Focus Ratings

A Guide to the New Ratings

Spring 2015

Version 1.0

Introduction

This document describes the various columns in the New Format Ratings PDF.

The columns are described going from left to right.

But, before I say any more I do have to say that Focus Ratings is not a Tipping Service.

Whilst I'll do anything I can to help you **Rob the Bookies** (apart from put a stocking on my head and carry a shotgun, or drive the getaway car, come to that; I draw the line at that), I'm not suggesting that you blindly back the top rated horse in every race.

What I am trying to do is give you some idea about the value of each horse in today's race.

Now, let's talk cars for a moment...

Let's take three cars and try to rate them.

We've got a Ferrari, an Ford Focus Sport (I'm not sure if such a thing exists but, think Hot Hatchback) and a second hand ex-military Landrover Defender.

Now try to rank them.

Most of us would say rank them as...

    1). Ferrari
    2). Ford Focus Sport
    3). Second Hand Landrover

And, if they were to race against each other, that might be the order in which we could expect them to finish.

After all, the Ferrari is the most powerful, the most expensive and has the highest top speed. Think of it as the Kauto Star or Frankel of the car racing world.

The Ford Focus Sport is the average car of these three. It is the Averagely Priced car and, whilst not as fast as the Ferrari, it probably doesn't require as much care and attention. In horse racing it is the equivalent of the horse that runs in class 3 to 5 races, might win occassionally but probably wouldn't be less than 200/1 should it enter a good championship race.

The second hand Landrover is pretty much the Donkey of the bunch. It's the cheapest and has the lowest power and top speed. In horse racing terms, it's the horse that struggles in class 6 races and should have been retired long ago. It's the sort of horse that's better pulling a plow than running at Ascot.

And, this is how most horse racing ratings work.

Focus Ratings is different though; we take into account today's race and today's conditions and produce a rating that changes from race to race according to those factors (amongst others.)

So, in a race that is 20 laps around Brands Hatch, we would rate the cars in this order...

1). Ferrari
2). Ford Focus Sport
3). Second Hand Landrover

The Ferrari is the most poweful, the fastest and is pretty much designed to go round a race track (or cruise the streets of Monte Carlo or Mayfair.)

The Ford is still nippy enough for most of us and is the second most powerful and the second fastest interms of acceleration and top speed.

The muddy Landrover is the least powerful and is going to struggle going round the corners with its nobbly tires.

Now, lets run the same race but over the RAC Lombard rally (do they still run that? I did my A Level Statistics project using data for that race – you wouldn't belive how many times that Skoda won their class in that race!)

I've got a feeling that the results would be something like this...

1). Ford Focus Sport
2). Second Hand Landrover
3). Ferrari

The Ford would be in its element here – a certain winner.

The second hand Landrover would somehow struggle round.

The Ferrari wouldn't have the ground clearance and would probably break down after 100 yards (thinking about it, the Landrover would probably also break down after a 100 yards but the driver could probably fix it with a sledgehammer, a monkey wrench and a screwdriver (and a few choice swearwords) – the Ferrari would need a computer expert, 2 mechanics and 3 hairdressers to be sent over from Italy.)

And, if the race was run in Farmer Giles's muddy bottom field, the second hand Landrover would win by a mile.

In fact, it would probably be needed to go round again to drag the broken down Ferrari out of the field and then asked to do another tour to drag the Ford out of the muddy swamp that it was slowly sinking into.

And that's the difference between Focus Ratings and other ratings (such as the official ratings.)

We adjust the ratings to take into account today's distance, race type, competition, class, going and distance. All horses have their ratings recalculated just 3 to 15 hours before the start of the race.

And the Live Ratings are only ever 15 to 20 minutes out of date!

In other words, we don't tell you that the Ferrari is top rated if today's race is 20 laps round

Farmer Gile's muddy bottom field (after a thunderstorm.)

Even if it is the most expensive and most powerful car in the race.

