



# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WAGERING

**AT THE HARNESS RACES**



# WELCOME!

Hello and welcome to Harness Racing at Cal Expo. We've put together this little guide to help new visitors to the track, or people who have never wagered before. Wagering can be a fun and exciting way to enjoy the races—and you may even win some money! Let's talk money for just a minute: When you come to the harness races, it is best that you decide on a **WAGERING BUDGET**—how much money are you willing to wager? Always remember, you could go home with more money than you came with, but you could also lose some or all of your money. We recommend you "Wager with your head, not over it."

This guide will take you through these 7 steps:

- 1) Get a Nightly Racing Program
- 2) Get a Voucher
- 3) Select a Type of Wager
- 4) Which Horse to Bet On?
- 5) Two Ways to Wager
- 6) Understanding the Tote Board
- 7) Cashing Your Winning Wager

Because understanding the Tote Board (the large scoreboard in the infield) is crucial to grasping harness wagering, **text that references the Tote Board is printed in red**. When you see this, you'll know that you can find additional information on the Tote Board fold-out.

That being said, let's get started....

## STEP 1 GET A NIGHTLY RACING PROGRAM

The first thing you'll need is a PROGRAM. They only cost a few dollars, and you can buy them at the front entrance, where you bought your admission. One PROGRAM for every 2 or 3 people will be enough for your first couple times at the track. The PROGRAM has all the information needed to bet on the horses. On your first time at the track, the things you'll be most interested in are the Horses' Names and Numbers, and which horses are in which races.

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## STEP 2 GET A VOUCHER

Good old cash can still be used when wagering with a teller, but the **VOUCHER** is easier, increases your options, and speeds up the betting process. A **VOUCHER** is the piece of paper that will become your wagering money while you're at the track. You can purchase a **VOUCHER** from a teller or from a **VOUCHER MACHINE**. Choose a dollar amount, say \$20, and ask the teller for a \$20 **VOUCHER**—or purchase it at a **VOUCHER MACHINE**, following the simple on-screen instructions (\$20 is the minimum amount on a voucher machine). Now that you have the **VOUCHER**, you can place a bet with either a teller or at a self-service Wagering Machine.

## STEP 3 SELECT A TYPE OF WAGER: WIN, PLACE OR SHOW

You've got your program and voucher. Now let's talk about types of wagers. There are all sorts of ways you can wager—but on your first or second time at the harness races we're trying to keep things simple, and we suggest wagering either **WIN**, **PLACE** or **SHOW**. Getting comfortable with this type of basic wager can reward you with greater success.

A wager to **WIN** wins if the horse you pick finishes 1st. **(You receive the WIN price)**

A wager to **PLACE** wins if the horse you pick finishes 1st or 2nd. **(You receive the PLACE price)**

A wager to **SHOW** wins if the horse you pick finishes 1st, 2nd or 3rd. **(You receive the SHOW price)**

In addition to the tote board, you can view **WIN**, **PLACE** and **SHOW** prices on TVs throughout the track.

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The payoff for a SHOW wager is usually the lowest, because it involves the least amount of risk. A wager to WIN or PLACE involves greater risk and therefore yields a larger return if your horse performs as you wagered it would. SHOW wagering will usually produce a greater number of winning tickets, but most likely not a lot of dollars. Many people in order to increase their chances of winning make their wager to SHOW. While you're getting accustomed to wagering, betting SHOW may be the best path to travel.

## STEP 4 WHICH HORSE TO BET ON?

Now that you understand a little about basic types of wagers, the question is 'What horse should you wager on?' That's the toughest question on the track. In the long term, mastering the racing program is the key to wagering success (check out "HOW TO READ THE PROGRAM" at [www.capitolracing.com](http://www.capitolracing.com)). In the short term, here are a few suggestions:

### A. INTUITIVE FACTORS:

Choosing a winner can be as simple as picking your horse by name. Harness horses have great names, and if you find one you really like place your wager on that horse. You could choose your horse by its color. Picking horses can be as scientific or as unscientific as you want to make it.



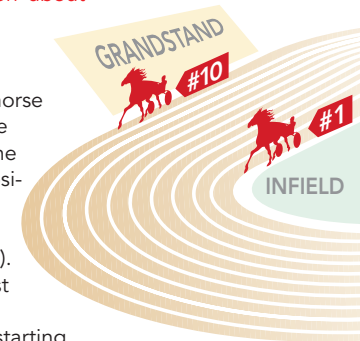
**B. FAVORITES VERSUS LONGSHOTS:** FAVORITE horses offer the smallest pay-offs because they are more 'likely' to win, and LONGSHOT horses offer the biggest pay-offs because they are less 'likely' to win. Some people who are a bit more daring and are looking for a bigger payoff tend to wager on LONGSHOTS. While other people prefer a greater likelihood of success and therefore bet on FAVORITES.

