

GETTING YOUR UPS DOWN UNDER

By Ivan Bigg

AUSTRALIAN RACING OFFERS AN EDGE

So you're getting beaten up betting horses at your favourite tracks. So what do you do? You bet Australia. Before you conclude that it sounds like jumping from the frying pan into the fire, consider this:

1. A change is as good as a rest. A total change in track venues is as good as a splash of cold water in the face. It freshens the mind and often gets you out of a rut.
2. You get an edge on other players. Since most North Americans don't pay serious attention to Australia, the payoffs are often higher than they should be - and often huge!
3. It's not complicated if you know what to look for, although the programs are totally different from North American ones.



Okay, you say you've bitten a bit, so what are the so-called angles?

1. Note the class of track that each horse has been racing at. The tracks there are M for Metropolitan (an "A" track), P for Provincial (a "B" track) and C for Country, which is the lowest class. This is huge. Horses going from a P track to an M track is like an Assiniboia Downs horse going to Woodbine in Toronto.
2. Note the purses they have been racing for and their previous finishes at that purse level. This is a major handicapping angle. Grass horses, especially in a country that specializes in grass racing (Australia is all grass racing), run more consistently than horses on the dirt and generally are more fit. So a horse that finished 1st at a \$6,000 purse level should be given a much bigger edge over horses that have only finished 2nd or 3rd at the same level.
3. Horses that were put up to a \$9,000 purse level, then dropped back down to, say, \$6,000 are big plays. They are likely to improve just because they raced in tougher company last time. You'll catch big longshots with this angle.
4. Australia is most playable from Sunday night to Thursday night. That's because the cheaper horses race on those days and can be more readily differentiated from the competitive high class horses racing on other nights.
5. Don't play races lower than a \$5,000 purse level. They are too inconsistent.
6. Watch the odds board for a brief showing of the odds in Australia. Since these odds are shown only for a minute or so before each race, a lot of people in North America miss them and only see the uneducated North American odds.

So there you have it. These tips should go far into turning you into an Australian racing fan. I know of players who love Australia and of a local player who even bet a straight \$50 triactor that paid \$130 for a \$2 wager. Can't see the saddle cloth numbers during a race? Look for the colours of the jockey's silks, which are noted in the programs.