

## **SMARTsig Confidential 8.04, April 2001**

### ***In this month's issue . . .***

- |           |  |                       |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Up Front - Wouldn't You Just Know It!</b>   | <b>SMARTsig</b>       |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Extracts From Bias 2001 (part II)</b>       | <b>David Renham</b>   |
| <b>16</b> | <b>Betting With Gay Abandon</b>                | <b>SMARTsig</b>       |
| <b>19</b> | <b>SMARTsig Swap-Shop</b>                      |                       |
| <b>20</b> | <b>Diary of a Rookie Pro</b>                   | <b>Stuart Doyle</b>   |
| <b>26</b> | <b>Trainers/Favourites for Courses III</b>     | <b>Peter May</b>      |
| <b>34</b> | <b>KISS - The Hillman Plan</b>                 | <b>Philip Roy</b>     |
| <b>37</b> | <b>System Peaks &amp; Troughs</b>              | <b>SMARTsig</b>       |
| <b>42</b> | <b>KISS Feedbacks</b>                          |                       |
|           | <b>42 Newspaper Tipsters</b>                   | <b>Bill Sheen</b>     |
|           | <b>43 Sole Selection + Nap Report</b>          | <b>Mel Johnson</b>    |
| <b>48</b> | <b>Shhhhh! The 'V' Word</b>                    | <b>SMARTsig</b>       |
| <b>50</b> | <b>Mug Punter or Value Hunter?</b>             | <b>BobEdinburgh</b>   |
| <b>54</b> | <b>Too Many Assumptions</b>                    | <b>BillWilloughby</b> |
| <b>59</b> | <b>Horses To Follow Update</b>                 | <b>Terry Collins</b>  |
| <b>64</b> | <b>Trainer Patterns</b>                        | <b>Email Group</b>    |
| <b>70</b> | <b>Soccer Superiority Spreads</b>              | <b>SMARTsig</b>       |
| <b>72</b> | <b>Race Class &amp; All-Weather Favourites</b> | <b>J Williams</b>     |
| <b>76</b> | <b>Subscription Rates / Back issues</b>        |                       |

**NEXT  
ISSUE**



*May 2001, issue 8.05, is scheduled for  
posting on Thursday, 3rd May 2001.*

# SMART UP FRONT

*The intelligent choice*

## **Wouldn't you just know it!**

**A**t the time of writing virtually all the world's stock markets are tumbling. Phenomenal amounts have been wiped off share portfolios and many funds are now worth little, if any more than they did some two years ago.

Reports in the financial columns also inform us that the majority of fund managers actually perform worse than 'tracker' funds, which merely consist of an unmanaged selection of shares selected to reflect the FTSE index movements, or whatever other world index it is set to mimic.

Despite this we all seem to know someone who, although they have no connection with any financial services, bought into 'x' company stock at exactly the right time and sold them at a whacking great profit. Is it always the case - or do we just relish remembering such events?

Coinciding with the current stock market fall you may have caught the news item about the three individuals who were invited to select £1,000 worth of shares. The winner would be the one whose portfolio had the greatest value at the end of a set period. The story was newsworthy for two reasons. The three individuals were; A non-professional share expert, an astrologer, and a child.

Because of the current financial climate all three of the competitors lost money, but of course wouldn't you know it, it was the little girl lost least of all, and she won the contest.

Her selection method was totally random using the non-scientific 'all names in a hat' method. Any other outcome would not have been reported as widely though, leaving us with the impression that this outcome is the norm. Whereas of course it is not.

Just to round the story off, the astrologer who charted the positions of the planets as a forecasting strategy brought up the rear of our trio.

It brings to mind the very first time I took my wife racing - bless her! Doncaster was the venue and quite naturally the pretty colours the jockeys were wearing turned out to be a far more profitable strategy than my form study. To my embarrassment the story is still resurrected from time to time in mixed company!

Barry Meadow, a well respected American handicapper, discussed the topic of hunches and coincidences in a recent article. Things like Bob comes round to see you and you spot a horse called Bob's Visit, it wins at 10/1 for you. Or it's your 38th birthday, it's the 3rd of August, so you do the 3-8 forecast in the day's Showcase handicap and it wins paying over 100/1.

Thing is, we tend to remember such coincidences when they come good, yet conveniently forget the ones that did not.

And of course a 10/1 winner will, as we know, come home in front just 8 or 9 times in every 100 races. But they can, and do, win almost every day.

But if it fits in with an unrelated event . . . and we make a spurious connection, we can be soon be lulled into awarding the coincidence a completely irrational over-importance.

C'mon, admit it, just how many have a story to tell? Do you have a 'lucky' coat or shoes?

We've a wealth of experience on our email group. How many

of them I wondered had seen the National Winner in a dream the night before or backed a 20/1 winner called Shoelace when theirs snapped minutes earlier? Has anyone ever actually backed the 5th horse in the fifth race on the 5th of the month at 5/1 only to watch it come in 5th?

### **Hobbs-on's Choice** From Steve Tilley:

Some friends of ours have a horse in training with Philip Hobbs. Glancing through the runners on a Worcester summer meeting I said "here, Philip's got one running in the bumper". "Silly sod" said my friend "that's A.E.Hobbs not Phillip Hobbs." Suitably mortified I returned to study the form.

On the way to the course we passed a small slightly down at heel horse box. Property of one A.E.Hobbs. Obviously it now had to be backed.

The horse was called "Never in Debt" and it won at 33/1.

. . . and . . .

### **Wrong Runner - Right Result**

My friend and I were at Cheltenham having a heated discussion about a Novice Hurdle. I was on the favourite and was waiting for at least 7/4. Nothing much was doing in the ring and it kept touching 6/4 and bouncing back.

Meanwhile my friend was extolling the virtue of the 2nd favourite, which he had been following for a while, but felt this was not quite the right race for him just yet. We were having a heated discussion about our fancies and their relative values. Then, out the corner of my eye, I noticed 7/4 about the favourite on a far distant board. I sprinted off and in the ensuing melee around this bookie managed to get my bet on.

About two seconds after putting the bet on I realised that in all the hurry and excitement and I had actually put the bet

on the horse my friend had been rabbiting on about rather than the one I originally intended.

I returned somewhat leadened footed to the stands to watch the outcome.

The favourite made all the running and seemed to have matters well in hand until he clipped the last hurdle hard and Cheltenham's hill started to take effect. Staying on from the pack was my friends fancy which just got up on the nod. He commiserated with me in the way friends do when they know you've lost money but want you to know they were right all the long and if you'd listened to them you wouldn't have lost the money.

It took me three more races before my embarrassment would let me tell him I had actually backed the winner by mistake. I still get reminded of this.

### **Bus Route to Ruin** From Brian Oldham

I was cured of hunches/coincidences one Cheltenham when I was on a bus near Waterloo, just passing Morley Street, when I saw a Docklands Express bus - both were fancied and running that day and I plunged on them.

Needless to say, the original selections I had pencilled in won at good prices!

### **50/1 Pub Address** From Chris Blount

Last year I went racing with a friend. It was his second ever meeting and first over jumps. Knowing that we were going, fellow members of our pub quiz team had given us last week's winnings to "invest".

The pub is the Lady Bay. It is on Trent Boulevard in Nottingham. My friend insisted that the pot went on Boulevard Bay when he saw it was running. I spent the afternoon trying to persuade him not to back it. He still did!

We stood by the last fence and my friend gradually became more and more animated as it ran out of its skin. He shut up as Boulevard Bay approached the last. When asked why, he told me he didn't want to put it off!

Boulevard Bay won by a street at 50/1. My friend still considers himself a betting guru! I notice Boulevard Bay is running at Lingfield today. I'm not going to tell him.

### **“I Have a Dream . . .”** From John Witts

I've dreamt about two horses and both won. I have also dreamt about the lottery and have the six numbers - unfortunately one of them was 50 (although I know the sixth number is divisible by five).

My brother had a dream about Tebbito winning (useful novice hurdler with A Turnell?) In late 80's. It had a good chance in the first race at Ascot on Victor Chandler day. It was a very foggy day and as the runners went down for the race the fog got thicker. After about 15 minutes the racing was called off and the horses had to come back from the two and a half mile start. First to pass the post - Tebbito.

I think that broke his dream as the horse was well beaten next time.

### **Housey Housey** From Tony Wheeler

Before getting married in 1990 we looked at a house on Morley Street, Sutton in Ashfield. For the next four years this proved profitable, especially the last one at our annual pilgrimage to the National. But does this get remembered? No sir. In the National we always have no 13 except for year it bloody wins, I hate Ted Walsh!

### **Initial Reactions** From Patrick Wallen

A few years ago, when visiting my mother I took her (a punting novice) to Bath Races. Running in a 6f handicap was a horse called JAYANNPEE, the favourite and well fancied. She being a J and me a P it took her eye immediately. "I'm

going to have a £10 bet" she proudly announced.

Me rambling on about there being no mileage in backing short priced favourites in 6 furlong handicaps, etc., etc. had no effect and she proceeded to back it at an early show of 5/2. Horse won of course, at an SP of 7/4

**Body Language Genius** From William Russell  
Different, but maybe related subject, hope this counts?  
In my other life I am youth coach at Heart of Midlothian F.C. Last year one of our good young players, Graham, signed for Manchester United. Although he was/is a great talent, he had the annoying habit ,whenever he got the ball of doing a step-over. (puts left foot over ball, then moves off with right foot)

Anyway, a couple of months ago I was at the Cliff, Manchester United's training ground for an FA coaching seminar and the Man Utd youth players were going through their paces. Watching this with me were the youth coaches from Everton and Manchester City.

Surprised to see Graham, I casually remarked to my two companions that I could tell, merely from players body language, what they are going to do even before they get the ball. They laughed mockingly, looked at me askew and said "Right!?!?"

As it was a shooting exercise and our Graham was next in line, I said "£25 each of you says this next player does a stepover before he shoots"

Not knowing Graham as I do, they took the bet. The outcome was never in doubt, not only did I get £50, these two coaches went away thinking I was a genius.

PS Don't worry, next time I saw them I gave the money back.



***Last year we ran a mini-series of extracts from what was to become a very popular book among SMARTsig members. There's a revised version for 2001 and we're sneaking a look at a couple of courses.***

## **EXTRACT FROM BIAS 2001 (part II)** ***David Renham***

**L**ast year, Stef was kind enough to review my first work, "Bias 2000", and allowed the space for me to show an extract from it.

Ten months on, It's been updated, with more courses, more analysis and new "angles". The book has almost doubled in size from 27,000 words to over 50,000!

In this, the second of two articles I'm sharing the second of two of the new courses analysed in the book.

Last month's item featured the Brighton course and this month I'll be examining Windsor. All races contested by 10 or more runners are the basis of the analyses.

***Windsor*** (both five and six furlong races)

The Windsor track is shaped in a figure of eight, but the sprint track is nearly straight.

After writing Bias 2000, some readers expressed surprise that Windsor was not included. During its compilation, I felt that the Windsor draw bias was not as clear cut as people thought.

There have been plenty of qualifying races over this period - 151 in fact, and the overall picture from the most recent five years of statistics are shown in the table on the next page:

**Windsor: All 5 & 6 furlong races, past 5 seasons.**

	Top "third" of the draw	Middle "third" of the draw	Bottom "third" of the draw
Winning percentage	41.7	28.5	29.8
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	36	33.1	30.4

**General conclusion:**

A small, but tangible bias to high numbers.

Here is one important point to note :

- a) If, in every race, you simply placed 1 point on the second highest numbered stall, you would have made a large 60 point profit (just under 40% in profit on turnover terms).

**More Detailed Summary**

I thought it appropriate to look at both sprint trips separately to see if there were any significant differences.

**5 furlongs**

There have been 60 qualifying races over the five year period. Here are the statistics:

**Windsor: All 5 furlong races**

	Top "third" of the draw	Middle "third" of the draw	Bottom "third" of the draw
Winning percentage	48.3	28.3	23.3
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	37.7	32.8	29.4

## 6 furlongs

The 6 furlong trip is more popular at Windsor and there have been 91 qualifying races over the five year period. Here are the statistics:

### Windsor: All 5 furlong races

	Top “third” of the draw	Middle “third” of the draw	Bottom “third” of the draw
Winning percentage	37.3	28.6	34.1
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	34.8	33.3	31.9

It seems that the draw bias is much more prevalent over five furlongs than it is over the six furlong trip.

