

*HTR Report*  
Thoroughbred Handicapping Newsletter  
Jan/Feb 2009

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*Tournaments*  
**Championship Tournaments 2009**

**NHC** = National Handicapping Championship; Red Rock Hotel, Las Vegas, Jan 23-24, 2009

**HPWS** = Horse Player World Series, Orleans Hotel, Las Vegas, Feb 19-21, 2009.

Did it seem like 2008 zoomed by in a hurry? Maybe that was due to so much negative financial news every day. Most of the news in the gambling and horseracing world was bad as well. However, it was a very upbeat year for HTR and it's customers. Starting in January, one of our members Richard Goodall won the NHC (worth half a mil) and 15 of our subscribers had qualified and several others had an excellent showing as well. As the year progressed, many of the same HTR players will be returning to the Red Rock to compete and Rich G. will defend his title. Lots of new faces will be competing at both tournaments and I wish you all success.

The HPWS was moved to February in hopes of attracting a larger turnout and not trying to compete with the NHC for players. That's a wise move and they should benefit from it. Yet rumors are flying about the Coast Casinos (Boyd Group) and this possibly being their only tournament for the year 2009. The traditional Orleans (March/October) and Gold Coast (July) Contests are scheduled but not definite due to the declining financial situation. We will report the latest news on the Vegas tourneys on our discussion forum.

Our annual seminar could also be affected because it depends on the Gold Coast tourney being held in July as usual. If they cancel, we will announce another venue or alternative for our event. Overall 2008 was a very successful business year for HTR and our customer base held steady from month to month. Thank you very much for your patronage.

If you would like a review of past results and strategy for the NHC or HPWS, please refer to previous newsletter issues that covered these events: Jan-April editions available in our library archives.

**Robot II and Crunch Time**

Most of the rest of this issue is devoted to the development, training and test results when using the new Robot II software. This powerful program should give our tournament players a major edge in research and in selection confidence. There is an abundance of creative new ideas to converge and work with. You make money at horse racing by gaining an edge in knowledge. You score big in tournaments by applying it during 'crunch time'. In other words, you need a valuable resource to help you make critical last minute decisions.

Prior to the tournaments you should be researching and have a good feel for where the 'fish are biting'. I go into this concept further on page-3 with an example from the real world and how to apply it when you are examining data in the quest for live longshots. Robot II adds an entirely new dimension to your pre-tournament studying with a series of negative exclusions (reviewed later in this issue). You don't want to be wasting those valuable bullets on horses with very little chance of winning.

In any contest, as the majority of the players fall farther and farther behind the leaders, they begin to 'strafe the odds board' for their picks – blindly playing bombs or *cappers* (20/1 up) with no chance. This rarely works and what often happens is that a more modest logical selection wins the race in the \$15-\$25 range. Later the players realize that had they used that medium priced winner, they would have had a fighting chance to get some cash with just one more hit.

Almost all tournament champs get their winners in bunches. Momentum is a powerful force when playing the horses. Just about any winner that you hit which pays over \$15 will help your self-assurance level and regain the feeling that you are capable of scoring. Now let's get started on that trek.

Note: an alphabetical list of our HTR subscribers that will be competing in the NHC can be found on the back page.

*Advanced Handicapping*  
**Data Research – Fishing in the Best Pond**

Hundreds of studies of career criminals and violent felons have found some very common patterns. When incarcerated prisoners are interviewed, it is almost uncanny; sometimes virtually 100% will reveal that they grew up with a dysfunctional father in the home. Among violent offenders, their dad was either missing, never raised the child, had run off, or worse, he was a drunk or a brute that beat them, or perhaps he was a child molester.

Statistics show that a child who grows up in a loving home with the father playing a major role in their development will rarely end up in prison for a violent offense. Another interesting statistic – women rarely commit violent acts, and more than 90% of murders and assaults are committed by men.

