

Chapter 7

The New Pace Top

Lifetime

Let's say it one more time: **Condition** is the paramount handicapping factor. Class, pace, distance, final-time ability and all other factors are relevant of course, but they must all be evaluated in relation to the horse's current condition. A player who is able to assess this variable significantly better than his competition will have a decisive edge at the windows. **THE XTRAS** are the single most effective tool for predicting a horse's current condition.

Most dirt races in North America, especially sprints, are exercises in *deceleration*. Absent a dead rail or anti-speed bias, horses that are able to break alertly and establish prominent early position enjoy a tactical advantage. These early leaders and pressers can often save ground near the inside and avoid traffic problems in the latter stages of the race.

As the initial portions of dirt races are usually run the quickest, a horse that exhibits improved early speed is usually showing signs of development. Young horses with gradually improving pace and final numbers are always worth a second look. Remember, however, that if the final number move is too large, a regression (bounce) will occur sooner or later - usually sooner, if you have gotten careless and made an ill-advised wager. Smaller, incremental moves, particularly in the final number, are more likely to produce another immediate peak effort.

Of all the discoveries **EQUIFORM's** research has unearthed, one of

the most powerful is also one of the easiest to spot – the **new pace top**. You will see this pattern several times a day no matter what track(s) you play. The pace number, which measures four furlong velocity at all distances, is in parentheses just to the right of the final and turnback number grid. If the final number that resulted from the new pace top (NPT) was not a significant top (two points or more), an improvement in the final number is quite likely next time out.

The most valuable use of this elementary pattern occurs when the horse runs an “off” final number when running the new pace top. The public will generally be a little perplexed about the animal’s current condition and will be unsure what to expect next. But based on years of research, Equiform can predict that approximately 70% of the time the horse will make a nice forward move. This is true because a horse has only so much energy to distribute during a race. If it exerts itself more than normal in the early portion, its final time usually suffers. However, the improved early pace in the most stressful segment of the race usually portends better days down the road.

On pages 61–64, you will find The Xtras for some horses as they appeared on race-day.¹ All of them had run a new pace top in their last race, along with a final number below their previous best. The public and most other figure players are often oblivious to this strong pattern. Consequently, they cannot predict a forward move with any degree of confidence. This translates into good wagering value for users of The Xtras.

All of these horses won their next starts. From favorites to long shots, from youngsters to old veterans, and from maiden claimers to Grade I stake races, the new pace top performs its magic. Of course, horses naturally record higher numbers as they gain more seasoning, with second and third time starters often exhibiting extreme volatility. However, predicting the timing of these swings is another matter, and users of The Xtras have the information to anticipate these moves more precisely. Below are the final numbers these horses earned in their next start after the new pace top, along with the win prices.

¹For ease of presentation, some examples of The Xtras have been reformatted. All the numbers appear, but some date spacing has been condensed.

Ordained	75"	\$ 6.20
Balto Star	71-	\$28.20
Darling Deputy	73	\$ 7.60
Fighting Spirit	68-	\$13.40
Mr Lion Heart	68-	\$36.80
Chase A Star	69-	\$28.60
Millennium Wind	80-	\$10.20
Icicle Angel	71+	\$41.60

On February 17, 2001, at Gulfstream Park, The Fountain of Youth Stakes, an early Kentucky Derby prep, was contested over 1-1/16 miles. Take a look at the major contenders for that race as they appeared on The Xtras on pages 65-67.

The race was quite competitive. The deserving favorite, Outofthebox, who had run a 74" and a 76 in routes as a two-year old, came back right in line with a 74" in January, and had Jerry Bailey at the helm. There were several other interesting possibilities. Buckle Down Ben was coming off a new pace top, earning a final number just off his two-year old top. City Zip had danced all the dances as a 2yo, and had come back with a strong sprint prep to open the year, but he had the look of an early bloomer, who might not relish the longer distances. Global Gait had done nothing wrong in his 2yo campaign (note the NPT in late November), and was now under the tutelage of Bob Baffert. Meetyouathebrig and Holiday Thunder also had some good 2yo form, and both were making their 2001 debut. All the others, save one, looked too slow to threaten.

