

SMARTsig Confidential 7.05, May 2000

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*June 2000, issue 7.06, is scheduled for
posting on June 1st.*

SMART ^{UP} FRONT

The intelligent choice

Soccer betting

This past season I have been beavering away with the artificial intelligence neural network software from Ward Systems asking it to help solve the puzzle that is correct score soccer betting.

Someone on our email group talked of such betting as more akin to the National Lottery than it was to a serious money making prospect. Well, earlier on this year the model I was using was hitting 1-1 scores at a rate of 25%, making my predictions a 3/1 chance. For a bet which is offered everywhere at 11/2 this looked a good prospect to say the least.

However, no sooner had I offered to share these predictions with a few members of the email group, the results fell apart at the seams. A pin would have faired much better than did the program over the period I sent out the ratings.

Correct score betting is such a very difficult to achieve success, perhaps this is one of the reasons I find it such a challenge. I will find a solution dammit! I will ... one day! Perhaps not, but a rugged determination keeps me going - or is it the bloody-minded compulsion of a nerd following a lost cause? - don't answer that!

Take a typical example, from the league programme of April 15, 2000. WBA playing at home to Bolton.

Prior to the game West Brom. were 5 from bottom of the table and had scored just 17 goals at home in 20 games, an average of below one goal per game and the lowest in the whole division. They had however only conceded 21 goals during this period, so defensively they were quite respectable.

Bolton were 8th in the table. Their away record of goals scored and conceded to this stage showed a remarkable similarity to that of WBA. They'd only scored 16 goals in 20 away games, only two others in the league had scored fewer on their travels - however, this low scoring was matched by an excellent defensive record, only 19 goals conceded was, together with Manchester City, the equal best away defence in the division.

Given the flavour of this match and the goals profile of the two contestants, how would you see the game going - in terms of a correct score? Two low scoring teams, but also both with better than average defensive records.

At the final whistle to two teams were level, final score was 4-4! Makes a grown correct score man want to weep doesn't it - will we ever be able to make sense of such events?

End of season lethargy

An area that has proved a correct score happy hunting ground in past seasons is when the season reaches that point where the last handful of games is to be played before the seasonal break.

At this stage there is a mid-table section in each division where the current campaign has prematurely as good as finished. Those teams who cannot reasonably be expected now to reach promotion or the play-off places, but they are well placed enough to be untroubled by relegation worries too.

The manager may be still trying to whip up some enthusiasm for the remaining games, but the players will often take the view that this is a time to do "just enough". Why bust a gut when there's nothing to play for? There is no more credit in finishing in 10th place rather than 12th. Many are away for some sunshine too, so why pick up an injury, or worse still a broken leg, which would put the holiday in jeopardy?

Look to these teams, when playing each other, to drag out more than the average spectator-numbing 0-0 draws.

Because of modern coaching methods, I would discount the Premier league from this approach. The way forward for most of the big teams these days is to frighten opponents with a heavyweight attacks. Working with the premise that if you can put the opposition on the back foot, your defence will have less to do. Consequently, the Premiership is not a particularly fruitful area for the 0-0 bore draw.

So, Premier League excepted, begin by drawing a line below the highest club still in with a realistic chance of reaching the play-offs. Don't take the 'mathematical possibility' route, the team players won't be doing that, and it is their attitudes we're looking to exploit. If a team needs say 5 points or more to catch those above with only 4 or 5 to play - forget it. They won't do it - and the players know that!

Draw a line also above the lowest team you judge to still be in realistic danger of falling into the drop zone.

Now check out the fixtures. If any of these mid-table teams is playing against any other from the same 'dead' zone, back it as a 0-0 draw. You'll often be able to secure a 10/1 about the game. Remembering also, that wherever possible back the 'no goalscorers' option - which pays out if an own-goal ruins the 0-0 scoreline.

<i>Selections from w/e April 15</i>	<i>Results</i>
Blackburn v Portsmouth	1-1
Fulham v Sheff Utd.	4-0
Notts C v Reading	1-2
Wrexham v Bournemouth	1-0
Wycombe v Colchester	3-0
Mansfield v Hull City	0-1
Southend v Torquay	postponed

<i>Selections Easter Sat April 22</i>	<i>Results</i>
Crewe v Stockport	3-2
Grimsby v Blackburn	0-0
Nottm Forest v Sheff Utd	0-0
Colchester v Cambridge	3-1
Lincoln v Leyton Orient	0-0
York v Brighton	0-0

Selections Easter Mon. 24 April Results

Fulham v Nottm Forest	1-1
Sheff U v Crewe	1-1
Tranmere v QPR	1-1
Notts C v Oldham	0-1
Reading v Wycombe	2-1
Wrexham v Colchester	1-0
Exeter v Lincoln	3-0
Torquay v Macclesfield	3-2

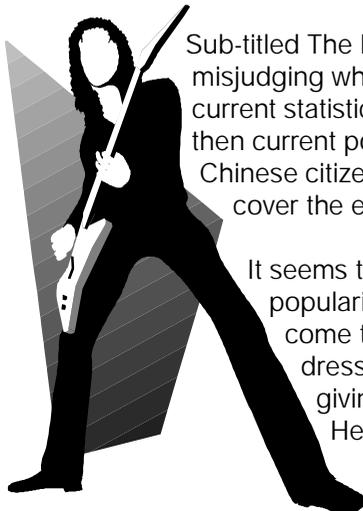
Small sample maybe, but we're only looking at the final weeks of a season, and these fixtures yielding just a few selections.

The above 20 selections provided 4 x 0-0 results, and with odds of 10/1 commonly available, just a couple were actually needed to make a pre-tax profit.

No fewer than four of the other results were decided by a single goal too, giving extra support to the lethargy strategy.

Got your sparkly suit ordered yet?

Anyone catch the BBCtv Open University short pointing out the dangers of predicting future events from current trends?



Sub-titled The Elvis Statistic, the experts warned of misjudging what is likely to happen, based upon current statistics. Was it 30 years ago that, given the then current population growth rate in China, that Chinese citizens, standing at 1 metre intervals, would cover the entire world?

It seems that now, given the increasing popularity and numbers of Elvis impersonators, come the year 2005, 1 adult in 3 will be dressed in the obligatory sparkly jump-suit giving his all with Hound Dog and Heartbreak Hotel!

- Stef



The final chapter from our on-going comparison of Timeform and One Jump Ahead's horses-to-follow lists for the National Hunt season just ending.

NATIONAL HUNT HORSES-TO-FOLLOW LISTS

Terry Collins

This is the final instalment of my charting of the progress of two of the well known horses to follow publications namely TIMEFORM '50 to follow' and ONE JUMP AHEAD by Mark Howard.

For the purposes of this exercise Timeform consists of the fifty named horses to follow while One Jump Ahead consists of the fifty to follow plus the 'Best of The Rest' (62 in total) the same criteria as last year.

All selections were backed to a 1 point win, regardless of any comments made in either publication and only horses running at any of the 59 UK mainland courses were used in forming the tables. These limitations should be borne in mind when reviewing the results.

The checking started from 22nd October 1999 and continued until after the Grand National - which equates to the same time period we covered for last season's comparisons.

So as we pass the winning post let's see where they both stand after the weigh-in...

TIME FORM (-£32.74)

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win prices
25-Mar	2	1	-£17.74	16/1
01-Apr	3	1	-£14.24	11/2
05-Apr	1	1	-£0.24	14/1
07-Apr	1	0	-£1.24	

TIMEFORM (continued)

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win prices
08-Apr	3	1	£8.76	12/1
14-Apr	1	0	£7.76	
15-Apr	4	0	£3.76	

Selections = 15
Winners = 4
Strike rate = 27%

ONE JUMP AHEAD
(£3.61)

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win prices
25-Mar	1	1	£6.61	3/1
01-Apr	4	2	£14.11	4/1 ,11/2
05-Apr	1	1	£28.11	14/1
06-Apr	2	0	£26.11	
07-Apr	4	1	£24.48	11/8
08-Apr	2	1	£35.48	12/1
13-Apr	1	0	£34.48	
15-Apr	7	0	£27.48	

Selections = 22
Winners = 6
Strike Rate = 27%

It was a quiet month with both lists only coming out to play on a few occasions, although they were made into special occasions by both lists landing some very nice touches!

Timeform finally wiped out it's huge deficit and ended in the black by only picking 4 winners.

I think that outcome would even have fooled the Question of Sport panel in the 'what happened next' category!

One Jump Ahead also wasn't resting on it's laurels and ended with a very healthy profit for it's second season in succession and must be considered good value at under a fiver!

Filters

The filters mentioned earlier were the '3/1 or better filter' and the advice 'ignore Cheltenham' which was mainly aimed at One Jump Ahead based on last years results.

The 'combined filter' results were as in the table;

- Filters -

	none	3/1 up	No Cheltenham
Timeform	£3.76	£11.83	£10.83
One Jump Ahead	£27.48	£41.33	£49.83

Statistics

Finally just a mini statistical fest to end on which, for simplicity, does not include any filters whatsoever.

Longest losing run

Timeform = 17

One Jump Ahead = 10 (this occurred at Cheltenham!)

Highest SP winner

Timeform = 16/1

One Jump Ahead = 14/1

Highest deficit recorded

Timeform = -£34.74

One Jump Ahead = -£28.10

Highest profit recorded

Timeform = £8.76

One Jump Ahead = £35.48

Date first into profit

Timeform = 4th Nov 1999
One Jump Ahead = 18th Feb 2000

Best days profit

Timeform = £15.50
One Jump Ahead = £16.00

Profitable days

Timeform = 26/83
One Jump Ahead = 35/89

Hope this information is of use in your quest to rob your bookie!



If you'd like to be notified automatically by Email if one of your own 'horses-to-follow' is running, Terry operates a horse-tracking service. Check out <http://members.tripod.co.uk/HTS/tracker.htm> to get more details. (14 day free trial available)

Peter May's 2-y.o Ratings
now available every day
by phone: 09068 55 66 34 (calls charged at 60p/min.)
by e-mail: www.pjmr.freeseve.co.uk
PO Box 13 StNeots, PE19 1NS

SPEEDMAX : FLAT RACING WORKSHOP

Demonstration program available – send email to
speedmax@nwsoft.globalnet.co.uk

SPEEDMAX : FLAT RACING WORKSHOP

Continuing our golf Master-Classes. There are many opportunities in the betting market of a tournament to extract genuine value. Look for instance at place-only betting when the favourite is at short odds.

GENUINE VALUE IN GOLF BETTING

Derek Fearnley & Scott Miller

Many discussions among this group concern the Holy Grail of punting, or any other form of speculation, obtaining genuine value.

Genuine Value = The opportunity to bet with an expectation of profit rather than just hope.

After last month's rather coy introduction to golf betting, its time to reveal a little more. Here is an anomaly we have been highlighting to our subscribers all season. Think of this snippet as a glimpse of stocking rather than a full flash of the frillies. It wouldn't be fair to our paying customers to reveal too much all at once.

A combination of factors this season has lead to a situation where a genuine value bet is available in most US tournaments.

The factors:

- 1) Tiger Woods' dominance over the last six months or so has lead to him starting most US events at odds of between 2/1 and 5/2.
- 2) Place-only betting is now available through several bookmakers most notably Sunderlands, (SkyText page 282 and prices are shown in Racing Post), who offer best terms including 1/6 odds on places 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 in some events but generally 1/4 odds places 1-2-3-4-5

The Value Bet

By shopping around the more established web bookmakers and

those that advertise on teletext, which we do, we are able to get the overround on outright betting for a tournament down to about 120%.

That is you could place a bet to win £100 on every player in the field such that your total outlay would be £120. Not a clever thing to do as you would suffer a 20% loss. To establish genuine value we have to overcome that 20% which is the bookies profit.

The value comes from the fact that a player's odds reflect his chance of winning the event. Tiger is quoted at 2/1 because he's won around half of his last 20 tournaments. He should be nearer evens! Well maybe that's value, but it's a small sample, it's not an original thought and it's not the point we're going to make.

The value comes in the place-only betting. Tiger is quoted to reflect his chances of winning the event, but even he can't occupy all top 7 places in any one event. Tiger's low quote forces bookmakers to raise the prices on other players to get to an acceptable overround. This leaves players genuinely overpriced in place only betting.

An Example

Let's take last month's US Masters as an example. Tiger is quoted at 2/1. His chance of a top 7 finish, including a win, is somewhere between 75%, based on his last 20 events, and 50% based on 70 events. Let's then assume Tiger's probability of a top 7 place is the mean of the two at 62.5%, as neither figure changes the logic too much.

There are around 90 players in the event. After taking out the no longer active ex-winners and invited amateurs, we are left with about 75 players with realistic chances of winning.

If the winner was to be a random selection from the active professionals the fair value odds would be 74/1 for each player. If the top 7 places were also determined randomly we can calculate the probability for any player of a top 7 finish as:

$$7/75 = 0.093$$

So, as we've worked out already, Tiger's chance of a top 7 finish is 0.625, leaving the remaining 6.375 top 7 places to be determined randomly. From this we can work out the probability of any other player finishing top 7:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(Tiger fails to finish in top 7)} & \quad 0.375 \times 7/74 = 0.035 + \\ \text{(Tiger finishes in top 7)} & \quad 0.625 \times 6/74 = 0.051 \\ & \quad 0.035 + 0.051 = 0.086 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore the fair odds of a top 7 finish based on all players having a random chance except Tiger are 10.63/1:

$$(1 / 0.086) - 1 = 10.63$$

In the Masters betting, all bar 12 of those players were quoted at 66/1 or better. Place odds of 11/1 for a top 7 finish. All bar 22 players were quoted at 125/1 or better, with an average best available price of 170/1.