Indeed, the statistics for the six furlong races indicate no significant draw bias whatsoever.

### Ground conditions

The general consensus amongst racing pundits about Windsor is that on firmer ground high numbers are favoured and on softer ground the advantage swings to lower numbers.

To investigate this, I have firstly looked at all races on good to firm ground or firmer, and secondly all races on good to soft ground or softer.

### Good to firm or firmer

There have 71 qualifying races over five and six furlongs on this ground over the past five seasons.

The statistics table is shown at the top of the next page:

## Windsor: 5 & 6 furlong races, going g/firm and firmer

	Top "third" of the draw	Middle "third" of the draw	Bottom "third" of the draw
Winning percentage	46.5	29.6	23.9
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	40.4	33.8	25.8

These figures do indicate that the high draw bias is stronger on firmer ground.

## Good to soft or softer

There have been less races on softer ground - 40 in total. However, still a reasonable sample size to explore:

## Windsor 5 & 6f races, going g/soft and softer

	Top "third" of the draw	Middle "third" of the draw	Bottom "third" of the draw
Winning percentage	39.3	24.2	36.4
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	41.4	29.3	29.3

The bias to higher numbers disappears, and low numbers seem to do marginally better than the other two "thirds" if you look at the first, second and third placed percentage figures.

I decided to next to look at field sizes.

The far rail (low) only seems to come into play when either the ground is soft, or the number of runners is large. I decided to look at all the races with 20 or more runners over the past five years.

There have been 33 qualifying races:

**Windsor 5 & 6f races with 20 runners or more**

	Top “third” of the draw	Middle “third” of the draw	Bottom “third” of the draw
Winning percentage	35	30	35
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	31.7	28.3	40

The win percentage of the bottom “third” increases from an overall percentage of 29.8 to a figure of 36.4. Perhaps the far rail is not significantly slower than the stands’ rail after all.

I followed this research up with looking at races of 20 runners or more run on good to soft ground or softer. I hoped to see an edge for those horses drawn low this time.

Unfortunately, there were only 13 qualifying races, but the statistics read as follows:

**Windsor 5 & 6f races, 20 runners or more, going declared good/soft & softer**

	Top “third” of the draw	Middle “third” of the draw	Bottom “third” of the draw
Winning percentage	23.1	23.1	53.8
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	28.2	30.8	41

The small sample of races gives little validity to the percentages, but the signs are promising. Low numbers may well have the edge on softer ground in big fields.

Finally I looked at the 74 handicap races to see whether the overall bias to higher numbers increased, as is usual when studying draw bias courses. Amazingly though, the bias was marginally less significant. The statistics are shown below:

### **Windsor 5 & 6f handicap races**

	Top "third" of the draw	Middle "third" of the draw	Bottom "third" of the draw
Winning percentage	39.2	29.7	31.1
Placed 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> percentage	33.8	35.1	31.1

It seems therefore, that Windsor is a course where one needs to take several factors into account.

High numbers seem to have a tangible edge, especially over the shorter 5 furlong trip, and also firmer ground.

Lower numbers perform better on softer ground, and may well have the advantage when the field size becomes larger.

### **Season 2000**

There were forty qualifying races this season with fifteen victories for horses from the top "third" of the draw, thirteen for horses from the middle "third" of the draw, and twelve for horses from the bottom "third" of the draw. A very even split in terms of results.

This is in stark contrast to the season that preceded it (1999) when twenty two of the thirty nine races went to horses from the top "third" of the draw (56.4%).

However, there were some races in 2000 where higher numbers definitely enjoyed a clear advantage, with the lower numbers struggling.

One such example came on 8<sup>th</sup> May in the Rodrigo Handicap

when *At Large* won from a central draw (11), and was followed home by horses drawn 24, 18, 17, 13, 12, 21 and 19. Horses from the bottom "third" of the draw were never on terms.

A second example occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> May in the 19 runner 'Sportingbet.com Handicap'.

Higher draws dominated once again, with *Pedro Jack* (drawn 15) beating *Pays Damour* (drawn 14), with *Alphilda* (drawn 18) third. Horses from draws 11 and 10 filled the next two places, and lower numbers never got competitive.

A third example of high draw bias was seen on 12<sup>th</sup> June, when the first four horses home in the 19 runner 'MLL Telecom Handicap' were drawn 15, 18, 17 and 16 (N.B. there were two non runners).

However, perhaps the most interesting case of high draw bias occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> July in the 'Creeper Handicap'.

The race was on soft ground, but with only 12 runners, it looked like low numbers would not be able to take advantage of the potentially quicker far rail. However, the nine lowest drawn horses decided to make a beeline for the far rail, despite appreciating the fact that they would have to race much further than the horses that stayed stands' side.

The three highest drawn horses stayed stands' side, and finished well clear of the far side group.

*Doctor Dennis* (drawn 13), beat 33/1 outsider *Carnage* (drawn 11) into second, with *Fox's Idea* (drawn 12) third. The horses that raced on the far side clearly lost too much ground at the start, and whether there was indeed better ground under the far rail is impossible to say.

In terms of soft ground low draw bias, the best example of this occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> October in the 'Sky Text Handicap'.

This 25 runner contest on good to soft ground saw the first five horses home drawn 6, 3, 5, 8 and 4.

The best finishing position from a horse drawn high was sixth - *Indian Warrior* (drawn 19) who led the stands' side group home, but finished a massive ten lengths behind the winner.

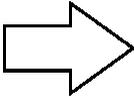
Windsor is a course where betting opportunities should arise over the season, but the astute punter needs to tread warily and take several factors into account.

Best suggestion for profiting from any Windsor bias?  
High numbers on firmer ground look the safest option.



*A screen-shot from the Internet Home page of Randombet.com*

Notice who was sponsor of this year's Lincoln Handicap at Doncaster - *Random* betting? So what's that all about then?

SMARTsig takes a closer look . . .  
see story on next page 

***The internet spawns ever new ways for the consumer - or punter - to spend their money. The latest recruit in the betting business is, of all things, betting at random.***

## **BETTING WITH GAY ABANDON**

**SMARTsig**

**T**hose horseracing fans amongst you may well have noticed this year's sponsors name of the Lincoln Handicap. Rando**bet**.com.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a new bookmaker or a new tipping service? None of those things. It is, as the man in the tv commercial says, "Exactly what it says on the tin".

It's a new service that allows you to place a 'bet' at random. Well, to be more precise, you have full choice over the event, you have complete control over your stakes . . . but your selection . . . well that's the random bit.

Now this is such an alien concept to those who subscribe to this publication that your first reaction is likely to be "What??!!?"

Imagine going down your local bookmakers, or picking the phone up, dialing your bookie and saying something along the lines of;

"First race at Folkstone, £50 win bet please." or

"2001 FA Cup Final, £10 please"

The bookie then replies saying "Thank you, that's done. Our *randomiser* facility has selected Dobbins for you" Or, in the case of the Cup Final, "You've been allotted Doncaster Rovers."

Of course being a *randomised* selection process it could equally have selected Arkle or Manchester United respectively. Makes life much easier doesn't it?

The way they work it is this. For whatever the event, they award all outcomes equal winning 'odds'.

Chancing your arm in a 20 runner handicap for example, each and every runner is fixed at 16/1—you can't pick your selection, their 'randomizer' does that for you, but whether it's the 'real-world' 11/10 favourite or a 66/1 rag, if it wins you get paid at 16/1.

A speculative punt on the winner from the last 16 for the FA Cup final will offer odds around the 13/1 mark for all remaining teams.

Every SMARTsig subscriber is dedicated to the improvement of his/her final selection process, no wonder then the first few mentions on our email group were;

"I predict Randoibet.com goes broke in 6 months"

. . . followed by

"Defeats the object of punting to me"

. . . after which came

"I must admit the whole thing was lost on me"

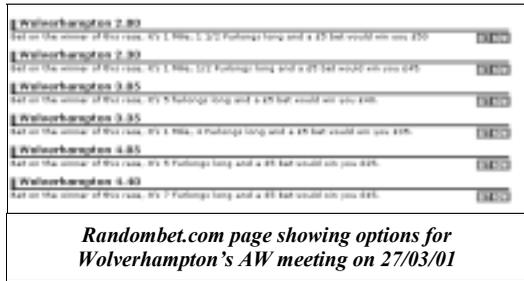
It's attraction is difficult principle to grasp though isn't it? For anyone who's spent hours pouring over form books and mathematical formulae it is a totally alien approach.

Looking at their web site, there is certainly no shortage of money being thrown around to support it's promotion either. From the first page where ex-England manager, Kevin Keegan welcomes you to ". . . a unique and fun way to win", through page after page of events from which to *randomize* yourself a selection.

Everything is on offer, horseracing and every type of sporting events through to politics and the recent Oscars. But let's look at the concept for what it is.

Isn't this project simply turning our beloved horseracing and sports betting a series of random occurrences, it's just an alternative lottery ticket, or a roulette wheel, a bingo

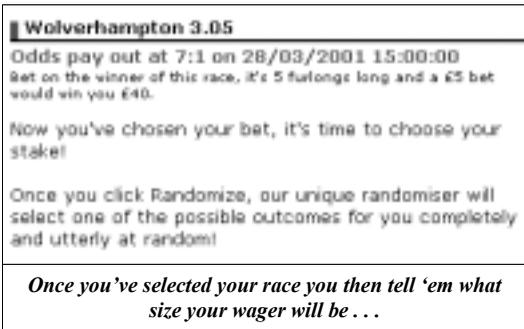
session or a slot machine. It is never likely to attract the likes of you and me, but Lotteries, roulette, bingo, slots or even workplace sweepstakes attract million of participants and even more millions of pounds & dollars on a daily basis.



*Randombet.com page showing options for Wolverhampton's AW meeting on 27/03/01*

Petty opinions aside, the only downsides I can see for their prospects is that many of the aforementioned gambles have one of two things in their favour that randombet.com cannot offer.

Some of the activities are inescapably social events. The roulette wheel, craps table or blackjack game will to my mind always be more popular in a casino than it can ever be 'on-line'.



Bingo may not be my scene, but those that do go regularly enjoy the night out just as much as their chance of a win.

The on-going and popular gambles that do not include a social element need another carrot to dangle in order to hold this type of punters' interest. That attraction is massive prizes, hence our National Lottery sells million of tickets each week.

Not my cup of tea this, but I wouldn't want to pass judgment on the pleasures that others may well get from it. I wish randombet the very best of luck, I suspect they'll probably need it.



All screenshots in this article are taken from the randombet.com web site and copyright is acknowledged.

***Our Swap-Shop feature has been little used over recent months.***

***It is the perfect place to recycle your unwanted racing books and betting paraphernalia.***

***Do your bit to save the planet - and do someone a favour at the same time!***



**SWAPSHOP is a FREE service to members  
Make FULL use of the facility**

**WANTED:**

I'm looking for the last three years worth of results in book form, something like Superform. I'm researching more complicated systems and I find it very difficult and time consuming to do this by computer via disc or via the web.

***David Renham.***

***The Hunters, Middle Rd. Tiptoe, Lymington, Hants.***

***SO41 6EJ or CazDeacon@aol.com***

**SALE OR SWAP (WHAT HAVE YOU?)**

\* Profile Nhunt edition (2000) \* Profile Throughform (97/98)  
\* Supaform Flat (1999) \* Supaform NHunt (1996) & (1998)  
\* Mordin on Time \* Compile your own Handicap (D Dickenson) \* Forecasting Methods (P May) \* The Solidus (Davey Towey) \* Uncle Ernie Flat 2000 \* Backing the Draw for Profit (2000) \* Winners Back Winners (Clive Holt)  
\* Bigger Profits From Handicap Races (P Kilgallon) \* How to beat The Handicapper (P Kilgallon)

***Paul Gittings.***

***92 Marbury Road, Stockport, Cheshire. SK4 5NG***

***or Paul@procalc.freemove.co.uk***

***Pro betting can bring substantial rewards, but for everyone who makes the grade, there are multiple bodies who fall by the wayside.***

## **DAIRY OF A ROOKIE PRO**

***Stuart Doyle***

***A good few SMARTsig subscribers make their living, or the greater proportion of it, from betting. A few others have achieved the status during their membership. For the great majority though it remains perhaps the ultimate dream. One of our younger members has grasped the nettle in an attempt to make his mark as a pro, this is the start of his story. In the beginning . . .***

**D**ate: Wednesday 6th March

I'm in Thailand at moment. It really suits the sports bettor here because you can awake at your leisure due to the time difference.

