814	0.9485
WILLIAMSON BRIAN	133	21	0.1579	1.3814	1.4158	37	0.2782	1.0429
MANDELLA RICHARD E	134	21	0.1567	1.3709	1.0246	33	0.2463	0.7784
GOLDBERG ALAN E	129	20	0.155	1.356	0.8163	33	0.2558	0.7004
PIERCE MALCOLM	129	20	0.155	1.356	0.7566	39	0.3023	0.7833
HILLS TIMOTHY A	142	20	0.1408	1.2318	1.0708	28	0.1972	0.7116
FOSTER JOSEPH M	105	20	0.1905	1.6666	0.9076	45	0.4286	1.0338
GLATT MARK	123	19	0.1545	1.3516	0.8821	33	0.2683	0.7707
LOPRESTI CHARLES	87	19	0.2184	1.9107	0.6523	30	0.3448	0.7879
HENNIG MARK A	150	19	0.1267	1.1084	0.6597	41	0.2733	0.927
SERVIS JOHN C	117	19	0.1624	1.4208	0.6795	33	0.2821	0.6726
BIEHLER MICHAEL E	114	19	0.1667	1.4584	0.8044	34	0.2982	0.9206
ALBERTRANI THOMAS	156	18	0.1154	1.0096	1.0587	40	0.2564	1.0353
MULLINS JEFF	126	18	0.1429	1.2502	0.8254	39	0.3095	0.8214
DOMENOSKY TAMMY	83	18	0.2169	1.8976	0.859	28	0.3373	0.8458
DRYSDALE NEIL D	136	18	0.1324	1.1583	0.836	35	0.2574	0.8441
SANO ANTONIO	198	18	0.0909	0.7952	0.9828	45	0.2273	1.0025
SCOTT JOAN	83	18	0.2169	1.8976	1.1337	25	0.3012	0.75
REED ERIC R	122	18	0.1475	1.2904	0.8131	36	0.2951	0.7369
STALL JR ALBERT M	100	18	0.18	1.5747	0.63	37	0.37	0.807
FARRO PATRICIA	138	18	0.1304	1.1408	0.592	36	0.2609	0.7551
DELACOUR ARNAUD	92	18	0.1957	1.7121	1.0082	35	0.3804	1.1076
HOUSE BRIAN S	90	17	0.1889	1.6526	1.2122	27	0.3	0.9033
MARTIN JOHN F	66	17	0.2576	2.2536	0.9212	39	0.5909	1.1303
JACOBSON DAVID	160	17	0.1063	0.93	0.4819	42	0.2625	0.6834
SCHERER GARY M	132	17	0.1288	1.1268	1.2818	36	0.2727	1.0273
DESORMEAUX J KEITH	113	17	0.1504	1.3158	0.9646	31	0.2743	0.9327
GALLAGHER PATRICK	123	17	0.1382	1.209	0.8358	32	0.2602	0.8886
BONDE JEFF	86	17	0.1977	1.7296	1.3128	30	0.3488	1.1872

THE HORSEPLAYER MONTHLY, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE HORSEPLAYERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

SCHERER RICHARD R	117	16	0.1368	1.1968	0.659	28	0.2393	0.6235
TAGG BARCLAY	113	16	0.1416	1.2388	0.9956	36	0.3186	1.0084
JONES MARTIN F	127	16	0.126	1.1023	0.5701	30	0.2362	0.6236
ROBERTSON HUGH H	104	16	0.1538	1.3455	0.9019	29	0.2788	0.6913
GAINES CARLA	87	16	0.1839	1.6089	0.8713	29	0.3333	0.8368
WILSON SHANE	94	16	0.1702	1.489	1.0904	28	0.2979	0.7936

Top Turf Trainers - 1st Start in the Barn (turf routes)

