

HTR Monthly Report
Thoroughbred Handicapping Newsletter
July / August 2006

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KM Software
Handicapping Technology and Research

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Late News and Tournament Doings

The HTR Monthly Report is converted from a Microsoft Word Document to a .PDF file for viewing with the free Adobe Reader. The newsletter may be viewed while on-line or the file can be downloaded to your computer hard-drive for off-line reading and printing.

Each month, the current edition of the HTR Monthly Report is available on the Internet from our members' web site only. This is not a free newsletter; it is included as part of a paid subscription to HTR's monthly download service (\$119/mo). Selected articles can be found on the free HTR web site (see back page for web address). The HTR Monthly Report is normally available by the 5th of each month.

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*Seminar***HTR Seminar 2006 at the Gold Coast**

The annual HTR seminar and workshop took place Wednesday July 19 at the Gold Coast hotel in Las Vegas. Attendance was about 42 members for the 10am – 8pm meeting. We thank all the veteran users who attended and a big welcome to several new attendees, hope to see you all back in 2007.

Tom Walters (*TomCat*) began the day with his presentation dealing with “races tough to handicap”. His focus was on workouts and first time starters. The handout included the TLC screen printout for several races and a list of drills to watch for the unknown entrants. This was the perfect lead in for my talk and coverage of the updated HTR2 software that focuses its new material on the intangibles, such as workouts and trainer strength. We broke for lunch about 12 noon.

Prior to the afternoon session, we paid tribute to HTR webmaster (and Hurricane *Katrina* survivor) Rick Bush and presented him with a nice gift (external mobile hard drive) of appreciation. On behalf of all of you that contributed to our “Rick Fund” last September you’ll be happy to know that part of your donation was used to pay for Rick’s trip to Vegas. We’ll have to get him back at future meetings as he is a big help with all aspects of the event.

My presentation combined the new material in the HTR2 update along with the clear need to focus more on intangible factors such as workouts, trainer strength and pedigree. The main handout appears on pages 6-12 herein followed by additional comments and examples.

This year our seminar contest consisted of live races as we had several big screen televisions in the room. Races 5-6-7 from Del Mar were selected for the contest and it was won by Jerry “ggpagels” Pagels (Santa Barbara, CA) and he took home \$300 first prize.

Don Nadermann began his Access workshop around 4pm. Donnie is an excellent teacher and always improvises quickly on any new stuff from the software upgrade. Several data fields were added to HX4, HX5, and HXV (see herein) and he showed us some quick and creative queries using the new items, including some ideas I had just spoken about a few minutes prior! As the night wears on, the material becomes more complicated as he shows us the massive power of database processing. There is so much to learn in Access and our goal is to offer a few new techniques to take home that will enhance the research process.

Thanks again to Rick, Tom and Donnie as well as Ernie, John Buls and Herman Bell for all their help in producing another successful seminar. The Gold Coast welcomes us back for 2007 and we will have the dates and more information before the end of the year.

Full coverage of a highly successful Gold Coast tournament for HTR players follows below and then the complete text of my seminar presentation with added material, commentary and examples.

Tournaments
Gold Coast Summer Championship
HTR Players Finish 1-2 !!

John Buckley takes Top Honors

John Buckley (Novato [San Francisco], CA) won the top prize at the Summer Coast Championship at the Gold Coast, July 20-22. The champ took home \$78,000! JB is a long-time subscriber to HTR and a full time horseplayer who works harder at the game than just about anyone I know – his victory was earned through persistence and attention to detail.

JB and wife Barbara have been successful fixtures at the major handicapping tournaments in Nevada for years. They attend every HTR seminar and participate in all our contests and on-line forums (*JBShoulda* and *LeakyEyes*). John is a key beta-tester for our software updates and has helped me greatly with additions and bug fixes over the years – his ideas are born of practical experience from day to day betting. He reads the newsletter every month with interest and listens to ideas from other users with an open mind. John and Barb have custom handicapping applications enhanced from the HTR2 to their specifications. In fact, they had me update their screens just 48 hours before we left for Vegas – they were serious about winning.

JB has graciously written out his entire tournament victory diary on the next page. Interesting that he did it with no ‘cap’ or ‘bomb’ plays. His average Win price was about \$20, so he won it with consistency rather than ‘stabs and bombs’.

Gary Brous Finishes 2nd and Wins \$29,000.

