



*Racing to Profit: The Importance of  
Race Position in Handicap Chases*

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## Racing To Profit

### *The Importance of Race Position in Handicap Chases*

#### Introduction

As you may or may not have noticed the jumping game is my main racing passion, mainly chases and specifically staying handicap chases over 23/24 furlongs and further.

In time I've come to realise the importance of race position in chases and it's now a vital consideration before I place a bet.

I'd go as far to say that if you're not considering race position in these races, you should not be betting in them. If you're not assessing what horses will lead, race prominently, mid division or be held up out the back, you should not be betting in chases (or arguably in any race for that matter).

In this report, I want to show you why, as well as a few stats you can use in your own pre-race analysis.

What follows may be obvious to some of you but with any luck there's something of use below. As always, my aim is to share a few ideas that may make you even more profitable over time, helping you enjoy this great game more so than you do now.

But first >>>

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#### My thanks to Geegeez Gold

This report is only possible thanks to [Geegeez Gold](#) and their excellent Query Tool, which allows me to dig into their historical pace data. With this tool I'm able to research the historical running styles of horses and how this has impacted results.

These are the most comprehensive set of value racing tools I've come across. If you like finding your own bets you should take the £1 – 30 day trial – and see for yourself. 😊

[Transform your betting experience HERE>>>](#)

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Let's crack on...

*What follows is a look at handicap chases and the importance of where your horse is positioned through the race...*

## Setting the Scene

The following figures relate to the last 5 years of data at the time of writing – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

I've looked at all handicap chases run in the UK/Ireland, Class 4 and above. I have not taken account of field size, going or distance. This is very much a 'top level' look at the stats to provide general pointers. There's much more digging to be done ☺

So, all handicap chases in the period, C4+ >>>

45346 runners / 5573 winners / 13513 placed horses

The following table is a breakdown by [Geegeez Gold](#) pace score.

- A '4' indicates the horse led
- A '1' indicates the horse was held up
- A '3' indicates the horse was prominent, not leading, but likely tracking the pace and a '2' was mid division, nearer last than first, but not held up out the back.

Below you can see the number of handicap chasers that have run with each run style on the day and how they performed >>>

Pace Score	Runs	Wins	Places	Win%	EW %	Win PL	EW PL	ROI	A/E	IV (impact value)
<b>4</b>	<b>7310</b>	<b>1496</b>	<b>2845</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>38.92</b>	<b>1800.28</b>	<b>1436</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.67</b>
3	15288	2237	5276	14.6	34.51	-598.11	-2393	-3.9	0.94	1.2
2	6041	485	1512	8.03	25.03	-2399.5	-3995	-40	0.69	0.8
1	15659	1263	3686	8.07	23.54	-6600.51	-6600	-42	0.66	0.68

In a way this table speaks for itself. You can see the success of those handicap chasers that led (pace score of 4) versus the rest. (there's a small proportion that had no LTO pace profile, that I've removed from the stats)

20.5% of handicap chasers that lead stay there and win.

Only 8% of horses that are held up go on to win.

For those that lead... you can see they represent 1496 winners from 5573 total winners from the starter set of data.

That's a race win strike rate of 26.8% and obviously fewer horses lead than the rest of the pace profiles, as you can see from the number of runner stats.

Those chasers that are held up (1) have an Actual vs Expected score of 0.66, indicting they perform 34% below market expectations. They are generally under-priced and don't win as often as their odds suggest they should. Front runners win 20% more than the market suggests they should.

This game is a constant battle where we as punters are trying to increase our chances of long-term success. Focussing more on handicap chasers that lead or race prominently could be one way to do just that.

Finding those handicap chasers that you think will lead is a valuable 'way in'. Trying to predict if they will do so again isn't an exact science. However, if you could back every handicap chaser that led in a chase, you'd be doing rather well financially! A cool +£1800 to £1 stakes at SP, with a 24.6% ROI.

It's worth considering the difference between front runners and prominent racers (pace score of 4 + 3) and the rest.

Those with a pace score of 4 + 3 represent 3733 of the 5573 winners from the sample.

***That's 67% of all winners in handicap chases (C4+) either led or raced prominently, from 50% of all such runners.***

This is why analysing the race position of your selection is so important.

Obviously hold up chasers do win, and they win plenty of races. However, it's much harder to do so and they are harder to identify, given they win around 31% of races contested and the sheer number of chasers that are held up, compared to those that lead for example.

Hopefully it's clear why if you bet in handicap chases you should be analysing the running style of the horses and identifying who will lead, race prominently and who will be further back, and the impact this may have on the result.

