



BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BETTING THE RACES

~ QUICK POINTS ~

AGE: If physically and mentally ready, the career of a race horse can begin during the second half of their 2-year-old season. Because of their breeding potential, the average career of a female horse is not as long as that of a male. In most cases, females do not race beyond the age of six. It's somewhat rare, but male horses, geldings in particular, can sometimes race until they are 10, 11 or even 12 years old.

SEX: Males under the age of five are colts. Males 5 years old and up are called horses. Males who have been cut are geldings. Females under the age of five are fillies. Females 5 years old and up are referred to as mares. Females typically race against one another and must be exceptional to beat male rivals. However, 2-year-old fillies often blossom quicker and beat the boys.

SURFACES: Races are contested over three types of surfaces – Traditional dirt, turf (grass) and synthetics (man made). Some brands of synthetic tracks include: Polytrack, Tapeta, and Cushion Track.

DISTANCE: Races under 1 mile are called "sprints" and over 1 mile deemed "routes". A race under 1 mile is measured in furlongs, with each furlong measuring one-eighth of a mile (a city block). At most racetracks, sprints are run around one turn and routes are contested around two turns.

RUNNING STYLE: Horses that race on or near the early lead are commonly referred to as "speed" horses or "front-runners". Those who sit a couple of lengths off the pace are known as "stalkers". Horses that lag behind early and finish strong are called "closers" or "come-from-behinders". Pace makes the race. Pace refers to the fractional times set by the leader at each point of call. Races with few "speed" horses are most often won by horses on the front end, while races with several "speed" horses often favor the "closers" when the early pacesetters tire.

~ TYPES OF RACES ~

In order to keep the game competitive, and bettable, a wide variety of races are written by the track's racing secretary. The job of the trainer is to place their horses where they can be the most competitive.

(Listed lowest to highest)

MAIDEN CLAIMING: All horses looking for first win; horses can be purchased by other owners. Common claiming prices range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT: All horses looking for first win; horses cannot be purchased by other owners.

CLAIMING: Class level for horses that have won at least one race; horses can be purchased by other owners. Conditioned claiming races, for non-winners of two, three and sometimes four races lifetime, are also common. Common claiming prices range from \$4,000 to \$50,000.

STARTER ALLOWANCE: Horses entered have raced previously in a claiming race at a designated level, but today cannot be purchased by other owners. To be eligible to compete in most cases, horses would have had to have started for the designated claiming price once in the current year, or the year before.

ALLOWANCE: Top level of "everyday" racing, horses entered cannot be purchased by other owners. Horses are often the most accomplished or most promising horses at the track. There are traditionally four allowance levels. Once a horse runs through their allowance conditions, they will either transition to either stakes, or claiming races, depending on their level of talent. Talented young horses who have not yet run through their allowance conditions have immediate earning potential.



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OPTIONAL CLAIMING or ALLOWANCE:

Tougher level of race in which some horses are made eligible to be purchased by other owners and some are not. Horses who have already won at the allowance condition can still be entered for the designated claiming tag. These types of races often provide interesting battles between up and comers, and older, more accomplished horses.

STAKES: Prestigious races where the purse money is substantial and participants must pay a fee for the right to enter the race, thus making the events very competitive.

GRADED STAKES: Stakes races that a national committee ranks among the toughest in the US, based on the yearly quality of horses that have entered. Less than 500 races in the entire country most any year are designated this level. As a point of comparison, the Triple Crown races – Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont – are all Grade I's.

As a rule of thumb, horses stepping up from a lower level on this list to a higher level are said to be "jumping up in class".

Theoretically, they'll have a tougher time competing as the races get more difficult. Conversely, a horse going from a higher level on this list to a lower level would be said to be "dropping in class" and often times hold an advantage over their competition in lesser races, at least on paper.

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**HORSE
PLAYER
NOW**

~ PARIMUTEL WAGERING ~

Unlike a casino, the racetrack has no financial interest in who wins or loses. They merely serve as a broker. Of the money that's wagered, percentages are deducted for the track, the state and for purse money (this is called the "takeout"). In essence, you are wagering against everyone else in a competitive format. The money that's wagered creates a "pool." Once the race is run and declared official, payouts are determined based on the number of correct tickets.

ODDS FOR \$2 WIN WITH RESULTING PAYOUTS

1-9	\$2.20
1-5	\$2.40 - \$2.60
2-5	\$2.80
1-2	\$3.00
3-5	\$3.20 - \$3.40
4-5	\$3.60 - \$3.80
1-1	\$4.00 - \$4.20
6-5	\$4.40 - \$4.60
7-5	\$4.80
3-2	\$5.00
8-5	\$5.20 - \$5.40
9-5	\$5.60 - \$5.80
2-1	\$6.00 - \$6.80
5-2	\$7.00 - \$7.80
3-1	\$8.00 - \$8.80
7-2	\$9.00 - \$9.80
4-1	\$10.00 - \$10.80
9-2	\$11.00 - \$11.80
5-1	\$12.00 - \$13.80
6-1	\$14.00 - \$15.80
7-1	\$16.00 - \$17.80
8-1	\$18.00 - \$19.80
9-1	\$20.00 - \$21.80
10-1	\$22.00 - \$23.80



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~ TYPES OF WAGERS ~ (same-race/intra-race bets)

