

KERRY THOMAS' VISUAL HANDICAPPING

150  KENTUCKY
DERBY®



KERRY THOMAS' VISUAL HANDICAPPING DERBY 150

"The ability to compete is an attribute of physical talent, being competitive is an aptitude of psychology." kmt

Welcome to Visual Handicapping, a Reference Guide to the 2024 Kentucky Derby!

With these performance profiles we explore the psychology of motion and embrace the essence of horse racing: the fusion of beauty, emotion, and performance. For over two decades, I've delved into the psyche of these majestic creatures, understanding that their emotions drive their victories. Throughout my career I have traced and studied the unique characteristics of elite performance and how to identify them. For years I have put this study to use in identifying potential; an evaluation process that separates those horses that are athletic from those who are true athletes. Traits and tendencies revealed as competitive expression have observable characteristics that are consistent, appreciable, and highly applicable in the determination of probability of success irrespective of their discipline. The fact of the matter is, what we see as a race is largely experienced by the horse as a herd in motion, and all the laws of their nature apply.

I have long endeavored to unlock the secrets to horse racing success by exploring the essential elements that define elite performance. Herein we dive into the intricate world of sensory acuity, emotional resilience, and the art of managing competitive stress to discover how these factors shape a horse's ability to optimize their physical talents without succumbing to mental fatigue. Through visual handicapping we transcend traditional statistics, delving deep into the tangible qualities that set champions apart—grit, heart, and unwavering determination. Through meticulous observation and instinctual insights, I believe we unveil the true competitive nature of each horse.

Each performance is a journey where every detail counts, where every observation leads to a deeper understanding of the horse-athlete and to the emergence of a unique window into their world. Details which, when quantified by an exclusive performance aptitude rating, reveal the ultimate competitive edge. With the Competitive Edge guide tool at your disposal, clarity reigns supreme, empowering you to catalog and comprehend the nuances of every horse studied.

Competitive Edge Rating is the evaluation of an athlete's ability to merge physical and psychological characteristics effectively, especially under pressure. This assessment considers individual strengths and weaknesses in sensory perception, athletic proficiency, and the capacity to handle competitive stress without succumbing to mental fatigue before physical exhaustion. The rating determines the likelihood of success against challenges such as time constraints or total duration of (distance), and environmental factors.

Athletes are graded on a scale from E (lowest) to A+ (highest), reflecting their probability of success relative to both the demands of their environment and the performance standards of their peers in their respective disciplines.

Ultimately, we are not just handicapping races; we're dissecting the individual athletes within. By deciphering their behavioral characteristics and examining their physical expressions, we get the measure of strength against vulnerability. It's important to look at "distance" from the horses' point of view, which is duration. It's not a question of how many furlongs the race is or how long the course is, it is about the duration of time that the horse can sustain mental engagement and efficiency in a competitive fashion. The pursuit of greatness goes deeper than the morning line; it's about identifying the true athletes, understanding that who they are precedes what they are in the pursuit of greatness, where performance is driven by emotion.

Thank you for your support, all of us win when we explore the world of the horse, through the horse's view of the world.

~Kerry

Essential reference tools and educational resources available through www.kerrymthomas.com website include:

Free Glossary of Terminology and Phrases, → <https://www.kerrymthomas.com/glossary-of-terms>

The Art of Visual Handicapping; Identifying Athletes Master Class *save 10% use coupon code Derby150* → <https://www.kerrymthomas.com/courses>; also see the "Laws of Nature" series on our [YouTube Channel](#).

Inquiries regarding service options related to visual handicapping for specific horses or races, and all other bloodstock needs from sales to breeding, email #LetsRace to Daphne@sensorysoundness.com

KENTUCKY DERBY®



Competitive Edge Scorecard

Exploring the Psychology of Athletic Excellence, where performance is driven by emotion...

Resilience - A

Fierceness - A-

Just a Touch - B++

Stronghold - B+

Sierra Leone - B+

Catching Freedom - B+

Forever Young - B

Dornoch - B

Endlessly - B

Honor Marie - C++

Track Phantom - C+

Domestic Product - C+

Just Steel - C+

Mystik Dan - C+

Encino - C+

T O Password - C

Catalytic - C

Society Man - C

Grand Mo the First - C-

No More Time - C-

West Saratoga - C-

Epic Ride - C-

Uncle Heavy - D+

RESILIENCE

by Into Mischief o/o Meadowsweet

Trained by: William I. Mott

Owner: Pam Wygod & Martin Wygod

Breeder: Pam and Martin Wygod

Resilience has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **A**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Resilience has shown a steady psychological growth pattern indicative of a horse with strong and “resilient” Group Herd Dynamic. His natural capacity to absorb multiple stimuli has benefited him in the way that it benefits most horses, in allowing their physical strength to emerge in time. This minimizes the stresses that precocious IHD shifted horses often put upon themselves.

Of notable strength is that as Resilience gains experience, the seasoning from different herd-in-motion environments he’s faced has benefitted him in the ability to recognize precisely when to seek out his quiet, but strongly built, Individual Herd Dynamic where targeted combat comes into play. His athletic expression is emergent and though at times can seem to be just under the surface, his Group Dynamic is gaining in the rate of interpretation and is sequencing faster each time out. This pushes him closer to the competitive nature of IHD during the body of a race where he can access and tap in with less struggle and less time loss.

Resilience is very good at disappearing in the crowd, using other horses’ emotional efforts to time his rhythm, not in a needy way, but in a purposeful way much like a car drafting behind another; he is emotionally drafting and this he uses to chip away steadily at the competition. This performance characteristic allows him to conserve emotional energy along his route, he doesn’t overreact and when it is time for the transition into IHD hammer down mode, he dials in methodically. I trust him to be a consistent and sustainable athlete, and when it is time to emerge from the herd, he has the mind to body fluency and the reservoir of emotional energy to elevate his intensity to whatever is needed to face a challenge.

Left to their own uninhibited devices, Resilience has a very efficient, if not methodically rhythmmed sensory system, he is sensory sound without equipment. He clears space well; he

has the capacity to determine depth perception in motion and maintains self-awareness. Because of his sensory soundness he has gained the benefit of the experiences he’s had. He expresses athletically straight forward, which is also of value.

Purposeful and controlled responses to stimuli are natural and a useful byproduct of his nature, he evenly distributes emotional energy and when allowed to run his natural pattern, which is a methodical stairclimbing expression, he is surely a formidable presence to deal with.

Vulnerabilities:

Despite the solid and methodical psychological growth patterns that are emerging from his broad-based Group Herd Dynamic, there are some whisperings that question if Resilience is or is not getting the full advantage of the energy he is conserving.

His natural tendency, as a horse, to both feed off of and be hidden by, the emotional content of the horses around him, can actually be counterproductive in that this process does eat up the seconds and ground loss could be proxy to that. If ground loss isn’t a problem, the larger fields of herd chaos that can develop in front of him could be a roadblock of physical efficiency. This would present as a competitive antagonist environmentally because by nature, Resilience operates best when he can dial-in and dial-up his Individual Herd Dynamic gritty mindset, it is definitely there, but for it to manifest at full strength he depends upon a steady physical pace and a mental cadence that builds in time. It’s like cranking the handle in a cable wire to slowly increase the tension. That energy is ready to be released efficiently and purposely only when the handle is all the way back.

Resilience may be vulnerable to being thrown off that natural GHD build-up that he relies upon as a mental foundation. If he gets caught up in or is asked to switch hard into IHD combat

mode too early, I feel his mind to body fluency will be thrown off and he will strongly desire to default back to full environmental awareness before feeling comfortable in going back into IHD. Where I don't view this as anything that he cannot overcome, if it does occur too early or more than one time, I truly feel that as an emotionally intelligent horse, Resilience will seek out a full understanding of his environment before kicking on. How much time and distance loss this will consume is an unknown, but any will play a role in the outcome, it always does.

Additional Thoughts:

Distance is his friend, and the addition of blinkers is not. Resilience in my opinion is in a naturally good place where his strong and methodical Group Herd Dynamic is top notch, and he is on the verge of merging it with what appears to be a very strong and "resilient" deep welded Individual Herd Dynamic. The timing of this merger is well placed for the Kentucky Derby. His strengths are within the high degree of sensory soundness that he has shown; it has allowed him to have a naturally occurring growth pattern and to affectively grow into himself as an athlete. Sensory lead changes are clean and fast, interpretative ratio into forward space highly efficient, and he runs straight forward through the zone 1 sensory aspect. The fact that he won his last time out before the Derby was not, in my opinion, because he was wearing blinkers, I think he won in spite of them. Herd dynamically he was better, stronger, even with the sensory depriving equipment compromising his sensory lead changes. This compromise slowed his ability to complete sensory sequences, resulting in his depth of emotional energy making him "float" off course. He has a very well-defined natural pattern of competitive motion, and it is because of this, and because I feel that he is savvy enough to overcome and adapt to eyewear should it remain, that he has earned a Competitive Edge Rating of A.

I view the 10 Furlongs to be well within his wheelhouse in both time management and distance capacity, where he is the kind of horse that, left untampered with, would be competitive further than he will need to be on Derby day.

Human Factor:

Trust the horse, trust in his natural pattern of motion and manner of expression. Trust in the fact that it really doesn't matter all that much to Resilience's psychological profile where his post position is. Trust that you have more emotional energy than you are likely to need if you manage your affairs properly. What I would urge the jockey to be mindful of is that heading off, and anticipating situational chaos you can sense happening, will mean a great deal in the bigger picture. I would also look to compromise with Resilience on his terms. Where he likes to "settle" and feed off the emotional rhythms of other horses, let it be but don't let it go without a tap here and nudge there just to let him know that "hey dude, we're in a battle here stay vigilant". I would seek to keep him on the upper part of GHD speed cycles and at the ready to transition into IHD, be alert but not overreactive. I would not ask him for IHD unless I was prepared to and in position to keep him engaged in it. If you're going to go into the fight, do so when it is time, and you can stay in it. I do see Resilience as quite versatile when time is available, but there is no reason to ask him to go through all his stages of psychology to compete more than one time. He will benefit from a thoughtful navigator in the saddle.

FIERCENESS

by City of Light o/o Nonna Bella

Trained by: Todd Pletcher

Owner: Repole Stable

Breeder: Repole Stable Inc.

Fierceness has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **A-**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Fierceness exhibits a strong capacity for managing the dynamics of herd motion, contributing favorably to his ability to anticipate kinesiology which is a great assist in increasing response times to changes around him. This stems from his Group Herd Dynamic (GHD) and is a naturally occurring behavioral trait that when translated to competition, helps a horse navigate the moving parts of situational chaos.

He has a natural ability to regulate his emotional energy under commonly experienced competitive stresses which is a significant asset befitting a stayer psychology. This allows Fierceness to conserve and distribute energies evenly, optimizing physical talent without mental over exertion. Harmonized with the environment in such a way, Fierceness has acute awareness of his surroundings including surface conditions which enables him to assimilate to changes quickly, further contributing to the ease with which he seems to absorb his environment.

In motion, Fierceness displays a competitive forward aspect and sensory efficiency, enabling him to press into open spaces with purpose and maintain emotional momentum. He has a capacity for above average self-awareness when he is free to attack forward space and forwardly placed peers. Self-awareness is particularly useful in the gate, contributing to strong starts and focused performance throughout races.

It is worth noting that among the most difficult things for any horse to do is make the transition from standing to being in motion in such a dramatic way. This sequence not only puts a great deal of strain on the physical body and joints over time, but the sensory transitions must happen in an anticipatory manner to exit the gate smoothly. If they happen in an associative manner, the horse will hesitate, get “stuck”, “fall out”; all of which delay efficiency and add additional physical pressures.

Mentally, Fierceness possesses an aptitude for hitting a “cruise control” mental gear within the upper rhythms of the GHD, this helps further the conservation of emotional energy and keeps him ‘pounce-ready’ in strategic moments. His competitive nature is undeniable, he is all systems go when there is harmony and contentment, providing the octane required for his Individual Herd Dynamic (IHD) to get the advantage of any vulnerabilities within the peers he faces. In the game of psychological warfare, Fierceness is well equipped to go to battle with any horse.

Fierceness is showing indications that his IHD has reached near full maturity, a growth pattern indicative of a horse that has been well coached and allowed to learn and grow uninterrupted by sensory depriving equipment.

Rear sensory zone (Zone 4 if you’re familiar with the Sensory Soundness Map offered in the Master Class) appears to have very good feel interpretations, allowing him to respond to hindmost pressures with efficient communication between the forward corresponding sensory fields. This serves to keep his emotional energy expressing as an accelerant, with controlled and purposeful motion. .

Vulnerabilities:

The depth-perception portion of the sensory egg, which is both up and down (from ground up) and in and out (from the body), can become compromised under certain environmental conditions and peer pressures.

There is potential of protracted filtering time being required when engaging multiple stimuli. With added duration, Fierceness tends to tuck-in his emotional energy. This changes his physical expression from a forward ‘into space’ motion to a more ‘up and down’, compromising stride length and requiring more energy to cover the same distance in the same time span. This burns excess energy rapidly and mitigates total duration

of competitive nature and shortens competitive distance.

There is an underlying risk of accumulating environmental stresses and when experienced while competing, these cause Fierceness to withdraw his placement in a developing hierarchical structure.

Excessive herd pressures when experienced early, will draw a lot of emotional energy from the competitive aspects of IHD into the environmental monitoring aspects of GHD; this is Fierceness overcompensating for a loss of feel in depth-perception. This scenario is only detectable and affecting when in motion. Even when Fierceness recovers himself and re-establishes his competitive rhythm, this sacking of energy taxes reserves and can leave him subject to mental fatigue. Self-preservation instinct can then kick in, resulting in Fierceness seeking herd cover which is not uncharacteristic of high-level horses. Mother Nature is very clever in her ability to hide emotionally intelligent horses in plain sight.

Additional Thoughts:

Fierceness has an interesting psychological growth pattern where his Individual Herd Dynamic has matured at a significantly faster rate than his Group Herd Dynamic. Not an aggressive antagonist to total performance in most circumstances, but something worth noting as it can gnaw away at him. That said, I tend to lean toward the fact that the mature and competitive nature of his IHD has a better than average chance of prevailing in most cases involving race related situational chaos. His GHD growth patterns do show signs of improvement and of 'catching up'. He will be reliant on this to balance out to sustain competitive nature for the duration of time required to finish 10 furlongs. We must be mindful that though the physical distance is 10 furlongs, the

psychological time of combat can fluctuate depending on the amount of situational chaos encountered. It is like us driving the same 2 kilometers under different circumstances of weather and traffic. How well Fierceness will handle unforeseen race conditions is in the hands of how far forward his GHD growth has advanced.

Human Factor:

Fierceness is the type of horse that will benefit from a strong intent of purpose that partners with, not tries to control his competitive aspects, and will assume a guidance role when navigating situational chaos. Situations that are demanding of Fierceness to determine close space awareness and depth-perception while in motion are taxing, Jockey awareness and the ability to anticipate will go far in helping Fierceness navigate. This stands for post position, no thought by the jockey should be given to where they are, regardless of draw, early physical position will prove less impactful than finding an early natural mental rhythm.

JUST A TOUCH

by Justify o/o Touching Beauty

Trained by: Brad Cox

Owner: Qatar Racing LLC, Resolute Racing,
and Marc Detampel

Breeder: Don Alberto Corporation

Honor Marie has raced 5 times

Competitive Edge Rating - **B++**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Just a Touch immediately strikes me as the kind of horse that is highly efficient and mentally well balanced. I can see early markers of a profoundly forward psychological growth pattern that is supported by a very clear view of the world owing to his naturally efficient sensory soundness and hi-functioning self-awareness. His ability to change sensory leads is decidedly complementary and the benefactors are harmonized balance and even emotional energy distribution.

Just a Touch enjoys the benefits of having harmony between his Group Herd Dynamic and his Individual Herd Dynamic. This allows him to exit as cleanly from the gate as any horse with years of experience, and smoothly transition into a mental posture that is just under full on combat. This allows him to ease through the environment, conserving energy he can access further down the line.