Why do I give you this sociology lesson? Violent criminals can be compared to cap horses (\$42+ winners) in horse racing. They are not typical and are actually extreme in terms of data. If making a prediction about what type of person will eventually become a murderer, you could narrow the search to two fundamental categories and find over 90% of all future killers:

1. Men.
2. Grew up with a dysfunctional father.

Searching in the following categories would be almost fruitless and result in hardly any future murderers:

1. Women.
2. Men who grew up with a loving attentive father.

The analogy here is to impress upon you the merge between statistics and reality. Most of what you are searching for (longshots or whatever) with horse data will be found in specific sub-groups of data. The adage of “fishing in the best pond” applies to statistical research in any field. Stop wasting your time betting horses with almost no chance of success because you didn’t do your homework.

The Robot is a powerful ally in this search because of the detailed reports that it can generate. Database users can quickly match certain parameters and factors together in the search for a positive ROI. But unless they have setup a broad and comprehensive report of all categories and data items, they won’t uncover subtle and hidden categories of success or extreme failure.

Take a look at these statistics below. It is part of a *Quick Test* run with the new Robot II on HOL recently. The race parameters don’t matter. I want you to look at one of the statistics below which you will now see on every Robot printout: “Odds 20/1”

Play All	00723	00100	14%
Favorites	00103	00035	34%
Odds < 3/1	00159	00053	33%
Odds 8/1 up	00308	00017	06%
<b>Odds 20/1 up</b>	<b>00124</b>	<b>00000</b>	<b>00%</b>

Not a single winner in the “Odds 20/1 up” group – zero, zilch, a shut out of 124 straight losers. How many people may have played these horses with real money or used them in exotics or took a shot in a tournament?

The Robot offers you a wealth of valuable knowledge like this. The new version, Robot II, tremendously expands this capability. Sometimes it is difficult to judge certain statistics. For example, looking at the results of the “Odds 8/1 up” category above, is 6% a good percentage of winners? How significant is that? To find out, you need to run an “all burger” (every race in a broad category) and benchmark it.

BTW: Typical results for 8/1 up “all burger” test get an impact value of about 0.40. Win% is not indicative because there are usually multiple horses in each race at those odds. If you get a test result with a higher I.V. than 0.40 for the “8/1 up” category, you may have a strong longshot angle.

*Robot II***A New Robot with Advanced Solutions**

Robot II is a new force in your data analysis and spot play creation. All the elements remain on one screen and are compartmentalized to remove clutter. Various filters and options can be selected via clicking the buttons and then you work from individual screens rather than dealing with one large busy screen. This system allows much more material to be put into the Robot while at the same time keeping all of the information in clear view.

The Robot II software will not be completed for some time as it evolves with user feedback from our beta-tests. But there is much of it that is working now and you can use it for data testing and spot plays if you want to download the latest version from the [HTR Subscriber Zone](#).

This month we'll focus on the Angles and Systems filter screen and review all of the new items. Data tests will give us a general sense of the effect of having these items. On the header row for each factor you'll see some of the statistics for Win%, ROI and I.V. I'll comment on these results under the heading.

**1st for Tag (or 1st time in a claimer) Win = 14% ROI = 0.82 I.V. 1.21**

This is for any horse that has never before been entered in a race in which it was eligible to be claimed. Typically an allowance or stakes runner taking its first dip into a claiming race. These days this could encompass many types of "optional" races as well, particularly OCL (Optional Claimers). Although the win rate is not high (14%) this factor has some promise for spot plays because it catches a lot of prices.

**Big Drop in Claim Price Win = 15% ROI = 0.78 I.V. = 1.39**

Any horse taking a 50% or more dip in claiming price will get picked up with this filter. This could be a M50 dropping into M25 (a significant drop at major tracks) or a C20 now showing up in C10. All such drops are suspicious, but in these days of the "super trainer" this angle has become a winner for them. Note that a maiden claiming winner dropping into an open claimer at half the price will not get picked up with this filter. Results are paltry for ROI because the public is in tune with obvious droppers, but this one has some promise if you restrict it to a particular trainer strength or race type.

**Bid but Hung**

This popular angle has also been called the "hidden workout" or "workout within a race". The idea is that the horse makes a nice mid-race move, especially if it is on the turn and then fails ("hangs") in the stretch and doesn't pick up the winner. For our purposes, the horse will have gained 3 lengths or passed three horses between the 1st and 2nd calls.

