

**HOW TO TURN A RACETRACK**  
**INTO YOUR OWN PRIVATE**  
**MONEY MACHINE**  
**(AND BE JUST ONE OF THE 2% THAT DO)**

**By Greg “Boomer” Wry**  
**With**  
**Craig Lanham**

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**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.

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the exciting world of horse race handicapping! Unlike many other books on the subject that promise you the world on a string in five minutes if you purchase the authors' "system" for beating the racetrack, this book is the real deal! *Systems* come and go, but the knowledge you obtain from this book will last you a lifetime!

This comprehensive book uses easy-to-understand terms that are thoroughly defined and explained—often with examples. You will learn how to break down a race by reading and understanding *The Daily Racing Form* and grading each horse to determine if a race is a play or a pass. You also will see how to use proven money management strategies to apply what you've learned to finish the puzzle.

This is not a "get rich quick book" by any stretch of the imagination. It is a learning guide, just like any textbook that you've used in any of your studies to learn something worthwhile. I have worked diligently to make the difficult process of handicapping as understandable and usable as possible for people at all levels of experience—from complete novices to racetrack regulars. So, whether you're completely new to handicapping or a seasoned pro, this book can help you.

If you sincerely want to become a successful horse racing bettor, I am confident that this book offers the tools and information you need to learn and do so.

I am often asked what it takes to become a successful horse bettor, and the same answer always comes to mind: Knowledge, Discipline, Guts, and Patience! If you combine these with what I teach you, I promise that you will have what it takes to become successful in your own right!



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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This book is designed to teach you EVERYTHING you need to know about handicapping horse racing, from learning to properly spot wagers with solid betting strategies, to properly managing your bankroll so that you can succeed.

Is this a lofty goal? You better believe it, because some folks, no matter how many learning materials they purchase, fail to take the time necessary to apply what they've learned, be patient with the initial results, and learn from their mistakes. But I'm betting that you are not one of those people, and that's what attracted you to this book.

As with any new venture, I guarantee you will make mistakes. But you will make fewer mistakes after reading this book, because you will be learning from someone who has been playing the horse racing handicapping game for 25+ years, and I've probably made every mistake possible. During my years "around the block" in horse racing, I have performed virtually every function on the inside, from director of racing to jockey agent to track announcer to tip sheet handicapper (the latter two functions I still perform today.)

Recently a racing fan said to me, "Boomer, I think the only function you haven't performed at the racetrack is riding the horse!"

Why is this extensive background important? Because every function I've performed at the racetrack has taught me something about handicapping. As a director of racing/racing secretary, I had to know what horses were available to us to card races and post race conditions for entering by horsemen, which enabled me to learn that part of the "game" inside-out. As a jockey agent, I learned the angles. Why does a jockey stay on a horse in a certain situation, or ride a different horse in that same situation? Did the rider have a previous commitment or did he or she switch or stay with whom they thought was the best horse? I learned about morning workouts and how important they are in the big picture. As a track announcer I learned how to watch races and determine what horses were coming around or would be over-bet in their next start. And as a tip sheet handicapper, I

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learned how to mold it together to come up with a final analysis that the public could (hopefully) count on.

Although I can impart my vast knowledge to you in this book, it's important for you to know that it's not easy to learn and apply this extensive information so you can become a winner at the track. Over the years I have met some tremendous handicappers who picked more winners than I did on many occasions, but they either never had the desire to convert this knowledge to a profitable "business", or were severely lacking in their betting strategies or money management, or both.

The late Chuck Badone was a dear friend of mine, the author of many books, and a colleague at National Race Line back in the 1980s. He handicapped Gulfstream Park in the winter and the old Hialeah in the spring, while I handled whatever Chicago area track was running at the time, be it Arlington, Hawthorne, or the old Sportsman Park, which was converted to a motor speedway a few years ago.

As Chuck's supervisor I vividly remember the day when he called me from his winter home in Phoenix and told me how excited he was about a trifecta (a bet to pick the first three finishers) at Gulfstream. Chuck was known to be a \$2 player, which was always a mystery to me because of his handicapping prowess. Anyway, I filed his numbers for that race away in memory, turned in my selections for that day for Chicago and forgot about it. The next day I looked at the Gulfstream results in the paper and realized Chuck had picked an \$8000 trifecta ice cold at Gulfstream! I immediately phoned Chuck to congratulate him on his big score, but he said that somehow he had missed cashing this monster trifecta when making his bet. I was stunned! I said, "Chuck, you had it ice cold on the race line!" He responded, "I know."

And that was it. Chuck never expanded on how he missed that, but it made for this GREAT point: You can handicap the skin off 'em, but if you don't bet 'em properly it's all for naught. And, if you can't handicap, and have trust in your ability to do so, all the strategies and money management in the world won't help you.

Chuck's story always reminds me of one of the first "scores" I ever made in racing. In the late 1970s I befriended an assistant trainer from Kansas City, Kansas (my hometown) named Darrel Shemwell. Darrel was another one of the greatest handicappers I ever met, routinely beating the old summer meet at Ak-Sar-Ben in Omaha, Nebraska for 50-60K every summer from the mid

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70s to early 80s. I once saw him bet \$3000 to win on Bold LB, a stakes horse that paid \$8.80 to win that day, and Darrel was leading the charge to Ross's Steakhouse that night for the celebration. Seemingly every dollar he had to his name went on that horse, (something you will never do if you choose to make this part of your livelihood) but he was sure he would win, loved the "overlay" (something you'll learn about later in this book), and put his money where his mouth was.

Darrel had been chasing a horse named "Robin Bob's Eli" for quite some time, taking me under his wing in the process, and explaining trip handicapping and key race handicapping, two more items you'll hear more about in this book. Darrel had wagered on Robin Bob's Eli two other times, but the horse failed to get the job done. Still, Darrel was determined to catch this horse at a price and make it all worthwhile, because he was sure the horse was in at the right distance and competitive level (also known as conditions).

So back came Robin Bob's Eli for the third time. Darrel called me the night before to tell me that the horse was in, and that he was 20x1 in the morning line. The morning line is another job I've held at the racetrack, as the morning line maker is responsible for estimating what odds the public will send the horse off at when the race is run. So, off I go to Omaha the next day, with my tiny bankroll of about \$500, to bet Robin Bob's Eli.

Post time during the week in those days at Ak-Sar-Ben was 4 p.m., so all the out-of-towners could get there for the first post. (Those were the days before pari-mutuel wagering was legalized as it is now in the surrounding states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Texas, Iowa and Wisconsin). Not only was Ak-Sar-Ben the only game in town, it was the only game in a lot of towns! Sadly, as the surrounding states began to legalize pari-mutuel betting on dogs and horses, Ak-Sar-Ben's business rapidly declined, and it was torn down in the early 90s.)

Anyway, Robin Bob's Eli was scheduled to run in the fifth race that day. Darrel met me in the paddock before the fifth race and took a good look at the horse, as he always did before the race, to make sure in his mind that the horse looked healthy and ready to run (body language of race horses will also be discussed later in this book). He LOVED the way Robin Bob's Eli looked! The horse was on his toes, and really looked super in the paddock.