



Frandsen Publishing Presents
Favorite ALL-Ways™ Newsletter Articles

“The Very Best Way We Know to Play the Superfecta”

From Top to Bottom

Many horseplayers look forward to what are considered to be “playable” Superfectas. There generally is at least one or two good plays on a card. And, many tracks are offering this wager on more and more races. This makes it easier to be patient and selective in the races we play. The Superfecta clearly offers the opportunity for big scores with payoffs frequently in the thousands of dollars and sometimes even tens of thousands. And, it is much easier to hit than the Pick Six. **Then we have the advent of 10 cent Superfectas. They are fun to play, but they are very seductive. Be careful!**

In this article, we are going to explore four different areas that will help point us in the right direction for playing this wager successfully. We will cover:

1. Top heavy tickets
2. When to pass or play
3. How to reduce combinations wagered
4. Handicapping for 3rd and 4th place

With the advent of the 10 cent Superfecta, one might think it is no longer necessary to look for ways to reduce the number of combinations in the wager. We do not agree with this. Instead, we suggest reading this article with \$1 Superfecta wagers in mind. Then, we will wrap up the article by considering the handicapping and wagering implications of the 10 cent Superfecta, including ways to take advantage of the 10 cent wager to further improve the success/profitability of our wagering.

All past ALL-Ways Newsletters, as well as a Major Topic Index, are posted on both the BRIS and Frandsen Publishing Web sites and they are always free. Also, articles already published as part of the Favorite ALL-Ways Newsletter Article series are posted in the Newsletter Section on the Frandsen Publishing Web site and they are free as well. See the links at the end of this article.

Top Heavy Tickets

Ask yourself, “Is it easier to handicap for win and place horses or is it easier to handicap for the 3rd and 4th place finishers?” The answer, of course, is that it is much easier to handicap for the top two finishers. Now, consider one very popular way to play the Superfecta. Here is what the ticket would look like.

ABC / ABCD / ABCDE / ABCDEF

A \$1 Superfecta ticket of this type costs \$81. Actually, in the right circumstances, this ticket makes sense. Indeed, we have played it successfully on occasion. However, more often than not, we would consider this to be a “Top Heavy” ticket. Now, consider the following ticket:

AB / ABC / ABCDEFG / ABCDEFG

A \$1 Superfecta with this ticket costs \$80, about the same as the “Top Heavy” ticket. However, this ticket has horse “F” in the 3rd position in addition to the 4th slot and it has added horse “G” to both the 3rd and 4th slots. What we have done is to remove some combinations at the top of the ticket, which are easier to handicap, in favor of adding more combinations on the bottom of the ticket, which are more difficult to handicap. So, one of our recommendations is to move some combinations from “Top to Bottom”. More on this later.

When to Pass or Play

More often than not, the Superfecta should be passed. It is very important to be selective. This is a high-risk bet and you should play it only if you have the opportunity for a big payoff. There are two simple rules we follow to determine if we will pass or play the Superfecta:

1. The underlying Trifecta must be playable.
2. The going-off crowd favorite must be, in our opinion, a false favorite. We must be convinced the favorite will not win.

(continued)

Before we play the Superfecta, we must determine that the underlying Trifecta is playable. To do this, we use the chart below. This is a chart we published in the Favorite ALL-Ways Article titled “The Very Best Way We Know to Play the Trifecta” which is available on the Frandsen Publishing Web site.

Pass or Play the Underlying Trifecta

Favorite In-the-Money	Long Odds In-the-Money	Pass or Play
yes	no	pass
yes	yes	play
no	no	play
no	yes	crush

When we refer to a “long odds” horse, we are referring to horses that are going off at 10 to 1 or higher, the higher the better, of course. The Trifecta is not playable if the favorite figures to finish in-the-money and no long-odds horse figures to finish in-the-money. Otherwise the Trifecta is generally playable including the probability of high payoffs when the favorite figures to finish off-the-board.

We will play the Superfecta ONLY if the underlying Trifecta is playable AND if we consider the public’s first choice to be a false favorite.

Reducing the Number of Combinations

There are good ways to reduce the number of combinations you play in your Superfecta ticket. This will reduce the cost of the ticket. You can pocket the dollars you save or you may want to reinvest them to add additional horses on the bottom of the ticket (moving combinations from top to bottom). Let’s look at techniques for reducing combinations. We will relate these back to the common Superfecta ticket presented earlier. Here, again, is that \$81 ticket for a \$1 Superfecta.

ABC / ABCD / ABCDE / ABCDEF

There are two key methods of reducing the number of combinations or moving combinations from top to bottom. We call them:

1. The “Trifecta Plus” method
2. The “Key Horse With Required Finish” method

The “Trifecta Plus” Method to Reduce Combinations

In the Favorite ALL–Ways Article covering the Trifecta, we introduced the concept of developing your Trifecta ticket by first developing an Exacta ticket. We showed how to take an Exacta ticket of AB/ABC and turn it into a Trifecta ticket of AB/ABC/ABCDE. The article has some very good ideas for selecting these horses. Now, what we are saying regarding the Superfecta is to take this Trifecta ticket and turn it into a Superfecta ticket. The thought process might look like this.

