

Boomer's
Easy to learn
Thoroughbred wagering
Strategies

By Greg “Boomer” Wry
With
Craig Lanham

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Authors' Bio

Greg “Boomer” Wry is a well known track announcer and handicapper, and has worked in virtually every phase of the racing business over the last 25+ years. He is the current track announcer, television and radio handicapper and director of media relations for Yavapai Downs in Prescott Valley, Arizona. You can reach him to learn more about handicapping at www.boomerhandicapsraces.com.

Craig Lanham is a former handicapping student of Boomer's. Craig and his wife Lynn met Boomer at a KC Royals game back in 1989. He has since become an expert handicapper in his own right. Boomer and Craig have become close friends and continue to handicap together to this day.

Cover Designer: Adriana Morehead

Photography: Shawn Coady Photography

Website: <http://www.boomerhandicapsraces.com>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I said in “**How to Turn any Racetrack into Your Own Private Money Machine (and be just one of the 2% that do)**,” I want to reiterate that I truly believe this page is one of the most difficult to write in any book. It is fairly easy to pass along my knowledge and passion for the great sport of horse racing, but when it comes to thanking everyone behind the scenes that makes a book like this possible it takes a tremendous amount of thought. I sincerely want to be sure that I don't leave anyone out that has not only supported me in this venture but throughout my career and has made it possible for me to get to this point. Since my career encompasses nearly 30 years in the business, that is obviously not possible, so let me apologize in advance for anyone I may leave out. But let me thank each and every one of you (and you know who you are) who showed confidence in me even when I was a “rookie” and allowed me to learn and grow in the business. Now that I have thanked folks from the past, let's get to the present:

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PREFACE

In our first book, **“How to Turn any Racetrack into Your Own Private Money Machine (and be just one of the 2% that do)”** we concentrated on the handicapping element of thoroughbred horse racing: How to “break down” a race handicapping wise by using the 3 basic elements of pace, class and speed, and then how to determine if the race “qualified” as a potential wager.

In this book, we have taken you to the next level. We are now making the assumption that you have used our textbook to arrive at intelligent handicapping decisions or another one of your choosing, or are a novice that has no interest in learning the handicapping process, but would like to possess some sort of basic knowledge of wagering when making that occasional trip to the track.

This book takes wagering at the most basic level from the novice or small bettor prospective all the way to the large bankroll of the successful player who either has already become one of the select 2% that actually make a profit at or game, or has the desire and bankroll to learn to do so.

We are confident that no book has covered wagering in this much detail, and that no matter what level of handicapping skill you possess, you will learn new wagering and money management skills which are imperative to your overall success. If you are currently a professional player, at the very *least* we will be passing along some ideas that will give you some additional “food for thought” and could be incorporated into your daily wagering regimen!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In our first book **“How to Turn any Racetrack into Your Own Private Money Machine (and be just one of the 2% that do)”**

Craig Lanham and I worked vehemently to teach you as much as we possibly could about thoroughbred handicapping, how to “break down” and analyze races by using actual examples, and how to learn the “nuts and bolts” necessary to beat the game of horse racing. We both felt that “building a foundation” was the first step in teaching folks how to become one of the 2% of pari-mutuel players who consistently beat the game of horse racing. We followed the book with a supplemental video (DVD) to further expand upon the important points in the book

Of course, Craig and I understand that very few students of our materials will actually ever achieve the 2% status, because, many people will not have the desire or work ethic it takes. They will be satisfied to be recreational players who were never interested in pursuing the professional level in the first place. Some are “sour” by their own experiences to allow themselves to be properly taught the fundamentals of achieving professionalism. So, if you find yourself in any of the aforementioned categories, that’s ok, we’ll teach you everything we can on that basis. Hopefully by acquiring *some* knowledge from us you’ll reduce your losses at the track and have more fun wagering on our sport.

But, if you desire to be one of the select **2%** that beat our game on a regular basis, and actually make a *living* at it, I am confident that you have taken the next necessary step up the professional ladder. Review with Craig and I, the proven methods for determining proper WAGERING decisions that now await you once you have perfected the art of “breaking down” and analyzing a race from the handicapping perspective. So, even though I strongly feel that novices and intermediate handicappers can learn from this book from a wagering standpoint, this is an **advanced textbook** for those of you

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who have boarded the “handicapping train” and are anxious to continue on with the pursuit of a horse race wagering “career.” And, although Craig and I committed a few chapters in “**How to Turn any Racetrack into Your Own Private Money Machine (and be just one of the 2% that do)**”...*let’s shorten that title and just refer to my previous book as “Money Machine”,* to specialty wagering, bankroll tidbits, and definitions of each particular wager available to the betting public, we have been asked by many of our readers to focus an **entire** book just on the perfection of wagering! So as Jim Lang of Dating Game fame used to say “heeeere they are” we’ll say “heeeere it is”!