The most likely options for today look like the Champions league games, tennis and I also note that there are some rugby union games tonight. I also figure that Tony Ansell might take an interest in some of the Scottish football. I pay for Tony's service because he covers a lot of areas where I have little expertise such as Scottish football which allows me to increase my turnover (and hopefully profits).

This evenings football looks to be priced correctly and the team news doesn't add anything new - I decide to leave it alone. The only side I am even half tempted by is Bayern Munich at Lyon. But Bayern's recent Bundesliga form isn't spectacular and this is Lyon's last chance in the competition, perhaps too tricky to call, so I pass.

The tennis looks more interesting and I call an associate

who has been talking to a few tennis judges. The consensus of opinion is that Woodruff is value at 5/6 with William Hills who appear to have underestimated him all week. I try to get on but they are betting overbroke. Whilst their revised price of 4/6 is still the biggest in the village, it makes no appeal because I make Woodruff an 8/13 shot.

Whilst this is theoretical value I am not certain enough of my opinion to take the price. I think Jan Michel Gambill is nailed on to win and the 4/11 available there seems juicy as I would expect him to win 8 or 9 times out of 10. But when I look the price has gone to 1/3 and for some reason I decide to leave that one alone too.

Maybe I have a psychological barrier which stops me betting anything at shorter than 1/3 in a single. I know this has no logical basis and is exactly the kind of thing that I need to address if I am to be successful.

Almost about to give up on the day when I get a telephone call from 'the Milky Bar Kid'. We have been working together on a few projects together recently and he is fascinated by the corners markets and correctly ascertained that the fixed odds markets on this were invariably wrong.

The corners loophole now seems to have been closed but he now thinks that the spreads are overestimating multi-corners. I'm not so sure but decide to go with his judgement and he sells £40 for me at 36. He also asks if I have looked at the evenings rugby union.

Deciding to give it the once-over I immediately see that the ten that Surrey want Leicester to give up is an underestimation of them. Problem is that I need a double and I don't have a view on the Harlequins game.

Then I remember Gambill who's at 2/7 with them, which seems fair. I try for an optimistic £660 double but am only laid £330.

It is now getting late in Bangkok and my girlfriend is itching to go out for dinner when Ansell comes through with Livingston at 7/2 to beat Aberdeen.

Apparently the Livingston players are on a grand a man to win which is massive for them and I telephone Stan James and ask for £300. I'm offered a hundred at the price. Yesterday I got £1200 on a tennis match on which they were betting overbroke!!!!!!

By now my girlfriend is really moaning at me so I'm pressured into packing it up for the day without looking into getting any more on Livingston.

I sit down at 3:00am to watch the Arsenal game and immediately saw that I was in for a rough ride with more than a few corners just in the first few minutes.

Furthermore, all of the Thais around me seem to have backed Arsenal and are irritating me by cheering every single Arsenal corner! I know this shouldn't get to me but it does and so decide that whatever will be will be and go to bed.

Normally I would look to bet in-running on supremacy or total goals but have had a few beers and decide it unwise given the added pressure of likely corner losses.

My sleep is disturbed at 5:00am with the mobile ringing. It's the 'Milky bar kid' - who is prone to emotion at the best of times - telling me that I have lost £2,800. He says he has lost the same but my guess is that it is very likely even more.

I feel the shock physically and now can't sleep properly. In my mind I'd been stupid to take someone else's advice on a spread market without thinking about it properly.

My betting bankroll could soon disappear with these kind of reversals - but then when I was working for a living I had no

problems sleeping. I realise my rent is due and it feels like I have backed another loser.

My mind turns quickly to my other bets and I telephone a friend for the results. They've both won.

This makes me feel better until I remember that I didn't get the bet I had asked for, I'd allowed my girlfriend's hunger to come before my new job.

Work is work is work. No matter whether that work is professional punting or coal mining. It would have been totally unacceptable for her to turn up at Zettlers, tell me she was hungry and for me to walk out before my work was done. Why should this job be any different?

Okay, I'm my own boss, have no need to qualify the use of my time to anyone but myself, but that is no reason not to be professional.

I ask myself if Dodger McCartney or even Alan Potts would be tempted to miss the opportunity to get a bet on by the Seafood stall at Goodwood.

I don't even need to answer that.....

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*Following his first dairy page, and nearer to publication date, I asked Stuart if he'd anything to add by way of an update some three weeks after his £2,800 loss on football multi-corners.*

---

**D**ate: Tuesday 28th March

I know from talking to other punters that many harbour dreams of one day turning professional. When I started out six weeks ago I had five years (out of the last six) of successful gambling behind me - not bad for a twenty-five

year old. I thought it was easy. It isn't.

Nothing prepares you for the stress that you feel when you've not backed a winner for ten days - or a spread bet goes horribly against you. There is nowhere to hide, no colleagues to blame, no boss to complain about. Any failure is likely to be a very personal failure and that is very damaging to your personal esteem. I now realise that there is a lot more at stake than my money.

My first two weeks went well. I won just over £2,000 and thought that I was invincible. Then, when I decided to visit friends in Thailand I took my eye off the ball for two weeks. This exercise cost me in excess of £5,000 because I was trying to keep up my turnover without maintaining the same levels of research.

One single sloppy bet taken on the advice of someone else cost nearly £3,000 alone. When I arrived back I learnt my first real lesson.

My betting bank balance was down nearly £6,000 in total. There were no wages that were going to top that back up.

£3,000 of losses turn into a downturn of £6,000 when you take into consideration living costs. Luckily, during the last two weeks the incoming profits have fared rather better and have clawed back my position by the tune of £4,000.

If I can keep up this momentum I'll consider myself a fully-fledged rather than a rookie pro.

Whilst some things in the above may sound as though I regret my decision - I don't. Well not yet at least! The advantages outweigh all of the disadvantages. I have never been a fan of office politics and can't say that I miss commuting.

I've certainly not yet acquired the attributes of the hardened pro, where every event is viewed with a cold detachment. I

readily confess to dancing on my coffee table when Captain Steve hit the front in the Dubai World Cup for example.

The thrill I get from being proved right hasn't dulled and I doubt if it ever will. I love sport and I love gambling and they occupy my thoughts for most of my waking hours.

Even as I am sat here writing this I am thinking about why the draw advantage in the Lincoln was so different to what it appeared to be in the sprints.

Am I going to continue along the road to fully-fledged gambling professional? I honestly don't know.

I'm acutely aware that it will be difficult for me to get a mortgage given my current 'profession' and deep down I still badly want to be involved in a successful bookmaking operation that will do things differently (the right way?).

At the moment though what I'm doing suits me fine - and I only have to look after myself. I am 25, single and have few responsibilities. I think I will review the situation in a years time (unless a run of bad luck forces a decision before then!)



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***Last month Peter May explained the method behind his now discontinued Hot Favourites column in Raceform on Saturday. It looked to pinpoint value favourites with close to 50% winners and avoided long losing runs.***

## **TRAINERS & FAVOURITES FOR COURSES III (Epsom to York Favs)**

***Peter May***

**W**hereas many value punters would accept the idea of following the draw, the majority would maybe query a system based on favourites.

But favourites played an important part in my betting for several years and if I was tempted back into betting in non-juvenile flat races, I would still include them in a portfolio of betting strategies.

The important feature of any system based on favourites is that the win ratio is high.

Draw based systems, for example, result in high priced winners and long losing runs, so, from a psychological aspect, these systems can be difficult to follow.

The win ratio using this favourites based idea has usually exceeded 50% each season, it would break up the long losing runs, and would often change a day from no wins from four bets to 3 wins from eight. At the end of the year it will make a profit, even after paying 9% tax.

Although I stopped betting like this a few years ago, I resurrected the system for *Raceform On Saturday*, and initiated the *Hot Favourites* column.

During the Summer, racing on Saturdays can become very competitive, and often the tipsters in the paper found very

few winners, leaving nothing to advertise the following week.

However the Hot Favourites column often produced several winners giving scope for future advertising even during the lean spells.

In this way it acted in the same fashion for the paper as it did for me. In fact during its run, 27 May 2000 to 25 November 2000 the column highlighted 88 winning favourites with 99 losers (47%) and returned a profit of 14 points at starting price.

However the column no longer runs, and I have been asked by several members to give the method of selecting the races.

Well, it is very simple and merely uses the following analysis which highlights the races where the favourites tend to perform well, though I did omit races on going softer than good and races with very large fields.

As an example I would have included any juvenile stakes race at Ascot providing the going was good or quicker and the field size was reasonable (under 15 for instance).

### ***Key to using the tables***

Under the race type heading;  
2yo refers to juvenile races, and 3yo+ to non-juvenile races (not those restricted to just 3-y-o horses, but all non-juvenile races).

The Ret/£1 column shows the average return for a level £1 stake at Starting Price.

Therefore to cover off-course betting tax at 9% and return of 0.09 would be required.

<b>EPSOM</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoListed	1	4	25.0	-0.41
2yoStakes	3	6	50.0	0.15
2yoMaiden	13	31	41.9	-0.02
2yoHandicap	1	7	14.3	-0.46
3yo+Group	7	23	30.4	-0.26
3yo+Listed	3	12	25.0	0.01
3yo+Stakes	11	21	52.4	0.28
3yo+Claimer	2	11	18.2	-0.48
3yo+Maiden	13	24	54.2	0.22
3yo+Handicap	20	124	16.1	-0.32
<b>FOLKESTONE</b>				
2yoStakes	5	20	25.0	-0.48
2yoClaimer	1	7	14.3	-0.74
2yoMaiden	20	56	35.7	-0.20
2yoHandicap	3	9	33.3	0.06
3yo+Stakes	11	42	26.2	-0.17
3yo+Claimer	8	21	38.1	0.04
3yo+Maiden	18	50	36.0	-0.15
3yo+Handicap	36	147	24.5	-0.20
<b>GOODWOOD</b>				
2yoGroup	9	19	47.4	0.20
2yoListed	2	5	40.0	-0.14
2yoStakes	7	22	31.8	-0.28
2yoClaimer	0	2	0.0	-1.00
2yoMaiden	44	75	58.7	0.22
2yoHandicap	6	21	28.6	0.36
3yo+Group	13	36	36.1	0.08
3yo+Listed	17	39	43.6	0.11
3yo+Stakes	18	46	39.1	0.07
3yo+Claimer	4	8	50.0	0.27
3yo+Maiden	24	57	42.1	-0.06
3yo+Handicap	54	252	21.4	-0.14
<b>HAMILTON</b>				
2yoStakes	13	24	54.2	0.36
2yoClaimer	6	12	50.0	0.10
2yoMaiden	22	55	40.0	-0.22
2yoHandicap	5	13	38.5	0.50
3yo+Stakes	19	63	30.2	-0.30
3yo+Claimer	15	33	45.5	0.04
3yo+Maiden	18	26	69.2	0.38
3yo+Handicap	65	234	27.8	-0.01

<b>HAYDOCK</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoStakes	9	27	33.3	-0.24
2yoClaimer	0	3	0.0	-1.00
2yoMaiden	32	84	38.1	-0.12
2yoHandicap	3	13	23.1	-0.04
3yo+Group	5	15	33.3	-0.13
3yo+Listed	4	19	21.1	-0.47
3yo+Stakes	22	47	46.8	0.18
3yo+Claimer	5	15	33.3	-0.07
3yo+Maiden	25	64	39.1	-0.17
3yo+Handicap	54	231	23.4	-0.20
<b>KEMPTON</b>				
2yoListed	1	5	20.0	-0.43
2yoStakes	9	21	42.9	-0.15
2yoMaiden	22	56	39.3	0.08
2yoHandicap	2	6	33.3	-0.23
3yo+Group	1	2	50.0	0.75
3yo+Listed	7	23	30.4	-0.19
3yo+Stakes	6	29	20.7	-0.60
3yo+Claimer	2	8	25.0	-0.20
3yo+Maiden	26	65	40.0	0.00
3yo+Handicap	43	152	28.3	0.26
<b>LEICESTER</b>				
2yoStakes	8	25	32.0	-0.24
2yoClaimer	1	5	20.0	-0.30
2yoMaiden	33	90	36.7	-0.22
2yoHandicap	5	25	20.0	-0.24
3yo+Group	0	1	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Listed	1	7	14.3	-0.74
3yo+Stakes	32	91	35.2	-0.12
3yo+Claimer	13	35	37.1	0.12
3yo+Maiden	28	49	57.1	0.18
3yo+Handicap	46	174	26.4	-0.02
<b>LINGFIELD (turf)</b>				
2yoStakes	13	39	33.3	-0.15
2yoClaimer	8	15	53.3	0.68
2yoMaiden	53	107	49.5	0.09
2yoHandicap	4	19	21.1	-0.08
3yo+Group	2	4	50.0	0.64
3yo+Listed	6	13	46.2	0.15
3yo+Stakes	17	39	43.6	0.21
3yo+Claimer	1	2	50.0	0.13
3yo+Maiden	40	85	47.1	0.04
3yo+Handicap	49	208	23.6	-0.23

