



Frandsen Publishing Presents
Favorite ALL-Ways™ Newsletter Articles
An Effective Pace Handicapping Process

This article presents an effective pace handicapping process that turns pace oriented handicapping data into powerful handicapping information. Even if you are not an ALL-Ways software user, you will find some very helpful techniques in what you are about to read.

Why bother? First, pace handicapping is a very effective way to separate horses in very contentious races. It is also the best method we know to identify high priced horses that surprise everyone and cause exotic payoffs to skyrocket. And, many players will find pace handicapping to be a very enjoyable process. **Indeed, gaining an intimate understanding of just how a race is likely to play out is intellectually stimulating and just plain fun. Profit and fun isn't that why we love horse racing?**

Even if you do not currently use ALL-Ways software, you will still gain helpful insights from this article. These concepts “travel well” and can be used effectively with handicapping information in ALL-Ways Software as well as information from other sources, such as the BRIS Ultimate Past Performances.

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.

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So, let's get started. The word "process" is very important here. While it is going to take us several pages to explain it, the fact is, once you have learned the process, you will be able to apply it effectively in just 2 or 3 minutes per race. The process has the following steps:

1. Determine the pace scenario.
2. Determine the track bias influence.
3. Determine/visualize how the race will unfold at the 1st and 2nd Calls.
4. Determine/visualize what is likely to happen in the stretch run.
5. Make your selections.

Again, once you learn and practice these steps a bit, you will be able to carry out this whole process with a very small investment of time, literally just a very few minutes.

Step 1: The Pace Scenario

This is where, very quickly, you get an overall feel for how the race is going to be run. This simple step will influence your decisions. You may not think so at first, but it will strongly influence your thinking.

A good way to approach this is to use the concept of Race Pace Shapes presented in ALL-Ways Newsletter #3 and that is now included in the ALL-Ways Favorite Article Series. This is a concept original to ALL-Ways software that has received wide acclaim as one of the most powerful, yet easy to use pace handicapping methods ever published.

We are not going to repeat the whole article, but here are a few highlights. ALL-Ways software identifies races as having one of four possible Race Pace Shapes as follows:

Fast Early Pace: These races have two or more horses with an Early Running Style ("E"). ALL-Ways software designates this race as "EEE" or "EE". These races will be run very fast to the 2nd call. By definition, "E" horses need the lead. Any "E" horse that figures to not get the lead will likely finish off-the-board. These races often set up for horses from off the pace and you will almost always see one or higher priced late running horse finishing in-the-money.

Lone Early Pace: These races have just one horse that likes to be on the lead or up close to the lead. So, there is either a single “E” horse with no Early Presser (“EP”) or there is a single “EP” horse with no “E” horse. ALL-Ways software designates these races as either “E” or “EP” or “EP-P” where the “P” is for Presser horses that like to run mid-pack. Lone “E” or “EP” horses are always a threat to run away from the field with an uncontested lead.

Honest Pace: Most races are Honest Pace races. ALL-Ways software designates these races as either “E-EP” or “EP-EP”. These races do not generally set up for closers simply because the early pace of the race is honest, not too fast and not too slow. “E” and “EP” horses will win these races more often than “P” or “S” horses. The Combined Pace Rating (Early Pace + Final Fraction) in ALL-Ways software is a particularly strong handicapping factor in these races. Also, the track bias will have the most influence on Honest Pace races.

Slow Pace: These races are devoid of early speed because there are no “E” or “EP” horses running. They often set up for horses with the best Early Pace figure and the best Final Fraction figure. “P” horses with the best Early Pace ratings are the most dangerous.

Step 2: The Track Bias

The ALL-Ways Pace Line Report and Search Report show you important track bias information for the specific race you are handicapping for the current week and the current meet. Information includes the percentage of races won by “E” and “EP” horses. This is called the Speed Bias. It also includes the Impact Values for each of the four running styles and for post positions. It is not uncommon to see that 20 dirt sprints have been run this week with a speed bias of 75% or higher. This is very valuable information. The Track Bias/Jockey-Trainer Report also shows you how well the jockey does with horses that have the same running style as the horse he/she is riding today.

