



Presents the **Expert-ease** newsletter

The Breeders' Cup? ALREADY ??? Better than the Triple Crown!!!

Yeah... I said it...



Joe's Corner... RIP Alan Dietrich

Back in 1975, Russ Dietrich started a horse racing newsletter he called *Phillips Racing Newsletter (PRN)*. Ten or so years later, I picked up my first monthly edition of it. I only knew Russ through *PRN*, but it felt like I had known him all of my handicapping life; his many angles were both simple and elegant... cumulatively, they inspired me to develop and sell a handicapping program, which is how **Hor\$ense** came to be. For the initial version, *PRN* was the first (and the ONLY) publication that would review it; to my surprise, it was an instant success... as a **direct** result of their review. *Russ was a man who loved the sport to the end...*

After Russ' death, his son took over, and Alan is who most of you know. I had a strong connection with him... like-minded, as it were. Whenever I had a new version of **Hor\$ense**, he would always have it reviewed ASAP. For many years, I was fortunate enough to be allowed to submit "Computer Handicapping" articles almost every month, right up until the last "consecutive editions" issue of *PRN* came out in September 2021, stopping only because his recurrence of cancer required his full attention. My last article for *PRN* was actually the ENTIRE April 2022 issue of my **Expert-ease** newsletter; Alan insisted on it. I thanked him, and his "you're welcome" was the last time I heard from him. ☹

Thereafter, I thought of him almost every month, waiting for an email. This July, I finally went to the *PRN* website, and it was shut down; I had a bad feeling, so I searched around and discovered that he had been scratched from his last race in February of this year. I've never been so sad at the death of a stranger. But he wasn't really a stranger... he was a horse racing mentor and friend. **You are forever missed, Alan...**

Yours in Racing... *Joe*

Quick Hits

Places to Be

At the Track	Get out there!
Online	24/7/365
Las Vegas	race books!
	(and some tournaments)

Things to Do... now & forever

- Stop and smell the roses!
- Skip a race now and then!
- Keep accurate wagering records!

Fact that sounds made up...

On August 20 at Hawthorne, the right stirrup **BROKE** on Abel Lezcano's mount in race 3!!! He managed to hold on long enough to get back in the saddle and pull the horse up safely!!! Jockeys are really strong! *Find and watch the replay... you will be amazed! Well done, Abel!!!!*

Expert Quick Trick

More Plays (being specific)...

If you find that you're not getting enough **PLAY** races, there's another way to do it.

Set up a Profile (shortcut **Ctrl-P**) and set the **Threshold Control** Adjust Limit to a negative number to get more **PLAY** races.

Threshold Control

Always: "PLAY" PASS

Adjust Limit **-10** +/- 20%

(+ = tougher, - = easier)

... and don't forget to save the Profile!



Featured – More Tracks are Closing... and **SOON!!!**

It's been a rough summer for race track closings!!!

Early this year, Stronach Racing Group (SRG) announced that they would cease operations at Golden Gate Fields, leaving Northern California without a flagship track. The PR spin says that it's better overall for racing in California, because the horses will move to Santa Anita (the jewel in the SRG stable). But, it would be hard to believe that the value of the property didn't play a major role in the decision. Now, the only decision to be made is **WHEN** this will happen; there was initial talk of stopping at the end of the meet in early October, then it moved to the end of the December meet... now SRG has asked the CHRB to grant it the dates for the meet that ends next June. It will happen *eventually*... California racing will survive. **So... who could be next???**

Let's stay with SRG – who a horse racing friend refers to as a real estate company that owns race tracks – and their desire to consolidate racing in Maryland. My friend could be on to something, as the **property** arm of SRG (1st.com/properties) headlines their work in Maryland with “Prime real estate with racing at its core”. The **Maryland's Racing into the Future** program has an initial \$375 million price tag, which would involve complete rehabs at Pimlico and Laurel, as well as the already started – and separately funded – “Paddock Park” mixed use project directly north of Laurel.

This led me to believe that Pimlico might become a boutique meet (like Kentucky Downs), in order to keep the Preakness in Maryland. I also thought this could lead to Pimlico becoming the only major track in Maryland. **How so, Joe?** If the Pimlico rehab was successful, then Laurel could end up being sold and the land south of Paddock Park would become more valuable. Following the money, my guess was that they would remodel Pimlico first – with “encouragement” from the Triple Crown folks, who've been successful with Churchill and Belmont – and if it's successful then Laurel could be sold off. **It sounded farfetched... until I browsed by news feed last night (9/30)!!!**

In an article referencing a report on *The Racing Biz* website that reported on a Friday (9/29) meeting between SRG's 1/ST Racing, the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority and the Maryland Jockey Club (MJC). The meeting laid bare what has been whispered out loud for a while... under SRG, the MJC has lost millions of dollars every year, for nearly a decade. The gloves are off: SRG wants to move all racing to Pimlico and reduce the number of racing days in the state to roughly 50% of the current schedule (80-90 days instead of 175), as well as increasing daily purses to be more competitive in the region. This certainly makes sense, with less days and bigger purses... but it's only part of the story. SRG's reduced operating expenses would make them more profitable, as would the sale of Laurel as mixed used property. Once again, when property becomes more valuable as something other than a racing facility, it's destined to be sold for a tidy profit. **Just sayin'... it's how the world works!**

Remember, no matter how much we want things to stay the same, it's inevitable that tracks will keep closing. As evidenced by the tumultuous late summer and early fall, BIG changes are coming to California racing... and the future in Maryland is now clearer.

My words of advice: get to your favorite track... *before it becomes something else!*

Handicapping Tips – Speaking Confident(ially)...

