From the “Why NOT Maidens” thread, here is the graciously shared wisdom from, For The Lead (FTL). There are several pages of examples, all of which deserve your attention if you wish to progress as better handicappers. Please note in the RDSS screenshots that FTL highlighted certain columns of information to help point us in the right direction.

Why NOT Maidens?

In all probability, this will not be a real popular topic, but I'm putting it up here anyway. The idea is for this to be educational, so here it goes.

In general, the Sartin Methodology dismisses maiden races, but should you?

I'm aware that most people avoid maidens like the plague. But why? Some of the best plays I find come in maidens races.

Like any other type of race, you have to understand the race that you have in front of you. Now I'm not suggesting that you bet a maiden race that is full of first time starters, however, first time starters don't win that large of a percentage of maiden races, so as long as there is just a couple of them I don't mind. I can just throw them out.

The other thing to note of is, the number of lifetime races a maiden has. A maiden that continues to run without winning, learns to lose! Many times these types of maidens are the ones that are bet down to favoritism because they show good running lines, having run second and third several times.

Also, I'm not a fan of maidens scheduled to run on the turf. In fact, I definitely avoid those races. Actually, I prefer sprint races, but sometimes routes will do just fine.

Finally, in general, if you are looking for the best speed ratings and best third fractions, perhaps maidens are the wrong place to look.

Looking at 2 consecutive years of maiden races, both maiden special weight and maiden claiming that consisted of more than 22,000 races, the following were my findings:

**About 52% of maiden races were won by the horse that was running 1st or 2nd at the first call.**

**About 63% of maiden races were won by the horse that was running 1st or 2nd at the second call.**

Maidens, especially young maidens, haven't learned how to run yet. Many of them don't take kindly to rating. They just want to come out of the gate and run as fast and as far as they can. So the statistics bear this out. What you should be looking for is the horse that is the fastest early. Many times this horse establishes a lead and just goes on with it.

When it comes to line selection, unless a maiden won and got disqualified, you obviously don't have winning lines to choose from. Therefore you are left with lines where the horse may have run 2nd or 3rd. You also have to consider lines where the horse was running 1st or 2nd at the first call, even if it fades from there. My line selection procedure in maiden races is no different than any other type of race.

I looked at the maiden races from the last couple of days at the tracks I like to follow. There were 10 of them. Three of these races did not produce the winner from among my contenders. Some of the
winning races had only 2 contenders. Some of them had short prices such as $6 or $7, but then there were others that make it all worthwhile, just like in any other type of race.

The following posts will show the screen shots from the various races. I will also offer some commentary.

**PRX race 3 on 01.20.13**
There were only two contenders here, so for those who bet 2 horses per race there really isn’t anything to do. Either play or pass based on the odds.

**The winner, #3, paid $6.60.**

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**Why NOT Maidens?**
TP race 2 01.20.13
Here is another race with just 2 contenders. If you must bet 2 horses, your only decision here is to play or pass based on odds. If you are looking for a 1 horse bet, take particular note of the the running lines and "RS" for the 2 contenders, that will point you in the right direction.

Then you can follow all the things I have marked.

The winner, #3, paid $7.20.

TP race 4 01.20.13
My contenders did not produce the winner of this race.

Why NOT Maidens?
TP race 6th 01.20.13
Here is the race that makes it worthwhile. I have 5 contenders.
Take note of the various markings that lead to the winner.

The winner, #6, paid $37.40.
**TP race 9th 01.20.13**
This is another nice paying winner.

Start by taking note of the running lines and "RS". Then the "TPR" section certainly shows this winner's early domination. Again, on the "segments" screen, the winner's early domination is clear.

The winner, #3, paid $11.60.
**LRL race 5 01.21.13**

Another nice priced winner.

Looking at the lines, it is easy to find the early horse, not just in the running lines, but in the "RS" designations. Also, two of these contenders are running back for today's claiming price while the third is moving up a couple of classes.

The "segments" screen also points out what a clear early advantage the winner had.

**The winner, #4, paid $13.00.**
**LRL race 9th 01.21.13**

My contenders did not produce the winner of this race.