If we assume that those odds are a true reflection of the player's relative merits, then a player quoted at 66/1 is 2.5 times better than one quoted at 170/1. Generally this is an understatement. As in horse racing players at high odds tend to represent the worst value. The probability of a top 7 finish for a player quoted at 66/1 or less is calculated by:

- Determining the probability of a 66/1 or less player finishing in the top 7, which we assume is 2.5 times the probability of the higher priced players finishing in the top 7.
- We are also expecting the number of top 7 finishes to be 6.375 (7 minus the probability of Tiger finishing in the top 7, which is 0.625).

Using the above the probabilities, the chances of a player placing in the top 7 are

- 0.15 for a player less than 66/1, and
- 0.06 for players at longer odds.

This gives fair odds of just over 5.7/1 for a top 7 finish. For a 66/1 chance we are offered 11/1! Betting place-only, to win equal amounts, on all players in the range 25/1 to 66/1 would give 13 bets with odds of between 4.2/1 and 11/1. If two of those players place we make a profit. The results on the US tour show far greater returns than this, particularly in the more prestigious events, which are the ones Tiger chooses to take part in.

In the previous two years at the Masters 11 from 17 players, excluding Tiger, finishing Top 7 including tied 7th have been quoted at 66/1 or less. This only applies in US events where Tiger plays and distorts the odds. The form in US events is more reliable. There is less likelihood of long-priced players finishing in a place than there is on the European Tour. The player must be best odds where you are able to make place-only bets.

In reality, we apply rigorous selection criteria to all our bets. Only when we find a player who we believe is overpriced according to our ratings would we make a bet. The method of placing the bet ensures that we are obtaining the even greater value compared to placing win or each way bets.

In the Masters the player we identified was John Huston at 66/1. 11/1 a place for a player ranked 15th in the betting, calculated using average price across all bookmakers. He has 6.375 places to aim for!!!

Winners in May

So onto this month's tournaments. The generous place terms outlined above are generally offered at the majors, with the next one coming next month.

In the meantime the European tour hits UK shores for the first time this season, starting with the Benson & Hedges International on 15 May, which this year moves to the Belfry, more famous for hosting the Ryder Cup.

The biggest event though will be the Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth at the end of May, where Ernie Els will be visiting the UK

for the first time this year. Having played the West Course at Wentworth there is an overpowering feeling of claustrophobia on some of the holes, especially the tee shots.

The course itself is not long, so the obvious prerequisite to be in with a chance of winning is driving. Some of the holes are short, but if you don't hit a good tee shot you can have no shot to the green, several of which are severely undulating.

Players for Courses

Who does this suit? Big names do tend to win here but the outsiders do come through. This is one Euro tour venue where past performance is a good guide. Anyone driving well entering the tournament will have a good chance.

Previous players with good past course form here include Colin Montgomerie, Ernie Els and Bernhard Langer. This is one course where past course form is invaluable and one European tour event where we do have lots to go on! Langer is starting to look like his old self again, and it won't be long before he's back to winning ways. A value outsider is likely to be Gary Orr.

The Scot finally won for the first time in Portugal earlier this year after countless 2nd places, and has some good form at Wentworth, placing in 1998 (2nd, where else) at 150/1, and followed that up with a creditable top 30 placing last year. For those who think he may be to long in the betting to consider backing in the outright, place-only as outlined above may offer better value, as might a sell of his finishing position on the spreads.

The Players Championship of Europe takes place towards the end of May in Germany at Gut Kaden. If as expected Tiger returns to defend expect to see Montgomerie off at around 9 or 10/1. Apart from Darren Clarke's triumph at the World Matchplay in February, none of the European tour regulars have done anything to talk of. It was Monty's May last year. With his putting sorted out and his desire to raise his game for the US Open at Pebble Beach next month (he was 3rd when it was last played here in 1992), expect to see him challenging.

Poor Fields = Poor Punters

With the poor quality fields at many of the European tournaments, 100/1 plus winners a regular feature, it is no wonder that many people prefer to concentrate on US events. However, although there are weaker fields in Europe and unattractive to the casual golf watcher, they do offer good value betting opportunities as the bookmakers struggle to find out information about the lesser known players.

In addition to the better quality players winning more regularly, and watching the action unfold on Sky on Sunday nights, the advantage of concentrating on US events is the predictability of the courses used. In order to accommodate the large crowds at their tournaments the USPGA decided to start hosting the events at their own purpose built courses.

These Tournament Player Courses (TPCs) give spectators excellent viewing opportunities, but for the punter they mean lots of previous years of form on the same course. Certain players can be playing like a dog, but when they turn up at a venue where they have previously won or placed, watch their game change for the better.

It's not just TPCs, but many events take place at the same course at the same time of year, year after year. This month sees long established events including the Byron Nelson Classic and the MasterCard Colonial.

One of the highlights of the US Tour is the Memorial, Jack Nicklaus' very own tournament. With a smaller than average field (the norm is usually 144 or 156 players) invited by Jack himself this tournament does offer a better chance for punters because of the high quality. Time and again when we see top players competing invariably one of them will win.

NB For the record John Huston finished 14th at the Masters. A poor first round 77 left him with too much to do for the following three days. He was only 3 shots from a placing in the top 7. Let's see what we can find for next month's US Open.

Always welcomed are the views of betting related computer software product users. John Williams has been a user and advocate of Speedmax for a good while now.

SPEEDMAX PROGRAM

- progress report

John Williams

As you might recall, I wrote about horseracing computer programs in last December's (6.12) edition of SMARTsig. In it I made mention of *SpeedMax Flat Racing Workshop* by George McNaney.

At the time of writing, the program was due for some upgrades. Well, I am pleased to announce that George has done it again, and come up with the goods, in response to users requests.

At the moment I am coming to grips with the new enhancements. A very useful feature is the ability to view racing statistics via a toggle button on the racecards screen. Using it shows current Jockey , Trainer, Jockey/Course, Trainer/Course, Jockey/Trainer, Jockey/Trainer/Course, together with Course, Distance and Going win percentages for the runners in the race.

To facilitate analysis, highest percentages are highlighted, and the basis on what the figures are reproduced from (wins/runs) are also shown. All the relevant data is sortable by clicking on the column heading.

The above sort feature is also applied to another enhancement, via the Browser/Race History screen. One can sort a horses' race history by date, finishing position, lengths beaten, course, distance run, going, class, runners, race age, race handicap level, official handicap mark, weight carried, headgear, starting price and SpeedMax rating.

This makes form study much easier. In an instant, you're able to see what handicap mark a horse was on when in winning form.

For those of you who follow sire form, the new sire statistics are very useful indeed . Included for each sire are its performances by going, distance and age, with wins to runs featured. For all weather punters, individual statistics for all three all-weather courses are also shown.

All this data is linked via buttons to make data access easy.

Another useful feature, is a notebook. This is linked to the racecard, so any previous notes about a horses' running are near to hand You're able to scroll through this list with ease.

For those who use "dutching", (multiple betting with proportional staking) as a betting style, a valuable new multiple staking feature has been added. This quite naturally calculates the stake for a preferred return, or how much will be returned for a given stake on several horses.

Via a new drop down list the user is now able to view a horses' rating year upon year. This has the ability to show whether a horse is progressing/regressing with age or not.

Finally, within the program, the Research Assistant feature has been enhanced. This indicates how the program is performing given certain criteria. This now includes the going. Using this variable for instance, shows that the program performs better when the going gets firmer.

All we need now is a feature to disable the wife, when she demands that I spend some time with her!

Then a further update from John at a later date . . .

Since writing the above George has been at it again!
(can't touch you for it - ed)

At the request of several program users, he has developed a very powerful feature indeed. With the click of a mouse button, the Speedmax user is able to generate a report for all sires in any given race.

The report lists the horse, sire, strike rate on going, distance, and age. In addition, listed are the best SpeedMax ratings that each sire has achieved. All these ratings can be sorted into ranking order by simply clicking at the head of each column, with best ratings being highlighted to make life easier.

Also, included in this latest package (which is free), a rating for each jockey can be displayed on the racecard via a toggle button. This lists the jockey's strike rate over the last 24 runs whilst riding favourites. This represents an adjusted rating, owing to the possibility of too little data being available for the given period.

There have also been substantial increases in data collection speed, as well as other minor improvements in layout.

All I need to do now is get to grips with it all!



Next month we hope to bring you a review of a new program called ProForm available via the internet.

- Stef

SMARTsig email group

If you're a SMARTsig subscriber and have access to electronic mail you too can be a part of our daily chats as a member of our email group.

To enrol, send a request to <stef@smartsig.com>

subscribers now have options for receiving List email;

- *Individual emails*
- *Daily Digest (all the day's mail in a single message)*
- *Suspended (no mail sent, but you can access a List message archive via the internet).*

Email List members can select their desired option at
<www.egroups.com/group/smartsig>
or send me an email and I'll do it for you.

Winner finding tricks and techniques are the mainstay of any horseracing discussion. Our email group is no different, as demonstrated in this extract from January/February this year.

PACE, TIMING & STRIDE-COUNTING

SMARTsig Email Group

Alan Rogers, Thu, 20 Jan 2000 03:27

Paul Willis wrote -
"The gentleman who tabulated his AW ratings inferred that it was possible to ignore weight to a large extent and still pick a very high proportion of winners . . . but in his results tables this was mainly applicable to sprint races. In distance events his figures showed that ignoring the weight factor reduced the percentage success rate significantly as distance increased."

Thanks Paul, it's not often I'm called a "gentleman"!

I wouldn't accept the point that it's ignoring the "weight factor" which reduces the effectiveness of speed ratings at longer distances. The essence of speed ratings is that they measure how fast a horse ran from A to B adjusted only for the prevailing track conditions. Speed ratings perform best when a race is run at a true pace from the start.

Practically every race run at a mile or less on the AW is run in this manner. As distances lengthen, the scope for more tactically run races increases and I would argue it is this factor which reduces the usefulness of speed ratings at longer distances.

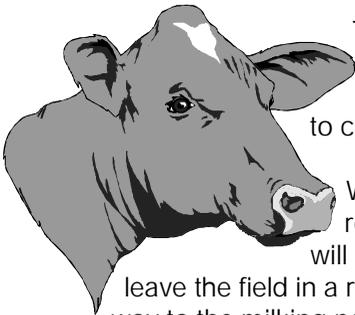
From Gordon Ross, Thu, 17 Feb 2000 16:27

PACE

Every day the Racing Post publish a set of clues as to the winner of each race. Your task is to separate the relevant clues for each race and discard the rest. It is my contention that in most races, the early pace plays a role in determining the final outcome and in many

paces it plays a key role. In some races it can provide the only relevant clue to the eventual winner.

Pace analysis does provide an insight into the way a race will or may unfold. It has the advantage both of ruling out possible contenders who will be disadvantaged by the early pace and more importantly indicating that high priced horses who would be only marginal contenders using a more traditional form-based approach should be more seriously considered. It can also categorise races into those where pace will be the most relevant clue or those where other factors will be more relevant and consequently more profitable.



The 'Cows' Theory

Before we discuss this I would ask you to consider the following;

When a farmer goes to the field to round up his herd of milking cows they will follow a definite pattern. They may leave the field in a random manner but as they make their way to the milking parlour (along a familiar route which they follow twice a day) they will arrange themselves into three distinct groups. The dominant group will be in the centre of the herd, the second most dominant group will lead the herd and the least dominant group will bring up the rear.

The first cow into the milking shed will quite likely be the same animal day after day, but it will not be the leading figure in the herd hierarchy. You may ask what relevance this would have for a horse race, but I would argue that many herd animals are creatures of habit, and that habit can be predicted.

Their common ground is that they are all made of meat and much of their lives from the beginning of time has been spent avoiding becoming something's dinner.

The basic premise in a pace analysis is that the faster the early pace of a race, the slower the final stage pace will be. If you had to travel for a distance of 500 yards you would record a faster time if you

jogged for the first 400 yards then sprinted the remaining distance, than if you sprinted the first 100 yards then jogged the rest.

Horses are no different. If two horses are separated by 5 lengths after 1 furlong of a race then the lead horse has travelled the first furlong about 1 second faster than the other. This early effort can be enough to ensure that the front horse will be overtaken as it tires more quickly in the later stages.

Consider a sprint race around the turn at Chester for example. A lone front running horse with a good inside draw can dictate a slow early pace, with the other horses come from behind habits making them reluctant to overtake around the outside. A small 1 or 2 length advantage can then be crucial as the field quickens off the final bend onto the short run-in.

Alternatively, we can consider a race in which most of the contenders have a front running style, run over a longer trip and with gentle bends and long flat finish. In this case a fast early pace where the lead is furiously fought over would suggest that the come from behind horses would be fresher at the business end and may be able to overcome the spent front running horses.

Neither of the two above scenarios would produce a fast race time or generate good speed figures for the winners so an analysis of speed figures for the horses previous races may not provide the relevant clues to the winner.

So how can we quantify the early race pace in the absence of sectional timing?

My technique is to examine the running styles of the individual members of the field and try to extrapolate that into a race pace analysis. The only clue to this is in the comments of the race readers. If a horse 'made all' or 'led early' in all of its previous races then it is probably a habitual front runner who may be unhappy anywhere else in the field.

If a horse always has the description of 'behind' or 'held up in rear' it can be classified as a come from behind horse. The water can be

muddled by other factors such as field size. In a race of three or four runners the likely race comments would be **led**, **disp lead**, or **chased / tracked/pressed leader** or **leaders**. A 'come from right out the back door' kind of horse would be disguised by these comments. A thirty runner cavalry charge could have several confirmed front runners drawn badly and unable to gain an early lead. They would be described possibly as '**midfield**' or '**in touch**' or '**prominent**', none of which would give a picture of its true habit.