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There is another great set of bias statistics on the ALL-Ways Pace Line Report and Search Report, namely the long term bias stats with one set for win horses and another set for place horses. Both the 1st Call and 2nd Call bias statistics are shown. What is unique and powerful about these figures is how they are presented. Here is an example: Note: the figures are percentages (%).

		1 st Call Beaten Lengths						2 nd Call Beaten Lengths							
		1	2	3	4	5	+			1	2	3	4	5	+
W I N	Position	34	17	10	8	10	21	Position	43	14	9	14	8	12	
	Lengths	50	13	8	6	6	17	Lengths	67	11	7	7	4	4	
P L A C E	Position	12	13	20	21	12	22	Position	15	18	28	16	11	12	
	Lengths	29	20	10	14	8	19	Lengths	43	16	15	9	6	11	

Here is how you read these charts. We reference the 2nd Call Beaten Lengths for Win horses. For the “Position” line, the (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, +) corresponds to the position of the winning horse at the 2nd call. So, in this example, 43% of the winners were 1st at the 2nd call, 14% were second and 9% were third. Now add the numbers together and you get 57% were either 1st or 2nd (43% + 14%) and 66% were 1st, 2nd or 3rd at the 2nd Call (43% + 14% + 9%). Reminder: The 1st Call is at 2 furlongs in sprints and 4 furlongs in routes. The 2nd Call is at 4 furlongs in sprints and 6 furlongs in routes.

For the “Lengths” line, the (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 +) represent the beaten lengths of the winning horses at the 2nd Call. In this example, 67% of races of this type were won by horses that were on the lead or within one length of the leader at the 2nd Call, 11% were farther back but within 2 lengths of the leader, 7 percent were farther back but within 3 lengths of the lead. Again, when you add the numbers, a whopping 85% of the winners were on the lead or within two lengths of the leader at the 2nd call (67% + 11% + 7%).

This makes it pretty clear that for this kind of race (our sample data is for a dirt sprint), deep closers are in trouble, at least in terms of winning the race. “E” and “EP” horses have a distinct advantage.

So, with just a few seconds work, we have a very good feel for the overall pace scenario and the track bias.

Step 3: The First and Second Calls

The 1st Call is at the two furlong point in sprints and the four furlong point in routes. The 2nd Call is at the 4 furlong point in sprints and the six furlong point in routes. What we really want to know at the end of this step #3 is which horses are going to be in contention at the 2nd Call for a possible in-the-money finish. Part of this includes determining just how the horses will get to their 2nd Call positions. This includes the dynamics at play in getting to the 1st Call.

The 1st Call

We will explore two things about the 1st Call. First, we will look at the pressure a horse may experience getting to the 1st Call. Second, we will look at a special situation regarding post positions and negotiating the first turn.

The 1st Call is very different than the 2nd Call. It is more dependent on the running style and the will of the horse than it is on any pace figure. Just about any horse can run fast for a short distance out of the gate. So, we prefer to use a positional handicapping factor for this. ALL-Ways software gives you two choices. One is the First Call Performance index (FCP) and the other is Quirin Speed Points. Quirin Speed Points is examined in depth as part of the ALL-Ways Favorite Article Series. We will use these Quirin Speed Points as we look at the 1st Call.

What you want to determine here is which horses are going to be on or near the lead at the 1st Call and how much pressure or exertion will come into play to get there. Look at the following chart.

	Running Style	Quirin Speed Points
Horse A	E	Q7
Horse B	E	Q5
Horse C	EP	Q8
Horse D	EP	Q5

Note that Quirin Speed Points range from 0 to 8 where the higher the number the more likely the horse is to be on the lead or very close to the lead at the 1st Call. We are only looking at Early and Early Presser horses in this example since they generally are on or near the lead. Note that you will occasionally see a "P" horse with a high Quirin Speed

Point rating. This is not an anomaly. These horses go towards the front at the 1st Call and then settle back to mid pack before reaching the 2nd Call.