**Top EPS Life or 365-days Win = 23% ROI = 0.80 I.V. = 1.91**

EPS = Earnings Per Start. This is perhaps the most overused angle and formula in the history of horse racing systems. These statistics are composite for the two and there does not seem to be an advantage for either, although the Life EPS gets a better ROI (0.81 vs. 0.79). Although most of these horses are low odds runners, the I.V. and win rate, as well as the ITM (56%) are still impressive in 2008. You might find this a useful tandem factor with some high percentage spot plays or to increase the win rate with high% horses such as K=110+ or HF.

**Big Speed Win= 20% ROI = 0.88 I.V. = 1.66**

This one has lots of promise. To get picked up by this filter the horse must have all of the following going for it: (1) QP +6 or higher; (2) RS = "F" or "E"; (3) FR1=1. With a large sample size and the probability that such horses will make the lead early, this could prove to be strong angle when attached to specific distance/surface/class types as the results are superior to Fr1=1 alone. The average win payout was about \$9, so it does get a decent price once in a while.

**Cramer Double Figure Advantage Win = 30% (ITM 66%) ROI = 0.75 I.V. = 2.27**

To qualify, the horse must show its last two Cramer speed figures higher than all the other horse's (vs. a minimum field of four others) last two figures. This creates a very obvious standout that the public will see immediately. ROI is paltry, sample size is very small, but these horses are usually "live".

*Advanced Handicapping*  
Robot II – The *Bad* Eliminators

Who's the Baddest of the "Bad" ?

One of the neat new features of Robot II is also found in the Angles/System module. These filters can be checked to eliminate horses that have certain negative factors. This can be a lifesaver with spot plays because you need a method tossing out low% and detrimental ROI horses without having to go through your plays one-by-one and look for all of these items.

I'll go through each of the "Bad" items individually and explain them. Then we'll run a very interesting comparison test and find out which of these factors have the greatest negative impact on favorites. You should use the new Robot II to test these factors on your spot plays or angles and see if tossing them produces a higher return.

All data from the stats and comments below is from Jan 1 - Dec 31 2008 using PL-5 with Purse \$10k+

**Bad Fr3**

For dirt horses, an Fr3 rating < 49.00 fps for Turf or Artificial, < 50.00 fps. This item is paceline sensitive as it uses Fraction-3 velocity. Any thoroughbred that is unable to sustain a final fraction above these minimum standards is woefully incapable of holding on and winning a competitive race. It would have to compete at the lowest class levels and use early speed to contend.

**Big Loser (from last outing)**

This is sometimes denoted on some screens in HTR2 as the @ symbol to identify horses that finished 20 lengths or more behind the winner in their most recent outing. This includes horses that did not finish at all including: "distanced", "broke down", "vanned off", "pulled up" etc. But usually it is just horses that finished far back, perhaps because they quit trying or possibly sore and injured. Often jockeys will not drive on a horse that has been defeated and allow it to coast home far back. That's humane and not usually an issue, particularly if the horse was caught in a vicious speed duel.

**Chronic Loser**

For a maiden, this is 11 or more consecutive defeats. For horses in non-maiden races it is a win rate below 5%, such as 1 for 23 lifetime. Most chronic maiden losers eventually win a race because they can drop in class or go to an easier circuit. Betting on them until that happens is another issue for the horseplayer though as we don't want to put our money on such horses.

**Bad Trainer / Bad Jockey**

These are based solely on the TRN and JKY ratings in HTR. Any rating below 150. This typically equates to under a 5% win rate. One problem with eliminating these low rated trainers and jockeys is tossing out some promising price plays as the odds would remain high because the public is very aware of the weakness with the jockey or trainer.

**Cold Trainer**

If the trainer has at least 15 starts in the last 30 days and has a win rate under 5%, then the item applies. This could include a 0 for 17 or a 1 for 26 trainer. Cold trainers are a great way to eliminate low priced horses that are trained by a good trainer in a slump as the public is usually unaware of the losing streak.

**Bad Trainer + Jockey**

This is another one that is not always apparent to the public as some good trainers and jockeys become ice cold together. If the win rate is below 5% with at least 11 starts in the last year, the item applies.

*Robot II*  
Robot II – The *Bad* Eliminators

**No Bad Pedigrees**

For this one there are two possibilities:

- 1) The HTR Pedigree rating is under 200 (PED < 200)
- 2) The FT index (first time on surface or route) is under 20 (FT < 20)

Those are pretty bad ratings, especially if the horse is attempting something new or having to deal with competition with much higher PED or FT ratings. If today's race is full of old geldings, then it has almost no meaning.

