

HTR Report
Thoroughbred Handicapping Newsletter
July-August 2010

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Horse Racing, Technology and Research

Contents

[1] Front Page

[2] Seminar 2010

Annual Seminar Last Call

[3] Tournament Tips

The 'Outlook' for Tour Plays

[4] HTR_Tour Handicapping

*The Total Buzz
Multiple Buzz Items Tested and Analyzed*

[10] Velocity Handicapping

PL Mode Comparison Test

[12] Software Upgrades

Software Update Info

[13] Back Page

Summer Schedule

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The newsletter is available bi-monthly. The current edition of the HTR Report is available on the Internet from our members' web site only. The newsletter is included as part of a paid subscription to HTR's monthly download service (\$119/mo).

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*Seminar 2010***Annual Seminar – Last Call**

This is the final announcement for the 2010 seminar. There is no RSVP for our seminar, come as you are, last minute or late arrivals are welcome. Bring your laptop - we will install the new updates and fix any issues that you are having. The E-Book will be available to you that day. A few surprises might be in store as well. We hope to see you in Las Vegas!

When Wednesday, July 28, 2010, 10am.

Where Las Vegas, Gold Coast Hotel, Salon A Upstairs in the Banquet Hall.

How Much \$40 donation at the door compensates our guest speakers and room helpers.

RSVP not necessary, but arrive early for best seats.

Materials Handouts and software provided, bring laptop if possible.

Hotel Room You can't find a better bargain in Las Vegas during the summer than the Gold Coast Hotel. Room rates Sun-Thur are under \$50/night. Try online at www.goldcoastcasino.com/hotel-reservations. The Rio is right next door and the Palms is across the street if you prefer.

Tournament The Gold Coast Summer Classic follows the seminar, Thursday thru Saturday July 29-31. It should be a great contest as it will include SAR, DMR, MTH and AP. Participation in the tournament is not necessary for seminar attendees. However, you may want to get involved as results over the years have proven dramatic for HTR players following the seminar, including two-time winner John Buckley.

Tentative Schedule

10- **Intro and Overview (Ken)**

11- **XFIG and Optimal Filtering (Donnie)**

12- **Lunch**

1 - **NHC Developments, Record Keeping and Tax Issues (Mike)**

2 - **New Tools, Robot2 Research, Spot Plays, E-Book Speed Figures (Ken)**

5 - **MaxVel Modeler (Donnie)**

6 - **Dinner**

7 - **Research with Database (Donnie)**

Speakers

Ken Massa, Mike Mayo, Don Nadermann.

Room Help, Tech Support, Beta Testing

Herman Bell, John Buckley, John Buls, Rick Bush, Mike DeRienzo, Ernie Logsdon, Tom Walters.

Seminar Banquet Facilities

Provided free of charge by the Gold Coast Race & Sports, Carol Boyd manager.

A big thank you to everyone listed above!

Tournament Strategy
The 'Outlook' for "Tour" Plays

Note this article researches the "Tour" plays only. You can test the "Bombs" with Robot2. Both items are found in the HTR_Tour software and Robot2.

For tournament players, immediate identification of potential live longshots is critical. The marked "Tour" selections have several benefits for this purpose.

- They have zero or just one negative as shown on the NLog. Never more than one.
- One or more positive factor(s) from HTR that forecast a "live" effort or improvement.
- Must be 6/1 ML or higher.
- "Tour" plays are separated from "Bomb" because they have a higher probability of winning.

As with our HTR longshot identifiers, "\$" and "\$\$", the "Tour" and "Bomb" picks do not come close to a flat-bet profit on their own. In fact, the ROI and Win% may seem downright terrible as compared to other factors in HTR. It's important to understand why this is happening, and not be misled with the raw statistics at first glance.

- The "Tour" plays tend to cluster in certain types of races. They are more common in large wide-open fields that have a greater number of horses at 6/1 and up ML. If there are multiple "Tour" picks in the same race, obviously only one can win at most, and that can skew the statistics.
- The goal of the "Tour" selections is to guide you in the right direction toward possible winners at a price. Many of these plays are over-bet and fall well below their MLO and are worthless as advertised. In fact, hundreds of "Tour" selections were actually bet below 2/1 odds in my test!
- Race 'Outlook' (see below) has a major effect on the statistical outcome of the "Tour" horses. Check out the stats separated by the 'Outlook' categories.