Songandaprayer, owned in part by former Duke basketball star Bobby Hurley, had a very nice look. After breaking his maiden at Monmouth Park with a 70" in June 2000, he was laid off for five months, but returned with a 76- in the fog at Aqueduct. In the Holy Bull Stakes, his first time around two turns, he flashed blazing early speed, running an (88) NPT in the process. With that big 2yo number buttressing the NPT, Songandaprayer had every right to be considered a serious contender. In addition, he had a top rider in Edgar Prado, and figured to get the lead on the usually speed-favoring Gulfstream strip.

Having studied the race, it was now time to decide if there was a wager worth making. In a field this contentious and with lots of question marks concerning the layoff horses, Outofthebox just wasn't enough price at 5/2. But Songandaprayer at 18/1 was an outstanding play. I made his real odds in the 6/1 to 8/1 range. Prado got him to the front, and the ever-prescient Bailey, sensing a theft, sent Outofthebox after him on the far turn, but Songandaprayer dug in and drew off to a \$38.00 mutuel.

The seventh race at Aqueduct on January 26, 2001 was a bonanza for Equiform players. Both John Paul Too and Pure Harmony (pages 68 and 69) had just run new pace tops. However, John Paul Too was coming off a **double top** (a new pace top accompanied by at least a two point final top). Double tops normally knock a horse out for a while, and they often bounce more off a double top than just a final top of two points or more. By running its lifetime bests both early and late, the animal usually needs some time to recover.² Pure Harmony, on the other hand, had already hit a 75 final number back in November and had followed up with a 73+ while running his (84) pace top. He rated to bounce off the 75, and he did. But in doing so, he exhibited continuing good development by staying above his previous final tops of 71 and 71+. He looked primed for another top effort, while John Paul Too looked vulnerable. John Paul Too, a resident of the powerful John Kimmel barn, was made the 2/1 favorite. Maybe it was the outside post going two turns on the Aqueduct inner dirt that dissuaded others from betting on Pure Harmony; but, he was completely overlooked by the public. He romped to a front-end score at 13/1.

²Lightly raced horses that run double tops where the final number is below 65 are not as suspect.

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 81

ORDAINED (119)

THE XTRAS™

9TH AQU DECEMBER 29 - 6 FURLONGS INNER DIRT

	2		3		4	
D			AQ	70"	(82) ⁸⁵	-->
e						
c	AQ	66-	(78) ⁷⁵	AQ	73"	(81) ⁸⁰
N						AQ ^74+
o						(85) ⁸¹
v	AQ	62"	63 (61)	AQ	76-	(79) ⁷⁸
O						AQ 68
c						(75) ⁷⁹
t	BE	/67+w	(83) ⁹⁴	BE	=63	(67)=
S	BE	66-	66 (76) ⁷⁶			BE 73+
e						(78) ⁷⁸
p	SR	66+	67 (74) ⁷⁶	BE	73-w	(81) ⁸⁴
A						SR 73-
u						(76) ⁷⁷
g				SR	\73+	(78) ⁷⁰
J						SR /70
u						70 (74) ⁷⁷
l				BE	72	(79) ⁷⁵
J				BE	72"	73 (77) ⁷²
u				MP	=69"	(72)=
n						BE 70+
M						(74) ⁸¹
a						BE 71+
y						69 (81) ⁸⁷
A						
p				AQ	72	(78) ⁷⁸
r				AQ	66"	62 (61) ⁵⁴
M				AQ	70-w	(80) ⁸¹
a				AQ	55	67 (79)
r						
F				AQ	\63	(76) ⁷⁵
e						
b						
J						
a						
n						

BALTO STAR (120)

6TH AQJ JANUARY 1 - 1 MILE 7C

2		
D e c N	AQ \63-	68 (82)
O V	AQ 64	(79) 91
O c t S e P	BE 55-	(72) 77

DARLING DEPUTY (121)

2ND GPJ JANUARY 14 - 7 FURLONG

2		
D e c N	CD 67+	67 (79) 84
O V	KE -64-	(63) -
O c t S e P	KE 71	(75) 79
A	SR 66	(73) 70

FIGHTING SPIRIT (118)