The fact that Just a Touch is emotionally stress free is a self-evident truth in my book, and this is an extension of his sensory soundness. A sensory sound horse enjoys very even and efficient communication between himself and the world at large, all 6 of the zones of sensitivity around him appear to be communicating properly. This allows for great sensory balance as each corresponding (opposing) zone acts as a guardrail, so to speak, keeping the horse fluent and purposeful in their movement.

Physically efficient, Just a Touch moves through himself with ease and is very light, his energy though quite deep and strong, is not pressing down through him in any situation that I have seen to this point. This will benefit his physical output in that he will be able to fully optimize whatever physical talent he has available to him.

Vulnerabilities:

Sensory Sound yes, corresponding zones yes, dialed in for full on combat recognition just yet in his current stage of psychological development, I'm left to ponder? I lean yes, but

this is a point of contention for me as I roll him around in my noggin, basically for a full day at this point. It is important to play devil's advocate with every athlete, no scouting report would be of any value without the pro and con, and where Just a Touch has not won every race so far like his father, he hasn't lost any of them either. Or has he?

Youth and inexperience? Maybe this is what happened when he got caught by surprise, it was a rather sneaky bachelor herd style "cheap shot" if you will, when Sierra Leone bum-rushed him in the Bluegrass without warning. Or was it that Just a Touch has not yet learned and earned that sense of urgency that is so beneficial in the heat of any battle where you never assume, you never spike the ball until you are at the back of that endzone. I found the point of entry, that moment when Sierra Leone pierces the awareness sphere of Just a Touch. If you want to see something, (I use Equibase) watch the head-on replay of the Bluegrass, enlarge your screen and pause it at 1:43 / 1:44; this is the moment, the "ole crap" moment for Just a Touch. From the time of that recognition on, it takes Just a Touch a few strides to recover from that momentum wave. I thought perhaps he had deferred, but I really don't see that in his expression in that moment nor any signs of carryover in the gallop-out. What I truly feel is that he wasn't out-bullied, just out positioned because of the surging momentum that was heading his way.

Even though I feel that Just a Touch is and will grow into a herd dynamically influential horse, the question is, is he still vulnerable to such a predatory style attack or has a chip been placed on his shoulder?

Additional Thoughts:

Sensory Soundness connects the physical world with the emotional horse, and in that regard Just a Touch is well connected. As I continued my intensive study of this horse, I started to realize that there was evidence within the nuances of his traits and tendencies that were hallmarks of his father. I remember vividly having similar feelings when I studied Justify and though not exactly the same, there is surely evidence of behavioral genetic stamping. One of the most fascinating investigative tools that I use when trying to unravel esoteric potential in a horse is to trace the lines of behavioral expressions; herd dynamic stamping is even more potent as a tool of study because athletic expression is an extension of the operating system running the machine.

In my view Just a Touch is still experiencing refinement in the execution of his expression and is yet learning how to directly target both peers and space as well as defend against encroaching antagonists. If the Bluegrass hasn't brought this to fruition in him, then it surely must be close to bubbling up and starting a fire. If it isn't then he will be at risk of being competitively static, where he is now is where he will remain; but I doubt it. There is too much here, too much depth to remain long in one moment, and where I feel that yes, his psychological profile is yet incomplete, each new battle can bring forth another layer of grit and intensity.

Aside from the peer experience, Just a Touch has won two battles against the environment in back-to-back sloppy tracks, conditions less than ideal only add an extra layer of opportunity to learn and gain experience. His first clean and dry race was

the Bluegrass so in some respects, that was his first time competing at a high level on a new surface. The pressures and the feel were different, and I think the true measure of his herd dynamic strength has yet to show itself. The question is, will he be among the enforces on May 4th?

All things considered and trust me, I considered a great many different variables when trying to properly assess his current Competitive Edge Rating as it stands at this moment, my scouting report values him at a B++. I can't bring myself to settle upon an A or A- but he is also a hair split above B+, so I invoke my right as creator to bestow upon him an extra plus for good measure!

Human Factor:

Do not put him in a Bluegrass state of mind... There is a great deal to work with her and there is plenty of psychological versatility with the machine to back it up. The one thing that I think the jockey needs to keep in the back of their mind is that this is an unfinished work. Just a Touch may be an inch from putting the final touches on as he is competing and you do not want to assume anything, nor force anything. I would hate to see impatience or any worry over exactness of position, let the herd be what the herd will be and above all else, don't ask him to run an IHD pattern of motion unless absolutely necessary. Let Just a Touch dial it back if he senses it and show him, teach him, guide him how to attack and when to feed off the urgency in the room and from the timed urgency in the saddle. He is still a student, if he is going to go down, let it be from the hoof, not from the seat.

STRONGHOLD

by Ghostzapper o/o Spectator

Trained by: Philip D'Amato

Owner: Eric M. Waller & Sharon Waller

Breeder: Eric Waller & Sharon Waller

Stronghold has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Stronghold was a precocious two-year-old with a well-defined Individual Herd Dynamic evident in his very first start. His forward first natural tendency expresses athletically by nature and early in his career it was only his physical conditioning that needed a little catching up.

His naturally fast mental rhythms come with a no fear clause, Stronghold has but little problems accepting a challenge from other horses even if he finds himself on the losing end. What I like is his resilience; throughout his 6 starts to this point, though he didn't win them all, he did not herd dynamically lose to any horse. His Herd Dynamic strengths are better than average, and this serves him well in combat.

One of the risk factors with a heavily slanted IHD psychological rhythms is that the sensory system can have trouble keeping up. It must operate faster than the body is moving by at least two-times in order to clear space effectively for the body to move through, like a blocker for a running back. Stronghold's sensory sequencing does that job well. Key sensory zones for strong-forward IHD racehorses, for those of you going through the Visual Handicapping course and have the sensory map, are zones 6, 1 and 2, with sensory lead change markers E and F requiring equal elite efficiency. All the evidence points to Stronghold having above average to elite capacity in this.

There is a notable psychological growth pattern as well. Stronghold, with seasoning is starting to learn how to conserve his emotional energy and distribute it more evenly, albeit within the fast cadence that is natural to him. There is a marked, even if subtle difference between what he was as a two-year-old and what he has thus far molded in to as a three-year-old.

Physically he is strong enough to support his fast-paced mindset, and mentally he has the aptitude to extract every bit of physical talent that he has; there is grit, elan, and daring within him.

Vulnerabilities:

With all the positives that are incarnated within Strongholds psychological profile, there are, as with even the best of the best athletes, counterpoints acting as devil's advocate. Where it is true that high functioning IHD mindsets are very progressive as young athletes, they also, more often than not, hit the apex of their mental growth and development early in their professional lives. What you see is what you get, there is but little left to unearth in the talent tank.

With his Group Herd Dynamic slower developing because so much of his athletic psychology is expressed in IHD, the expenditure of emotional energy is consistently high and pressed forward. This is a nagging issue and there is some evidence I have noted that in prolonged "hand-to-hand" combat, there is a switch. The switch is from mental grinding to "ok, can I outrun you then?". I worry about mental fatigue in only one competitive circumstance; those of prolonged battles where a depth of emotional energy is needed. Amassed emotional energy is held in the reserve tank of GHD. Saved and accumulated moment to moment along the trip, this energy can be tapped to out-grit the competition and is what, in the natural world, allows elite emotionally intelligent herd leaders to patiently outwit their antagonists or make proper and calmly stated decisions in the face of chaos.

Where I have my concerns about protracted in your face battles with worthy herd dynamic peers who may have a deeper GHD base from which to draw, I also wonder how many seconds will be taken off the clock of available competitive distance. I'm not worried about 10 furlongs at face value, but measured in the value of competitive time, I am a little concerned. Stronghold has without a doubt the physical characteristics to drop the clutch out of the gate and move effectively and efficiently through space the entire physical distance in probably under the "two minutes" customarily associated with the derby. It is the psychological battle scars and space infraction dings along

the journey that steal away time; my estimation is that every 2 seconds lost in emotional battle adds a stride of distance that needs to be made up.

Additional Thoughts:

Well trained horse is the first thing that comes to mind when I watch and study Stronghold. I think that his human coaches collectively have done a fine job, all things considered of not getting in this horse's way. I do not need to know the details behind the scenes, the horses tell us everything. That said, I have confidence that Stronghold will be as ready as he can be and, in any other race, he would have earned a Competitive Edge Rating of A, but I give him a B+ in the derby context.

Time. Always about time... battle time in seconds... this is what concerns me; 10 seconds is my marker. I can't get over the nagging, lingering evidence just under the surface that if he is required to battle head to head for more than 10 seconds or, if collectively, he has to navigate through cuts and scratches of emotional wear for more than 10 seconds in total time, will there be enough "poop" in the scoop left to make up 5 strides in the throes of competitive stress?

Stronghold is consistent, runs very straight, clears space well, mentally the inception of the battles he confronts he does so without fear. His Group Herd Dynamic is showing indications of slow and incremental growth... but is it enough? The trip itself will tell us, we know what the horse is capable of in theory, but my concern is we have 110 seconds to work with and need a clean road with no potholes for the physical athlete to make up the distance with a clean overstride. This only happens when the mental horse is pushing forward through the body in full.

Human Factor:

My advice to the human in the saddle is relax, relax, relax. The one thing that can help conserve emotional energy for Stronghold is by not adding emotional angst to his behavioral characteristics. Where the horse may be deficient in one dynamic, the jockey needs to be proficient, this can help conserve emotional energy because the horse can bridge through chaos with the assist. My mantra when giving equestrian education presentations is Be the Bridge, Not the Block. Providing an emotional Bridgepoint for the horse to outsource to, be they doing so purposefully or by proxy, can save seconds and add distance capacity to performance. This is how we extend and optimize talent.

The post position will matter. Not because he can't outmaneuver for an early spot, but I don't want him to feel like he must. For this will tap emotional energy and seconds off the clock that will have to be made up later by the physical output.

Shadow Roll? Well, it has but little effect from what I am seeing. Stronghold physically expresses his emotional self very consistently and his posture in motion is not a byproduct of any sensory interruptions, it comes from the full court press of emotional energy into zone 1.

SIERRA LEONE

by Gun Runner o/o Heavenly Love

Trained by: Chad Brown

Owner: Magnier, Mrs. John, Tabor, Michael B., Smith, Derrick, Westerberg, Rocket Ship Racing, LLC and Brant, Peter M

Breeder: Debby M. Oxley

Sierra Leone has raced 4 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

What I like about Sierra Leone is that he has a very competitive emotional energy and when he winds himself up into IHD he has a strong capacity to follow through with it. His ability to “run into space” is consistent, especially when there is open space in front of him and he doesn’t show any markers of hesitation to enter combat. His expressions are sincere and athletic, the times where he has come into close contact with competitors he has shown a solid fortitude to enter the fray.

Something else that strikes me is the fact that his Individual Herd Dynamic, (IHD), remains athletic while expressing in a fast-cycling natural rhythm, and he has all the earmarks of a horse with a high degree of emotional energy at his disposal. This lends itself to a dial-up then dial-in performance style with determination pushing it forward. His competitive nature cannot be questioned.

I view this psychological profile as one that will not defer to herd peer pressures in combat. He will try with all that he has for as long as he is able; Sierra Leone has thus far shed peer pressures well in the races he has run.

He has the psychological makeup of a horse that can run from any position but competes best when he has had the opportunity to get into a clear area where depth-perception and space awareness are non-issues. I do like the fact that Sierra Leone can take a punch and shake it off.

Vulnerabilities:

The vulnerabilities I see with Sierra Leone’s profile largely stem from inefficiencies in the Group Herd Dynamic within the body of the race itself. His Sensory Lead Changes are delayed when “cruising” with other horses and when in the hammer-down stages of IHD, things are happening even faster. This

increase in mental rating dissolves any cushion between mind and body he did have, and things can get a little bumpy. Anytime a horse loses even the slightest bit of body control they lose purposeful motion, and this in turn compromises forward momentum.

GHD is charged with environmental interpretations and subsequently depth-perception and self-awareness; Sierra Leone has some evidence of nagging delays when at speed, with both. It takes him some time from out of the gate to find his rhythm as he is, in these early stages where GHD is navigating the environment, outsourcing (looking outward for the answers to questions he can’t answer fast enough). Sierra Leone is less than efficient in his early sensory sequences, and by nature he is inclined to let things play out around him before he settles into a purposeful mental cadence. How long this takes has changed from race to race, which indicates that he is, in the initial stages just out of the gate, environmentally dependent.

I worry about the slightly reckless expressions that come when he is in IHD combat mode which are a byproduct of sensory lead change delays. His sensory system in this capacity is not clearing the space around him as quickly as I would like, and this causes him to lose forward efficiency. His sensory lead changes, especially when in this hi-rev cycle, are delayed and this causes him to leak emotional energy in excess when his operating system is full steam ahead.

The blinkers do not project him forward as much as would be expected nor do they funnel the distribution of emotional energy fully into the forward aspect (sensory zone 1), in an athletic manner. They have, however, lessened the knee-jerk replies to oblique stimuli; horses off to the left (sensory zone 6) or off to the right (sensory zone 2). Because the visual aspect is mitigated in these zones, Sierra Leone is attempting to supplement that with his sense of “feel”.

Additional Thoughts:

Sierra Leone is unquestionably a fine athlete, he has the tenacity to compete and the will to be competitive, but he does come with some chinks in the armor. I do not see his biggest antagonist to be his peers in any circumstance, his biggest antagonist is himself and his ability to be physically efficient from start to finish. I lean toward him having to outrun himself in spots and in the derby, these could compound more than he has yet experienced.

His emotional leaks are noticeable, not dramatic but nagging papercuts. He tries to overcompensate for any sensory inefficiencies through movement which is by itself not a bad thing, but the fact that he has delays with sensory lead changes compromise the fruits of those efforts. Ironically, I do not see the 10 furlongs of physical distance to be an issue. But do feel that when compared to the psychological duration required to compete in that time frame, under nagging cumulative stresses collected along the way, that mental fatigue could prove to be an enemy. Not because Sierra Leone isn't equipped with a depth of emotional energy, it's more that I worry about how much of it is going to be contributing to combat beyond the 100 second mark. We can't overlook the reality that any inefficiencies in the body (like paddling or winging), challenge fluid motion. This often taps emotional energy reserves because these horses, when competing against high level peers, have little choice but to grind a little harder, and dig a little deeper.

I don't see surface changes as being much of an issue to him personally, rain or shine Sierra Leone will be inclined to perform as we have come to expect of him. If things go his way and he can keep himself from leaking away too much energy, he can be as competitive as any horse he will face.

Human Factor:

Sierra Leone is reliant upon his Jockey to help him find a befitting mental cadence straight away out of the gate. The very best way for the jockey to do this is going to be by not giving in to any desire to get an early physical position in the Derby. This will only tax Sierra Leone, even the thought of having to press can be counterproductive. Highly sensitive to human emotion, horses can detect the slightest urgency or anxiety coming from the saddle, and the jockey will do well to break the "race" into compartmentalized herd motion. I would go moment to moment until herd motion finds its rhythm, and then go from there.

Post position will play a role in how much and how long he will need the benefit of the Jockey to help him bridge his GHD, multitasking/multi-interpretation demands. I don't want to see him feel as if he must unload his lunchbox early and then not having snacks left at the end. A lot of what Sierra Leone will be able to do after 100 seconds as he zero's in on the finish line will depend on how costly the first 15 seconds were to him. It's important to look at "distance" from the horses' point of view, which is duration. It's not about how far the race is it is about how long can any horse sustain mental engagement and efficiency in a competitive fashion.

CATCHING FREEDOM

by Constitution o/o Catch My Drift

Trained by: Brad Cox

Owner: Albaugh Family Stables LLC

Breeder: Winstar Farm LLC

Catching Freedom has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Of the particularly notable strengths that I see in Catching Freedom is that early in his performances he shows an effort to be patient within a naturally strong IHD, something that for him takes a big effort at times because he has a desire to engage. This often provides him just enough time to sort his environment for he is using a dip into the Group Herd Dynamic pool right out of the gate. Otherwise Catching Freedom could be too "rushy" too early. I give him extra credit for this effort in light of the fact that wearing headgear is interrupting his GHD efficiency. These interruptions in space-awareness and depth-perception create some trepidation that he has thus far been able to overcome in three of his five races to this point.