TYPE	DIFFICULTY	\$2 PAYOFF LIKELY RANGE	EXPLANATION
Show	easiest	\$2.10-\$4	Your horse can finish first, second or third and you will collect. The most conservative wager in racing and your safest chance at cashing a ticket.
Place	easy	\$3-\$10	Your horse can finish first or second and you will collect. Pays a bit better than show, but you won't get rich on this path.
Win	moderate	\$4-\$50+	Your horse must finish first (WIN) in order to collect. Most traditional bet type and still one of the best.
Quinella	less tough	\$5-\$75	Your horses must finish first and second – in any order – in order to collect. A more conservative approach than the exacta, hence a smaller return. Because exacta boxes are essentially the same thing, not all tracks offer quinellas.
Exacta	tough	\$10-\$150	Your horses must finish first and second – in the exact order – in order to collect. You're beginning to take risks, but the rewards sweeten. Experienced horse players often box, key or formulate partial wheels based on their opinions (see below).
Trifecta	tougher	\$50-\$1000+	Your horses must finish first, second and third in order to collect. Now, you're pushing your luck! Very popular wager with big returns if you can conquer it. Experienced horse players often box, key or formulate partial wheels based on their opinions.
Superfecta	toughest	\$100-\$5000+	Your horses must finish first, second, third and fourth in order to collect. A major thrill-seeking wager for a single race. Good luck, but note that the odds are against you. Experienced horse players often box, key or formulate partial wheels based on their opinions. The 10-cent superfecta has become a very popular wager in recent years. The lower cost allows players to use more horses on their tickets without having to break the bank.
Super High 5	lotto-like	\$3000+	Your horses must finish first, second, third fourth and fifth, in order to collect. The ultimate thrill-seeking wager for a single race. The Super High Five most often is offered just once daily on a racing program, customarily the last race of the day. If no one hits all 5 horses in order, a % of the money bet (called the "pool") will carry over to the next racing day's High 5.



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~ TYPES OF WAGERS ~ (mutl-race/inter-race bets)

Daily Double	easiest	\$15-\$150	You must correctly select the winners of two consecutive races. Both must win in order for you to collect. Often held on the first two races and the last two races of the day.
Pick Three	tough	\$50-\$500+	You must correctly select the winners of three consecutive races. All three must win in order for you to collect. Much tougher than the daily double, but payoffs typically make up for it. Experienced horse players often use more than one horse in each race of the pick three sequence box, but the more horses you use, the higher the cost of your ticket.
Pick Four	tougher	\$200-\$2000+	You must correctly select the winners of four consecutive races. All four must win in order for you to collect. Challenging wager that has become very popular in recent years. Experienced horse players often use more than one horse in each race of the pick four sequence box, but the more horses you use, the higher the cost of your ticket.
Pick Five	toughest	\$300-\$100,000	You must correctly select the winners of five consecutive races. All five must win in order for you to collect. Challenging wager that became very popular during the spring/winter '11 meet at Gulfstream. Reducing the minimum wager from \$1 to 50-cents, which some tracks have also done with their Pick Fours, allows fans of the bet to potentially utilize more horses in each leg of the sequence. The more horses you use, the higher the cost of your ticket.
Pick Six	lotto-like	\$1000-\$1million	You must correctly select the winners of six consecutive races. All six must win in order for you to collect. The ultimate jackpot wager in the racing industry is not for cautious types. If no one holds a perfect ticket on a given day, the majority of that day's pool will be carried over to the next racing day, greatly increasing the amount of money in the jackpot. Experienced horse players often use more than one horse in each race of the pick six sequence, but the more horses you use, the higher the cost of your ticket. With six races in the sequence, the ticket cost can multiply quickly.



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~ EXOTIC WAGERING TIPS ~

Box: Most horseplayers utilize the "box" when it comes to playing exactas, trifectas and superfectas. By "boxing" horses, they can run in any order, so long as you have the right combinations. For instance, if you like #1 and #2 for the exacta, if you "box" the exacta, you will collect if they finish 1-2 or 2-1. The chart below will help you calculate the cost to make a "box" wager:

\$1 EXACTA BOX

2 horses costs \$2 (2x1)
3 horses \$6 (3x2)
4 horses \$12 (4x3)
5 horses \$20 (5x4)
6 horses \$30 (6x5)

\$1 TRIFECTA BOX

3 horses costs \$6 (3x2x1)
4 horses \$24 (4x3x2)
5 horses \$60 (5x4x3)
6 horses \$120 (6x5x4)

DIME SUPERFECTA BOX

4 horses costs \$2.40 (4x3x2x1 x 10 cents)
5 horses \$12.00 (5x4x3x2 x 10 cents)
6 horses \$36.00 (6x5x4x3 x 10 cents)

Wheel: Horseplayers who really like one horse may decide to "key" or "wheel" that runner with all other betting options, hoping to catch a longshot to round out their wager. This option is particularly popular in daily doubles and exactas.

Partial Wheel: This is the art of using multiple horses in a given position. For example, if you like the #1 and the #4 equally, and I think #2 and #7 are also good enough for second, you could construct an exacta ticket this way – 1-4 with 1-2-4-7. You would then have played six combinations: 1-2, 1-4, 1-7, 4-1, 4-2 and 4-7. If you bet this ticket for \$2, your cost would be \$12 (6 combinations X \$2 = \$12).

~ DRAWING "THE LINE" ~

The Morning Line

The job of a morning-line maker is to predict, as accurately as possible, the final odds of each individual race on a day's program.

When calculating odds, the final total of points should add between 122 and 126.

Odds	Points	Odds	Points
1-5	70	7-2	22
2-5	65	4-1	20
3-5	60	9-2	18
4-5	55	5-1	17
1-1	50	6-1	14
6-5	45	8-1	11
7-5	41	10-1	9
8-5	38	12-1	8
9-5	35	15-1	6
2-1	33	20-1	5
5-2	28	30-1	3
3-1	25	50-1	2

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