6TH GPJ JANUARY 5 - 7 FURLONG

2		
D e c N	CR 64"	(75) 78
O V	CR -66+	(67) -
O c t S e P	CR 68-	68 (73) 69
A	CR -64	(67) -
U	CR 65+w	(68) 75
G	CR 62	(71) 78
J	CR 60"	(68) 73
U	CR 61+	(67) 70

MR LION HEART (119)

FURLONGS DIRT

3		
D e c N	-->	
O V	HO 51-	50 (71) 77
O c t	SA 59"	(68) 72

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 20

CHASE A STAR (114)

3RD FGI FEBRUARY 25 STATE-BRED - 1 MILE DIRT

		2		3	
D e c t S e F e b J a	PG	60-	(67)	68	
	LD	60"	(66)	69	
	LD	57	(60)	56	
				-->	
				PG 60"	(74)
			FG 61+	(68)	67

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 68

MILLENNIUM WIND (123)

9TH KEE APRIL 14 - 1 1/8 MILES DIRT

		2		3		
D e c p r M a r F e b J a	HO	74"	69	(73)		
					-->	
				PG 73	74	(82)
				SA 74+W	68	(69)

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 37

ICICLE ANGEL (117)

THE XTRAS™

6TH SAX MARCH 30 - 6 1/2 FURLONGS DIRT

	2		3		4
D					
e			HO 64+	63 (67) 59	
c					
N					
o			HO 64"	63 (67) 57	
v					
O					
c					
t					
S					
e					
p	EM 62"w	(62) 63			
A	EM 58+	(66) 71	EM 66+w	67 (67) 57	
u					
g	EM 55-w	(61) 74	EM 60	62 (73) 74	
J			EM 67	65 (69)	
u					
l			EM 64	63 (64) 58	
J					
u					
n					
M					
a					
y					
A					
p					
r					
M				-->	
a					
r				SA 66"	66 (76)
F					
e				SA 66"	66 (72)
b				SA ^63+	64 (70)
J					
a					
n					

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 73 OUTOFTHEBOX (112)

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT

	2		3	
D				
e				
c				
N	CR	/68- 63 (66)		
o				
v	CD	68 71 (83)		
O				
c				
t	CR	74* 72 (76)		
S				
e				
P	TP	76w 72 (79)		
A				
u	EP	\72w 67 (72)		
e			-->	
b				
J				
a				
n			GP 74"w	()

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 74 BUCKLE DOWN BEN (11)

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT

	2		3	
D				
e				
c				
N	AQ	72" 65 (72)		
o				
v	LR	73w 72 (69)		
O				
c				
t	DE	66+ 66 (69)		
S				
e	DE	/70-w 65 (67)		
w				
e			-->	
b				
J				
a			GP ^73-	71 (75)

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 72

CITY ZIP (117)

THE XTRAS™

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT

	2		3	
D				
e				
c				
N				
o				
v	CD	74+	70	(75)
O				
c	BE	69	72	(80)
t				
S				
e	BE	72"w	69	(76)
P	SR	73+w	70	(75)78
A				
u	SR	75-w	73	(81)85
g				
J	SR	72"w		(80)96
u				
l	BE	74w		(81)86
J				
u	BE	72		(82)87
n				
M	CD	75-		(75)80
a	CD	/75w		(81)82
y				
A	KE	68-		(78)90
P				
r				
M				
a				
r				
F				
e				
b				
J	GP	76+	73	(77)79
a				
n				

GLOBAL GAIT (117)

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16

2			
D	LR	75*W	70 (72)
e			
c			
N	LR	/73-W	73 (86) 82
o			
v			
O	LR	72-W	(79) 86
c			
t			
S	DE	>62+	(70) 72

MEETYOUATHEBRIG (119)

2			
v	CD	73+W	68 (79)
O			
c			
t	KE	70+	71 (80)
S			
e	FX	73+W	74 (83) 88
D			
n			
M	HO	64*	(72) 72
a	HO	71*W	(80) 85
y			

HOLIDAY THUNDER (112)