Gary Brous has been with HTR since 2005 and has enthusiastically attended our last two seminars with his dad Gary Sr. – you won’t find two nicer people to talk handicapping with. Gary played smart throughout and just missed the top prize at the end, but he told me this is his biggest score in horse racing so far, so I’m sure he is pretty happy with taking home thirty grand! *See page-5 for his tourney picks.*

Donnie and Tomcat Rally on Saturday

Most of the other HTR tournament players were far behind going into the final day Saturday. But as usual, almost all of us rallied strongly. Tom Walters and partner John Buls pulled themselves all the way up to 23rd place and grabbed a \$1000 check. Don Nadermann, who has a history of big daily scores in this tournament, did it again with over 15,000 points on the final day and took home a \$3000 chunk of the day money. At least a dozen of the rest also took advantage of the tired tournament competition and cracked on or near the 20,000-point level, but it took 22,000 to cash. Good try everyone - we’ll be back – we roll on when the other players are running out of gas at the end.

For the last three years our seminar attendees have scored major cash in this tournament. This edition was obviously no exception and there is little doubt that a live interactive experience just prior to a major handicapping contest is rewarding. Be inspired to attend our seminar next year!

Tournaments

Gold Coast Summer Championship – John Buckley’s Winning Summary

Here are the payoff selections that *JB* made during the Gold Coast tournament with his comments and summary of the scoring. Keep in mind that there were multiple wet tracks to deal with; tons of scratches during the contest (including BEL and ELP cancellations) and most races were taken off the turf in the east.

Day One; Thursday July 20 - 13,480 pts

ELP Race-1 #1 Baby Girl Malia; \$\$; shipper w/ hard trying jock trying to get established.
\$24.00 - \$7.60

ELP Race-7 #3 Cunning Cat; 2nd off claim; Jock switch; not much speed in the race and jockey likes to get to front: **\$30.60 - \$13.80**

LAD Race-8 #9 Reds Cinnamon; Jock switch to barns main rider (TJ=26%) Rte-to-Spr and figured he be coming late when everyone else gunned it, guessed right. **\$23.00 - \$8.20**

LAD Race-9 #2 Majestic Ruler; race taken off turf looked for speed horse - he was it; Wk=87+
\$19.20 - \$8.40

Day Two - 13,740 pts

CRC Race-5 #3 Tzipi; 2nd time starter; K=3; Fr1=1; **\$0.00 - \$12.20**

LAD Race-6 #12 Time Taker; FTS; Big FT=80 and PED=611; Looked good on the track
\$31.00 - \$11.60

CRC Race-9 #4 Lone Smitten; K=2; Fr1=1; TRN=1 and hot rider; **\$0.00 - \$8.00**

AP Race-6 #8 Bahri and Grill Public; K=2; FC=86; best last race FIG **\$24.60 - \$9.00**

DMR Race-4 #5 Kouri; bx; Wk=85; hot Garcia riding; JKY=403 **\$19.00 - \$8.40**

DMR Race-8 #9 Gimme S'mor; last bullet, last race and could not find a longshot so I just bet who I thought would win; K=2; Wk=83; Claim; (+) Jky switch to Espinoza **\$8.20 - \$5.40**

Day Three- 5680 pts

AP Race-5 #8 Case Closer; Fr1/PAC=1; TPG(+) Top d/s speed fig; **\$22.20 - \$8.80**

ELP Race-10 #2 May Gator; K=2; hard-knocker 10 wins and 17 places in 57 races and at 8/1 looked good to me **\$0.00-12.20**

DMR Race-6 #1 Dancing Edie; after the standings were posted I was behind by about 1200 pts and was looking to get ahead with a solid play and at 4/1; and this horse was it for me. \$\$; solid fit and (+) switch to Nakatani riding for his brother in law and Nakatani loves turf riding. Lucked out on the win and then inquiry (no change): **\$10.00 - \$5.80**

Summary of all selections

6 plays odds 3/1 - 7/1 = 2 Wins & 1 Place

17 plays 8/1 - 9/1 = 4 Wins & 1 Place

9 plays 10/1 - 12/1 = 3 wins 1 place

13 plays 13/1 - 20/1 = 1 win

Final 32,900 pts 45 Plays (15/day x 3) 10 wins 3 place

Editors Note: It is extremely rare to have a *Coast* tournament winner that was accomplished without hitting one or more 'cap' longshots (\$42+) during the contest, let alone win it with such a high hit rate – kudos to John for pulling it off. *Thanks to JB for providing this summary.*

Tournaments

Gold Coast Summer Championship - Gary Brous 32,540 Points

Gary Brous finished 2nd at the Gold Coast, just a few hundred points behind John Buckley and earned about \$30,000. Below are his point producers during the tournament. Notice that he and Buckley did not share too many of the same winning selections, proving that there is more than one way to skin a cat. Also interesting is the large percentage of Place finishes that helped him accumulate points. *Thanks to Gary for providing this list.*