<u>Tour Plays</u>	<u>Purse \$10,000+</u>						
<u>Item</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>ITM</u>	<u>WROI</u>	<u>I.V.</u>	<u>High-AvgWin</u>	
ALL	35168	12%	39%	0.84	1.00	\$91	\$15
Very Chalky	02675	09%	41%	0.73	0.62	\$61	\$15
Chalky	08750	11%	42%	0.82	0.78	\$73	\$15
Mixed	08532	11%	39%	0.83	0.96	\$81	\$15
Value	08421	12%	37%	0.88	1.08	\$91	\$15
Wide Open	04775	13%	37%	0.90	1.32	\$79	\$14
Bombs Away	01015	14%	40%	0.92	1.55	\$84	\$14

Analysis

The 'Outlook' chart is perfectly correlated from top to bottom statistically. This meets our expectations for the purpose of the "Outlook" to provide a first alert for the likely results of the race in terms of payoff. The "Tour" horses have a difficult time of it with the "Chalky" races and the results are far better when the races are designated "Value", "Wide Open" and "Bombs Away".

Tour Plays / Place and Show

We are all well aware, after many bad beats that price plays such as "Tour" will finish 2nd about twice as often as they Win, and they will finish 3rd about three times as often. Place and Show ROI are higher than Win in almost all instances from the data on this chart. For example, the Show ROI for the "Bombs Away" category is 0.95. That's an impressive statistic in what are usually large fields of unknowns.

The ITM% is good sign of productivity with the "Tour" picks and indicates that a high number of them are "live" and run well, even though they may not be able to beat lower-odds more talented contenders in their field. The 40% or so ITM rate is strong for horses that average about 7/1 final odds. That's all we can ask for with horses in this odds-range: a solid effort.

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

The Total Buzz

What is the Buzz?

This month we will spend most of the issue discussing the various *Buzz* items from the HTR_TOUR program. The discussion is broad and applicable to general handicapping and an important addition to your knowledge base. The object of the *Buzz* is to highlight important changes or dynamics that forecast improvement or a possible "live" effort in today's race. Thoroughbreds are fickle, physically fragile and not as predictable as we would like. The *Buzz* is a good place to look for signs that the horse is healthy and heading in a positive direction for the trainer.

Test Parameters

All tests in this section have the following in common.

- Test dates were races from June 1, 2009 - May 31, 2010. You can easily retest all the data here for more recent results by using Robot2, June 2010 or later versions.
- Purse \$10,000 or more. These are the races that we are most likely to bet and that have the least volatile wagering patterns. Be aware that ROI with low-purse races can be an illusion. This is due to smaller pool sizes and odds are far more unstable. A \$20 winner tested at a small track might pay just \$12 next time, if several HTR spot-players have caught on!
- PL-5 is the default setting for paceline selection in HTR_TOUR and all of the development research was based on PL-5. If testing with Robot2, you can change the PL-method and seek out different results. (note the comparison of PL methods in this issue).

Total Buzz

In addition to the individual *Buzz* factors, Robot2 counts the total number of *Buzz* items listed and allows you to test the results. The accumulation of *Buzz* can have a profound effect on contender selection. Let's look at the results.

<u>Buzz Totals</u>	<u>Purse \$10,000+</u>						
<u>Item</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>ITM</u>	<u>WROI</u>	<u>I.V.</u>	<u>High-AvgWin</u>	
Buzz Tot= 0	176832	08%	29%	0.69	0.71	\$329	\$17
Buzz Tot= 1	72023	14%	42%	0.80	1.22	\$189	\$11
Buzz Tot= 2	30187	21%	53%	0.87	1.76	\$116	\$8
Buzz Tot= 3+	16865	31%	65%	0.89	2.43	\$61	\$6

Analysis

Let's consider the total 'Plays' first. The majority of entrants do not have a single *Buzz* item listed on race day. That makes it easy to separate them. A lot of horses have just one and just 15% of entrants have 2 or more *Buzz*. There is no point in expanding the list past 4+ due to the diminishing sample size, yet it is probable that those rare runners with 4 or 5 *Buzz* items will have even better results.