In this book we’ll cover **EVERY** wager available to the betting public, tell you when (if ever) to use it, when not to use it, and how it applies to the overall structure of things based on how strong of a handicapping decision you’ve made.

Remember, I can’t stress enough the importance of “breaking down a race” like Craig and I taught you to do in “**Money Machine**”, but if you do your own handicapping and feel you just need a wagering “boost of knowledge and how to”, then we’ll go with that too by teaching you how to get the most “bang for your wagering buck” based on the handicapping decisions you’ve made.

This is a wagering textbook, and we will use examples just like we did in our first book. This time, we’ll proceed to **STEP 2** *assuming* that you now have an idea of how to handicap, either from our book, by your own learned skills, or just recreationally want to know how to wager, just in case that guy in the paper or track program actually gives you a winner!

And by the way, it’s like the guy who lost 25 racing bets in a row, and was encouraged by his pal to begin wagering on hockey instead....and said “Hockey?” I don’t know anything about Hockey”! The humorous point being that if you don’t know how to handicap and have no desire to learn, then at least follow someone that does! Many of the *Daily Racing Form* and track program handicappers are very

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knowledgeable, and can point you in the right direction if you're an occasional player.

REMEMBER: The pari-mutuel system is player against player after a takeout off the top by the host track. This is not like Vegas where you're playing against the house! The track actually benefits when you win! If you win a bet, you're going to roll more dollars over in the pool which gives the track increased takeout, as opposed to if you just lose your \$50 bucks and go home, the track lost not only the rollover handle of you continuing to bet, but you as a customer as well.

The tracks hire guys like me because they WANT YOU TO BE EDUCATED and have a chance of winning and possibly becoming a long term racing fan. Many racetracks are finally learning with increased competition for the gambling dollar the importance of **fan education**. And even if you're an occasional recreational player and just go once in a while to the races, you can win if you use the information available to you and have a basic knowledge of wagering.

The reality is this: When recreational players go to the track, they are facing a double edge sword!

First, they have no knowledge of how to handicap, so they must read as much from the local handicappers as they can, which obviously everyone else sees as well, so they are at a distinct disadvantage for trying to come up with "price" or overlay horses.

But where it gets worse is even if they make that proper handicapping decision (by handicapper or by accident), now they have to figure out how to bet it properly. Since they have no earthly idea of how to do so, they end up betting \$2 to show on the favorite. And no matter who you are in the scheme of things, and in talking with many novice and "first time starter players" over the years, I have yet to find anyone who found pleasure in collecting a \$2.40 show bet!

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So again, just as we covered **handicapping a-z** in “*Money Machine*” we’ll cover **betting a-z** in this book and hopefully teach those of you that are newcomers to the game some advanced wagering strategies to impress your friends with!

I talked about a score I made by picking a winner in “*Money Machine*,” but now I’d like to pass a story along to you that happened while I was in college at Arizona State University (I know, most of my colleagues in the racing business went to the University of Arizona, so don’t even go there) that accents the importance of knowing how to wager properly. The late Warren Siegel, my friend and wagering partner (who used to run The Turf Supply Store at Turf Paradise in Phoenix) and I had spotted a very difficult, but must-pay situation, on the **PICK 6** at Bay Meadows in Northern California. It was closing day in a driving rainstorm at the Bay, which meant all of the money had to be paid out in the pool that day as there would be no carry-over regardless if someone picked 6 winners or not. The more that Warren and I scoured *The Daily Racing Form* past performances, the more we both felt that picking 6 winners that day was paramount to climbing Mt Everest! There was about a 60k carryover in the pool from the day before so going after that dead money was definitely inviting. The question was, could we get *enough* winners to take down all or part of the pool.

For those of you who read “*Money Machine*,” you’ll remember that I said the only way I play **PICK 6** pools (because they are so tough to hit and require a \$2 minimum play) is if they have a huge carryover pool with a lot of dead money to go after, (which this had) with the added advantage of being a “must pay.” So, Warren and I decided to take about \$1200 out of our hard earned bankroll and see if we could shoot for 5 winners. By doing so we would “give up” one race (play a single only) but use multiple horses in the other races to increase our chances of getting 5 out of 6, a number of winners which we both definitely thought would be good enough to take down the pool given the degree of difficulty.

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So, here's how we played the **PICK 6**:

- 1st leg - 4 horses
- 2nd leg - 3 horses
- 3rd leg - 4 horses
- 4th leg - 1 horse (our single)
- 5th leg - 3 horses
- 6th leg - 4 horses in the anchor or last leg

Total cost of the ticket was $4 \times 3 \times 4 \times 1 \times 3 \times 4$ (multiplying the number of horses used in each race) times the bet minimum of \$2 for a total of **\$1152**.