Catching Freedom is a very strong physical horse, he has a wealth of emotional energy from which to draw upon. A natural competitor at heart, Catching Freedom drives himself hard, almost too hard at times, but he has the physical prowess to accommodate his emotional strength. He is expressing athletically the bulk of the time he is racing which translates to his being competitive at nearly every stage of herd motion.

In IHD mode much of his time-in-motion, there are no markers of peer deference in any of the herd sequences I have seen to this point. As he seasons along into his 3-year-old year, his confidence has grown but not in arrogance to his environment, he is just a stronger version of himself.

Consistency is important for any competitor and Catching Freedom has remained consistent in the way he is expressing himself, and this helps him navigate situational chaos as he continues to hone-in his physical responses to them.

Vulnerabilities:

I do have my concerns and they all come from the same thing, sensory efficiency. Catching Freedom is such a deep well of emotional energy that the pressure in the balloon exposes the pinholes. The first sign of the internal struggles he is dealing with come into play when he is trying to ascertain the environment around him out of the gate. His GHD quickly goes into trying to find the balance between where am I and what is going on around me, mode. However, the would-be guardrails that otherwise come from the Group Herd Dynamic are compromised by several factors, natural inefficiency one, blinkers the other.

Having so much emotional energy on-hand saves him from spending too much time in the Group Herd Dynamic struggle, but this is also an antagonist to overall performance. Catching Freedom makes a fist and punches down on the IHD throttle not far into the argument with himself over environmental awareness. He is a ready-made combat soldier but with all that emotional energy leaking out, you can see that he struggles in pushing his emotional energies fully into the forward aspect (zone 1), with some of it going up and out. This energy distribution by proxy effects his physical output because the efficiency is interrupted; instead of plowing everything forward in full athletic expression, Catching Freedom is tucked up a little mentally and he must run over himself, in a manner of speaking, until he drags all energy forward. He does accomplish this, but it takes effort and consumes time. Time equals distance.

Another concern I have is the struggle's Catching Freedom is having with any lateral or oblique stimuli interpretations and with moving into these areas, thus compromising his versatility. His Sensory Lead Changes are quite delayed and what I often call "sticky", like gum stuck to your shoe. These delays cost him energy, interrupt forward efficiency and though he has the grit to battle through there is ground loss through

time expenditure that has me a little concerned regarding 10 furlongs. Not that he can't fight to the end, but will he be in position to?

Additional Thoughts:

In IHD Catching Freedom is a double-edged sword for me. On the one hand his deep reservoir of energy is a great asset when in competition, he has no lax in competitive effort. On the other hand, he has several pinhole leaks and efficiency compromises. Where I do not worry about mental fatigue with him, I do worry about the time it takes him to sort himself out because this costs him ground. It may be only bits and pieces at a time, but they add up. I look at it in through a lens of time; if out of every 30 seconds of combat time the athlete is using 10 of them to sort through and properly react, sensory unsoundness has a cost of 40 seconds out of 120 available (If we just stay with the fastest two minutes in sports). How much physical distance is sacrificed in 40 seconds of time is anybody's guess, but it can be significant depending on the circumstances.

I personally feel that wearing equipment has compromised Catching Freedom's psychological growth pattern. He has physically matured into a very strong three-year-old colt who still struggles with the same issues. The operating system running the machine has not matured as fast as the machine itself, and this puts a horse's body ahead of their mind in competitive circumstances, leaving them having to outrun themselves. He can do this, but at what cost? There is plenty of gas in the tank for Catching Freedom to reach the roses, but it needs a manicuring from the saddle to get there.

Human Factor:

Outsourcing is not in his nature, but he does need a bridge point from the gate to the wire; strong forward intention without urgency may sound like an oxymoron, but this is the best in-saddle approach for this horse's psychological makeup. The key for Catching Freedom is going to be minimizing as much IHD combat chaos as possible and 100% try to mitigate the need for abrupt lateral or oblique movements. The jockey will do well to navigate the world for him well in advance.

FOREVER YOUNG

by Real Steel o/o Forever Darling

Trained by: Yahagi Yoshito

Owner: Susumu Fujita

Breeder: Northern Racing

Forever Young has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Forever Young exhibits a strength of will and athletic determination from gate to wire, he is very consistent in his 'try'. Even though he hovers close to the line between frantic and controlled emotions, by and large he finds his way through.

Shows a natural ability to use the rhythm of herd motion to his advantage in circumstances where he enters such fray with ease of motion, allowing him to match existing herd cadence.

His sensory egg, which controls self-awareness and depth perception has athletic characteristics when he forwardly expresses, pushing into space. Forever Young has a good sense of 'feel' amid herd motion and can anticipate movement around him in most of the circumstances that he's faced. This representation of self-awareness in motion is an extension of a functioning sensory sequence within GHD, which acts as a support to IHD (competitive) expressions.

His ability to patiently stalk a pace is a derivative of good correspondence between the Group and Individual Herd Dynamics. The added benefit of a high functioning sensory awareness allows Forever Young to easily navigate through any situational chaos that is in his forward aspect, sensory zone 1.

Feels most at ease when settled into a herd stalking position where he can access his very efficient 'to-target' focus ability. Forever Young feels the least vulnerable in this herd position.

Vulnerabilities:

Exits the gate with a lot of emotional energy that can create physical down-pressure resulting in random, slight disruptions in mind to body fluency. When this occurs, Forever Young experiences accumulated stresses that, though they do filter, can interrupt physical efficiency. This leads to early, even if

short lived, frantic expressions that will nonetheless exhaust emotional energy. How much depends on how long, but this could by extension, mitigate IHD 'hammer down' ability at the wire.

There are times when Forever Young is forced to physically 'outrun' himself where physical talent has led the way. At 2000 meters however, there is a risk of mental fatigue or of at minimum, of having to finish the job while on fumes.

Inefficiencies with Sensory Lead Changes when in combat stem from overloading into IHD. In such cases, Forever Young finds himself hyper-focused which interrupts his ability to complete sensory sequencing and lends itself to 'seeking' other horses to gather his own cadence. This delay in response, between Survey & Orienting, compromises environmental awareness and depth-perception. Forever Young has never fully capitulated to herd pressures when he does encounter competitive stresses however, for he has thus far been able to outrun his peers.

The efficiency of emotional energy distribution over extended periods of time, under competitive strain, is of some concern to me. When I consider that Forever Young, a very accomplished athlete to be sure, will be facing just a tick above 2000 meters against peers with equal or more complete, herd dynamic strength, I must ask myself has this horse reached his growth potential?

Additional Thoughts:

Weakness of character? No. But there may be lurking issues in a crowd of herd dynamic peer strength. Blinkers being added are an indication to me that his vulnerabilities have been noted and an effort to channel his emotional energy forward and/or mitigate the sensory lead change interruptions, (even if they don't recognize them as such), is being taken seriously. The issue, however, is that when you condense the horse's

sensory field of view, you're shifting their intensity. And in the case of Forever Young, with an already overflowing of excess herd dynamic energy, the risk is a loss of overall efficiency. You're turning the keys over to physical talent and the steering wheel over to the Jockey, hoping the horse can hold it together over the time required to finish the distance at hand. The other thing that I think straight away when equipage is added, is that the trainer senses he's reached the top asking-point of the horse both physically and mentally and is trying to shake the bag to get every useable morsel.

Human Factor:

Just watching this horse race, it is easy to see that we are looking at a very good athlete. However, when you really dig in, he will show you where he needs someone to be the bridge, and not the block. I am not so sure the added blinkers will be the fix they are hoping for long term, but I would urge the jockey to be sure to not over-intensify emotionally and be extremely precise and direct with any triggers. Forever Young is a fast-cycling IHD and does not need any added squeeze from the saddle to pull his trigger. Finesse and purposeful intent can help Forever Young compete against the peers he will face in the environment that is the Kentucky Derby.

DORNOCH

by Good Magic o/o Puca

Trained by: Danny Gargan

Owner: West Paces Racing LLC, R. A. Hill Stable, Belmar Racing and Breeding, LLC. Two Eight Racing, LLC, and Pine Racing Stables

Breeder: Grandview Equine

Dornoch has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Physical efficiency and the depth of available emotional energy to drive it is the first thing that comes to mind as they are right in your face every step of the way. Dornoch is the poster boy for fast cycling Individual Herd Dynamic psychologies with a point and shoot mentality; his rubber band is always pulled back and all he needs is the go now button to be pressed.

A key strength for Dornoch is getting early position and he is best when open space is before him, I can't say that his ability to target objects way out front is a part of this, (Distance Target Focus), but nonetheless he attacks open space as if there is an unfinished argument.

Straight away from the gate Dornoch is in battle mode where there is little effort given to environmental assessment in this psychology, (blinkers could be a contributing factor to this, so it isn't a nock on him behaviorally). You can count on the fact that he will be forward in expression and honest in effort. There is plenty of gas in the tank to physically accommodate the distances ask of him.

Dornoch is consistent in that his preferred pattern of motion translates to every environment, is well suited for the surface, and always a force to be reckoned with by his peers. There is nothing hidden with his strength of purpose, he knows where he wants to be, and he has the capacity to get there. Once in his comfort-zone which is up on the pace and preferably out in front, Dornoch finds what I refer to as that hi-rev (naturally fast mental rhythm) proverbial "cruise-control" which helps him maintain physical fluency over extended periods of time. This equally helps him eat up ground and, within these conditions, 10 furlongs of time and distance should prove to be of little problem.

Vulnerabilities:

Dornoch, a capable physical athlete to be sure, and an honest competitor, has his share of issues that he must overcome. I describe him as the kind of athlete whose body is ahead of his mind, in a horse sale I mark this down as B/M, which translated to, this horse will likely need to outrun himself.

For as strongly shifted as he is in the Individual Herd Dynamic, there is a lack of Group Herd Dynamic awareness. This makes the efficiency of his running style heavily predicated upon his positioning. Dornoch very strongly desires, seeks, and needs open space in front of him. Where this mitigates sensory strains and allows him to move freely forward, it also demands that he outrun not only the competition, but also himself.

Sensory unsoundness is rather challenging for any horse, making them outsource reliant, and for Dornoch it is no different. Because he has worn blinkers from day one, we have no real way of knowing what his natural psychological development would look like, but what we are seeing is much delay between sensory transitions. He is clearly a very fast filtering type of horse who in ideal circumstances is quite effective as an athlete, but there are holes in the balloon. Dornoch is so overloaded into the forward aspect whether from the blinkers or not, that his sensory system can barely keep up, which is why he benefits from open space in front of him. This lends itself to a lack in competitive versatility.

Sensory lead changes pose a particular challenge for Dornoch, especially so when a horse approaches from back to front and presents in his sensory lead change marker A or D which are charged with oblique interpretations. Dornoch, unable to or incapable of interpreting what is in these areas, seeks to outsource for help. He asks and if there is no immediate answer, he will linger. This eats up precious time and can allow the door to close in front of him.

Dornoch has a fine line between his being a proactively expressing athlete and his succumbing to situational chaos he must mentally navigate before being able to physically outrun.

Additional Thoughts:

A hard trying and true to himself athlete, I admire his “try” and willingness, while at the same time being concerned about his energy distribution. Not every horse has a wide range of disparity in their physical versatility, they move how they move on a surface that fits them. That said, mental versatility is what allows a horse to optimize their physical talent in variations of herd motion, and that versatility is hinged upon their sensory soundness and overall efficiency. In this is where I find my nagging concerns about Dornoch. He quite clearly has a heavy and naturally placed shift of emotional energy pressing hard on the forward aspect, which is itself a good quality to have when it is a part of an otherwise evenly balanced distribution. The fact is, Dornoch struggles when he finds himself in circumstances that ask him to interpret a world that is not directly in front of him. The blinkers, whether warranted or not, are for sure funneling his strong IHD energy firmly forward and causing much delay in his efforts to sort through stimuli that isn't in zone 1. This is a double-edged sword, where he is “strengthened” in one aspect, he is compromised in two. I don't know this horse personally, for all I know he may be prone to wanderlust and floating and the blinkers help him. But I do know that equipment delays a horse's competitive growth patterns regardless of their purpose and design and these things can become a factor when the horse-athlete is asked to up his or her game and engage elite competitors.

Dornoch, a capable athlete who has the aptitude to compete for “120 seconds”, nonetheless has holes in his game; he will be subject to both the evolution of the herd chaos and the demands this places upon his sensory system.

Human Factor:

I don't say this often but post position one wouldn't be so bad for this horse, and the jockey should let him roll, find open space as early as possible. From the saddle Dornoch will benefit from being guided away from as much chaos as possible, most especially from infractions off to the right or left of his forward. The jockey will need to think fast and anticipate for Dornoch, trying to pump the brakes is going to be a challenge but is far better than slamming them. You must strongly consider your horses' strengths and overlay them on the task at hand with the shape of the environment you're in, being a strong consideration. What he does well is make other horses catch him, what he doesn't do well is navigate multiple stimuli, so to offset that you rely on placement and his very efficient physical talent. It will be very helpful for Dornoch to have the jockey be his built-in, readymade Bridge point, especially where he encounters oblique sensory demands and starts to ask, “what's happening and how do I respond?” Be the bridge, not the block.

ENDLESSLY

by Oscar Performance o/o Dream Fuhrever

Trained by: Michael W. McCarthy

Owner: Amerman Racing LLC

Breeder: Jerry Amerman

Endlessly has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **B**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

There is a lot of good in Endlessly, and they all start with his solid Group Herd Dynamic rhythm that is at the foundation of his character traits. Endlessly has a well-defined ability to quickly absorb the environment around him and masterfully determine both his position relative to his peers and his emotional posture feeds from that in time.

A very efficient sensory system and smooth sensory lead changes serve him well because it helps to “lighten” the otherwise heaviness of his deep energy. Not a light on his feet type of emotional energy, his expression is a powerful wave like a building tsunami that needs time in motion to gather, shape, and transition from back to front for combat purposes.

Endlessly is not devoid of athletic expression represented in the Individual Herd Dynamic, quite the contrary. In fact, when he is executing his primary pattern of motion, his DTF or Distance Target Focus, the naturally occurring ability to identify and interpret objects and targets at a distance in front, and essentially attack them, is very sharp. Downright ballsy in fact, as he seems to relish getting into a ruckus and demanding his space. He is very adept at stalking and pressing horses in their rear or oblique sensory aspects, (zones 3, 4, and 5 for those of you playing along with the online course) and it is much like being tripped up from the rear by someone pulling at your heels with each step.

Psychologically I believe that he has completed the bulk of his growth patterns when it comes to competitive expression and Endlessly has self-defined a precise pattern of motion where he feels at home and that fits his energy and its manner of distribution. He has a daring and gritty IHD, not itself a lone wolf assassin, but one that is solidly supported by his strength in GHD. He gets out of the gate with good awareness and efficiency, then settles for a long and rhythmic mental cadence

where he takes in everything from either side and then begins his focus upon whatever his task is that lay ahead. Endlessly slowly shifts his energy into the competitive IHD and has little problem ramrodding forward. His motion is not reckless, he has control and moves with purpose. If there is a crack in the door, he’s like a (big) cat, if he gets his nose in he’s through.

Vulnerabilities:

Of all the great qualities to be stated about Endlessly’s pattern of motion and its well-defined characteristics, the word versatility is not among them. Endlessly’s vulnerability does not come from any lack in effort or being game, gritty, and willing to battle, his vulnerability is found in context.

There are athletes who can influence their environment regardless of it, and there are athletes who impose their will upon one environmental construct only to be marginalized in another. The subtle differences can fool us if we are not careful.

Endlessly seems to have proven where he fits best and where he performs at his best; in certain herd dynamic levels of peers executing a precise pattern of motion on a specific surface that seems to support it precisely. As I said, there are many things to like about this horse, and I like them all, but the things that I like about him are also the same things that concern me relative to upping the game in the following ways: different surface, added distance, added duration of peer-pressured combat.

In circumstances that require of him a different pattern of motion, where an early and much more protracted duration of time be spent in IHD to “keep up”, in an environment more likely to present an intensity of situational chaos, I personally feel Endlessly could find himself out of the water. Where I see a solid, ballsy fighter well placed in all but one of the

performance levels that he has so far experienced, I do not see the versatility of psychology that lends itself to extended battles with high level herd dynamic dirt specialists. I also have yet to see evidence that, though a very strong and capable athletic psychology indeed, there is enough presence to subdue some of the seasoned and versatile dirt combat veterans who have in your face IHD. Endlessly's strength in emotionally tripping up his competition in the rear sensory zones, which causes horses with less than efficient sensory sequences and sensory lead changes to overcompensate, withdrawing their forward projection and shifting it to the hind, has yet to be tested upon horses who are highly sensory sound and/or are so overloaded into the forward aspect that quite frankly, they just don't give a damn.