At this stage I would stress that we should only be interested in the comments which describe a horses early pace or field position. Whether the horse finished well or poorly is not relevant to an early pace analysis.

My technique is to assign a value, on the scale of 0-12, to each horses running style and to use a sum of the relevant figures to give an indication of early race pace, which can then be used to indicate from where on the scale the winner is most likely to emerge.

The easiest way to describe this would be as worked examples and today's racing is as good a place as any to start.
Wolverhampton 17th Feb '00.

Race 1, 2.00 1m 1f 79y 8 nrs

Draw no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pace fig.	5	4	2	1	3	4	6	3

This is a low pace race over a distance and course which does not overly advantage front running horses. The draw advantage is relevant and towards the high numbers. The most likely contenders on pace alone are horses from draws 7 and 1 with a confidence level of 3 on a scale of 1 to 5.

Race 2, 2.30 1m 4f 7 nrs

Draw no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pace fig.	10	4	4	6	4	4	6

This is a low medium pace race over a c/d which gives more advantage to come from behind tactics. The draw advantage has a small relevance. The winner is most likely to come from a horse with a pace fig of 4 although none of the field can be excluded with confidence. Confidence level of 1.

Race 4, 3.35 6f 13 rns

Draw no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Pace fig.	2	10	6	0	3	1	3	6	3	2	4	0	4

Again a low medium pace but over a distance which is more likely to reward runners to the fore. This analysis is more revealing than the 2.00 in that we can begin to exclude. The main contenders are from draws 2, 3 and 8 with draws 11 and 13 being considered. The number of runners is beginning to approach the level where pace analysis tends to break down. Confidence level of 2.

Race 5, 4.10 5f 11 rns

Draw no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Pace fig.	8	3	4	3	2	2	2	12	4	3	3

Again a low medium pace over a distance which favours front runners. Main contenders are from draws 9 and 3. Confidence level of 2.

Race 6, 4.45 7f 8 rns

Draw no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pace fig.	4	4	2	4	10	3	4	5

Again a low medium pace. This is not a very revealing analysis with so many horses having 4 points. Had there been less of these then the selection would be from draw 8 with a confidence level of 4. As it stands the confidence level is around 2/3 and other contenders would be from draws 5 and 1, 2, 4, and 7.

All in all today is not the day on which I expect to break the bank. Certain patterns are good in pace analysis and I was hoping that some of these could be identified today to illustrate my points but that is not the case. As regards selections I would be tempted by the following, in order of preference, after reference to forecast prices and possible value.

4.45 Church farm flyer
2.00 River ensign
4.10 Lisa-b

In conclusion I would say that pace analysis is an extremely effective tool under certain circumstances. As well as a basic philosophy, I would like to develop some definite rule based selection procedures with pace as the basis. An example of this would be that at Sandown 5f back the fastest starting horse from the best draw (depending where the stalls are situated). These will I am sure prove very profitable.

Pace analysis can and does point out large price winners on a regular basis and when we do a post mortem on some races the only explanation for success is often that the winner was the only horse which was fully pace advantaged .

My SP record is 40/1 Red Lion early last flat season and this was as a direct result both of speed figures and pace analysis. This was followed up with a 33/1 and 10/1 forecast (Cybinka) a few days later. I still consider myself at the very early stages of my research into pace analysis with a great deal more to discover and learn.

If this analysis provokes a response I can run through more examples or perhaps explain more detail of the mechanics of the analysis, but it is unusual for me to have time to access the net and type out the details prior to racing so please bear with me if I cannot get back to you immediately.

Alan Rogers, Thu, 17 Feb 2000 22:05

Thanks for your reply, Gordon. I don't disagree with much of what you say especially about pace analysis providing an insight into the

way a race will or may unfold, and the way the horses I have been backing lately have been running the analogy with cows is very apt.

However, I feel what you are trying to measure so precisely needs a finer tool than the comments of racereaders. Have you received any of the sectional timings from the Wolverhampton race course web site? These are an eye-opener. I gave up using them because they were so riddled with inaccuracies, there was so much missing data and it was so difficult to get them they became more of an annoyance.

But those sectionals you felt could be trusted were extremely useful in predicting the likely pace scenario of a race.

Having used them for a while I don't feel there is any way you could get the same quality of information from the comments of racereaders. There's no doubt you can pick up from the comments whether a race will have a strong pace or a slow pace, which horses will be advantaged/disadvantaged by the pace or whether a horse will get an easy lead - but to trying hang a numerical value on a race from these comments, in my opinion gives the analysis an impression of accuracy it can never achieve without the benefit of sectional timing.

Gordon Ross, Fri, 18 Feb 2000 00:10

No I haven't tried Wolverhampton's sectional times because of the lack of a full picture from other tracks.

On your point about numerical values giving an air of authenticity or accuracy, I would agree with you up to a point. The use of numerical values is only to allow the picture to show up more clearly, but the value lies with those instances where the advantage is so clear that it stands out beyond any inaccuracies.

It is a danger with any good rating system that you may try to read too much into the figures and in fact Beyer warns of this in his publications on speed figures. 23.85 may be better than 23.84 but I wouldn't want to put the mortgage on it.

However, I would argue with you as to the extent of its usefulness. Today's examples were not too good so I have detailed some recent mouth-waterers where the advantage was clear.

Oh, and before you ask, I also have some recent mouth-waterers which were also very similar to the cows in question. Last Saturday at Lingfield was excellent. Lingfield favours front-runners and the draw advantages the inside draws (low numbers)

Race 1, 7f (draw/pts)

1/3, 2/4, 3/0, 4/8, 5/6, 6/4, 7/1, 8/0, 9/2, 10/2, 11/2

The formula, for want of a better word, says that in this situation we should look primarily at draws 4 and 5, with 8 and 6 points, but not with any great confidence. But then Ghaazi (draw 5) was withdrawn (or should that be flushed).

The revised analysis said draw 4 with great confidence. This screamed value: a lone front-runner, inside draw, over 7f at Lingfield. The horse loves the place with all its wins coming from Lingfield or Brighton (a pattern that you will probably recognise)

The pace dangers from draws 2 and 6 were both 25/1 + and then came draw 1. The result was a win for the selection Apollo Red at 6/1, with draw 1 Reachforyourpocket 3l second.

Race 2, 7f

1/6, 2/7, 3/3, 4/0, 5/0, 6/0, 7/1, 8/8, 9/7, 10/0

The selection was close between draws 1 and 3 which were the first and second favourites and they finished first and second at 2/1 and 3/1.

Race 3, 1m

1/2, 2/0, 3/7, 4/1, 5/0, 6/9, 7/0, 8/1, 9/0, 10/2

This is not a good pattern with such a large gap in the spectrum (there are no 3's, 4's, 5's or 6's) These are best left alone over anything but 5f, 6f or possibly 7f at a push.

Race 4, 5f

1/2, 2/2, 3/6, 4/10, 5/10, 6/4, 7/1, 8/6, 9/12

A high pace race even for 5f which often have high figures. By the way, 5f is a dangerous area on some courses, I think because they tend to be run less tactically. This was confidently put as between draws 1 and 2 with the outside draw of 7 putting it out of consideration. This was Mukarrab's race, draw 8 and was won by draw 2, Frilly Front at 6/1.

Race 5, 5f

1/3, 2/2, 3/4, 4/5, 5/1, 6/8, 7/2, 8/8

The analysis said back draw 4 who has 5 points but this was the evens favourite and this didn't show massive insight, although it did win.

Race 6, 1m 4f

1/7, 2/12, 3/9, 4/1, 5/4, 6/12, 7/12, 8/0, 9/7

This is a high pace race especially for 1m 4f. It is on the boundary of what I call massive pace and at that stage I would tread warily. The only possible selections would be the 0 from draw 8 (which was China Castle which seems to win less frequently at this course and is not in top form) or possibly Be Gone from draw 4 with 1 point. This finished 3rd at 10/1

Race 7, 1m 2f

1/6, 2/2, 3/3, 4/4, 5/2

Analysis said draw 1 with 6 but not with any enthusiasm. This was the 2nd favourite, and with the 1st and 3rd favourites being disadvantaged with only 2 points this became a decent opportunity and indeed won at 9/4

So that gave 22¼ points returned for 8 selections level staked.

Or how about Southwell Feb 4th? This gave only 3 possibles from only 2 races

2.10, 1m App

1/2, 2/0, 3/8, 4/3, 5/7, 6/0, 7/2, 8/2, 9/3, 10/4, 11/2, 12/0

The system insisted on a 4 and there was only one from draw 10, There were no 5's or 6's and this looked like what the American Racegoers call the Garden Spot - tucked in behind two duelling front runners with no pressure on the selection from other horses trying to do the same thing. Noble Investment won at 25/1.

3.10, 6f

1/8, 2/6, 3/8, 4/6, 5/2, 6/5, 7/1, 8/2, 9/3, 10/3, 11/2

A medium pace race with all the early action going on in the inside 4 draws. A 3 drawn wide was the perfect selection and there were two of these - Sharp Hat and Keen Hands which won at 8/1.

And sometimes it can be really frustrating

Lingfield Feb 5th, 1.50, 7f

1/10, 2/9, 3/7, 4/0, 5/6, 6/5, 7/8, 8/6, 9/8,

The only possible pace selection was the 0 from draw 4 - Cappucino Lady at 50/1. The winner was the 5 from draw 6 - Damasquiner at 50/1. No prizes for getting the price right on this show.

Sorry if all this sounds like a tipsters letter, but I have recently elevated the pace analysis from being only part of the consideration in my selection procedure to a level where it is the main weapon in the armoury. I also believe that a pace analysis can be used in conjunction with speed figures to show up those well-earned figures as opposed to those which were gained relatively easily. I would hesitate to take the victory of Apollo Red at purely face value for instance, since he had a high pace advantage.

Michael Lydon Fri, 18 Feb 2000 01:48

Hello Gordon,

It's gone half-one in the morning and I've just felt the need to delete about four pages of text regarding 'pace' analysis due to the amount of sub-categories involved.

After one hour spent typing, I found that this wasn't nearly enough on the subject. So until such a time comes when I am able to devote my self unconditionally, I shall have to put it on hold.

One thing that bothers me with your piece Gordon is your 'cow' example followed by you going on to discuss the distribution of pace in a race. The thing I cannot get to grips with is your explanation of relevance. You say that horses are creatures of habit and that habit can be predicted, but where does this fit in when discussing pace?

Are you suggesting that horses have a natural tendency to run in a particular type of way (i.e. front runners etc), due to the natural hierarchy which exists? I look forward to hearing your reply.

Jaygee Fri, 18 Feb 2000 08:59

If, as Gordon asserts, the tendencies to front run or come from behind are genetic traits, then Pipey must either only buy horses with a front running predisposition or he's not getting the true potential from all his charges. You could also argue the same case in respect of hold up horses in the care of D Elsworth.

In my opinion the respective records of both trainers cast doubt on the importance of this factor in winning races.

Michael Lydon Fri, 18 Feb 2000 10:59

Jaygee, I was thinking along exactly the same lines. This can be further complicated by the 'use' made of a horse when running over varying distances.

Anyway, lets allow Gordon to respond, as genetic qualities do have an influence in racing only (in my opinion) somewhat differently than Gordon suggests.

Gordon Ross Fri, 18 Feb 2000 20:49

This subject thread seems to have provoked a good exchange of views and I don't think that we have a great difference of opinion on the value of a pace analysis of some description.

The actual mechanics of the analysis seems to be where the differences arise. I am sure that many of us consider pace when making selections to some extent and my method is simply another way of doing it. I am not claiming it as the new Holy Grail, but I am claiming that it will highlight horses which would be summarily dismissed by other procedures, be they pace, form or speed based.

It will not win every time, and any system which claims this is false. Best speed figure last time out will produce the winner in maybe 20 - 24% of all races backed blindly. I don't have a comparative figure to give for this pace analysis since it is not simply, back the highest number.

There is no hard and fast rule which says, back the number 4 or the number 10 although it will be very definite in some cases or more precisely patterns since this is what we are really looking at (Apollo Red for instance)

I think that this answers Nick's point on the advisability or advantage in using figures. Figures suit me, but maybe that is part of my character. They are only a guide, for presenting the information in a clear manner. I did use a combination of letters and figures at one point, but you can't add up letters. But it is different, and therein must lie the advantage. I will give one further example from today's racing at the bottom of this thread, in the hope that you are not sick of the sight of them already. This, I am sure will illustrate the point.

As to the other points raised, I will try to answer these as follows:

The cow analogy may have clouded the issue. This was only to illustrate that animals do interact with each other in ways that may seem strange to us. They have hierarchies and rituals which we may not even notice, and these will have some effect on racing.

I am not linking this with pace other than to say that horses react in particular ways to particular circumstances. Front runners perform better in the main when not under pressure, and I would argue that this is the same all down the field.

The garden spot, behind duelling front runners was another thing I

mentioned, and would add that the more runners which try to occupy that spot, then the less advantageous this will be.

As to Martin Pipe's success with front runners, which was mentioned by Jaygee, this is entering the nature or nurture debate, and quite frankly I don't know.

Again to illustrate the point, I would say look at the record of a horse which ran a few days ago (sorry can't remember the name off hand) This horse had won 4 from the last 5 races (or 5 from 6) losing the other on the only occasion where it tried to make all.

