

Horse Racing Handicapping Checklist

Keep these essential factors handy as you analyze races and make your picks!

Before the Race: Key Factors to Evaluate

- **[] Recent Form:**
 - *Check for:* Top-3 finishes in the last two races.
 - *Why:* Shows current competitiveness and peak condition.
- **[] Jockey Performance:**
 - *Check for:* Jockeys with a 20%+ win rate.
 - *Why:* Indicates proven ability to get the best out of a horse.
- **[] Trainer Success:**
 - *Check for:* Trainers with a 15%+ win rate.
 - *Why:* Suggests skilled preparation for specific races and conditions.
- **[] Track Conditions:**
 - *Check for:* Horse's past performance on dirt, turf, or synthetic surfaces.
 - *Why:* Some horses excel on specific surfaces.
- **[] Distance Suitability:**
 - *Check for:* Horse's past strength in sprints (under 1 mile) or routes (1–2 miles).
 - *Why:* Horses often have a preferred distance.
- **[] Horse Behavior:**
 - *Check for:* Pricked ears (alert, ready) or pinned ears/subtle signs of lameness (stressed/pain).
 - *Why:* Reveals mental state and physical well-being before the race.
- **[] Speed Figures:**
 - *Check for:* Consistent speed figures of 90 or higher.
 - *Why:* Quantifies how fast a horse has run relative to others.

Advanced Considerations (for deeper analysis):

- **[] Class:**
 - *Check for:* The horse's level of competition (maiden, allowance, stakes, etc.).
 - *Why:* Helps determine if a horse is well-placed or outmatched.
- **[] Post Position:**
 - *Check for:* The starting gate number, considering field size and track layout.
 - *Why:* Can influence race outcomes, especially in crowded fields or on tight turns.

Pro Tip: Prioritize Recent Form and Speed Figures for quick, reliable picks when you're just starting out!