**No Bad Favorites**

These are sometimes termed "BF" in the HTR screens and are ML Favorites with either a (K) rank 3 or worse or an HTR ranking of 4 or worse. There are some exceptions built into the formula and it has been slightly modified for the Jan 2009 versions of the software. The idea is to locate a large body of ML favorites that will lower the win rate under 25%. Test this one carefully, because even these favorites win over 20% and can get hot at certain tracks.

**NO Front Wraps**

A significant number of entrants will be wearing front wraps to race today and our studies in the past have shown that they hold their own. This is true of "first time front wraps" as well - there is no real statistical edge. However, if you are betting a spot play and use this filter - and the horse shows up in Front Wraps today - then maybe you would back off. This indicator is based on their last start as we don't get accurate enough Front Wrap information in real time (such as blinkers on) from the tracks to alert to the wraps for today's race. However 99% of the horses wearing wraps in their last race will wear them again today.

**Other negatives to consider.**

Perhaps the strongest negative elements found in Robot II are the (K) and HTR bottom ranks. Rank = 9 is particularly bad in most cases. Often there are few winners among K=7,8,9 or HTR=7,8,9 in many test samples. To use this negative, click into the RANK Filters screen and un-check from the (K) or HTR boxes. We'll add the "9"s to our "all burger" test sample below and see how they match up with the other negative elements in our sample.

The test sample below is drawn from all races in 2008 with Purse \$10,000+. We are primarily interested in the ROI and I.V. (Impact Value) as many of these filters would draw out multiple horses in the same race (such as a race with 3 or 4 "Bad Jockeys" in it). The analysis is on the next page.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Plays</b>	<b>ROI</b>	<b>I.V.</b>
Bad FR3	97222	0.73	0.83
Big Loser	25378	0.61	0.54
Chronic Loser	15433	0.62	0.73
Bad Trainer	61926	0.62	0.53
Bad Jockey	31355	0.58	0.45
Cold Trainer	15545	0.70	0.82
Bad T+J	9885	0.65	0.64
Bad Pedigree	21729	0.61	0.68
Bad Favorites	2993	0.77	1.86 (22% win)
Front Wraps	64034	0.74	1.04
K = 9	32769	0.57	0.28
HTR = 9	31334	0.55	0.29

*Robot II*  
Robot II – The *Bad* Eliminators

Benchmarks to think about from the above data

ROI = it gets pretty scary in a large sample when the ROI drops below 0.70 (-30%).

I.V. = the key number here is about 0.60 or less. Definite negative correlation beyond random.

Bad Favorites has to be set at a different benchmark since the normal rates for winning favorites are about 33%, 0.80 ROI and I.V. = 3.00. Any sample of favorites with I.V. < 2.00 is a solid negative.

Analysis

There is so much to talk about here I could easily conduct a two hour seminar on this data and the implications. The first thing you need to remember is that this is an "all burger" sample. The majority of races are going to be older claimers for maidens and low quality horses of various levels, not to mention lots of state-bred and slot funded cheapies that exceed that \$10,000 purse mark at most tracks. So the Bad Pedigree is probably a good item to start the discussion since we would not expect the PED rating to have much impact on the bottom level horses.

Bad Pedigree

Despite a large mixed sample, the Bad PED (and FT) showed very negative results overall, even with so many cheap horses. You should consider this item for higher class races, grass, synthetic tracks, routes and younger maidens with FTS in them. Pedigree is very underrated as a negative factor.

Bad Fr3

You can see from the sample size that there are too many runners with this negative factor and in many cases the entire field would drop into the Bad FR3 range. So the stats may be misleading and this is another factor that would be better suited for higher class races.

Big Losers

Extremely bad bets next outing winning half as much as a random selection would be expected to score. This one is more universal for all types of races and is an excellent way to eliminate losers.

Chronic Losers

This one has some similarity to the Bad Fr3 stats in that many races are written to attract these horses (Claiming Nw1 for example) so the entire field may be involved in the stat! And don't forget maiden claimers that often feature several "chronics", many of which are pretty fast horses who will eventually win by default. Chronic losers are a great bet-against when they are favorites and facing younger or lightly raced company that hasn't proven sour yet.