So, now that I've got that off my chest, let's look at the new columns on the New Format ratings.

New Format PDF

These are the various columns in the New Format Ratings PDF.

The columns are described going from left to right.

- Ratings Rank. This is simply the rank of the horse.

Quite simply, the top rated horse will have a rank of 1, the second rated horse has a rank of 2 and so forth.

St – Stall Number. In Flat and All Weather races this column shows the Stall Number of the horse. In National Hunt races this column will be blank.

Some people feel that certain stalls are more likely to produce a winner than others over certain distances. This is known as Draw Bias. The ratings already take the Draw Bias into account (to a very small level) for certain All Weather races.

SWP – Stall Win Percentage. This shows the average percentage of winners that have historically come from this stall for races over the distance of today's race at this course since the 8th of July 2013.

This is for those people who are interested in Draw Bias. You might want to look at this briefly (even if you are not interested in Draw Bias) for those occassions where the top rated horse is drawn in a stall which has a low Stall Win Percentage.

Please bear in mind that the ratings already take the Draw Bias into account (to a very small level) for certain All Weather races.

Horse – The name of the horse. Nothing really to explain here.

There is a number in brackets after the horse's name. This is the saddlecloth number of the horse.

We have one client (that I know of) who is visually impaired; this is mainly for him, he finds it easier to put his bets on by saddlecloth number rather than trying to type out the name of the horse (as dictated by his text to speech program) when the horse is called something silly like KingTutenhamens Sun.

Please note, we'll always do whatever we have to in order to make the ratings work for you.

Jockey – The name of the jockey. I truncate the forename of the Jockey to save space. Thus, Sam Twiston-Davies becomes S Twiston-Davies.

If there is a number in brackets after the Jockey's name, this indicates a Jockey Weight Allowance.

In some races, a Jockey may be given a Weight Allowance. I'm not sure of the exact rules but an Apprentice Jockey may be given an allowance; sometimes female jockeys get an allowance, and so forth. This means that the horse has to carry less weight and have a supposedly better chance of winning.

In some cases, the Jockey's name will be highlighted in bold. This means that it is the Jockey's only ride in the meeting.

One has to ask why a Jockey would only be called upon to only ride one horse at a meeting. It could be that a lower class jockey is just being given a chance or, it could be that a better class jockey is being used to test one particular horse.

It's up to you to work out the reasons; all I can do is highlight those occassions to draw your attention to them.

JWP – Jockey Win Percentage. This shows the percentage of wins that a Jockey has had from his or her last 50 races.

By choosing only the last 50 races this gives a pretty good idea of the recent form of a Jockey.   However, there are certain anomalies, such as when a jockey races very few races – amateur jockeys, for example.

Trainer – The name of the trainer. Once again, this is truncated so that Nigel Twiston-Davies becomes N Twiston-Daves.

In some cases, the Trainer's name will be highlighted in bold. This means that it is the Trainer's only horse in the meeting.

One has to ask why a Trainer would cart only one horse to a meeting. It could be that this is just a test for a horse or it could be that the Trainer is very confident in that horse at that meeting.

It's up to you to work out the reasons; all I can do is highlight those occassions to draw your attention to them.

TWP – Trainer Win Percentage. This shows the percentage of wins that a Trainer has had from his or her last 50 races.

By choosing only the last 50 races this gives a pretty good idea of the recent form of a Trainer.   Once again, there are certain anomalies, such as when a trainer enters very few races – If Nigel Twiston-Davies has a TWP of 18% and Joe Bloggs (who only has one horse in his stable and only races that horse 5 times a year) has a TWP of 30%, I'd go for Mr. Twiston-Davies every time.

Form – The form of the horse. This shows the results of the last few races (up to six races) that the horse has raced in.

Recent form is a wonderful tool but, it does need to be taken into acount with all the other factors of the race. Are we comparing like form with like?