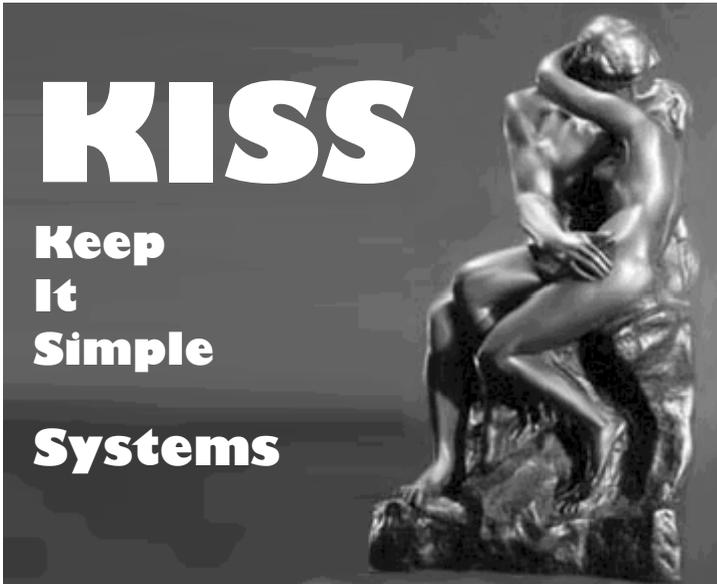
<b>MUSSELBURGH</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoStakes	9	17	52.9	0.31
2yoClaimer	6	12	50.0	0.02
2yoMaiden	21	47	44.7	-0.07
2yoHandicap	5	21	23.8	-0.34
3yo+Group	0	1	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Stakes	9	28	32.1	-0.18
3yo+Claimer	13	26	50.0	0.13
3yo+Maiden	21	34	61.8	0.40
3yo+Handicap	56	203	27.6	-0.07
<b>NEWBURY</b>				
2yoGroup	4	9	44.4	0.18
2yoListed	9	18	50.0	0.27
2yoStakes	16	41	39.0	-0.17
2yoMaiden	20	56	35.7	-0.01
2yoHandicap	2	19	10.5	-0.57
3yo+Group	9	30	30.0	-0.38
3yo+Listed	11	37	29.7	-0.29
3yo+Stakes	13	38	34.2	-0.06
3yo+Claimer	2	6	33.3	0.13
3yo+Maiden	10	47	21.3	-0.35
3yo+Handicap	41	186	22.0	-0.15
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>				
2yoClaimer	3	9	33.3	-0.04
2yoMaiden	24	75	32.0	-0.28
2yoHandicap	1	11	9.1	-0.59
3yo+Group	1	3	33.3	-0.13
3yo+Listed	2	7	28.6	-0.29
3yo+Stakes	17	37	45.9	0.25
3yo+Claimer	1	5	20.0	-0.40
3yo+Maiden	29	51	56.9	0.10
3yo+Handicap	49	208	23.6	-0.22
<b>NEWMARKET</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoGroup	12	27	44.4	0.16
2yoListed	10	27	37.0	-0.22
2yoStakes	26	62	41.9	-0.03
2yoMaiden	62	139	44.6	0.02
2yoHandicap	13	44	29.5	0.02
3yo+Group	19	75	25.3	-0.18
3yo+Listed	35	87	40.2	0.09
3yo+Stakes	28	66	42.4	-0.02
3yo+Claimer	8	36	22.2	-0.38
3yo+Maiden	42	101	41.6	-0.09
3yo+Handicap	81	358	22.6	-0.08

<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoStakes	17	37	45.9	-0.04
2yoClaimer	2	3	66.7	0.61
2yoMaiden	47	105	44.8	-0.08
2yoHandicap	5	13	38.5	0.53
3yo+Listed	0	1	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Stakes	22	94	23.4	-0.35
3yo+Claimer	6	15	40.0	0.12
3yo+Maiden	28	74	37.8	-0.23
3yo+Handicap	83	285	29.1	0.07
<b>PONTEFRACT</b>				
2yoListed	2	3	66.7	0.89
2yoStakes	10	21	47.6	0.03
2yoMaiden	21	64	32.8	-0.28
2yoHandicap	5	23	21.7	-0.32
3yo+Listed	1	3	33.3	-0.36
3yo+Stakes	19	66	28.8	-0.23
3yo+Claimer	6	14	42.9	0.10
3yo+Maiden	32	65	49.2	-0.04
3yo+Handicap	38	206	18.4	-0.32
<b>REDCAR</b>				
2yoStakes	15	39	38.5	-0.07
2yoClaimer	1	4	25.0	-0.41
2yoMaiden	22	66	33.3	-0.34
2yoHandicap	3	22	13.6	-0.43
3yo+Stakes	21	54	38.9	-0.09
3yo+Claimer	11	23	47.8	0.06
3yo+Maiden	21	49	42.9	-0.20
3yo+Handicap	60	217	27.6	-0.04
<b>RIPON</b>				
2yoListed	3	4	75.0	0.63
2yoStakes	11	25	44.0	0.03
2yoMaiden	20	44	45.5	0.13
2yoHandicap	0	3	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Stakes	10	29	34.5	-0.29
3yo+Claimer	4	15	26.7	-0.35
3yo+Maiden	38	66	57.6	0.13
3yo+Handicap	43	187	23.0	-0.25

<b>SALISBURY</b>				
<b>RaceType</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Bets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ret/£1</b>
2yoStakes	24	44	54.5	0.17
2yoClaimer	3	6	50.0	0.63
2yoMaiden	26	67	38.8	0.04
3yo+Listed	2	6	33.3	-0.19
3yo+Stakes	21	41	51.2	0.18
3yo+Claimer	4	13	30.8	-0.08
3yo+Maiden	28	64	43.8	0.06
3yo+Handicap	55	186	29.6	0.15
<b>SANDOWN</b>				
2yoGroup	0	5	0.0	-1.00
2yoListed	4	12	33.3	-0.11
2yoStakes	8	22	36.4	-0.33
2yoClaimer	0	3	0.0	-1.00
2yoMaiden	21	55	38.2	-0.05
2yoHandicap	3	16	18.8	-0.42
3yo+Group	10	35	28.6	-0.13
3yo+Listed	1	7	14.3	-0.78
3yo+Stakes	12	29	41.4	-0.10
3yo+Claimer	9	27	33.3	-0.12
3yo+Maiden	26	61	42.6	-0.06
3yo+Handicap	47	206	22.8	-0.20
<b>THIRSK</b>				
2yoStakes	10	33	30.3	-0.25
2yoClaimer	2	13	15.4	-0.51
2yoMaiden	18	43	41.9	-0.08
2yoHandicap	2	8	25.0	-0.25
3yo+Listed	0	1	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Stakes	14	41	34.1	-0.22
3yo+Claimer	0	3	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Maiden	28	66	42.4	-0.13
3yo+Handicap	65	187	34.8	0.15
<b>WARWICK</b>				
2yoStakes	5	10	50.0	0.26
2yoClaimer	1	2	50.0	0.19
2yoMaiden	31	62	50.0	0.22
2yoHandicap	2	8	25.0	0.17
3yo+Stakes	12	37	32.4	-0.16
3yo+Claimer	7	22	31.8	0.01
3yo+Maiden	25	52	48.1	0.11
3yo+Handicap	46	159	28.9	0.07

<b>WINDSOR</b>				
2yoStakes	17	52	32.7	-0.23
2yoMaiden	19	62	30.6	-0.11
2yoHandicap	1	12	8.3	-0.73
3yo+Group	4	5	80.0	0.97
3yo+Listed	0	1	0.0	-1.00
3yo+Stakes	25	59	42.4	0.14
3yo+Claimer	4	15	26.7	-0.07
3yo+Maiden	34	72	47.2	0.11
3yo+Handicap	43	206	20.9	-0.16
<b>YARMOUTH</b>				
2yoStakes	27	55	49.1	0.04
2yoMaiden	34	70	48.6	0.01
2yoHandicap	8	20	40.0	0.20
3yo+Listed	1	4	25.0	-0.28
3yo+Stakes	23	66	34.8	-0.16
3yo+Claimer	10	26	38.5	-0.05
3yo+Maiden	31	63	49.2	0.06
3yo+Handicap	50	204	24.5	-0.14
<b>YORK</b>				
2yoGroup	3	10	30.0	-0.25
2yoListed	5	12	41.7	0.00
2yoStakes	11	28	39.3	-0.12
2yoMaiden	19	54	35.2	-0.14
2yoHandicap	4	22	18.2	-0.10
3yo+Group	14	41	34.1	-0.08
3yo+Listed	8	25	32.0	-0.17
3yo+Stakes	11	24	45.8	0.37
3yo+Claimer	2	8	25.0	-0.06
3yo+Maiden	11	21	52.4	0.14
3yo+Handicap	37	194	19.1	-0.13

Remember, using the statistics in these tables has a history of short losing runs and after-tax profits. Good luck.



***A method for scoring with multiple place betting, first printed in Practical Punting Monthly magazine, Australia.***

## **KISS #1**

# **THE HILLMAN PLAN**

***Philip Roy***

**T**he other week a long-time PPM reader telephoned me to ask my opinion about place betting systems. This chap had read a lot about place betting, fancied his chances of making it work, and wanted to know if I could recommend an easy-to-follow selection plan.

I immediately thought of the Hillman Plan, which came out many moons ago and has continued to work well down through the years. It's a system that has been mentioned before in PPM and I feel it bears repeating. The reader who called me was certainly excited about it after I'd explained the rules.

Basically, it looks at horses that gain the most points in a tipsters' poll. Certain qualification rules are then imposed to achieve final bets. It's all very well structured, and it's easy to operate. All you need on a Saturday is a good panel of tipsters. You can combine two or three to make up a sizeable list of tipsters.

If you don't have access to a tipsters' panel, then you can switch to using the shortest priced favourite of the meeting.

### THE HILLMAN PLAN

- 1) The only horse considered as a possible selection is the one with the greatest number of tipsters' poll points (using a 3-2-1 system).
- 2) To qualify further, the contender must have run 1st, 2nd or 3rd at its latest start.
- 3) The horse's last start must have been not less than 4 or more than 21 days from the current race.
- 4) The horse's last start must have been on the same track on which it's now to race OR, failing that, it must have won or been placed at the track previously.
- 5) The distance of the race must not be more than 1 furlong shorter or 2f longer than the horse's last race distance.
- 6) The track conditions must be the same as when it last raced OR the horse must have shown it can handle the prevailing track going for the current race.
- 7) To become a bet the contender must qualify under all rules from 1 through to 6.
- 8) If the selection is beaten, you follow it at its next start provided it runs not sooner than 4 days or later than 15 days after the race in which it was beaten, and further provided it has some poll points for the race in which it's to run.
- 9) The recommendation is that you bet 20 per cent of your capital balance split to each-way investments.

That, then, is the Hillman Plan. A little beauty.

A variation of it was sent to me some five years ago by a Ringwood, Melbourne, reader of PPM. His approach was to use the most tipped poll horse only if it was at 2/1 or longer.

If it was not, he then moved onto the second most-tipped horse, again seeking 2/1 or longer. He went on like this through the card until he got a contender.

His point was that the most tipped horse is usually overbet and sent out at ridiculous odds. He said he didn't want to be backing horses that were not going to pay much more than 1.20 for the place.

I think he's got a good point, though when I followed the Hillman in the early '90s (during one of my place-bet phases!) I found that often the odds on the place-getters were excellent.

In the nine months I used it I can recall only one losing run of three. While I'm talking about place plans, there is an old UK system that is always worth a closer look.

It concentrates on sprint races between 5f and 7f, and calls for you to back the favourite for a place, provided it was a last-start winner.

This is a really simple approach but it's one that can pay off very well, especially for those punters who like to throw in on race-by-race cover-all perm. A good run of these favourites getting into the placings can see you pick up fantastic returns.