Bad Jockey and Bad Trainer

These are two obvious knockouts that prevent winners in your spot plays. The only issue is that bad trainers and jockeys tend to score with all the bombs! Large sample sizes mean you can find loads of uses for these two filters.

Cold Trainer and Bad T+J

Cold trainers hang in there with just slight negatives, but the T+J combo does much worse and is a better negative filter to use except that it has a small sample size.

Front Wraps and Bad Favorites

The Front Wrap is similar to the Bad Fr3, loads of horses and sometimes the entire field qualifies (Rule 50 race). The Bad Favorites hit about 22%, but they are the most obvious vulnerable chalk and the public doesn't bet them heavily. I do not like these two filters at all; maybe you'll find a better use for them.

K=9 and HTR = 9

Can't get much lower I.V. in a large sample than these two!

*Advanced Handicapping with HTR2*  
**Robot II and a Revival of the Impact Ratings**

If you are not familiar with the Impact Ratings found in HTR, there is a complete review below. For those of you that have used them with HTR software in the past (they have been part of the program for over 10 years), you may have thought they were long forgotten and relegated to the back burner. Robot II revives them by allowing more direct testing and you may discover some hidden gems and valuable insights with these numbers.

Click the [IMP] button in HTR2 to view the ratings for any individual race. The IMP ratings are also presented in the [TLC] screen for the horse's most recent running line (same as PL-1).

**Impact Rating Development**

The Impact Rating concept was adapted from the Sartin velocity and the notion of the TPR (Total Pace Rating, read *Pace Makes the Race* by Sartin, et al). Instead of the more complex feet-per-second numbers such as 59.50, 56.50, 51.00 for Fr1, Fr2 and Fr3, the Impact ratings round them into whole Integers for easier understanding and comparison and we label them as follows:

**ESP** = Early Speed (1<sup>st</sup> call velocity)

**ATT** = Attack rating or expanded Turn Time Segment, from 1st call to 1/8 pole

**RES** = Resistance or Final Segment Rating, final 1/8 mile only

**TOT** = Total of the three above, this is similar to a TPR rating, simply 1+2+3

The ATT and RES segments vary slightly from the normal Fr2 and Fr3 however. The Stretch Call is used as the marker instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call. This gives the Attack rating a more complete turn-time and focuses the final RES rating keenly on the stretch run where many horses fall apart miserably.

Take a look at three horses rated by Impact running in an 8.5A race.

<b>Horse</b>	<b>ESP</b>	<b>ATT</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>TOT</b>
<b>#1</b>	<b>117*</b>	<b>098</b>	<b>060</b>	<b>275*</b>
<b>#2</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>055</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>#3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>108*</b>	<b>065*</b>	<b>273</b>

**\* = top rank**

As with regular velocity numbers in HTR, Impact ratings are pace-line dependent. The default PL-5 is an excellent choice in most cases, however you are encouraged to experiment with the other modes such as PL-7 which may yield surprising results. One of the reasons the Impact Ratings have not been talked about much is because of the lack of research on them, so Robot II is an opportunity to uncover some new information.

The three horses listed above have very close final TOT ratings while the three segment ratings (ESP, ATT, RES) vary considerably among them. How do we deal with this? The first clue is to determine how far back #3 will be from the other two early. A good rule of thumb with the Impact ratings is:

**3pts = 1-length**

This is not a perfect or universal equation, the lengths vary according to the actual speed of the race and the segment involved, but it will suffice in a pinch when making general comparisons.

So we figure that Horse #3 will be about 5 to 6 length from the leaders after the first call. Will its strong ATT and RES rating get him past the other two? Not likely since #1 and #2 both have quality RES ratings and will not quit in the stretch. But that is pure conjecture. We have no idea without running tests which of the ratings is producing the most winners at this track and distance. That's where Robot II comes in. You can test the Impact ranks to find out which segment is the most dominant and make a realistic track-bias determination.

*Advanced Handicapping with HTR2*  
**Impact Rankings, How do they Stack Up?**

Let's look at the statistics for the four Impact ratings. The data is from 2008 all dates inclusive with purses of \$10,000 or more using PL-5.