Any analysis which regarded this as a selection on the basis that it sometimes leads would have been flawed. There are huge unpredictabilities with pace as with any other selection tool and as Nick pointed out the tactics of Tycando for instance can only be guessed at.

I also have a friend who used to work for the old Victoria Blower (remember that?) and some of his comments on the behaviour of race readers would suggest that the comments are sometimes of limited value.

As to the particular example quoted by Alan, 'led at a strong pace', I would be interested in the 'led' but not the 'strong pace'. I don't believe that they can be that accurate and neither can I. You get a 1 or a 2, you can't get a 1.35. Incidentally of the 120,000 + horse runs in the three years that I researched, there were 96,000 different race comments.

As to Steven's points on National Hunt. There must be some relevance for this method in NH but I can see problems with the large numbers of small fields. I have done no research into NH.

Finally to Doug's points. His points on 5f and speed figures mirror my findings, and the same applies with pace. On some tracks its okay but tread warily. As to the draw advantage, pace does strange things with this. A low pace can reinforce a draw advantage but not always and not everywhere. There is a lot of work to be done in this area but I can see huge potential.

In conclusion check out the 1.10 over 2m at Southwell today:
draw/pace fig 1/3, 2/2, 3/9, 4/2, 5/6, 6/4, 7/1, 8/2, 9/2,

This is a decent pattern and the basic formulae says a pace figure of 5 is best. This is then adjusted for distance and course to give a preference for a 4. There was only one 4 and it was Outplacement which won at 50/1.

There goes the record. How many other approaches would have highlighted this?

Michael Lydon Sat, 19 Feb 2000 01:06

Regarding ". . . noticed was that the race-readers were poor judges of pace."

It's not only the 'race-readers' which are poor judges. For anyone watching horseracing on television DO NOT BELIEVE WHAT THE COMMENTATORS SAY ABOUT PACE!!! (I hope the capitals help signify how strongly I feel on the subject)

I have found that every single commentator is guilty of throwing in the comment 'slowed up the pace' or 'quickened the pace' or some other rubbish to help fill the gaps in their commentary.

Visually this may appear to be happening, but resist the temptation to believe what you hear from the commentator (whoever it is), as they are all guilty of getting it badly wrong. I can say this hand on heart as I am a stride-counter.

Equally, the times they do not pick up on, when the pace has slackened astounds me. I find that unless a glaring change of pace occurs, commentators and race-readers very rarely pick it up.

With the above knowledge at hand, if you are prepared to do some 'investigative research' on horses, you can usually identify the ones which will be weak or even false favourites, or even horses which have been under-rated - time figures do not always identify this by themselves!

Anyway, time constraints are with me yet again (1-00 am), so I'll leave you with the thoughts before watching Pitman & Co on TV this afternoon.

Sorry, almost forgot . . .

I would hate sectional timing to become commonplace, as I wouldn't be the only one which would have access to it. I know it's inevitable that it will be widely introduced, but it's areas like this that any serious punter should be looking to gain an edge from NOW.

There is no 'edge' in having the same information as everyone else, and in order to get ahead in this game you've got to look for areas which have so far gone unnoticed or untapped by others.

To me, sectional timing on racecourses will give a pretty good indication to EVERYONE how a horse should and prefers to perform. If you want to beat the crowd, you've got to be ahead of them somewhere along the line!

John Gregory, Sat, 19 Feb 2000 08:10

So Michael, you're a 'stride-counter'? Now that strikes me as really innovative. Perhaps you could give us some more details on how you do it? Nothing too revealing of course just target horse, part of race, timing duration, sample analysis, equipment used etc. <grin>

Colin Trainor, Sat, 19 Feb 2000 19:07

Gordon,

I think that your approach seems to make sense - I have to be honest and say that I hadn't considered using pace as a selection tool. You say in your message that the formula indicated it as a 5, how did you arrive at this conclusion (is there a formula?)

I am getting slightly lost at this stage, from looking at your figures I would have thought that the 3 draw had the front position all to himself. Surely would this not mean that he was the selection?

Sorry if it seems that I am totally ignorant concerning this - the fact is that I am!

Michael Lydon, Sun, 20 Feb 2000 00:48

Hello Jaygee,

You asked ". . . some more details on how you do it? Nothing too revealing of course just target horse, part of race, timing duration, sample analysis, equipment used, etc."

You don't ask for much do you!!!

I admit that I'm not wildly enthusiastic about sharing everything I know about the subject, but as you are interested I shall try to answer your questions.

Target horse:

I mainly use stride counting to find out exactly what happened during a race where a horse has won impressively, to find out whether or not the form is likely to be 'false' or if there are any weaknesses in an animals make-up (I have been known to send a note to a trainer to inform them of a weakness in a main competitors pace analysis).

Also if a particular fancy of mine has run badly (with or without a physical problem) to find out whether the pace in the race contributed to his downfall.

NOTE: This is not set in stone as I do use them at other times, though it would be fair to say that the above examples are the majority of case studies.

Part of Race & Timing Duration:

These obviously must be linked when dealing with National Hunt racing, as you cannot go on counting as they leap over a hurdle. To get a fair and accurate assessment I have found that twenty strides gives a perfectly accurate view on what is happening, this also bodes well in that a horse can usually get a 'balanced' twenty strides in between hurdles and fences at most courses which I have come across.

When I'm looking seriously at a horse, I assess the horse heavily throughout - this also includes a comprehensive examination of my own particular style of race-reading (sorry folks-no ins and outs on

that one) which involves key points which I look for, and write both the times and comments in 'segment boxes' to see the significance of events which happened during the race.

I think it's fair to say that I cover nearly every stride which the horse has taken, though there is strictly no need to do this I feel that you can never have too much information.

NOTE: The word 'balanced' is essential! A horse will usually take around three revolutions of his stride to retain balance and momentum - there is no point in timing a horse which is 'out of stride' or 'off-balance' as your figures will lead you to a false assessment.

Sample Analysis:

I was going to be cocky and simply fill this category with the following.....'Cheltenham 2000-Monsignor', but it seems that I had better quash any thoughts of being 'flash' due to the 'Bismarck effect' which seems to follow any selections I air on the e-mail group, come back Montjeu!

It's fair to say that I am knee-deep in Monsignor vouchers for Cheltenham though, and instead of being apprehensive as I usually am when backing ante-post, I have complete confidence that if he arrives there in one piece it won't even be close (I heard today that he is now Evens if he arrives there fit and well he's a 1/2-4/9 shot in my book) I have this confidence due to stride counting him earlier this season.

Incidentally, previous winners at Cheltenham reinforced by stride counting included French Holly and Barton, see if you can find the connection . . .

Please don't think I'm rude Jaygee, but I'd rather not place my assessments - you should have a fair idea of what to do by now though :-)

Equipment Required:

I never stride count at a racetrack - what is the point? I can't influence my decision now, and a video tape which I can re-run time and time again to make sure my figures are correct is far more accurate.

So you'll need (here comes the Blue Peter 'sticky back plastic and a fairy liquid bottle' bit)

Recording of race:

- Video which allows you to pause and search (if any member has a video player which doesn't have this facility, you'll make far more money selling it at an antiques auction than you will stride-counting)
- Electronic stopwatch - I say electronic due to the need for an accurate count. A stride count resulting in say 8.83 per twenty strides-then drops to 8.20 is very significant-be accurate and always double and treble check your results!
- Pen
- Paper
- A very keen eye
- A hell of a lot of practice

Jaygee, I hope this gives you a better view of stride counting, it may not be the way others do it as I started completely from scratch myself without any prior knowledge of it. I have not mentioned other factors such as undulations and bends (I completely ignore wind) deliberately as I must retain some advantage.

Remember, this is just one way of seeing which pace conditions suit horses and which doesn't, also what tactical pace a horse has. I also have my own ways of 'sectional timing' but that just tells me the pace of the leading horse which is a different matter entirely.

An offshoot of sectional timing leads you into the 'balance' of a horse and how much 'leg changing' is going on to alleviate strain. These are just a few branches of the subject of 'pace', and this is why when I start writing I am forever looking to add something else!

Anyway, I hope this brief if not censored mention of the subject is of help.

Jaygee, Sun, 20 Feb 2000 11:25

Thanks for a most interesting reply and particularly for revealing

some hard earned details in the true spirit of the list.
I'm off to Comet this afternoon to replace my 1985 Ferguson VTR with something that meets your spec and start applying your ideas.

Both my wife and I have a natural antipathy towards small field long odds-on shots and watched Monsignor's race at Warwick yesterday with some scepticism until the last hurdle when we both did a double take. Not since See You Then at his peak has either of us seen a horse take a hurdle like that; simply as part of its natural stride with absolutely no check in its forward motion.

In my honest opinion, the only danger to your anti-post vouchers would be if Monsignor is re-routed to the Champion Hurdle. If he did go there and if Pipey ran a couple of front runners in the race I reckon Monsignor would win.

Michael Lydon, Sun, 20 Feb 2000 17:12

Jaygee, He's good - but not *that* good :-). . . . and I'm sure that Mr Pitman is fully aware of that. Istabraq is a stride-counters nightmare/dream, it depends which way you look at it.

Nightmare - his tactical pace is second to none. He can accelerate and decelerate at will for tactical position in a race, that's off a fast, medium, slow or winding pace. This ensures that you have to re-check everything ten times over as his sheer brilliance has you scratching your head!

Dream - this is the 'perfect' horse according to everything I believe in. Can settle beautifully and accelerate and decelerate to adjust to the pace instantly, is perfectly balanced, and not only 'stay on' when the form book reads 'drew clear' but actually produce a burst of speed that makes you think that you've hit the 'stop' button on your watch a second early. We've discussed him before and you already know my feelings about him, but unless I live to 180, I honestly believe that I will never see better - a one off!

Just one thing Jaygee, in my haste I forgot to mention to count from the 'lead' leg (though I'm sure you were aware of this already).



The article entitled 'Archie' in last months issue offered a method of ranking the longer term effectiveness of betting methods based upon their results. Its complexity however left a few puzzled faces.

ARCHIE THE SECOND

Steve Tilley

After the first article I received some feedback saying that the original formula was too complicated and could it be made simpler. I consulted with a friend at the local college and she gave me some useful advice and pointed me off to read some more textbooks.

As a result we now have the version 2 of Archie.

$$\text{Archie} = \frac{\text{runners} \times (\text{winners} - \text{expected_winners})^2}{\text{expected_winners} \times (\text{runners} - \text{expected_winners})}$$

So to calculate the Archie score for any system you need three numbers, the number of runners, the number of winners and the expected winners. It is this last one that is the trickiest. You need to convert all the odds of the bets in the system in to their decimal equivalents, (2/1 is 0.3333, 6/1 is 0.143 etc) and then add them all together. This is merely the sum of odds.

As a quick example let us take the Racing Post's Ten-year Trends results since January 2000.

Runners 57, Winners 20, sum of odds, 12.068

$$\text{Archie} = \frac{57 \times (20 - 12.068)^2}{12.068 \times (57 - 12.068)} = 6.614$$

This can then be looked up in the new probability table below. This

has had to be changed so as to make the working easier in the formula.

Table 1

Archie	probability	Archie	Probability
0.3	0.5839	6.5	0.0108
0.5	0.4795	7.0	0.0082
1.0	0.3173	7.5	0.0062
1.5	0.2207	8.0	0.0047
2.0	0.1573	8.5	0.0036
2.5	0.1138	9.0	0.0027
3.0	0.0833	9.5	0.0021
3.5	0.0614	10.0	0.0016
4.0	0.0455	10.5	0.0012
4.5	0.0339	11.0	0.0009
5.0	0.0253	11.5	0.0007
5.5	0.0190	12.0	0.0005
6.0	0.0143		

The first column in Table 1 is the Archie score; the second is the chance of getting a score that high due to chance.

Here our score of 6.61 would occur less than 0.0108 of the time by pure chance thus we can be safe to say that Ten Year Trends is getting results better than the starting prices would suggest.

Please note you must not use Archie if the expected winners is less than 5. This is for good statistical reasons.

Let us assume that we decide to follow *Ten-Year Trends* and back his selections, now we can use the Archie score to help us evaluate the bets.

Now we all know what happens when we follow a tipster or a system. It starts to make losses. Then just after we give it up in disgust it promptly produces a number of long priced winners.

Why does this happen?

First the tipster or system may have been having a purple patch when we noticed it and then has returned to its normal performance after we join in. By using Archie as described above we can reduce the chances of this. If we have a good Archie score and hence a low probability of the system getting that good a result by chance then we can have reasonable hopes there is a good chance of similar performance in the future.

Systems and tipsters may have bad runs due to chance as we all know. However there is also the chance that the system or tipster has "gone off". There are many reasons to account for this; the public or bookmakers may become wise to the system and force prices down. Changes in courses, handicappers, race fixtures, training methods etc may all cause the number of winners picked to drop sharply even if the odds are still the same.

Archie helps us to differentiate between these. It is important to do so. If you leave a system when it has just hit a bad patch then when it recovers you will miss out on the winnings. Conversely failing to get out of a collapsing system can be expensive!

Further problems arise if it is your own system or you are your own tipster. You have a bad patch. You start to get concerned and start changing your selection rules. If you do this and it was just a bad patch you hit due to pure bad luck then you'll miss out on winners you would have had if you'd stuck to your original methods. Of course if your system had been overtaken by events and was now useless then sticking with it is not a good move.

Let us assume that we decide to follow Ten-Year trends and back his selections, now we can use the Archie score to help us evaluate the bets.

First we find the average advantage per bet.

$$\text{This average_advantage} = \frac{\text{number_of_winners}}{\text{sum_of_odds}} = \frac{20}{12.068} = 1.657$$

means that on average this system produces a 65.7% advantage over the starting price. This is a good start!