Win and ITM percentage are dubious statistics if there are variable numbers of horses with the same factor. So we turn to ROI and I.V. for comparison. No question about it, the more *Buzz* a horse has, the greater his chances of winning and returning the bettor some cash. Horses that have zero *Buzz* items have weak I.V. = 0.71 and that translates to a solid negative association. The ROI is a -31% loser on the zero group but was pumped up with all of the 99/1 flukes that it caught. If the bombs over 50/1 are taken out of the test, the ROI drops much lower on the zeroes. As the *Buzz* increases, the positive statistics rise.

The tradeoff is the same one we see with nearly all horse racing statistics. The higher the win rate, the lower the average Win payoff. The productive *Buzz* horses are no exception to that axiom, yet there is plenty of upside at medium value price ranges to recognize profit potential with the *Buzz*.

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

{Claim}

{Claim} is the last item added to the HTR_TOUR list. But last is *not* least in this case as the results are surprisingly productive. To qualify for {Claim} the horse was tagged in its last start by a trainer with a winning record with claims. The { } on all *Buzz* items indicate a significant change has occurred since the horse's last start. In this case, it is a barn change with a new trainer.

{Claim}	Purse \$10,000+						
Item	Plays	Win	ITM	WROI	I.V.	High-AvgWin	
ALL	01089	27%	59%	0.95	2.19	\$69	\$7
Favorites	00456	42%	73%	0.96	3.32	\$9	\$5
\$\$	00127	22%	50%	1.33	1.91	\$69	\$12
TRN 400+	00338	30%	65%	0.80	2.41	\$5	\$13
Razor Sharp	00111	42%	71%	1.43	3.40	\$24	\$7
Buzz Tot= 1	00339	15%	45%	0.67	2.68	\$30	\$9
Buzz Tot= 2	00299	30%	57%	1.32	2.46	\$69	\$8
Buzz Tot= 3+	00451	34%	71%	0.92	2.68	\$15	\$5

Analysis

There is much to decipher with this angle and there are two key statistics to notice right away. First is the small sample size. The {Claim} angle barely met my minimum of 1000 plays in a year to make the *Buzz* listing at all, so this one doesn't pop up often. The second important aspect to {Claim} is the dramatic improvement when it is combined with one or more additional *Buzz* items. Notice the statistic line showing "Buzz Tot= 1". These are horses that had the {Claim} angle as their one and only *Buzz* listed. If the horse had additional *Buzz* factors listed (Buzz Tot= 2 or 3+) the results improve impressively.

The low sample size makes sense in light of the fact that claims are not that frequent statistically. We have combined the claim with a trainer with a proven winning record to designate {Claim} and the output becomes very limited. A large number of these horses become the wagering favorite (456 out of 1089) and that is due to the public's definite awareness of claims by top trainers. Notice the ROI with "Super Trainers" (TRN 400+) is just 0.80 despite the strong 30% win rate. This is a clear indication of overbetting by the public when these trainers claim a horse.

There is some hope for overlays and betting value based on the output for "\$\$" and "Razor Sharp". The ROI is very high when they are combined with {Claim}. This is true of many factors on the report as well, but most of them had less than 100 plays in a year. That makes this one a tough sell for spot plays despite the excellent overall results.

Very Unusual Forward Results

There is an interesting aspect to the {Claim} that defies almost all other trainer statistics. It actually wins at a higher rate going forward than the raw trainer statistics. In other words, if we locate all of the 'last out claims' from trainers that qualify for this item, they would show an average of 24% winners in this category. Yet when tested going forward, we get 27% winners! The barns that consistently make good claims learn from their mistakes and repeat their successful methods and actually improve on the past. I have rarely found that to happen with large sample trainer statistics (500 or more plays/year).

Summary

The {Claim} has one of the thinnest sample sizes of any of the *Buzz* items. But it makes up for it with strong results. If you see {Claim} as part of a multi-item *Buzz* on a horse, it is most likely a live runner.

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

"Fresh"

The combination of a moderate rest period (1 to 5 months) under the care of a patient trainer is a sure sign of a healthy thoroughbred racer. The "Fresh" *Buzz* is similar to the {Claim} in that the trainer must have a proven winning record over the last 365-days with these layoff horses. Below are the statistics and notice how large the overall sample size is compared to {Claim}.

