

Appendix B - Reasons to Pass and Races to Pass

Sartin's Yellow Manual says this about contender selection:

"Always use the LAST RACE **UNLESS** there is a valid excuse to go back farther. That shapes up as the biggest "unless" in handicapping and puts the monkey on the back of "valid" for further examination. Some valid excuses are:

1. Trouble Line
2. Off track
3. Wrong Distance
4. Wrong Surface
5. Class Level Too High
6. First Race Over the Track – Current Meeting
7. Form Cycle Graph shows Cyclic Low
8. Bad Finish – But Good Early Pace'
9. Poor Early Pace – Outstanding Close (Not Against Tiring Speed)"

DON'T MAKE UP EXCUSES!

Trouble Line Information

Ok, the last line says "wide", "shuffled back", "blocked on turn", or "bore out/in". Go to the next line. If the next line is a "0" line with no excuse, then I would use the trouble line. Otherwise you would be throwing the horse out unfairly. If the next line is a "+" race or a "(+)" race, use that line.

Why to Skip Off Tracks

The first thing you have to ask is "WHY" is it recommended to skip over (excuse) off tracks?

1 - some horses just plain DON'T LIKE IT, therefore they won't give their best effort. On the other hand, there are some horses that love the off tracks and may perform better for that reason. The assumption is, all horses will give you an honest performance on a fast track which will be dictated by their current form along with the distance and class at which they are currently entered.

2 - "OFF" tracks can be slower than fast tracks. Let's take two horses, one that ran 6 furlongs on a fast track and one that ran on a muddy track. Here are their times;

Horse A, on a fast track..... 22.2, 45.3, 111.4

Horse B, on a muddy track.. 23.1, 46.4, 113.0

Would it be fair to compare these two horses?

Understand that adjusting these times for daily variant can bring them closer together, but using "fast track" times for both horses is more appropriate.

As it pertains to TURF racing.

The same point I just made pertains to "firm" tracks as compared to "yielding" tracks.

Out of Form or Not

"At what point is a horse considered to have gone out of form & not expected to return in the next race?"

The class of today's race and the class of its' recent races give an indication, i.e., if today's race is at the same class/condition and the same distance/surface as its' last couple of races and the horse has shown nothing in those recent races, I would think it is safe to say the horse will not be a contender in today's race.

There are instances where a horse shows it was clearly facing a pace that was just to fast for it. It happens. But more often, a poor effort will be due to an increase in class level and/or condition level and, of course, a change in distance or surface.

Keep in mind that the higher you go in class level, the more consistent horses are, so you don't incur this problem that often. However, in the cheaper races, you can find a horse that wins a NW2L race and the very next race vs NW3L it throws in a real clunker. This is common. But be aware, this does not mean the horse went out of form "just that quick". Many times that horse will come back off that clunker race and come right back to win that same NW3L condition. Naturally, the class level (claiming price) of these races are a factor. There are many possible scenarios and you just have to be aware of them. There is no teacher like experience, so be on your toes and pay attention. Take notes.

Reasons to Pass a Race:

There is more than one reason to pass a race.

You find a race where there are no "unknown factors". You are able to get good pace lines for several horses in the race. Those horses with no lines, because they have no form, are eliminated as non-contenders. You enter your contenders into your program and get your two horses to bet. If the odds on one or both of your horses is too low....PASS THE RACE. What are odds that are "too low"? There is the obvious, such as your two horses are 4/5 and 2/1. Beyond that, it is up to each individual to set their own minimums.

If I remember correctly, Doc's advice was, if you encounter a race with two or more "unknown factors"...PASS THE RACE. What is an "unknown factor"? Here are some examples.

- A maiden race where there are two or more first time starters.
- A race being run on the turf and there are two or more horses with no turf lines.
- A race being run on the dirt and there are two or more horses with no dirt lines.
- A race at a sprint distance and there are two or more horses with no sprint lines.
- A race at a route distance and there are two or more horses with no route lines.