We now start to bet following Ten-year trends and record our results. Now we can apply a little trick.

In Archie originally the expected winners was merely the sum of all the odds. This means that I was expecting Ten-Year Trends to be no better at finding winners than the odds would suggest.

The Archie score and probability suggest otherwise i.e. he is better at finding winners than the bare odds. In other words he has an advantage over the odds. If his system is continuing as before we should still expect that advantage again.

Thus our expected winners in our Archie formula is not the sum of odds but the previous advantage, 1.657, times the sum of odds.

		winner	Price	return	bank	odds	odds*1.657
08/01/00	Archive Footage	0	10/1	-1.09	-1.09	0.091	0.151
08/01/00	Snowdrop	0	10/3	-1.09	-2.18	0.231	0.382
08/01/00	Lancastrian Jet	1	4/1	3.91	1.73	0.200	0.331
15/01/00	Nordance Prince	1	13/8	1.53	3.26	0.381	0.631
15/01/00	Slideofhill	0	7/1	-1.09	2.17	0.125	0.207
21/01/00	Bellator	1	8/11	0.64	2.81	0.579	0.959
22/01/00	Bobby Grant	0	4/1	-1.09	1.72	0.200	0.331
22/01/00	Miss Fara	0	7/1	-1.09	0.63	0.125	0.207
29/01/00	Dr Leunt	0	7/1	-1.09	-0.46	0.125	0.207
29/01/00	Lady Rebecca	1	EVS	0.91	0.45	0.500	0.829
29/01/00	Storm Damage	0	9/2	-1.09	-0.64	0.182	0.301
05/02/00	Young Spartacus	0	9/4	-1.09	-1.73	0.308	0.510
05/02/00	Echo's Of Dawn	0	9/2	-1.09	-2.82	0.182	0.301
05/02/00	Brandon Court	0	11/2	-1.09	-3.91	0.154	0.255
05/02/00	Master Bevelled	0	11/2	-1.09	-5.00	0.154	0.255
Totals	15	4				3.536	5.858

Here are the results for the first month showing 15 bets, producing 4 winners and giving a loss, after tax, of 5 units. Would you carry on with him?

The Archie score can be calculated as before.

Runners 15, winners 4, expected winners 5.858

$$\text{Archie} = \frac{15 \times (4 - 5.858)^2}{5.858 \times (15 - 5.858)} = 0.967$$

This is low and from Table 1 could occur over 31% of the time just due to chance. So you would carry on following him, as you have no evidence that this is other than pure bad luck?

Let us now imagine we have followed Ten Year trend into the future and had the following results

Runners 80. Winners 22. Sum of odds 19.31. Expected winners $19.31 \times 1.657 = 32$. Bank +70.

$$\text{Archie} = \frac{80 \times (22 - 32)^2}{32 \times (80 - 32)} = 5.208$$

This would only occur from Table 1 about 0.02 (or 2%) of the time. This indicates that Ten-Year trend was not achieving the same advantage as before. His advantage over these 80 bets was

$$22/19.31 = 1.14.$$

It would certainly indicate that all was not well and it might be worth reducing stakes or leaving well alone for a while. The nice point here is you have a 70-point profit in the bank. With a spreadsheet it is easy to calculate the Archie score as you go along.

In my view if when your following a system and the Archie score reaches about 4 you should be looking carefully at what is going on. If it reaches 5 then take some action.

A final example.

We follow Ten-year trend into a different future and find

Runners 60 Winners 30 Sum of odds 14.2 Expected Winners
 $14.2 \times 1.567 = 23.53$. Bank +180

Has Trend Year Trend made a long-term improvement so we should put our stakes up? He has a 50% strike rate and an advantage per bet of $30/14.2 = 2.11$. 111% advantage per bet!

$$\text{Archie} = \frac{60 \times (30 - 23.53)^2}{23.53 \times (60 - 23.53)} = 2.927$$

This occurs from Table 1 about 0.0833 of the time should not be taken as a long term change. Increasing stakes for example is not justified. Many thanks to Brianover of the e-mail group for the raw data for Trainer Trend.



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One member presents here his different slant on comparing jockeys. Nothing so straightforward as number of wins, win percentage or prize money won.

FLAT JOCKEY STATISTICS

(from a different angle)

Mike Dove

Having purchased the race results on disk from SMARTsig some time ago now, I have been enjoying myself wrestling with the wealth of information it contains and generating all sorts of facts, figures and statistics in the hope it will help me improve my profitability.

One area of newspaper statistics I've always found frustrating is the tables showing top jockeys and top trainers. Trainers is based upon money won, and jockeys on races won. As far as I'm concerned these two items offer little help in allowing me to see who is better than who at their particular job.

Is the trainer winning most money the best trainer - or just the one with the classiest / or largest number of runners? If a couple of the top trainers "traded places" for a complete season, would the end result be that much different from if they'd not done so?

Jockeys too. How is number of winners on its own going to help me decide which is the better rider? Attached to a top stable, or a workaholic rider with an enthusiastic agent can get twice the number of bookings than another. Even "percentage winners" leaves much to be desired - how does this help if one jockey's rides are mainly in the first few in the betting, compared with another who rides mainly outsiders?

So against these 'failings' of the big sporting papers to provide me with some interesting views of comparative jockey performances, I decided to configure some statistics of my own.

There is no claim on my part that this is fresh ground, it may have been covered somewhere before, but I've not seen it. Even if it is

new ground, it might be the case that no one has done it before simply because the figures as they have been configured are useless!?!

Undaunted however, I pressed on. I did not have any preconceived ideas of exactly how I wanted to construct the comparisons, so I started with a blank canvas.

I'd read somewhere that checking how jockeys perform in tight finishes may be a revealing source of data. Okay I thought, extract all those jockeys I could find who were within half a length of the winner. That is, any race where the winning margin was half a length or less, record the jockeys involved and their finishing positions.

If a jockey won more such contests than he lost, perhaps this would be a good pointer to the ones who I would sooner be riding for me?

In order to keep the statistics relevant, I decided upon using just the last two full flat seasons, i.e. 1998 & 1999. Recorded in the following table is a record of each jockey's performance in such situations, his/her number of wins, losses and dead-heats. The total number of such finishes and a win/lose ratio figure to enable me to rank these jockeys in order of prowess.

Rather than mess about just giving the best and worst on my recorded listing, I present the table in its entirety. I'm sure there'll be some who want to see where some of their own favourite jockeys came in such a ranking. The only filter I applied was that the total number of half-length finishes to qualify for a rating would be 10. I'm not too bothered about a jockey only involved in 2 such finishes over a two season period, whether both were won or lost!

Data from the past two seasons will also inevitably show some riders who may not be riding now, but they were a valid part of the investigation, so they are also included.

Also, for reasons related to some other work I was doing, only races where all the starters finished were considered. This also had the effect of rejecting races where a horse was withdrawn under starters orders. Such filters though will make little difference to the final table.

Rank	Jockey	won	lost	dheat	total	W/L Ratio%
1	M J Kinane	21	2	0	23	10.50
2	P McCabe	15	3	0	18	5.00
3	A Beech	11	4	0	15	2.75
4	D O'Donohoe	10	4	0	14	2.50
5	W R Swinburn	20	9	0	29	2.22
6	A Daly	15	7	1	23	2.14
7	J Fanning	22	11	0	33	2.00
8	T Lucas	10	5	1	16	2.00
9	M Henry	6	3	1	10	2.00
10	D Sweeney	18	10	2	30	1.80
11	R Lappin	14	8	0	22	1.75
12	P M Quinn	7	4	0	11	1.75
13	A McCarthy	11	7	0	18	1.57
14	G Hind	24	16	0	40	1.50
15	S Whitworth	18	12	0	30	1.50
16	A Polli	6	4	0	10	1.50
17	R FitzPatrick	6	4	0	10	1.50
18	K Darley	77	54	2	133	1.43
19	F Lynch	14	10	0	24	1.40
20	T Quinn	84	61	1	146	1.38
21	P Doe	20	15	0	35	1.33
22	N Kennedy	12	9	0	21	1.33
23	Paul Eddery	8	6	2	16	1.33
24	G Faulkner	8	6	0	14	1.33
25	M Fenton	29	22	0	51	1.32
26	A Mackay	14	11	1	26	1.27
27	A Nicholls	20	16	1	37	1.25
28	A Culhane	44	36	0	80	1.22
29	Pat Eddery	74	61	0	135	1.21
30	G Bardwell	6	5	1	12	1.20
31	G Carter	37	31	1	69	1.19
32	L Charnock	32	27	0	59	1.19
33	P Fessey	14	12	0	26	1.17
34	N Pollard	30	26	0	56	1.15
35	C Lowther	24	21	0	45	1.14
36	G Parkin	11	10	0	21	1.10
37	G Stevens	11	10	0	21	1.10
38	G Duffield	35	32	1	68	1.09
39	Dale Gibson	12	11	0	23	1.09
40	L Dettori	60	56	5	121	1.07
41	A Clark	17	16	1	34	1.06
42	M Roberts	35	33	0	68	1.06
43	W Ryan	26	25	0	51	1.04
44	R Hughes	44	43	2	89	1.02
45	D Holland	48	47	0	95	1.02
46	R Mullen	21	21	0	42	1.00
47	D Harrison	10	10	0	20	1.00
48	J Tate	10	10	0	20	1.00

Rank	Jockey	won	lost	dheat	total	W/L Ratio%
49	J McAuley	9	9	0	18	1.00
50	A McGlone	8	8	1	17	1.00
51	J D Smith	6	6	2	14	1.00
52	P P Murphy	6	6	0	12	1.00
53	K Fallon	90	91	2	183	0.99
54	J Fortune	66	67	3	136	0.99
55	R Ffrench	23	24	0	47	0.96
56	C Rutter	18	19	1	38	0.95
57	J Reid	35	37	1	73	0.95
58	S Sanders	35	37	1	73	0.95
59	T Sprake	32	34	0	66	0.94
60	Dane O'Neill	40	43	2	85	0.93
61	R Cochrane	42	48	0	90	0.88
62	R Hills	44	52	1	97	0.85
63	O Peslier	10	12	1	23	0.83
64	M Hills	42	51	0	93	0.82
65	R Brisland	4	5	3	12	0.80
66	J Lowe	4	5	1	10	0.80
67	Martin Dwyer	19	24	0	43	0.79
68	Kim Tinkler	7	9	0	16	0.78
69	R Smith	7	9	0	16	0.78
70	J F Egan	31	40	0	71	0.78
71	R Winston	27	36	1	64	0.75
72	J Carroll	34	46	1	81	0.74
73	N Callan	14	19	0	33	0.74
74	D Mernagh	11	15	1	27	0.73
75	S Carson	5	7	0	12	0.71
76	J Quinn	21	31	0	52	0.68
77	F Norton	16	24	0	40	0.67
78	N Day	6	9	0	15	0.67
79	P Dobbs	4	6	0	10	0.67
80	R Price	5	8	0	13	0.63
81	J Weaver	26	43	0	69	0.60
82	T Williams	9	15	0	24	0.60
83	L Newman	4	7	0	11	0.57
84	R Perham	4	7	0	11	0.57
85	Alex Greaves	9	16	0	25	0.56
86	J Stack	5	9	0	14	0.56
87	N Carlisle	5	9	0	14	0.56
88	C Carver	6	11	0	17	0.55
89	O Pears	6	11	0	17	0.55
90	P Robinson	17	32	0	49	0.53
91	DeanMcKeown	14	30	1	45	0.47
92	O Urbina	5	12	0	17	0.42
93	S Drowne	11	27	0	38	0.41
94	D Biggs	3	8	0	11	0.38
95	M Tebbutt	8	25	0	33	0.32

I rejected the idea of showing the percentage of 'close finishes' to total rides, this could be influenced by one jockey having more market leaders amongst his mounts than another. I decided that by analysing the finishes in their own right, where it was a head-to-head battle for the line, the true grit of a jockey was far more likely to be displayed than his percentage of rides producing a close finish.

Does the table tell us anything after all that trouble? Does it tell us which jockey can be relied upon if the finish is close? Or does it also show those jockeys who prefer to do 'just enough' to win the race? I suppose if there are certain jockeys who when they do win, like to win 'well' - by as many lengths as possible, they would possibly have fewer entries in our table than would the ones who do just enough and can get almost caught close home?

One thing from the table is certain, if one of my selections, coming down the home stretch, is in what looks like being a close finish, I hope MJ Kinane is carrying my money rather than M Tebbutt!

Better Than Rank

Another angle for comparing the relative merits of the jockeys I thought of was based around the finishing position in relation to the SP rank of the horse in the betting.

Examining the same two year period, I sorted each race by starting price, then compared the actual finishing position against the finishing position suggested by SP rank. As an example, a 9 horse race with SPs as follows;

Horse	SP	Rank
Horse 1	9/4f	1
Horse 2	9/2	=2
Horse 3	9/2	=2
Horse 4	6/1	4
Horse 5	7/1	5
Horse 6	10/1	6
Horse 7	14/1	7
Horse 8	25/1	=8
Horse 9	25/1	=8

My idea was to mark the jockeys of these horses with regard to their final finish position. If they bettered the SP rank of the horse, they get +1 point. If they finished in a position worse than that suggested by the SP, -1 point. Those finishing in accordance with their SP rank, zero points.

For a rider then to equal his/her SP rank in every one of 100 races their score would be 0, if they beat the rank in all races they'd notch up a 100 score, but for failing in every race, -100. In the example, if a jockey on one of the 9/2 shots won the race, score is +1, if they finished 2nd or 3rd, no points, but for finishing 4th or worse, -1 point.

