

1 MAR 2006 - PUTTING DRF BREEZE FIGS TO THE TEST **By Stuart Slagle, *The HorsePlayer Magazine* Chief Technology Officer**

What do Post-it Notes, Viagra, and BreezeFigs all have in common? They all are benefactors of the law of unintended consequences.

Several years ago, Robert Fierro and his partners at Data Track International developed a service for buyers at Thoroughbred two-year-olds in-training sales. Based upon the times and video of pre-sales breezes, Data Track International crafted a proprietary index, BreezeFigs, of the works to predict the future racing performance for each sales entrant. The BreezeFigs are built around stride length and times measured during the workouts.

In 2004, Fierro had an epiphany that their BreezeFigs also had predictive value in the pari-mutuel racing world. In 2005, Fierro partnered with Daily Racing Form to provide the numbers to horseplayers.

The BreezeFigs Report is available daily and contains the list of all horses entered to race that day who breezed once at a sale. Runners are listed for their first four career races. The report contains the following information for each horse: today's race, sales history and BreezeFig details (number, surface/distance of breeze, minimum/par/maximum number for that sale).

All workout performances at two-year-olds in-training sales are divided into quartiles: Group 1, 2, 3 and 4. From a DRF study of the "Class of 2004" exiting the eight sales that they covered, 41.3% of all Group 1 and Group 2 starters from all sales won within their first two starts. Additionally, they stated 12.3% of other starters with BreezeFigs at one or two below Par won in their first two starts.

DRF and BreezeFigs advise playing all Group 1 and Group 2 horses for their first two starts provided that the figure was no lower than the sale's par minus two. Without a doubt, the product is very predictive.

During the summer of 2005, The HorsePlayer Magazine followed the performance of BreezeFigs with 783 runners in 442 races over 30 days to ferret out other angles. During the study, we used all runners in the BreezeFigs Report (not just those making their first two starts to anticipate consumer use). Out of ignorance and/or laziness, many horseplayers likely will start using the figures without eliminating horses making their third or fourth start.

The table below shows the aggregated performance for each quartile of BreezeFigs. As with the DRF study, there is a distinct predictive trend for each grouping. HorsePlayer's Return On Investment statistic is normalized to zero being break even. Our study shows

less-impressive results than the DRF study because we didn't use the prescribed filter of the first two starts and par requirement.

GROUP 1

- Win % 26.6%
- ITM % 53.2%
- ROI -14.0%

GROUP 2

- Win % 17.1%
- ITM % 43.7%
- ROI -41.3%

GROUP 3

- WIN % 15.8%
- ITM % 38.8%
- ROI +1.7%

GROUP 4

- WIN % 8.8%
- ITM % 35.9%
- ROI -52.8%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Don't Bet Group 4 Horses to Win

While data mining, we sliced the data various ways to try to increase the predictive value of the BreezeFigs. First we segmented the runners by the figure itself. During the study, the BFs ranged from 47 to 74. Both win percentages and in-the-money percentages trended upwardly with the increasing value of the BFs.

BF 70 or higher

- Win % 31.3%
- ITM % 56.3%

BF 65-69

- Win % 18.0%
- ITM % 44.3%

BF 60-64

- WIN % 16.6%
- ITM % 43.0%

BF 55-59

- WIN % 15.4%
- ITM % 41.1%

BF 54 or less

- WIN % 6.4%
- ITM % 31.9%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Don't Bet Horses with BFs less than 55 to Win

Next, we separated the runners by surface of the day's race. BFs weren't predictive for turf races. Both win percentages and in-the-money percentages do not trended upwardly with the BF Groups on turf. In-the-money percentages do trended upwardly with the BF Groups on dirt.

GROUP 1 on Turf

- Win % 4.8%
- ITM % 38.0%

GROUP 2 on Turf

- Win % 16.2%
- ITM % 40.5%

GROUP 3 on Turf

- WIN % 4.5%
- ITM % 27.3%

GROUP 4 on Turf

- WIN % 0.0%
- ITM % 20.0%

GROUP 1 on Dirt

- Win % 30.8%
- ITM % 55.8%

GROUP 2 on Dirt

- Win % 17.0%
- ITM % 44.2%

GROUP 3 on Dirt

- WIN % 17.8%
- ITM % 40.7%

GROUP 4 on Dirt

- WIN % 9.6%
- ITM % 37.2%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Don't Use BFs for turf races.

To test a hypothesis that BFs would be more predictive for two-year olds than three-year olds, we separated the runners by age on race day. BFs predictive trends were maintained when the juveniles were separated out.

GROUP 1 two-year olds

- Win % 26.5%
- ITM % 55.9%

GROUP 2 two-year olds

- Win % 17.8%
- ITM % 44.0%

GROUP 3 two-year olds

- WIN % 16.7%
- ITM % 42.2%

GROUP 4 two-year olds

- WIN % 9.8%
- ITM % 37.6%

GROUP 1 three-year olds

- Win % 26.8%
- ITM % 50.0%

GROUP 2 three-year olds

- Win % 15.4%
- ITM % 42.9%

GROUP 3 three-year olds

- WIN % 14.6%
- ITM % 33.3%

GROUP 4 three-year olds

- WIN % 5.4%
- ITM % 27.2%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Use BFs for both two-year olds and three-year olds.

To test a hypothesis that BFs would be more predictive for sprints or routes, we separated the runners by race distance on race day. BFs predictive trends were maintained when the sprints were separated out, but failed to do so for routes.