These are some examples for you to begin with. My best advice is to pay attention to the races you handicap. Draw some conclusions of your own on every race you either play or pass. After the race, evaluate your thoughts prior to the race to those after the race. Ask yourself, "did I make the right decision?" Don't reach any final conclusions until you have done many, many races. You can't let "this race" dictate what you are going to do in the "next race". You will need many, many decisions to base your conclusions on.

Betting odds is one of the major reasons for betting or passing a race. If I don't get a minimum of 4/1 on a horse I want to play...I pass. WHY? Like everybody else, I lose races, so I want 4/1 as my minimum in order to keep a productive ROI.

Reasons Why the Last Line Might Not be the Right Line:

Here are some acceptable reasons for not using the last line where the horse ran a bad race or encountered one of the following. Remember, we are looking for either "+" or "(+)" races.

Let's start with a controversial reason.

1 - **WRONG SURFACE.** So what is controversial about that? Sounds pretty straight forward, doesn't it? Well, suppose you are looking at a race on an artificial surface. Let's further suppose the horse has no races in its' PP's on an artificial surface, but it does have races on dirt and grass. Are either of them acceptable? In my opinion only the dirt races are acceptable. There will be those who disagree. Why? They will say a horse expends its' energy on an artificial surface in much the same way it does on grass. I say "so what?". I'm sure there are other stories, but I'll just take a horse by the name of "Ft. Marcy" as an example. If you are old enough, perhaps you will remember him. If you're not old enough, GOOGLE his name. He was a grass CHAMPION, but he didn't start out that way. He started out, like most horses, running on dirt and was a miserable failure. In a last ditch effort, just before sending him off to the glue factory, they raced him on grass. The rest is history. Horses "feel" with their feet, just like you do. Some of them don't like the feel of dirt, but love the feel of grass. And the opposite is also true. Now, I have never heard a story where a horse ran on an artificial surface for the first time and came back and said,"WOW! That feels just like grass!". If **YOU**, in your bare feet, walked on an artificial surface, a dirt surface and a grass surface, do you think you could feel the difference? Probably, huh? So, my opinion is, grass is grass. Unfortunately, we have to deal with dirt and artificial surfaces. I use them interchangeably, but grass is grass and that's all that it is.

2 - **WRONG DISTANCE.** Just one note here. DOC said to use races that are within one furlong or 1/8th of a mile from today's distance. Suppose today's distance is one mile. Is a seven furlong race acceptable? NO! One mile is a route. Seven furlongs is a sprint. Don't mix sprints with routes or routes with sprints.

3 - **WRONG CLASS.** This means the class was too high. Go back one line and follow the guidelines.

4 - **FIRST TIME OVER THE TRACK AT THE CURRENT MEET.** If this is the case and the horse ran a poor race, go back one line and apply all the same guidelines.

5 - **TROUBLE LINE.** If the horse's last line is a trouble line, go back one line and apply all the same guidelines. Somewhere in one of my posts, I put up a screen shot of a horse from one of the early follow ups. Believe it or not, every line in his PP's was a trouble line. So what do you do? The answer is, use the last line as long as it fits the guidelines. By the way, for those who followed this in the follow up example race, they were rewarded with a double digit mutual.

6 - **TRACK CONDITION.** When the track is "OFF", such as muddy, sloppy, good, etc., you are not suppose to use that line. However, I need only to direct you to the race I put up yesterday. I used a line from an "OFF" track because it was the only possible line to use. I don't throw horses out because the only line I can get comes from an "OFF" track condition.

7 - **THE 90 DAY GUIDELINE.** This **IS NOT** a Sartin guideline. It is mine. If a horse hasn't run in 90 days I throw it out. It gets no line. When I am excusing lines, I do not go back more than 90 days. If a horse is sound and racing on a regular basis, it can run 4 or 5 times in 90 days. If you can't get a line from one of those races the horse is probably not going to win. If a horse came back after a long layoff and has just one race back, it better be a "+" or "(+)" race or it gets thrown out. The other races will be more than 90 days old.