{Fresh}	Purse \$10,000+						
Item	Plays	Win	ITM	WROI	I.V.	High-Avg	
ALL	06270	22%	53%	0.87	1.82	\$96	\$8
Favorites	02001	38%	72%	0.85	3.05	\$5	\$9
\$\$	00899	15%	41%	1.14	1.30	\$96	\$16
K=1	01883	35%	70%	0.87	2.77	\$30	\$5
K=110+	01133	37%	73%	0.84	2.82	\$13	\$5
HF	00088	57%	89%	1.00	4.07	\$8	\$4
HTR=1	01886	34%	67%	0.97	2.73	\$96	\$6
Fr1=1	01029	28%	61%	1.01	1.54	\$85	\$7
PAC=1,2	02267	26%	62%	0.95	2.34	\$96	\$7
TRN 400+	02541	28%	61%	0.92	2.26	\$62	\$7
Razor Sharp	00862	25%	60%	0.90	2.06	\$45	\$7
Buzz Tot= 1	01794	13%	40%	0.68	1.14	\$54	\$10
Buzz Tot= 2	01888	20%	49%	0.99	1.65	\$96	\$10
Buzz Tot= 3+	02588	30%	64%	0.92	2.37	\$45	\$6
Hot Trn	01245	27%	62%	1.03	2.17	\$65	\$8
{Hot Trn}	00305	31%	65%	0.96	2.57	\$28	\$6

Analysis

A healthy sample size for this factor makes it an excellent choice for spot play development. Notice again the dramatic difference as the number of total *Buzz* items increases. If "Fresh" is the only item shown for the horse (Buzz Tot= 1), the results are poor. Add one or more additional *Buzz* factors with "Fresh" and the value increases exponentially. The top rated tandem factor (if *Buzz* Tot = 2) was the *Hot Trainer*. Note that the {Hot Trn} in brackets indicates a switch to a new trainer since the last start.

I included several early speed factors on the chart with positive results. These are Fr1=1 and PAC=1,2. The results with "Fresh" are much better if the horse has some forward zip. If you run your own tests on this item, you'll notice that Sprints on Dirt and Artificial have the best ROI while Turf Routes are the worst. The "Fresh" horses seem to respond best if they have some early flash and are returning in a sprint race.

From all of the test results presented so far, we have found a key tool for exploitation = multiple Buzz. The compound accumulation of items was the original premise for the NLog and *Buzz* in HTR_TOUR and on the [KM] Screen. The theory that multiple association, either of positive or negative value, will produce far superior results to single factor handicapping is clearly exposed.

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

"H4C"

H4C = Horse for Course. If the horse has a consistent record of finishing 1st or 2nd at today's track or today's distance/surface, it will be assigned the "H4C" on the *Buzz*. The problem with this item is that it is not subtle and the public is well aware of horses with a particular liking for the track, distance or surface.

<u>H4C</u>	<u>Purse \$10,000+</u>						
<u>Item</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>ITM</u>	<u>WROI</u>	<u>I.V.</u>	<u>High-Avg</u>	
ALL	01299	27%	60%	0.85	1.97	\$52	\$6
Favorites	00511	42%	78%	0.85	3.06	\$8	\$4
K=1	00395	40%	74%	0.82	2.85	\$14	\$4
K=2	00293	33%	66%	1.05	2.35	\$17	\$6
TRN 400+	00217	32%	59%	1.08	2.24	\$52	\$7
TJ 30%	00240	34%	65%	1.07	2.49	\$52	\$6
Proj N Top	00225	46%	80%	0.88	3.27	\$8	\$4
Buzz Tot= 1	00442	20%	50%	0.86	1.56	\$52	\$8
Buzz Tot= 2	00360	23%	56%	0.86	1.69	\$25	\$8
Buzz Tot= 3+	02588	35%	71%	0.85	2.49	\$42	\$5

Analysis

The "H4C" has a relatively small 'footprint' of plays with just under 1300 horses qualifying. The win rate is a healthy 27% but a large number of these horses are favorites. The public doesn't miss much with the "H4C" and bets them heavily. Notice the high win rates with 'Favorites' and 'K=1' but the ROI is still dismal. This is a certain indicator that the public is aware of these horses and over bets them.