The final table below, shows all jockeys with 50 rides or more from UK flat races, where all horses finished. It shows number of rides, accumulated score (along the +1, 0 or -1 per race basis explained above) and a ratio figure of score to rides. Using this tactic generated a table with some unexpected names both at the top and the very bottom.

	Jockey	rides	acc score	score/rides
1	Angela Hartley	56	23	141.1%
2	Jenny Benson	88	31	135.2%
3	M Semple	54	19	135.2%
4	C Catlin	78	27	134.6%
5	Darren Moffatt	122	40	132.8%
6	N Carlisle	501	157	131.3%
7	V Halliday	68	20	129.4%
8	R Thomas	95	27	128.4%
9	J Bramhill	294	79	126.9%
10	R Brisland	370	99	126.8%
11	P M Quinn	445	118	126.5%
12	S Webster	72	18	125.0%
13	M Gallagher	66	16	124.2%
14	Nicola Wright	85	20	123.5%
15	G Sparkes	66	15	122.7%
16	W Hutchinson	89	20	122.5%
17	Sophie Mitchell	58	13	122.4%
18	Iona Wands	224	50	122.3%
19	L Newman	272	59	121.7%
20	J Edmunds	139	29	120.9%
21	T Ashley	72	15	120.8%

	Jockey	rides	acc score	score/rides
22	D Wright	78	16	120.5%
23	Kim Tinkler	551	113	120.5%
24	J McAuley	415	85	120.5%
25	Joanna Badger	127	26	120.5%
26	S Maloney	103	21	120.4%
27	A Daly	588	119	120.2%
28	C Cogan	338	68	120.1%
29	AmandaSanders	76	15	119.7%
30	Kimberley Hart	163	30	118.4%
31	P Fessey	757	136	118.0%
32	V Slattery	130	23	117.7%
33	N Kennedy	427	75	117.6%
34	Candy Morris	194	34	117.5%
35	J Lowe	385	67	117.4%
36	S Righton	352	60	117.0%
37	S Clancy	53	9	117.0%
38	R Cody-Boutcher	113	19	116.8%
39	A Polli	346	58	116.8%
40	N Adams	143	23	116.1%
41	P Hanagan	115	18	115.7%
42	F Norton	1056	164	115.5%

	Jockey	rides	acc score	score/ rides
43	M Baird	117	18	115.4%
44	D Mernagh	591	90	115.2%
45	S Carson	391	59	115.1%
46	L Newton	315	47	114.9%
47	C Teague	305	45	114.8%
48	R Perham	512	74	114.5%
49	R Price	589	85	114.4%
50	Declan O'Shea	91	13	114.3%
51	P P Murphy	295	41	113.9%
52	P Fitzsimons	263	36	113.7%
53	O Urbina	265	36	113.6%
54	G Bardwell	857	115	113.4%
55	Martin Dwyer	1003	125	112.5%
56	D Sweeney	916	114	112.4%
57	A Whelan	271	33	112.2%
58	A McCarthy	814	97	111.9%
59	Claire Bryan	113	13	111.5%
60	N Varley	54	6	111.1%
61	C Carver	310	33	110.6%
62	J F Egan	1258	133	110.6%
63	G Mosse	59	6	110.2%
64	M Henry	403	40	109.9%
65	D Harrison	307	30	109.8%
66	G Hannon	164	16	109.8%
67	G Strange	52	5	109.6%
68	K Sked	95	9	109.5%
69	P Strydom	53	5	109.4%
70	W Supple	833	78	109.4%
71	TG McLaughlin	598	55	109.2%
72	P Doe	964	86	108.9%
73	G Hind	574	51	108.9%
74	Dale Gibson	748	66	108.8%
75	R Smith	206	18	108.7%
76	S D Williams	149	13	108.7%
77	R FitzPatrick	349	30	108.6%
78	Aimee Cook	70	6	108.6%
79	S Drowne	1320	111	108.4%
80	J Bosley	150	12	108.0%
81	T Williams	793	63	107.9%
82	P McCabe	528	37	107.0%

	Jockey	rides	acc score	score/ rides
83	DeanMcKeown	1286	90	107.0%
84	R Lappin	645	45	107.0%
85	L Charnock	1319	92	107.0%
86	P Shea	52	3	105.8%
87	O Pears	527	29	105.5%
88	C Rutter	823	43	105.2%
89	J Tate	558	29	105.2%
90	R Winston	1070	55	105.1%
91	J Quinn	1556	79	105.1%
92	K Hodgson	83	4	104.8%
93	R Havlin	349	16	104.6%
94	A Beech	178	8	104.5%
95	P Robinson	876	37	104.2%
96	P Cleary	95	4	104.2%
97	R Mullen	658	27	104.1%
98	P Goode	276	9	103.3%
99	J Fanning	860	25	102.9%
100	C Lowther	1080	23	102.1%
101	A Nicholls	758	16	102.1%
102	K W Marks	52	1	101.9%
103	N Callan	743	13	101.7%
104	F Lynch	617	10	101.6%
105	N Pollard	961	15	101.6%
106	A McGlone	474	7	101.5%
107	S Finnamore	238	1	100.4%
108	A Mackay	715	3	100.4%
109	M Tebbutt	726	3	100.4%
110	T Sprake	1558	6	100.4%
111	J Murtagh	95	0	100.0%
112	W J O'Connor	256	0	100.0%
113	G Faulkner	431	-1	99.8%
114	S Whitworth	1105	-9	99.2%
115	J Fowle	104	-1	99.0%
116	P Dobbs	196	-2	99.0%
117	M Roberts	841	-9	98.9%
118	D Griffiths	154	-2	98.7%
119	N Day	446	-6	98.7%
120	Dane O'Neill	1476	-20	98.6%
121	M Fenton	957	-14	98.5%
122	G Parkin	404	-7	98.3%

	Jockey	rides	acc	score/
123	D McGaffin	102	-2	98.0%
124	J Stack	387	-8	97.9%
125	R Ffrench	825	-19	97.7%
126	R Cochrane	1222	-31	97.5%
127	M Wigham	61	-2	96.7%
128	D Williams	141	-5	96.5%
129	A Culhane	1640	-59	96.4%
130	J Gotobed	109	-4	96.3%
131	T Lucas	339	-13	96.2%
132	J D Smith	202	-8	96.0%
133	H Bastiman	50	-2	96.0%
134	D Hayden	69	-3	95.7%
135	P Fredericks	201	-9	95.5%
136	S Sanders	1356	-76	94.4%
137	M Rimmer	107	-6	94.4%
138	Jo Hunnam	67	-4	94.0%
139	A Garth	65	-4	93.8%
140	A Clark	1173	-75	93.6%
141	R Hughes	1192	-78	93.5%
142	A Eddery	148	-10	93.2%
143	G Carter	1103	-79	92.8%
144	P Bradley	336	-25	92.6%
145	R Fowley	51	-4	92.2%
146	R Studholme	207	-17	91.8%
147	W Ryan	902	-75	91.7%
148	D Biggs	215	-18	91.6%
149	O Peslier	215	-18	91.6%

	Jockey	rides	acc	score/
150	D Holland	1168	-101	91.4%
151	J Reid	1022	-97	90.5%
152	J Carroll	1230	-121	90.2%
153	J Fortune	1413	-141	90.0%
154	M Hills	1123	-115	89.8%
155	Paul Eddery	388	-41	89.4%
156	R Hills	986	-120	87.8%
157	J Weaver	1125	-141	87.5%
158	T Quinn	1649	-209	87.3%
159	G Duffield	1271	-162	87.3%
160	G Stevens	199	-30	84.9%
161	M J Kinane	278	-42	84.9%
162	W R Swinburn	275	-43	84.4%
163	P Roberts	73	-12	83.6%
164	K Darley	1527	-301	80.3%
165	Mrs L Pearce	65	-13	80.0%
166	S Copp	64	-14	78.1%
167	D O'Donohoe	275	-61	77.8%
168	J P Spencer	105	-24	77.1%
169	Miss D Jones	59	-14	76.3%
170	Alex Greaves	363	-89	75.5%
171	Mrs S Bosley	60	-16	73.3%
172	Miss R Clark	51	-14	72.5%
173	P Clarke	84	-24	71.4%
174	Pat Eddery	1423	-416	70.8%
175	L Dettori	1149	-368	68.0%
176	K Fallon	1883	-607	67.8%

A little hindsight perhaps explains these results. The scoring system I used allows those riding outsiders more opportunities to gain points than lose them. Conversely, those riding favourites or market leaders have more chances to lose points than to gain them. However, especially seeing the sharp tail-off at the very bottom of the table, it certainly suggests to me that Messrs Eddery, Dettori and Fallon are constantly over-bet and would be jockeys to avoid for those seeking value?

Your comments are welcomed, and if anyone has any other off-the-wall ideas of testing jockey and/or trainer performances in unusual ways, please let Stef know. I'm sitting poised at my keyboard, and ready to roll!



Course and draw information contained in Raceform's most popular book of 1998, 'The Effects of the Draw' have been updated for the follow-up title.

BOOK REVIEW

SMARTsig

Title: Backing the Draw for Profit (Graham Wheldon)

Published by: Raceform Ltd. (01635 578080)

Price: £9.95

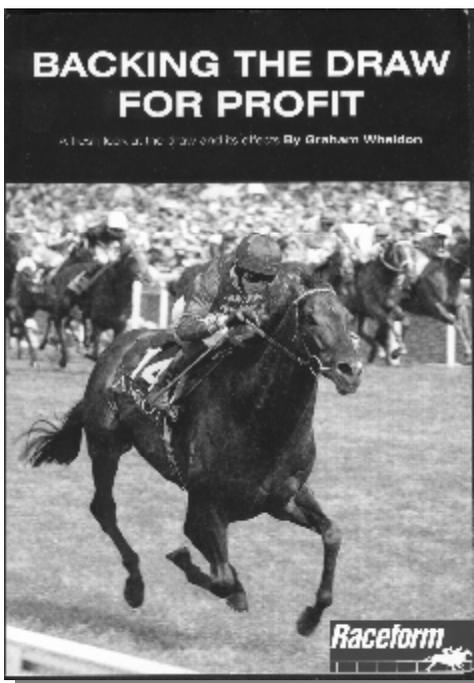
If enthusiasm were a bankable commodity, Graham Wheldon would be a very rich man indeed. It is difficult to avoid the impression on first reading this, his second and latest instalment to what looks set to become a bi-annual publication, that he really loves his subject. Here's a man excited about his chosen speciality and who wants you to share his findings.

We're informed in the first few pages that on many British courses the draw has more influence on the outcome of the races than any other single factor.

So much so, Wheldon continues, that a healthy profit can be made simply by backing well-drawn horses at the right tracks, and plenty of examples are supplied to support the case.

We're also given a synopsis for each UK flat course, detailing draw influences where present and under which ground conditions and stall positions.

There is a comprehensive section giving racecourse



layouts with additional information to enable the draw-bias student to understand the significance of stall positioning. Other details here include course drainage, watering, effect of the wind, etc.

A review of 1999 is well put together, examining many different example races with the author's explanation of the events.

Part of the strategy is taking careful note, not of the horses who are drawn well, but of those who gave creditable performances from a bad draw. Such prospects are then followed with interest for future runs, but where conditions may be much more in their favour.

This is not a book where you can sit down, read and become an expert on the effects of the draw. I would suspect those making best use would use it as a reference to the day's racing.

I have no reason to discount the idea that by sticking closely to the guidelines given a punter would end the season in profit. However, if it were only that simple.

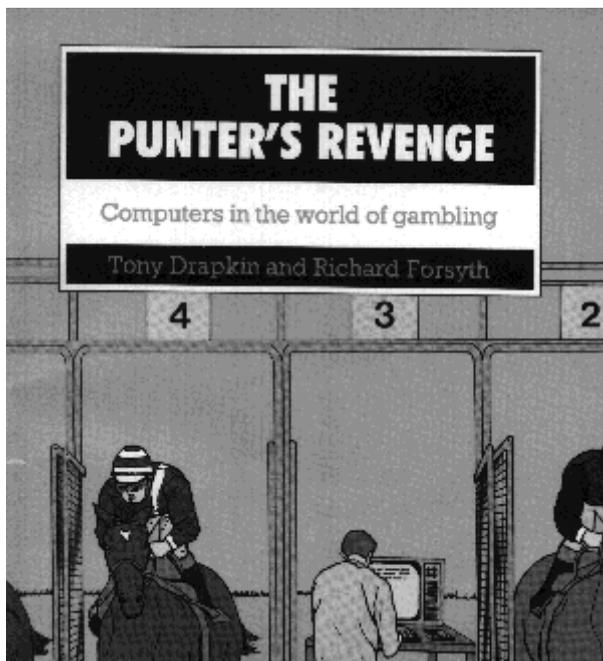
What is made crystal clear is that the competent "draw bias spotter" has to be aware that the dynamics of his trade are constantly, and sometimes very rapidly changing. Wheldon's 1 & 2 from his 1997 listing of top 10 draw-affected courses, are now relegated to 4th and 3rd spots respectively. These top two spots now being held by the course formerly in 6th place, and another which did not make the top 10 last time!

We're also warned to take the official going reports with a pinch of salt and are recommended the Raceform verdict, using their going allowances. All well and good after the event, but if we're assessing the chance of today's runners, official going may be the information on which we have to rely.

All in all though, a well written book with well presented information, allowing those who wish to take this subject further a head start. It's not going to turn you into an expert on its own, it doesn't claim to. As always, in order to keep up to speed with any specialist topic, you'll need to keep an eye on what's happening and where.