I think this will cover most of the situations you will encounter.
Hope it helps.

Picking the Right Race to Play is Just as Important as Picking the Right Contenders and Right Pacelines

It seems most people just attack a race without ever reading the conditions for the race, like every race is just a matter of picking the fastest horse based on speed rating or some final time measurement from a previous race. (See Appendix A – Interpreting Race Conditions) It is not.

Recently a contestant choose a race to play that should have been avoided. The result was a loss, a loss that was fairly predictable. Let's take a look.

The 5th race at Santa Anita was a 5.5 furlong sprint over the track's dirt surface. The race was for 3 year old and up fillies and mares with a claiming price of \$8,000. It was an "OPEN" race. Now what that means is this. ANY filly or mare age 3 or older could be entered in this race as long as the horse's connections were willing to lose the horse through the claiming box for the claiming price stated, \$8,000. What else does that mean? It means that a horse that just won a GRADE 1 race could be entered in this race. That's not likely for obvious reasons, but that doesn't mean that horse would be precluded from entering the race. It also means that a maiden, a lifetime NON-WINNER could be entered in this race. So there are the extremes, but also understand that everything in between those two extremes is eligible. Horses with 1 win or 20 wins, it wouldn't matter. With that in mind, you are now ready to start looking at the horses in the race.

There were 11 horses entered.

- 4 of the horses were 1 time winners. In other words they have beat nothing but maidens (non- winners).
- 4 of the horses were two time winners.
- 3 were 4 or 5 time winners.

At this point you can already draw the conclusion that this is not a very good field of horses.

I'm not going to review every race for every horse, **but if we look at just the 5 most recent races for each horse, that's 55 total races, you can only find 7 wins among the entire field.** We can only find 1 race where one of the horses ran 2nd and just 3 races where one of the horses ran 3rd. A bad field.

The questioner commented on the winner that it didn't like DMR or FPX. That could very well be true, however, in a closer look, perhaps it didn't like running against winners, since most of it's good races were against maidens. Since we don't know the make up of the fields it ran against in non-maiden races, perhaps they were better than today's field. What we do know is this. Today's field isn't much better than a field of maidens. In other words, the race is wide open...with very little in the way of solid information from which to reach a determination as to which horse(s) have the best chance of winning.

This is a good race TO PASS!

Evaluating the race to see if there are solid contenders that have good recent lines denoting good form where you can rely, to whatever extent possible, on the horses performing today is a good starting point.

More Reasons to Pass..

There are many reason to pass or play. Many times, the reasons are more than just the numbers. This may not seem to be an answer to your question, but it is. Work like Bill's was the determining factor in playing or passing the race. Armed with additional information, Bill was "confident" in his choice of horse to play.

Determining whether or not the favorite is valid or not is another reason to play or pass. If I think I can't beat the favorite, why play? I pass instead.

You mentioned "confusion". I'm not sure what your definition of confusion is, but **if you are confused about a race, how can you play it?** There are times when I can't make heads or tails of a field. For me, that is a good enough reason to pass. I want to be able to have a clear vision of how the race will run.

I guess another way to put it is, most people look for a reason "to bet" a race. **I look for reasons "NOT TO BET"**. If I can't find any reason not to bet the race, then I bet it, as long as I am getting the odds I want. What that means is, I have found a horse I believe will win the race and I can't find a reason for any other horse in the race to beat my horse.

I hope you can put together what I have said here, make heads or tails of it, and hopefully somewhere in there find at least some part of an answer to your question.

Hiding Favorites:

I'm not a fan of the idea of "hiding" favorites, or any other "hiding", but if you are going to engage in that practice, at least hide a favorite that has little to no chance of winning, not just any favorite. Here's an example.

In the 8th race at PEN tonight, the favorite was a horse that was 2 for 45 lifetime. The horse had a good last race, finishing strongly to run 2nd. But let's be real about this. This horse has had "45" races and only managed to win "2" of them. I don't care how good this horse might look, I can't bet this horse with YOUR MONEY!!! So if you are going to "hide" favorites, hide favorites like these. At least these kind will rarely, if ever, come back to bite you in the a--.