	PLAYS	WINS	PCT	IMPACT	ROI	PLACES	PCT	ROI
*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
MAKER MICHAEL J	59	15	0.2542	2.1673	1.1559	24	0.4068	0.972
BROWN CHAD C	36	10	0.2778	2.3685	1.1778	15	0.4167	0.9889
DIODORO ROBERTINO	20	7	0.35	2.9841	1.02	9	0.45	0.755
CIBELLI JANE	19	6	0.3158	2.6925	1.4263	8	0.4211	0.9789
MARTIN JOHN F	15	6	0.4	3.4104	1.1867	9	0.6	0.98
CATALANO WAYNE M	19	6	0.3158	2.6925	1.5947	7	0.3684	0.8632
MOTION H GRAHAM	22	5	0.2273	1.9379	1.4	9	0.4091	1.125
SHERMAN STEVE M	15	5	0.3333	2.8417	1.2667	6	0.4	0.8067
SADLER JOHN W	15	5	0.3333	2.8417	1.4733	8	0.5333	1.4133
PROCTOR THOMAS F	17	4	0.2353	2.0062	0.6824	7	0.4118	0.8353
CLEMENT CHRISTOPHE	24	4	0.1667	1.4213	0.4583	6	0.25	0.525
HOLLENDORFER JERRY	19	4	0.2105	1.7947	0.4842	9	0.4737	1.0105
SAVILLE NIAL	9	4	0.4444	3.7889	3.3222	5	0.5556	2.0667
PINO MICHAEL V	14	4	0.2857	2.4359	1.8286	5	0.3571	1.1857
MITCHELL MIKE R	10	4	0.4	3.4104	2.45	5	0.5	2.09
CHAMBERS MIKE	9	3	0.3333	2.8417	1.4333	4	0.4444	0.9333
RODRIGUEZ RUDY R	14	3	0.2143	1.8271	0.775	3	0.2143	0.475
HESS JR ROBERT B	21	3	0.1429	1.2184	1.1571	4	0.1905	0.7476
MCMAHON HUGH I	9	3	0.3333	2.8417	1.0667	5	0.5556	1.8444
MARAGH AUBREY A	8	3	0.375	3.1972	1.025	5	0.625	2.3
JACOBSON DAVID	19	3	0.1579	1.3462	0.6684	5	0.2632	0.5053
WALDER PETER R	15	3	0.2	1.7052	0.8333	6	0.4	0.7
WEAVER GEORGE	11	3	0.2727	2.325	2.4182	5	0.4545	1.8818
SERVIS JASON	10	3	0.3	2.5578	1.005	4	0.4	0.835
CALLAGHAN SIMON	14	3	0.2143	1.8271	1.4143	4	0.2857	0.75
STIDHAM MICHAEL	11	3	0.2727	2.325	1.4273	5	0.4545	1.0545
MULHALL KRISTIN	8	3	0.375	3.1972	1.85	3	0.375	0.9625
MILLER PETER	23	3	0.1304	1.1118	0.6696	6	0.2609	0.5348
BROWN BRUCE R	16	3	0.1875	1.5986	1.5125	5	0.3125	1.1031
MOREY WILLIAM E	11	3	0.2727	2.325	0.6	4	0.3636	0.5182
RICE LINDA	23	3	0.1304	1.1118	0.8391	7	0.3043	0.95
BRUEGGEMANN ROGER A	9	2	0.2222	1.8945	0.4667	5	0.5556	1.4556

By: Equipment Change on Turf

Value	P/L	Bet	Roi	Wins	Plays	Pct	Impact	
0	-29346.30	130154.00	0.7745	7486	65077	.1150	1.0064	No Change
1	-1153.40	3878.00	0.7026	189	1939	.0975	0.8527	Blinkers On
2	-430.00	2060.00	0.7913	103	1030	.1000	0.8749	Blinkers Off





KENTUCKY DOWNS

THE HORSEPLAYER'S RACETRACK

September 6♦10♦13♦17♦24
Live Turf Racing



- ◆ Lowest Takeout in North America and Exacta Takeout is the Lowest at 18.25%
- ◆ \$1MILLION Daily Purses
- ◆ Full Fields (9.96 in 2013)

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