If a horse has had wonderful form in class 4 races and then moves up to racing in class 2 races, does the recent form show any indication of current form at a higher level?

TR – Total Runs. This shows the numbers of races that a horse has raced in since the 7th of July 2013 (when I started recording these things) regardless of the code of the race.

This is just to give you an idea how many races the horse has run in since July 2013.

RR - Recent Runs. This shows the numbers of races that a horse has raced in since the 8th of July 2013 (when I started recording these things) in the same code of the today's race.

A low figure here might indicate if a horse is under exposed. In other words, have the punter, the bookies and, most importantly, the handicapper caught onto this horse's abilites yet?

LC – Last Code. This shows the last code of the last race of the horse. It will be C for NH Chases, H for NH Hurdles, B for NH Flat Races (Bumpers), A for All Weather and F for Flat. If the LC is in bold it means that there is a change in code since the last race.

So, you're looking at the form and the Average R4 of a horse but, isn't it a bit meaningless if the horse had been running in Bumpers and is now running in a NH Hurdle?

The same goes for flat racing in the spring when a horse has been running in the AW all winter; I'm not a horse but I bet that my form in my first flat race of the year at Brighton has nothing in common with my last race which was an AW race at Soutwell.

LTO – Last Time Out. The number of days since the horse last ran in the UK or Ireland.

There's a lot to be liked about having a horse run (certainly at the lower classes) recently after his or her last race. The Trainer must have his or her reasons, after all.

And, what can we tell about a horse that hasn't run for 300 days? A year ago (or the best part of it) it had a certain form – does that still count today?

CC – Change in Class. This shows the change in class between today's race and it's last race.

Thus, if a horse is running in a class 4 race today and its last run was in a class 5 race, the CC would be shown as +1.

If a horse last ran in an Irish race and today it is running in a UK race then the CC will be blank. If a horse is running in an Irish race and its last race was in the UK then the CC will be blank.

This is because there is no horse racing class system in Ireland.

However, for Irish races where the horse last ran in an Irish race, I show CC as the difference between the Prize Money of the horse's current race and the Prize money of its last race.

So, for Irish races, if a horse is running in a higher prized race than last time out he'll get a CC of more than 100% and vice versa.

Some people look at the change in class of a horse as an opportunity. Certainly, if a horse drops in class it has more opportunity of winning but, long term, horses that rise in class are more profitable (to backers, anyway.)

DC – Change in Distance. This shows the change in distance between the current race

and the horse's last race. Thus, if a horse last ran in a 5 furlong sprint and is running today in a 6 furlong sprint this would be shown as +1.

If the horse's last race was a 6 furlong sprint and today's race was a 5 furlong sprint, this would be show as -1.
If your horse has a good Speed Rating and has recently changed distance, you might want to ask why it had done so.

In fact, for the shorter races, you might want to always ask that question.

JC - Change in Jockey. This indicates if the horse is being ridden by the same jockey as it's last race. Any change in Jockey brings into question the validity of the horse's form.

I think that if a horse is usually riden by A.P. MCCoy and today is being ridden by Frankie Fallsoffalot then I'd have to ask myself if the recent form (and, indeed, the horse's rating) has any value. I'd also want to ask why the Trainer wanted to change the Jockey for this race.

TC – Change in Trainer. Now, I have to admit that all I know about horses is how to fall of them and break my glasses in the process of doing so. I did have riding lessons about 30 years ago when I was 21 years old but that was more to do with stable girls in nice tight johdpurs than any real desire to learn about riding horses!

However, if a horse moves from one Trainer to another, wouldn't you want to know about that?

When a horse moves from one Trainer to another, it will either improve in performance or do otherwise. It's certainly something to keep an eye on, either way.

C – Course Winner. This shows whether a horse has won at the course in the past.

Please forgive me for being biased (although I have loads of maths to back up my bias) but, just because a horse has won at Kempton doesn't really suggest that he/she has won at today's course (AW, NH or Flat) and at today's distance under today's going.