Additional Thoughts:

I really like this horse, I do. But I must be honest about the fact that his strengths are also potentially his weaknesses that could be exposed in more challenging competitive engagements. I see a very capable horse-athlete who has owned his affairs more often than not, but who at the same time has also been campaigned in a carefully manicured, indeed responsible to the horse (hats off for that), thoughtful way. The next level of competition refuses to allow as much control; the environment will be different, the herd dynamic peer strength will be infused with power, the duration demands will increase. All these things add up to versatility requirements I am not sure are available to Endlessly. He would be a solid B+ or an A in Competitive Edge Rating 'if' I were assessing him for nearly any other race, but I have to embrace the reality of circumstances and error on the side of caution.

Human Factor:

My advice here is to not overthink it, not to "over-ride" the horse just to attempt to fit into the circumstances. It is a simple formula, Endlessly has a very specific running style, pattern of motion and manner of expression. What he does well he does very well. Run with his strengths because you just never know. Let him do it, avoid rushing into combat unnecessarily, use his strengths in the way he is accustomed to and let the environment away from him do what it will. The best chance for Endlessly as I see it, is in moving in the moment, you don't need to be at the front of the coaster to get a great ride.

HONOR MARIE

by Honor Code o/o Dame Marie

Trained by: D. Whitworth Beckman

Owner: Ribble Farms LLC

Breeder: Royce Pulliam

Honor Marie has raced 5 times

Competitive Edge Rating - **C++**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Honor Marie has a lot of things going for him, not the least of which is sensory soundness and good correspondence between all 6 zones of sensitivity. This in turn translates to both good self-awareness and effective depth-perception in changing herd environments. His ability to clear space, recognize viable targets, (worthy adversaries) both close and far, supports the advantage of a high functioning Distance Target Focus. That key ability to locate, zero in on and remain focused upon forwardly placed targets allows him to be a long-range missile; once you've been chosen, he is coming. Honor Marie is also able to freely "attack" open space with equal energy, not all IHD horses do this without first having another horse at which to aim.

An interesting nuance to his psychology is that where he is very effective using his Individual Herd Dynamic to hone-in on singular stimuli for extended periods, Honor Marie executes this from a solid base of environmental awareness; his Group Herd Dynamic is equally high functioning. This provides him with an element of versatility other strong, forwardly projecting IHD combat fighters are often lacking.

His natural pattern of motion, which is the physical expression of the psychological athlete, is exiting the gate with a purposeful IHD burst and then settling, drinking in the environment, absorbing it through the Group Dynamic. Honor Marie's GHD is fast cycled but very efficient and sensory sound, he can "cruise" at its upper end and drop the clutch for a long-range move. This is classic GHD and IHD both working to promote athletic expression and is a naturally occurring asset in the more emotionally intelligent horses.

In the herd construct, Honor Marie would be the one that other horses with sensory inefficiency would outsource to, "buddy-up" with, during these long range moves to his targets. This is because when Honor Marie is firmly dialed-in he is expressing

that ultimate talent optimizer, Independent Nature. This ever-desired aptitude to operate for an extended period unbound by the fabric of the herd is elusive and sporadic. Some horses engage it for short periods in precise circumstances, others are largely independent from start to finish, while for the greater majority by percentages, it is a mirage they have only heard stories about as a kid. Directly related to herd dynamic strength, it manifests intermittently in reflection of hierarchical life.

Vulnerabilities:

Mental fatigue? This is my biggest question with Honor Marie, and I think, ironically, is among his more concerning vulnerabilities. It isn't the 10 Furlongs that I view as an antagonist, but as we have discussed many times before, there is a big difference between physical distance and competitive distance.

Where Honor Marie is very capable in his long range DTF launch and ability to sustain it, I have taken note that the duration of this effort and the fruits of this labor hinge upon the herd dynamic strength of the horse he's targeted for assault. Longer physical distance against equal or even stronger peers is more demanding and Honor Marie has previously succumbed to this by having assumed his bachelor herd position accordingly. At the end of these sustained moves he can lose fluency, becoming less physically efficient while trying to press down on the gas pedal and keep the pressure on. Holding it together to battle for space becomes more difficult for Honor Marie the longer he is required to do it, and this is where duration, not distance, matters; mental fatigue has happened before.

Another potential vulnerability for Honor Marie ironically enough, is his defined natural pattern of motion. I view him as a very strong herd dynamic horse, but not an elite one.

That said, his inclination to short burst IHD out of the gate and then GHD it until the herd chaos shakes out and shapes up in front of him before that long range push, could itself pose an obstacle. Environmentally, owing to the number of horses that will be part of the chaos, there are many more unknowns. It's easier to navigate a herd of 6 or even 10 fellow combatants than it is 19. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Honor Marie could find himself frustrated to execute his ideal pattern, and where he by presence will cause some horses to defer and give way, not all of those involved will capitulate unless by attrition.

Additional Thoughts:

Honor Marie is a worthy competitor, game adversary and a horse with a lot of mental versatility when it comes to navigating and interpreting herd chaos. He has both sensory soundness and physical talent on his side. My biggest and really my only concern overall is where Honor Marie measures upon the Fujita Scale of herd structure. In most of his experiences he will be near the top of this totem pole, but with more horses on the playground coming from any number of backgrounds from the lightly raced to the seasoned battlers, his ability to impress himself upon their will is an unknown. I don't view Honor Marie as an elite HD, but he is a very capable, savvy and emotionally intelligent horse.

His best option when he starts his launch is targeting open space, not other horses to run to. This will help minimize Herd Dynamic attrition and the risk of capitulation because he can bank on physical momentum to scoot by competitors. There

are always a great many intriguing psychological factors to consider and with some horses, such as Honor Marie, you find yourself splitting hairs because the spaces between a B+ and a C rating, for example, are paper-thin. Herd structure and natural hierarchy matter, and the unique characteristics of Bachelor Herd relationships play an intrinsic role in races where most of the horses are colts. All things considered, Honor Marie tips the Competitive Edge Rating scales for me at C++.

Human Factor:

This is one of the more straightforward psychological profiles to ride and it's a matter of making a tweak here and a tweak there, but not getting in his way. The jockey would be wise to have two things in mind; one, out of the gate urge him to burn that IHD a little longer (not hotter but say 10 strides longer). And two; get full advantage of his long range DTF by pointing to open space. Let Honor Marie drink in the open range and free him as much as possible from the gamesmanship required to outduel IHD fighters at the end of that long burn. He may hold up or he may not, but I don't take that chance, I keep clear of close space combat if/when possible.

TRACK PHANTOM

by Quality Road o/o Miss Sunset

Trained by: Steven M. Asmussen

Owner: L and N Racing LLC, Clark O Brewster, Jerry

Caroom and Breeze Easy, LLC

Breeder: Breeze Easy, LLC

Track Phantom has raced 7 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Track Phantom is an honest and straight forward, athletic horse. With top-notch physical efficiency straight away out of the gate, he is not at all wishy-washy about his intentions.

His primary strength is his physical efficiency which helps him get early momentum and he has the stamina to sustain it. He hits his full Individual Herd Dynamic expression very early, nearly immediately, which helps him outrun any herd chaos.

I also like the fact that Track Phantom shows no issues with surface variations, be it sloppy or ideal, he can execute his preferred pattern-of-motion with the same energy, purpose, and dash.

Track Phantom's willingness to attack open space seems more than that, it's almost a necessity driving him forward. Once in his comfort zone, which is a very "bachelor herd" performance style, he settles to the best of his ability and is very even with his physical fluency. This helps him a great deal in that whilst other horses combat situational chaos behind him, he is free to drink in the open range before him, sustaining a physical rhythm and mental cadence.

Track Phantom prefers to set his own pace and is physically strong enough to hold his position until someone runs him down after they have navigated through the herd to find him. His greatest strategy is eating up time and distance, holding his position while the wire gets ever closer, and the time grows shorter for other horses to close in. .

Vulnerabilities:

While Track Phantom has proven himself to be a worthy

adversary, this is largely an extension of his physical talent and overall efficiency of foot. His Individual Herd Dynamic is operating well enough to drive him forward yet all the while it is less than tightly cropped; with every step he is leaking tiny bits of emotional energy. Track Phantom is heavily reliant on physical talent and early position, tools that will see him competing consistently it is true, but when it comes to competitiveness, he is limited, pinioned by the physical. In short, he must outrun himself to outrun his competition.

Track Phantom's less than efficient Group Herd Dynamic leaves him in a state of nearly constant searching and anticipating. It is subtle, hidden well by his physical talent, but you can see it. His posture and expression are indicative of a horse who is using his sensory system in a searching and slightly defensive posture, especially in the zone 4 (rear zone of sensitivity, as shown on the map for those taking the course) and this corresponds with zone 1, the forward aspect, creating "Pull", a sort of emotional anchor. This contributes to the emotional energy leaks and his physical countenance in motion, especially when being dogged from the rear or obliques, not expressing entirely forward.

Track Phantom is not collecting stress, which is good, however it filters through him and mitigates his ability to find another gear, offsetting components that create a static disposition. This lends itself to hitting a plateau and makes him vulnerable to predatory-styled attackers. The defensive, searching slant of the sensory system is used for safety in chaos and in such cases, especially when "racing", horses have trouble with depth-perception and self-awareness' because sensory lead changes are compromised when at speed.

Track Phantom's state of hi-alert is subdued and comforted best when he has a bachelor buddy hanging out with him. This allows him access to outsourcing in these circumstances

and subsequently is able to find a mental cadence when in harmony. This offers emotional succor and greatly relaxes him because he doesn't have to make his own decisions.

This is a good strategy to use to help him eat up time in motion, but you also must be concerned then that his "buddy" will kick on and cut the cord because they are a stronger herd dynamic.

Additional Thoughts:

Ironically for some horses, their greatest assets can also be their biggest antagonists. Track Phantom is an example of this phenomenon. There is no doubting that he is a well-prepared and highly capable physical athlete, he has a singularly defined running style and is nothing if not consistent in its execution. At the same time, the reasons for this physically efficient style are rooted in the inefficiencies of psychology. In the bulk of competition physical talent alone will take you far, and it has for him, but it can only take you so far and is highly predicated upon the environment of the competition. Track Phantom, though he moves with physical control, does not move into forward space with as much purpose as he could be, and this is not anyone's fault nor can it be "fixed", it is behavioral genetic characteristic.

Among the most difficult of things for the herd-wired horse to do is operate independently of their nature, and when we add the stress of competition against their peers with whom they are naturally inclined to be bound to, the strain for some is not long sustainable. Track Phantom emotionally relaxes best and enjoys the most mind-to-body fluency when in the company of a mate to "run with". This is a common bachelor herd behavior pattern in male horses with sensory unsoundness in their makeup. This strengthening of their character in tandem, a binding fabric of herd structure, is through the lens of competition a point of contention and vulnerability. The horse whose hand you're holding is the one who decides when to let you go... your performance is then dependent upon the caprice of their nature.

It is from this consideration in context with the task at hand, that I assign his Competitive Edge Rating as C+.

Human Factor:

There is no mystery here, Track Phantom is going to ask to be allowed to run his pattern and it would be counterproductive to try and inhibit it. The way I see it, we know his vulnerability and we know his strength, the only way to optimize any horse and rider collaboration is that it be both complimentary in nature and purposeful in execution. I would adopt the "you go I go" mindset, go with him to his space of comfort and then become his bachelor herd buddy. Track Phantom will take care of getting himself positioned, the jockey then must be charged with his emotional posture. Be his bridge; sense and feel, absorb, and process all that is around him, emotionally supporting his GHD and dare the competition. You cannot change what you cannot change; if you're not working with a horse's natural herd dynamic, you're working against it.

DOMESTIC PRODUCT

by Practical Joke o/o Goods and Services

Trained by: Chad C. Brown

Owner: Klaravich Stables, Inc.

Breeder: Klaravich Stables

Domestic Product has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Domestic Product brings several favorable “naturally occurring” psychological components to his game. I say naturally occurring because left to his own devices, he is quite capable of handling his affairs.

Right from the get-go I noticed a very favorable mental cadence and mind-to-body fluent expression indicative of a young horse with a big drink of air; he seemed to have the natural rhythms of a horse that would absorb time-in-motion.

Where he has a competitively geared Individual Herd Dynamic, it is not naturally fast cycling, or what I often refer to as a hi-rev, drop the hammer type of expresser. Domestic Product does, however, have a competitively geared GHD. His Group Herd Dynamic is efficient, sensory sound and clears space around him. Something unique about Domestic Product can be found in his tendency under competitive stress, which is that he feeds off close space. The tighter the box the more comfortable he seems to be, and he has the capacity for (or audacity to) feed off the energy and rhythms of his herd mates while conserving his own. This matching of cadence is not coming from a place of need to outsource, but rather it is purposeful; he likes it.

A physically talented mover driven by a psychology that doesn't get in his own way, Domestic Product does well in conserving physical energy through the steady hum of his athletically paced group dynamic. What I mean by that is, commonly the Group Herd Dynamic portion of the psychology necessarily cycles in a more deliberate manner owing to its responsibility. Starting at the beginning with sifting through the broader reach of the environment during the Survey stage of the sensory sequence, the GHD in essence tells the horse where they are, where you are, and what is happening around them. The IHD then, in short, is engaged when stresses are elevated, and singular targets have been circled on the radar screen. By its nature, the individual dynamic cycles faster to

accommodate enhanced movement and is where competitive nature is expressed. In athletically expressing horses, like Domestic Product, the group dynamic cycles faster than is commonly found (we breed this, but it is difficult to control in random matings), allowing him to hum-along at a faster clip over extended duration in tight spaces.

By proxy, and unfortunately so, this type of herd dynamic profile is often misdiagnosed and left unnurtured.

Vulnerabilities:

Among the vulnerabilities that come with a horse with the characteristic expressions such as those inherent in Domestic Product is that they camouflage their combative nature from view. Not only do they keep it under wraps for long periods of time, a hi-rev GHD can keep the IHD from sticking it's head out too far, because the horse just doesn't sense the need to let go of the comfortable cadence of GHD. From a human perspective it can be frustrating, and I completely get the blinker experiment as an attempt to ignite the fire. The trouble is, Domestic Product's version of that fire was and is steadily burning, just not always as bright and loud as maybe it could be.

And for as efficient and progressive as his GHD is, Domestic Product does have some vulnerability in the IHD when he tries to or is asked to over-express it. Partially a byproduct of an interrupted growth pattern owing to vision restriction which forces a horse to rely on the sense of “feel” in sensory zones where it is not naturally an active participant (if you are taking the Visual Handicapping course, on your map I am referring to zones 6 & 2). There are markers that in an over-extended IHD battle, Domestic Product begins to lose his mind to body fluency and becomes “floaty”, leaking emotional energy out through sensory zones 6 and 2 that are otherwise occupied and more evenly distributed by a fast-rev GHD. There is plenty of emotional energy from which to draw upon, duration and

distance are not an issue relative to 10 furlongs, however, just how “hammer-down” and “up yours” he can be approaching the wire is suspect from my view. Not that he can’t, but will he?

The biggest antagonist that I see in Domestic Product is that when in IHD battle zone, especially in extended stay mode, he begins to tuck back under the blanket and there is a pull back into GHD. He has zero need for bridging when in the group dynamic but the same cannot be said when in the individual dynamic. There are outsourcing markers, which means that from a sensory clearance point of view, Domestic Product drops down a notch. He is unable to, over extended IHD burns, process the environment at a competitive rate; thus, he will hang with a pal or two. If none are available, he will flip flop in and out of IHD because doing more than poking his out the window for quick looks serves to accumulate stress. This becomes a point of concern for me when in protracted combat against aggressive mindsets that I can’t overlook in my overall consideration. I know how I would coach this horse, but where do we fit him on May 4th?

