



THE FRESH HORSE (1-1/2 points; 1 point)

One of the best qualities of a horse in a given race is to be fresh. This means it must have sufficient time off to be revitalized. Like people, they need their vacations. Unfortunately, with year-round racing throughout the country, many owners get greedy and simply drop the horse in class to squeeze another race out of a sour horse. Eventually this approach fails the owner and the bettor. Owners who do right by their horses become a live play. It probably won't fire first time off the bench, though many do, but in their third or fourth race you have a refreshed horse with a decided edge over his/her competition. The Rules of Play are as follows:

- 1) Play claiming and allowance races only (no maidens and stakes horses)
- 2) Layoff or freshening period must be a minimum of 90 days.
- 3) Consideration for play must be 3rd or 4th race back, following a layoff period.
- 4) The horse must not have won its 1st or 2nd start back.
- 5) It must show improvement without winning in its 2nd or 3rd start off the layoff.
- 6) The horse must be moving up or down in class for this race, but not at the same level.

This further suggests a strong trainer's intention.

This angle will not give you a great deal of play -- usually one or two plays on any given 9-race card. Still, the mutuel is generally (at least) \$10.00 and you should click about 30% of the time. The criteria is strong because you're looking at an improving animal who is approaching their best race and going against many horses needing some time off. Keep in mind that should the horse win their 3rd or 4th race back, it becomes an automatic play in their next start if raised in class. After all, you still have a very fresh horse who can effectively give an owner 12-15 good races a year. A powerful angle, the fresh horse on its 3rd start off a 90-days plus layoff, and providing it hasn't won in either of its two previous starts, receives **one and a half points**. The fresh horse on its 4th start off a layoff of 90 days plus, having not won in their previous three races receives **one full point**. After their 4th start they are no longer a *fresh* horse.