**Prx race 1st 01.21.13**

Here is another race with just 2 contenders. Again, two horse players have one choice, play or pass.

Notice that these two horses are close on "RS" with one horse being "P5" and the other "P6". There is a possibility that the difference in times and rankings are a result of one horse being rated on an 8.3f race, while the other horse is being rated on a 9.0f race.

The winner, #2, paid $7.20.
PRX race 4 01.21.13

This is an interesting race for the following reason. **THERE IS NOT AN EARLY HORSE AMONG THE CONTENDERS!** Just look at the running lines.

What I’m going to say next applies to ALL TYPES of races. When you end up with nothing but pressers and closers among your contenders, one of them will rank #1 early. One of them will show best on the F1 section of the segments screen. One of them will show fastest on EPR on the TPR screen. Does this mean that is the early horse in the race?

**ABSOLUTELY NOT!!**

Early horses are early horses. OTHER THAN early horses are OTHER THAN early!!!

So in this race there is no early horse to "zero in on", even though the winner showed best on F1 on the segments screen. **In this race the BL/BL may be the right place to look.** In this case it was. The winner actually came off from the pace to win the race.

One last note. Check the class on the running lines screen. The winner is the only horse among the contenders that is dropping down a couple of classes for this race. This is always a help to maidens.

The winner, #4, paid $6.20.

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Why NOT Maidens?
PRX race 6 01.21.13
My contenders did not produce the winner of this race.

Recap of Races from 01.20.13 – 01.21.13
So just to recap, the ten races mentioned here were run on 2 consecutive days, at 3 different tracks on 2 different surfaces.

The total return of the 7 winners comes to $89.20.

Some would have been "high odds" bets, while some may have been "low odds" bets. Either way I'm sure you can see these were profitable races.

SA races 01.24.13

RACE #2....none of my contenders won this race.

RACE #4....here's the screen shot. The winner, #12, paid $35.60.

RACE #5.... The winner, #3, paid $3.40.

Why NOT Maidens?
Maiden races at TP and SA, 02.9.13

I had 5 cards on my plate for yesterday, PRX, LRL, PEN, SA and TP. Unfortunately, PRX cancelled. Just as unfortunate, LRL had no maiden races, so I was left with SA, TP and PEN, so I thought I would post all the maiden races. Keep in mind, I do not do turf races, so I was left with a total of 8 maiden races. Also keep in mind, this thread was about “early” horses in maiden races.

The results are, there were 4 winners from these 8 races. Here are the prices of those 4 winners;

TP 2nd $15.80
SA 7th $17.00
PEN 4th $12.40
PEN 8th $12.60

The total return comes to $57.80.

If you played two horses per race, even where it wasn’t necessary, and based on a flat bet of $2 on each horse, your investment would have been $32.00, giving you a profit of $25.80. That’s an ROI of almost 81%. Not bad.

I’ll comment very briefly on the races where the winner was not among the contenders and post screen shots where the winner was among the contenders.

In the second race at TP there were 6 contenders, therefore it would make sense for two horse bettors to play the two early types.

Why NOT Maidens?
In the 9th race at TP there were just 3 contenders. None of them won.

In the 5th race at SA there were just 3 contenders. None of them won.

In the 7th race at SA there were just 2 contenders. It is clear that just one of these horses were of the early type, so I really see no need to bet 2 horses.

Maiden races at PEN, 02.09.13
In the 1st race at PEN there were just 3 contenders. None of them won.

In the 4th race at PEN there were just 3 contenders. Here are the screen shots. The winner, #3 paid $12.40.

Why NOT Maidens?
In the 8th race at PEN there were 4 contenders. with 4 contenders I guess it makes sense for the two horse bettors to bet the two early types. The winner, #1 paid $12.60.

Why NOT Maidens?
Race Segment Screen Interpretation

Quote:

FTL, what if the horse that is projected to be the on the lead at the 1st call is also the projected
leader at the second call? Will you just bet that one horse to win ? or do you bet a second horse
to win also ? How do you look for a second-horse-win-bet?

