



Welcome to **Top Turf Today**, the comprehensive analysis of grass races run in sunny California. (Santa Anita, Hollywood, and Del Mar) Our turf analysis data starting date was May 24, 2005.

Using **Top Turf Today**, is an economical way to find top turf plays almost every day. For someone interested in predominately grass racing, it is the quintessential racing service. There are many reasons why handicappers prefer wagering on turf racing over dirt racing. The following are some of the major reasons:

- Turf “lanes” are usually fairly even, while dirt lanes are often biased, making them difficult to measure.
- Multiple courses and many lane configurations make for more sophisticated examinations of pace and final time.
- Turf racing is kinder to a thoroughbred’s health, thus making recent racing form more predictable.

These reasons above, as well as many others, illustrate why most handicappers respond with a preference to turf racing when asked what surface they prefer wagering on. Just take a look at the wagering pools at a given track, weighing equal numbered entries of turf versus dirt fields. People enjoy turf racing more, amateur or professional, and it shows in the betting pools.

The key to adjusted turf performance ratings begins with its “foundation,” note taking. Take bad notes and all the adjusting for loss of ground, weight, bad starts, wind, pace, being blocked, checked or what have you, makes for false performance ratings. **Top Turf Today** keeps the note taking centralized to one or two note takers, not a network of many. Just compare the variance in the quality of racing charts throughout the United States.

What makes up our turf ratings? A number of components, including solid centralized note taking, and accurate pace and par figures. We account for wind, weight, pace, position, field quality, and track bias. Our turf ratings are expressed in two ways, whichever you feel is most beneficial to your style.

Besides our numerical ratings of how well a horse performs on the turf, **Top Turf Today** assigns a positional grade of where a horse “sits” in relationship to how the pace and/or bias sets up a given race. This “positional grade” is determined by many factors, the most predominate being pace.

Reading a running line in **Top Turf Today** starting from the left.

- Name of the horse...The left side of the column shows the beginning of a new race. The race number and track are presented in scheduled post time order. The number that follows is the par rating for the race. The higher this number, the better.
- Date of the Race...Year/Month/Day
- Track Abbreviation
- Distance of the race in furlongs
- Turf condition...our own rating
- **Top Turf Today** rating, the higher the better, one point = approximately 1 length. When a given race has a suspect time, or a race is so void of early speed that the final time is way too slow to properly measure, NF (no figure) is used.
- Basic position in a given race:
 - LOOSE = a length or more lead in the early stages of the race
 - CHASE = on the chase, a length or more behind the leader
 - SHORTLD = short lead, mostly of a lead of $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length
 - PRESS = about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length behind, pressing the leader
 - STALK = laying behind dueling leaders
 - MID = in the middle of the pack
 - BACK = towards the back of the field
 - FRBACK = far back, way in the back of the field
 - FADE = near front early and quickly fading from contention
- Positional grade. AA, A, B, C, D, E, F, FF is the scale used with AA being the best position and FF being the most unfavorable. AA and FF are seldom used. AA usually would occur from a leader with very easy pace on a speed biased turf course. Conversely, FF might appear from two dueling horses with a suicidal pace on a turn course that is conducive to closers. Do not confuse the positional grade with a horse's "trip." The grade only evaluates the position of a horse in relationship to how a given race sets up. 60% of all horses earn a C.
- Top Turf Today rating is expressed in (+) or (-) par figure format. (-) is the number of length a horse is better than par. (+) is the number of lengths a horse is worse than par. Think like golf, (-) below par vs. (+) above par. (i.e. + 5 = 5 lengths slower than par... - 3 = 3 lengths better than par).
- Bad trip comment. If a horse earns 6 points or greater of trip trouble it will appear in this column. Remember, trip, pace, and weight make up points of adjustment.
 - * bad start
 - ** very bad start
 - *** dwelt at start
 - CK = checked
 - STR = stretch

*Continue on for a more in-depth explanation of **Top Turf Today**.*

Top Turf Today Technical Guide provides an in-depth explanation of each column in a **Top Turf Today** report. The tech guide also provides some insights into the productions of our turf ratings and positional grades. Using our reports in a profitable manner is also discussed.

PARS

Providing a par rating for a race is essential for determining if the field in a given race is weak, strong, or average. Remember, par is the average rating for the winner of a given class.

DATE and TRACK

A word of caution here. Making use of your racing publication, (DRF, BRIS, or others) for determining “days off” patterns, is a wise idea. Obviously, **Top Turf Today** does not cover dirt racing, and certain turf courses. We may have some blanks to fill in, but the information we provide more than makes amends for those “blanks.” When analyzing how well a horse has performed on the dirt, a basic dirt figure from DRF or BRIS is more than adequate.

DISTANCE and TRACK

In this age of numerous turf course racing configurations, pace and par work is constantly changing. Tracks often add, or change, their turf rail positions. Solid par and pace work takes more time and expertise than ever before. Very few handicappers know what a reasonable pace is at many of the multiple position turf courses. We do.

TURF RATING

(expressed in whole numbers or in relationship to par (-) or (+)).