Additional Thoughts:

Confirmation Bias is an unfortunate collateral part of any industry where human caprice is paired with emotionally driven results. Ultimately it can be impatience, misunderstanding, or both that leads to the proverbial error on the side of this is what we always do in this situation, when it comes to how equine athletes are prepared. This is of course only my opinion on the matter, so that can be taken with a grain of salt, but nonetheless I view Domestic Product’s growth pattern to have been slightly interrupted in progress by the application of

blinkers. That said, it was a smart move and positive conscious effort to remove them.

Naturally occurring growth pattern delays or human interruptions that may have contributed aside, the overall herd dynamic presence and strength-of-power is something of a nagging issue for me. Domestic Product is a good horse getting better and I think has a yet to be determined ceiling, but the right here and right now of it all tells me that he yet needs assistance to clear space and sustain it. I just don’t feel that he has of yet reached his high point in combat education, and where I could be wrong because I have been before, I can’t go over a Competitive Edge Rating of C+ when I stand back and look at the total picture.

Human Factor:

The one thing I would advise against is trying to ask of him what he isn’t naturally inclined to do. Some horses can be nudged and re-postured, but Domestic Product has his “isms” and for him to best execute his athletic expression, these need to be accommodated. I would eat up as much time and space while within a crowded room for as long as I could, all the while looking for a Goose who I could ride with. Timing is a big deal with this maneuver, for we know that Domestic Product may prove reluctant to be away from the crowd for long unless he’s slung like a rock in a wrist-rocket before has time to think it over.

JUST STEEL

by Justify o/o Irish Lights
Trained by: D. Wayne Lukas
Owner: BC Stables, LLC
Breeder: Summerhill Farm

Just Steel has raced 11 times.
Competitive Edge Rating - **C+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Just Steel is a unique mystery of assorted strengths that, often just under the surface, have a sparkle to them that draws your attention. Among those that stand out to me is an underlying deep well of emotional energy that, though is on the heavier side of things (more methodical in natural rhythm), is nonetheless full of determination and desire.

Just Steel has a grinding, steady emotional energy distribution. Though he expresses the competitive stressors that he onboard in an athletic manner, (forward and through the Individual Herd Dynamic), he is not an IHD-first psychology. Just Steel has a shift toward the Group Herd Dynamic, and despite being asked to “sprint” as an early youth, his nature is to run through the full sensory sequence. Those of you along for the ride taking the online course will already know the sequence; survey □ orient □ investigate □ absorb □ interpret □ response.

The full sensory sequence is akin to the GHD based horses and is where they draw from when ramping up into IHD battle mode. An IHD shifted horse is cycling through these with less deliberation and very often skipping through, responding with or without purpose depending on how sensory efficient they are. Looking beyond the sensory impediment placed upon him, Just Steel is a sensory sound horse.

One of the essential core strengths that stands out to me about Just Steel is he has no lack of try in him and he will work with, not against, the human in the seat. He does a very good job of anticipating intention whilst running through his environmental awareness checklist, and this is a great asset in races where duration and chaos are party favors.

His ability to ascertain what unfolds around him is a useful tool for Just Steel, for he matches his psychological cadence to the shapes and rhythms around him. This enables him to respond

with purpose and control. His physical movement is poetic, graceful even and from my seat has all the earmarks of a mind to body fluency suitable for time-in-motion, i.e., distance.

His IHD strength is not an attack now kind, it is more the I'll dog you, nag you, shadow you and annoy you into submission, type. This psychological expression is slow growing and elastic, taking time to build and condense into action. Sadly, this herd dynamic is often misunderstood and misappropriated by being urged too soon in a world where time is money. Just Steel is yet learning how to battle and there are signs of intensity coming to fruition faster as he learns the difference between patience and apathy.

Because he is yet learning that difference, what he does best by proxy and by nature is drafting. An underappreciated competitive edge is the ability to draft right behind a single horse, not placed randomly within a herd but purposely behind another. This engages his IHD and helps ignite his passion.

Vulnerabilities:

Though Just Steel appears to have been considered an early, IHD slanted horse by virtue of the headgear and the timing of his career, he is in my opinion quite the opposite. The vulnerability inherent in that is a delayed, interrupted and staggered psychological growth pattern. It has and is taking him longer to define himself in the human world.

It is not unusual for the otherwise sensory sound horse who is accessorized with blinkers to experience the opposite effects of their primary purpose. This becomes a human-induced vulnerability in the face of competition as it does two things; it interrupts natural growth patterns (including the education of combat), and it causes delays in the sensory sequences. A horse with true sensory indices can be aided by equipment in the heat of battle, where horses with sensory efficiency will

ultimately seek to self-bridge. (This is an overcompensation; when the room is dark I must hyper focus with my sense of feel so I don't misstep...).

A vulnerability with Just Steel that could be and has already been costly in combat situations is that he refers to GHD when he should be transitioning into IHD. He takes more time to cycle through the environment before competitive action, and this now may have become an unfortunate learned behavior.

Another vulnerable part of Just Steel is that when it is time for an increase in energy, he can find himself depleted of reserves to fully execute. Most especially he becomes vulnerable when being asked to be a hi-rev, fast cycling and quick to respond athlete too early in a race, for this throws him off his natural cadence. You can see it in his physical expressions, there is a mismatch between what is being asked, what he is trying to accommodate, and his physical movement and rhythm. His movement looks very aligned with his dial-up from GHD into an IHD over time mentality, and when asked to rush through these sentences he begins to loosen that fluency. This costs him time, and we know that time is distance; trying to keep up with himself has brought on mental fatigue.

Another concern I have is that the eyewear has, regardless of how pronounced they may or may not be, delayed Just Steel's sensory lead changes which further eats energy and disrupts his fluency, and he goes from moving freely through the environment to moving less freely within it. It goes from imposing oneself upon the environment to more carefully making your way so as not to make a mistake.

Additional Thoughts:

Just Steel is somewhat of an anomaly in my view, a horse with a confused growth pattern that, though he may well have his own demons to overcome, seems further disrupted by an early start with equipment. I see Just Steel as a horse with a capable competitiveness inside him that has yet to be fully released or perhaps fully capitalized on. It's difficult to tell just how well developed his aptitude for competing is, which is often the case with GHD horses wearing headgear their entire career. He has raced 11 times but has the growth pattern of a horse who has raced for half that, and the truth is, I can only speculate as to the reasons, I don't know the horse personally.

That said, after studying him and comparing his expressions to his father for any behavioral stamping clues, I had a takeaway regarding his psychology that is, I feel, of vital importance.

Just Steel has a natural way of funneling emotional energy into the forward aspect in IHD combat mode, and this is through direct drafting. From a psychological standpoint, this is an underdeveloped coaching paradigm, there are many GHD slanted horse's male and female that access a heightened sensitivity to space infractions in this way, hence they get agitated. The result, if coached-up in this light, is a desire to put said horse behind them. There are a great many inherent, herd dynamic nuances of horse behavior that can be tapped to naturally coach them to stretch beyond, even just for a little while, their herd-binding inclinations.

What we are left to ponder is, "will the real Just Steel please stand up". Who is he right now and is who he is, good enough to go to blows with peers that are obviously further along in their combat training? I have tossed this around for an entire day and night by the time of this writing and when I put it all into the context of both peers and environment, and the attrition of his previous racing schedule going into May 4th, I settle precariously upon a Competitive Edge Rating of C+.

Human Factor:

My advice to the jockey is to let Just Steel have the time he desires to take in and onboard the world as it happens and not be impatient. There is both duration and distance to sort, and it is best to use time in the beginning and not lose it in the end.

Let this horse have his purposeful, slow build-up preferably somewhere amid the herd in bulk and find yourself a good prospect and go right behind them, right on up the corn hole close enough to count the hairs on the tail. I truly believe that if Just Steel has an opportunity to (safely of course) draft directly behind another horse who has themselves a good and steady cadence from which to feed, he will be more inclined to engage. In this manner you make the world smaller. Think of walking up to a horse and getting all their attention forward by walking right up to nearly touching their nose, you engage them. A key to stimulating a GHD horse is through direct focus in close proximity, and when we do this through movement, we increase competitive output.

MYSTIK DAN

by Goldencents o/o MA'AM

Trained by: Kenny McPeck

Owner: Lance Gasaway, 4 G Racing LLC
(Brent Gasaway) & Daneil Hamby III

Breeder: Lance Gasaway, Daniel Hamby
& 4G Racing, LLC

Mystik Dan has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

There are quite a few things to like about Mystik Dan, and at the top of that list is an honest and forthright athletic expression inherent in his Individual Herd Dynamic; Mystik Dan is a racehorse. His growth patterns have been consistent and forward, he has learned how to better control his hi-rev target oriented emotional energy a little better with each herd motion experience and has found himself more refined in athletic execution because of it.

The credit for this is two-fold and worth mentioning: He himself has shown an aptitude for mental growth which means that his Group Herd Dynamic, not a prevailing characteristic within him, nonetheless is functional. And he has been coached and trained very well. The simple fact is that a patient human mindset has allowed Mystik Dan the “room to grow” and to develop properly and proportionately. Thus, his underperforming group dynamic that was a part of his early combat service is now a strength in competition supporting his IHD.

Mystik Dan has evolved an IHD cruising gear from the “just enough” support he is now enjoying from an improved sensory efficiency within the group dynamic. He has grown stronger with energy distribution and more thoughtful with its conservation, helping offset a hi-rev/fast cycling natural cadence to his psychology which, early on, had many pinhole leaks. Most notable is his emergence from the barrier. This has become much less bumpy, eating up much less time than before in smoothing out the bumps, setting him in motion with more fluency.

Physically, Mystik Dan translates every bit of his emotional energy into the production of forward thrust when he is in that IHD cruising gear where he is steady and rhythmical in motion. Additionally, he has recently started to be more mindful of the intentions coming from the human in the saddle. He has gone from a horse who was slightly indifferent to subtle ques

to being a more sensitive creature, more responsive; another direct clue of his GHD growth, for communication is rooted within a horse’s group dynamic and physically expressed through the individual dynamic. This serves him well in elite combat because it invites him to be properly Bridged through situational chaos that his GHD cannot itself process. Having an outsourcing means from the saddle is essential when covering competitive distance. This is especially true for horses with underperforming GHD’s or still evolving group dynamics.

Interestingly, the fact that Mystik Dan’s GHD is less than fully developed (or with naturally lower efficacy to its characteristics) but is nonetheless supportive of his IHD, which is quite developed and high functioning, he can run more freely in the mud than many fast rhythmmed IHD horses can. Surface versatility is indeed a strength not all horses enjoy.

Vulnerabilities:

For all Mystik Dan’s mind to body fluency when he is in IHD cruise, two things are noteworthy as points of vulnerability. His emotional energy surges through him with a lot of down-pressure, this places a lot of strain on his body while leaking out a lot of emotional energy in the process. Where his most efficient gear is realized through the steady hum of IHD cruise when his mental cadence and physical pace become synced and congruent. It’s getting to that space and its ultimate sustainability that causes a hint of pause for me. His emotional energy is expressed more up-n-down than it is back-to-front leading into his cruising gear and then again when he is trying to press down a little more on the gas pedal to find still another, yet elusive, gear. Herein is where his physical efficiency becomes interrupted, presenting a marked challenge in the sustainability of long range or long-term combat. Like a car at its maximum output being asked for more, things start to shimmy and shake and become more difficult to control and you soon realize that you need to slow it down a bit. This

is where duration of intensity becomes more antagonistic than the physical distance; where he can easily compete physically for 10 Furlongs, I am concerned that emotionally the drain of being competitive during that time frame could prove challenging. I see 100 seconds of combat strength, for example, but maybe not the proverbial 120.

Something else that is gnawing for me as a vulnerability in the face of sustained competition is his overall Herd Dynamic Power. Against peers with highly developed sensory efficiency, the cornerstone of Independent Nature, Mystik Dan, though having a well-formed competitive nature, is slightly below the top tier levels of HDP. It is true that physically efficient and talented horses on the daily “win” the wire against higher HDP athletes, but they cannot beat them. Things like longer duration and an increase in the number of upper-level combatants are points of aggression added to the mix to overcome and can expose the weakness.

Additional Thoughts:

An interesting fact about Independent Nature is that horseracing is the only sport where I want to see it fully expressed. In other disciplines where the horse is doing things contrary to their nature where “teaching” and coaching through the associative aspect are essential elements, I never recommend horses that are strong HDP’s with “who are you again?” in their behavioral genetic coding.

A separating distinction between herd hierarchy are the degrees of independent nature, and it can, and often does, play-out over the course of a classic distance race. The trick for Mystik Dan as I see it, is in not getting tangled up and locking horns with equal or more athletically refined peers. If he is still learning to distribute his energy and expand his range of competitive distance, he will need to navigate the herd chaos thoughtfully and strategically. I can’t help but wonder, however, if indeed we are not at the apex of herd dynamic development, if Mystik Dan is not now at his peak? A part of me thinks so, and this leaves me to then consider the total environment he will likely experience as a key dynamic. Always a factor, horses going up against high level competitors who are themselves just a tick or two below them in emotional strength and presence, the environment plays a profound role in the unfolding drama. That said, if I am team Mystik Dan, I would be praying for rain, a monsoon even as I feel this gives him an environmental advantage.

With everything considered and having thought about this horse’s total performance profile in every detail from as many views from the hoof as I could, I ended up with a guarded Competitive Edge Rating of C+.

Human Factor:

Avoid HDP if at all and when at all possible. If he has reached his Herd Dynamic Power zenith, which appears to be a real possibility, there are no more herd dynamic tricks up his sleeve and the growth pattern is complete. All that is left is refinement. This comes from the coaching staff before race day, and from the saddle during.

Mystik Dan is a very capable athlete, he brings to the table a whole bunch of “good” that are desirable characteristics for any racehorse, and he is 100% honest and forthright. He wears his heart on his sleeve, and he only asks that he be buffered where needed, guided when asked, and gently urged when required.

ENCINO

by Nyquist o/o Glittering Jewel

Trained by: Brad Cox

Owner: Godolphin, LLC

Breeder: Godolphin

Encino has raced 4 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

A horse's natural pattern of motion is at the core of its integral strength, it is the foundation of their natural growth patterns, that proper "seasoning" from competitive experience. When I study Encino, what stands out to me is that his natural pattern of motion is, in my view, one that is not yet fully employed. There is a version of his athletic strength that may as yet be untapped.

Encino has an undeniably strong competitive nature erupting through his body from the Individual Herd Dynamic, that to-single-target or space mentality that so easily engages the "one track minded" colt. And he has been, rightfully so, encouraged to expand upon this inclination. That said, I feel his ultimate strength and the core from which he is best built, was shown by proxy in his opening act. Encino has the gift of being sensory sound both in the Group and Individual Herd Dynamics. He is very fluent in determining the cadence of the horses in his environment and in anticipating herd motion, these are all gifts of the GHD. From this posture and its accompanying herd position, Encino can launch. He has a long-range Distance Target Focus; he can zero-in on a position or peer well out in front and nearly will himself to that place without once losing forward projection. I think that this power move just needs refinement for him to fully exploit the advantages that are found in the vulnerability of his peers.

Relentless is a word that can describe his effort, an explosive IHD with the physical thrust that sees it manifest in full almost immediately, Encino has the group herd awareness in his back pocket to draw from, though he rarely, from a positional standpoint, accesses it. The versatility is there but is often overshadowed by his turned-loose aggressive nature as he plows forward into space.

There is a wealth of athletic energy within Encino, and once his position is established, he invites a battle of wills to the arena. He is a sensory sound, gritty competitor that has the aptitude and the ability to impress himself upon his environment and does so with a fast-cycling nature that is not unlike a "surprise attack" to most of the peers he's been against thus far.

Vulnerabilities:

What is the ultimate cost of being relentless and even cavalier in forward projection? Often the cost is stamina, both mental and physical. The thing with Encino is, I see a very affective, (when leaned upon), group dynamic, something he could use to his benefit in conserving emotional energy. Encino, being so forwardly expressive, for all its strengths in the moment, may at length prove to be his undoing if left unmanaged. A potential accompanying vulnerability for him is an extension of the saddle; being urged even in the slightest in my opinion, will only confirm what Encino views as his proper positioning. But just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. The only time the shortest distance between two points when measured in duration, is a direct line, is when there is nothing between them to navigate.