ELLIS 7/20 RACE 4 #3 Won \$41.00 \$16.40

BEL 7/20 RACE 5 #10 2nd \$0.00 \$11.40

ELLIS 7/20 RACE 6 #8 2nd \$0.00 \$9.20

ELLIS 7/20 RACE 7 #3 Won \$30.60 \$13.80

DMR 7/20 RACE 8 #10 2nd \$0.00 \$3.20

BEL 7/21 RACE 5 #2 Won \$11.40 \$5.40

ELLIS 7/21 RACE 6 #8 2nd \$0.00 \$9.20

ARLINGTON 7/21 RACE 8 #10 2nd \$0.00 19.20

CALDER 7/21 RACE 9 #4 2nd \$0.00 \$8.00

LOUISIANA 7/21 RACE 6 #12 Won \$31.00 \$11.60

LOUISIANA 7/21 RACE 7 #8 2nd \$0.00 \$18.00

LOUISIANA 7/21 RACE 8 #8 Won \$19.20 \$6.20

ARLINGTON 7/22 RACE 5 #8 Won \$22.20 \$8.80

BEL 7/22 RACE 8 #4 Won \$20.60 \$6.60

ELLIS 7/22 RACE 11 #5 2nd \$0.00 \$5.60

Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade
HTR Seminar 2006
Wed July 19, 2006
Gold Coast Hotel, Las Vegas

Brought to you by –
Ken Massa
Handicapping Technology and Research

- The Challenge 2006
- Intangible Factors
- PED, TRN, Wk, JKY, (K)
- Fresh Perspectives (PPX)
- What's New In HTR2
- Robot (Major Upgrade) & LearnX
- Longshot/Tournament Session
- Q & A

Be sure you have the separate 'example races' handout to accompany this text.

*Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade***The Challenge 2006**

- To get more winners, increased value, more live longshots and greater profits in all aspects of the game, we need to accept the reality that the outcome of races is often decided well before the race is run.
- It is naïve to believe that “the race is to the swiftest” in this day and age. We would love to have the ‘fastest’ horses winning every race since we can determine those with our superior speed, pace, velocity ratings and analysis tools. But it isn’t enough anymore and odds have plummeted on the ‘swift’.
- As more and more horseplayers gain access to the static sources of horse race data, they can crunch all the obvious numbers and uncover relationships and patterns, especially those related to time and beaten lengths. This has eroded profits considerably and it has hurt some of our most revered HTR ratings such as Fr1. Even though others cannot duplicate the algorithm for Fr1, they can uncover overlapping patterns; such as noting early speed in a sprint often works well for price plays when the horse stretches to a route.
- We need to supplement our understanding and focus on the factors of preparation referred to here as *intangibles*. Horses are pre-positioned for a successful effort (improvement) in most cases with elements that cannot be easily understood with a typical past-performance layout. Often the intangibles reveal probable failure as well.
- *Intangible* factors are those that cannot be readily defined numerically (quantified). The public gathers their information about intangibles from general statistics such as trainer standings or sire ratings. Our understanding in HTR goes much deeper and will be increased with this year’s upgrade.

Examples of Intangible Factors as Joe Handicapper sees it

- “blinkers OFF – trying to get the horse to relax”
- “first time gelding – that might wake him up”
- “jockey switch – he’s a bum, they are clouding his form”
- “first time on grass – sire loved the lawn”
- “trainer claim two back – lowers his tag today, he’s dumping him”
- “2nd after layoff, the return try was a prep, they’ll go for it today”
- “worked twice at 5.0f since last start in 1:00 flat”
- “3 for 3 at 7.0f, he loves the track”

HTR Quantifies the Intangibles

- TRN
- TPG (Trainer Power Grade – new)
- JKY (and TJ%)
- WK
- PED (and FT rating)
- PPX – *Changes* to the Intangibles

*Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade***Intangible Factors – Bullet Points**

- The more new challenges a horse is facing – surface change, distance change, shipping to a new track, class up, layoff – the greater the demand for higher intangibles to be successful.
- The higher the PED, the more likely the horse can overcome obstacles faced with trip, weather, class changes, field size, longer distance, unusual course layouts, inexperience, surface transition, injury and longevity.
- A power Wk rating is the single most striking probability of a rapid turnaround and sudden victory at high odds. A rise in the Wk rating over time (PPX) is indicative of a horse becoming more fit and gaining momentum in its training. A strong Wk combined with a high rated TPG today is a certain indicator for a “go” effort today. Very few horse bettors can ascertain this subtlety.
- A positive jockey switch, especially a big change in the jockey rating (PPX) from the last start, increases the probability of winning considerably. While jockeys and their agents are notoriously terrible handicappers, the switch itself is an unmistakable indicator for improved performance.
- The TPG is an excellent mechanism for determining how the trainer copes or prepares for various race scenarios and whether or not the trainer is determined to win --- or makes mistakes continually. The (+) TPG is a trainer that produces solid returns and hits with a price. (-) is money loser that hits mostly with chalk and rarely a good price.
- Super trainers (400+) generally excel at all angles, claims, layoffs and dist/surf switches and class moves and FTS/2TS. Interesting that while the public is well aware of the ‘supers’ they do produce positive returns and often hit with a price. Note: **2TS** = second time starter
- Blinkers off (bx) show near flat bet profits in all races and is a continually productive source of price plays. First time gelding is in this same realm (rare-but powerful) but can only be seen in HTR2 by using the PPX. Blinkers on and Lasix show no statistical impact, as they are too common. But the additions can improve an individual horse.
- Class drops are far more statistically significant than class rises. Those moving up in class are best handicapped with their previous speed and pace figures to assess their possible competition. Class droppers have greater incidence of sudden turnaround regardless of their figures.
- Longshot production with intangibles: PED 450+, FT > 60; Wk 80/85+, TRN 350+; Class Drop; Jockey Switch, TPG (+); it is almost imperative to find an intangible clue to get a ‘turnaround’ longshot that reverses its poor form.

Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade
New Stuff – July 2006 Update

- Also-Eligible: notated between the horse's program number and post-position on the PRG screen you'll see (A) for also-eligible and (M) main track also-eligible (the horse will run only if the race is shifted from the turf to the dirt). The overwhelming majority of these horses are scratched. The notation will not appear on the screen after the results are in.
- Temporary Turf Rail Position: sometimes the inside of the turf course is protected from over use by placing a temporary plastic rail up several feet from the inside. The number of feet out from the rail is now notated in some PP screens in the track condition location (next to the Distance). Example: 9.0T "R22" = 9-furlong turf race had a rail-out 22 feet. When the temporary rail is used, the circumference of the course changes – often causing tighter turns and unusual timing.
- Poly and Artificial Track: the artificial surface is now notated throughout HTR when referencing the surface. The "A" is used, i.e. "6.0A" = a six furlong race run on the poly/synthetic track.
- OFF Turf: if the race was taken off the turf due to wet weather the PP screens now notate this with an "x" next to the distance, i.e. "x8.5w" = a race moved from the turf. Many horses are "stuck" in these races – meaning they were entered to run on grass but were denied the scratch in order to keep the race filled – and can be excused for a bad effort.
- WINF (see below)
- FT Rating for First Route (see below)
- H4C – Horse for Course rating found only on the KM Screen (HTR User Guide)
- TPG Rating (PDF report)
- PPX Screen (PDF report)
- Robot (PDF booklet)
- Export (see changes below)
- Other Screens (HTR User Guide or Update Summary Sheet)

WINF

The WINF or "winning effort" is as an actual win or an all out effort that came up just short of the victory. This differs from the "Live" race designation because the WINF race is usually a maximum performance by the horse. The 'cross' symbol marks these efforts in the Past-Performance screens to the trip note. The Robot has the item for testing from the horse's last start. HX4 adds this item to the output. HX5 has the full pp history. The 'cross' symbol also appears on the PP screens in front of the trip note WINF from each race.

The WINF has many implications that are important to analysis. These horses are typically over bet based on the 'sharp' last race and strong speed figure they receive. Many will run well again and are in excellent condition and unbeatable, others will 'bounce' or run poorly. Either way, they are the horses that attract the most attention from the public.

Use the WINF lines to determine optimal Early Energy% distribution, PAC / PER balance, distance surface preferences, etc.

FT (First Time) Rating

The FT rating has been expanded to include horses making their first start in a route ($\geq 8.0f$). The FT rating is assigned to any of the following horses below and combines them when applicable. The average FT range is between 40-49, with 60 or more a strong indicator.

- Debut (FTS)
- First Start on Dirt
- First Lifetime Start on Turf
- First Lifetime Start in a Route (8.0f +)

Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade
Export Changes and Additions

All export functions will now output additional nSURF (surface) and nTDS (today's dist/surf category) for the artificial (i.e. Poly) surface. In addition HX4 and HX5 contain nCOURSE for separating "Inner".

All HX Functions / Changes

nSURF = 4: Artificial or Poly surface
 nDS = 5: Artificial Surface Sprint
 nDS = 6: Artificial Surface Route

nGL8 has been removed from throughout HTR2 and the export. This field will now export 'Lifetime Wins' in Field 36 in HX1,2,3 with no header change. HX4 changes the header for field 36 to nLWINS.

HX4 Additions/Changes

Field 36 nLWINS Lifetime wins

Integer (>0) = Lifetime Wins

0 = still a maiden

Field 159 nCOURSE Course Type for this race

1= Main Dirt

2= Main Turf

3= Inner Dirt

4= Inner Turf

5= Artificial Surface – Main Course

0= Unknown or other (such as Steeplechase)

Field 160 nLWINE Ran a *winning effort* last out

1 = ran a *winning effort* (see explanation)

0 = raced, but did not run a *winning effort*

-1 = no race or data

Field 161 tTPG (text) Trainer Power Grade from Trainer Stats Download

Letter Grade and +/- Suffix (i.e. "B+")

"N" = insufficient data on trainer or no data file available

Important: if the matching trainer file was not available during export, this field lists "N" for all horses.