GROUP 1 sprints

- Win % 29.0%
- ITM % 54.2%

GROUP 2 sprints

- Win % 17.7%
- ITM % 43.8%

GROUP 3 sprints

- WIN % 16.9%
- ITM % 39.0%

GROUP 4 sprints

- WIN % 10.3%
- ITM % 37.7%

GROUP 1 routes

- Win % 11.8%
- ITM % 47.1%

GROUP 2 routes

- Win % 12.1%
- ITM % 42.4%

GROUP 3 routes

- WIN % 9.5%
- ITM % 38.1%

GROUP 4 routes

- WIN % 0.0%
- ITM % 25.0%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Don't Use BFs for routes.

To test a hypothesis that BFs would be more- or less-predictive for runners who did not attain the reserve (RNA) or were withdrawn from the sales (SCR) BFs of RNA and SCR horses did not provide predictive.

GROUP 1 RNA at Sales

- Win % 19.4%
- ITM % 41.9%

GROUP 2 RNA at Sales

- Win % 13.6%
- ITM % 38.2%

GROUP 3 RNA at Sales

- WIN % 23.3%
- ITM % 51.2%

GROUP 4 RNA at Sales

- WIN % 6.0%
- ITM % 36.0%

GROUP 1 Scratched from Sales

- Win % 0.0%
- ITM % 16.7%

GROUP 2 Scratched from Sales

- Win % 33.3%
- ITM % 60.0%

GROUP 3 Scratched from Sales

- WIN % 7.0%
- ITM % 42.9%

GROUP 4 Scratched from Sales

- WIN % 16.7%
- ITM % 33.3%

The sample size for SCR and RNA races were too small to make recommendations on or against their behalf.

Since the HorsePlayer study included the performance of winners in their first four starts, we separated race-day maidens from winners. BFs predictive trends were maintained when the maidens were separated, although Group I maidens were more likely to win than Group I winners. When maiden claimers were separated from maiden special weights, the trends remained. Group 2 maiden claimers and special weights won 35.0% and 29.0% of their respective races. Group 2 maiden claimers and special weights both won 16.3% of their respective races.

When winners were subdivided by classification, Group 1 and 2 BFs in allowance races won 25.0% of the time and finished in the money 57.1% of the time. Group 1 and 2 BFs in stakes races won 19.0% and finished in the money 42.9% of the time. Group 1 and 2 BFs in claiming races won 0.0% and finished in the money 18.2% of the time. The sample size for stakes and claiming races were too small to make recommendations on or against their behalf.

GROUP 1 maidens

- Win % 30.3%
- ITM % 55.1%

GROUP 2 maidens

- Win % 16.3%
- ITM % 43.5%

GROUP 3 maidens

- WIN % 16.8%
- ITM % 40.0%

GROUP 4 maidens

- WIN % 8.4%
- ITM % 34.4%

GROUP 1 winners

- Win % 25.6%
- ITM % 55.8%

GROUP 2 winners

- Win % 21.4%
- ITM % 44.6%

GROUP 3 winners

- WIN % 7.1%
- ITM % 28.6%

GROUP 4 winners

- WIN % 9.0%
- ITM % 36.1%

HorsePlayer Recommendation: Use BFs for both maiden and allowance races

Group 1 and 2 BFs produced winners at 34 different tracks in North America during the one-month study. The Group 1 and 2 trends were qualitatively seen at all tracks. Calder Race Course's sample size was large enough to look at statistically. 186 of the BFs starters raced at Calder. 19.4% of the Group 1 and Group 2 BFs won. 12.8% of the Group 3 and Group 4 BFs won.

The numbers likely skewed down at Calder due to the competition of other BF horses in the same race. 28 of the 55 races had more than one BF horse. Sixty percent of these Calder races were won by one of the BF horses. There are no statistical recommendations from the track perspective.

Group 1 and 2 BFs produced winners at 23 different sales during the one-month study. The Group 1 and 2 trends were qualitatively seen at all sales. There are no statistical recommendations from the sales perspective.

Putting It All Together

Using our recommendations, we will look at the performance of BFs for dirt sprints for maiden and allowances races for both two- and three-year olds. This reduces the sample to 579 horses in 311 races.

GROUP 1

- Win % 36.6%
- ITM % 58.5%
- ROI +13.0%

GROUP 2

- Win % 16.2%
- ITM % 43.8%
- ROI -24.9%

GROUP 3

- WIN % 18.1%
- ITM % 40.4%
- ROI +11.0%

GROUP 4

- WIN % 10.8%
- ITM % 38.5%
- ROI -40.2%

While single-factor handicapping is not a substitute for comprehensive handicapping, by using the Daily Racing Form BreezeFigs Reports you can identify flat-bet profit situations. Betting horses with Group 1 BFs in dirt sprint maiden and allowance races can be lucrative. This will require some trust in the figures, as all of the winners paid under 6-to-1 and two-thirds paid under 2-to-1.

While adding a 'chalk' filter to this final group, one can obtain another unintended consequence. While the sample size is small when restricting the group to post-time odds of less than 2-to-1, the results are huge. We see 21 winners from 24 races (87.5%) and 95.8% in the money for a ROI of +99.6%.

The ideal use of this tool is to isolate legitimate favorites and key horses for exactas and trifectas, as well as singles for multi-race wagers.