Many times the horse that has the lead at the first call is projected as the leader at the second call. This is common place. **However, the best case scenario is for a horse to have the best first fraction (first call) time AND the best second fraction time.** Obviously, this horse will show as having the best first fraction time AND the best second call time, but understand the difference. Don't lose sight of the fact that this is the best case scenario and not the only scenario in which the first fraction horse can go on to win.

Having the best first fraction time is self explanatory.

Having the best second fraction time means that this same early horse is running faster (or at the same pace) than all the horses behind it. When this is true, the horses attempting to make up ground on the leader is impossible. They just can't make up any ground if the leader isn't slowing down. In this scenario, the horse on the lead has a huge advantage.

RDSS provides the means to see these different scenarios. On the "segments screen" there are a couple of sections. One shows the computerized beaten lengths. This is at the first call (F1) AND the second call.

The section to the right of this shows the first fraction (F1) AND the second fraction (F2). The best second fraction (F2) horse could be any horse in the race. It could be the horse running dead last at the first call or it could be the horse on the lead at the first call or any horse in between. **Where you see a horse that is last in the computed beaten lengths section at F1 and first for F2 in the incremental match up area, this does not mean this horse now has the lead at the second call. It only means it was running the fastest during the second fraction.**

As far as how I bet, I am a one horse bettor. I either get it right with one horse or I don't. I spent many years as a one horse bettor, then I found the Sartin Methodology. At that point I became a two horse bettor in order to follow the methodology concepts. Later I went back to betting one horse.

Take a look at the 7th race at SA on 02.09.13. There were only two contenders. It is obvious that only one of those two horses are of the early type and since an early type is the focus of the thread, you only need to bet that one horse. Now, if you are uncomfortable with only betting one horse, then bet both horses, I just feel the second bet is not worthwhile.

Finally, look at the post of the 8th race at PEN. In this race there are 4 contenders. If you look at the "computed beaten lengths" area it is easy to see that the #5 horse is the fastest first fraction horse. And as I stated above, this horse is also projected as the fastest "second call" horse. However, if you look to the right in the "incremental match up" area, you can see that the fastest second fraction horse is the #1 horse. Now look back at the "computed beaten lengths" area. You can see under the second call section that although the #5 shows best at the second call, the #1 is only 0.40 (less than 1/2 length) behind the leader. Notice that these two horses have a clear advantage over the other two horses at that point in the race. If the #5 does not go on to win, which horse is in the best position to win the race turning for home? The #1 and therefore the #1 would be your second bet.
FTL did not originally work this race, but responded to a question with this analysis. These are the lines he used. Its a good example.

**Why NOT Maidens?**
Here are a couple of winners from March 30, 2013 at Penn National. Now I’m not trying to make everybody maiden race players, but I do want to show that there is money to be made from maiden races. Naturally, like any other kind of race, you are not going to win them all, but when you consider some of the prices you get, you don’t need to!

Here’s the winner, #6. It paid $15.40. It has just one start, 15 days ago, where it fought for the lead through the first two calls at today’s class level.

Here is the #9 horse. I thought I would explain the reason for including this horse as a contender.

1. It is dropping down from 20k to 5k. Notice the improvement from its’ first race vs. Maiden Special Weight to 20k.
2. That improvement propelled this horse close to the lead at the first call last race. I want to see how it matches up to the #6 horse who is obviously going for the lead.

Then I thought I would show the #11 and #12. First #11. This horse is “0 for 35” lifetime!

Why NOT Maidens?
Now the #12 horse. This horse comes in as the second WORST horse in the race at "0 for 19".

I mean, you just have to love a race where there are two horses like these. It appears they have all the credentials, but they can be dismissed out of hand.

**Screen Shots and chart**

Ok, here are the usual screen shots I post along with the chart of the race. The main thing I’m looking for here is whether or not the #6 can make the lead.

Notice that the #11 and #12 are the top 2 horses on the BL/BL screen and have almost all the #1 and #2 rankings.....except #1 for EPR. #6 has that.
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**Why NOT Maidens?**
And I couldn’t let the day go by without posting this one. Here are the contenders. There are only two of them, so two horse bettors have nothing else to do except walk to the window and bet!

