



TRACKWISE: Saturday 30th October

TRADING ANALYSIS – GENERAL

GENERAL: The complete question mark over the weather and the track condition at Flemington on Saturday makes it difficult to assess the likely market movements. What has been clearly noticed is that many wet track performers have already firmed due to the original “torrential rain” forecast, earlier in the week. Therefore, expect plenty of runners such as Moudre, Soul and Prince Braeman to ease if the track remains good.

TRADING ANALYSIS – FLEMINGTON

RACE 3: (CRUSHER): Having blinkers put on for the first time this preparation, there is a strong possibility that **ZUTARA** could crunch strongly on raceday from her current quote of \$17, if the track remains good.

RACE 8: (FIRMER): I expect **DUBLEANNY**, with proper race shoes on tomorrow, to start much shorter than the \$10 currently available, no matter what the track condition.

TRADING ANALYSIS – ROSEHILL

RACE 7: (CRUSHER): Carrying only 2.5kg over the limit, **STRAT’S FLYER** is extremely well placed if he is ready to go first up. Watch for the money – his price could halve from his current quote of \$9.00 with Tab Sportsbet.



BETTING OPTIONS

TAB SPORTSBET: will be offering a 50% bonus on **Rekindled Interest** from 6.00pm tonight. They will also be offering a 25% bonus on the fixed price of **So You Think** in the Mackinnon Stakes on Saturday morning at 9.30am.

LUXBET: is offering \$7.00 about Retrieve for a short period today to a maximum of \$50 (the Racenet special), while they will be announcing another special tomorrow at 9.30am on Sky Racing Radio.

SPORTSBET: are offering a Derby Day Money Back Offer - back a horse to Win or Each Way in any of the four Group 1 races on Saturday., and if your horse runs 2nd, they'll give your money back! (limit applies). They will also offer a 50% bonus paid on winnings in the Victoria Derby if you place a wager on Saturday between 11am and 12pm.

IASBET: will be offering their **Hour Of Power** as usual on Saturday between 11.00am and 12.00pm.

CENTREBET: have four huge offers this weekend:

1. Back anything to beat So You Think in the Mackinnon & if it gets up they'll reward you with a **50% bonus** (up to \$100).
2. If the horse you back gets beaten into 2nd by one of Snowden's **you'll get a refund** (up to \$50)
3. Back the winner of the Lexus Stakes tomorrow & we'll give you a **freebet to back them in the Cup** (up to \$20)
4. **They are offering the special price of \$3.00 about Horse of the Year Typhoon Tracy to conquer the rest (max bet \$100, 1-4pm AET)**



PUNTING THEORY – WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE

Last issue, I gave my opinion on why I believe that weights are still an important betting factor in racing.

I received a couple of emails from readers who challenged my opinion, which is fair enough, as I am not so stubborn in my punting views that I am not willing to listen to opposing ideas and theories.

One contributor, Ken Blake, has been kind enough to allow me to reproduce his article that has been previously published in a racing magazine.

So I hand over to Ken, and his opposing view, for balance:

THE MYTH OF WEIGHTS

The importance of weights as a major form instrument, has for the greater part of racing history never been a contentious issue. Weights have long been regarded as the cornerstone of successful ratings and form analysis. Rem Plantes detailed enquiry into the impact of weight in form evaluation was regarded as ground breaking. It was this work that propelled his 60's publication of 'Australian Horse Racing and Punters Guide' to be regarded as the first and possibly only punters bible of Australian racing. Plantes weight mandates have long held unwavering esteem amongst the nations form students and have remained virtually unchallenged for decades.

However it would seem over recent years there has been a developing trend both here and abroad that not only challenges the merit of weights as a racing tool, but puts forward a well constructed case to completely disregard weights when doing form analysis! Now I'm sure that any suggestion to disregard one of racing's most time honoured core values would be met with utter disdain by weight aficionados. It would seem presently that no other aspect of racing has form students in greater disagreement than the issue of weights and precisely where it sits in racing's pecking order. So in an effort to get some sort of definitive answer, even for my own needs I embarked on a passage of research into what has become one of racing's more questionable concerns. With some university assistance I have been able to unearth some thought provoking facts which hopefully will enable the reader to be a little more lucid on the issue of racing and weights.

In handicaps, weights are allotted to each runner with the projected aim to make the racing more even. Better performed horses are asked to carry heavier imposts than their under performing rivals, the theory being that the heavier weights will have some degree of a slowing effect, thus enhancing the winning chances of lower weighted animals. Race club handicappers allot weight to the respective race runners with the assumption that all runners through the weight frame have an equitable chance of winning.



PUNTING THEORY – WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE (cont)

Idealistically all runners would finish in a dead heat. The practicality of the situation is somewhat different. Statistically the heavier weighted horses win a highly disproportionate share of the races.

This is a constant that encompasses racing not only in this country but world wide. What should we derive from this? Maybe handicappers are too lenient on the better performed horses or perhaps the problem lies at the other end of the scale. If some horses were truly weighted to their ability the allotted weight would fall well below bottom limitations. What is conclusive however is that weight does not bring horses together nor is it a significant factor in the defeat of the best horses. Now I can hear the weight proponents voicing 'But weight will stop a train' and yes weight will stop a train, but it must be questionable whether the taxing the effect of added weight within the normal parameters of racing handicapping is truly detrimental to a horses ability to win.