For each set of Impact ratings below you'll the sister velocity rating. Let's see how they compare.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Plays</b>	<b>Win</b>	<b>ITM</b>	<b>ROI</b>	<b>I.V.</b>
<b>ESP= 1</b>	<b>37282</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>1.52</b>
<b>ESP= 2</b>	<b>37052</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>1.23</b>
FR1= 1	37401	18%	46%	0.88	1.51
FR1= 2	37163	16%	44%	0.82	1.30
<b>ATT= 1</b>	<b>40023</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>1.40</b>
<b>ATT= 2</b>	<b>38772</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>1.34</b>
FR2= 1	37575	17%	46%	0.81	1.37
FR2= 2	37143	16%	45%	0.79	1.27
<b>RES= 1</b>	<b>42765</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>1.71</b>
<b>RES= 2</b>	<b>39663</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>1.44</b>
FR3= 1	37380	17%	48%	0.80	1.37
FR3= 2	37127	16%	46%	0.77	1.30
<b>TOT= 1</b>	<b>39585</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>2.02</b>
<b>TOT= 2</b>	<b>38350</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>1.50</b>
A/P= 1	37329	24%	56%	0.85	1.97
A/P= 2	37104	19%	51%	0.82	1.52

### Analysis

There is one rating that surprised me here; it is the RES (as compared to FR3). I wonder if RES statistics in the pre-synthetic track era were this good? These results are very promising. There are a lot more ties with RES (and ATT) than the other ratings, but this does not affect the comparative value of the ROI or I.V. Notice the distinct differences between RES and FR3 with win% and ROI. Keep in mind that RES is the final 1/8 mile only (1.0f at all distances) whereas Fr3 includes the entire final fraction (2f for 6.0f, 2.5f for 6.5f, etc.). That small RES segment may be critical in most Turf and Artificial races.

ESP=1 gets a slight edge over Fr1 with very similar sample sizes and win rates. This is typical as they cover the same segment. The difference would be in the whole number rounding and indexing to create the ESP rating vs. the pure decimal of Fr1.

The ATT and Fr2 (turn-time) ratings do not achieve very good results and are statistically similar in outcome. This has always been the case with turn-time ratings, and they are the weakest of the three fractions in any data sample.

The TOT actually beats out the A/P, but just slightly. The RES rating comprises one third of the TOT and is the reason that TOT beats out A/P (with its weaker Fr3 rating).

Every one of these ratings can produce positive results if you dig deep enough and find winning combinations with them. But the probability of finding a profitable spot play with any of these solo is difficult as none of these ranks reaches 0.90 ROI, which is unfortunately the case with almost any numeric rating these days based on time segments.

*Handicapping with HTR2*  
**Comparing the Seven PL Modes**

This month we'll run some stats on all seven of the PL modes and compare the output to find out if any of them are superior. Although the data below is for a general test - each PL mode has its strength and weakness though and much depends on the type of race and class level. I'll mention some of that below as we review what each PL modes entail.

PL Mode - or PaceLine Mode refers to the method of selecting running lines from a horse's past-performance for the purposes of computing various pace and speed figures. The concept came about in the 1970s from the Sartin Methodology. The idea was to select running lines from each contender that would represent how the horse would likely run today. No small feat to be sure and it is always a guessing game. But the primary target is to find out if the horse has enough early speed to keep up with the field or enough of a late move if it doesn't.

Our original MPH software (circa 1997) was the first application of its kind to perform automatic non-mechanical paceline selection, known as artificial intelligence. Other software of the era use simple rule methods similar to PL-1,2,3,4 (see below) but it was PL-5 that stood out because it more closely emulated how a real horseplayer might subjectively select a line(s). Always cautious, PL-5 is careful not to choose the horses very best effort or its poorest efforts if they came on a non-conforming surface (particularly wet) and often averages two lines in order to iron out the highs and lows.

For a decade, PL-5 has stood the test of time and always outperformed the mechanical methods. In the last few years we have seen a considerable depletion of price payoffs with all velocity, pace and speed numbers and PL-5 is hurt by that as well. In other words, despite our best efforts, it is very difficult to beat the public with time-based handicapping methods anymore. (One of the purposes of Robot II was to help re-discover pace and speed with a number of clever filters to improve performance).