Horse A is probably going to be on the lead at the 1st Call. With an “E” running style and a high Quirin rating of 7, it figures to be the pace setter. Horse C, with a style of “EP” will be content to stay back a length or two, but you can count on it being close with a Quirin rating of 8. Horse B is a different story. Its “E” style tells us it wants the lead but with only 5 Quirin Speed Points, it doesn’t always get there. This horse is going to have to work harder than it likes in order to keep up with Horses A and C. Finally, Horse D will probably be in 4th place at the 2nd Call but it will be reasonably close and it will have run at a modest pace.

Here is how we would summarize our thinking for the 1st Call.

- Horse A** On the lead with modest pressure getting there
- Horse B** Struggling to keep up
- Horse C** Very close. Little pressure
- Horse D** Close. No pressure

The hypothetical example we are using is one with some, but not extreme, pace pressure getting to the 1st Call. Some races have several “E” horses, all with Q8 ratings. These are “suicidal” fast pace races. Then, there are races where all horses have modest or low Quirin Points. Such races are devoid of much pressure to the 1st Call. Sometimes a horse will have 7 or 8 Quirin Points and be 3 to 5 points higher than the next closest horse. This horse will be loose on the lead and a real threat to wire.

1st Call Special Situation: At most tracks, in both dirt and turf route races, the first turn is part of the run to the 1st Call. “E” and “EP” horses will generally try to outrun the other horses right out of the gate in order to move towards the rail to avoid having to go several horses wide around the first turn. The special situation arises when any “E” horse or any other horse with a Quirin Speed Rating of 7 or 8 is in one of the outside post positions and one or more other “E” or Q7/Q8 horses have inside post positions. The outside horse will have a tough time getting in front and moving to the rail. If it does, it will be severely compromised by the effort. If it doesn’t make it, it will still be compromised and will also go wide around the first turn. Such a horse will eventually have a difficult time coming down the stretch run.

The 2nd Call

The fundamental issues here are:

1. How will the “E” and “EP” horses get to the 2nd Call? Will they have anything left to advance or hold their position down the stretch?
2. Will the “P” and “S” horses be close enough to the leader at the 2nd Call to be a factor in the race? Will they be starting their late run soon enough to be able to challenge the front runners for a piece of the purse?

Let’s add Hall Early Pace Ratings to our hypothetical example. Early Pace is measured from the gate to the 2nd Call.

	Running Style	Quirin Speed Points	Hall Early Pace
Horse A	E	Q7	116
Horse B	E	Q5	114
Horse C	EP	Q8	112
Horse D	EP	Q5	110

Horse A had only modest pressure getting to the lead at the 1st Call and, with the highest Early Pace rating, will probably have the lead at the 2nd Call and still be in pretty good shape. Horse B had to work hard to the 1st Call and, with an Early Pace figure below Horse A, will probably be backing up at the 2nd Call. It needs the lead but isn’t going to get it. Both Horse C and Horse D were comfortable getting to the 1st Call and both will be within 2 to 3 lengths of the leader at the 2nd call. **Important:** One Early Pace Rating point equals about a half length at the 2nd Call.

About Hall Pace and Speed Figures

ALL-Ways Software includes BRIS and Hall pace and speed figures and Daily Racing Form Speed Ratings as well as Hambleton and Brohamer pace figures based on the Sartin Methodology. The BRIS figures are solid and have consistently high Impact Values. The Hall figures are velocity based and go a step further than the BRIS ratings. Specifically, the Hall figures use a “Conservation of Energy” concept to normalize how each horse’s past performance pace and speed figures would have been had the horse run at the track, exact distance and surface of today’s race. The Hall figures are particularly powerful for determining how a horse is likely to perform if it is changing distance in today’s race. The Hall figures all have solid Impact Values and tend to have very strong flat win bet profits as well.

Now, let's add some Presser and Sustainer horses to the mix and also look at Hall Turn Time.