A horse race like any other race is a contest of speed. Therefore the most important attribute a racehorse can have is speed. Slow horses do not win races, nor do athletes nor do cars. Speed is the dominant factor in horse racing. It is relative speeds that determine placings. To determine the relevance of weights in racing, it is necessary to ascertain what weight carried does to speed. Many hours of net surfing in search of answers led me to the Truman State University in Minnesota U.S.A. who were kind enough to furnish me with over 80 pages of specific information on the relationship of weight and speed particular to racehorses. As punters what we would all like to know is whether weight is a significant factor in both the ability of a horse to perform and the duration of such a performance. The first point is that the relationship of any weight carrying ability correlates to the body weight of the horse. For the benefit of this enquiry it is the assumption we are not dealing with animals abnormally small in stature.

Whilst speed is the dominant factor in racing it must be considered in relation to its co-factors of Distance, Weight, Age and Sex. We are dealing predominately with the weight speed relationship here. The following points gleaned are resultant of research that covered every official race run in the U.S.A. over a 25 year period, furnishing over two hundred thousand records. It has been established that the point at which weight carried starts to impact on horses speed is 113lbs or 51.4 kg's, which is around the limit weight for most races in this country. The impact on speed at this point is only slight, then with greater added weight there is greater speed reduction, but examination of weight speed charts reveals the impact between one horse carrying 54kg's and another carrying 57kg's is minimal. Again this adds credence as to why statistically the higher weighted horses win more races.



PUNTING THEORY – WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE (cont)

One of Plantés initial theories was that the weight effect was more pronounced over the concluding stages of a race, producing a decelerating effect, whilst weight off a horse produced an accelerating effect. The first part can be challenged statistically whilst the university research has revealed an interesting phenomenon in regards to weight off a horse known as the 'switch back effect'. It is the reverse assumption to standard weight ideas in that the more weight you take off a horse the faster they will run. Analysis of over two hundred thousand races shows this in fact has firm limitations to the point where weight reduction could easily be dismissed as only a very minor consideration in form.

If we use 52kg's as racings minimum, seldom do we see horses weighted above 60kg's. The whole scope of weight and related issues in essence is encompassed in only an 8kg framework. Weight shifts between horses within this framework also means the shift of hundreds of thousands of dollars in wagers. If horse A defeats horse B by a head, then under similar conditions horse B has a 2kg turn around in the weights , weight pundits will assuredly back horse B to reverse the placings.

Let's try to examine what the 2kg rise will do to horse A in the above situation from a different perspective. In the animal world horses are not small beasts, the average weight of a thoroughbred is around 550 kg's. Two kilograms represents 0.36% of the horses body weight. Let's translate this illustration to human terms. Two 90kg athletes compete with athlete A narrowly victorious over athlete B over 200m. Same conditions 1 week later this time athlete A must carry 0.36% of his body weight strapped to his back as a penalty. This equates to 330 grams or about the size of a family block of chocolate. Which begs the question, will the 330 gram penalty stop a powerful finely tuned athlete from repeating the win? Or will a 2kg weight turn around impede the winning chances of a 550 kg thoroughbred?

It seems somewhat incongruous to me that so much emphasis in racing and punting is placed on such frugal weight shifts. One of the biggest indictments against the value of weights is the history of the set weight 3yo events. What we have here is a 'double action' where under performers who would carry minimum weight in a handicap are obliged to carry an extra 3.5kgs whilst strong performers can enjoy a similar drop in weight. Class gallopers under this weight regime can meet their lesser performing rivals on up to 7kg's better weight terms. Bearing this in mind one would expect an overwhelming history of favourites in such events. I researched the results of the VRC Derby and Oaks, Caulfield Guineas, Australian Guineas and Bill Stutt in Victoria and the AJC Derby and Oaks, Rosehill and Canterbury Guineas in Sydney over the past 25 years. Outright favourites in these events had a strike rate of less than 44%. Another interesting point unearthed during research, was during a ten year span in recent British



PUNTING THEORY – WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE (cont)

racing, top weights were more successful over longer distances. Sprint races and middle distance races returned a 24% win rate whilst staying events yielded a 29% win rate.

This again seemingly defies standard weight rationale. Logically, the further the weight is carried, the greater the taxing effect. This would again add further credibility to the earlier suggestion that within the normal parameters of weight handicapping of racehorses, weights have only a minimal effect. Weight is essentially a function of recent form and class, a figure of external acknowledgement of racecourse deeds. Perhaps there have been a few seeds of doubt sewn amongst the most hardcore weight adherents. Maybe it's time to look beyond the implication of weights and focus more on aspects that deal directly with a horse's ability. Personally, I'm truly converted. No more examination of allotted weights or weight shifts, which after 30 years of doing form is really a weight off my mind. *Courtesy of Ken Blake*

AND FINALLY:

In a soul-destroying effort, I managed to permanently delete an article I wrote this week on "Punting Mathematics", which was to be issued in next week's Trackwise.

Therefore, please accept my apologies, there will not be a Trackwise issued next week, with the busy four day Melbourne Cup Carnival now upon us. It will return the following week, when I will hopefully have time to re-write that article.

As always, shrewd punting over the Melbourne Cup week, and remember, there is no difference in taking 4/1 in the Melbourne Cup, or on a Kembla maiden. Therefore, don't increase your investments just because it is "Cup Week".

Kevin Skene, TRACKDATA, 29/10/2010

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