Why NOT Maidens?

LRL 7th 03.30.13
Here is the favorite, the #6;

It has two races. One was 24 days ago and the other was "332" days ago. I think it is obvious that the public made this horse the favorite on the strength of this horse's first race which was at BEL.

It's a nice race, just 332 days old. The public completely ignored its' most recent DULL RACE.

Our contender, whose ML was 10/1 paid $56.20!!!!!
DMR 3rd, 08.11.13
Here is a $20,000 Maiden Claiming race going 6 furlongs. I will follow the same procedures as I do in every race I post. The #8 horse was scratched.

There are 2 first time starters, #3 and #13. BOTH of them are eliminated from consideration.

There are 3 horses with a Morning Line of 20/1 or greater, the #5, #6 and #11. All three are dismissed from consideration.

The #4 horse hasn’t run in 147 days and will not be considered.

The remaining 6 horses have all had a race in the last 90 days. These will be the horses that will be considered for a line...IF they have a “+” or “(+)” line in the last 90 days.

#1 – NO LINE. last race was a turf route. Line 2 is just a bad line. Line 3 is a good line, but it is 108 days ago.
#2 – NO LINE. This horse has two races back after a layoff of 287 days. Neither line is a “+” or a “(+)” line.
#7 – LINE 1. This horse has just two races. After its’ first start it was off for 104 days. In its’ return race (25 days ago) it showed good early speed to the half mile point of the race before fading.
#9 – LINE 1. This is another horse with just two lifetime races. After its’ first start it was away from the races for 252 days. In its’ return race (28 days ago) it ran a pressing race and being 2nd at the second call just 2 lengths behind the leader before fading down the stretch, but still finishing 3rd.
#10 – NO LINE. This is another horse with just two lifetime races. Unfortunately, neither race is a “+” or a “(+)”.
#12 – LINE 1. I’m using a line for this horse simply because it has a “(+)” race just 22 days ago. I will leave it in just to see its’ effect on the other contenders. However, let me be clear, I WOULD NOT BET ON THIS HORSE. The horse is “0 for 26” lifetime and I can’t think of a much worse animal than a maiden that is 0 for “a whole bunch of races”. They have learned to lose and that is what they keep on doing...losing.

Let’s look at the "Original screen

On this screen we can see that line 1 was used for each horse.
We can also see that all horses have had a race in the last 30 days.
We can see that all the horses got their line in a $20,000 claiming race.
We can also see the running styles of each horse.
We can see the horse’s running style designation we have made for each horse (RS) along with the Quirin Speed Points.

Why NOT Maidens?
Along with that, we can see the field sizes the horses ran against, the odds they went off at, the speed rating, track variant, race class and, of course, the BL/BL. There is a lot of comparative information on this page.

So as not to keep you in suspense, the #7 horse won this race wire to wire and paid $37.20.

Since the #12 is simply unplayable, a 2 horse bettor had no problem with this race as the #7 went off at 17/1 and the #9 went off at 7/1.

You can't manufacture these kind of races, they come along when they come along. You just have to look for them. For whatever it's worth, here are the rest of the screen shots.

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**Why NOT Maidens?**
PARX - Race 2 - 10.13.13
This thread started out with the premise that horses in maiden races that show good early form are threats to win their race. This follows that premise.

#1 – Line 2. Last line was a route race on the turf. Today is a sprint on the dirt, so was line 2. Line 2 is a “+” race where the horse ran a good 2nd.
#1A – SCR
#2 – FTS
#3 – Line 2. Last line was a “MS” race. Today is a “MC”, so was line 2. Line 2 was a “+” race where the horse ran 3rd.
#4 – Line 2. We’ll pull out all the stops here. The last line was run on a “wf” track. Line 2 was on a “ft” track. Line 2 is a “+” race where the horse ran 2nd.
#5 – NO LINE. The horse has two lifetime races, both routes with one being on the turf.
#6 – Line 3. The horse has three lifetime races. The last line was a route. Lines 2 and 3 were “MC 40K” races. Again, pulling out all the stops, we’ll just forgive line two for being at a higher class level and give the horse line 3 where it showed early speed.
#7 – FTS
#8 – FTS
#9 – Line 2. The last line was a route race.