Place betting, of course, is always a battle. But careful application of the Hillman and other sensible selection plans can help you make decent profits if you bet full-cover multiples. Those place-getters can quickly add up to sizeable returns when you are ploughing your money in over and over.

***Newspaper tipsters have been having a rough time during the early part of this year.***

## **SYSTEM PEAKS AND TROUGHS**

**L**ast month, SMARTsig contributor PJ Widdicombe followed up on an enthusiastic article he'd given us sometime earlier, regarding the following of newspaper tipsters.

Poor old PJ was in despair that his once promising looking system was now falling down around his ears - chances are he, and many others faced with the same situation would abandon the idea as a failure . . . but would such a move be premature?

Systems and methods win a few, then lose a few. They then win a few more and lose again. This process is as inevitable as night follows day. Knowing that your betting bank will not follow a straight line (up or down) but will show peaks and troughs is something we all know, but many of us choose somehow to ignore.

A system that rapidly makes a 50 point profit from the first 75 bets, but then loses the entire 50 point gain over the next 75 bets is one that often gets abandoned as 'a loser'.

But what about the very same system, but where our starting point was half way through the above sequence. The first indication is that we're staring at a complete dud. 75 bets and a loss of 50 points, is there any point in continuing my research on this one? I don't think so!

Or the same system again, but in an environment where the bets come over a much longer period. Say those first 75 bets, with their accompanying 50 points profit were over a two year period? We'd be as happy as PJ was when he first submitted his article.

The only reason we can have such a full range of conclusions over the identical system is that any idea needs a great deal more results to hand than many of us care to use.

My fictitious, example system, we know is capable of producing 50 points profit from 75 bets. We also know it is capable of also losing 50 points over 75 bets.

But, from the sample we've examined there is little to indicate that these will be the limits of its profitability or loss-making. At 1 point per bet, any system, at its worst can achieve a 75 point loss from 75 bets - it is only the chance of that occurring that varies from method to method.

What it is capable of winning from 75 bets will probably never be known. It will inevitably, at some point, exceed the 50 points given in the example, and this new maximum benchmark itself will be beaten. But how frequently this is likely to happen needs a great deal more data by way of results before we can make any assumptions.

Steve Tilley's 'Archie' featured in recent issues takes a very good shot at predicting whether or not a system is heading in the right direction, but even that is reliant on the amount of samples it is given to process — the more the merrier.

20% profit from 100 bets if FAR better than 20% profit from 50 bets. 20% profit from 1,000 bets is better than either!

But even that final 200 point profit could have seen an extremely rocky road on its route to the final figure. The user may have been 300 points up after 750 bets, but lost 100 on his 250 most recent bets.

So many variables, so many outcomes. Many bookmakers are that little bit richer because good ideas were abandoned at the first signs of 'trouble'. But then again many others are richer because the user did not see the signs early enough and know when to cut his losses and to stop betting.

Learn to identify what 'trouble' really means. As I've demonstrated, different individuals can interpret the very same system and/or results in entirely opposing ways.

Are you thinking rationally? Is it the data alone that is influencing your judgment, or are outside, perhaps irrelevant influences coming into play?

We see many examples where the punter apparently is looking for 'perfection'. They need everything in place, every one a winner. Some can understand that performances will vary, the occasional losing week they can cope with—so long as there's a winning week either side of it. But losing weeks are only a variation of a losing bet, they can often come in groups!

On many occasions I've seen people show the results of a system they've tested using Racedata's excellent Racing System Builder (RSB) package. With a footnote saying although the idea looked promising and it makes a profit over an extended run of several years, a few, or even just one of those years gave disappointing losses. So maybe a system to watch rather than use??

But a winning system that stands up over several years use is great! So a couple of years showed losses, well? What is it about a one year time slot that makes it such a magical indicator of the profitability of a system? Wins in 1993, 1994, 1996 and 1997. But the loss in 1995 puts me off!????!

A table of results could look something like this;

Year 1	+68
Year 2	+32
Year 3	-21
Year 4	-2
Year 5	+63

We're showing a profit of 140 points over a 5 year term, but a couple of negatives in the middle can make it look less

attractive. The profits far outweigh the losses so why the gloom? Is it because that magical term "year" is symbolic of some great test of financial stability? . . . Or . . . How can I tolerate a two-year period without profits?

### ***Creative Accounting***

Let's take a different look at those very same results, but we'll break the time periods down into half-years this time. For each year in this table we'll reveal the January-June and a July-December figures. They look like this;

Year 1	Jan—Jun	+2
	Jul—Dec	+66
Year 2	Jan—Jun	+10
	Jul—Dec	+22
Year 3	Jan—Jun	+8
	Jul—Dec	-29
Year 4	Jan—Jun	+35
	Jul—Dec	-37
Year 5	Jan—Jun	+53
	Jul—Dec	+10

Those prone to the 'cup is half-empty' school of thought will probably still see the two loss-making periods jumping off the page and telling them to steer clear.

But take a slightly closer look. We'll still use the Holy Grail one year period, but we'll stagger them to view the periods beginning in the July of one year and ending June the next.

For example, using our table the first 'full year' period would be from July (Year 1) to the end of June (Year 2). Profits of +66 and +10 gives us an overall profit of +76 for our new 'one-year' period. In tabular form we now have;

Jul Year 1—Jun Year 2	66 + 10	+76
Jul Year 2—Jun Year 3	22 + 8	+30
Jul Year 3—Jun Year 4	-29 + 35	+6
Jul Year 4—Jun Year 5	-37 + 53	+16

What's this? FOUR consecutive winning 'years'?!?!

Because we're assessing the year from July to June, we're left with two 'unused' half-year periods at either end. There's (Jan-Jun Year 1) and (Jul-Dec Year 5) but those two periods were profitable in their own right too.

Let's get this straight.

12 month period 1	+68	
12 month period 2	+32	
12 month period 3		-21
12 month period 4		-2
12 month period 5	+63	

Same system, same results but we can view it as both like this . .

Total: +140

And an alternative view, but the same results looks like this . .

Initial half-year	+2	
12 month period 1	+76	
12 month period 2	+30	
12 month period 3	+6	
12 month period 4	+16	
Final half-year	+10	

Is this creative accounting of the worst kind? Making a silk purse out of a sow's ear? Fooling me into thinking the system is better than it is? No!

Total: +140

Same system, same results, nothing up my sleeve—just a different view of the same thing. Examine the final two tables closely. If one of these looks inescapably better than the other one to you then look to your own assessment methods and try to start seeing things as they really are.

But back to PJ's specific system problem. Based as it was around newspaper tipsters it relies upon their performances. And, as we can read from the following two articles, they've all been having a rough time of late.

 SMARTsig

## **Is there a competition among the daily tipsters to see who can have the longest losing run?**

### ***KISS Feedbacks***

## **NEWSPAPER TIPSTERS**

***Bill Sheen***

**A**lthough I have not been following PJ's system please tell him not to be too downhearted with his tipsters as I think they have mostly been having a difficult time of late.

Has it been the bad weather? I don't know, but surely it is not a coincidence that so many have performed badly all at the same time.

During December and through into the new year I have recorded some horrendous losing runs, which includes the Racing Post experts: -

R.P. North,	16
R.P. Lambourne,	13
Newsboy,	12
Spotlight,	10
Postdata,	10
Topspeed,	10
Templegate,	10

. . . and so it goes on!

These are not uncommon losing runs either, one poor fellow recorded two losing sequences of 11, and 12 which made up almost 50% of his nap selections during a period just over two months.

Overall strike rates are also poor. What though are we to expect from our tipsters?

My guess is that any one worth their pay should score between 30-40% or am I being unreasonable?

Over the same period as the losing runs (above) we have percentage strike rates hitting the bottom from: -

Postdata	14%
Betting Bureau,	22%
Spotlight,	23%
Topspeed,	24%
Templegate,	24%
R.P. Lambourne,	26%
Postmark,	34%

So, ever being the optimist, I say thing can only get better (or can they).




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***Newspaper tipsters have a strong influence on the following feedback system too. So it's more tales of losses and losing runs.***

## **SOLE SELECTION + NAPPED**

***Mel Johnson***

**F**ebruary was an absolute disastrous month for followers of the system with no (that's nil, zero, zilch!) winners from 29 qualifiers!

The losing run now stands at 30. Of course this may have been a freak month and long losing runs on a system with such a low strike rate were to be expected (although thirty consecutive losers would, I fear, try the patience of the most resolute gambler)

It's a little too early to write off this system, so I will continue to monitor results until the end of the year.

Results to date appear below;

Bets	Win	W%	Out	In	Profit	%Profit
159	21	13.21	159	162.35	+3.35	2.11%

And the Tote.....

In	Profit	%Profit
165.20	+6.20	3.90%

*Email feedback from **Mark Harrison**;*

Mel,

I too have been following the system and noticed a slight difficulty on 26 February. Bolham Lady was napped at Southwell by both 'The North' and the 'Spotlight' correspondent. Further investigation showed them to be one and the same person, Colin Russell.

The horse was clearly strongly fancied and duly won easily.

*Reply from **Mel***

Mark,

Thanks for highlighting that, I didn't realise that area correspondents also "doubled up" as Spotlight analysts.

For the sake of clarity, I record system qualifiers strictly in accordance with the rules of the system. In the "real world" and with real money then, Bolham Lady would justify backing as the principle of the system is being met;

i.e. only one tipster has selected and napped the horse.

There have been several decent priced winners where only two tipsters have selected a particular runner with one or both also napping it. But the great thing about systems such as this is that they can be *tweaked* as necessary by the individual.

I'm sure most would agree that it is the principal of a

system rather than the following of strict rules than can help lead the player to a profit.

*Email follow-up from **Mark Keeble***

Mel,

I know you have posted this before, but could you tell me again who the best tipsters were in your system. I'm still very interested, and I think it has a great deal of potential.

I remember backing *Red Ark* at 16/1 when only two tipster had gone for it and I think both (or at least *The Daily Mirror*) had napped it.

Like you say, you don't have to follow it all the time and I'm sure there are many "tweaks" you can use to improve it.

Often the big handicaps of the day have got many one-napped horse. What do you do in these situations - just ignore the race?

Mel replies;

Mark, I agree totally. The big races do seem to bring out the ego in Racing tipsters - or is it editorial pressure ? If there are several qualifiers in one race then the decision lies squarely with the individual - back one, some or all. I personally wouldn't use a general rule but view each race on it's own merits.

You also asked about the best tipsters as seen by the research. The following have provided the winners

Spotlight	4
The Express	3
The North	3
The Mail	2
The Independent	2
The Telegraph	2

And 1 each for Lambourn, The Star, The Sun, The Guardian and finally The Mirror.

*Email follow-up from **Stuart Holland**;*

I also monitored the system for three months to the end of February and you may be interested to know that 52 of 96 selections were outside the first 4 in the Racing Pages forecast SP, and not one of these won.

What this indicates I believe is that a large proportion are hopeful selections which are good for racing page headlines when they win at high prices.

Omitting these will considerably improve results - February for example there were 14 losers instead of 23 by my reckoning (I must have missed some).

But well worth looking into don't you think?

*Mel replies;*

Stuart, The shorter the price, the higher the strike rate, and it is undoubtedly true that by eliminating the higher priced qualifiers, strike rate will be improved.

However one of the attractions of this system was the potential for big priced winners, so restricting qualifiers to the first 3, 4 or 5 favourites would eliminate the horses that the system was designed to highlight.

There are also undoubtedly many ways that the basic system in its present format could be adjusted/adapted and results/profits improved as a result.

Maybe your idea is one of them. Another idea is to follow "next best" sole selections in the same manner as "Nap" selections.

Could it be argued that newspaper tipsters are more creative/bold with their <nb>'s than their Naps?

Maybe someone would like to monitor these qualifiers and see if that's the case.

## Tipsters Records For Sole Selection + Nap System (19/10/2000 to 28/02/2001 inclusive).

Tipster in Capital letters denotes profit on all selections.

