

HOR$ENSE

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

Presents the **Expert-ease** newsletter

Fall *Usually* Brings Changes…

Hopefully for the better… at least for racing*!!!*



Joe's Corner: It's my "full-time job"!

What would you do if you didn't have to work? ***Play the ponies "all the time"?*** **Well… that's (sort of) what I have been doing…** since leaving the "get a paycheck" work force in 2017. Would you try it? No sure where to start? Well, let me show you what that might look like, by using a "weekly review" format. **Let's give it a try, shall we*!***

Identify [ID]: For a typical summertime week, expect an average of 10 tracks a day. I get the first-post times using a combination of the XpressBet Calendar and Equibase Entries webpage. **It takes one minute per card.**

Weather [W]: I check both the "day-of" AND the "day-prior". First, I see if any of the tracks were "wet" the day before… eliminating tracks that will be "muddy/sloppy" and/or "off turf". I then look at the forecast, for future "wet" AND "too hot (90°) or cold (40°)" weather. **It takes 1-2 minutes per card.**

Screening (pre-Expert) [S1]: I skip certain race types – no dirt routes, no 2yo or 3yo only races, no cheap claimers, and so on – by looking at the (very detailed) Equibase Entries webpage. When I'm done, I end up with about 2 to 4 races per card **It takes 2-4 minutes per card; average of 3.**

Screening (Expert) [S2]: Based on my specific screening setups, I pass on "unplayable" races. **It takes under one minute per race.**

Evaluating (Expert) [E]: The first stage of handicapping has a wide range of time needed; I'm very detailed, but in Automated mode it only takes 5-10 seconds per race. **It takes me one minute per horse; average field of 8.**

Analysis (Expert) [A]: The second stage of handicapping also varies; I use the Race History, but if you skip that step then you'll be done in about a minute per race. **It takes me 3-5 minutes per race; average of 4 races.**

Time Needed (for each step): **ID**=1, **W**=1, **S1**=3, **S2**=3, **E**=8, **A**=4
Time Needed (total): **ID**+**W**+**S1**+(**S2**x(**E**+**A**)) = 1+1+3+(3x12) = 41/track

If I play 5 tracks, that's 205 minutes (almost 3.5 hours). I limit myself to 3-4 days a week, so that's about 11 to 14 hours a week. With **Expert**, the range for a single card is roughly 15 to 40 minutes… which I'm guessing is a lot faster than what you will experience on your own. **I'm here to help…**

Yours in Racing,

Joe

Quick Hits

Places to Be

At the Track	Get there*!!!*
NOT at the Track	Anywhere*!!*
Race Books	Find one*!*
In-person Tourneys	Try it & Love it*!*

Things to Do… now & forever

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

Nostalgic Ramblings

Remember when…

California racing was great? Not just in "SoCal", but in the "NorCal" bay area, too!!!

It's not looking so great right now. Without help coming – no racinos, no subsidies – when will Del Mar, Santa Anita and Los Alamitos go the way of Hollywood Park, Pomona, Bay Meadows and Golden Gate?

I've been to all of them, so I'll choose to remember the good times and roll on… the road trips and many fun times… I even got engaged at the track***!***

Bob Dylan said it best: *"Yer gonna make me lonesome when you go"*

Featured in Expert: 2027 wish list, new wagers?

The work on the 2027 release has already started! *Actually*, it's more like the prep for the work… as in "am I just adding stuff, or is it meaningful?"

Pre-Race Screening:
- I'm looking into creating more "playable" races, without making additional setup changes

Evaluation:
- I'm checking the DRF Speed Rating & Track Variant, to see if the SPEED needs to be refined

Analysis:
- I'm considering tweaking the PAST CLASS, to add "track's class level" to the formulas

Overall:
- I need to perform live testing for the new synthetic surfaces at Belmont and Pimlico
  - First races at Belmont were run on September 20 (my birthday)!!!

"Am I missing something?" (looking at more new wagering options)

Technically, it's not part of **Expert**… but it IS something that needs to be looked at…

➢ Part ONE… my origins

I've been a "win-only" player for decades, and it's served me well. ***So, how did <u>THAT</u> happen?*** **Glad you asked!** This goes WAY back, to when my dad first took me to the track at age 12… and I was hooked!

Back then, betting the daily double was as exotic as you could get… and the first exacta race was years away. Once I turned 18, I played some exactas, along with daily doubles… and even a few trifectas. My main problem was that I wasn't good at "building tickets" – leaving horses out to save money, and losing the bet – and by the 1990's, I stopped playing all exotics. My new style was simple: play to win, adding place/show (P/S) "as needed". Turns out I was awful at knowing when to use "as needed", so I stopped making P/S bets. **Winning races and making money is hard enough, so that's me, Win-Only Joe!**

The other reason I became a win-only player was that it was good business. ***How so, Joe?*** Well, since its introduction, all **Hor$ense** products have guaranteed a profit (using very specific criteria). One flaw there: I couldn't show a consistent profit with my own cash wagers. I looked at my wagering results, and I saw that place and show bets were costing me money. **Playing only to win, I had a better ROI*! Yep, that's still me, Win-Only Joe!*** But… even THAT *might* be changing… so, what other wagering am I studying?