But who determines the **pay-off odds of each horse?** Actually you do! A horse's pay-off gets lower as more money is wagered on it. And a horse's pay-off gets higher if less money is wagered on it. Therefore the pay-off amount is constantly changing as bets are being tabulated prior to race time. Although all betting stops when

the horses reach the starting line, the pay-off amounts continue to change early in the race as wagering from remote locations continues to be tabulated. **Go to the Tote Board fold-out and the Pay-off chart for more in-depth information about pay-offs.**

### C. POST POSITION:

Post position is where a horse begins the race—from the inside to the outside of the track. Generally inside positions (#1 to #3) are more advantageous than those on the outside (#7 to #10). It is a fact that the #5 post position wins 20% of the time, so that might be a starting point for your wagering decision.



**D. DRIVER AND TRAINER PAST PERFORMANCE:** You can choose a horse by driver—if you like a particular driver, or you notice that a particular driver is "hot" on the night you're at the harness races. Also, a horse's trainer can be an indicator. On the first few pages of the program there is a page dedicated to Driver and Trainer Standings (*Who's Hot & Who's Not*).

**E. TRACKMAN'S PICKS:** At the bottom of each race page in the program are the TRACKMAN'S PICKS. These picks are in the predicted order of finish from 1st to 3rd (including 4th place for some of the more advanced types of betting). The TRACKMAN is the guy who compiles all the data for the program—all those lines of numbers and comments. So the TRACKMAN'S picks are his best bets for each race.

## STEP 5 TWO WAYS TO WAGER

There are 2 ways to place a wager: with a TELLER or on a self service WAGERING MACHINE. In either case we recommend placing your bet early. Betting activity at both tellers and machines increases just before post time, and if you wait too long betting may close before you've had a chance to make your bet.

**BETTING WITH A TELLER:** To insure your request is accurately communicated to the TELLER it's highly recommended that you state your bet to the TELLER in a specific way. You say to the TELLER: *continued on p. 6*

- 1) The race number
- 2) The name of the track
- 3) The dollar amount
- 4) The type of wager (win, place or show)
- 5) The horse number

For example, "In the 3rd race at Cal Expo I would like to bet \$2 to SHOW on #6," which means you're placing a \$2 SHOW wager on the #6 horse in the 3rd race at Cal Expo.

Why say 'Cal Expo?' There may be as many as 5 or 6 tracks racing on some evenings, so it's very important that you say the name of the track you want to wager on.

The TELLER will enter your information and then print the ticket for your wager. You can pay for your wager with cash, or give the TELLER your voucher, and your wager amount will be deducted from the balance on your voucher.

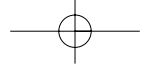
**BETTING ON A SELF-SERVICE WAGERING MACHINE:**

The other, and sometimes faster, way to wager is on the self-service WAGERING MACHINES. In this case you insert your voucher (self-service WAGERING MACHINES do not accept cash), choose Cal Expo as the track you're wagering on, and then continue to use the touch screens to complete your wager, specifying: the dollar amount that you would like to wager, the type of wager you would like to make (win, place, show), the race number, and the horse number.

When you have entered all of the information, touch the FINISH button located at the bottom left of the screen. At this point, your ticket will be printed by the self-service wagering machine. If your wager is less than the current amount of your voucher, the machine will print a new voucher with your new balance on it. THESE VOUCHERS ARE JUST LIKE CASH, SO MAKE SURE YOU GET BOTH YOUR WAGER TICKET AND VOUCHER before you leave the machine or teller.

WHETHER YOU'RE AT A LIVE TELLER OR USING A SELF-SERVICE WAGERING MACHINE, CONFIRM THAT YOUR WAGERING TICKET SHOWS THE WAGER YOU WANT. IF NOT, TAKE THE TICKET BACK TO THE TELLER, OR RE-INSERT IT INTO THE MACHINE AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.

*For the record, there is actually a third way to wager on the harness races at Cal Expo—online. Visit our Website [www.capitolracing.com](http://www.capitolracing.com) for more information.*



There are usually 10 to 12 races each evening here at Cal Expo. RACE displays the number of the upcoming or current race. All of the information on the TOTE BOARD relates to this particular race. This race number corresponds to the race number in your program.

The TIME simply displays the time of day. And the POST displays the expected starting time of the next race. This is important because it tells you how much time you have to place your wager. Remember to leave yourself enough time—tellers and self-service wagering machines get crowded just before race time.

The colored numbered squares that run across the top of the TOTE BOARD are HORSE NUMBERS. Although we are only showing 3 in the diagram below, the actual tote board contains 12 HORSE NUMBERS. If there are fewer than 12 horses in a race, only those numbers that are lit with information are actually running in the race.