## **Why do handicap chasers that lead/race prominently do so well?**

There are many reasons for why it's so beneficial for a handicap chaser to race prominently and examples of when this may not be ideal (too many front runners/going too hard on the front end). A few ideas...

**PACE >>>** When a horse is comfortable leading/racing prominently (many are not) it means their jockey can dictate the pace of the race- in effect how fast they are going at any point. The slower they can go, the more energy they can save, and the good jockeys will know when to start stretching, kick on and hit a top speed they can sustain. If a jockey can get a lead, or be prominent, and ride their horse efficiently, they are drastically improving their chances of success.

In this scenario, if your horse is held up, they're in big trouble as they have a gap to close when the pace is increasing, when the leader is starting to motor. Obviously in chases there are fences in the way! Many horses will have a safe jumping speed and of course the faster you're going the more important fluent jumping becomes. Clearly some horses are up to this task, but it's no surprise errors start creeping in when trying to close a leader that may not be slowing down, and later in the race when tiredness creeps in. I've seen many prominent chasers win thanks to shoddy jumping in behind late in the race. It's their race position that's put their rivals under this pressure.

**Out of Trouble >>>** If you're trying to make all or are sat 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> the main dangers are in front of you – the fences. Jumping is so important in chases. I know that sounds obvious but the more chases you watch the more it hits you. Only having the fences to worry about is a positive. If you're behind a wall of horses out the back not only are you hoping the leaders are going too fast/and may stop, you're increasing your chances of being brought down by others, being unsighted at fences and being stuck in a pocket at a crucial time.

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To finish, below I've highlighted a few stats focussing on front runners and which Jockeys and Trainers have done well, as well as those tracks that have suited front running handicap chasers.

There's much more work to be done in this area, especially over certain distances and field sizes. That's work for another day.

#### How can you use this report/information?

Hopefully it's clear what an advantage it is to lead or race prominently in handicap chases. If this report makes you focus more on race positioning in chases, I'll have done my job.

The tricky part is to identify which chasers may race this way and then deciding which horse to bet on.

[Geegeez Gold](#) is an incredible piece of kit to help in this endeavour, but there are free pace resources available, such as on the At The Races website. Of course, you could go through each runner in the Racing Post race card, reading the in-running comments to assess running styles.

Arguably finding front runners/prominent racers is the easy part. Working out whether they will stay there is more challenging, but that's a topic for another time.

I hope you've found this report useful.

Below you can find the tables of stats, to use as a guide/reference point in your own punting. These stats focus on horses that have led (a pace score of 4)

All the best,

Josh

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Appendix A

**Jockeys**

*Of those with at least 10 winners and a 25% win SR >>>*

*Sorted by win %, highest to lowest >>>*

Jockey	Runs	Wins	Places	Win %	EW %	Win PL	EW PL	ROI	A/E	IV
Wayne Hutchinson	28	10	14	35.7	50	24.38	28.03	87.1	1.9	3.14
Ross Chapman	32	11	14	34.4	43.8	26.75	23.54	83.6	2.06	2.4
Paddy Brennan	108	36	56	33.3	51.9	102.1	116.2	94.6	1.61	2.69
James Bowen	49	16	19	32.7	38.8	33.92	24.16	69.2	1.38	2.17
Bryony Frost	40	13	23	32.5	57.5	33.88	47.81	84.7	1.85	2.67
Harry Cobden	90	29	37	32.2	41.1	71.92	60.45	79.9	1.35	2.52
Sean Bowen	132	42	62	31.8	47	83.62	77.42	63.4	1.46	2.48
Jack Quinlan	36	11	14	30.6	38.9	20.38	14.68	56.6	1.61	1.98
Robert Dunne	53	16	24	30.2	45.3	50.35	58.37	95	1.89	2.33
Danny Cook	164	46	81	28.1	49.4	32.54	20.55	19.8	1.2	2.12
Daryl Jacob	79	22	35	27.9	44.3	47.79	47.97	60.5	1.53	2.38
Paul Townend	36	10	18	27.8	50	54	71.83	150	1.98	3.4
Leighton Aspell	58	16	28	27.6	48.3	19.99	20.5	34.5	1.31	1.74
Harry Skelton	81	22	33	27.2	40.7	11.85	-8.66	14.6	1.07	2.05
Brian Hughes	159	43	76	27	47.8	21.15	5.3	13.3	1.16	1.8
Harry Bannister	52	14	22	26.9	42.3	24.76	21.74	47.6	1.34	1.93
Aidan Coleman	179	47	88	26.3	49.2	86.66	96.98	48.4	1.33	2.03
Gavin Sheehan	86	22	39	25.6	45.4	47.26	45.24	55	1.39	2.01
Jamie Moore	112	28	46	25	41.1	64.93	66.21	58	1.39	2.1
Paul O'Brien	40	10	16	25	40	13.88	10.28	34.7	1.7	2.25
Nico De Boinville	79	19	35	24.1	44.3	8.51	-1.7	10.8	1.21	2.13
Henry Brooke	103	24	44	23.3	42.7	37.07	36.38	36	1.4	1.84
Charlie Deutsch	82	19	39	23.2	47.6	20.88	24.19	25.5	1.28	1.96
Danny Mullins	82	19	41	23.2	50	78.41	121.4	95.6	1.87	2.52
Nick Scholfield	57	13	21	22.8	36.8	13.45	0.95	23.6	1.17	1.83
James Best	62	14	25	22.6	40.3	33.63	36.73	54.2	1.38	1.74
Matt Griffiths	50	11	20	22	40	7.76	4.4	15.5	1.26	1.65
Tom Scudamore	164	36	61	22	37.2	51.03	21.41	31.1	1.11	1.74
Sean Quinlan	138	29	55	21	39.9	29.59	27.55	21.4	1.5	1.75
Jonathan England	48	10	20	20.8	41.7	28.83	39.7	60.1	1.37	1.67