Field 162 nLTOP PAC and/or PER "tops" run last out; minimum 2-lifetime starts

1 = ran PAC top last out

2 = ran PER top last out

3 = ran both a PAC and PER top last out

0 = ran a race, but did not have a "top" or has just one lifetime start

-1 = no race or no data

note: fields 163-168 below were previously found in HX5, same output now in HX4, min 2 starts

Field 163 nTOPPAC high PAC figure from last 10 PPs

Field 164 nTOPPER high PER figure from last 10 PPs

Field 165 nTOPSHF high Cramer 'sheet' figure from last 10 PPs

Field 166 nTOPPACAGO number of days ago the top PAC figure was run

Field 167 nTOPPERAGO number of days ago the top PER figure was run

Field 168 nTOPSHFAGO number of days ago the top Cramer 'sheet' fig was run

(All above) 0 = no data or output not applicable to this horse

Field 169 tOWNER Name of owner (from Trainer Stat File), 25 char truncation. Blank = no Trn File

Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade
Export Changes and Additions
HX5 Additions/Changes

Field 41-50 nPPxSUR (surface code) addition of Artificial/Poly designation

- 1 = Fast Dirt
- 2 = Turf
- 3 = Wet Dirt
- 4 = Artificial Surface (Poly Track, etc.)

Field 61-70 nxEPR

Field name (header) change only – previous was: nPARx

Field 131-140 nCOURSEx (Race Course Type)

- 1= Main Dirt
- 2= Main Turf
- 3= Inner Dirt
- 4= Inner Turf
- 5= Main Artificial/Poly
- 6= Other (such as Steeplechase)

Field 141-149 nWINFx replaces nLIVEx

- 1 = Horse ran a *winning effort* (not necessarily a Win but always a big effort)
- 0 = Horse ran, but it was not a *winning effort*
- 1 = No race

note: the “Tops” data was moved to HX4

HXV Additions/Changes

Field 211 – 220 nCVARx Cramer Track Variant / adjusts raw Cramer speed rating

Positive Integer = Track was Slow

Negative (-) Integer = Track was Fast

999 = no variant or race

e.g. (3) = the track was 3 points slow; (-6) = the track was six points fast

note: this item is provided by Jim Cramer “as is” / KM cannot provide further info

Field 221-230 nTURFCHx Turf Race Changes

Temporary Turf Rail Position (‘dogs up’) – When Applicable – Grass Races Only

Also indicates OFF TURF when the race was scheduled for Turf but was moved off.

Integer Value (>0) = number of feet the temporary rail was set out

0 = race was run on Turf but the rail was at zero (or there was no report)

999 = race was scheduled for Turf, but was taken off

-1 = race was not scheduled or run on the Turf

Field 231-240 nDFIGx DFIG = (PAC – Cramer Fig); same as FIG3 screen but full decimal value

Value = DFIG for the horse in that race, decimal value

0 = no race or no figure computed

Field 241-250 nPURSEx Purse of each PP race (x \$1000)

Integer Value = Purse of race x \$1000 (e.g. 37 = \$37,000; 1000 = \$1,000,000)

0 = no race or data

Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade
Minimums and Maximums

I have reset the minimum and maximum values in HTR for several key factors. This was done to create a clear whole number range from top to bottom for display, robot and export. It has very little effect on previous ratings →

Factor	Min	Max	Robot Default Setting	Export Max
(K)	050	115	090 - 115	115.4999
TRN	050	550	250 - 550	550
JKY	050	550	250 - 550	550
PED	090	990	300 - 990	990
WK	065*	095	080 - 095	95.4999
EPR	080	115	080 - 115	115
VI	15	50	All	50

* Wk Score minimum is for non-zero values. Some horses will have Wk = 0 if they have no workouts or recent pattern to compute.

*Seminar/HTR2 Upgrade***New TPG Rating**

TPG = Trainer Performance (or Power) Grade

Introduction

The TPG is new to HTR software as of July 2006. The rating is derived from the data found in the Trainer Stats (text) file. You'll need to download those files in order to see the TPG grades.

If you get your daily files from the auto-download in HTR2, be sure to checkmark the box for Trainer Stats along with the corresponding Racefile. If you download from the Internet, there is a new combo option: Racefile + Trainer File together.

If the trainer file data is not found (the file not downloaded), all the trainers in each race will show an "N" for their rating. The TPG can be found on the main Program Screen [PRG] and the [KM] or [TLC] under the column "TPG". It is also exported with from the HX4 option as a text field. The TPG is not available in the 'Robot' yet, but will be in the future.