Here's the horse I'm talking about and the chart of the race.

PEN 8 Mar 08, 2013		6f Dirt CL5000 4+ Purse: \$13,000 RC: 83 (CL s5 N3-L)										Post Time: 9:10 pm		
7 O When The Saints		ch g 6	ML: 2.5	APV 321	Contender?	St	W	P	S	W%	IM%	Earnings		
J: 86 10 10 12 12 37 Suarez Angel		PP-7	Live Odds:	CR 2.07	Win	Life 45	2	2	8	4	27	148,219	3	
T: 27 2 4 3 7 33 Rojas Murray L					ITM	2013	2	0	1	1	0	6,680	3	
O: Jack J. Armstrong					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2012	17	1	0	0	6	30,838	1	
					<input type="checkbox"/>	S/D	21	2	2	3	10	89,313	4	
					<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet	8	1	1	3	13	57,244	7	

Days	Race Id	Dist	1st	2nd	3rd	Fin	Age	Conditions	Br	1st	2nd	Str	Fin	Fld	Odds	SR	DTV	RC	Adj. SR	PoH TE	PoR TE	Per
1	22 33	14Feb13 6Pen ft 6.0	:22 ⁸	:45 ⁸	:58 ⁵	1:11 ⁶	4+	CL 7.5/15 N3-L	6	8.7	8.9	6.4	2.2	11	6.6	76	-2	88	80 3	167.6	168.1	15.
2	55	12Jan13 2PRX my 6.5	:22 ⁸	:45 ⁸	1:10 ⁹	1:17 ⁵	4+	CL 7.5/20 N3-L	2	5.4	4.1	3.1	3.2	7	15.8	87	0	89	82 1	168.8	169.2	4.
3	67	31Dec12 6PRX ft 7.0	:22 ⁹	:46 ²	1:11 ⁵	1:25 ¹	3+	CL 10/24 N3-L	7	6.3	3.2	5.0	6.1	10	47.4	79	20	94	73 10	167.9	169.8	32.
4	81	17Dec12 3PRX gd 6.5	:22 ⁵	:46	1:10 ⁷	1:17 ¹	3+	CL 10/24 N3-L	4	4.3	5.2	5.8	5.1	7	7.3	74	13	91	72 11	167.0	168.8	37.
5	94	4Dec12 8PRX ft 8.0	:24 ⁶	:49 ²	1:14 ⁴	1:40 ⁹	3+	AL 47 N1-X	3	9.5	9.1	8.1	8.2	9	59.3	51	17	104	68 15	163.3	164.4	53.
6	115 44	13Nov12 6PRX gd 5.5	:22 ⁵	:46 ²	:59	1:06	3+	CL c16/26 N3-L	8	9.4	9.8	7.9	7.4	9	3.0	72	8	94	76 7	167.0	167.9	35.
7	159	30Sep12 1PRX ft 6.5	:23 ³	:46 ⁷	1:12	1:18 ⁷	3+	CL c10/24 N2-L	6	4.4	1.5	1.2	1.3	7	6.5	87	11	85	80 3	167.2	167.2	16.
8	181 34	8Sep12 1PRX ft 8.3	:25	:49 ²	1:13 ⁵	1:45 ²	3+	SA s10/35	6	4.7	4.2	4.4	4.7	6	27.7	71	9	103	77 6	165.8	165.9	26.
9	215	5Aug12 4PRX ft 7.0	:22 ⁹	:45 ³	1:10 ⁶	1:24 ¹	3+	CL 10/24 N2-L	7	7.3	5.2	4.2	4.2	7	28.1	90	4	80	83 2	170.1	170.6	0.
10	229	22Jul12 4PRX fm 8.0	:24	:48 ³	1:13 ⁶	1:39 ⁸	3+	CL 16/28 N1-6MX	3	5.8	6.7	10.2	10.2	10	41.0	57	0	99	76 7	166.1	166.8	27.

