HOR$ENSE

"The PRICE-PERFORMANCE LEADER in thoroughbred handicapping software" SM

Presents the Expert-ease newsletter… back for another try!

Welcome *back*, my friends, to the newsletter that never ends!!!
(with sincere apologies to Emerson, Lake & Palmer)

Joe's Corner

Hi Again!

Welcome, my fellow horseplayers, to the reboot of the **Hor$ense** newsletter. To those who were there for the 2012 attempt… at least the template was something to build on.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to share. Each issue will contain a featured handicapping article, which will be suited to a general audience. I'll also share **Expert** related handicapping tips. The "Quick Trick" section is… well, a quick handicapping tip! There is also a section for your handicapping ideas.

Joe's Corner will be a bit more free-form, so I can't really tell you what to expect… other than it will have to fit in this tiny space.

In short, this newsletter is for every handicapper… the beginner to the near-**expert**.

Welcome BACK aboard!

Yours in Racing,

Joe

Quick Hits

Places to Be

At Home   until further notice
Online   24/7/365
Las Vegas   racebooks are open
      (I'm waiting for tournaments to restart)

Things to Do… always!
- Keep accurate wagering records!
- Skip a race now and then!
- Stop and smell the roses!

Fact that sounds made up…
Seabiscuit ran **35** times in 1935 as a 2-year-old. And, six different times that year, he ran with two days rest… and once with just one day off*!!!*

Quick Trick

The "Third Handicapping Level"
In the setup **Systems Settings**, select the **All** option for the **Hor$martsPlus for Facets** and **Auto-Set** options (using the **Interactive** handicapping mode).

By doing this, during the **Evaluation** the preview screen is shown for each horse, and you can add/remove facet data.

It only adds 3-6 keystrokes/clicks for each horse, so it's worth it if you have time.

Featured – Handicapping "Rules of the Road"

There are many worthwhile handicapping rules, so let's take a look at those that I use… along with how **Expert** applies them.

Be selective: As I've often said, "Just because you handicapped the race does NOT mean that you have to play it!" I don't focus on playing every race, which is something I learned in the early "dark days" of simulcasting, where Vegas casinos were the only place to bet on tracks while not actually being there. I've been doing this since 1980, and this will never change.

　　Expert: This was a key feature in the development of **Hor$ense** (which I started in 1987). With multiple tracks and races to choose from, the pre-screening of races is a necessity. While there's nothing stopping you from playing every race, this **Hor$ense** cornerstone will always be there for you.

Learn your strengths (and weaknesses): Depending on your inclinations, you will gravitate towards certain race types. This should make you a more <u>selective</u> player (see above).

　　Expert: Prior to the first Windows-based version (V6), I wasn't doing this… but then it occurred to me that if I was going to make the program selective, then I needed a way to be able to apply additional "rules" to help people flag race types – based on class, age, sex, distance, surface – to be more (or possibly less) selective. This is what I call a Profiler, which I have improved in **Expert**.

Keep records: If there was ever a proverbial horse that I have beaten into the ground, this is it. I've been around racing for a long time, and I have yet had someone tell me that you should NOT keep records.

　　Expert: I do! And once I did, I became a better handicapper. I realized that I have no real ground to stand on if I don't keep records, because you "gotta keep those pesky records" in order to get better. Using the Master Profile, a newer **Expert** feature, makes it easier to control. I'll also share my Excel tracking sheet with anybody who would like to have me email them a copy… at NO CHARGE.

Stay focused on the task in front of you: This is something I've learned from tournament play, and it applies in ALL situations. If you're making wagers ANYWHERE (home, mobile, OTB, on-site), your focus needs to be on the races… and not ANYTHING that distracts you from handicapping.

　　Expert: Another key feature is how fast it handicaps races. It's so much easier to focus on what's in front of you if it doesn't take all day (and the night before) to do it. On a typical race day I'll play 3-5 tracks. For each track I can pre-screen the entire card in about 5 minutes. Each race, using the Fully Automated mode, takes about a minute and you'd be done with a race card done in about 15-20 minutes. If you use the Interactive mode, each race will take no more than 7 more minutes; that's five good races in another 20-25 minutes (35-45 total). This frees up plenty of time to use the enhanced Race History (aka, the <u>mock "form"</u>) to generate a race specific file that highlights the key data.

Don't bet the rent money: Unless it's how you make your living, you need to have a separate pot of money to play with. And if you run out… well, before you put more money in, you probably need to revisit the lessons above to see how you can avoid having to "feed the kitty" again.

　　Expert: There is a "hidden" feature in **Expert**, where (at the end of the race analysis) you can choose an option that lets you enter your normal wager and you'll see a recommendation on the amount you should wager on that specific race. It's most useful for those who don't have a plan, but everybody can use it to check their plan against something else.

Enjoy yourself: Everybody has a tough day (or stretch of days), but if it's getting you down and making you chase your losses, then simply step back and take a break until your mind is feeling right about it.