Trainer Stats

The trainer stats file contains a wealth of data that is situational for today's horse and race type. Many pertinent angles are listed (such as "blinkers on") along with general statistics for the trainer at the track, dist/surf and class type. But the multitude of data can be difficult to grasp; often the individual statistics tend to conflict. The TPG takes care of this problem and gives you a clear appraisal.

HTR Scans the Trainer File for you

HTR2 software will scan the trainer data and link the statistics with a sophisticated algorithm. You won't even need to look at the text, although it is still there; click the [TRN] button to view.

The TPG Grade

There are two elements involved with the TPG, the letter grade and a (+) or (-) sign when applicable. Don't confuse the hierarchy of school grading here; for example a C+ could be much more valuable than an B- if you are a value or longshot player.

The letter grade is based on the win% and impact value for the trainer in 5-9 categories.

- A** Outstanding win percentage in this race situation or with this type of horse
- B** Above average win rate, solid
- C** Average impact or the data is highly conflicting
- D** Below average win rate, infrequent success
- F** Very poor, rarely if ever wins
- N** Insufficient data, new trainer, or the file was not downloaded
- +** Plus sign – positive ROI, gets longshots home, value trainer
- Generally negative returns, mostly hits with chalk or under valued horses
- blank** Neutral, average or conflicting return information

Example Race

Horse	Odds	TPG
# 1	4/5	C-
# 2	3/1	B
# 3	15/1	C+
# 4	40/1	D-

Analysis

Horse #1 is a bad bet as the trainer is just average in this situation and loses money for the bettors in the long run. #2 has a solid trainer, so consider other factors, may be a good bet to beat #1. #3 may be the price play; trainer has average production for winners but (+) indicates that he gets across longshots and has solid returns for his backers. #4 may still be a stab if other factors are present, such as \$\$, PED, Wk strength; we shouldn't be too picky at 40/1!

Handicapping with HTR2
Further Thoughts on the TPG

I don't have enough data to test the TPG for you yet. The trainer stats file was not a regular download for me over the years, although I did take it for selected major tracks from time to time. So we will wait a few months to accumulate more files and then take a detailed look, as the rating is very promising. For now, this discussion is based on my observations and feedback from other users.

Keep in mind that the TPG is really like a spot play that you uncovered with 365-days worth of trainer stats and updated daily. The trainer table is pre-computed with dozens of possible angles and situational records - an excellent window into the trainer's mind and management style.

A+ These are usually super trainers (TRN > 400); the (+) gets tagged because they get such a high percentage of winners that the ROI is positive without having hit any bombs. But sometimes you'll see an A+ assigned to a trainer of lower overall stature, and that's when it is interesting.

A High percentage in this situation missed the (+) either because the trainer does not hit with longshots or the ROI is not positive. Nevertheless, they win far more than their share of races.

A- Wins a lot of races, but mostly chalk or over bet winners. You'll lose money betting them, even if they do win often.

B+

C+ These are where the money is. Many trainers assigned these grades are not at the top of the standings but they have produced with prices in this situation.

B Win more than their fair share, perhaps the winners are tilted toward lower odds and favorites so the (+) was not assigned, but neither was the (-) so they roll along.

C - Good eliminator with lower odds horses; particularly effective as a *chalk beater*. Bet against these when the odds are under 3/1, there is no upside at those odds. But the "C" indicates they win between 8% and 14%.

C

D An average to low percentage situation for the trainer, returns are not positive, but if the odds are good, no need to eliminate.

D+ They don't win often, but they do pop with a big bomb once in awhile.

D- Win well under 10% in this situation and they don't return any profit when they do win. Ignore it if the odds are high though (see below).

F Close to a zero in this spot, bet against enthusiastically if low odds.

Don't let a "D-" or "F" winner frustrate you. As a horseplayer, you might lose 20 or 30 bets in a row – does that mean you will never win again? The trainer stats and the resulting TPG grade are based on 365-day performance, but any individual horse can turn things around for the trainer. The "D" and "F" trainers are *hungry* and will be hunting for an ideal spot when they finally get their hands on a live runner. If the odds are high and the horse has some strong angles in its favor, particularly Wk and PED, ignore the trainer grade. But when the TPG is bad and the odds are low, they become a good bet-against.

The (+) TPG is an excellent tandem factor, particularly when the Wk rating is strong or Wk rank = 1. You can also upgrade the value of any horse you like at a price when it has the (+).

If I am looking for a p4 or p6 single or any low odds key, I want to see an "A" or "B" next to that trainer to hold my confidence.

Handicapping with HTR
Notes and Observations and the Future of PPX

The PPX is a unique and fresh approach to looking at the past-performances. This first release is just the beginning and expansion will be continual.

There will be an August 1, 2006 update to HTR2 (or HTR2006) by the time you read this. I have added the PAC-PER ratings by popular demand to the PPX output. Also have fixed the (single race) printout so that horses are not cut off at the bottom and will separate correctly if two pages are needed. But I haven't yet figured out a way to run the Full Card Printing with PPX. It is problematic for the software to extract files and coordinate the output while Windows OS wants to move ahead of it with the printing batch.