His physical effort is quite intense and unwavering throughout, coupled with a never quit IHD mindset, that the further the distance is the more concerned I become about physical and mental fatigue setting in. Of both things, there are signs. His physical action in my opinion is slightly less than ideal especially when pressing into space as if he's running from the law, and as his mental cycles spin in time with his physical motion to clear the space, he begins to get a little sloppy. Pinhole leaks begin emerging in the balloon and the mind to body fluency that is a must for sustained effort starts to get a little bumpy. When running "this hot" and with so much aggression, the clock that measures competitive distance aptitude starts to show warning signs that it is about to run out.

Where it is a strength to have such a strong aggressively forward emotional energy, it is a vulnerability not to be able to dial it back and let it serve in a tactical manner. Encino does not instinctively “recognize” the difference between cruising and combat; naturally high-level herd dynamic horses selectively pick and choose their moments of aggression; they have a switch so to speak. Encino is yet developing and the recognition between cruise and combat is necessarily an extension from the saddle. The physical athlete of course must have the stamina and pace to cover the ground effectively, but the psychological athlete needs to be selective in the level of competitive intensity needed and given throughout, lest they have nothing left to fight with at the wire.

The growth pattern he is on or has been led upon, one of taking the fight to the contest, works well for a lot of horses, especially those that have little choice but to outrun their inefficiencies. But I view Encino as more the type whose real advantage is within his ability to let the herd argue amongst themselves, target the weak points that become exposed, and exploit them.

From a body language perspective, you can see by the rigidity of his ears that Encino is internalizing a great deal of emotional intensity, almost as if you or I were “gritting” our teeth while performing a task. Not because we didn’t like it or feel comfortable doing it, but because we’re constantly putting dollars into a drawer that only needs 50 cents; the byproduct of overextending emotional energy is an excess of physical exertion. A great force from which to draw upon situationally becomes less effective and steadily muted when overused, ultimately weakening his herd dynamic strength in the process.

Additional Thoughts:

Encino is a horse that has shown a lot of grit, talent, and drive so far in his career. A horse whom I view as a deep closer masquerading as a front running pace setter. He is a naturally versatile athlete with an over-expressing nature, one that if you open the door or tap his shoulder, he has no issue bursting into action. Where he can effectively attack early, which has served him well so far in the company and distances he’s been in, the best use of his total athleticism in my opinion is from a mid-herd stalking position. I don’t want to see him too far back, but I would like to see him attack from the middle, conserve emotional energy, and then burst on the scene taking full advantage of existing independent nature by letting it express in predatory fashion.

But the truth is, I doubt that this will happen.

Encino is a mentally capable athlete, he has inherent Herd Dynamic Power and versatility, however his ability to outrun the competition in all but 1 of his races to this point has left

him a little behind on learning how to “outdue!” and out-grit a worthy, in your face adversary. No pun intended but in short, I am concerned about the competitive distance and the accompanying physical and mental stamina factors at 10 furlongs. Encino competes so hard in every moment, stride to stride, that he often asks more of himself than he has yet been asked for by others, but that may soon change. He has the desire and the will to go to battle with any horse and will likely do so with all the dash we see in the best athletes, but I am worried that he is yet lacking combat experience and tactical refinement to see it through.

In my view, Encino is a very capable competitor who is entering his next battle with a current Competitive Edge Rating of C+.

Human Factor:

If I’m on the back of this IHD hi-rev athlete, the last thing I want to do is put him in situations that invite him to engage unnecessarily. It’s not an easy job to ask a horse with this much emotional energy being expressed so forwardly from gate to wire to dial it back a little. But from my chair here, this is the best tactic to adopt in races above middle distance where competitive duration combined with physical distance are factors. I would seek to move incrementally from a settled position right out of the gate, let that energy and urgency build, navigate my way into a spying position where I could time my long-range attack. His overall HDP is yet to be known as it may not be fully developed, so I would not rely on his presence to hold back combatants but rather invest in his willingness to pounce.

T O PASSWORD

by Copano Rickey o/o T O Rachel

Trained by: Daisuke Takayanagi

Owner: Tomoya Ozasa

Breeder: Yanagawa Bokujo

T O Password has raced 2 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Even with the limited number of competitive experiences there are nonetheless a few things that stand clear as competitive strengths for T O Password. It is apparent to me that he is on the forward slant of the Individual Herd Dynamic and that it is competitive in its nature. Expressing a great deal of emotional energy straightaway from the gate, T O Password waits for no one to establish his physical position or his posture. He's a horse eager to get a place at the table from the moment mom yells "Dinner!". His manner of expressing is in such a way that it tells me this is learned, associative behavior. In fact, his early pattern of motion in its entirety is such; his connections likely feel they know "what" he is and are trying to accommodate it. Hopefully "who" he is, develops as a match.

His fast-cycling individual dynamic is supported by physical talent enough to keep up and his sensory efficiency in the fore-left, forward, and fore-right areas of sensitivity, (zones 6, 1 and 2 for those of you who are in the visual handicapping course and have the sensory soundness map), are so far clearing space effectively. This sensory clearance and depth of strongly expressing emotional energy are indicative of the forwardly placed running style, and it seems so far that T O Password has enough physical talent to execute it. Time will tell if he has the mental stamina to underwrite it.

His IHD is also showing signs that it has and will continue to develop a strong sense of "to-target" DTF, a Distance Target Capacity where the horse can sight and hold, (not have to reacquire) objects or positional objective points, even those of open space. He maintains a nice line around the turns and does not lose any physical efficiency in the process, which helps in preserving physical stamina. .

Vulnerabilities:

The key to success for a horse with emerging Distance Target Focus capacity in any competition where duration, distance, and emerging strengths of peers are factors, is hinged upon the efficiency of the Group Herd Dynamic. GHD being charged with identifying and interpreting at-large environmental stimuli, which allows then the IHD to stay on task, most especially tasks that involve accelerated physical pace, must have above average functionality. There are signs of a potential breach of contract between the two psychological dynamics, which would leave T O Password in a situation where he would have to outrun himself as well as his peers. Has done both successfully to this point, but for how long and how far? The rhythm expressions that I'm seeing at this point, along with the level of sensory functionality demonstrated, have him optimizing his physical talent in a competitive manner for a duration of time suitable for a middle-distance athlete.

Among the vulnerable are his emotional energy reserves. There is yet a goodly portion of his emotional energy that is being leaked out through the forward (zone 1) aspect unused because his self-awareness is seemingly devoid of a reference point when he is out in front. His sensory lead changes are, when in all out hi-rev output, erratic and searching as if in-waiting and he is less than aware of anything approaching zone 4, the rear aspect. This tells you that his sense of feel is either underdeveloped (which could be a byproduct of training methods or just a natural area of sensory unsoundness) and his ability to Survey and Orient while in motion is overstressed, making his ultimate ability to Interpret and Respond in a timely manner to defend himself and his space, lethargic at best.

It may seem counterintuitive to teach a horse to go forward by coaching them through the rear aspect, yet there are many

horses who could benefit from this. For them to emotionally express through the forward aspect and maintain or even increase the rate of motion into space because of the sense and presence of approaching horses coming up behind them, they need to be introduced to this concept and coached forward. Training a horse to go forward is one thing, but coaching them not to become anchored, or hang, is another.

At this point in time T O Password is hitting the ground hard, his energy is pressing down and kicking back up, subsequently he is losing some forward thrust when in hard driving efforts to find a cruising gear. He is leaking away stamina by doing this and shortening the length of his stride. This is a byproduct of his “searching” psychology of motion. Seasoning can help this, and he may be much improved his next time out, but I don’t see him being so much improved that he will competitively sustain himself for the total duration of the distance.

Additional Thoughts:

I am less concerned about T O Password’s lack of combat experience than I am about what he has and has yet to learn about himself and how to control and express competitive nature. The purposeful action of any horse’s expression is purely driven solely by emotion. How an athlete handles the nature of stress is an important component directly related to their capacity to express talent. This includes environmental stresses that, though they may not be directly related to, are contributing factors of, performance outcome.

In studying the performance psychology of T O Password I see a fine horse who is more athlete than he is athletic so far in his development. Where it can be fairly stated that he has “raced” in a large field before, I dismiss the importance of this because he did not “compete” against a large number of peers. His position, coupled with his rear sensory unsoundness, made his personal experience rather common if not pedestrian. This May 20 foal is still figuring things out, a talented youngster yet

learning the game beyond the run. I’m not saying that he won’t figure it out, even though I have my doubts he will ever realize high functioning Independent Nature, I am saying that I don’t think he is there yet. For this reason and in the context of the Kentucky Derby experience, not as a knock against the fella, I see him with a Competitive Edge Rating of C.

Human Factor:

My advice from a psychological perspective, considering where T O Password is at this stage in his growth pattern, is to do all that you can to keep him from over expressing himself. In order to give him a chance to compete for the total duration of time I think it would be wise to use the peer environment as best possible. By that I mean see about piggybacking; find a mate and work toward a matching cadence which can help relax T O Password and by proxy eat up ground while preserving physical and emotional endurance. When there is a shot at an opening, don’t ask him to take it, let him take it if he sniffs it out. This is a great learning opportunity where, as we have seen more than a few times before, anyone can get the jump on the wire if the circumstances play out right.

CATALYTIC

by Catalina Cruiser o/o One Show Only

Trained by: Saffie A. Joseph, Jr.

Owner: Bobo, Tami. Davies, Julie and Isaacs, George G

Breeder: Fred W. Hertrich

Catalytic has raced 3 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Catalytic displays a very strong and immediate expression of Individual Herd Dynamic well before he exits the gate. Studying his countenance in and his first few strides out of the gate, Catalytics' emotional posture is that of a horse who is mentally on the go and just waiting to push the body forward.

A physically filtering, fast rhythm horse, Catalytic best operates when up in the fray and engaging in IHD battles from the outset. Though he is very nearly in a hurry to "get there", he is ultimately able to run through and not just in, the competitive conditions. Where his Group Herd Dynamic is pressed hard to accommodate the environment around him, once Catalytic dials in and filters out full-on in the forward, Individual Herd Dynamic, he becomes arrow sharp and quite capable and willing to throw himself forward into a space. He reminds me of a dart looking for a balloon to pop.

His best competitive expression thus far in his young career is when in a sustained drive into space, he doesn't have the earmarks of a horse that needs assistance from peers, nor does Catalytic appear to be heavily reliant upon his helmsman for direction. In the box he fits in, which is yet to show a wide degree of versatility, he nonetheless can compete effectively and is not beaten down by peer pressure. In fact, Catalytic has a dismissive nature in that he beats to his own drum and plays his own music, seemingly oblivious to situational chaos while minding his own affairs for as long as he is able.

Physically strong and efficient; athletically, Catalytic gets the most out of every stride.

Vulnerabilities:

Catalytic has what I personally refer to as a horse that is expressing a "sprinters" rhythm. Not because a typical sprint

distance is the only type of race that these mental cadences can compete in, but because the further the physical distance the more physically reliant they become. There is a point in time where these horses will enter the fog of mental fatigue and will be left outrun it.

From the gate, and I dare say even before the gate opens, he is already up against himself. With heightened sensitivities Catalytic erupts from the barrier already in IHD compete mode, and it takes his body several strides to catch up. This makes him a little "bumpy" until he can regulate and recover from over-expressing. Then key factor here, and something that antagonizes overall performance, is that Catalytic is mentally seeking fast engagement not from, but because it is how he filters environmental stresses, he tries to outrun them; his Group Herd Dynamic is unable to accommodate these overt expressions. This is where the "bumpy" early expressions stem from; his body and mind are essentially disconnected for a time, one part of him is doing one thing and the other is trying to catch up. This lends itself to an overage risk on his emotional energy expense account, and where he is arrow sharp for a time, he is at risk of popping his own balloon and hitting the ultimate performance inhibition, the heretofore evil doer, mental fatigue.

A capable horse with a boatload of emotional energy to rely upon, it is the proper distribution of that which for me is the most gnawing. He is always moving in an athletic slant, but for all his physical talent, the struggle with mental efficiency lends itself to a less than complete total performance. When we are considering 10 Furlongs of ground to cover, I just don't feel he will be able to both outrun himself and the peers he will face. I also have a concern, however minor it may prove to be, how the total environmental experience may affect him. With all the earmarks of a horse who filters stress most naturally through movement, external before internal, I can't help but look at the overall experience of race day and wonder how much of himself he is using before the gate opens...?

Additional Thoughts:

Catalytic is a classic example of the separation between time and distance. It isn't the distance; it is the duration that gives me most pause here. I see a horse with a lot of talent who is still learning how to control and distribute emotional energy. His sensory system struggles to identify the bulk of the environment that isn't within the forward aspect, zone 1, and subsequently there is an accumulation of unprocessed and uninterpreted stresses in all areas that aren't forward, and this is where he is in a rush then, to go. Despite the markers that Catalytic's environmental interpretations, his GHD, are struggling to keep up, I am happy to have seen no blinkers because this would ultimately prove to be of minimal effect. He is already fully condensed into zone one during combat circumstances and he has shown an improving trend (even though only marginally to this point) for getting himself together and running through it. The best hope for a continued trend to the positive is to not impede his senses with equipment, he is always fighting through and adding further blocks would only add to the emotional weight, disrupting the positives in his growth patterns.

Nonetheless, when I consider the amount of emotional energy required and pushed into every stride, I can't help but view Catalytic, to this point in his career, as a horse who is over expressing/overexerting and leaking away competitive edge in the process. He's chipping away at the total time he has available for competing by paying three bits for a stride that should only cost one. It is for this reason that, when I look at the big picture for this horse in the context of where he is, and to be fair, where his ideal competitive distance truly is, Catalytic comes out with a Competitive Edge Rating of C.

Human Factor:

Guide, not steer, that is my advice based upon the psychological profile I'm seeing here. Horses with the mindset we have here will not pay a lot of attention to much of anything until they sort themselves out. It takes Catalytic a few tries during the sensory sequence to functionally Survey and Orient. When horses are in this part of the mainframe anything that is close to them, including the human upon their back, is largely nonexistent. We must remember; it is the operating system that is running the machine. It will only become a battle to do more than look well ahead and get him pointed toward something early that can help carry him. The goal should be preservation and responsible distribution of energy, gaining an early cadence with the environment and letting him be as much of himself as possible without being in positions that will tax him further.

SOCIETY MAN

by Good Magic o/o You Cheated

Trained by: Danny Gargan

Owner: West Paces Racing LLC., Danny Gargan
and GMP Stables LLC.

Breeder: SF Bloodstock LLC

Society Man has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Society Man is a hard-working and honest horse with an efficient Group Herd Dynamic well suited for duration and distance.

Among the core assets is that he has a very patient manner and methodical cadence in his group dynamic mental cycle that is well suited for allowing the herd structure around him to shape without being affected by it himself. An added favorable caveat to that being, Society Man is not positional in this, which means that he does not have to be in any certain location in order for him to get the gauge on what is shaping up around him.

Where I don't view his Individual Herd Dynamic to be particularly aggressive or "arrow sharp" into space, (he is a gelding... which can dull competitive expression in some equine psychologies), he is expressing the individual dynamic in a subdued dial-up into a more, "I am present" kind of athlete. Not the type of horse psychology you will necessarily take much notice of until suddenly, he is just there. This ghostly presence has a way of showing up.

Society Man is not going to impose his will upon anyone, he doesn't even appear to seek to, but what he lacks in herd dynamic power (HDP), he makes up for with an even and steady cadence that lulls you into seeing him as insignificant. The advantage in a horse who can hang around and hang in all the way, while the world goes crazy around them, is well documented. These types of horses have won the Kentucky Derby before.

Sensory soundness in the Group Herd Dynamic is more than obvious, Society Man gets the great advantage of having an elevated aptitude of self-awareness. He always knows where he is in relation to others as he grinds through his gears in his controlled and slow rev-up, navigating deftly both the shape of

the evolving herd and, by virtue of a high functioning depth-perception, the surface under his feet. This sensory efficiency in GHD helps "slow the game down", to borrow a phrase, and if you watch him closely, you will see how evenly his emotional energy is flowing through his body under these conditions. A classic example of how the operating system runs the machine.