Tipster	Bets	W	W%	Return	+/-	%Pr/loss
TELEGRAPH	21	2	9.5	22.00	+1.00	4.76
SPOTLIGHT	19	4	21.1	28.25	+9.25	48.68
Mail	16	2	12.5	14.00	(2.00)	(12.50)
NORTH	13	3	23.1	24.50	+11.50	88.46
Mirror	13	1	7.7	5.00	(8.00)	(61.54)
Lambourn	12	1	8.3	10.00	(2.00)	(16.67)
EXPRESS	10	3	30.0	23.10	+13.10	131.00
INDEPENDENT	10	2	20.0	14.00	+4.00	40.00
Sun	9	1	11.1	6.00	(3.00)	(33.33)
Times	9	0		-	(9.00)	
Topspeed	9	0		-	(9.00)	
Postdata	6	0		-	(6.00)	
STAR	4	1	25.00	9.00	+5.00	125.00
GUARDIAN	4	1	25.00	6.50	+2.50	62.50
Postmark	3	0		-	(3.00)	
Newmarket	1	0		-	(1.00)	

Note the poor performance of the Racing Post Table/Figure Tipsters. Postmark, Postdata and Topspeed are a combined 0 - 18.

It's also interesting to note that certain newspaper tipsters (e.g. Telegraph, Mail) regularly nap horses ignored by the majority whereas others (e.g Star, Guardian) rarely do so.

If time permits, I will put together an analysis of the various price ranges at a later date. I'm sure there are clues to be found there too.

***Shhhh! There are some topics we avoid mentioning in polite company, it always causes an argument.***

## **THE 'V' WORD**

**SMARTsig**

**V**alue. The 'V' word as it is referred to on our email group. No other word raises so many passions among the betting community, its very mention never fails to bring about a frank and often heated debate between its supporters and the critics. Very few seem to sit on the fence over this issue, and for those who do argue the pros and cons, very rarely does anyone ever cross the divide and change their allegiance to the other's point of view.

Me? I cannot bring myself to support the way in which the 'v' word is often used and held high as though some kind of betting panacea.

A supporter might proclaim words to the effect "In order to make a profit from betting one requires to bet only on outcomes where the chances of winning exceed the odds offered." Now I, nor anyone else, could not possibly have a quarrel with the validity of such a statement. However, true it may well be - but is it helpful?

If I were an Olympic high jumping coach I could offer my protégé the secret of success "In order to win a gold medal you'll have to jump higher than any of the other competitors. Do that and you've cracked it."

Great! Would that piece of invaluable information help my man win? Of course not. The message it delivers is true of course, but it is a piece of totally empty advice.

The gold medal winning high jumper, trains extremely hard, follows a strict dietary regime and strives to achieve the physical attributes to enable him to jump as high as he

possibly can. He is focused on a single aim, train, train and train to jump higher, higher and higher still.

Okay, if he does win gold it is because he did indeed jump higher than all the others. But that is a conclusion we can draw *after* the event, not a pre-event focus which has helped him to achieve it.

The written, spoken or inferred conclusions that follow the 'v' word statement are as though it is some sort of discovery, the 'missing link', or a magical formula able to turn losers into winners. I think not.

It is my opinion that most horseplayers or sports bettors will constantly practice, revise and reassess his/her methods in an effort to improve their profits as their number one goal. To achieve this they'll be attempting to eliminate losers in order to increase winner strike rates, or sifting out the shorter odds chances from the selections, or a bit of both.

What they hope to achieve is that the selections they make will be more successful than the odds they are taking would suggest. Which may be called seeking value to the committed 'v'-man, but I'd disagree. Such an interpretation is of what they're *hoping* for, rather than the way they are going about it. 'Value' statements in the accepted context to my view only stand up after the event. It is a comment on what *has been* achieved rather than how *it is* achieved.

My own personal betting is governed exclusively by knowing the odds I want beforehand, but I wouldn't presume to dictate others must follow suit - or they *will* fail. Far too many people of my acquaintance make money from betting without ever attempting to establish the 'true' odds of an event. Some go half-way and assess the chances of a series of events, but everyone's entitled to their own approach.

Still, no matter what I or others may say on this issue v-men will stay firmly v-men and the doubters will still doubt, as the following exchange of views illustrates well. 

ARGUMENT

**To 'v' or not to 'v'? That is the ~~question~~**

## **MUG PUNTER or VALUE HUNTER?**

**Bob, Edinburgh**

**P**erhaps it's just my canny Scot *persona* but I have always taken it for granted that any shopper has some idea of the price he/she is prepared to pay before parting with his/her hard earned.

Why then should the punter who backs racehorses be any different? Yet Bill Willoughby in his contribution last month, 'Ignorance is Bliss', appears to have found my earlier offering unduly condescending and has taken offence.

The term 'mug punter' is certainly offensive when used contemptuously about any given individual. For this I apologise. I do not wish to offend.

Nevertheless I stick by my contention that if you don't have some idea of the price of the horse you are backing then you are indeed the proverbial mug punter. I have already given reasons.

Bill contends that he is no mug punter and I very much enjoyed reading his argument. But I wonder if he is not missing something in his own betting?

Perhaps he will allow me to be a proper SMARTY about his own betting?

Table 1 contains the various statements Bill made regarding a series of his 100 most recent bets.

The first 3 columns are his own information. He never bets odds-on and he showed a profit of 13 points in total. From this, it was possible to work out his winners and losers as follows.

**Table 1**

Price	No. of bets	Strike rate	Winners	Losers	Returns	Profit
11/8 max	100	42%	42	58	113	13
Over 11/8	69	39%	27	42		
Over 6/4	59	34%	20	39		
Over 2/1	33	27%	9	24		
3/1 plus	20	15%	3	17		

The prime directive of value punting is to know where your profits lie. Thus the next step was to work out the profitability of each of the price brackets and Table 2 is the result.

The price is the assumed mid-price for each price bracket. The number of bets and the numbers of winners and losers are obtained by deducting line 2 above from line 1. The strike rates are then obvious.

Returns are found by multiplying the mid-price by the winners and adding the stake.

The profit is the Return less the number of bets.

No tax is assumed.

**Table 2**

Price (mid)	No. of bets	Strike rate	Winners	Losers	Returns	Profit
5/4, say	31	48%	15	16	34	3
6/4	10	70%	7	3	18	8
2/1, say	26	42%	11	15	33	7
5/2, say	13	46%	6	7	21	8
3/1 plus	20	15%	3	17	7	-13
TOTAL	100	42%	42	58	113	13

Perhaps Bill might wish to indicate if there has been an error but on the information given it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the 3/1 plus bracket is a dead loss. Skip these and double your profits, Bill.

My initial reaction therefore is that if a gentleman at the track with a T-shirt emblazoned with the words 'Ignorance of a high order can be profitable' passes me I shall check to see what he has printed on his back. 'Informed betting pays more' perhaps?

More seriously, Bill is to be complimented on his methodology. In achieving regular profits he has plainly established that he is no mug punter.

Nevertheless, I believe that it is clear from the above figures that Bill could do better. This initial analysis of his betting may be entirely superficial but there are at least three observations that could be made and questions that might be asked (based on the above data alone) which might well lead to even further profit. But perhaps I've said enough and value minded readers and Bill can ask their own questions and draw their own conclusions.

To get back to Bill's fundamental difficulty with my article. I originally suggested that if you had a strike rate of one winner in three then a price over 2/1 was needed to make a profit. Bill rejected this simple idea because as he showed for his own betting his strike rate falls off dramatically as the prices he obtains rise.

Surprise, surprise! Isn't this the crux of the problem?

In my original article I was at some pains to suggest that the strike rate envisaged should not change in this manner. I don't know if I wasn't as clear as I thought or if Bill simply didn't read it. I did say that all runners produced by a system were assumed to be running at the same price. Which seemed clear enough to me.

Bill may believe that this is unreal and can't be done. He is not alone in his thinking.

I do not wish to repeat myself having already written enough on this topic in previous editions of the magazine.

There is an abundance of hard evidence in back issues of SMARTsig to support the view that a single selection source can indeed provide a uniform strike rate regardless of the price of individual selections. I know that this is tough to take in but the market assessment of a horse's chance is not the holy grail that the majority believe that it is.

I will not spoon-feed any further on this point as I am sure most SMARTies are already there.

To win at racing it is necessary to obtain value. All value punters are winners and all winning punters achieve value. This is the case whether or not the winning punter understands what he has done! For me, to be a value punter and be a loser is a contradiction in terms.

I maintain that a value punter must know the price of his bets. Or he is a mug punter. Admittedly this is an opinion. Not a fact. Yet I cannot believe that there is a punter on the face of the earth – other than Lucky Eddie, of course – who wins consistently without having some basic idea about the prices of his bets.

I freely accept that regular winning punters may not know the individual price of each and every horse they bet. However, they are pursuing a class of horses with a known outcome which effectively beats the market. Essentially they bet with a price in mind. I note that 80% of Bill's bets fall within the price range of evens to just under 3/1. Coincidence? Hmm.

The stumbling point for punters almost always lies in estimating the horse's chance of winning. However, as the example of Bill's own betting shows, the road to riches is also strewn with judgements to be made about prices to be taken and prices to be missed.

I rest my case and, hello Bill, there is no charge. However, the next time I head due south perhaps we can meet up and you can buy me a pint.



Bob, Edinburgh attached a note to his letter (previous page) *"It occurs to me that Bill Willoughby may be a member of the e-mail group.*

*If you want to let him have a preview then I've no objection. I don't think that I've said anything that should offend or that is incorrect. However, if you want to make changes then I'd appreciate hearing what they were in advance, particularly if they are as the result of any input from Bill."*

I made no amendments or alterations to Bob's letter, but did send it to Bill for comment. His response is below;

## **TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS?**

***Bill Willoughby***

**H**ello Stef

I disagree with a lot that Bob says but I have no personal problem with his article. I think, however, that perhaps he should check his arithmetic. The last row of Table 2 doesn't add up.

Assuming all the winners were at the minimum 3/1 for this range, which they weren't, the loss would have been 8 (20 outlay - 12 returns). How does he get 7 for returns?

Based on this bad arithmetic he then goes on to give me his good advice.

Taking actual results the final column of Table 2 would read 0.3, 7.5, 10.0, 3.0, -7.7. Bob could argue that he was still directionally correct in that I would improve my profit by abandoning selections priced at 3/1+. A fact, which of course Bob had no way on knowing, is that in the last two flat seasons (I only bet on the flat) I've had 45 bets in this price range with 12 winners and an level-stake profit of 7.1. So I don't think I'll be taking Bob's advice.

One last point - Bob seems to be implying that, as 80% of

my selections fall in the price range of Evens to less than 3/1, then I am not being totally honest in saying that I don't take price into consideration.

The reason for the short prices of my selections is that I only bet on favourites in non-handicap races. The price is the result of the selection system - not the reason for it.

Perhaps Bob should start contributing to the e-mail forum then we could fling insults at each other on a daily basis - which seems to be the current practice (only kidding - I wasn't really that offended by what Bob said in his original article and I'll be happy to buy him a pint anytime).



*Which of course prompted a reply;*

Hi Bill,  
Pleased to meet you. To deal with your points in the order raised.

Firstly, the last column does add up.  $3+8+7+8-13$  always totals 13.

Secondly, there was indeed an error in table 2 at the 3/1 plus level. Thanks.

The reason for this was because I had to assume that you had achieved uniform profits at prices lower than 3/1 than you actually did achieve. I had simply taken the total of the preceding tranches from the grand total of 13 points which you had said you had won but had not noticed that this led to an error in the cross-calculation for the 3/1 plus tranche. Sorry.

Thanks too for letting me have your actual results, i.e. 0.3, 7.5, 10.0, 3.0 and -7.7 and I have rounded them down and up and put them into a revised table 2 as follows.

Price (mid)	No. of bets	Strike rate	Winners	Losers	Returns	Profit
5/4, say	31	48%	15	16	31	0
6/4	10	70%	7	3	18	8
2/1, say	26	42%	11	15	36	10
5/2, say	13	46%	6	7	16	3
3/1 plus	20	15%	3	17	12	-8
TOTAL	100	42%	42	58	113	13

Thirdly, you say that you won't be taking my advice to leave the 3/1 plus bets alone because your actual results are really quite different from the figures you presented in 'Ignorance is Bliss'. Well, don't you see that this destroys the credibility of your figures and hence of your whole argument?

Finally, to the nitty gritty. I really do think you have done well. However, the whole point of my article was to insist that punters must have some idea of the price they are prepared to bet at. You said that this was unreal. Now you tell me that this is because you follow a system based on favourites. And again, you take my breath away.

How can you expect me to follow the argument that your selection system independently always picks certain favourites without them knowing that they are going to be favourites? Unless you are a bookie?