Eventually the PPX will draw its data from a single file. There is an inoperable "Update" button for PPX on the bottom of the HTR2 Main Screen now. You'll be able to extract the PPX data from an effortless database file created from your racefiles, and then move them out of the working folder to speed up operations. We might even offer it on-line for an immediate update (subscriber site only). The large number of files required to get a complete PPX readout is a little cumbersome and I want to alleviate the necessity of holding thousands of files + results in the local folder. More announcements on this feature will be coming up by the end of the year.

The key to beating the public at this game is to recognize details they cannot see from traditional racing publications or past-performances. The typical handicapper believes he is seeing all the information about a horse's form from the fractional and final times, beaten lengths and history of human connections. Pace and speed are quantified with various types of figures in this listings. What else could we want?

Serious handicappers develop an *opinion* regarding changes to the horse's connections (Jockey / Trainer) or its pre-positioning and preparation (Pedigree and Workouts) to today's race based on their own experience and perhaps general statistics. *Expert opinions* from public handicappers and racing authors make their way into the mindset of the majority and eventually depress payoffs.

Yet they cannot make qualitative hard assumptions as to the exact value of these intangibles and especially changes to them. With the PPX, we can see instantly that the new trainer is an 88 points improvement or the pedigree has dropped 300 points as the horse moves from Turf to Dirt.

The strength of the PPX data is the ability to form a definitive appraisal of probable improvement or decline based on hard evidence, not conjecture. There is indisputable evidence, for instance, that a horse with a JKY = 350 has a higher probability of winning that one with JKY = 225. But what conclusion can we draw when this 125-point switch such as this occurs from one race to the next?

Not only do we know that something deliberate and favorable has taken place (a 125-point jock switch) but we also understand with instant clarity from the PPX, the value of the switch without having to resort to our own opinion about it. Logically, the greater the change in the numbers, the more likely a different result is going to happen for the horse.

Research with the Robot
Robot / Tester Learn ALL

The Robot / Tester / Spot Play Generator has undergone a major overhaul. You can get complete details in the new 13-page PDF booklet "[Robot User Guide](#)" in the HTR Library. There are two new test output screens: LEARNX (see next page) and LEARN ALL.

I like to use the LEARN ALL to quickly assess the strength and weakness of a promising spot play. Here is a spot play I like to look at →

- Layoff 30-90 (freshened horse)
- Workout 83+
- Positive Jockey Switch (+)

The first item uses the Layoff Range section of the Robot Filter screen. Set the "1st" (same as LAY or days back since last start) and then set the range 30 to 90. Be sure to put a checkmark in the box.

The second item requires the Workout Rating Range box. I put a checkmark on it and then set the range 83 – 95 (max).

The last item is in the general filter section to the right in the large gray box "(+) Jockey Chg".

The reasoning behind the play is that the horse has been given some healthy time off and has shown a strong work pattern after (or during) the rest period. The jock switch could indicate the new pilot has taken over the morning works as well, but at least indicates the barn is serious about the horse.

Using the *Learn ALL* printout, I can find out a great deal about this play. I want to find out which types of races does it show the best returns and win rates with. With this knowledge, I can set additional parameters to increase understanding and perhaps find some profitable situations.

The *Learn ALL* is a two-page printout and I don't want to eat up space showing you the whole thing here, but here are some highlights pulled directly from the *Learn ALL* result. This test took me 17 minutes to run on my hard drive using a 60,000-race folder.

Overall play results (365-days of data; July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006)

Plays: **2649** Win: **21%** ITM: **50%** ROI = **0.94** (-6 %)

This is not a bad result overall, and since the play count is ample and I have lots of wiggle room to tweak it and experiment with positive elements.

I looked through the printout (there are 120 elements in the *Learn ALL*) for items with fairly large sample size that produced a positive ROI. Just about everything related a strong Trainer (350+, rank = 1, etc) was profit producing and the same was true for good PED stats. But most telling was PAC=1, it showed strong returns with both Win and Place and a large sample. So my emphasis with this play will be to test it again with a trainer or pedigree boost, and most important to isolate those horses with the top PAC figure. Other early speed items showed promise too, such as Fr1 and E/P. One other interesting note: Females did much better in this test than Males.

Even if you prefer to use the HTR2 HX export options, the Learn ALL can give you a nice head start before you run specific queries. It would be a real chore in Access or other db programs to produce such as an extensive report with breakdowns in every conceivable category.

Research with the Robot
Robot / Tester Learn X

The new Robot *LearnX* feature is a fast way to find out what is happening with any aspect of your data. The *LearnX* extracts the “best and worst” from the 120 items found in the *Learn All* and sorts them into viable categories so you quickly determine strength and weakness.