He can execute purposeful expressions and though he may not reach forward in IHD and take out your feet, tripping you up, he can appear like an apparition. If you're not careful, Society Man can slip into the room through the door you just started to open

Vulnerabilities:

The sensory efficiency that Society Man enjoys within his even and methodical GHD core leaves him when asked to elevate the intensity too quickly. In particular I noted that as the competitive stresses that are collateral to IHD deployment begin to compile, Society Man experiences delays in changing sensory leads. He flips from being M/B to B/M; in my own "Kerry's Lexicon" this stands for Mind ahead of Body (clearing space properly) and Body ahead of Mind (not clearing space effectively). The bottom line is, Society Man is not keen on being pushed to hard too fast, he much prefers letting things play out. Where this can be a strength in common circumstances, when viewed in the context of elite performers as peers, it is more often an Achilles heel.

Another vulnerability that Society Man is dealing with when dialing-in his version of IHD, is that his energy expresses very intensely; the harder he tries to hold and express emotional strength, the more condensed and "boxy" his physical action gets. This is counterproductive to forward extension, emotional reach is what allows for purposeful, sustained stride function and power; his energy is reluctant, and he struggles to release it forward. From a psychological perspective this is from a

lack of herd dynamic strength and overall independent nature. When a horse doesn't naturally assume they have an elevated herd position, be that in a family group or bachelor group, they will struggle to impress themselves upon their environment.

All things considered, where Society Man can cover ground, he seems to have a line drawn between ground coverage and competitive ground coverage. This makes him highly environmentally dependent, he will need to hang around and get the advantage of that which is presented to him, for he will not himself force the issue with definitive purpose.

Additional Thoughts:

Society Man is a likeable horse, he tries hard and is honest, but in the larger picture he is at length a horse highly circumstantial. He needs aid from the environment and in racing, the environment is random and ever changing. His consistency in honest efforts can only guarantee he will try and that he will be present should the environment of the herd shape in his favor. Not that this could not happen for him, but what is the likelihood that it will?

The lack of aggression and quick switch into a sustainable and controlled IHD output could be because he is a gelding, or the reason why he is. Colts that have sensory efficiency, especially when stress accumulates unprocessed within the individual dynamic, will invariably express as "hot", "hard to handle", "unfocused", and otherwise recalcitrant in behavior patterns, especially when not in full movement. This is because these psychological factors are dependent upon two things, mutual dependency within the herd and the freedom to filter stress through physical action. Gelding a colt can have several affects on behavioral expressions and we can save that for a future course lesson I will write for my equine education center programs but suffice it to say that I commonly see from a subtle to a more dramatic dulling of the expressions as a result. It doesn't change the behavioral genetics of the operating system, but it can affect the octane levels.

All things considered, where the horse is athletically inclined but who is also environmentally dependent, I can cheer for them, but I can't rely upon them for sustained success. Not because they can't, but because the randomness of the herd environment matters more to these performance psychologies than most. This means that you 100% must incorporate environmental circumstances into the equation as having a real impact on outcome. That said, I view Society Man's Competitive Edge Rating to dial-in as average, C.

Human Factor:

The mystery here for the jock is not the horse, but the environment. My two cents are that the theme from the saddle should be, relax, relax, relax, allow Society Man to methodically grind through his internal gears of GHD while selectively and without alarm, inching forward. Your best assets are a good, steady, physically capable athlete under you and your careful assessment of how the environment is shaping up. I 100% recommend that to grab a shot at the wire, thinking with strong emotional intent farther forward than Society Man is inclined to do, will help him outsource to you in assuming the forward space is clear of more powerful herd dynamics and you're not going to draw any attention by being there. The environment, and not the other horses, are at length both Society Man's greatest antagonist and greatest asset.

GRAND MO THE FIRST

by Uncle Mo o/o Lillies So Fair

Trained by: Victor Barboza, Jr.

Owner: Granpollo Stable

Breeder: John D. Gunther

Grand Mo the First has raced 6 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C-**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Grand Mo the First lives up to his “highfalutin” name, (a nod to my late grandmother who always used that term tongue and cheek with her church friends for bringing their fancy dishware to the bazaar dinners), in that he quite splendidly skips across the surface. He has a light-footed, easily propelled machine with which to drive, and he drives it with an honest effort.

Among the athletic strengths I find in Grand Mo is that his emotional energy, expressed proportionally slanted into the Individual Herd Dynamic, is not hypersensitive or being overused, there is some versatility within his natural cadence. When paired with physical filtering, Grand Mo has an effective sensory soundness that accommodates the basic needs of his body and his discipline. He is a racehorse.

An asset regardless of the discipline, having sensory efficiency enough to meet the demands of the discipline is vital in keeping the horse from getting in their own way, allowing them to optimize whatever talent they may have.

Grand Mo the First has a unique characteristic in his pocket of resources in that his Group Herd Dynamic, that proprietor of community affairs part of the psyche, is an effective operative assisting his capacity to settle. However short-lived either from his nature or human nature, Grand Mo the First can execute what resembles a group dynamic pattern of motion. After he emerges from the gate he settles in and recalibrates his senses, gaining the advantages found when herd chaos unfolds in front of you and not all around you. He does not, however, for all its markers of existence, sustain it to the point where his GHD is more than an extra tool. But for the duration of time that he adopts this more methodical mental cadence he does so with good effect.

As I've already mentioned, from a physical standpoint Grand Mo gives me the impression of a very light, barely touching the

ground type. The first thing that came to mind when I began to study his races is that he looked much like a greyhound in my eyes. When I see this type of physical expression it tells me straightaway that this is a horse who is not beating himself up, not wasting energy by pushing it into the ground and having it kick back like a rubber ball off concrete. The strength inherent in this is obvious. I invite you to watch a horse's motion not just for lead changes and action, which are essential of course, but consider how hard they are hitting the ground and then look at their head carriage for further clues. Where is the power behind the thrust coming and going? The body provides thrust and power, but the operating system drives it, curates it, conserves and sustains it. When you have a horse that is sensory unsound or is not effectively sensory sound enough to fulfill all the demands of competition, you need to be sure that they are at least not leaking emotional energy out of gaps in their mind to body fluency. If they need to outrun their sensory unsoundness as well as their competitors, no leaks can for long be tolerated.

Vulnerabilities:

Grand Mo the First, though equipped with his strengths to be sure, like every horse, comes with his share of vulnerabilities. These often come as a part of or an extension of their strengths.

Grand Mo the First is a horse who tries harder mentally than is his physical capacity to fulfill it, and when he presses the IHD combat “go button”, and thrusts himself into full-on forward, he is yet devoid of the depth of emotional strength needed to impress himself upon his peers. This leaves him in short order needing to outsource; he gets clingy, reliant upon a bachelor herd-buddy to attach to. Anytime he can physically sustain and stay with, he does, but that is all he can do. A Herd Dynamic Powerhouse he is not. When push comes to shove, Grand Mo for all his desire, settles into a subordinate herd posture.

There are markers of IHD uncertainty that can be noted right from the gate. His first step out is rarely athletically forward, which tells you straight away that his focus in perceived high-pressure ovens is more the searching... "what's happening and when, does anyone know?", as opposed to the purposeful "open the damn door". The use of the sensory system in a defensive posture is not reserved just for the moments in the gate; (keep an eye on this in the post parade for all horses. Those of you who are taking the visual handicapping course can refer to Body Language chapter for details).

What you're observing in the gate and in the moments of their escape is the horse trying hard to connect the sequencings first two steps, Survey and Orient; they can't orient which creates stress, stress accumulates and leads to anxiety. The horse escapes from the gate, and magically finds its footing and seems to have sorted things out. That's because they have in a manner of speaking, they have physically filtered the unprocessed stress. Grand Mo does this and when he takes (is allotted) the time to get the advantage of his group dynamic strength, as we already covered, he processes any residual stresses, and this then allows him to kick back into IHD (competitive) action from a clean (re-kick) slate. Unfortunately for Grand Mo the First, when he dials himself into the "next gear" of IHD streetfighter mode, the struggle to Survey and Orient, those all-important first two stages of the sensory sequence, rears its ugly head again.

Watch closely to his ears and his all-around countenance when not in the company of a peer to buddy-up with and you will see (pause the video, watch a frame-by-frame sequence, and keep an eye on expression), the defensive nature of the Survey and the frantic efforts to Orient. Among the first things to go when competitive stress levels elevate and get ahead of the horse (that thing where I always say B/M body ahead of the mind), is the horse's ability to properly execute SLC's; Sensory Lead Changes. Watch how "floaty" and unbalanced a horse can get when in a full-on drive. It can look as if the body is going one way and the mind another, and that is because they are. This leads a horse to strongly desire a Bridge point, a buddy to lean on.

Additional Thoughts:

There are obstacles that combine to present Grand Mo the First with more than a few inherent things to battle against, complexities of psychology that needs to be sorted before he considers going head-to-head with some of the upper-level Herd Dynamic Power horses.

I never thought it was proper to try and learn about the horse and all their idiosyncrasies of behavior and communication, from our point of view, for a horse lives by the laws of its nature. Where they fit into the herd, how they interpret their world, how they learn, how they're coached, how they

ultimately perform, is governed by the rules of that nature; it is wise to make an effort, to understand it. I put this perspective to use in every horse profile I ever do for any purpose, allowing the horse to tell me who they are. Grand Mo, like all horses, is extremely honest about who they are. It is the taking of this information and determining where they then fit in the context of their performance demands and competition that is the key to handicapping; be it a race, a career, or reviewing considerations for purchase and breeding.

The measure of strengths in the horse juxtaposed with the measure of their vulnerabilities, compared with the context of the demands of their discipline, all come together in the development of their Competitive Edge Rating. With a horse like Grand Mo the First, there are many personal characteristics to overcome and some of them are natural tendencies that translate to prevailing traits when competing under certain stresses. I admire his light, energy saving running style, I like his capacity to regain himself after the gate, and I would not be shocked at all if he was a face in the crowd up in it. But where you can take the horse out of the herd, you cannot take the herd-wiring out of the horse; for these reasons Grand Mo the First's aggregate Competitive Edge Rating, heading into May 4th, computes to a C-.

Human Factor:

My advice is simple, he will benefit the most from the saddle when he gets help riding over his bumps. Helping him navigate through his own inefficiencies by not making a big deal of them. Giving him the time he needs after the gate to filter all cumulative stresses incurred within it, and not succumbing to a sense of urgency. The best chance he has to sustain competitive nature is going to be by breaking the race into bits and "winning" each of them in sequence. If he wants to ride along with another horse for a while, so be it. His performance characteristics define who he is, no good can come from trying to override this. Work with his nature and help Be the Bridge, think forward with strong intent and do not linger in his self-imposed sticking spots.

NO MORE TIME

by *Not This Time* o/o *Baroness Juliette*

Trained by: *Jose Francisco D'Angelo*

Owner: *Morplay Racing LLC*

Breeder: *MAMAS Thoroughbreds, LLC*

No More Time has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C-**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Distance is an environmental strength for No More Time as he finds mental cadence through tangible action.

Physically talented and able to sustain his heavily slanted Individual Herd Dynamic, No More Time's best asset is within his capacity to compete through movement with the best of IHD fast cycling horses. Most notably when he finds an early forward posture where he can rely upon movement and dare other horses to hunt him down and stay with him.

He does have some strength within dependency, as oddly as that sounds. No More Time is not a Group Herd Dynamic multi-tasking magician by any means, wearing blinkers ensures this. I reckon it is true by nature even without them. That said however, his outsourcing dependency in forward-oblique sensory ranges, (zones 6 and 2 on the course's sensory soundness map) which are often the points of delay and much leaking of emotional energy, are abridged when another horse is in this sensory aspect. No More Time affectively attaches himself via the natural binding agent of the herd-wired mindset and is able to relax, filtering competitive stresses through this psychological umbilical.

No More Time has a very efficient stride that is consistent in most circumstances, even those where he is mentally sorting out the environment or running himself out of sensory demands. Where it is an honest stride, it becomes a powerful one when he is able to balance his mental cadence with the rhythms of pace. This is when No More Time is at his best, and once he is there, he can capitalize upon it.

Vulnerabilities:

Where physical distance is an environmentally based strength, psychologically, duration is an environmental liability. No More Time is heavily reliant upon physical-first rhythms to settle

and emotionally conserve energy, walking a tightrope flanked by mind and body both within and without himself. Adding to this fine line between controlled output and misplaced movement is No More Time's singular competitive-gear trait. He has an effective IHD, that is itself vulnerable to his sensory unsoundness.

Group dynamic weakness is a point of constant contention for the physically filtering horse, and No More Time is no exception to this law of nature. It starts in the gate where his sense of self-awareness and depth-perception is greatly exaggerated and askew; mental cycles already at a naturally fast rhythm are increased all the more by the blinkers. The smoothness of his great escape from the barrier is random because of this. If his focus point at the time the gate opens happens to be forward, he comes out relatively clean. If his focus point is anywhere else when the gate opens, he falls out, bursting almost recklessly into action on either account. This makes him extremely reliant upon the start of the race because no matter what, he is going to need to run himself into some version of balanced rhythm but when he falls out, he must first outrun his sensory unsoundness to do so. This is a task that eats up a great deal of emotional energy and burns physical stamina.

Naturally inclined to over-express in most race related circumstances, No More Time can get the full advantage of his stride length only when he has outrun himself and his peers into a "safe zone" ahead of the others, or he has synced just off the pace with another horse. This scenario helps pull him forward, giving him the time needed to sort his affairs of the heart. For he is a very emotionally driven horse, giving his all even when his all quite unnecessary to achieve the goal.

Sensory Lead Changes, the ever-important component of athletic versatility, gives him much trepidation; the very same issues that haunt him in the starting gate gnaw away at him throughout the race in any situation where he must himself

internally filter the environment around him. This being another antagonist upon his emotions, one of my concerns for him when in elite competition is the potential effects of mental fatigue.

Additional Thoughts:

I admire No More Time's "try", he assuredly has a deep-set will and elements of grit that no one can take away from him, but himself. Even so, he is truly the iconic physical-first athlete, at no point does his mind lead his body through the chaos. At best he has extended moments where mind and body are balanced, short-lived moments when the one is not impeding the output of the other. Many a race is won by the physically talented horse who has sensory unsoundness clipping at their heels it is true. But these horses are so heavily reliant on circumstances for their consistency, be it level of competition, carefully manicured rides, distance consideration's (which are, in reality, duration-of-time considerations) or equipment, that all must be considered together to postulate probability of success. Added elements that cloud the crystal ball.

Where I applaud No More Time for his effort, I am yet cautious about his total performance capacity. I see a horse whose growth pattern is static at best; blinkers or no blinkers I feel this would be the same truth. The fact he is going into a competitive field where many horses are sensory sound and not overly reliant upon circumstances to define their full potential, and knowing it is quite random how much emotional energy he will syphon off in finding his way forward, No More Time hits the Competitive Edge Rating at C-

Human Factor:

The start is everything, how he emerges sets the stage for everything that follows. To be fair this can be said about many horses, but with No More Time the manner of his exit is an extension of the entirety of his performance. I recommend finding an early running mate, a partner to connect with forwardly placed but not leading the way, sit back a bit, set in to a nice cadence as early as possible, eat up time and distance and see where it takes you. Pre-planning too far ahead can only get you in trouble I feel. Because versatility of mind is left to follow where the feet are leading, stay within the moment and embrace the race moment to moment, only taking peeks forward until an ideal opportunity is discovered. It is wise not to add anxiety from the saddle, No More Time needs a Bridge, not a Block.

WEST SARATOGA

by Exaggerator o/o Mo Wicked

Trained by: Larry W. Demeritte

Owner: Harry L. Veruchi

Breeder: Two Hearts Farm II LLC

West Saratoga has raced 10 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C-**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

West Saratoga can be fairly viewed as a hard trying and all-in on effort kind of horse, he is honest and gives his best “try” each time out. His resilience is admirable in that he has proven to be a steady and tough physical athlete.

Among the strengths noted are a willingness to go where he is directed; he doesn't fight against the jockey and does his best to respond to every “ask” with as much determination and energy that he has available.

I also like the fact that West Saratoga has the wherewithal to make every effort in holding his position once he establishes himself and finds his cadence. Exiting the gate in hi-rev Individual Herd Dynamic, he maintains this competitive based aspect from start to finish which helps him optimize the physical talent available to him.

