



ASCOT BETTING INSIGHTS

Ascot is one of the two Metropolitan race tracks in Western Australia and unlike other States; they race on a seasonal basis from mid October through to mid April the following year. During the other months of the year Metropolitan racing is hosted by the Belmont track.

Perth racing doesn't come on the radar of many punters, but it's one of my favourite places to bet and historically I've done very well there. With the Perth Summer Racing Carnival about to kick off, I thought it a good time to take a look at the Ascot track and what lessons can be learned about betting there.

THE RECORD OF HORSES BASED ON MARKET PRICE

The table below shows the result of all runners at Ascot from January 2005 to 13th November 2016, sorted by starting price.

Starting Price	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
\$1.01 to \$3.00	2690	1062	39.5%	-3.1%
\$3.1 to \$5.00	5991	1245	20.8%	-4.6%
\$5.1 to \$7.00	4653	589	12.7%	-9.1%
\$7.1 to \$10	6165	567	9.2%	-3.3%
\$10.1 to \$15	6742	372	5.5%	-7.0%
\$15.1 to \$20	3499	128	3.7%	-14.8%
\$20.1 to \$50	9910	209	2.1%	-13.8%
Greater than \$50	4393	13	0.3%	-72.5%

The market average at Ascot using best of SP / 3 totes as the dividend is -6.6%, so you can see that horses up to \$5.00 have returned much better than the average and therefore represent an easier target to profit from. Up to \$15 the results have still been respectable, but naturally with a significantly lower strike rate.

FAVOURITES

The record of favourites has been excellent, but that has come from races up to 1600m.

Favourites	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
Up to 1200m	1882	675	35.9%	0.2%
1201m to 1600m	1546	515	33.3%	1.4%
Greater than 1600m	747	238	31.9%	-4.5%
TOTAL	4175	1428	34.2%	-0.2%

If you had backed every metro favourite up to 1600m at Ascot since 2005 and were able to shop well for prices and beat the best of SP and 3 totes (not difficult as more than 60% of favourites firm) then you would have made a tidy betting profit. That's a significant statistic!

It's a recurring theme in our analysis that Metropolitan favourites represent excellent betting prospects. The value you need to add by filtering out a few of the higher risk runners in order to make a good profit is minimal, especially compared to other runners.

BARRIER DRAWS

A bias against wide barriers and belief that you should only back horses drawn barriers closer to the inside is very counter-productive to profitable betting. Every track and distance is a case by case basis, but like all of the tracks we've looked at so far, Ascot is certainly a track where wide barriers do well.

The following tables show the result of genuine chances up to \$10 SP by barrier draw between January 2005 and 13th November 2016. We've grouped distances based on their starting location on the track.

1000m to 1200m races

Barrier	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
1 to 3	2914	553	19.0%	-4.2%
3 to 5	2816	493	17.5%	-10.8%
5 to 7	2603	455	17.5%	-8.0%
7 to 9	2070	363	17.5%	-3.2%
9+	1593	278	17.5%	0.3%

There's a remarkably consistent strike rate across barrier groupings here with the wider draws most profitable. This indicates that the market offers a slightly better price on these runners due to the perceived winning risk the barrier represents. As you can see though, on average they win just as often as all except those drawn 1-3.

1400m to 1650m races

Barrier	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
1 to 3	2265	419	18.5%	-0.8%
3 to 5	2244	424	18.9%	1.1%
5 to 7	2087	371	17.8%	-3.9%
7 to 9	1708	306	17.9%	2.5%
9+	1581	241	15.2%	-6.7%

Races from 1400m to 1650m only have a very short run to a turn into the back straight so while outside barriers are far from terrible, it's no surprise that they are inferior to inside drawn runners. If you like one drawn wide though, I certainly wouldn't let these statistics put you off.

1730m to 1820m races

Barrier	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
1 to 3	523	89	17.0%	-10.8%
3 to 5	479	87	18.1%	-9.4%
5 to 7	466	83	17.8%	-7.6%
7 to 9	375	61	16.3%	-11.0%
9+	365	66	18.1%	7.5%

This narrow distance range is dealing with a much smaller sample than others and the results also reflect the lower than average success of runners up to \$10 SP in the distance range. What's interesting though is that wide drawn runners (9+) actually have the equal highest strike rate of all barrier groupings. When you add to that the market's tendency to offer a better price because of perceived barrier risk, the end result is a strong profit.