## Trainers

*Of those with at least 10 winners and a 25% win SR >>>*

*Sorted by win % , highest to lowest >>>*

<b>Trainers</b>	<b>Runs</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Win %</b>	<b>EW %</b>	<b>Win PL</b>	<b>EW PL</b>	<b>ROI</b>	<b>A/E</b>	<b>IV</b>
D Dennis	27	11	16	40.7	59.3	33.13	39.78	122.7	2.18	2.63
M Walford	25	10	14	40	56	25.96	28.01	103.8	1.82	3.26
H Whittington	27	10	12	37	44.4	9.2	2.31	34.07	1.51	2.83
K Lee	40	14	20	35	50	27.61	35.54	69.03	1.62	2.97
N Henderson	52	18	25	34.6	48.1	24.68	16.86	47.46	1.58	3.08
Dr R Newland	43	13	23	30.2	53.5	4.89	3.62	11.37	1.12	2.21
T Vaughan	50	15	22	30	44	24.37	15	48.74	1.3	2.12
P Nicholls	95	28	40	29.5	42.1	27.51	7.07	28.96	1.14	2.21
H Daly	39	11	18	28.2	46.2	8.79	8.8	22.54	1.5	2.32
P Bowen	129	36	57	27.9	44.2	73.1	69.72	56.67	1.37	2.13
R Walford	40	11	20	27.5	50	21.5	30.97	53.75	1.48	2.17
C Tizzard	129	35	58	27.1	45	83.64	95.2	64.84	1.42	2.33
C Mann	60	16	25	26.7	41.7	47.8	47.8	79.67	1.41	1.8
D Bridgwater	84	22	29	26.2	34.5	49.79	31.91	59.27	1.41	1.74
F M O'Brien	101	26	40	25.7	39.6	77.14	77.56	76.38	1.42	1.98
G L Moore	82	21	30	25.6	36.6	31.38	9.26	38.27	1.21	1.82
Mrs S Smith	196	50	94	25.5	48	25.1	8.92	12.81	1.21	1.97
C Gordon	63	16	29	25.4	46	-7.38	-11.6	-11.7	1.11	1.76
N Hawke	40	10	16	25	40	-3.07	-6.79	-7.67	1.33	2.17
N Alexander	40	10	19	25	47.5	-0.24	-0.52	-0.6	1.25	1.67

## Courses

*Of those with at least 10 winners and a 25% win SR >>>*

*Sorted by win % , highest to lowest >>>*

<b>Course</b>	<b>Runs</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Win %</b>	<b>EW %</b>	<b>Win PL</b>	<b>EW PL</b>	<b>ROI</b>	<b>A/E</b>	<b>IV</b>
Listowel	34	11	16	32.4	47.1	56.29	65.83	165.6	2.4	3.49
Hereford	47	14	22	29.8	46.8	31.18	31.16	66.34	1.58	2.43
Hexham	110	32	47	29.1	42.7	64.01	53.51	58.19	1.67	2.11
Tramore	39	11	17	28.2	43.6	70.38	76.68	180.5	2.02	2.75
Clonmel	43	12	18	27.9	41.9	32.83	33.75	76.35	1.82	2.68
Catterick	94	25	44	26.6	46.8	-6.04	-8.34	-6.43	1.28	1.84
Carlisle	160	42	73	26.3	45.6	117.1	129.8	73.18	1.55	2.08
Fakenham	112	28	53	25	47.3	24.26	23.03	21.66	1.1	1.41