Setting aside the fact that you only disclosed this because of my suspicion that you are indeed strongly aware of price, forgive me, but are you not splitting hairs here?

Are you not in fact very much in the position of those punters who price their selections using the betting forecast. Just as I originally suggested, except that you use the real price, not a forecast?

I suspect, Bill, that you are a value punter (not a mug punter at all) but you haven't recognised it yet and come out of the closet!

*. . . and the response from Bill*

Bob, If you re-read my note you will see I said that the last row (not column) did not add up - and by this I meant it didn't make sense for the reasons that you now accept.

Not sure why my comments destroys the credibility of my argument. I said I took my last 100 bets and that's what I did.

You question of how can my selection system identify favourites beforehand? Sorry if I didn't make myself clear on this point.

One of the selection criteria of my system is that the horse must be the SP favourite - if it's not favourite it's not a selection. So not only do I have no idea of the price that the selection should be - I sometimes don't even know which horse I'm backing.

Occasions occur where there is more than one horse in a race that could be a selection, any of which might end up as favourite. In this case I blindly back the favourite

Then you suggest I am in the position of those punters who price their selections using the betting forecast.

To say again - apart from the one price restriction of not betting at odds-on, I do not price my selections. If the horse fulfils all the other criteria of the system then I will back it whether it's evens or 10/1, as long as it is the SP favourite.

I never said I wasn't a value punter. But I believe value is in the system and not in individual selections. I've re-read the diary at the end of your article and it strikes me that there are a lot of subjective factors in your assessment of value. So subjective, in fact, that I don't believe that anybody apart from Bob Veitch could operate this approach.

For instance, what do you mean when you say Lady of Gortmerron was an unlucky loser at Carlisle? I'm sure others

would disagree with you.

If it works for you that's great - but it's not transferable. I'm an out-and-out systemite because I don't want to have to rely on my own judgement, in which I have no faith (not as far as horses are concerned anyway).

Bob - good luck in all your punting - whatever different approaches we use to this fascinating and frustrating game a little bit of luck never goes amiss.

If I ever make it to Edinburgh I'll be glad to buy you a pint of heavy (no idea what it is but I'm told it's what the natives drink).



*This conversation did (inevitably) go back-and-forth a few more times than I've shown here, but in the end the parties, as so often happens in a 'v' debate, agreed to disagree.*

Giving further thought to the concepts highlighted by this month's look at randombet.com (see page 16) it occurs to me that maybe some outfit might come along and push these principles that little bit further.

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***Terry Collins returns again this National Hunt season, reporting the progress of four horses-to-follow lists available through commercial publications.***

## **HORSES TO FOLLOW PUBLICATIONS**

***Terry Collins***

**C**ontinuing the checking of four National Hunt books featuring horses-to-follow lists. There are;

One Jump Ahead - Mark Howard. (£4.99)  
Available from WH Smith's and elsewhere.

Jumping Annual - Racing & Football Outlook (£4.95)  
Available from most good newspaper shops.

10 to Follow - Karl Dennis (£5.00)  
Available via email from [karlatkz@netcomuk.co.uk](mailto:karlatkz@netcomuk.co.uk)..

NH Season Betting Guide 2000 -Weatherbys (£6.95)  
As advertised on the back page of Smartsig 7.12.  
Further details of each list can be found in Smartsig 7.12.

These lists are being checked from 20 Oct until after the Grand National which is roughly the period covered in previous years. (In the light of recent events let's make it Cheltenham this time round!)

The loss of racing for 7 days and meetings being abandoned due to weather or exclusion zone problems has obviously had a big effect on the number of runners for the lists this month.

Still it's the same for each list and it makes my job easier!

## **ONE JUMP AHEAD (+£11.31 brought forward)**

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win SP's
<b>19-Feb</b>	2	1	£16.81	13/2
<b>22-Feb</b>	2	1	£16.61	4/5
<b>23-Feb</b>	6	2	£14.66	4/5, 5/4
<b>24-Feb</b>	5	1	£12.16	6/4
<b>27-Feb</b>	2	1	£11.89	8/11
<b>10-Mar</b>	1	0	£10.89	
<b>15-Mar</b>	2	2	£16.33	4/9, 5/1
<b>17-Mar</b>	1	1	£17.13	4/5
<b>20-Mar</b>	1	0	£16.13	

***Selections = 22***

***Winners = 9***

***Strike rate = 41%***

Crisis? What Crisis! One Jump Ahead laughs in the face of fixture problems and yet again comes up smelling of roses.

Surely these figures are being doctored in order to coerce all SMARTies into rushing out and buying a copy? Well no doctoring necessary - Mark just seems able to stay one jump ahead!

## JUMPING ANNUAL (-£25.14 brought forward)

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win SP's
<b>19-Feb</b>	1	0	-£26.14	
<b>22-Feb</b>	1	0	-£27.14	
<b>23-Feb</b>	2	0	-£29.14	
<b>24-Feb</b>	6	0	-£35.14	
<b>10-Mar</b>	1	0	-£36.14	
<b>15-Mar</b>	2	1	-£32.14	5/1
<b>17-Mar</b>	1	1	-£27.14	5/1
<b>24-Mar</b>	1	0	-£28.14	

***Selections = 2***

***Winners = 15***

***Strike rate = 13%***

No laughing for Jumping Annual followers with only two winners from 15 for the period.

But the small loss is a welcome relief after last months bungee jump!

## KARL DENNIS (+£1.95 brought forward)

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win SP's
<b>22-Feb</b>	1	0	£0.95	
<b>24-Feb</b>	2	0	-£1.05	

***Selections = 3***

***Winners = 0***

***Strike rate = 0%***

No winners and almost no runners for the month sends this particular HTF list into the red.

The loss of Young Kenny reduces Karl Dennis's list even further to just 8 horses now. He's still clinging on to second place though - but for how long?

## **WEATHERBYS (-£4.54 brought forward)**

	selections	winners	BALANCE	win SP's
<b>22-Feb</b>	2	0	-£6.54	
<b>23-Feb</b>	1	0	-£7.54	
<b>24-Feb</b>	4	0	-£11.54	
<b>25-Feb</b>	1	0	-£12.54	
<b>15-Mar</b>	2	2	-£7.09	4/9, 5/1

**Selections = 10**

**Winners = 2**

**Strike rate = 20%**

A last minute flurry with two late winners saves Weatherbys from a whitewash, leaving them still in contention for the second spot.

## **Staking**

As long standing SMARTies will remember, previous years profits were increased by only betting on horses whose starting prices were 3/1 or greater.

Results for this plan so far are as follows . .

	normal	3/1+
One Jump Ahead	£16.13	£20.50
Weatherbys	-£7.09	£3.00
Karl Dennis	-£1.05	-£3.00
Jumping Annual	-£28.14	-£14.00

No change in the order from last months standings so I'll let the figures speak for themselves.

### Summary

The postponement of Cheltenham obviously had a huge effect on the number of runners this month and with only One Jump Ahead returning a profit over this accounting period, the eventual outcome looks very predictable and the 'cameras' I suspect will be trained on the fight for second place.

But, we all know that it's a funny old game and One Jump Ahead's bad record at Cheltenham could be the fly in this horses-to-follow list's particular ointment.

The Festival beckons . . . hopefully!



## Horses engaged monitoring service

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(free trial period available)

## SMARTsig email group

*Enjoy lively chat and stimulating debate?  
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Join by following the links on <[www.smartsig.com](http://www.smartsig.com)>  
or send an email request direct to me at;  
[stef@smartsig.com](mailto:stef@smartsig.com)

***If we knew what the trainers knew would we be better placed? It depends entirely on if the trainers are any better at winner finding than your average punter.***

## **TRAINER PATTERNS**

***Email Group***

**T**rainers. Does the team think it worthwhile to attempt to research for patterns in the 'modus operandi'. I have a friend of a friend who trains and reckons that no amount of logical analysis will ever give me (us) their knowledge of a horse's capability on a given day.

What intrigues me is how these guys know that their charge has a more than excellent chance of winning or do they? Is it a question, particularly at a lower level, of entering several races and then going for the one whereby the opposition can be evaluated to be weak and a trainer knows that his horse is in good form?

For example I was at Leicester last season when Wain Mountain romped home. First outing over hurdles, been off the track for an eternity I see a guy place £200 @ 20/1, thirty seconds before the off. How did he know that it would be up for it - just lucky? I suspect not.

Theory.

I am a trainer and have charge of several new horses - I need to know their respective ability. So somewhere along the way I have to put the clock on them to say well that one is a Class B, that's a C, a couple of D's and E's and the rest are F's and G's. Then I have to assess what I can do with them to either progress them or win at their 'natural' level.

As a trainer my livelihood is, ultimately, dependant upon me producing winners for my owners, therefore I will do everything within the rules to ensure that this occurs.

A line of research that I am currently following is to try and cross correlate between trainers. So, for example Pipe in the last six year might have had a total 1200 winners of which 110 were against Henderson's horses and contrary Henderson might have had 70 wins against Pipe - that type of thing.

The theory here being that the opposition is chosen for the required result - might not be to win but to sharpen a horse up for next time.

To my mind it seems sensible to try and understand the training game as there have to be clues galore in there. As always views and opinions are appreciated.

*Ron Stevenson*

Hi Ron

There is definitely mileage in analysing trainer patterns. Much like the brief analysis of flat trainers of mine (published SMARTsig Feb 2001, issue 802) Also, to supplement my ratings, I provide some trainer data relating to factors such as;

- Trainer performances with horses returning from long lay-offs
- Success/profit for horses making their debuts in handicaps (both chases and hurdles)
- Success with beaten favourites, etc.

Each of the above three trends I believe are well worth further investigation. I also have a trainer analysis program (with data) that provides other information for trainers by course, if you would like a copy please get in touch, it is freely available.

[peter@pjmr.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:peter@pjmr.freeseve.co.uk)      [www.pjmracing.com](http://www.pjmracing.com)

*Peter May*

Ron,

Not exactly on your point, but I'm sure I'm not the only regular punter that would like the name of the bookie that was prepared to lay a horse to lose four grand in a novice

hurdle at Leicester. He certainly hasn't been visible whenever I've visited that track!

*Alan Potts*

Good point. I have double checked this with my friend who was with me at the time. My memory had played tricks - he placed £100 bet - we saw the back end of the transaction so I cannot go to a court of law and say that he got £2000 to £100.

We noticed this particular guy because it was a bitterly cold day and my mate and I had been in the bar discussing the race and he was a few feet away from us, on his own. Thinnish type, looking slightly unkempt, with no overcoat.

Looking from the Tatts bar we went to place a bet with a bookie on the left of the front line, nearer the running rail. On the way back up to the bar we noticed this guy at a board in the back line and stood behind him as he handed over his dosh. Thought nothing of it until the horse romped home.

Maybe he was just lucky, it was only on reflection that we thought that he might have had the nod. These things are never conclusive, it's a feeling I suppose of watching him in the bar. He didn't have a racecard or anything and looked to be killing time, at a bit of a loss.

Looking at the odds now we had a Evens, 2/1, 4/1 as the market leaders so presumably that would cover any liability on a 20/1 coming in? Would you have taken the bet?

*Ron Stevenson*

From a total stranger - probably not. But if he was a regular, it would depend on the state of my book and whether I could lay off.

If I knew that 25/1 was available elsewhere, then take the £2000/100 and have £60 at 25/1 back, leaving me with a liability of £500/40, equivalent to 12/1. But if I'm alone at

20/1 and best elsewhere is 16/1, I'd be wary.

By the way, it's highly unlikely that this was a bet based on stable info, since the trainer of Wain Mountain is Jim Old and you'll never meet a more pessimistic man. I know him fairly well and his favourite saying is "I hate it when things are going well as I know it won't last".

He's about as likely to bet a novice hurdler first time out as I am to purchase an Arsenal season ticket!

*Alan Potts*

How about backing all favourites trained by David Elsworth? Okay, so there are two losing years - but the overall return is not too bad. 60 winners from 180 runners returning a level-stake profit of 30.38. (1993 -99)

*Mark Elcocks*

Your David Elsworth idea gives an Archie score of 2.05. Nothing to get excited about. Sorry.

*Steve Tilley*

Mark,

Er - how can you be sure when you bet that a horse is going to be favourite?

My own record with horses in my colours trained by DRCE isn't quite so good. Three went off as favourites producing one winner at 11/8 and two losers at 7/4 and 5/4 on.