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16

2			
D			
e			
c			
N	CD	/72+	69 (72)
o			
v			
O			
c			
t	KE	73-	70 (78)
S			
e	TP	67	67 (75)
P			
A	SR	74	(78) 78
u			
g	SR	\69-W	(76) 76
J			

SONGANDAPRAYER (117)

10TH GPX FEBRUARY 17 - 1 1/16 MILES DIET

2		3	
N	AQ	/76-W	()
o			
v			
J			
u	MP	^70*W	(84) 88
n			
P			
e			-->
b			
J			
a		GP	^70 71 (88)

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 53

JOHN PAUL TOO (121)

THE XTRAS™

7TH AQU JANUARY 26 - 1 1/16 MILES INNER DIRT

	2	3	4
D			
e			
c			
N		AQ ^73+w 69	(80)
o			
v			
O		AQ 72w 69	(75)
c			
t		BE 71- 69	(77)79
S			
e			
p		SR 71+w	(76)77
A			
u		SR 69 "	68 (73)75
g			
J			
u			
l			
J			
u			
n			
M			
a			
Y			
A		AQ /69-w 65	(77)79
p			
r		AQ 68	(77)78
M			
a			
r		AQ 73+	(76)77
F			
e		AQ 68	(76)75
b			
J			
a			
n			
			AQ 75+ 77 (82)

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 55

PURE HARMONY (123)

THE XTRAS™

7TH AQU JANUARY 26 - 1 1/16 MILES INNER DIRT

	2	3	4
D			
e			
c			
N		AQ /75w	73 (77)
o			
v			
O		AQ 68w	65 (68)
c			
t		BE 71+w	70 (77) 79
S			
e			
p			
A			
u		SR 64+	(73) 79
g			
J			
u		BE 71	(81) 85
l			
J		BE 62+	(76) 82
u			
n			
M			
a			
Y			
A			
p			
r			
M			
a			
r			
F			
e			
b			
J			-->
a			
n			AQ 73+ 78 (84)

Cyclical

The new pace top is quite common with young and lightly raced horses. After all, they should run faster as they develop and mature. Older horses (4 year-olds and up), with plenty of racing experience, are another matter. Although they are still capable of running new pace tops, and often do, many have already reached their full potential or have limited upside.

One key to spotting an upcoming improvement with these more heavily raced older animals is the **cyclical pace top** (CPT).

Many older claiming horses, especially the cheaper ones, cycle in and out of form frequently. They are the racing secretary's best friend, usually available to assist him in filling races that require more betting interests. These horses are often "raced into shape", and the cyclical pace top can help us determine when a big effort is likely.

After a five-week layoff (a long one for him), Too Much Heart (page 72) was making his third start within three weeks. He had won his last three races but was now facing stronger opponents. His pace numbers had improved in his last four races, culminating with a cyclical pace top of (76) on December 14. This was the second best dirt pace number he had run in his entire career, and indicated he was in peak condition. He ran a 71" while returning \$7.80.

On March 1, 2001, Madok (page 73) ran his best pace number in almost two years. He won his next start at 8/1.

The cyclical pace top occurs quite frequently, and although not as powerful as the new pace top, we have found it to be very effective when a horse makes its third start off a layoff.

As I perused the September 17, 1999 edition of the *Racing Form*, an article by Dick Jerardi aroused my interest. Jerardi's article focused on the second race at the Meadowlands on September 11, 1999. After analyzing the race, he concluded that Frank T. (page 74) was worth a wager at 3/1, citing his three out of four record at the Big M along with his affinity for the one mile and 70 yards distance. He saw no reason why the horse shouldn't fire and was aghast when Prince Tierra (page 75) won the race at almost 40/1.

I hadn't played the Meadowlands that evening, But, out of curiosity, I decided to look at The Xtras for the race. As The Xtras were printing, I noticed that two races back, Prince Tierra had broken from the twelve post going a mile at Monmouth. Then, in his next start, another route at Monmouth, he had chased a sizzling 21-4/5, 45-4/5 pace before fading badly.