I'm sorry but this is one of the metrics that I show that I'd rather not show. In my opinion it's meaningless and I'd love to get rid of it and replace it with something more sensible.

D – Distance Winner. This shows whether a horse has won at that distance in the past.

See above (the course winner explanation.)

CD - Course and Distance Winner. This shows whether a horse has won at the course over the same distance in the past.

See above (the course winner explanation.)

So, the horse has won at Kempton over 20 furlongs; was that over the AW course or the Flat couse of the NH course?

And what was the going?

And, in what class (and thus, against what competition, did it do that?)

BF – Beaten Favourite. This shows if the horse was a favourite last time out and was beaten.

I quite like this metric as, if a horse was a favourite the last time out it must have been thought of as the logical winner.

It must have been a good horse, in other words.

If it lost badly last time out then today's prices might be interesting.

GW – Going Winner. This is my metric that show Going Wins since the 7th of July 2013.

I put a lot of value in this metric. If a horse can cope with heavy going, I feel that it will cope with heavy going no matter what the length of the race. I put a lot of value in this metric.

GP - Going Places. The number of Going Places since the 7th of July 2013.

As above. I also have this feeling that a place is almost as good as a win (I can prove this statistically.) I think that Going Places are an important metric.

CW – Class Wins. The number of wins that the horse has had in that class.

Now, to me, this is very important. If we only restricted ourselves to the classy races then we wouldn't have many races to talk about.

However, most of us bet over a whole range of races and, when we do, we need to know how each horse in that race managed to cope in a previous race of that class.

If a horse has previously managed to win one or more class 5 races and is currently running in a class 5 race today, I've got to feel that he or she might do it again.

CP – Class Places.   The number of places that the horse has had in that class.

See above for my explanation.

G – Course, Going and Distance Wins.

In my mind this is very imprtant. If I can show that a horse has won over a certain course (and, to me, Kempton AW is different To Kemptom Flat or Kempton NH) and has won over that distance and going on that course, then it stands a pretty good chance of doing so again.

Y – The age of the horse.

Since Kauto Star won the 2011 King George's Stakes I have never taken the age of a horse into account. However, it is there for those of you who do.

Wgt – The Weight of the horse.
S – The Sex/Gender of the horse.

A - The All Weather Speed Rank of the horse.

Quite simply, the top rated horse (as far as the Speed Ratings are concerned) will have a rank of 1, the second rated horse has a rank of 2 and so forth.

ASR – The All Weather Speed Rating expressed as Average Seconds per Furlongs for this horse.

F - The Flat Speed Rank of the horse.

Quite simply, the top rated horse (as far as the Speed Ratings are concerned) will have a rank of 1, the second rated horse has a rank of 2 and so forth.

FSR – The Flat Speed Rating expressed as Average Seconds per Furlongs for this horse.

DB – The Distance Beaten of this horse in its last race. It will shown as W (for won), N (for nose), S (for short head), H (for head), K (for neck), 0 (for didn't finish) or a number (number of furlongs.)

I imagine that this is mainly of interest to the Layers. They might think twice about laying a horse that lost by a neck last time out.

R4 – The rating of the horse. The average horse in any race will have a rating of 3.0. The ratings are specific to that specific race. Thus, a horse may have a rating of 4.38 today, win its race, and, a week later, have a rating of 2.98 (for example.)

Av – The Average Rating of this horse over its last 6 rated races. The horse with the highest Average Rating of the horse will have that number highlighted in bold.

Diff – The percentage difference of the Average Rating and its current rating. If the difference is positive it will be shown in bold.

F/C – My forecast price.

Conf – The % confidence in the horse. The second rated horse always has a confidence if 100% - the confidence of all other horses are their R4 (rating) divided by the R4 of the second rated horse. This is a KEY metric!

Yld – Yield. This is a simple number that is produced by multiplying the forecast price with the confidence of the horse.