1. Look at the distance and surface of the race.

Look at the top right hand corner of the page at the track diagram for the distance of the race and the surface the race will be run on, usually dirt or turf. This can be important in handicapping the race because some horses do their best at specific distances or on specific surfaces. Looking at the diagram also enables you to know the point at which the race will start and end.

2. Use the Equibase Speed Figures.

You can review the Speed Figures for each starter’s most recent efforts, to find those that perform best in races run at the track or at the distance that you are handicapping. For example, if the race you are handicapping is on the turf, you would want to give more consideration to Speed Figures earned on turf before looking at races run on dirt.

Speed Figures also enable you to compare each horse’s ability to other horses in the race, regardless of the track, distance or surface over which their previous races were run. Comparing Speed Figures of one horse to another, especially in races similar to today’s distance and surface, can help you to separate the contenders from the non-contenders in the race by showing you which horses, if running as well today as in those previous races, would run faster than the others.

3. Review the Equibase Pace Figures.

The Equibase Pace Figure is the Speed Figure taken at the first point of call of each race. Use the Equibase Pace Figure to determine a horse’s ability in the early stages of a race compared to other horses, allowing you to see if there are one or more horses that performs best when on or near the lead, and if so which of those are fastest. Sometimes there are many horses that want to lead early, but none are fast enough to get clear of the others. In those cases a horse coming from behind could win the race. In other cases, one horse may have a much better Equibase Pace Figure than the others, suggesting it is capable of winning wire to wire.


The Equibase Class Rating is a single number for each horse that projects the Equibase Speed Figure that particular horse is capable of earning in today’s race. The Equibase Class Rating is a predictive number based on the horse’s previous Speed Figures with emphasis on recent races and races run at the same distance as today’s race. Since the Speed Figure is a numeric representation of how fast a horse has run in each of its races, the Equibase Class Rating numerically represents an estimate of how fast each horse should run today.

You can use the Equibase Class Ratings to see how each horse stacks up against the others in the race. Since the Equibase Class Rating is essentially a predictive Speed Figure based on similar races, you can handicap a race by putting the horses in order from highest to lowest Equibase Class Ratings. Then, eliminating horses with the lowest Class Ratings, you have a short list of horses that should be competitive in the race.