　　Expert: This is really not a feature… but once you get used to how to make **Expert** do what YOU want, you just might have fewer down times.

Handicapping Tip – Pre-Race Screening

How often do you decide whether you're going to handicap a race BEFORE you get started?

The response from most people is somewhere between "*not very often*" and "*I never miss a chance to handicap a race*". Well… the truth is that you do it more often than you realize, but most of the time you don't even recognize it. C'mon, who hasn't looked at a 5 furlong two-year old race with a bunch of first-time starters in July and said "***not with MY money!***"? It's just that you probably don't do it often enough.

And why does it matter so much to pre-screen races? Because that is probably where more of your time and money is lost than with ANY other handicapping decision.

If you're using **Hor$ense Expert**, then it's already being done for you. Without boring you with the formulas used to determine the four levels of pre-race screening results – PLAY (GOOD and MARGINAL) and PASS (MARGINAL and NO GOOD) – I'll just list the phases and conditions that are used… which you can implement even if you're not using a **Hor$ense** product!

There are two pre-race screening phases: the <u>race</u> conditions and the <u>field</u> conditions.

Hor$ense first evaluates these **<u>race</u>** conditions:
 1. the date of the race
 2. the track abbreviation
 3. the surface type and condition of the racing surface
 4. the race distance
 5. the class type and value of the race
 6. the age and sex conditions.

Hor$ense then reviews the past performances for the **<u>field</u>** to see how many horses have:
 1. recent form at any track
 2. recent form on the same surface at any track
 3. a race at or beyond the distance on the same surface at any track
 4. recent form at the track where the race is being run

The results produce a PASS or PLAY recommendation in **Hor$ense**, so you will know whether you should spend the time handicapping a race.

This can easily be done manually. The first step is to review the **<u>race</u>** conditions to see if there's a condition that prompts you to skip the race. The next step is to check the **<u>field</u>** conditions for a recommendation on whether to PASS or PLAY the race. You will need to keep track of how many horses meet EACH of the criteria, and then (in its most simplistic form) you'll assign values and decide whether you have enough information to continue.

Here's a quick example for a TEN horse field (listed by their **<u>field</u>** conditions): [1] seven, [2] six, [3] five and [4] four. From this data, you get a total of 22 points (7+6+5+4) out of a possible 40 points (a max of 10 for each condition). From here, you need to decide if 55% (22/40) is good enough to move to the evaluation stage; my minimum is 60%, so I'd PASS on this race.
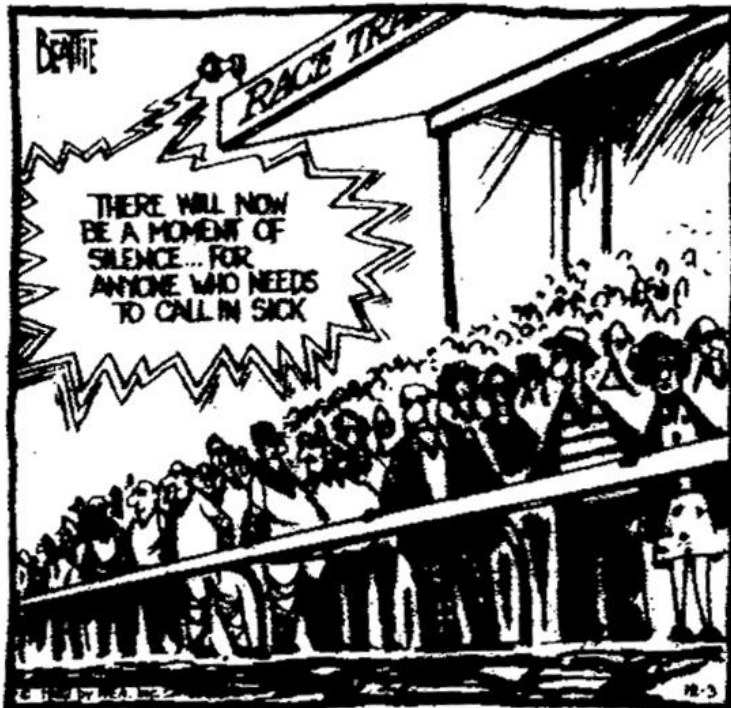
I can't tell you how many times pre-race screening has saved me… from myself! Hopefully, you'll find pre-race screening to be just as useful in your handicapping.

Your Take…

This space is for you to share your handicapping ideas and thoughts…

Since this is the first issue (the second time around), there's nothing to show you just yet… but for future issues just send me your take on **Expert**, handicapping or the sport in general, and maybe it'll be in this space.

*U*NIQUE *S*OLUTIONS *S*OFTWARE

On the Web:
www.ponypicker.com

What I saw recently…

A race in England, where one horse broke about four lengths tardy… but another horse waited for **20 seconds** before walking out of the gate! *WOW!*

In closing…

Does anybody remember when…?

Joe Mainardi
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