



# My Personal Method

George Kaywood

Powerful Handicapping to Help You  
Play Like a Pro

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## Part 2

### Adjusting to Reality

The legacy of racing in the 90's forces us to address several situations that affect handicapping today. Each is simple, but very important. All of them seem to be overlooked by players who want to make a quick leap to an imaginary single factor that can spot a winner in every race.

#### **1. Shrinking Fields**

Every handicapper I know says that five, six, and even seven-horse fields were considered short fields at most tracks during the 80's and earlier. Today, even at the best tracks in the U.S., it is not unusual to see fields of as few as 6 horses for various types of races. I used to shy away from such short fields, but as they have become commonplace, I work with what I've been dealt if there's money to be made. I advise you to do the same.

## **2. The Need to Include the Favorite**

Most experienced players hate to include favorites at low odds simply ***because*** those horses are favorites. Since favorites win one-third of the time, many players reason that they can beat the favorite the remaining two-thirds of the time. These players wind up feeling very frustrated or angry because they bet against the favorite and lost, when the horse was simply the best horse in the race.

The "favorites win-1-of-every-3-races" statistic is valid, but ***it is not uniform***, because it is meant to be interpreted over long periods of time.

This is why, if favorites win the first three races on a nine-race card, you can't assume that the other six races on that card will be won by non-favorites. If this seems obvious to you already, so much the better! Add this reality to the reality of Shrinking Fields, and

the need to include the favorite—IF you want to cash tickets—should be obvious.

Reminder: we're talking here about a method that was designed for and by a guy who could only get out to play the races one or two days a week, if that. At that level it's really hard to make **serious** money. But it's not impossible to make **good** money. It's very important to keep this distinction in mind to avoid making stupid bets when you're playing at the track or simulcast facility.

### **3. Simulcasting**

Are you among the horse racing fans who do not have access to a local track? Thanks to simulcasting and the legal horse race wagering sites on the Internet (YouBet, BRISBet, etc.), you still have the option of playing as many as 10 to 20 tracks a day. Taken as a whole, this is overkill, of course, but a daily menu of 100 to 200 races offers wonderful opportunities. **You**

***have the luxury of ignoring races for which you have inadequate or no information.*** You have the benefit of concentrating on the type of races that you can handicap most successfully.

With ***My Personal Method***, players who looking at only one track when several or more are available for play, are missing out on better wagering opportunities and restricting themselves unnecessarily.

#### **4. Time is Time**

***Good handicapping takes time.*** I said this ten years ago, and even with the widespread use of computers today for speeding up handicapping, it's still true. Unless you let a computer simply spit out picks for you, the analysis of information to reach a decision still takes time. The best handicappers know this is an integral part of the process. They make their selections well before the point at which they structure their bets, which happens when the tote board is close

to showing final odds. Simply put, tomorrow's races should be handicapped today or tonight.

## **5. Figures, Numbers, and Ratings**

In *Handicapping in Cyberspace*, I talk about the reality that figures, numbers, and ratings used to make selections are all somewhat of a paradox. Many players still look only at a horse's last race in deciding whether or not he's worth a bet today. When the horse wins, the figures are great. When he loses, the figures are garbage. The truth is that few players can determine the form cycles of various horses, while some other players have problems determining when a horse is improperly entered in a race in which he simply doesn't belong. You can be right in your evaluation of all but one factor...and still lose because you weren't sure about that factor.

Averaging doesn't help, and in fact *worsens* the reliability of figures in many cases. And the arguments

over constructing and using tracks variants will never end.

**It's tempting to make decisions based on a single number, because doing so gives the illusion of having a measurable quantity as the basis for making a choice.**

***This does not work!***

But it's possible to use some readily available figures/factors in a simple way that will be serviceable and effective. That's what ***My Personal Method*** is all about.

## **Summary**

Remember these realities:

1. Short fields are not necessarily lacking in profitable wagering opportunities.

2. Favorites, even at short prices, should not be automatically eliminated from consideration for betting purposes. They can help build profits.
  
3. Ignoring races for which you have no or inadequate information is not only common sense, it is a smart, proven way to keep your return on investment stable.
  
4. Successful handicapping takes time. While not impossible, it is difficult to handicap well between races at the track or simulcast location.
  
5. Figures, numbers, and ratings are simply one type of tool and not always the dominant factor in making a betting selection.

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