Interesting to surmise as to why such a system should work. I know from personal experience that the trainer in question never chose races on the basis that the horse would have a *favourites chance*. My horses were block entered in every suitable race and the choice was made on the basis of things like jockey availability or the chance to send several horses to the same meeting (he only had one horsebox at the time!). Mind you, that was in the early 1980's, and much has changed since then.

*Alan Potts*

Alan,

I suppose like all financial markets one has to take a view at some stage and I guess that more often than not, just before the off, teletext gets it right very often (but not always). But I accept your point. Maybe I should look at his record with 2nd favourites, just in case -)

In reply to Steve Tilley's posting in respect of the Archie Score, I know it's not brilliant. However, I tend to find that using traditional form study methods I usually end up with a selection that is favourite for the race.

If the average strike rate of favourites in handicaps is 25% and my selection is a favourite trained by a man who hits at 38% of the time, surely it's a better bet than a trainer who's favourites only hit at 8%.

It's my suspicious (some may say paranoid) nature, I suppose, but in my opinion the horses of some trainers' regularly fail to win when the money's down. Whereas the entries of other trainers in similar circumstances do.

*Mark Elcocks*

Isn't it also possible that a serious punter might have a BETTER overview of the race than the trainer?

They aren't gods, they are specialists doing a specialised job. Like all specialists there must be times when they don't (or can't) see the wood for the trees.

Also why not study THEIR form statistically / analytically just in the same way that we study horses? Who evaluates him or herself objectively?

*Duncan Johnstone*

Do most trainers actually know whether their horse is going to win or not? My experience of race horse ownership was with the far less exalted Robin Dickin.

It soon became quite clear that he had no real idea of how

his horses would do; his string was not big enough to have form lines, and although a nice fella, I wouldn't class him as shrewd.

On the other hand, I also know people who have horses with Venetia Williams and if the moment is right, she is usually accurate about the horse's chance.

A trainer has a lot of hidden politics to contend with, though, and their loyalty is never to the owner alone. I came to the conclusion that it was better to rely on figures alone, as inside information is often not accurate, and can't be relied on to be there long term.

For example, although I did not bet on it, Peter May's ratings threw up a 50/1 recently. I'm willing to bet that the trainer did not back it, or think it had a good chance.

*Patrick Gamble*

It is an interesting question that you raise Patrick. I think the answer is largely dependent upon who the trainer is and how many horses he has. I was lucky enough to spend a morning at Henry Cecil's stable before last year's 2000 Guineas. What struck me was the sheer number of horses that were there.

HC is widely considered to be one of the straightest and shrewdest operators yet I would be amazed if he could remember all of his horses. I certainly wouldn't be able to.

In addition talking to the stable lads whom I am sure serve as his eyes and ears it is obvious that they are biased towards the horses that they look after. One thing is for sure they don't worry about threats from other stables.

In short I doubt very much that information from the large stables could ever be reliable certainly not about the lesser lights in the yard.

*Stuart Doyle*



**Following the football spreads using our simple to use ratings system.**

**SOCCER SUPERIORITY SPREADS**  
**SMARTsig**

**C**lawing our way back to profit following our black weekend (see previous installments) was never going to be an easy task. But we're chipping away at the target with a further 4.9 to the good during the last accounting period.

**Update period 11/02/01 to 25/03/01**

Betting Bank brought forward: -19.70  
 Profit/Loss this period: +4.90  
 Betting Bank carried forward: -14.80

score	date	Home side	PI	pts	Away side	PI	pts	Ratg.	Pred	Trade	Edge	Bet	stake	BANK	
20	11/2	Charlton	26	37	Newcastle	25	37	-0.1	0.4	no edge			2		-19.70
12	24/2	Bradford	26	16	West Ham	26	32	-0.7	0.0	(3/6) HS	3	SAF	2	-1	-1.40
22	24/2	Coventry	27	22	Charlton	27	40	-0.7	0.0	2/5 IS	2	SHF	0.5	0	0.10
10	24/2	Derby	27	28	AstonVill	25	33	-0.3	0.3	no edge			1		-21.00
20	24/2	Ipswich	26	40	Everton	27	31	0.3	0.6	no edge			2		-21.00
20	24/2	Leicester	26	39	Sunderlan	27	44	-0.2	0.3	no edge			2		-21.00
61	24/2	Man Utd	27	63	Arsenal	27	50	0.4	0.7	no edge			5		-21.00
01	24/2	Middlesbro	27	27	Southampt	26	35	-0.4	0.3	5/8 H	2	SHF	0.5	-1	0.75
01	24/2	Newcastle	26	37	Man City	27	23	0.5	0.8	10/13 S	2	SHF	0.5	-1	1.00
12	24/2	Tottenham	27	36	Leeds	27	40	-0.2	0.3	no edge			-1		-19.25
30	3/3	Arsenal	28	50	West Ham	27	35	0.4	0.7	10/13ge	3	SHF	0.5	3	-1.00
00	3/3	Coventry	28	23	Chelsea	26	38	-0.7	0.0	(2/5) H	2	SAF	2	0	0.40
21	3/3	Derby	28	31	Tottenham	28	36	-0.2	0.3	no edge			1		-19.85
11	3/3	Everton	28	31	Newcastle	27	37	-0.3	0.3	no edge			0		-19.85
11	3/3	Leeds	28	43	Man Utd	28	66	-0.9	-0.1	no edge			0		-19.85

score	date	Home side	PI	pts	Away side	PI	pts	Ratg.	Pred	Trade	Edge	Bet	stake	BANK		
20	3/3	Leicester	27	42	Liverpool	26	45	-0.2	0.3	(2/5) HS	5	SAF	2	2	4.40	-15.45
01	3/3	Man City	28	26	Southampt	27	38	-0.5	0.2	no edge				-1		-15.45
00	3/3	Middlesbro	28	27	Charlton	28	41	-0.5	0.2	no edge				0		-15.45
31	4/3	Ipswich	27	43	Bradford	27	16	1.0	1.2	no edge				2		-15.45
11	4/3	Fulham	34	78	Bolton	34	66	0.3	0.6	9/12 gen	3	SHF	0.5	0	0.45	-15.00
11	5/3	Sunderland	28	44	AstonVill	26	33	0.3	0.6	no edge				0		-15.00
21	10/3	Aston Villa	27	34	Ipswich	28	46	-0.4	0.3	no edge				1		-15.00
22	17/3	Bradford	28	16	Man City	29	26	-0.4	0.3	(0/3)I	3	SAF	2	0	0.00	-15.00
12	17/3	Charlton	29	42	Leeds	29	44	-0.1	0.4	(0/3)Gen	4	SAF	2	-1	-2.00	-17.00
24	17/3	Chelsea	28	42	Sunderlan	29	45	-0.1	0.4	11/14 H	7	SHF	0.5	-2	1.55	-15.45
20	17/3	Man Utd	29	67	Leicester	28	45	0.7	1.0	19/22 H	9	SHF	0.5	2	-0.05	-15.50
12	17/3	Newcastle	28	38	Middlesbr	29	28	0.3	0.6	no edge				-1		-15.50
10	17/3	Southampt	28	41	Everton	29	32	0.3	0.6	no edge				1		-15.50
30	17/3	Tottenham	29	36	Coventry	29	24	0.4	0.7	no edge				3		-15.50
01	17/3	West Ham	29	35	Ipswich	29	46	-0.4	0.3	no edge				-1		-15.50
11	18/3	Liverpool	27	45	Derby	29	34	0.4	0.7	14/17ge	7	SHF	0.5	0	0.70	-14.80
00	18/3	Aston Villa	28	37	Arsenal	29	53	-0.6	0.1	no edge				0		-14.80
31	18/3	Wolves	35	43	WestBrom	37	62	-0.5	0.2	no edge				2		-14.80
21	25/3	West Brom	38	62	Tranmere	36	32	0.7	1.0	no edge				1		-14.80

The abbreviated terms used in the 'Bet' column are SHF = Sell Home Favorite, SAF = Sell Away Favourite.

The figure in the column marked 'edge' indicates the strength of the bet as compared to our game rating. The higher the figure, the greater the perceived advantage.

The rating method used to determine the trades and to calculate the betting 'edge' was explained fully in SMARTsig issue 7.11 (November 2000)

***At our horseracing dirt tracks, do more favourites win as the race class improves? The figures from 199 would suggest they do.***

## **RACE CLASS & AW FAVOURITES**

***John Williams***

**T**here has been some recent correspondence on the group regarding form appearing to work out better at our all-weather tracks.

Certainly if one looks at the 1999 results for favourites on AW, strike rate does improve in accordance with an increase in race class identifier.

The figures in percentages are set out below.

C	19	from 48	39%
D	72	from 211	34%
E	97	from 345	30%
F	97	from 345	28%
G	63	from 181	34%

There is insufficient data for class A and B.

My question is this. What are the reasons for the lacking of quality racing on the AW surface?

- Could it be the punter possibly getting too much of an edge over the bookies?
- Depriving higher grade courses of quality racing?
- Snob value?

Maybe with the likelihood of a further AW track offering weekly racing close to London in the future, things could change.

**Reply from Patrick Gamble**

Below are figures for AW favourites for class C to G from 1994 to 2000.

They show the picture to be rather different from the one year snapshot offered by John. The variation in winning favourites for class C races is particularly marked.

All Trainers

All Jockeys

Lingfield (aw)

Southwell (aw)

Wolverhampton (aw)

**1st favourites****Race Class (Official) C**

YEAR	WINS	RUNS	STRIKE%	LSP	LSP%	VSP%
1994	5	13	38.46	-0.90	-6.92	24.05
1995	8	29	27.59	-2.24	-7.72	4.50
1996	3	22	13.64	-13.25	-60.23	-53.88
1997	12	54	22.22	-12.46	-23.07	-25.12
1998	3	24	12.50	-16.84	-70.17	-43.83
1999	19	48	39.58	13.54	28.21	26.11
2000	9	35	25.71	0.75	2.14	-30.63
	59	225	26.22	-31.40	-13.96	-12.77

**Race Class (Official) D**

YEAR	WINS	RUNS	STRIKE%	LSP	LSP%	VSP%
1994	78	221	35.29	1.94	0.88	-4.59
1995	61	185	32.97	-17.56	-9.49	-6.71
1996	57	184	30.98	-35.72	-19.41	-15.79
1997	56	174	32.18	-17.26	-9.92	-13.89
1998	70	223	31.39	-28.87	-12.95	-18.92
1999	72	211	34.12	-30.31	-14.36	-6.86
2000	50	148	33.78	-16.00	-10.81	-10.45
	444	1346	32.99	-143.78	-10.68	-10.97

Race Class (Official)			E			
YEAR	WINS	RUNS	STRIKE%	LSP	LSP%	VSP%
1994	69	229	30.13	-18.69	-8.16	-5.30
1995	83	246	33.74	9.29	3.78	1.27
1996	69	272	25.37	-53.90	-19.82	-16.36
1997	65	208	31.25	-4.61	-2.22	-4.77
1998	60	221	27.15	-39.88	-18.05	-14.05
1999	71	232	30.60	-21.49	-9.26	-7.18
2000	44	132	33.33	-11.34	-8.59	-6.14
<hr/>						
	461	1540	29.94	-140.62	-9.13	-7.64

Race Class (Official)			F			
YEAR	WINS	RUNS	STRIKE%	LSP	LSP%	VSP%
1994	86	294	29.25	-33.97	-11.55	-15.26
1995	108	386	27.98	-63.28	-16.39	-13.92
1996	106	381	27.82	-88.32	-23.18	-13.66
1997	106	368	28.80	-53.82	-14.63	-13.77
1998	110	370	29.73	-52.21	-14.11	-11.42
1999	97	345	28.12	-69.63	-20.18	-18.36
2000	84	244	34.43	6.72	2.75	-0.38
<hr/>						
	697	2388	29.19	-354.51	-14.85	-12.96

Race Class (Official)			G			
YEAR	WINS	RUNS	STRIKE%	LSP	LSP%	VSP%
1994	15	65	23.08	-19.10	-29.38	-24.72
1995	39	120	32.50	-20.08	-16.73	-6.38
1996	28	96	29.17	-12.10	-12.60	-11.16
1997	41	131	31.30	-17.04	-13.01	-14.15
1998	65	168	38.69	22.41	13.34	10.87
1999	63	181	34.81	3.05	1.69	-1.68
2000	49	129	37.98	0.79	0.61	0.46
<hr/>						
	300	890	33.71	-42.07	-4.73	-3.91

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