Note the profitable ROI with K=2 though. K=1 and 2 combine for more than 73% of the winners with the "H4C" angle, yet the public seems to back off betting aggressively on the K=2s, perhaps because they are hammering the favorite in the same race.

The most significant finding with the "H4C" is that it seems to work best in tandem with strong connections factors. I listed a couple of the factors above including TRN 400+ ("super trainer") and TJ 30% that showed a positive ROI.

The tandem *Buzz* item that worked in combination with "H4C" was "Projects New Top" with a whopping 46% winners and 80% ITM. Yet the ROI was not profitable. The Place and Show ROI were considerably higher. So that's a potent combination of finding a horse that loves the surface or track, and is projected to run a "top". Unfortunately, our fellow bettors seem to know this as well and the average winner paid off below even-money (\$3.92).

The *Buzz* Totals don't make much difference with the ROI, which is unusual compared to our previous tests. The "H4C" horses with 2 or more Buzz items do have higher win rates though.

The problem with "H4C" is simple. It is too obvious. There is no doubt that it is decent factor in terms of win production and most of the "H4C" entrants are 'live'. Yet everyone reading a Racing Form or Track Program will see the 'money box' with the horse records and easily recognize the ones that "love the track" or "love the distance".

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

"Hot Trn"

Note about Hot Jockey - Not Tested

This section is about trainers. The reason for not testing the jockey items: "Hot Jky" and "{Hot Jky}", is the lack of data. The "Hot" rider is determined by the most recent 14-day jockey record. Those statistics have only been available in our data files since April 2010. Not enough data for a 365-day test yet.

{Hot Trn} not tested here.

This test looks at "hot trainers" that have had the horse in their barn since at least its last race. There is a subset of hot trainers on the *Buzz* item that uses the brackets to indicate a trainer change: "{Hot Trn}". I did *not* run a test on those trainers this month.

Hot Trainer

Our 30-day trainer stat has been part of the data for many years, so we can test it with a full year of files. If the trainer has a reasonable number of starters in the last month, and is winning with more than 25% of them, the "Hot Trn" is assigned on the Buzz.

<u>Hot Trainer</u>	<u>Purse \$10,000+</u>						
<u>Item</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>ITM</u>	<u>WROI</u>	<u>I.V.</u>	<u>High-Avg</u>	
ALL	10425	22%	53%	0.87	1.80	\$184	\$8
Favorites	03185	39%	74%	0.85	3.07	\$9	\$4
HTR=1	02953	35%	69%	0.93	2.75	\$35	\$5
HTR=2	02094	26%	60%	0.95	2.05	\$62	\$7
Buzz Tot= 1	03550	15%	43%	0.81	1.24	\$184	\$11
Buzz Tot= 2	03309	20%	52%	0.88	1.66	\$106	\$9
Buzz Tot= 3+	03566	31%	65%	0.92	2.43	\$61	\$6

Analysis

It's all good news with the "Hot Trn". Huge sample size (10,425) offers unlimited opportunity for angles, spot plays and live longshots. Surprisingly, the hot trainers get a decent share of big bombs as well.

Notice the definitive rise in productivity as the Buzz total rises. See below for a spot play.

The HTR-consensus ranking 1-2 performs particularly well with "Hot Trn" as shown above. I didn't display any additional positives on this one because there are dozens of diverse factors that combine well with hot trainers. These include surprising results with tandem factors that don't usually produce good results on their own such as new geldings ("Just Gelded") and even a flat bet profit with the lowly K=9.

Hot Trainer Spot Play

I'll use the promising stats for HTR=1,2 and Buzz Total= 3+ to formulate a spot play from the test data.

- Purse \$10,000+
- Hot Trn
- HTR=1,2
- Buzz Total = 3+

<u>Item</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>ITM</u>	<u>WROI</u>	<u>I.V.</u>	<u>High-Avg</u>	
Spot Play	02680	36%	71%	0.95	2.76	\$30	\$5

Analysis

The ROI is 0.95 across the board (Win-Pla-Sho) and a strong indicator of potential success going forward. Not a flat bet profit yet, but there are many negatives that can be removed to pump up the ROI and not drop the Play count below 1000/year.