PENN NATIONAL - March 8, 2013 - Race 8

CLAIMING - For Thoroughbred Four Year Old and Upward (SNW3 L) **Claiming Price:** \$5,000
Six Furlongs On The Dirt **Track Record:** (Quantum Miss - 1:08.63 - May 27, 2011)

Purse: \$13,000

Plus: \$2,366 PABF - Pennsylvania Bonus Program

Available Money: \$15,366

Value of Race: \$15,366 1st \$9,360, 2nd \$3,120, 3rd \$1,716, 4th \$780, 5th \$390

Weather: Clear **Track:** Fast

Off at: 9:13 **Start:** Good for all except 6



Last Raced	Pgm	Horse Name (Jockey)	Wgt	M/E	PP	Start	1/4	1/2	Str	Fin	Odds	Comments
14Feb13 ⁶ PEN ⁴	4	Jetsdarkstorm (Otero, William)	118	L	bf	4	4	2 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	4.60	just lasted, driving
15Feb13 ⁸ PEN ¹	1	Gold Dubai (Wolfsont, Andrew)	122	L	b	1	8	5 ^{Head}	3 ²	2 ¹ / ₂	2.20	closed late, missed
14Feb13 ⁶ PEN ⁸	8	Sweet Storm (Tunon, Jordano)	118	L	b	8	2	6 ^{Head}	4 ¹	4 ³	24.80	close up, evenly
21Feb13 ⁷ PEN ³	5	One Diego (Diaz, Vladimir)	118	L	f	5	1	3 ¹	2 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	7.30	pressed pace, weakened
14Feb13 ⁶ PEN ²	7	O When the Saints (Suarez, Angel)	118	L	b	7	5	7 ¹	7 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹	1.80*	slow early, mild bid
21Feb13 ⁷ PEN ⁶	2	Corvino (Esquillin, Carlos)	118	L	b	2	7	4 ^{Head}	6 ^{Head}	6 ³	14.10	close up, faded
21Feb13 ⁷ PEN ²	6	Food Fightin (Chaves, Manuel)	118	L	b	6	9	8 ²	8 ³	7 ³	13.70	stumbled, 5 wide turn
17Feb13 ⁵ PRX ⁹	9	Free Me (Bermudez, Samuel)	118	L	b	9	6	9	9	8 ⁵	33.80	4path turn, outrun
21Feb13 ⁷ PEN ⁶	3	Well Call Me (Belmonte, Luis)	118	L	b	3	3	1 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₂	9	22.30	vied, distanced

Fractional Times: 24.28 48.65 1:01.51

Final Time: 1:15.06

Split Times: (24:37) (12:86) (13:55)

Run-Up: 45 feet

Winner: Jetsdarkstorm, Bay Gelding, by Storm Center out of Soaring Jet, by A. P Jet. Foaled May 04, 2009 in Pennsylvania.

Breeder: R. N. Miller. **Winning Owner:** Shade Tree Stable (Treese)

Claiming Prices: 4 - Jetsdarkstorm: \$5,000; 1 - Gold Dubai: \$5,000; 8 - Sweet Storm: \$5,000; 5 - One Diego: \$5,000; 7 - O When the Saints: \$5,000; 2 - Corvino: \$5,000; 6 - Food Fightin: \$5,000; 9 - Free Me: \$5,000; 3 - Well Call Me: \$5,000;

Total WPS Pool: \$26,768

Pgm	Horse	Win	Place	Show	Wager Type	Winning Numbers	Payoff	Pool
4	Jetsdarkstorm	11.20	4.80	3.80	\$2.00 Exacta	4-1	53.60	26,038
1	Gold Dubai		3.40	3.00	\$2.00 Trifecta	4-1-8	695.40	22,620
8	Sweet Storm			7.80	\$2.00 Superfecta	4-1-8-5	4,181.80	10,718