**PL-0** User selects their own lines - not included in the data tests this month.

**PL-1** Selects last line only if viable, if data is lacking then it chooses the 2nd line.

**PL-2** Selects the line with the best figure among the horse's last three races.

**PL-3** Selects the best two lines from the last-3 based on speed figures. Data is averaged for the two.

With these three methods above, it is rare that a horse will not have a line chosen at all. But there is no objectivity to these methods except for the speed rating choice in PL-2 and 3. But those lines could have come from anywhere at any time.

**PL-4** Although PL-4 is a mechanical method, it is much more restrictive than the first three and many horses do not qualify and are blanked. PL-4 selects the horse's best (speed fig) line within the last 180-days if it was on the same surface as today and within 1-furlong in distance. PL-4 never goes back more than 5 lines.

**PL-5** (default) This is the artificial intelligence method used to select the most ideal line or combination of two lines that represents how the horse is likely to run today. PL-5 will "force" a line selection for every horse if anything is available to ensure that all horses are represented. So unlike PL-4, it usually won't skip a horse. PL-5 has been critical to the success of HTR software as it is trusted by almost every handicapper that subscribes. Note: PL-5 never selects beyond the last 8-lines in the PPs.

**PL-6** Somewhat similar to PL-4 except that it uses A/P velocity to select the line. Also PL-6 will go back 365-days to select rather than 6-months. The distance/surface parameters are similar and many horses will be skipped. Note: PL-6 will not select a line if the horse has had a long layoff (180+).

**PL-7** Selects EVERY line that was run within the last 365-days regardless of distance or surface and averages them all together. PL-7 will skip a line if there is any data missing - and this has been adjusted in the 2009 versions of HTR2 and Maxvel to ensure no zero numbers are averaged into the PL mix.

*Handicapping with HTR2*  
**Comparing the Seven PL Modes – Stats Rundown**

Below, the seven PL methods are tested and the results compared with five key factors from HTR2. These factors have minimal ties and tend to represent the outcome of the PL-modes pretty well.

- 1) K rank = 1
- 2) E//P velocity rank = 1
- 3) A/P velocity rank = 1
- 4) HTR Consensus rank = 1
- 5) \$\$ longshot indicator

Items 2 and 3 above are entirely dependent on the PL mode. The other three utilize some aspect of it depending on class type, distance/surface and the composition of the field. While A/P would seem to be the ultimate decider of PL success, my gut feeling is that the HTR rank is the most important item to compare because it utilizes three of the velocity ratings (Fr1, E/P and Fr3) in a mix with five other diverse ratings - much more in tune with a handicapping process that must assess every horse's chances with multiple factors. The (K) rating is not as direct with its utility of the PL mode but is dependent on pace and speed factors to a large extent. The \$\$ often uses factors such as Fr1 that depend on the PL selected, but the majority of the \$\$ designations are based on Workout, Pedigree and Trainer.

Note: the results with \$\$ are for the Jan 2009 version of HTR2 which has been updated to include the *Razor Sharp* workout in its algorithm. So these results should be better than previous versions (see upgrades page herein for more information).

Data is all from 2008 inclusive - Purse \$10,000+ All distance/surface/class levels

**PL 1-7 as ROI**

<u>PL-Mode</u>	<u>(K)=1</u>	<u>E/P=1</u>	<u>A/P=1</u>	<u>HTR=1</u>	<u>(\$\$)</u>
1	0.84	0.87	0.84	0.89	0.91
2	0.84	0.87	0.86	0.89	0.91
3	0.85	0.89	0.86	0.89	0.92
4	0.84	0.89	0.85	0.87	0.93*
5	0.85	0.89	0.85	0.90*	0.90
6	0.85	0.88	0.88*	0.88	0.90
7	0.84	0.90*	0.84	0.89	0.91

**PL 1-7 as Win%**

<u>PL-Mode</u>	<u>(K)=1</u>	<u>E/P=1</u>	<u>A/P=1</u>	<u>HTR=1</u>	<u>(\$\$)</u>
1	30%	21%	25%	29%	10%
2	30%	20%	24%	28%	10%
3	30%	22%	26%*	29%	10%
4	30%	21%	25%	29%	10%
5	30%	21%	24%	28%	10%
6	30%	20%	24%	28%	10%
7	31%*	25%*	22%	28%	10%

\* = top performer if no ties

I also tested Fr1 and VEL ratings, but the outcomes mirrored E/P and A/P respectively. Late speed velocity such as Fr3 and L/P (Lv) showed very small differences except that PL-7 was by far the worst performer in those 'late' categories.