Handicapping with HTR_Tour
The Buzz – Item Test Results

"Pace Adv"

"Pace Adv" is the *Buzz* descriptor for a horse that shows a strong first fraction velocity (Fr1) rating followed by a strong turn-time (Fr2), combined with a few additional parameters that have been added. In theory, this should put the horse in front at the top of the stretch. The test below will determine how often they translate this apparent pace advantage into a win.

"Pace Adv"	Purse \$10,000+						
Item	Plays	Win	ITM	WROI	I.V.	High-Avg	
ALL	01720	26%	55%	0.91	2.02	\$47	\$7
Favorites	00631	41%	71%	0.86	3.21	\$10	\$4
HTR=1	01006	34%	64%	1.02	2.68	\$35	\$6
Buzz Tot= 1	00358	14%	41%	0.76	1.17	\$45	\$11
Buzz Tot= 2	00525	18%	49%	0.82	1.40	\$47	\$9
Buzz Tot= 3+	00837	35%	64%	1.03	2.75	\$35	\$6

Analysis

This is a strong rating and there is a built-in spot play with HTR=1 showing a flat bet profit. The only negative is the sample size of just 1,720 horses qualifying in a year. The reason why the number of plays is so low is that I specified several strict criteria to ensure the "Pace Adv" entrants were likely to be in control of the pace throughout the race. Next we'll attempt to find out how well the pace-advantage horses can handle pressure.

Control the Pace Theory Tested

One of the keys to success as a velocity handicapper is the ability to identify horses that can *control the pace*. The term "control the pace" is often confused with "lone speed". They are not the same thing. In theory, a thoroughbred that has strength in both Fr1 and Fr2 (turn-time) should be able to handle any pace it encounters. What happens if it has to deal with pace pressure from other horses?

Let's test this by looking at the "Pace Adv" horses separated by the Pace predictor header items in the Tour program and see if they are able to win despite probable competition for the lead.

"Pace Adv"	Purse \$10,000		Race Pace Types				
Item	Plays	Win	ITM	WROI	I.V.	High-Avg	
ALL	01720	26%	55%	0.91	2.02	\$47	\$7
Hot	00102	17%	43%	0.71	1.46	\$19	\$9
Fast	00621	22%	51%	0.82	1.73	\$47	\$7
Normal	00684	29%	49%	0.98	2.24	\$45	\$7
Soft	00094	27%	59%	1.09	2.00	\$33	\$8
Lone Speed	00219	31%	63%	0.93	2.41	\$35	\$6

Analysis

This data shoots down the theory that a horse able to control the early fractions will prevail regardless of the pace scenario. Our "Pace Adv" horses have a much tougher time winning when the pace is labeled "Hot" or "Fast" and they have to fight for the front. They are far more productive if the pace is "Normal" or "Soft" and especially if the pace of the race is labeled "Lone Speed".

Pace of the Race velocity handicapping is alive and well with HTR!

*Velocity Handicapping with HTR***PL-Mode Comparison Test**What is a "PL Mode"

PL = Pace Line. The PL-modes within the HTR software are used to select representative running lines from each horse's past-performances. Those lines are then used to compute the myriad of pace, speed and velocity numbers used in the program. Below is a list of the PL modes used throughout HTR.

- PL-0** Blank Slate, user selects, not discussed here.
- PL-1** Last line only, but will select the 2nd line if the last was bad.
- PL-2** Takes the best line (speed figure) from amongst the last three lines.
- PL-3** Averages the two best of the last three lines.
- PL-4** Strict method, selects best line within last 180-days if it matches today's general distance and exact surface. Horses that do not qualify with these parameters are left blank.
- PL-5** Default in all HTR programs. Artificial Intel method (see below)
- PL-6** Similar to PL-4, but accepts lines within the last 365-days.
- PL-7** All Burger, selects and averages all valid lines from the horse's last 10 starts. No filtering unless the paceline cannot be used at all.
- PL-8** MaxVel (only) Trial. Selects best E/P velocity line, last 365-days.
- PL-9** MaxVel (only) Trial. Takes best A/P velocity line with loose filters.