When I looked at The Xtras, I was as dumbfounded as Jerardi, but from a totally different perspective. I couldn't believe that a horse coming off a cyclical pace top (74) who had run his two best fast track races (68 and 68+) at the Meadowlands paid \$80.80. Two of Prince Tierra's good Meadowlands races did not appear in the *Form's* PP's due to the ten-race cutoff. While he lauded the Meadowlands record of Frank T., Jerardi downgraded Prince Tierra due to his 0/13 record over the same oval. He made the same mistake others commit by measuring wins and losses rather than performance. Prince Tierra had given every indication that he liked the Meadowlands, but this had escaped Jerardi's faulty analysis. Certainly, Frank T. had run big back numbers at the Meadowlands, but his recent form gave no indication that he was ready to run back to those numbers, an assessment which Jerardi duly acknowledged. Meanwhile, Prince Tierra had given a wake-up call with the cyclical pace top and, given his preference for the Big M, was playable at 10/1 or better.

Jerardi is a keen and insightful analyst, and I have enjoyed his articles over the years. But in this case, his information set did not yield the proper clues. The Xtras did.

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 53

TOO MUCH HEART (120)

THE EXTRAS™

8TH CRC DECEMBER 24 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT

	3	4	5
D		CR =67+	(72)= -->
		CR 66"	65 (69) CR 68-w 70 (76)
e		CR =70"	(68)= CR 68+w 68 (74)
		CR 67+w 66	(73)74
c		CR ^59+	(68)74
		CR 59-	62 (64)
N		CR =60"	(56)= CR 68-w 66 (70)
		CR =65"	(67)= CR 66" 64 (69)
o		CR /66-	67 (73)
		CR =69-	(63)= CR 66" 66 (70)
v		CR =69+	(70)= CR 68 65 (71)
		CR 64+	64 (72)
O		CR =69"	(78)=
		CR =69-	(60)= CR 65 66 (72)
c		CR 62	63 (62)
		CR 69	64 (68)
t		CR 66	63 (67) CR 65" 68 (77)79
		HI =66+	()= GP 70 62 (63)
S		HI =69	()= GP 69"w 66 (69)
		HI =68-	()= GP 69- 66 (69)
e		HI 64"w 58	(64) GP 67w 65 (72)
		HI 44+53	(67)71
p			GP 62+ 63 (74)75
			GP 64 65 (74)76
A			GP 67 65 (71)74
			GP =68" (59)
u			
g			
J			
u			
l			
J			
u			
n			
M			
a			
y			
A			
p			
r			
r			
F			
e			
b			
J			
a			
n			

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 60

MADOK (116)

THE XTRAS™

		5		6			7		
D e c N o v O c t S e p A u g J u l J u n M a y A p r M a r c h F e b J a n				AQ	^73+w	(77)	75		
	TP	73"	72	(77)	74				
	CD	67	68	(71)					
					BE	76-	74	(79)75	
	BE	71+	71	(77)	BE	73"w	73	(80)77	
					BE	73+	73	(80)74	
	SR	72	69	(73)	71	SR	71"	71	(75)73
					SR	/72+	70	(77)77	
	SR	73	72	(76)	75				
	BE	71-	68	(68)	DE	69-	(74)	74	
					DE	72	(75)	73	
	BE	73w	71	(74)					
					DE	/70	(79)	86	
	BE	74"	(79)	66					
	AQ	73+	73	(83)	87	DE	70	(70)67	
					DE	72	(77)72		
	AQ	69+	(77)	56					
AQ	72"	(78)	73	GP	73-w	69	(73)68		
				GP	73+	(78)74		AQ 74 (82)80	
AQ	74	(80)	75	GP	71+	71	(76)77		
								AQ 69" (75)68	
AQ	72"w	(81)	77	GP	71	70	(78)76		