I’m only going to put screen shots up of horses that have started. No FTS.
Screen Shots
Notice how much faster the first call time is for the #9 horse. For those looking at the first call time for the #3 horse as being just about as fast as the time for the #9 horse, keep in mind that the #3 was almost 10 lengths BEHIND that time, while the #9 horse was ON THE LEAD.

Why NOT Maidens?
I don't usually post the ENERGY screen, but I thought it would be a good idea here. Notice the #9 horse is second on TOTAL ENERGY by just ".1". So in spite of the fact that the #9 horse backed up 12 lengths in the stretch, it is, for all intents and purposes, in a TIE for the #1 spot on TOTAL ENERGY.

The TPR screen, again, shows the TOTAL ENERGY reads, but take a good look at the EPR. The #9 horse has a 4 point advantage over the next closest horse. So does this mean the #9 horse will come out of the gate, run as fast as it can and open a 10 length lead only to collapse in the stretch? NO! What it means is, the #9 horse can come out of the gate and WITHOUT running as fast as it can, establish a clear early lead to the second call, saving energy for later in the race.

Why NOT Maidens?
I think the segment screen speaks for itself. The #9 horse has the "0.0" all the way across, in spite of what you see in the TS+F3 panel.

Here is the chart of the race.

Using the same straight forward approach to contender and line selection, horses like these will win for you. That is not to say they will win every race you play (neither will any other type of play), but at these prices they don't need to. AND, you don't need to search for ML 20/1 or higher horses in order to get these kind of prices. This horse had a ML of 10/1.

Why NOT Maidens?
I really didn't have any choice in this race. None of the horses had a last line that qualified. Not only that, but their last lines offered a valid excuse to go back a line. In each case, however, the horses all had a race in the last 90 days and the line used was also within the last 90 days. It was an odd kind of race in that respect, but that is why we have guidelines. Trust me, if all the lines used had been the last line, I would have been on the last line!

**FTL Comments on Running Styles**

The hardest thing to do in handicapping is understand early horses. Sure, when you see one that went wire to wire its' no problem, but when they fade down the stretch it becomes a MAJOR ISSUE. People see these horses as fading each and every time they run. Nothing could be further from reality.

Closers are easy to see. They start off somewhere behind the leaders and make up ground throughout the race coming ever closer to the finish line and a win or close 2nd. It's a very good "visual". You can "picture" (that's a key word) the horse coming from off the pace, running down the early leaders and winning the race. Easy, right?

But early horses that fade down the stretch, ahh, that is a different story. Nobody can "picture" (remember that key word?) that early horse getting the lead and drawing away down the stretch. It’s just too much for them to "visualize" even though it happens many times a day at tracks all over the country.

So how can you tell which early horse can win and which one can't? Well, your readouts are a good place to start, but your readouts are only as good as your contender selection and line selection. Consider this. You have a race that is filled with "other than early" horses. In fact, none of them have ever been near the lead in a race. So you go about picking lines and etc. When you look at your readouts, one of those horses is going to show as the best F1 horse. Does that mean that horse is an early horse? NO.

Most people look at a race and if they see more than one horse that has ever been on or near the lead, even if it was only one time, they visualize a "speed duel". Is that correct? NO.

Then there are the races that have an abundance of early type horses. Does this guarantee a "speed duel". NO.

In many of these types of races there will be a dominant early horse that will come out and establish a clear lead, relegating the other early types to "chasers" that ultimately will not challenge for the win.

Although I do not use them, the Quirin "speed points" in RDSS give you some insight. When entered in the same race, an E8 is certainly an early horse, where a P4 is not.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of line selection if you want good readouts that actually tell you something.

*With early horses, it doesn't matter how the horse finished down the stretch. It just doesn't. The important thing for early horses is the first fraction, just like it is the third fraction for closers.*