➢ Part TWO… a place/show redux?

Curiosity… oh, the stories of what it's done to cats! One day, while randomly watching races, I saw a big place and show payoff on a longshot… and more randomly decided to look into it as a way to make money. ***Great, but how did you go about it?*** **Well… I went back into my wagering results!**

To be as accurate as possible with enough data points, I limited the data to when I retired and moved to Las Vegas (in 2018). I figured that chasing longshots was best… and I was correct*!!!* At less than 9-1 odds, P/S bets showed a **<u>large</u>** net loss, so I focused on 9-1 and up. **And here's what I learned…**

I used "paper" $2 P/S bets, for $4 plays. From 9-1 to under 12-1, the P/S bets would've netted -$21.80 (66 "plays" for $262, winning $242.20, for an ROI of -8.3%). ***Well, there's only 12-1 and up longshots left… can it show a profit?*** **YES, it can… and it does*!*** Using 12-1 and up, the P/S bets would've had a net profit of $66.40 (95 "plays" for $380, winning $446.40, for an ROI of 17.5%). ***That's much better, but what will you do, Joe?*** Well, if I'm willing to increase my bankroll by almost 2/3 on picks at 12-1 and up, there's a chance that I will have another "money making" wager. **Just another tool in the wagering kit…**

➢ Part THREE… not all news is great

I've always wondered if "dutching" multiple horses to win was worth the effort… so I'm analyzing my 2026 saved wagering results, only looking at races where **Expert** was unable to separate two (or three) top horses. Yep, sometimes the top horses are rated "too close" to pick a solo winner. So far, the results are not good, showing a 13+% loss on 113 races… but there are three months left in the year. **Stay tuned!**

Randomness: It's EXACTLY Like the Word Implies…

What's on the randomness docket? Let's go with the flow…

First stop… "RIP Ruidoso Downs"?

While Ruidoso Downs is MUCH more well known for their quarter horse racing, they still run some thoroughbreds. ***Why do we care?*** Well, they've had some **bad** luck with weather related damages, being forced to run some of their races at the Albuquerque track in 2025 and 2026. In late July, the New Mexico Gaming Commission announced that they were shutting it down for the year[1]. And, the 2027 QH Triple Crown will be run… at Lone Star Park in Texas[2]! Is this the end for Ruidoso? Doubtful, so let's hope not!

Next up… the latest on "Florida just can't get out of their own way"!

By now, everybody in racing knows that the current owners of Gulfstream Park want to shutter the "horse racing" biz and focus on the slots. So, Mike Repole – love him or hate him – has offered to buy the horse racing part. In late August, he stated that he "would buy Gulfstream for $300 million today and close the deal by Friday."[3] Oh, if only that were true… or even possible! Pressing the panic button, he also said "I think that by 2029, 2030, the only track left in Florida will be Tampa Bay Downs." But hold on now…

There's yet ANOTHER plan to open a new track! Rather than trying to move all racing to Tampa (a bad idea!), an ownership group, led by Gilligan Racing, Ron Winchell & Marc Falcone – both breeders and racetrack developers (part-owners of Kentucky Downs) and their team – "who bring racing, development and operating experience to the effort."[4] ***How is this even possible, Joe?*** Well, Gilligan Racing has an exclusive agreement with a division of the Florida Breeders and Owners Association (FTBOA) in Ocala, to use the only available thoroughbred racing permit left in the state. Stay tuned for this one, folks…

Another reason to care *even less* about the "Triple Crown Trail"!

Where do I start? First, NYRA and CDI are trying to kill the Preakness[5]! The "partners" announced that in 2027 there would be a six-race three-year-olds only series that purposely excludes the "middle jewel in the crown". Why, you might ask? Maybe because CDI lost out on buying the rights to the race? Oh, but the drama is NOT over! Not to be outdone, tired of not having the Kentucky Derby winner in their biggest race, the Maryland Jockey Club moved the race out a week and a day[6]! So now, legitimate candidates will have to decide on which race to go to after the Derby. Yeah, let's muddy the waters a little more***!!!***

And we have more on the "closed racetrack" theme…

With Hawthorne now closed, a letter to the editor squarely pins the blame on… **US** (the bettors)[7]! While it's easier to blame the track owners, the author makes sure that we understand that **WE** should have done more to force the track to make improvements, with the spin that we should have attended races at the aging track, so the owners could see people there and want to fix it. I mostly disagree with her – why bother to go to a lousy track, if you can bet on your phone? – but I have seen where a caring owner, like the one at Turf Paradise (where Vic Stauffer just announced his retirement[8]) can make a huge difference.