PL-5 Default in HTR

In 1996, HTR was the first handicapping software to introduce a non-mechanical approach to paceline selection. This was the introduction of PL-5, which uses an artificial intelligence scoring method to select one or two lines rather than mechanical criteria such as *Last Line Only*. The PL-5 methodology has proven venerable to the software as it tends to select lines that mimic the mindset of a human handicapper rather than a computer.

Comparative PL-Mode Testing

There are some important steps to take to ensure a side-by-side test of the PL modes is accurate and fair.

1. Use the same set of races to test all of the PL-modes. Don't change the filters.
2. Select a single factor for comparison that has few ties and is a balanced rating for overall performance. I always use A/P velocity rank = 1 (read more below).
3. Remove extremes from the data. For example, I removed distances 2.0f - 5.0f and 10.0f - 14.0f from this test. Also set an EPR range 085 - 105. Both of these and a few other minor settings help to filter out races that are not well adapted to line selection or velocity appraisal.

Keep in mind that PL-4 and similar selection methods with strict criteria will ignore horses that do not qualify based on the date/dist/surface parameters. For example, with PL-4, any horse that has been laid off for more than 180-days will be blanked out in terms of PL selection and is considered a non-contender for purposes of pace-speed-velocity ratings using PL-4. That's part of the process for that methodology, but in a sense it makes the test unfair to the other methods that are forced to take a line for every horse.

Another issue is unknown horses such as FTS. If they win the race, isn't the data distorted? It can be a problem if we were testing a factor based on our desire to use it for betting and profitable ROI. In this case, our test is only comparing PL modes to each other. They will all utilize the same set of data, so the comparison is fair and equal from that standpoint.

A/P = 1 is the ideal choice for a comparison variable in a PL test. A/P (Average Pace Velocity) is the most balanced of the velocity ratings, has very few ties, and is consistent in all types of races. In contrast, the (K) and HTR ratings are not strictly based on the running lines and utilize many other handicapping factors (in fact, they do just fine on PL-0). The VEL and PER ratings would seem like a good choice, but they have too many ties as they are whole-number ratings.

Velocity Handicapping with HTR
PL-Mode Comparison Test

Now let's look at the raw data for all the PL-modes and A/P = 1 velocity.

A/P = 1		Selected Filters					
Item	Plays	Win	ITM	WROI	I.V.	High--Avg	
PL-1	43769	26%	59%	0.83	2.10	\$115	\$7
PL-2	44011	25%	57%	0.84	2.04	\$120	\$7
PL-3	43900	27%	60%	0.85	2.19	\$108	\$6
PL-4	43094	26%	60%	0.88	2.11	\$142	\$7
PL-5	44023	26%	59%	0.86	2.09	\$139	\$7
PL-6	43207	25%	58%	0.89	2.06	\$163	\$7
PL-7	43722	26%	60%	0.86	2.17	\$146	\$6
PL-8*	44114	22%	54%	0.83	1.82	\$144	\$8
PL-9*	43814	25%	59%	0.86	2.09	\$136	\$7

* MaxVel program only, not available in Robot2 or HTR2

Analysis

The first impression might be that there isn't much difference between these methods. The Impact Values and Win% are essentially a non-issue as there is no more than a percentage point or two between most.

We do see some separation in terms of ROI. Notice the best returns come from PL-4 and PL-6, which use a similar restrictive methodology. Does this mean they are superior for our handicapping or spot play purposes?

As I mentioned on the previous page, it is not a completely fair comparison between the PL methods that have strict parameters vs. those that are forced to select lines from every horse. For example, PL-4 simply blanks horses with layoffs longer than 6-months (> 180 days). The layoff horses don't receive an A/P rank at all and are left out of the final mix. If we apply a layoff filter to the other PL modes, they may have improved ROI as well. PL-4 and PL-6 also do not accept horses that haven't raced on today's surface. This gives them an advantage in terms of compatible running lines and it is interesting that this seems to improve their longshot hit rate and raise the ROI.

PL-7 has a lesson for us in all this. It is the one method that - well - has no method. It just takes every usable running line and averages them. The results with PL-7 match up just fine with all the other PLs. This tells us that PL selection is really a case of "Six of one, half-dozen of the other" for the most part. So unless you have compelling evidence that a PL method is significantly superior to the others, there is not much purpose in spending hours and hours testing them all. Work with the default PL-5 or choose one other and stick with it.