The Starting Exacta: **AB / ABC**
Expanded to the Trifecta: **AB / ABC / ABCDE**
Expanded to the Superfecta: **AB / ABC / ABCDE / ABCDEF**

This reduces the \$1 Superfecta wager from \$81 to only \$36 and we have added Horse “F” into the wager, now covering a total of six horses in the race. You have a choice at this point. You can pocket the savings in the cost of the wager or you can add additional combinations to the bottom of the ticket. For example, the ticket below adds horses “G”, “H” and “I” to the fourth slot.

AB / ABC / ABCDE / ABCDEFGHI

This ticket costs \$72, but now covers nine horses in the race.

Once again, we suggest reading the Favorite ALL–Ways Article titled “The Very Best Way We Know to Play the Trifecta”.

The “Key Horse with Required Finish” Method to Reduce Combinations

Very simply, this requires that we select one of the top horses as our Key Horse. This is a horse that we feel confident will finish in the Top 3. What we really want to happen in the Superfecta is for the crowd favorite to finish off–the–board. So, the crowd favorite must never be our Key Horse. Here is what the ticket above would look like if we select horse “A” as our Key Horse. Actually, it is three tickets, one for each of the possible finishing positions of the Key Horse.

Ticket	\$1 Wager Cost
A / BC / BCDE / BCDEFGHI	\$36
B / A / CDE / CDEFGHI	\$18
B / C / A / DEFGHI	\$ 6

By using a key horse, we reduce the total cost to just \$60. We can either “pocket” this savings or we can invest it to put more horses in the 3rd and/or 4th spot. For example, we could add 2 more horses to the 4th slot as shown below.

Ticket	\$1 Wager Cost
A / BC / BCDE / BCDEFGHIJK	\$48
B / A / CDE / CDEFGHIJK	\$24
B / C / A / DEFGHIJK	\$ 8

This gets us back to an \$80 ticket, but the ticket now covers eleven horses in the field.



Stop and think now how far we have come: We started with an \$81 ticket that covered six horses. We now have an \$80 ticket that covers eleven horses. We did this by moving combinations from the top half of the ticket (which is easier to handicap) to the bottom half of the ticket (which is difficult to handicap) and by requiring that we select one horse in the race (not the favorite) to finish either first, second or third.

We are not suggesting that all your Superfecta tickets include eleven horses. What we are suggesting is that you construct your wager such that you have fewer combinations in the Win and Place slots in favor of more combinations in the 3rd and 4th slots.

Handicapping for 3rd and 4th Place

It is very difficult to handicap for the third place finisher and even more difficult for the fourth place finisher. That is why we have spent so much time figuring out how to get more horses into our wager at the bottom of the ticket. There are, however, some very good handicapping factors in ALL-Ways software that have proven to be effective for selecting these horses. These factors are also available in the BRIS Ultimate PP's.

Final Fraction Pace Figures

One particular good handicapping factor for finding the 3rd and 4th place finishers is a horse's Final Fraction Pace (“FF”) figure, which covers the run from the 2nd Call to the finish. We suggest including all horses that rank in the top part of the field for the BRIS

Final Fraction figure. We like using the BRIS FF 2/3 figure, which is the average of the horse's best 2 out of its 3 most recent races. By "top part of the field" we mean there is a noticeable gap of at least two or three points between the last horse you include and the first horse you exclude. See the example below. Note that ALL-Ways also includes the Hall Final Fraction figures, which are particularly helpful for handicapping horses changing distance.

Combined Pace Rating

The Combined Pace Rating in ALL-Ways software is the sum of a horse's Early Pace Rating and its Final Fraction Rating. For example, a horse with a BRIS Early Pace Rating of 90 and a BRIS Final Fraction Rating of 98 would have a BRIS Combined Rating of 188. We suggest including horses in the top part of the field for the BRIS or Hall Combined Pace Rating. We generally restrict this to the Best 2 of 3 figures.

Here are examples of the BRIS Final Fraction 2/3 figures and BRIS Combined 2/3 figures from the ALL-Ways Top 10/Ranking handicapping report. We have drawn lines to indicate Gaps between two consecutive horses. We would want to make sure the horses above the top lines are included in our Superfecta ticket.

BRIS FF 2/3	Par (82)	BRIS COMBINED 2/3	Par (176)
4 MISS ANIME	94	7 DESPERATE	180
8 REV HER UP	94	11 LOVELY LOLLY	178
3 BOMBING TWO	92	3 BOMBING TWO	177
2 DANIELLA ROTH	90	10 CATANA PEREZ	176
11 LOVELY LOLLY	90	<u>8 REV HER UP</u>	<u>174</u>
5 GOTHAM SPIRIT	88	5 GOTHAM SPIRIT	171
<u>7 DESPERATE</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>4 MISS ANIME</u>	<u>170</u>
10 CATANA PEREZ	84	9 APACHE ANNIE	167
9 APACHE ANNIE	84	<u>2 DANIELLA ROTH</u>	<u>166</u>
<u>6 TOO PINK</u>	<u>84</u>	1 RIGHTEPEOUSLY	157
1 RIGHTEPEOUSLY	77	6 TOO PINK	155

The actual race results were:

Win	# 3 BOMBING TWO	8.40	4.80	2.60
Place	# 4 MISS ANIME		6.80	3.60
Show	# 7 DESPERATE			3.00
4 TH	# 8 REV HER UP			

The \$1 Superfecta paid a modest \$366.80. Note that we purposely selected a modest Superfecta to illustrate a point we will make when discussing the 10 cent Superfecta near the end of this article.

