

## Irreconcilable Differences

That term may bring up some bad memories for a few of you, but don't worry - I'm not going to be discussing d-i-v-o-r-c-e. I am going to talk about a few things that could 'separate' you from racing (or at least from your bankroll) though, so heads up - here we go . . .

### Entertainment versus Income -

You love racing - right? That's why you're in it, and naturally you derive enjoyment, and entertainment from watching and participating in the game. For most, that's as far as it ever goes, and that's as it should be.

For others, the goal of making profits is paramount. The more serious a player becomes, the less they seek, or even pay attention to the aspect of being entertained. And again, that's as it should be. I won't go so far as to say that the two are totally irreconcilable, but I know for myself - when I'm truly out for just the pure fun of it, I don't bet much - if at all.

The difference between a 'fan' looking for a days' entertainment and a truly serious player could be likened to the difference between running through a sprinkler on a summer's day as opposed to swimming the English Channel in late fall. The latter requires stamina, serious commitment, and is full of risk and challenge - the former requires no more than the desire to be happily entertained.

### Making money *today* versus making money long-term -

These aren't irreconcilable - it's just that the 'mind-set' for the one is quite different than the 'mind-set' for the other. We all always prefer making money - today and forever! But for some, making money today is an emotional thing. They would rather 'dumb luck,' or a freak occurrence end up putting money in their pocket than executing the proper value plays all day and not making any money.

If a person's entire racing career consisted of just a few days at the track - then fine - let the good times roll and hope Lady Luck smiles on those few days. If, however, you're in this for the long haul and are even half-way serious - then making the proper play is always the primary goal. Losses incurred while making those plays should not be cried over. The bottom-line over the long-term will reflect positively and reward this kind of astute and 'correctly adjusted' player.

### 'Swinging for the fences' versus 'grinding it out' -

At first these seem like they might be irreconcilably different, but good players usually have a little of both in their game. Swinging for the fences causes a lot of strike-outs. The bankroll must be larger - the psyche of the player must be fairly immune to longer losing streaks. When the big hit is made, the player needs to be the kind who can continue on without reacting wildly to that success - another drought may well be right around the corner.

Grind players are often associated with place and show betting, or win and exacta betting while keying on the legitimate chalk. The active bankroll can be smaller. There are a lot more cashed tickets and the losing streaks are shorter in duration.

But - even long-shot and exotics players fall into a kind of grind. After all, this is a game that essentially has no end. Surviving to play another day is always key, and any good player pays great attention to that fact. Even high rollers are, in effect, grinding. It's just that their peaks and valleys are much more radical than the typical low-price grinder mentioned above.

### Picking winners versus making profits -

On the surface, it appears that these two are almost the same thing and anything but irreconcilably different. But - that's just on the surface - which is about as deep as the average player ever goes. The murkier depths of the true reality of betting the races is not a place they want to discover.

Picking the most winners is not the key to making good money at the track. If you happen to be one who still thinks that is the case - do this: Bet all the 3/5 to 6/5 horses that come up in any race for the next couple of weeks. It's guaranteed you will have a higher win % than your racing buddies, but you'll still be in the red. Betting to hit lots of winners is just a slower way to lose. It's uplifting to the Ego - maybe - but ultimately a downer on the bankroll.

This whole fixation with picking winners is the ruination of many players. That ole' Ego is the culprit here. A lot of players just need the bragging rights - they need to be able to say, "Yea, I had the winner - it was an easy pick."

Others - novices in the game - actually believe winning should come readily and steadily without much effort on their part. They are still under the illusion that it is an easy game.

### Betting every race versus limiting and restricting wagers -

Now we're getting into the truly irreconcilable. Any one who tries to to play every race - or even most races - cannot win in the long run.

It never ceases to amaze that otherwise intelligent people who are successful business persons, and would never think of trying to expand their line of products or services to include all types and categories - when these same people get to the track, they think they can bet every type and category of race and still come out ahead.

As in all walks of life, individuals have their strengths and their weaknesses.

Some handicappers are sharp on the maidens - others aren't / some players make good profits on Graded Stakes races - others don't / some players are stronger on the minor circuits / some are students of breeding / etc. etc.. In this age of simulcasting, when there are many tracks available to bet every day of the week, why in the world do players want to even try to bet every race?

The multi-track situation invites exclusivity and focus. Players

can find a niche/s and/or eliminate whole types and levels of racing. They can concentrate where they do well. The act of concentrating their energy will of itself increase the results of their play.

### Public Knowledge versus Proprietary Knowledge -

It is extremely difficult to make long-term profits with widely used, publicly available information. This is a pari-mutuel game (as it's usually played), and anything available to the general public has 'negative expectancy' written all over it.

I'm not saying that you can't find a novel combination of factors, or a unique mix of public information that will stand you well in this game, but the most commonly available of these (Beyer numbers, the popular "sheets," DRF consensus picks, popular "black box" systems, etc. etc.) are all but useless for those seeking a real edge. Their value has been steadily eroding since the moment they first became public.

If you can come up with your own unique method that gains you an edge, then you will be "on" certain horses for different reasons than the other players are on them. Over the long run, this will tend to get you better prices and you'll less often land on the over-bet public darlings.

### 'Dipping In' versus 'Hanging In' -

Lots of players expect that, even though they only wager a day here and a day there (often with many days in between), that they should hit it good on those days they have chosen to play.

Wishful thinking.

In a full week's worth of wagering, the actual profits for the week are very often made on a single day - and on that day those profits come in 2 or 3 races. Now - it could happen that the one day a "now-and-then" player decides to bet will be a good day - but that would be relying on a lucky choice.

Imagine that a full-time player makes profits in 2 weeks of four and that the profits in those two weeks are made on 6 good

days with 3 good paying races on those good days. That's 18 races that make all the difference in his bottom line for the month. Playing 5 days a week x 4.2 weeks a month = 21 days. If he is wagering in, say, 12 races a day (multiple tracks) - that would be 252 races in the month.

The "now-and-then" player bets on, say, 7 days a month. Maybe a visual representation will serve better than the statistics would: Below is the full-time player's races for the month. Each mark is a race wagered.

```

|||||  |||||  |||||  |||||  |||||
|||||  |||||  |||||  |||||  |||||
|||||  |||||  |||||  |||||  |||||
|||||  |||||  |||||  |||||  |||||
|||||  |||||  |||||  |||||  |||||

```

The red/yellow marks are the 18 crucial wagers that the month's profits were generated by (all the other wagers were just essentially going up-and-down - breaking even at best).

"Needle in a haystack" - for the now-and-thenner guy!

If he wagers for long enough at the same skill level as the full-time player - he'll come up with the same approximate bottom-line results. But, he'd need to bet for three months to get the same ROI and total results as the full-timer did above.

As I said, most players who can't play regularly just can't understand why they don't win very often.

Racing time is slower than real time anyway - ever notice that?

When you have time to stew over losses between races - or for days or weeks - it can seem like forever. Then what happens? They are off onto some new method or service - ever searching for the perfect method that will get them profits all the time. I read somewhere that **the average novice player lasts for less than two weeks on any new method or "system" he tries.**

Okay - enough of all that. You don't need to file any separation

papers yet! Just strive to become aware of the realities of this game, so you can up your performance and your results.