One of handicapping's great mysteries is "the slump". We've all gone through it and it takes a lot of confidence recover... as long as you stick to your plan. If you don't have a workable plan for how you play – both in how you handicap and how you wager – maybe now's the time... and if you do, then once we're done here, maybe you'll feel more confident about your plan.

Mine is simple... yet complex. Simply, I play to win only; no exotics for me. In that way, I can handicap with **Expert**... screening the races with how I've trained it, then handicapping those that pass muster. Then I do an old-school review of the **Race History** (it's best to use the **color** option). Find a horse, make the bet... it's that simple. **Well, there IS one other thing.** I never give up until the last race has been run... as evidenced by the two stories below. **Read on...**

Never Give Up #1:

I competed in the 2016 Summer Classic (at the Gold Coast casino in Las Vegas), where you played 15 WP tickets a day for two days. On day 1, I hit a 9-1 shot on my very first play, then two place finishes and finally back-to-back 9-1 shots. This was good for 7th place. Day 2 was brutal, with no winning tickets until Del Mar. Yet, on two plays there – an 18-1 that ran second, and a 31-1 winner in the second-to-last (!) race of the tournament – I cashed by finishing 14th.

Never Give Up #2:

I competed in the 2023 Del Mar Challenge, where you were given a race or two to handicap on every racing day of the summer meet. I'm not a big fan of the "we pick the specific races you play" format, but it was free practice. It only had four prizes AND had over 3,200 entries, so that made it even tougher. There were early missteps, where I learned some painful lessons – I missed races, and had unplayed winners, because I waited too long – so I got off to a bad start. I was barely treading water and then I caught a 9-1 on Labor Day weekend. Still, I had no shot for the top four, so now I was playing for validation... a top 10% finish, perhaps. Going into closing day Sunday, I was in 1,062nd place... but I kept playing! **And then, this happened...**

Del Mar | 2023 Summer Selection History

<< Contest Overview

Sun, Sep. 10th - Race 8

My Selections

\$100.00 Win	3 Two Rivers	\$770.00
	Over	
\$100.00		\$770.00

Sun, Sep. 10th - Race 6

My Selections

\$100.00 Win	6 Tapatio	\$1,150.00
	Leo	
\$100.00		\$1,150.00

Del Mar | 2023 Summer

Contest Information

Jul 21st, 2023 to Sep 11th, 2023

Next race: TBD

Current leader: Justinsilver1

My position: 33rd out of 3,204

My winnings: **\$1,528.00**

\$ My Selections

📊 Contest Standings

This represents a **top 1% finish!!!**

Even though I didn't win anything, I knew I could make a strong finish... because I had done it before! No cashing this time, but MAN was it fun!!! **I always play to the end... give it a try!**

“Tip by the Book”... A Handicapper’s DNA

*Let’s talk about tips from books and newsletters. Some are terrific (inspiring me to do similar work), and others not so much. **Let’s delve, shall we?***

The late Steve Davidowitz provides us with the book tip this time around, with his 2009 work *Betting Thoroughbreds for the 21st Century*. At the time, even though I was celebrating the 20th year of **Hor\$ense** handicapping software, when Steve wrote, I read what he had to say. The book touched all of the bases that interested me...

What struck me about the chapters was that it was a great mix, with both “old school” and “new wave” subjects. Within those groups, I saw three broad categories related to handicapping software: [1] those that fit computer handicapping, [2] those that software *could* use, and [3] those that relied on things that a computer didn’t do well.

From category 1, these subjects confirmed that I was right in working on items with the most “payback”: how to choose races to play (and skip), handicapping synthetic tracks, defining class better, combining speed-based pace with traditional trip evaluations, and workouts.

In category 2, I considered one major idea to be useful: creating a better version of “the form”. Key upgrades were: using **color** for enhancement, showing specific trainer angles, and pedigree values.

Finally, category 3 was a reminder that some things defy using software: daily track biases, key races, and physical appearance.

From these, I was able to greatly enhance the **Professional** version and eventually update it to what **Expert** has become. Steve’s book inspired me to keep improving, which helped make **Expert** a more robust tool than I could have ever imagined. **Thanks, Steve!**

I’m a Travelin’ Man... I Get Around!

*Part of my retirement involves travel... and every trip I take – whether it’s alone or with my wife – I try **VERY HARD** to stop at a race track. Big or small, I want to see them **ALL!!! So, where in the world is Traveler Joe???***

August – along with my chance to finally go to the Canadian Derby at Century Mile in Edmonton – came and went... my wife’s doctor said she couldn’t travel with her broken ankle. But, she got better in time for my next solo trip to... Kentucky Downs! I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend experience, and I’m looking forward to returning!!!

With Golden Gate closing, I have plans to get there before it’s gone. Depending on when they actually close (see the Featured article above), it will either be this November, or by next June... or both!!!

In closing...

Another horse racing phrase used in everyday conversation...

Hands Down

The origins of this phrase date back to the 19th century, where it specifically described a horse race that was won *indisputably* or *effortlessly*... because the jockey would slacken the reins and cross the finish line with his hands down... no whipping or urging needed.

Now, it usually means something that is indisputable, in all walks of life.



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What you should consider...

Breeders’ Cup “bet the high half”... with a twist!

I tweaked the rules in 2022:

- No Friday races (baby races)
- Minimum field size of 11

Here’s how Saturday looked:

- 6 of 9 races had field of 11+
- \$78 wagered overall
- One winner for \$87.78
- Profit of \$9.78

Not great, but a \$10 profit seems pretty good...

Joe Mainardi

Owner, Developer, Writer...

“a one man show”

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