Moving over to Aqueduct, *The New Yorker* magazine rolled out quite the verbose hit piece[9] on the closing… a full year later! With all of the available freelance writers available, they chose a "climate and energy" reporter to do the dirty deed. Let's skip right past the details, as they are as negatively biased against the sport as you could get, and go right to the title; *The End of **The** Aqueduct Racetrack*. Who has EVER referred to it that way? Did both the editors AND the author NOT check for a correct and true name reference? Or, maybe *The New Yorker* just hates racing? At least they were transparent in their views…

Lastly, the long-closed Atlantic City Race Course will have new life… as a huge Amazon facility[10].

Finally… jockeys make a stand for their safety!

We all know how dangerous it is to be a jockey, so I was very happy to see that the jockeys at Presque Isle Downs cancelled the rest of a card in August… because the ambulance that was supposed to take an injured jockey to the hospital didn't show up for almost 40 minutes[11]! Safety first out there!

I'm a Travelin' Man, I Get Around… to Tracks!

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

I ended up going to Del Mar in late July, via an invite to handicap at a private party. It was a "same day" roadie to San Diego… and there were adventures – an outbound plane change (due to a cracked engine blade!), barely made the last train (in both directions!), and a late return (due to excessive heat!) – but it was still a great trip***!!!***

In late August, I was off to Kentucky Downs… this time for opening weekend! After a rough travel start (delays that kept my Louisville HRF up past midnight waiting for my arrival), we were off***!*** We were guests of the track GM (another HRF, Johan Mirkovic) for both days, and stayed locally (avoiding the four-hour round-trip). **Awesome!!!**

What's left for the rest of the year? Going to Laurel, before they close for good, got too expensive. Maybe I'll go to Tucson in December and rub elbows at the Race Track Industry Program (RTIP). **Stay Tuned*!***

Headline that caught my eye… and sources!

Welcome! *This space is for [1] my take on a quirky or hard-to-believe article, and [2] providing literary credit when it's due. Shall we? We shall…*

A trainer, who argued that a banned substance found in his horse may have come from plants mixed into its hay, was suspended until April 3, ***2030*** and fined $25,000 after an arbitrator found he couldn't prove the hay was the source[12]. **To which I say… "c'mon, man!"**

Footnotes: (current year unless otherwise noted)

1. Max Zepeda. New Mexico Gaming Control Board unanimously votes to close Ruidoso Downs Racetrack & Casino, *KVIA.com*
2. Press Release. All American Futurity Will Move to Lone Star Park In 2027, *PaulickReport.com*
3. Bill Finley. Repole Expounds on His Efforts to Buy Gulfstream Park, *Thoroughbred Daily News*
4. Press Release. Gilligan Racing Moves Forward with Plan for New Track in Florida, *PaulickReport.com*
5. David Grening. Churchill, NYRA to hold 3-year-old Championship Series that does not include Preakness, *DRF.com*
6. Press Release. Preakness shifting back to three weeks and a day after the Kentucky Derby, to be run on a Sunday, *AP.com*
7. Patti Davis. Don't Mourn the Racetrack You Didn't Support, *PaulickReport.com*
8. Frank Angst. Veteran Announcer Stauffer Retires from Calling Races, *bloodhorse.com*
9. Rebecca Egan McCarthy. The End of the Aqueduct Racetrack, *The New Yorker*
10. Eric Conklin. After Amazon's deal, developer moves to acquire remainder of historic N.J. horse track, *NJ.com*
11. Chelsea Hackbarth. Jockeys Prompt Cancellation at Presque Isle Over Ambulance Response Time, *PaulickReport.com*
12. Chelsea Hackbarth. Trainer Suspended Through 2030 After Contaminated Hay Defense Falls Short, *PaulickReport.com*
13. T.D. Thornton. When Tracks Again Post Armed Guards Outside Tote Rooms, We'll Know it's a Real Betting Coup, *PaulickReport.com*
14. Matt Welch. The Fair Hill Five: "Almost hard to imagine," inside racing's most coordinated coup in years, *betsy.au.com*
15. David Grening. HISA could seek lifetime ban for owner Gramm over unauthorized access to portal, *DRF.com*

It's a wrap… on "bad betting actors"!

Maybe you heard about the scandal involving six horses who were [1] owned by the same group, [2] trained by the same trainer, [3] moved to Fair Hill training center (in MD) from Gulfstream, [4] won four of six races in a short time span, with a daily double that paid just 20% of what a parlay would have paid, and [5] resulted in almost $1 MILLION in payouts at brick-and-mortar betting shops (not online!) across Britain[13, 14]. Who first spotted it? It was bettors like us, who noticed it and reported it! **We are on top of things!!!**



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When will I…

Visit the new Belmont Park?

I wanted to go in 2026, but the new building won't be fully open. ***What about going next spring, Joe?*** **Maybe.** I'm also a hockey fan, and I want to go to a hockey game at the arena next door… and stay at the adjacent hotel. So, I have to find a time where all of those pieces fall into place!

"It's a Fact, Jack"*!*

Who "turned in" owner & tournament player Marshall Gramm for using protected HISA data, for advantages over others? Happily, it was tourney players, who saw his enhanced PPs at an event, and asked contacts where they could get them! **Good for us!!!**