	Running Style	Quirin Speed Points	Hall Early Pace	2 nd Call Beaten Lengths	Hall Turn Time
Horse A	E	Q7	116	0	112
Horse B	E	Q5	114	1	111
Horse C	EP	Q8	112	2	112
Horse D	EP	Q5	110	3	109
Horse E	P	Q3	110	3	114
Horse F	P	Q2	104	6	108
Horse G	S	Q1	108	4	110
Horse H	S	Q0	102	7	106

Horse E, a Presser ("P"), figures to be about 3 lengths off the pace ($116 - 110 = 6$ Early Pace points = 3 lengths), certainly in contention. Horse G will be about 4 lengths back ($116 - 108 = 8$ Early Pace points = 4 lengths). Horse F and horse H figure to be 6 to 7 lengths back, a decided disadvantage, at least in terms of winning the race.

Let's look at Hall Turn Time. This is the horse's pace figure from the 1st Call to the 2nd Call which is generally run around the turn leading up to the stretch run. Early runners will be slowing down, hence their Turn Time is generally lower than their Early Pace figure which is measured at the 2nd Call. The late running horses, on the other hand, will be revving up around the turn. So, you expect their Turn Time to be higher than their Early Pace figure. Hall Turn Time can be found on the ALL-Ways Form-by-the-Numbers Report, the ALL-Ways Pace Past Performance Report and the Brohamer Plus Report.

Notice Horse E and how high its' Hall Turn Time Rating is at 114. This horse will be within 3 lengths at the 2nd Call and coming on strong as it approaches the stretch run.

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Let's wrap up this 3rd step of the process by summarizing how things look at the 2nd Call:

- Horse A** On the lead. Modest pressure getting there.
- Horse B** About 4th. Backing up due to early pressure.
- Horse C** In contention. Within 2 lengths. No pressure.
- Horse D** In contention. Within 3 lengths. No pressure.
- Horse E** In contention. 3 back. On the move.
- Horse F** Out of it unless huge final fraction.
- Horse G** Marginal. About 4 back. On the move.
- Horse H** Out of it unless huge final fraction.

Step 4: The Stretch Run

In the final fraction of a race, from the 2nd Call to the finish, we know that early running horses ("E" and "EP") will be slowing down and trying to fend off the late runners ("P" and "S") that are trying to catch them. There are two areas we need to look at in this step of the process: 1) Pace figures for the horses; 2) Race and Track specific influences.

Pace Figures for the Final Fraction

There are two figures that will help us here, specifically the Hall Final Fraction (FF) pace rating (from the 2nd Call to the finish) and the Hall Combined pace rating (Hall Early Pace + Hall Final Fraction). Let's add some figures to our hypothetical example.

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	Running Style	Quirin Speed Points	Hall Early Pace	2 nd Call Beaten Lengths	Hall Turn Time	Hall Final Fraction	Hall Combined Pace
Horse A	E	Q7	116	0	112	109	225
Horse B	E	Q5	114	1	111	99	213
Horse C	EP	Q8	112	2	112	110	222
Horse D	EP	Q5	110	3	109	108	218
Horse E	P	Q3	110	3	114	116	226
Horse F	P	Q2	104	6	108	113	217
Horse G	S	Q1	108	4	110	112	220
Horse H	S	Q0	102	7	106	104	206

As you might expect, “E” and “EP” horses usually have FF figures that are lower than their EP figures. Conversely, late running horses usually have FF figures that are higher than their EP figures. The Combined Pace figures (EP + FF) give us a quick way to see how these numbers add up. In a perfect world, you could simply select the horse with the highest Combined Pace rating. But, there is another dynamic at work here and it is very important. **In a fast paced race, it is generally accepted that early running horses that are forced to run a faster pace to the 2nd Call than they prefer will lose more than a proportional amount of speed in the final fraction.** So, if an “E” or “EP” horse with an Early Pace rating of 116 and a Final Fraction rating of 109 is forced to run a 118 pace rating to the 2nd Call, it will probably only run a 105 or so in the Final Fraction. That is why it is so important in a pace handicapping process to assess the pressure on a horse in getting to the 2nd Call.