*Software Updates*  
**HTR2 and MaxVel Updated**

Yearly updates to HTR2 (a.k.a. HTR2009) and MaxVel should be ready by the time you are reading this.

Synchronized HTR2, MaxVel and Robot II with the following changes -

- Track Lists. Three tracks have been closed: BM, BMF and GLD and are eliminated from every reference in the software. Two new tracks have been added: SAC (Sacramento Fair) and PNL (Pinnacle). Both these tracks are classified as "C" level for track-class adjustment purposes. Please read how this might affect your Robot spot plays below.
- \$ and \$\$ have added the Razor Sharp workout to the mix. This should improve the earning power of these ratings considerably.
- Pars (EPR, SOR), track-class adjustments have been revised for 2009. It was a strange year 2008 and I was careful not to overreact to purse cuts that were brought about by economic declines or even the ADW standoff.
- Fixed a few bugs reported in both programs, including a PL-7 error that was sometimes averaging running lines with blank or zero data.

New Screen: HTR2 Full Card / Chalk Eval

This screen has been revised to include more information on the full card for each track daily. In addition, there is a new listing that shows the ML favorite and its probability of winning. The normal range is 30-35% for the chalk, but that varies considerably depending on several factors computed in tandem from HTR. You can use this to evaluate your chances of beating the favorite and whether the race is playable. Use this screen to preview a card before and after scratches. This is great for an early tournament preview.

To view this screen, look at the bottom of the Main HTR2 work area and click the large [FULL CARD] button.

Track Listing Changes and Robot

Before discussing the track list, be aware that the new Robot II will in no way affect your current spot play setup in the original Robot within HTR2. The two programs are not linked and function separately.

Adding and removing racetracks from the program causes a shift in the Robot Save function. If you have saved spot plays with individual tracks, you may notice that they are out of sync when you bring them up in HTR2 Robot now. This happened because BM, BMF and GLD were removed; and PNL and SAC were added causing the entire list to shift its index locations. Therefore, be sure to re-select your tracks with these spot plays.

The HTR2 Download function also uses this new list. You will need to re-select and save your *favorites*.

MaxVel and Robot II also use this new track listing, but it should not affect any of the activities in these programs.

*HTR Software Updates*  
**Announcements and Reminders**

**NHC Qualifiers**

Congrats to the following HTR subscribers that have qualified for the NHC 2009 Championship. Best of luck to each of you at the Red Rock on Jan 23-24 !!

Michael Acosta (CA)  
Bobby Brendler (MD)  
Mike Brown (IN)  
Barb Buckley (CA)  
Henry Damgaard (VA)  
Rich Goodall (NV)  
Sally Goodall (NV)  
Richard Grose (MO)  
Wayne Kwan (CAN)  
Marsha Mayo (TX)  
Mel Moser (KY)  
Paul Parker (GA)  
George Smith (IL)  
Jim Templin (PA)  
Hadj Thomas (NV)  
Daven Turner (OH)  
Bryan Wagner (LA)  
Judy Wagner (LA)  
Bernardo Wiesner (CA)

**HPWS**

We will have 20-25 HTR subscribers competing at the Horseplayer World Series on Feb 19-21. Kudos to those of you that qualified for it and stay tuned to the bbs for more info on this tourney after the NHC is over.

**Software Upgrades**

The newest versions of HTR2 and MaxVel are available as you read this. Check the bbs for continuing updates to Robot II.

**HTR Software**

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[www.homebased2.com/km](http://www.homebased2.com/km)

HTR Report is an on-line newsletter and is published bi-monthly, then placed on the HTR member (download) web site around the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Monthly subscribers to HTR can view the current newsletter for no charge on-line, Adobe Reader software (free) required. Past issues are available in our web-site archive library.

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