This month's extract is from a chapter which takes a look at the rules and strategies of two popular card games.

This instalment gives a brief outline of card-counting at blackjack.



THE PUNTER'S REVENGE (Serialisation part XX – Chapter 11)

Tony Drapkin & Richard Forsyth

The poker-faced machine

Card gaming is one of the most popular and enduring forms of gambling. Wherever two or three people are gathered together around fifty-two cards, you can be pretty sure that money is changing hands. In this chapter we look at two card games which flourish both inside and outside the casino walls - blackjack and poker.

Both are fascinating games in their own right, and both have been subjected to various kinds of computer analysis in recent decades. Moreover, unlike roulette, they are games of skill, where the enterprising gamester can hope to prevail in the face of sloppy play.

11.1 Blackjack

The name of Edward O. Thorp deserves a special place in the Punters' Hall of Fame. Professor Thorp became a legend in his own lifetime around the blackjack tables of the world - although he is now barred from most of them. In his entertaining and provocative book, *Beat the Dealer*, he explains how, after a series of computer-based studies, he evolved a strategy capable of beating the bank in blackjack.

Not content with theoretical speculation, he put his conclusions into practice with such effect that he amassed a large fortune before the Las Vegas casino owners changed the rules and banned him from their hallowed premises. Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of this celebrated case was that everyone had assumed for a century or more that blackjack gave the house a substantial and consistent advantage. Thorp showed that with correct play this advantage could be turned around.

Before explaining a modified version of his system, we must outline the rules of the game.

11.1.1 The rules of blackjack

The dealer always plays for the house. There may be up to seven other players who sit opposite the dealer round a curved table.

Before any cards are dealt, the players place bets, the limits of which are decided by the house. We will assume for the present a range from 1 to 100 units (pounds or dollars). The dealer then deals out two cards to each of the players and two to himself. One of the dealer's cards is placed face-up on the table.

The object of the game is to obtain a total greater than the dealer's, but not greater than 21. An ace can be valued at 1 or 11 points, at the player's discretion.

Court cards (jack, queen and king) are worth 10 points. All other cards have their face value. Thus:

Q & 7	= 17,
J & K	= 20,
A & 4	= 5 or 15,
A & 10	= 21,

where the last pair is a 'natural' or 'blackjack' which adds up to 21 with only two cards.

The third hand (A & 4) is termed 'soft' because the ace permits the player to opt for two different totals, whichever seems the more advantageous. The distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' hands is important in deciding how to play.

If the dealer's exposed card is an ace or a ten, he checks to see if he has a natural and, if so, declares the hand. (These are the Nevada rules: in London the dealer does not get his second card until after the players have had their turns, and consequently does not declare a natural in advance.)

If the dealer does not have a natural, the players act on their hands. They may elect to stand, or 'stick', or ask for another card. If, by drawing another card, a player's total exceeds 21, that hand is 'bust' and the bet is lost. As long as it remains under 21, the player may continue asking for additional cards.

When all the players have completed their turns, the dealer plays according to a simple, fixed strategy. He turns over his hidden card and if his total is 17 or more he stands; otherwise he draws cards till he reaches 17 or more, or busts - in which case all the players still remaining in the game have won. The chief source of advantage to the house is the fact that players who go bust lose their bets even if the dealer also subsequently busts.

If the dealer does not go bust then each player with a higher total than the dealer receives a sum equal to that player's bet from the bank; each player with a lower total forfeits his bet to the bank; and with tied hands, no money changes hands. The exception to this occurs when either side has a blackjack. A player with a natural receives 1.5 times his stake from the bank, unless the dealer also has blackjack, in which case there is a stand-

off. A dealer's blackjack does not get 1.5 times the stake money from losing players, but it beats hands totalling 21 made up of more than two cards.

There are two additional features to the game. Firstly it is possible to 'split' pairs. If a player gets two identical cards in the initial deal, then the hand may be split in two, permitting the player to operate two hands in tandem. Secondly, 'doubling down' is allowed: after seeing the initial value of his hand, a player may double his bet and draw exactly one more card.

These subsidiary rules make the game more interesting.

The essence of any blackjack strategy is the decision whether to draw further cards or to stick. Thorp ran several computer simulations to calculate the expected returns on all hard hands with a total of 12 or more (you should always draw on 11 or less). His findings are summarised in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Expected gain by drawing

Here the left-hand column represents the value of the dealer's visible card (assuming he does not have a natural), and the top row is the

Dealer's card	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20 (Player)
2	4	-2	-8	-14	-17	-38	-75	-114	-147
8	1	-5	-12	-18	-21	-42	-78	-110	-148
4	-2	-9	-16	-22	-26	-47	-76	-112	-149
5	-5	-12	-19	-26	-30	-55	-79	-116	-152
6	-3	-9	-17	-23	-22	-47	-85	-119	-154
7	21	17	11	12	11	-33	-96	-131	-161
8	19	15	15	11	10	-8	-66	-127	-163
9	14	15	10	6	6	-11	-40	-96	-159
10	16	12	8	4	3	-15	-47	-81	-142
A	25	22	19	16	15	-9	-55	-105	-153

points total of the player's hand.

The figures were obtained by allotting +1 for a win, 0 for a draw and -1 for a loss over 200 hands. A positive total indicates a situation where it is beneficial for the player to draw another card. It can be seen from the table that the player should draw on 16 or less if the dealer has 7 or more, and should also draw on 12 if the dealer shows 2 or 3; in all other cases the player should stick.

A similar method can be employed to compute the player's gain on soft totals. The borderline between drawing and standing runs between 17 and 18 except when the dealer has a 9 or 10 showing. That is: with soft hands, the player should draw on anything below 18 and should also draw on 18 if the dealer has a 9 or 10 face up; otherwise the player should stand. (NB In discussing soft hands we are counting the ace as 11, for the purpose of deciding whether to draw another card.)

If after drawing one card the total is still under that required to stick, another card should be requested, and the same strategy applied again.

Thorp also investigated the optimum conditions for splitting a pair and when to double down. There are slight variations here between London and Las Vegas rules, but you always split a pair of aces and never split a pair of tens. Generally, you split all other pairs except fours and fives unless the dealer shows 7 or higher.

As for doubling down, you only do it with a total of 10 or 11 when the dealer shows 2 to 9, or on a total of 9 when the dealer shows 3 up to 6. (At least this applies under European rules.)

Correct blackjack strategy is not simple, but it can be mastered with a little perseverance, and it cuts the house advantage to under 1% - which is not bad for a casino game, It can also be implemented as a program for a digital computer.

Obviously, most casinos will ask you to leave your micro with the cloakroom attendant; but by programming Thorp's basic strategy you can gain valuable insight into the game.

11.1.2 The thought that counts

The next step, which actually reverses the house advantage, is to vary your bets according to whether the state of the game is favourable or not. To determine whether this is so, you have to count the cards that have already fallen.

The point is that the dealer does not re-shuffle the pack (or packs) after every deal. Therefore, by remembering which cards have already been played you know whether the remaining deck is relatively rich in fives and sixes (which are unfavourable) or relatively rich in aces and tens (which are, broadly speaking, favourable). With plenty of tens and aces in the pack the dealer, who must always draw on a total of 16 or under, is more vulnerable to going bust.

A standard counting technique is based on distinguishing high and low cards as they fall. To follow this method, you assign the following numeric values to each card.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	= +1
8, 9	= 0
10 (and court cards)	= -1
Ace	= -2

This means that you must try to see all the cards discarded after each deal. You do not have to memorise them individually (though a computer could) but merely keep a running total based on the values listed above.

When the count is positive, there is a high proportion of tens left in the deck. When the count is negative there is a lower proportion of tens and a higher proportion of low cards still to be dealt. Running through a complete pack should always bring you back to a count of zero. (This is a useful test if you decide to practise your counting skills at a safe distance from the casino.)

The betting strategy is to stake more the richer the deck becomes with tens and aces. It is outlined in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Blackjack betting

Thus if the house enforces a maximum stake of 100 units, you could

	Two decks	Four decks	Stake
Count	up to +3	up to +7	minimum
	+4 to +7	+8 to 15	double
	+8 to 11	16 to 23	triple
	12 to 15	24 to 32	quadruple
	16 & up	33 & up	five-fold

make your basic stake 20 units and play that normally. If, in a two-deck game, your count reached 16, you would bet five times your normal stake, i.e. the house limit of 100 units.

Whether you win or lose does not affect your staking strategy: that is entirely based on the card-count.

Together with the basic strategy, outlined in Section 11.1.1, this staking method should enable you to make a long-term profit at blackjack. In addition, the real experts make minor adjustments to the basic strategy when the pack becomes very rich in tens, by moving the threshold between sticking and drawing on certain marginal hands.

For example, if the count exceeds 12 you might stand on a hard 16 to the dealer's 9 or 10 and stick on a hard 12 to the dealer's 3, instead of drawing.

Likewise you might stick with a soft 18 to the dealer's 9 or 10. With a very negative count, you can afford to move in the other direction, e.g. by drawing on a hard 17 when the dealer shows 8 or above.

But be warned! Casinos hate counters. Not only is the method quite tiresome to master, but it is hard to disguise. If the dealer spots you counting, he will alert the management.

Because the system in its purest form can easily be detected, more sophisticated versions of the scheme call for less obvious behaviour, thus limiting your potential gains. This can mean that if you wager

£100 per hour, your expected hourly return may be as low as £1.

The second problem is that after exhibiting the success of even a low-profile counter, you are likely to be invited by the manager to a free bottle of champagne or even dinner on the house.

Should you refuse this unexpected generosity, you will shortly find yourself 'escorted' off the premises by a club bouncer whose biceps are better developed than his sense of delicacy.

In spite of these words of caution, the example of Edward Thorp shines like a beacon to all gamblers with a scientific outlook; if you pick your target with care and do your homework thoroughly, you may discover gold in the most surprising places.

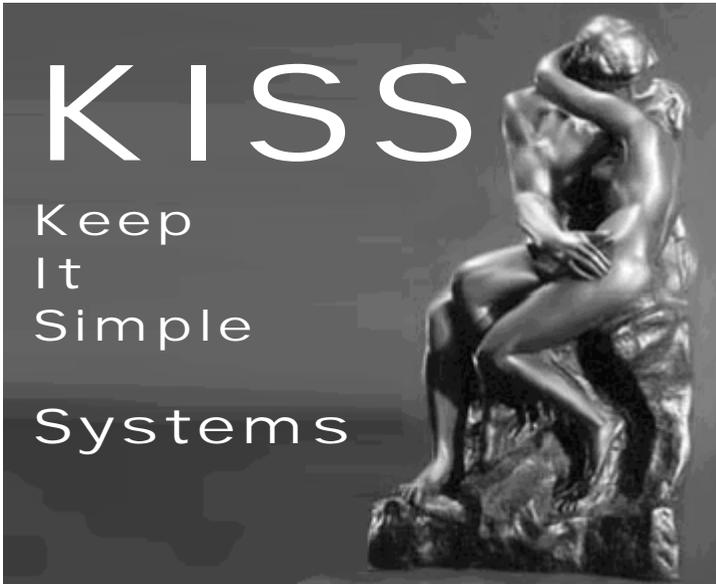
Our next instalment from Drapkin & Forsyth's Punter's revenge gives the low-down on the king of all card games - poker.



SMARTsig thanks you, our readers, for your support with contributions for publication.

Your articles, stories, ideas, theories and research are always welcomed. Everything from the simplest KISS system of a few lines to the complex mathematical argument which knocks your socks off!

Have you had your say?



Exploit the summer pools coupon, not by super-forecasting, but by using a scatter-gun approach and employing a perm with minimum guarantees.

KISS #1

SIMPLE SUMMER SOCCER with Economical Error Exceptions

John Norris

I have an Aussie coupon in front of me as I write, and am again fascinated by some of the team names. Are the Cobras a match for the Panthers? Do the Blue Eagles have a better defence than the Olympians? And will Bayside or Southside become leaders this year? Who knows? Why worry?

Just bang on an all embracing Treble Chance perm to cover the silly season, say most of us, and concentrate on the Flat instead. Why not do the same thing with the smaller Summer Results Pools?

It may possibly be a little easier to pick up a dividend now and then on these coupons, even if they have mysteriously increased in size.

We now have to find nine homes instead of eight, and six aways instead of four; so the compiler himself may judge both home wins and away wins easier to forecast in Aussie games. Hmm. But how to frame an entry for each pool, especially without going down the stake wasting "full perm" route ?

Six Aways Pool

The usual entries put forward for this pool are of the "3 pairs from N pairs" or "2 trios from N trios" type, where even if you do forecast 6 aways you still lose because they don't fall exactly into your neat little forecast positions. And the "full perm" stakes soon mount up, don't they? So, why not try something a little different?

May I suggest the following little 8 line block used twice?

1	2	2	2	2				
2					2	2		
3							2	
4	2	2						
5			2		2			
6								2
7	2							
8		2	2		2			
9				2		2		2
10							2	
11							2	
12				2		2		2

Or in number form:

1	1	1	1	2	2	3	6
4	4	5	9	5	9	10	9
7	8	8	12	8	12	11	12

It is constructed using the same principle as the Non Consecutive method I outlined in an earlier article, but with an extension.

Should 4 selections be correct within the 12 then 3 will appear in the same line, *provided that each away is separated by at least two spaces.*

Used twice, then for £6.40 at minimum stakes you've covered 24 games. On the week I'm writing, that amounts to two thirds of the available list. Why forecast?