It's almost post time at Bay Meadows for the first leg of the **PICK 6** when Warren and I finally got the bet in, so we found a television at Turf Paradise that was tuned to the Bay and settled in to root for our investment. Well, to say it didn't start off very well is the biggest of understatements. Not only did we miss the first leg (even though we had used 4 horses to insure we didn't miss it), the horse that won the race only paid \$10 and change to win, meaning that many of the other bettors had this horse! Things were not looking too good for the home team! And when we missed the 2nd leg with 3 more horses on the ticket, you could have purchased our \$1152 ticket on the spot for about \$20 bucks! But at least in the 2nd leg we had been beaten by a horse that paid \$66 and looked like a million to one shot on form so we both surmised that this winning horse hadn't **totally** destroyed our chances. Now we had to ace the last 4 races just to have even a slight chance of winning! So, in the 3rd leg of the **PICK 6**, we finally got one of our horses home at about a \$17 win mutuel, which wasn't great, but at least a tiny step in the right direction. Now to the 4th leg: We were in the unenviable spot of needing a single horse to win that we had basically just thrown into a wide-open "battle royale" of a race that we had difficulty figuring out in the first place. It was now going to be contested in about a foot of slop, as the rains had continued on throughout the afternoon. Another thing you never like to see as a bettor is when you single a horse that figures to get some play (as this one was about 4x1 on the morning line) and he is

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absolutely dead as a doornail on the board! Our horse opened at 8x1 and just steadily rose from there, as obviously the betting public (and his connections) liked nothing about his chances and his ability to handle the off track condition. Well, “Team Boomer” hadn’t had much go right thus far in the day, but here comes our plodding long shot to just get up on the wire and return \$25 to win!

Now with four double digit priced horses winning the first four legs of the **PICK 6**, we’re feeling *slightly* better about our chances! Still, I think we would have sold our ticket for about \$60 at this point! Remember, even though we had caught two nice winners in a row, we still only had 2 of the 4 winners on our ticket! But the good news was that in *case* 4 winners would be enough to get the gravy, we had 3 horses in the next leg going for us and 4 in the anchor leg. Well again things looked a little better for us when we caught a \$20 horse in the 4th leg!

Now we’re thinking with every winning horse in the 5 legs paying at least \$10 and change and most paying much more than that, we had a **legitimate** shot of getting a nice return on our investment with 4 winners! So now we just settle in to watch our 4 horses go to the post in the nightcap, and hope that catching 4 winners will be good enough!

Well, if we thought things had started off bad (which they had) it was about to get much worse! As the horses splashed down the long lane at Bay Meadows, 3 of our 4 horses are running 1-2-3 at the furlong marker (just an 1/8th of a mile from the finish line). The only thing Warren and I were concerned with at this point was to cheer for the longest odds priced horse of those 3 that we have to ruin the public’s chances of selecting 5 winners and to increase our chances of winning with 4 correct horses. Well, just at the last moment (and I’m sure many of you have heard the phrase “bet those grays on cloudy days”) here comes this gray beast on the extreme outside (he was practically in the first row of seats as I remember) to nail our 3 horses on the line! Warren and I are devastated! Now we know with just 3 winners on the ticket that we have virtually NO CHANCE of winning. So

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Warren and I are leaving Turf Paradise with our tail between our legs, when all of a sudden, by the grace of the horse gods, Danny Alameda, who was the voice of Bay Meadows in those days, announces that the **PICK 6** goes to **THREE winning selections!** I guarantee you that in my 25+ years of playing the game, this is still the only time I ever saw this happen! We were stunned and overjoyed at the same time!

And now the moral of the story: Because we knew how to bet, we had turned a complete losing day into a giant winner! Even though our handicapping had been atrocious, the horrible conditions had made it that tough for our opponents as well! So now when Danny announces that each consolation ticket returns \$2250, Warren and I look at each other and start constructing in our heads how many times we have that consolation, because obviously we have a multi-way ticket.

So here is how you figure it: We had **4 losers** in the first leg, **+3** losing horses in the 2nd leg, we had 4 horses in the 3rd leg and one of them won so add **3** losers to the mix, our single won in the 4th leg so no change, now we had three horses in the 5th leg and one of them won, so add **2** to the mix, and we lost with all **4** in the nightcap, so the total was **4+3+3+0+2+4 = WE HAD THE CONSOLATION 16 times!!!** And yes, as I did in "Money Machine" I'll do the math for you **\$2250 x 16 = a cool \$36,000!**

I wouldn't blame any of you for thinking that Warren and I just got lucky that day to win such an amazing consolation. Maybe we did, but remember this: Because we were skilled bettors, even though we hadn't handicapped as well as we would have liked, we were still rewarded because we had made a sound investment out of our wagering bankroll. So when folks ask me which is more important handicapping or wagering, it's easy to tell that they're both **EXTREMELY** important!

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Note: For beginners not yet knowledgeable or comfortable with wagering terminology we suggest going to a race track's website, such as, Delta Downs (or any of the others as all these websites offer this information) at:

<http://www.deltadowns.com/site/racing/handicapping/>

Glossary

How to Bet

How to Read Programs

For quicker reference we have included lots of these terms and some helpful tips in our Appendix Section at the end of the book.