2100m to 3200m races

Barrier	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
1 to 3	589	104	17.7%	-10.6%
3 to 5	587	100	17.0%	-13.7%
5 to 7	543	105	19.3%	0.7%
7 to 9	409	70	17.1%	-0.7%
9+	343	50	14.6%	-11.5%

Again we are dealing with a smaller sample than other distances and the results are mixed. From a strike rate perspective wide drawn runners have won clearly less but the price compensation from the market means the profit result is no worse than inside drawn runners. Middle barriers have a slightly better strike rate and much better return. In samples of around 500 though there is a greater chance of natural variance showing an influence.

PREVIOUS WINS & EXPERIENCE AT THE TRACK

The following table shows runners up to \$10 SP from Jan 2005 to 13th November 2016

Record @ track	Runs	Wins	SR%	POT%
Never won at the track				
0 starts - 0 wins	2982	477	16.0%	-10.5%
1 start - 0 wins	2123	362	17.1%	-4.9%
2+ starts - 0 wins	5125	834	16.3%	-2.2%
Previous wins at the track				
1 start - 1 win	461	133	28.9%	5.4%
2 starts - 1 or 2 wins	683	171	25.0%	2.0%
3+ starts - 1 or 2 wins	5766	1054	18.3%	-2.5%
3+ starts - 3+ wins	2359	432	18.3%	-10.2%

It's interesting to note that horses with no prior experience at the track have the lowest strike rate and POT of the entire sample. However it's not poor enough to place a lot of emphasis on it in your betting decisions.

Horses with just 1 or 2 starts at the track and have already won seem to have done particularly well, but the sample size is small.

Perhaps the most relevant point to take from this is that horses with 3+ wins at the track are very close to the worst betting return, which suggests the market considers that factor to be more positive than it really is. It doesn't mean you shouldn't back these horses, but it does suggest you should not add any extra credit in your decision making process because a horse has won plenty of times at Ascot.

IN RUN POSITION – RAIL MOVEMENTS

The following table shows the results of genuine chances up to \$10 in the market based on the rail position and where they settled in the run.

Settling Position	RAIL TRUE		RAIL 2m to 9m		RAIL >9m	
	SR%	POT%	SR%	POT%	SR%	POT%
Pace 1-2	22.4%	0.6%	25.6%	19.2%	22.8%	3.6%
Off Pace 3-4	19.6%	-1.9%	18.3%	-10.0%	18.0%	-8.0%
Mid 5-8	16.7%	-11.9%	15.1%	-17.5%	16.8%	-10.0%
Mid back 7-10	12.9%	-28.6%	15.3%	-15.8%	15.7%	-12.0%
Back9+	12.4%	-25.8%	12.0%	-28.9%	12.2%	-26.6%

You can see that Ascot is very much a track where on pace / handy runners are best suited and are significantly more profitable. Those well back in the field haven't won anywhere near often enough to justify their price so the simple strategy is to not back them. You would need to be certain that the market is making at least a 30% price mistake to even consider betting.

WRAPPING UP

In punting it's important to regularly question the beliefs you hold about certain factors and whether they are actually true. Making decisions on the basis of false beliefs will prevent you from achieving profits and most importantly, you won't even be aware of the mistakes you are making.... it will go on forever.

From these insights I have the following advice for you about betting at Ascot:

- Do not be biased against a horse simply because it's "the favourite." Favourites have an excellent record at Ascot and if you did nothing more than back favourites up to 1600m at the track you'd at least have broken square if not made a profit since 2005.
- Do not dismiss horses as betting prospects simply because they have drawn a wide barrier (unless you are very confident in your speed map to say it's a real disadvantage.) History shows that wide barriers at Ascot are on average either no disadvantage at all or the disadvantage is relatively minor and not enough in its own right to pass on an otherwise strong betting prospect.
- Don't give extra credit to horses in your decision making process because they have previously won plenty of races at Ascot. It's not the advantage you might think.
- The best betting prospects are well credentialed runners that are likely to race up on the lead or just off. You should avoid backing any horse you think will settle back in the field unless you are incredibly confident the market is making a huge mistake in its price. The discipline to do this will save you plenty of money in the long-term.

Smart punting!

Daniel