Nine Homes Pool

The "standard" entries for the Nine Homes are either of the "3 trios from N trios" type, with the increasing full perm stake; or more usually of the Banker type such as "1 Banker with 4 pairs" with the pairs either fully covered or placed against a reduction table. So one failure ruins the entire entry. Again, why not be different? They can't touch you for it!

This little block - printed on the facing page - in 52 lines costing just £5.20 at minimum stakes, has to be written in full, I agree, but the unusual and quite good guarantee makes it a worthwhile exercise.

Just ask your pools company for an extension coupon, and photocopy it weekly. As long as they get your cash, it should be acceptable.

16 games are covered in lines of 9, with the guarantee that should 11 homes occur in your 16 then 9 will be together *provided that no more than 2 non consecutive homes fall in the last 5 games.*

The first 11 can be in any order, but the last 5 must contain no more than 2 correct results.

There are 4,368 combinations of 11 from 16, and 11,440 combinations of 9 from 16, so a decent guarantee of 9 in a line in a 52 line table isn't bad, now is it? Come on, be honest...!

Jockey and trainer strike rates is the basis for this simple method. Only a handful of bets maybe, but a system gaining 18 winners from 30 selections and a good level stake profit is ignored at your peril.

KISS #2

RACEFORM ON SATURDAY SYSTEM

Steve B

One here for the KISS section which may be of interest, a pretty straight forward system based on information obtained from *Raceform On Saturday*.

It can't get much simpler, four rules only;

- 1 Refer to the 'Top Jockeys' table.
Note any Jockey who has a win to rides success rate of 40% or more for the particular trainer mentioned.
(not the overall % success rate on the course)
- 2 Check to see if that Trainer/Jockey combination has any runners at that particular course.
- 3 If favourite, but not forecast odds-on, check for the following rule.
- 4 Refer to the 'How The Favourites Fared' table.
If the mount concerned falls into one of the race types (e.g. Novice Hurdle) that has enjoyed a favourite success rate of 40% or more then that quite simply is the selection regardless of any other factors.

The following results are from the period I was a regular purchaser of the said weekly paper.

However, I have since reverted back to the Racing Post due to Raceform's omission on occasions of recent runs by a horse, deemed by them to be unimportant I suppose?

Personally, I believe at times as much can be learnt about a horses poor performance as can be learned from about a good one.

Anyway now I've got that gripe off my chest here are my tabulated results.

1998	
August	Lost
September	W 10/11
October	no qualifiers
November	W 5/2
December	Lost
1999	
January	W 13/8, W 2/1, W 6/4, Lost
February	W 4/1, Lost
March	W 8/13
April	no qualifiers
May	W 5/2, W 11/10, W 5/1, W 8/15, W 1/2, L, L,
June	W 7/4, W 13/8, Lost
July	Lost
August	W 2/9, Lost
September	W 3/1
October	W 2/1, Lost, Lost
November	W 13/8

Albeit a limited amount of bets, 18 winners out of 30 isn't to be sniffed at especially as a decent level stake profit was to produced.

I have virtually covered most possible selections, although I was away abroad for two weeks, so may have missed a couple, otherwise as far as I know haven't missed any others.

I would be interested if anyone has any back copies of Raceform, how the system has fared since?

Accessing teletext services through a computer opens up a whole new avenue for using this free TV information service

GETTING IT FOR FREE

Jaygee

Although the Internet allows punters easy access to many excellent racing data services the cost of phone call charges to do so on a daily basis soon adds up to a surprising sum.

An alternative, which costs absolutely nothing once you've bought the hardware, is to install a WinTV card in your PC and gain immediate 24-hour access to the racing data provided by terrestrial televisions' TeleText and CeeFax services.

Amongst the many useful features provided are daily going forecasts covering the next 7 days, ante-post and early prices from all the major bookmakers, racing gossip/news, racecourse access and admission details, live betting shows, results, Tote dividends and, probably most useful of all, overnight declarations.

The overnight declarations are particularly valuable as, in addition to the usual horse name and weight details, they also show last 6 form figures, headgear, jockey, trainer and forecast starting prices per race.



The hardware needed to receive all this data on your PC screen takes the form of a plug/screw in board which uses one of the PCI slots that comes with your PC. The host hardware requirements are pretty modest. Anything equal to or better than a Pentium 100 with 32MB RAM, a 1Gb Hard Drive, a CDROM drive, an SVGA monitor



From this image . . .

and Windows 9x performs reliably and well.

Installation is relatively simple provided you've not got a PC with a cramped internal layout and most modern PCs come with a video card which is compatible with the WinTV card.

In fact the most likely problem you'll encounter is routing the T.V. antenna feed cable to a loft or suitable aerial.

Although there are several branded and generic WinTV cards on the market the most commonly available is the Hauppauge brand.

Hauppauge (named after their upstate New York location and pronounced "Hop Hog") market the Primio WinTV card with Teletext (model 61295) for about £55.00 complete with remote control. Incidentally, unless you have the arms of a gorilla or the sight of an eagle you'll be hard pushed to find a use for the remote control.

Hauppauge's UK telephone no. is 0171-378-1997 and they have a website at <www.hauppauge.com>.

Having installed the card and got the program working the only other thing you'll need is a script to simplify downloading a teletext page to a text file for editing/browsing/printing.

At this point it should be noted that there are copyright restrictions concerning the use of teletext data but it would seem that private non-commercial use is tolerated.

Anyway here's a script to start you off:

```

VTPLUS SCRIPT
TVSTATION C4
GET C4581
WAIT ALLPAGES
EXPORT C4581 FILE=C:\TTEXT\RCARD.TXT
' FILTER=C:\PROGRA~1\WINTV\VTFILTER\RACECARD.VTF
CLOSE C4581
GET C4582
WAIT ALLPAGES
EXPORT C4582 FILE=C:\TTEXT\RCARD.TXT APPEND=YES
' FILTER=C:\PROGRA~1\WINTV\VTFILTER\RACECARD.VTF
CLOSE C4582

```

The script downloads the overnight declarations on Channel 4 pages 581 and 582.

The file references will need to be changed to comply with your particular set up.

The filter line has been commented with the ' character (ASCII 39) as it will only work once you've defined a filter.

Filters are optional and subjective so it's best to run the script without one until you're able to define your own.

Don't hesitate to tinker with the sample script. Just make a copy of it first.

Scripts are probably worthy of an article of their own. Not only do they allow pages to be exported to file but they will set up OLE links with MS

.. to this complete file of the day's racing, automatically

```

Teletext 581 Apr24 18:57:47
WETHERBY
TUESDAY
-----
2.20 (8 decs.) 2m Chase
1 HITCHHIKER 12-0 D Byrne
M Peill 122P1P
2 FASSAN 12-0 B Harding
M D Hammond 12321P
3 DANGERMAN 11-5 A Dobbin
M W Easterby 4P-505
4 BLOTOFT 10-10 A Thornton
S Scollings 203661
5 CITY GENT 10-6 N Smith
N Wilson PUP535
6 BLAZING DAWN 10-3 Mr K Rnwck
J Hubbuck 63PPRP
7 MILFORD WAY 10-0 R Wakley
T George -F5143
8 MONAUGHTY MAN 10-0 P Costello
E Caine PFP00P

Betting 11-4 Hitchhiker, 3 Blotoft, 7-2
Fassan, 6 City Gent, 7 Milford Way, 8
Dangerman, 16 Blazing Dawn, 200
Monaughty Man.
-----
2.50 (12 decs.) 2m 4f 110yds Hurdle
1 HEIDI III 11-6 N Horrocks
M D Hammond 01-21
2 MORIMONT 11-6 R Johnson
A King -F2F31
3 TIME OF FLIGHT 11-6 P Niven
Mrs M Reveley 33UP41
4 MINIOSO 11-1 S Durack
Mrs S Smith 044341
5 DROIT DE SEIGNEUR 11-0 P Costello
J Norton 502-6U
6 FLYING DANTE 11-0 N Smith
Miss L Siddall 00
7 MACINTOSH 11-0 R Guest
N Mason 00
8 MAGNETIC STORM 11-0 A Dobbin
C Grant 0P050
9 MILLENNIUM PEARL 11-0 G Lee
W Storey 00
10 PASSEREAU 11-0 B Harding
C Kellelt 04412
11 WAIN MOUNTAIN 11-0 T J Murphy
J Old 1
12 PREPOSITION 10-8 A C Coyle
M Peill P

Betting 5-2 Wain Mountain, 7-2 Heidi
III, Morimont, 5 Time of Flight, 6
Minioso, 10 Passereau, 33 others.
... and so on ...

```

Access, Excel and Word which opens up truly endless possibilities.

After a week with a WinTV card you'll wonder how you ever got on without one. And if you need anymore information on anything to do with the card mentioned please email me at <jgregory@tgis.co.uk>



My Hauppauge TV card is obviously a little older than Jaygee's, it does not come with a remote control. The installation was not quite as easy either. However, the Hauppauge help desk did a great job talking me through every little step of the process of changing the settings on my PC.

A great bonus of teletext on the computer as far as I'm concerned is the ability to view several pages simultaneously. The scripting is quite easy to set up, enabling a quick overview of current prices all together.

My little script of;

```

VTPLUS SCRIPT
WINDOW CLOSEALL
TVSTATION S04_
GET S04_609
GET S04_608
GET S04_604
GET S04_600
WINDOW TILE

```

Produces the following on-screen display.

This script does not export the information to file, it is solely to allow cross-checking prices on offer with the different firms.

Anyone else using a teletext card? You should be!

- Stef



SMARTsig TIPPING COMPETITION

No sooner had I mentioned last month that entrants in the SMARTsig tipping competition were competing solely for the pride of beating the rest, Brian Blackwell stepped in offering a prize to the winner of the April competition. Top dog this month will win a years subscription to Brian's *Practical Punting Monthly*, Australia's premier racing monthly and systems magazine.

Soon after the April competition started I had an email from a first-time competitor, Steve Poxon . . .

"I think the Tipping Competition is excellent, so how about a years subs to SMARTsig for the monthly winners? Believe me its bloody hard work to beat these guys.

On my first day I selected a 14/1 winner from 2 bets and that only took me to 5th place in the table . . . and I was still 77 points off the leader!"

No sooner said than done. Negotiations are currently underway and no doubt that SMARTsig subscription prize, in one form or another, will be a part of future competitions.

In the meantime, anyone interested in testing their selection skills head-to-head with other SMARTsig members should contact the competition administrator, Nick Hockaday, by sending an email request to: <nhock@aol.com>

Current leaders, with betting bank totals (as of 20/04/00) are . . .

1	Andy Irvine	221.49
2	Nick Hockerday	220.75
3	Andrew Lawrence	194.75
4	Paul Willis	171
5	Alan Rogers	170
6	Malc Smith	169.5

Also available for those with email access is a non-horseracing tipping competition. This one is not exclusive to SMARTsig members, but open to all comers. . . . See the next page . . .

Pit your wits against other enthusiasts on a email based sports tipping competition.

FANTASY SPORTS BETTING LEAGUE (FSBL)

Terry Collins

FSBL is a free email based Fantasy league competition in which players compete by betting a fictional 1000 points on sport(s) of their own choosing. On many occasions the player compete for prizes, for example a £20 Amazon gift voucher, book or video.

Betting on horseracing, with a few exceptions, isn't allowed in the FSBL. The reason being that, as many of you will already know, a racing based fantasy competition is already available to all-comers on the uk.sport.horseracing newsgroup and to SMARTsig members with their own in-house competition.

The exceptions to the non-horseracing rule are bets on the Grand National along with other horseracing-related markets such as Top Jockey at the Cheltenham Festival.

It all takes place on the UKBET email list and has been in existence now for almost 18 months. Subscribing to the UKBET list is completely free of charge.

Players must choose their bets and strive to obtain the best prices for their selections from any bookmaker's odds for a particular event. Prices quoted in the Racing Post are used by the administration of the league for settling and confirmation of prices, but odds from other sources (teletext/internet) are accepted as long as they can be verified.

A typical bet is shown here:-

**A. Smith: FSBL Selections 22nd March 2000:
Current Bank 1550**

Snooker: Thailand masters, Hendry v Doherty**150 win Hendry 5-3 @ 4/1 (Stan James)****50 win Hendry 5-4 @ 5/1 (Stan James)****Total Staked: 200****Surprised to see Hendry odds-on favourite for this but his win over Stevens shows he's back on form.**

The comments given with a bet are not compulsory but it makes for more interesting reading than just a string of bets. 250 points, along with a maximum of four selections per day is allowed. There is also an allowance of up to 250 points available for ante-post bets per month (if your bank allows). The use of ante-post bet is an interesting twist because, if successful, it gives you a head start or a boost for a future month's competition.

The FSBL is run mainly for fun but the more astute players have landed some serious bets in the past - so it's worth keeping an eye on. Many regular players have specific areas of knowledge - NFL football or Golf, for example. You don't have to play the league to read some interesting posts.

The high's and low's of playing the league are just like you'd experience betting in real life - only it's not real money you are winning or losing. That's either a good or bad thing depending on how successful you are as a punter !

It certainly allows you to be much more adventurous with your 'money' - not many people in the real world would consider placing regular 250 point bets. The FSBL gives you a chance to bet like a high roller - without risking a penny. The website for complete details is: <<http://go.to/fsbl.net>>

Matthew Holmes, a betting shop manager in the non-fantasy world, maintains and runs the league. His email address - if you would like any further information is, m.holmes@clara.net



Terry Collins, author of this piece, is not the same as our Horses-To-Follow Lists compiler (at least I don't think he is!) - Stef

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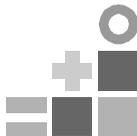
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