

TODAY'S RACING DIGEST HANDICAPPING TIPS

FAST FIGS AND QUICK PICKS

Not everyone in the world wants to be a 'blood-and-guts' handicapper. They don't want to spend hours pouring over past performances, charts, trainer data and numbers while making hundreds of individual decisions. They have families, they have friends and life is just too, too short to be bothered. They just want to go to the races and have fun which generally translates to "win".

There is no mechanical system that works all the time but then there are not handicappers who win all the time either, no matter how hard they work or what claims they make. What follows is a "quick pick" method based on the Fast Fig numbers that appear daily in Today's Racing Digest. You don't need a Form, you just need a Digest, an official program and access to near-post-time odds. Here it is:

STEP ONE--Pass races with a heavy "x" factor. In 11/12-horse fields, pass if there are four 'x' horses among the program entrants. In 9/10-horse fields, pass if there are three. In 5/6/7/8-horse fields, pass with two.

STEP TWO--Determine the contenders by stacking the Fast Figs in order. Include all horses that rate within FIVE points of the top choice OR the top three-rated horses, if they rate within 10 points of high. Remember to give horses with a plus(+) credit for five extra points. For example, a 104+ equates to 109.

STEP THREE--List the contenders' Morning Line next to their 'Fig. Eliminate contenders that have a price that is the same or lower than the number of contenders remaining to this point. For example, if four horses remain after Step Two, the Morning Line odds must be 9/2 or higher.

STEP FOUR--Multiply the number of remaining contenders by THREE to establish the required odds for an acceptable bet. If one contender meets this requirement, play it to Win/Place. If two meet the requirement, play both to Win.

That's it. Here are some winning examples from a representative week at Bay Meadows and Santa Anita.

BAY MEADOWS--THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26--8TH RACE (Just one 'x' in six-horse field)				
Contender	Fast Fig	Morning Line 7/2+	Post Time Odds 6/1+	Status
Indicum	109	6/5	6/5	PASS
Shaka	104+ (=109)	10/1	25/1	BET
Trip N Down Under	108	7/2	9/5	PASS

Favored Indicum was eliminated for his low 6/5 ML (Step Three) which left two play-able contenders at odds of 6/1 or higher (2x3). Since only Shaka offered the necessary value, he was a play to win/place with mutuels of \$56.40 and \$13.40. Rather than betting win/place, it's acceptable to box the qualified contender in the Exacta with the other two contenders. Trip'n Down Under ran 2nd (Indicum was 3rd) for a \$2 Exacta return of \$200.60.

BAY MEADOWS--FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27--6TH RACE (No 'x' horses)

Contenders	Fast Fig	Morning Line 6/1+	Post Time Odds 12/1+	Status
Diamond Pat	109	6/1	11/1	BET
Tin Man Taj	104+ (109)	15/1	23/1	BET
I'm A Pickup Man	106	7/2	7/2	PASS
Same Old Story	106	8/1	7/1	PASS
Classic Attire	104	6/1	9/1	PASS

I'm A Pickup Man was eliminated for his low ML odds. The other four were contenders after Step Two which meant 12/1 (4x3) was the established "value" odds. Tin Man Taj was the only true qualifier but Diamond Pat was right there at a healthy price. Both were playable to win with Tin Man rallying to score at \$48. Classic Attire ran 2nd for a \$300.20 Exacta for those that wanted to get involved in the exotics.

SANTA ANITA--SUNDAY, MARCH 1--2ND RACE (No 'x' horses)

Contenders	Fast Fig	Morning Line 6/1+	Post Time Odds 12/1+	Status
Drigg's Retreat	129	8/1	23/1	BET
Tin Man Taj	129	8/5	3/5	PASS
I'm A Pickup Man	127	6/1	9/2	PASS
Same Old Story	125	3/1	8/1	PASS
Classic Attire	124	5/1	5/1	PASS

The Morning Line qualification eliminated all but Drigg's Retreat and Slew's Royal Son, making the minimum price here 6/1 (2x3). Drigg's Retreat was the overlay and he won at \$48.60 and 15.80. Although, he didn't quality on the ML, Free World did turn out to be a big overlay on the board and ran 2nd to complete a hefty \$227.80 Exacta. Again, a flexible approach for the price player may have led to getting involved in the Exacta instead of a "place" bet on Drigg's Retreat.

SANTA ANITA--SUNDAY, MARCH 1--8TH RACE (No 'x' horses)

Contenders	Fast Fig	Morning Line 6/1+	Post Time Odds 12/1+	Status
Take A Left	133	6/1	6/1	PASS
Sankarang	133	10/1	11/1	BET
Zipperup	130	4/1	4/1	PASS
Hogan's Alley	130	10/1	17/1	BET
Si Seducator	130	7/2	2/1	PASS
Photarc	129	3/1	6/1	PASS

Only Sankarang and Hogan's Alley qualified on both the ML and final odds and deserved win bets. The former won and paid \$24.

All results aren't this positive, of course. If they were we could all retire. But this is quick, it's easy and it's a 'value oriented' approach on horses that have the Figs to win.