Let’s look at an assessment of the horses in our example when we take into account their Final Fraction and Combined Pace ratings. The first thing we would conclude is that we can toss out Horse B. It was compromised getting to the 1st Call and it has a Final Fraction rating that is just too low for it to be in contention. Horse H can safely be eliminated. It needs a much higher Final Fraction rating to overcome its very low Early Pace rating. Horse F presents an interesting situation that you see all the time. How often have you said, when disappointed by a late running horse: “The horse (or Jockey) started its move too late. It would have won the race if it had made its move earlier.” Well, here is a very important point: More often than not, this is a predictable outcome. In this example, Horse F has the second best Final Fraction rating, but it will be too far back at the 2nd Call, about 6 lengths or so, to make up all the ground. We would toss this horse out as well because there are too many front running horses to catch in this race that did not have a lot of early pace pressure and Horse E is a late running horse that clearly should have an in-the-money finish.

This eliminates three of the eight horses in the race. It is also pretty clear that the horses with the best shot at winning the race are horses A, C and E. Let's look at other pace considerations that should be reviewed before making our decisions.

Race and Track Influences

The Race to the 2nd Call: We completed this analysis in step 3 and have a good feel for how the horses got to the 2nd Call.

Length of the Race: The distance to be run from the 2nd Call to the finish is dependent on the length of the race. In 6 furlong sprints the distance is 1,320 feet. At 6 1/2 furlongs the distance is increased by 330 feet to 1,650 feet. At 7 furlongs, it increases by 660 feet to 1,980 feet. The distance in a one mile route from the 2nd Call at the 6 furlong mark to the finish is also 1,320 feet and it too increases by 330 feet for each half furlong, which is 1/16 of a mile. The longer the distance, the harder it is for the "E" and "EP" horses to hold on and the longer the "P" and "S" horses have to gain on the leaders. **Reminder:** One half (1/2) furlong equals 330 feet, which is a bit longer than a football field. This is a significant extra distance for a horse to run at the very end of the race.

Track Bias: The final fraction of a race is where you will see the influence of the track bias play out. A strong early bias and the front runners are more likely to hold on. A bias more kind to late runners will see the front runners struggling and the closers having an easier time making up ground.

Field Size and Running Styles: A large field with a number of "E"/"EP" horses may result in a "wall of horses" that closers will have to pass around the clubhouse turn. A late runner that needs to loop 4 or 5 wide around the turn will be compromised.

Step 5: Make Your Decisions

Stretch Gain Performance Index

There is one more handicapping factor in ALL-Ways software that will help you make your final decisions. We call it the Stretch Gain Performance index or SGN for short. This factor gives us a pretty clear picture of a horse's demonstrated ability and determination to hold onto a good position or to gain positions in the stretch run of a race. The index is on a scale of zero to five with five being the best. A rating of 3.0 to 5.0 identifies horses that you can count on to do well down the stretch. Note that this figure is weighted with more weight being given to the horse's most recent races, so it has an element of current form built into the index.

So, when you are done with Step 4 of evaluating the stretch run including the specific length of the race, the track bias and the field size, you should be in good shape to identify the most likely win contenders and the most likely contenders for place and show. If these race and track influences slightly favored early horses, we would probably look for the winner to be either Horse A or Horse C. If they slightly favored late running horses, we would probably peg the winner to be either Horse E or horse C. The remaining horses are candidates for place or show finishes.

One last point: We do believe in a comprehensive approach to handicapping. So, we recommend you look at other important handicapping factors in ALL-Ways software before making your final selections. This includes the horse's suitability to the distance and surface, current form, class level, speed figures, jockey and trainer ratings and overall comprehensive ratings. It is, however, pretty impressive to be able to spot the probable winners and the probable place and show horses without even looking at the horse's speed ratings. Such is the power of a good pace handicapping process.

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