The TOTE BOARD is especially helpful for understanding how much a wager will pay-off. This can be a factor when you are deciding which horse to wager on. Remember, earlier (STEP 4) we discussed that pay-offs for each horse are constantly changing based on how much money is wagered on each horse (the more money wagered on a horse the lower its payoff). A number or set of two numbers representing each horse's payoff, called APPROXIMATE ODDS display to the right of each horse number.

To translate this number into the pay-off on a \$2 wager use the chart in the lower left corner of this fold-out. Here, for example, the APPROXIMATE ODDS are 5:2. Look on the chart and see that if this horse wins your \$2 wager will pay \$7 - \$7.80.

If you don't see a red colon (: ) between the odds numbers on the board, add a :1 after the number. So a 20 is really 20:1.

## STEP 6 UNDERSTANDING THE TOTE BOARD

*What do all those numbers on that big green thing called the TOTE BOARD mean? The TOTE BOARD is located in the track infield. Look out at the track from the grandstand and you can't miss it. The TOTE BOARD contains a wealth of information about horses and their numbers, payoffs, times and many, many other things. To keep it simple for now, the diagram below explains those parts of the board that will help you most on your first few visits.*

As soon as the red OFFICIAL sign displays in this box the results listed below are declared 'official' by the Stewards of the California Horse Racing Board and you can cash your winning ticket (see back cover of this guide for how to cash your winning ticket).



### APPROXIMATE PAYOFFS FOR \$2 WIN WAGER

1-9	\$2.10 - 2.20	5-2	\$ 7.00 - 7.80
1-5	\$2.40 - 2.60	3-1	\$ 8.00 - 8.80
2-5	\$2.80	7-2	\$ 9.00 - 9.80
1-2	\$3.00	4-1	\$10.00 - 10.80
3-5	\$3.20 - 3.40	9-2	\$11.00 - 11.80
4-5	\$3.60 - 3.80	5-1	\$12.00 - 13.80
1-1	\$4.00 - 4.20	6-1	\$14.00 - 15.80
6-5	\$4.40 - 4.60	7-1	\$16.00 - 17.80
7-5	\$4.80	8-1	\$18.00 - 19.80
3-2	\$5.00	9-1	\$20.00 - 21.80
8-5	\$5.20 - 5.40	10-1	\$22.00 - 23.80
9-5	\$5.60 - 5.80	15-1	\$32.00 - 33.80
2-1	\$6.00 - 6.80	20-1	\$42.00 - 43.80

All of the pay-off amounts above include your original wager amount plus your winnings.



When deciding which horse to wager on, it can be helpful to compare horses in terms of pay-offs. Here, for example, the number 4 is displayed beside horse #3, and the number 20 is displayed beside horse #2.

The 4 means a \$2 wager on horse #3 to win pays \$10 - \$10.80.

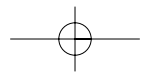
The 20 means a \$2 wager on horse #2 to win pays \$42 - \$43.80.

So horse #2 has a much better pay-off than horse #3. But remember that this 'better' pay-off is an indication that the horse is less 'likely' to win. See the discussion of LONGSHOTS and FAVORITES on page 4.

This is where to look for the ORDER OF FINISH—horse numbers will display beside 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The 4th place finisher also displays for some of the more advanced types of wagers.

So your wager won! How much money did you win? Read across from left to right starting with the horse number displayed in the ORDER OF FINISH. Say your horse finished second and you wagered on him to SHOW. This is the amount that a \$2 SHOW wager pays. If you bet \$4, simply double the amount displayed.

This section of the tote board is where you should look after a race has been run. It displays results and pay-offs for WIN, PLACE and SHOW wagers.





## STEP 7

### CASHING YOUR WINNING WAGER

Hold your ticket until the result of the race or races have been declared official. A few minutes after a race **you'll see an 'Official' sign lit in red on the tote board.** In the rare case where a foul has been alleged, the 'OFFICIAL' sign will say 'INQUIRY' until a determination is made by the Stewards. If your wager is successful, take your ticket to any window to redeem it for cash, or add it to the balance on your voucher. And Congratulations!

Take care of your ticket—State law forbids claims for lost or mutilated tickets. If you forget to cash it tonight, don't worry. You legally have until May 15th of the year following the close of the current race meeting.

### ENJOY A GREAT EVENING OF RACING

We hope this little guide has been helpful in introducing you to the basics. Enjoy a great evening of racing, good luck on all of your wagers, and remember "Wager with your head, not over it."

*There's a lot more to know about harness racing and wagering. For more advanced information, please visit our Web site: [www.capitolracing.com](http://www.capitolracing.com), or check out the Information booth at the track.*

## CAPITOL RACING LLC

P.O. Box 255069  
Sacramento, CA. 95865

[www.capitolracing.com](http://www.capitolracing.com)  
[info@capitolracing.com](mailto:info@capitolracing.com)

916.263.7893 **Phone**  
916.263.7887 **Fax**  
916.263.7894 **Voice Mail**  
916.838.TURF **Turf Club**