Dangerous Non-Contenders

After ALL-Ways software automatically selects contenders in a race, it looks at each remaining horse to see if it can spot anything that may make the horse “dangerous” in today’s race. If it finds something, it designates the horse as a Dangerous Non-Contender and shows you the reason(s) for the DNC designation. We suggest you include such horses in the bottom part of your Superfecta ticket.

A Word about Class and Layoffs

Low class horses and long layoff horses do indeed often finish 3rd or 4th. So, we do not eliminate such horses. If we just have too many horses for our ticket and feel we must eliminate one or two of these kinds of horses, be sure NOT to eliminate horses with good BRIS Back Speed or good BRIS Back Class.

Particularly Helpful Handicapping Reports

The **ALL-Ways Top 10/Ranking Report** is particularly helpful for playing the Superfecta. It shows sixteen separate ranked lists of handicapping factors with the horses ranked in each list. This includes pace, speed, class and comprehensive factors. It is particularly helpful for spotting “gaps” between horses. Contenders and Dangerous Non Contenders are highlighted as well. The **ALL-Ways Pace Line Report** is also very helpful for handicapping Superfecta plays. In addition to fundamental class, speed and comprehensive figures, it includes all the pace figures you need as well as complete track bias statistics.

The 10 Cent Superfecta

We are going to start here with a negative. There is a strong inclination to use the 10 cent Superfecta as a reason/method for including more horse combinations in the win and place positions of the wager. We will be the first to admit that there are times when this makes good sense. However, what we have seen is a tendency to use this as a “crutch” to overcome less than satisfactory handicapping. Two things seem to stand out on this: 1) We see many large 10 cent Superfecta tickets, costing in excess of \$60 that still do not generate a winning wager: 2) We see many of these large 10 cent Superfecta wagers that actually do generate winning tickets, but with payoffs being far less than the cost of the wager. The net of this is, in our opinion, that using the 10 cent Superfecta to cover up for less than satisfactory handicapping is a losing proposition. The Superfecta example shown earlier with the modest payoff helps make this point. It would have been very easy to play a \$36 to \$84 “top heavy” 10 cent Superfecta ticket that resulted in only a \$36 payoff.

Now, we turn positive. The 10 cent Superfecta does offer two very good opportunities for playing the Superfecta successfully:

1. Consider using the 10 cent Superfecta to keep your costs down as you implement the “from top to bottom” strategies in this article. The examples above include tickets that cost up to \$80 for a \$1 Superfecta. The 10 cent Superfecta will let you work on these concepts/ideas with a ticket that costs only \$8.00;
2. Consider using the 10 cent Superfecta to buy an insurance wager as a hedge to your \$1 Superfecta wager. For example, if you have something like the \$72 ticket shown earlier, but you are uncomfortable about leaving a particular horse or two out of the win and/or place positions, you can play a separate 10 cent Superfecta that includes these horses in those positions as an insurance bet. Here again is the \$72 ticket.

AB / ABC / ABCDE / ABCDEFGHI

Let’s say you are concerned that the “D” horse is not in the Win and/or Place position. If you simply add the “D” horse in the Place position, it increases the \$1 Superfecta wager from \$72 to \$108, an increase of \$36. And, if you want the “D” horse in both the Win and Place positions, the \$1 Superfecta goes all the way up to \$144, a \$72 increase. In this case, you may want to consider the following 10 cent Superfecta hedge bets. Each wager only costs \$3.60, but provides some “peace of mind”.

AB / D / ABCE / ABCEFGHI
D / AB / ABCE / ABCEFGHI

Summary

A few years back, a new ALL-Ways handicapper with a young family and modest means telephoned to thank us for a wonderful Christmas present. He had bet a straight \$2 Superfecta ticket using ALL-Way software’s first four picks in exact order. He won the Superfecta with a \$10,000 payoff. Like the television commercial says: “I love my job!” Obviously, Superfectas usually require that we bet a number of combinations. We hope this article helps you to decide which Superfectas to play and which to pass and how best to craft your tickets as well as how to make the best use of the 10 cent Superfecta.

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Frandsen Publishing is also the developer of ALL-Ways Handicapping Software. ALL-Ways is serious software for professional and serious horseplayers. Phillips Racing Newsletter calls ALL-Ways Software "absolutely the best free handicapping tool on the market" and gives ALL-Ways a 9 ½ rating ... the highest ever awarded. And, ALL-Ways Software is FREE!

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