PL-5 Default

Almost all factors in HTR are researched and developed using PL-5. The HTR_TOUR program is a good example of this. Many of the Negatives and Buzz items are dependent on the paceline selection and I always relied on PL-5 for the initial programming. If you wish, you can use the updated [KM] screen to change the PL-modes or test the Tour items with Robot2 and a different PL method.

MaxVel Trial Modes – PL-8 and PL-9

These two were an experiment. Neither of them has any value over the others in this and other tests I have run. So they will be re-programmed or simply removed in the next MaxVel version. There were some logistical problems with PL-9 and I'll fix that as well in the Fall update or eliminate the option. PL-8 and 9 will not be added to Robot2 or HTR2 at this point.

*Software Updates***HTR2/Export HXN – Robot2 – Tour****HTR2 July 8 Update**KM Screen

Newest version of HTR2 includes an updated [KM] screen that features panels II and III that are an exact match to the HTR_TOUR main output. There are two small differences: (1) the numbered index key to the negative items does not appear in the KM version. If you need to see the index, refer to the HTR_TOUR software or the Tour User Guide. (2) all sections are sorted by the KLine and there is no 'hot' key' as in the Tour version to resort the screen by the N# (number of negatives).

So if you prefer to see the numbered index for the negatives on every printout or like to sort the horses by the N#, then use the HTR_TOUR version. On the other hand, use the [KM] if you don't want to see the N# index and would like to try different PL-modes to shake up the output.

New Export HXN

A new Export option, HXN, includes all of the items from the HTR_Tour NLog and Buzz. This is an easy export to work with, adaptable to spreadsheets, as most of the data is flagged in simple Boolean integers (0 or 1) and the headers are just numbers. Refer to the new HXN.PDF spec sheet for full details on data fields.

FIG1 to be Replaced

[FIG1] button has been disabled in the July 8 version and a new screen will be introduced at the seminar on July 28. If you like the old FIG1 display, do not take the upgrade to your HTR2. Or you could rename the older version to HTROLD for instance, and operate the FIG1 screen separately.

Robot2 July 8 Update

I have fixed all of the bugs that were reported from the recent [Tour] module beta-test.

A new module [Special] has been added. This one has filters that were requested by our members and other various items of interest. These items do not yet appear on any of the 'Learn' reports, but you can use them for testing and add them to your current spot plays. I didn't have time to test these items yet, but if they pan out with good results, I'll add them to the 'Learn' printouts. Some pre-made spot plays also appear disabled on this screen and they will be unlocked if you attend the seminar or obtain the E-Book later from Rick.

The Tour items from Buzz and NLog are now part of the LearnX results.

The "Spot Play Desktop" has a new personal label maker. You can type in a description of any of your spot plays and then print the complete list of your comments later. This should help you keep track of your spot plays if you can't remember them all.

HTR-Tour July 8 Update

There are no major changes since the last update, just a couple of minor bug fixes and I synchronized the version date and output with the other software above.

Late Announcements and Reminders

Summer Schedule

I'll be away from the office from July 14 - July 22 taking some time off for the family as well as refurbishing our house. I will also be finalizing the seminar materials and then off to Vegas from July 27 - 31 for the Gold Coast. Please contact us via email or the bbs if you have any questions or software problems while I'm gone. You can also call HDW (502 570 0333) if the problem is related to your download account. Please note that webmaster Rick and Ron from HDW, will also be in Vegas for the seminar. We hope to see you there as well.

Software Updates

The July 8, 2010 updates should be available for HTR2, Robot2 and HTR_Tour, by the time you read this. Please refer to page-12 herein or our website for more details. The HTR membership has been terrific at reporting bugs and making excellent suggestions for the software. Thank you very much and please keep them coming.

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HTR website (software updates): www.htr2.com
www.homebased2.com/km

HTR Report is an on-line newsletter and is published bi-monthly, it is available in the HTR Subscriber Zone around the 10th of the month. Monthly subscribers can view the current newsletter for no charge on-line, Adobe Reader software (free) required. Past issues over a year old are available in our website archive library.

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