R Q A C I N G

Five Easy Steps to Picking a Winner

1. The need for speed.

Known as "America's fastest athletes", American Quarter Horses can accelerate to speeds of 55 mph. The measurement of how fast they have run in previous races is called the "Q-Speed Figure" and is noted in bold in the official program. Comparing the numbers of horses competing in a race, some of which can exceed 100, is a very useful tool in selecting a winner.

2. Look for the leaders.

At each track, the trainers and jockeys standings are referenced in the official program. Take a minute to see who is on top; the leaders often finish in the top three in the majority of their races.
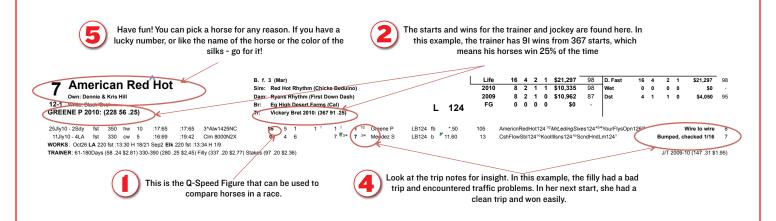
3. Watch the post parade.

Before each race, the horses "parade" in front of the grandstand as part of their warm up. Observing body language can be a valuable tool in picking a winner. Look for a horse with a shiny coat, nicely arched neck, spring in his stride and alert, energized demeanor. Horses that are sweating profusely, bucking or exhibiting other nervous behavior may expend too much energy before the race to produce an optimal effort.

4. Parlay troubled trips into cash.

American Quarter Horses are sprinters, generally running distances of a "quarter" a mile (440 yards) or less. To win, they must break from the starting gate cleanly and run a straight path to the finish line. In the official program, there is a comment line on previous races. Notes such as "bobbled, broke in, stumbled or hopped at the start" mean that the horse never got the good start required for a winning effort. The horse usually finished out of the money, but should not be overlooked. With a good clean start, they have a great chance of winning at a price.

5. Have fun with your friends or family.

Some of the names of American Quarter Horses are quite whimsical and fun. Sometimes it is fun to throw serious handicapping to the wind and go with your gut instinct on a name, color of the horse or the silks of the jockey.

(5) Have fun! You can pick a horse for any reason. If you have a lucky number, or like the name of the horse or the color of the silks - go for it!

(2) The starts and wins for the trainer and jockey are found here. In this example, the trainer has 91 wins from 367 starts, which means his horses win 25% of the time

7 American Red Hot
Own: Dennie & Kris Hill
12-1   White, Black Dca
GREENE P 2010: (228 56 .25)

B. f. 3 (Mar)
Sire: Red Hot Rhythm (Chicks Beduino)
Dam: Ryans Rhythm (First Down Dash)
Br: Eg High Desert Farms (Cal)
Tr: Vickery Bret 2010: (367 91 .25)

L 124

	Life	16	4	2	1	$21,297	98	D. Fast	16	4	2	1	$21,297	98
	2010	8	2	1	1	$10,335	98	Wet	0	0	0	0	$0	-
	2009	8	2	1	0	$10,962	87	Dst	4	1	0	$4,050	95
	FG	0	0	0	0	$0	-							

| 25Jly10 - 2Sdy | fst | 350 | hw | 10 | :17:65 | :17:65 | 3^Alw1425NC | 95 | 5 | 1 | 1 ^{1} | 1 ^{1} | 1 $^{1/2}$ | Greene P | LB124 | fb | *.50 | 105 | AmericnRedHot124 $^{1/2}$MrLedingSixes124 $^{43/4}$YourFlysOpn126 $^{3/4}$ | Wire to wire | 8 |
| 11Jly10 - 4LA | fst | 330 | cw | 5 | :16:69 | :19:42 | Clm 8000N2X | 6 | 4 | 6 | | 7 $^{83/4}$ | 7 $^{3/4}$ | Mendez S | LB124 | b | 11.60 | 13 | CshFlowSbl124 ^{no}KoolIllsns124 ^{no}ScndHndLm124 ^{1} | Bumped, checked 1/16 | 7 |

WORKS: Oct26 **LA** 220 fst :13:30 H 18/21 Sep2 **Elk** 220 fst :13:34 H 1/9
TRAINER: 61-180Days (58 .24 $2.81) 330-390 (280 .25 $2.45) Filly (337 .20 $2.77) Stakes (97 .20 $2.36)

J/T 2009-10 (147 .31 $1.95)

(1) This is the Q-Speed Figure that can be used to compare horses in a race.

(4) Look at the trip notes for insight. In this example, the filly had a bad trip and encountered traffic problems. In her next start, she had a clean trip and won easily.

EQUIBASE SPEED FIGURE NOW DISPLAYED IN YOUR AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE PROGRAMS!

Over the past few years, the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) has sought to provide handicappers an improved and more robust Speed Figure. While the current Speed Index, around since the early 70's, is easy to understand, from a handicapping perspective it is not very useful.

After a full analysis, and with direct input on the calculation, the AQHA has endorsed the Equibase Speed Figure (ESF- **E**) and is pleased to announce that it is now being displayed in printed track programs. Please note it is not replacing the current Speed Index, rather it is being added right next to the Speed Index.

Limitations of the Speed Index

Why is this being done? Let's start with the definition of the Speed Index per the AQHA handbook:

"Speed index ratings are based on an average of the three fastest winning electric times run each year for the immediate past three years for each distance at each track. The average…will represent a speed index rating of 100".

Simple to understand? Yes. Useful for the handicapper, not really. Take this hypothetical example:

Horse A equals best average time at a track with average or below average horses – earns 100 Speed Index
Horse B equals best average time at a track with above average horses - earns 100 Speed Index

Entered in the same race today, who would you bet on?

Again, while easy to understand, there are many issues with the Index. Using the example above, inferior horses can achieve the same Index as superior horses, rendering the Index useless for handicapping applications. In addition, it poses a barrier to entry for thoroughbred players who are accustomed to a more statistically sound figure. Finally, it only looks at times and does not take into account the differences between tracks, daily variants, or other factors like wind speed and direction.

Equibase Speed Figure (ESF)

The ESF is a much more useful number. It is a "normalization" of finishing times across all tracks and distances and is an indication of how fast a horse ran in a particular race. While rather complex, the calculation combines the raw time, inter-track variant (differences between size, shape and composition of tracks) and the daily-track variant. Also, it has recently been updated to include wind speed and direction in the calculation.

Performance – Equibase Speed Figure (ESF) Significantly Better!

How do the numbers stack up? No question the ESF is more predictive than the Index. Looking at all races in 2007, if you were to bet the horse with the highest ESF and Speed Index based on its last race, the ESF produced 10% more winners than the Index. Now that's certainly beneficial to your wagering customers.

In addition, tests comparing the predicted order of finish versus actual order of finish for all horses, again using the horses last race ESF and Speed Index, the ESF was measurably better.