West Saratoga is a very workmanlike horse that appears to be more than willing to go and battle to the best of his ability and I would venture to say that he trains the same way, his view of a race is not going to be too far removed from his view of training. This helps this type of behavioral genetic in being prepared for what's ahead. .

Vulnerabilities:

West Saratoga is dealing with what appears to be more than a handful of sensory soundness interruptions, though he tries hard to move through them, he is left to run beyond them to find success. He has worn blinkers from the start so there is little way of knowing what his true nature is, but by the leaking of emotional energy in the corresponding sensory zones away from the forward aspect, (zone one), the equipment may well

be warranted. The intensity of his Individual Herd Dynamic is getting but little support from his GHD, the environment at large is a blur to him especially when the speed of interpretation is asked to increase to match the rate of physical motion.

There is a lot happening in a tight space. Evidence shows a great deal of emotional energy is creating internal pressures as West Saratoga's mental balloon is operating at near bursting capacity. Struggling to accommodate, he leaks that energy out when in competitive motion. This internalizing of both competitive and environmental stressors seeps away otherwise usable energy, creating an internal battle zone of sorts. He tries hard to maintain a forward focus and I must lean toward the fact that without the blinkers, he may have a difficult time on his own funneling much competitive energy forward in a manner that is useful.

The level of sensory unsoundness affects West Saratoga's capacity to self-regulate; he has struggles with spatial awareness when operating at top speed, but it is a double-edged sword because running at top speed is his best opportunity to mitigate the sensory insurrection. The leaking of emotional energy also eats away at total competitive distance. The further the physical distance, the more he must outrun himself. The more he must outrun himself, the more emotional energy it takes, siphoning off time in the process; it's an ongoing saga. You can't stop at the gas station because you can't afford to slow down, but you will probably not have enough gas to reach your destination or hold off your peers if you don't.

Added to this sequence, West Saratoga hits the ground hard, a lot of his energy distribution is expressed in down pressure and is displaced in the pushing down and not the push forward.

Additional Thoughts:

One dimensional performer is what I see in West Saratoga and his best competitive fit is with peers who are also much the same. He tries hard every time and that is admirable, however he lacks the psychological versatility, in my opinion, that is required to excel beyond what he can do physically. Of course, any horse on any day, as they say..., but we have to be honest and realistic. West Saratoga is a tough and hard-working athlete who is to be applauded for his efforts, resilience, and sustainability, but within the context of that which befits him. I think when the herd dynamic pressures and the time of required competitive focus combine, West Saratoga, who must outrun himself to outrun his peers, will struggle to avoid the bane of mental fatigue. It is for these reasons which comprise his scouting report going into the Kentucky Derby, that his Competitive Edge Rating comes in at C-.

Human Factor:

Horses that try hard to sustain their competitive effort against external forces while needing to overcome their own internal antagonists, require very strong emotional intent from the saddle. It is imperative that the jockey create a sense of “it’s you and me, me and you”, which is a cornerstone of bachelor herd interdependency. The key for West Saratoga in going into battle with horses that are more naturally versatile and sensory sound is being able to operate in emotional tandem. His willingness to follow directions stems from his need to outsource, thus it is imperative not to use this against him by ignoring it. Use it in his favor by being attentive to his needs. In this way West Saratoga may find himself in his top form.

EPIC RIDE

by Blame o/o Pick A Time

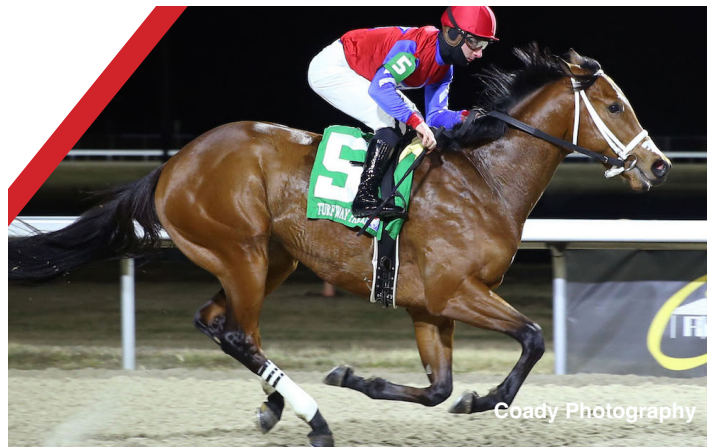
Trained by: John Ennis

Owner: Welch Racing LLC

Breeder: Fred W. Hertrich III

Epic Ride has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **C-**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Epic Ride has the earmarks of a horse with promising IHD strength coupled with an honest effort as he drives himself into forward space. He is a horse that digs deep to merge the cadence of his Individual Herd Dynamic with his physical rhythm straight away from the gate. By so doing, Epic Ride is able to position himself comfortably amidst a moving herd of his peers.

He has what I would deem an athletic range to his DTF, and where it isn't the ideal, which is a long-range Distance Target Focus, it is average but useful. By this I mean that targeting objects or space too far in front of him is not going to be a strength, for he is unable to hold a distant objective point effectively with herd chaos in his midst. However, he can do so in shorter bunches. His sensory system is sound enough to clear short range space at elevated pace and intensity, but not large chunks of it.

His Group Herd Dynamic, where not a large component of his total athleticism, is actively buffering the environmental stimuli sufficiently enough, and long enough, to allow Epic Ride the opportunity to run himself into a physical pace. This is a happy place where he finds his best fluency. Not a horse that is fearful of sticking his nose into other horses' space, Epic Ride is not going to let you down when it comes to an "all I got" kind of try.

Vulnerabilities:

Epic Ride is indeed a hard trying horse, but the further things go the more holes become evident in the internally pressurized balloon. The fact is, his sensory soundness only goes so far before things that started off in a decent mind to body rhythm, where he experiences physical efficiency, begin to derail bit by bit.

The biggest point of vulnerability for Epic Ride that I see, at least the one that is at the root of them all, is that he is my proverbial B/M type; Body ahead of the Mind. There is not much cushion in IHD hi-intensity expression between sensory clearance of space and his physical action through it. This creates friction, internalized stresses that accumulate over time. If you watch his races closely, you will see him slowly start to change his physical rhythm, he gets a little choppy. His emotional energy starts to leak out, and this is even more so when the physical distance demands start to create fatigue. Mental fatigue is already at the door, as it takes him twice the mental effort than it should to pull through and thrust forward in full stride. Emotional intensification eats up the duration of time available for competitive effort which then must be counterpoised by the physical ability to make up for it. In short, he must outrun himself and this shortens the total competitive distance available to him.

One of the first things to go to the wayside for Epic Ride are Sensory Lead Changes, and as a result he begins to lose his sense of self awareness. Anything that needs to be handed off from one sensory zone to another and/or interpreted while in motion, that isn't, adds to the accumulation of those internalized stressors. His physical mien and cadence change, and he no longer expresses fully forward through the zone 1 (forward) aspect; he starts to get choppy. This does not lend itself to sustained, long range head-to-head battles with Independently Natured, Herd Dynamic Power horses.

Additional Thoughts:

Epic Ride is a likeable horse for sure, I always find myself rooting for any horse that is a hard trying sort. Where he is athletically inclined mentally and has just enough sensory soundness to allow his physical talent to manifest, he doesn't have enough sensory soundness to sustain it over extended duration, mitigating competitive distance.

When I study the psychology of athletic performance, I do so in two stages. I first look for earmarks of competitive nature, which are found in athletic horses who have sufficient sensory soundness to process commonly experienced stresses. I then sort those horses and separate those among them who convey competitive edge. Athletes who have the capacity to navigate uncommon tension; they are sustainable regardless of duration and fueled by sensory efficiency that processes aggressive stress without negatively affecting physical action. The mind stays ahead of physical movement regardless of the requisite pace changes for in-the-moment assimilations, elevating their degree of Independent Nature.

Epic Ride fulfills the first part but falls short when I search for signs of the second. For this reason, considering the company he would be facing on May 4th along with the time expense and physical distance demands, he comes in at a Competitive Edge Rating of C-.

Human Factor:

Riding this horse in chunks of mid-range targeted objectives, in a sense, “stairclimbing” may be the best way to realize his finest possible performance. He needs the competitive duration minimized so that he can extend his physical distance capacity. Knowing that Epic Ride will be left to outrun himself while keeping pace with his peers, the herd-motion must be abbreviated, sliced into small portions; more moment to moment than point to point.

UNCLE HEAVY

by Social Inclusion o/o Expect Wonderful

Trained by: Robert E. Reid, Jr.

Owner: Milam, Michael and LC Racing LLC

Breeder: Barbara Reid

Uncle Heavy has raced 5 times.

Competitive Edge Rating - **D+**



Performance Profile

Strengths:

Uncle Heavy brings to the table a deep, almost dense emotional energy that is squarely rooted in the Group Herd Dynamic. His GHD being the primary player in his athletic expression, determining the cadence and pace of his mind to body fluency. This lends itself as a strength in the chaos of herd motion as he smartly runs through his full sensory sequence without outsourcing to find his posture and position.

Uncle Heavy expresses his athletic aptitude more commonly through an increasing mental rhythm projecting from his group dynamic, which means that his athletic output is manifesting through a slower process than that of the typical IHD horse. This is not necessarily a bad thing. But it does mean that his mental pattern of motion is often going to be behind that which is asked of him physically; he takes some time to wind through his internal, methodical mental gears.

An interesting side-effect of his psychology is that because Uncle Heavy does not fully transition into the A-typical Individual Herd Dynamic we see in many colts, he expresses his physical best when on less than perfect surfaces where physical pace is collectively mitigated. This allows him to grind along per-usual and be in the hunt and even prevail against more IHD shifted horses; the environment is his wingman. Most especially when there is sufficient time and distance for him to “get there”; which I view is at minimum 8 furlongs.

Vulnerabilities:

There are some strengths from which to draw from in the inherently deep-seated GHD mindsets, who, in natural herd structure, serve a more Adjunct role. However, unless there is a clear and concise translation through motion into the individual dynamic, competitive nature has no doorway leading into competitive edge.

Another party-crasher to this otherwise unique strength of GHD cadence is that nearly 95% of the time horses who express these behavioral characteristics do not have a far-reaching extension of Distance Target Focus. It isn't that they get easily bumped off task and must reacquire like some IHD hi-rev psychologies, it's the fact that they aren't seeking objective points that are not reasonably close. By that I mean, Uncle Heavy can “see” and “target” when asked, but he is not himself inclined to expend too much energy in things that do not immediately concern him. A fine trait in humans when we find it, but it can mitigate athletic vigor in horses.

Exiting from the gate is random for Uncle Heavy, in circumstances where he is asked or senses a need because of peers, to get out of dodge quickly, he finds himself caught in the mental exchange between absorb it first GHD and let's go now IHD. This becomes an additional point of vulnerability in the face of hi-level combatants because he gets “sticky” trying to grind into the individual dynamic, causing hindrance between the transaction. These delays leak competitive energy and eat up time, which ironically extends the physical distance required to complete the task, a good thing perhaps but for the fact that the wire is a fixed point in every race.

Additional Thoughts:

Interesting that his name is Uncle Heavy, because his emotional energy can be justly classified as being on the “hefty” side. It is, however, as pure as it is honest; Uncle Heavy is not a pretentious athlete, he is who he is in all circumstances. This is one of these performance profiles that though not a body-ahead-of-mind situation, (he just doesn't gather and release the intensity levels that we often see associated with that), his performance profile is environmentally dependent. Here we have a horse whose rhythms are perfectly fitted to 4-Wheeling in the mud. The duration of competitive edge being pinioned by circumstance, along with a not so developed aggressive

competitive nature, together paired with the task at hand, I think May 4th might warrant an also-ran projection. It isn't a lack of love, admiration, or respect for the horse, but a reasonable expectation against elite athletes dials Uncle Heavy's Competitive Edge Rating in at D+.

Human Factor:

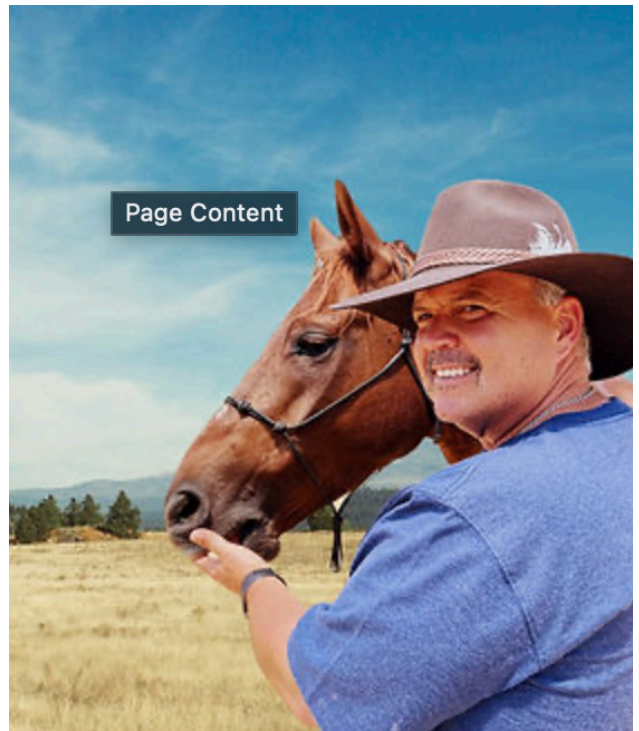
I always recommend to anyone riding a horse in any fashion, be it competitive or otherwise, to work with the horse's nature and not against it. That is sometimes easier said than done, especially when the success of performance decidedly hinges upon an aggressively slanted output. The truth is, the more we try to urge or command an effort that is above the true measure of the horses' aptitude, it cannot for long be sustained lest we risk the infliction of trauma. With this in mind, I recommend that a patient ride is key, not "over-asking" for a firm competitive drive but rather nudging Uncle Heavy along and see if that esoteric IHD can be somehow exploited in the heat of battle long enough to make his presence felt and force the hand of his peers.

About the Author

Kerry M. Thomas is a renowned equine therapist, educator, and consultant specializing in equine behavioral psychology and the application of cognitive theory to horse training, horse selection, and breeding programs. He is widely recognized for his expertise in the field of equine behavior, equine PTSD and trauma assessment and is the developer of the groundbreaking Sensory Soundness theory and Sensory Mapping. His innovative methods for understanding Herd Dynamics and creating protocols based upon the natural behavior of horses is considered by many as amongst the more progressive approaches in the world today.

Thomas created the Thomas Herding Technique (THT) in 2008, a methodology that focuses on building trust and communication between horses and humans through understanding their natural instincts and behavior patterns. In 2011 he started THT Bloodstock to accommodate international thoroughbred clients through which he and then partner Pete Denk began evaluating the herd dynamic patterns of motion of the Kentucky Derby Horses. In February 2024, Kerry dissolved that business to focus exclusively on his new venture. Kerry's passion for advancing educational opportunities for equestrian minded scholars and for expanding his services for all equine disciplines and riding levels, was the driving force behind shifting his focus to new frontiers. With the founding of www.sensorysoundness.com Kerry conducts clinics, creates educational programs, and lectures internationally, helping horse owners, trainers, and riders develop better relationships with their horses. Thomas's work has significantly influenced the equestrian community, providing valuable insights into horse psychology and training techniques. Kerry continues to press the envelope in his forward-thinking concepts for the advancement of the human to horse relationship through education and unique services. Kerry started his quest for knowledge as a young man through years of independent field research studying wild horses around the globe and the unique predator / prey relationship in the natural world. His unique insights have been used to find some of the modern era's best equine athletes such as Runhappy, Beauty Generation, City of Light to name a few. Kerry has been featured on the front page of the Wall Street Journal for his groundbreaking work and is often quoted or featured in international publications including the Barefoot Horse Magazine, the Arabian Magazine, the Los Angeles Times, and the Las Vegas Review-Journal. Kerry has also been featured on Television, Radio and has a special series of Podcasts on Herd Dynamics with Dr. Shelley Appleton.

“Too many horses are written-off because of misdiagnosis and misunderstandings. We must consider the world of the horse from the horse's view of the world. For it can be said that a true measure of horsemanship is realized in our willingness to find within the horse what we are brave enough to seek, within ourselves.”



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