	3		4		5	
D						
e						
c	ME	66- 65 (74)	ME	62" (69) 74		
N	ME	65+ 62 (66)	ME	66 (67) 54		
O	ME	63" 65 (73)	ME	63+ 60 (61)		
v	ME	67- 64 (67)	ME	68 61 (65)		
O	ME	^63" 58 (65)	ME	68+ (62) 57		
c	ME	=61+ (68)=	ME			
t						
S	ME	66- 63 (67)	ME	67 65 (71)		
e			ME	=62" (70)=	-->	
p			MP	/74-w 71 (73)	ME	68-w 65 (72)
A					MP	61+ 62 (74)
u					MP	62- 61 (65)
g			MP	=67+ (65)=		
J	M		MP	67" 64 (63)		
u	MP	58" 62 (69)	MP	64+ (76) 67	MP	64+ 66 (71)
n			MP	/64+ 57 (57)		
M					GS	64- 62 (68)
a			GS	66+ 65 (68)	GS	64" 62 (64)
Y			GS	65 65 (65)		
A			GS	65+w 63 (69)	GS	^65" 63 (71)
p			GS	64" 61 (62)		
r			GS	63" 64 (67)		
M			GS	62" 61 (61)		
a						
r						
F						
e						
b						
J			GS	60- 64 (75)		
a						
n						

Delayed

Sometimes, a horse will run a new pace top but not demonstrate its good condition until the second race after the pace top due to one of the following factors:

- intervening turf race
- equipment change
- excuse
- against the bias

The **delayed pace top** (DPT) is operative in these situations. One of the most powerful delay patterns is a new dirt pace top followed immediately by a turf race. The intervening turf race serves as an excellent prep, building on the animal's current good form. After demonstrating the best early foot of its career, the horse's finishing ability is enhanced with a stamina building grass effort. The third race in the pattern (back on the dirt) is the payoff, when the horse puts the conditioning benefits from both earlier races together. Of course, if the intervening turf race results in a big final number top, all bets are off. But usually, this move is employed to build both the endurance of the horse and the mutuel price for those wagering on it.

After winning off the August new pace top (67), Sandy Lass (page 77) made another new pace top (71) in November. In her next start in early December, she was thrown to the wolves, moving up to the allowance ranks to face 1/5 Voodoo Dancer. Surely, trainer and former riding star Jacinto Vasquez had no illusions about winning that particular grass race at 7-1/2 furlongs. After chasing the pace for half a mile, Sandy Lass finished next to last. However, the conditioning she received in that race, coupled with the new pace top, made her a lively possibility on the second day of the 2001 Gulfstream Park meet. Dropped back in with claimers and going seven furlongs, Sandy Lass exploded to a 65, paying \$47.20.

Be on the lookout for the other delay patterns mentioned above. Although requiring some detective work, they will point out many live horses hidden from the public.

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 28

SANDY LASS (117)

THE EXTRAS™

3RD GPX JANUARY 25 - 6 FURLONGS DIRT

	2	3			
D					
e					
c					
CR	=61+	(74)=			
N					
CR	60"	(71)70			
O					
CR	61"w	(67)67			
S					
e					
p					
CR	56"w	(65)76			
A					
CR	55"	(67)81			
u					
g					
J					
u					
l					
J					
CR	56+	(64)75			
u					
n					
M					
CR	51+	(61)71			
a					
Y					
A					
p					
r					
M					
a					
r					
F					
e					
b					
J					
a					
n					
			-->		
			GP 65w		
			64 (70)72		

Off a Layoff

Horses that run a new pace top off a layoff of 60 days or more often provide excellent betting opportunities, especially if a weak final number accompanies the new pace top. In the sixth race at the Fairgrounds on March 5, 2001, No Its Not, who had run final numbers between 68" and 70+ in his last three races, was installed as the 8/5 favorite. Ex Who, who had run a 68 final along with a NPT in his last start, was the 4/1 second choice. However, Ex Who had been away for over a month. The conditioning benefits of the NPT tend to diminish the longer a horse is absent. After all, if the animal is in good form, the trainer should want to cash in as soon as possible. With claimers, we like to see the horse back within three weeks, but allow longer rest periods for classier animals.

Now look at Land Of Dixie (page 80). After winning two of five races (all well spaced out) as a 2yo, Land of Dixie returned from a 77-day vacation with an (82) new pace top on February 23. Trainer Tom Amoss must have liked what he saw. He entered him right back ten days later, by far the shortest rest period of his career. With a June 67 as a 2yo, and a shrewd trainer like Amoss calling the shots, we felt Land Of Dixie had a good chance to run a final number in the 68-70 range. He did just that, running a 69" for a \$22.20 mutuel.