As of this writing, there have been 10-days of the 2006 DMR meeting through Saturday July 29 results. Let’s have a look at the highlights so far during the meet. I also ran the 2005 data from a separate folder as I wanted to see which items were reoccurring this summer.

Factor	Plays	Winners	Win	W+P	ITM	WROI	PROI	SROI	\$AvgM	\$20+	High	I.V.
Money Makers												
bo	00029	00007	24%	38%	45%	1.62	1.16	0.98	\$13.4	0002	\$23	2.24
JYCHG(+)	00088	00019	22%	34%	42%	1.40	1.02	0.81	\$13.0	0003	\$57	1.89
Fav	00087	00038	44%	63%	75%	1.15	1.12	1.05	\$5.3	0000	\$9	3.81
K110+	00032	00014	44%	53%	72%	1.10	0.86	0.97	\$5.0	0000	\$9	3.62
What's Winning?												
Fav	00087	00038	44%	63%	75%	1.15	1.12	1.05	\$5.3	0000	\$9	3.81
K110+	00032	00014	44%	53%	72%	1.10	0.86	0.97	\$5.0	0000	\$9	3.62
K=1	00086	00027	31%	49%	69%	0.84	0.87	0.98	\$5.4	0000	\$9	2.74
Bombs Away												
FR3>50	00416	00064	15%	28%	40%	0.89	0.82	0.83	\$11.6	0009	\$60	1.32
RS=S	00185	00023	12%	20%	32%	1.08	0.77	0.79	\$17.3	0006	\$60	1.13
Big Losers												
WK90+	00029	00000	00%	28%	59%	0.00	1.13	1.42	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
@	00039	00000	00%	08%	18%	0.00	0.41	0.50	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
FT>50	00045	00000	00%	18%	27%	0.00	0.57	0.67	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
RS=R	00040	00000	00%	20%	25%	0.00	0.79	0.57	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
TRCHG(n)	00028	00000	00%	14%	25%	0.00	0.41	0.64	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
K=9	00098	00001	01%	03%	10%	0.29	0.29	0.61	\$57.4	0001	\$57	0.11
Money Losers												
WK90+	00029	00000	00%	28%	59%	0.00	1.13	1.42	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
@	00039	00000	00%	08%	18%	0.00	0.41	0.50	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
FT>50	00045	00000	00%	18%	27%	0.00	0.57	0.67	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
RS=R	00040	00000	00%	20%	25%	0.00	0.79	0.57	\$0.0	0000	\$0	0.00
Races Tested: 86 19Ju106 - 29Ju106												

Sorry about the small print above, but necessary to fit the page. Later I’ll streamline a special output that will fit in the newsletter with larger print.

The negative categories are interesting. Notice that Wk90+, @, FT>50, RS=”R”, K=9 (one win) are all big fat zeros so far. That might be expected with categories such as RS=R and K9, but FT>50 and Wk90+ are supposed to be major positives. Last year, the results were very similar and it is surprising that Wk90+ in particular continues to get pummeled at DMR, I can find no explanation for this, but at least I’m aware of it and can stay on the sidelines until it turns around.

The favorites are the positive story so far at DMR, winning well above 40%, much to the consternation of longshot players. K110+ obviously mirrors the chalk in doing so well and both are showing flat bet profits. A ‘regression to the mean’ is likely with the favorites coming down to earth soon. The good news is that the public will probably start betting them even more heavily based on the good results early in the meeting. Blinkers ON and (+) Jockey are making money too.

Back Page

Late News and Announcements

Vacation for KM

I'll be out of the office from Aug 3-18. If you have any technical problems, please email webmaster Rick (ricks@homebased2.com) or leave a message on our discussion board. If you have problems related to downloading or your account or credit card situation, contact HDW in Lexington at 502-570-0333.

Software Update August 1

HTR2 (or HTR2006) has a minor update, fixed a few bugs and labeling problems. Added the PAC-PER numbers to the PPX and included a "Save Tracks" option on the auto-download / "Select Track" option. No serious issues to report with *Robot* or Export – they are good to go.

Summer Contest

Our annual end of summer on-line tournament will take place August 25 – Sept 4 (Labor Day); we will post rules and entry information ASAP. First prize = \$500 entry at the *Orleans* October. Contest tracks include SAR, DMR, AP and all the top summer graded stakes action.

Congrats Mel (again)

Mel Moser finished 2nd in the River Downs tournament on July 22 and earned another qualifying shot at the NHC championship in January. Last year Mel finished 3rd overall in the NHC and this is his third straight trip to the finals.

John Buckley and Gary Brous earn freebie to Horse Player World Series

In addition to all that cash they won (see page-3), Buckley and Brous received a free qualifier to the Horseplayer World Series at the *Orleans* in January as did all the top-10 finishers at the *Gold Coast*.

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