Here is the foundation, or essence of what makes up any database past performance report. We stand alone in our measuring of how pace, and sometimes bias, effect a horse's performance. We realize that measuring how wide a horse has ran is more exact, but to leave pace, and/or bias out of the equation leads to many false past performance ratings. How does one measure the effects of pace on a race? Using thousands of examples we have many pace / position matrixes. These matrixes combine various pace and position possibilities and their effect on final time. Combining bias, with pace and position, is a much more difficult task. Where the pace/pos. factor has a margin of error of about + or – 1, adding bias makes measurements more difficult. Significant turf biases do not occur that often, but to ignore them leads to many false figures. Many factors are used in measuring a horse's effort against a track bias. But predominately projecting what a horse seems capable of, versus what he actually ran sets a “bias variant.” For example, we project that horses A, B, C all should earn about 31, and they run on a seemingly bad rail. They run 24, 25, and 27 real time figures. If no other trouble occurred, then a bad rail cost the horses about 5 lengths. In another race, rail horses we projected at 30, 28, 26, ran 24, 20, 26. Again we see a variant of 5 lengths. This is rather simplified, and does not take into account pace, but it shows how biases can be roughly measured. Biased racing surfaces can yield very hidden figures. Running with the bias can yield false figures as well. Say a given turf course has gotten beat up on the inside after running a few races on yielding turf. Lane 3 and 4 become the place to be. You cannot adjust for going 3 wide or your figures will be way off. You cannot ignore bias in producing figures. At this point, we need to state a reminder that most turf lanes are even, and that biases usually occur after a course gets beaten up due to rain or overuse. Make sure you take note of when the portable turf rails move. They can stop or start any track bias. Racetracks are finally getting good about posting portable rail positions.

BASIC POSITION

Next to the turf rating is the basic position of a horse in the given race.

POSITIONAL GRADE

Whenever you examine the past performances of a turf horse, you should be attempting to figure out how each of his recent turf races set up for his particular running style. This is often overlooked by handicappers, especially past the last race or so. Figures do not tell at all. Good

wagering opportunities can arise from a horse that is a little short on figures, but has not had the right running style in his last 2, 3, or 4 efforts. We provide a positional grade to give the handicappers a valuable tool to go along with our turf rating. Remember that the positional grade only relates to how a race “sets”, and not to his “trip.” The trip is in the turf rating. Many factors go into our positional grade. They are the pace, the recent general tendency of the given turf course, the general tendency of a given day, and the tendency of a given race. By tendency, we mean speed favoring, neutral, or off pace. Understanding pace and the tendencies of a race day, or week, are relatively easy but an individual race’s tendency is more complex. Turf races are often set by the early fractions, or subtle surges of pace somewhere during the running of a race. Remember, we are usually given fraction times at the 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 point of a race. What occurred from the 1/8 to 3/8 or the 3/8 to the 5/8? Here is what we mean. Say a leader goes 24 flat, 48 flat, 112 flat. He may have run, (surged), 22 flat, from the 1/8 to the 3/8. This would be costly to him and anyone who kept pace. The fractions given say, “reasonable pace,” but in reality the front runners had a good reason to collapse. When quality front runners all collapse with a reasonable pace, the race needs closer examination to assign a decent positional grade. Gusty winds or a bad tele-timer can also be why a seemingly reasonable pace collapses. This “single race tendency”, is not easy to see, and is not used nearly as much as the day and week tendency.

BAD TRIP COMMENT

In the far right hand column you will find any “bad trip” comments. When a horse earns 6 points or greater, (about 6 lengths) of trip trouble, it will appear here. Remember, trip, pace, and weight make up our adjustments.

Suggestions for using Top Turf Today in a profitable manner are presented here.

What are we searching for in Top Turf Today that constitutes a betting opportunity? Below are some answers:

- *Obviously solid past performance ratings that are par or better.* When a field is strong, with horses running better than par, it is usually unwise to look elsewhere. By this we mean, first time turf horses or turf horses invading from a turf circuit we do not cover. Conversely, when the ratings of a given field are void of horses breaking par, take a good look at those first time turf horses. They are in a good spot to be able to compete if they take to the turf.
- *Bad grades, D’s and F’s versus A’s and B’s.* You want to look long and hard at any horse that has been unlucky enough to run D, F, or FF in his recent races. These horses had the race set against them. They might be a little short on figures, but they can go off at very generous odds. On the other hand, look for reasons why horses receiving recent A, B, AA’s can be bet against. A horse that runs close to par, but received an A in his last race is a very beatable low priced horse. (i.e. you want to play 28F to beat 30A).
- *Trip trouble horses, especially when solid pace is involved.* With video replays very available to many horseplayers, it is not such a great advantage to know that a horse was 3 wide both turns, and blocked 1 in the stretch. The mathematics to measure this is fairly simple, but when you add pace to the equation, things are more complex and hidden. Strong pace + Wide = Hidden effort.

Combine one, two, or all three of the bullets above with other top handicapping tools that are found in D. R. F., or Brisnet, and you go from a solid betting opportunity to a great one, You should be looking for a recent “upgrade” for a given horse. Here are some possible upgrades:

- Recent change of trainer to a higher % barn

- Sharp workouts recently
- Change of equipment or medication
- Best of all, sharp works since equipment or medication change.
- Change to a better turf rider. (One who rides in a given turf race is much more significant than in a dirt race. Most young riders see the grass so much less than the dirt, that it is hard for them to master the turf early on. You need a price to play unproven turf jocks.

The combination of a strong Top Turf Today performance rating that is hidden, (a poor letter grade and/or bad trip notation), and an “upgrade” since a horse last ran, makes for a superior wagering opportunity. If you have patience and look for this combination, you will greatly enhance your chances for profit.