Off Tracks

Sometimes, a horse that is coming off a new pace top will run its next race on an off track. If the horse has not handled wet surfaces well in the past and runs another clinker, consider it in the second race after the NPT. Conversely, if an animal has shown a liking for off tracks and is now running over such a surface off a new pace top, give it a long look.

The third race at Santa Anita on March 1, 2001, demonstrates this principle. Having progressed nicely in her 2yo campaign, Real Paranoide (page 81) peaked with a 66 final in the mud at Golden Gate. After clipping heels and losing her rider in her 3yo debut, she ran

a new pace top (75) on January 26, 2001 over a sloppy surface. Real Paranoide had earned both her best pace number and best final number on off surfaces. Coming off a new pace top and running over a muddy track on March 1, she was a steal at 15/1.

Stone Gold (page 82) is another example of a horse coming off a pace move and returning to a wet track he relishes. Note that entering this May 25, 2001 race at Belmont Park, his two best final numbers were earned on off tracks. Some players would bet him on that angle alone, but the (75) cyclical pace top in his last start was further evidence that he was in shape to deliver another good effort. He did, winning with a 72-.

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 48

LAND OF DIXIE (116)

THE XTRAS™

		2		3	
D e c N o v O c t S e p A u g J u l J u n M a y A p r M a r F e b J a n	FG	66-w	(73)	82	
	KE	60	62	(80)	85
	AP	/62"	(71)	72	
	AP	65w	(71)	70	
	RD	67	(67)	72	

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FG 63+ (82)86

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 18

REAL PARANOIDE (116)

THE EXTRAS™

3RD SAX MARCH 1 - 6 FURLONGS DIRT

	2		3	
D				
e				
c				
N	GG \66	(73)72		
o				
v	BM 60"	60 (64)		
O				
c	BM 64"w	(69)69		
t	BM 63"	(73)75		
S				
e	BM 61+	(72)71		
p	BM 60+	(67)78		
A	SC 58	(70)73		
u				
g	BF 58"	(63)58		
J				
u				
l				
J				
u				
n				
M				
a				
Y				
A				
p				
r				
M				
a				
r				
F				
e				
b				
J				
a				
n				

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SA /61 (75)72
SA xx ()70

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 14

STONE GOLD (116)

THE XTRAS™

4TH BEL MAY 25 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT

	2	3	4
D		AQ 69-	(75) 74
e			
c			
N			
O			
v			
O		BE 69+	64 (70)
c			
t			
S			
e			
p			
A			
u			
g			
J			
u			
l			
J			
u			
n			
M			-->
a			BE 67 69 (75)
y			
A			
p			AQ 70-w 66 (68)
r			AQ 69+ 64 (64)
M			AQ 70 69 (72)
a			
r			AQ \72 66 (71)
F			AQ 69" 68 (73)
e			
b			AQ 66+ 68 (66)
J			AQ /72+w 74 (77)
a			
n			AQ 68+ (74) 71

Out of the Blue

Although young horses often run improved pace numbers in erratic leaps, this is not the norm for older animals with plenty of racing under their girths. The **out of the blue pace top** occurs when an older, experienced horse runs a pace number at least 6 points higher than any of its last 10 pace numbers. This pattern often signals that a dramatic turnaround is imminent. It could be a back-class horse recovering from minor ailments, a trainer change, new shoes, or other factors at play. But, whatever the reason, the out of the blue pace top can help the handicapper spot these veterans that are on the upswing.

Layoff Inducing and Negative Reads

Although the new pace top is usually a positive indicator, the effort required to run so quickly in the early part of the race is sometimes detrimental. If a horse is unable to make a forward move off a lifetime pace top (unless the previous race was a double top or any of the aforementioned delayed lines), something is probably amiss. We downgrade the expected performance of such animals in their second race after the new pace top.

As a corollary, the new pace top can send a horse to the sidelines if it is not fit enough to withstand the stress concomitant with the NPT. If the horse is not sound, the increase in early output may cause an injury or old infirmities to resurface.