DUKE'S PICKS

Duke's *Playbook*

The foundation behind
thirty years in the game.

Mindset · Money management · Structure

DUKE MATTIES

30 years in the game · 20× NHC qualifier
Most NHC cashes of all time

BEFORE THE FIRST RACE

Anyone can hand you a horse.

Whether being right pays you comes down to everything around the horse.

I'm Duke Matties. I've been playing the races for thirty years. I've qualified for the NHC twenty times, and I have more NHC cashes than anybody in its history.

Everything I do sits on three pillars. They're simple. And they're the first things a player forgets once a race gets away from him.

01 · MINDSET
The five minute rule, late money, losing runs, and how I set up my day.

02 · MONEY MANAGEMENT
How much I put on a race, in dollars, and how it moves with my bankroll.

03 · STRUCTURE
How I grade horses A, B and C, build tickets that pay more than once, and when I pass. Then one real race day of mine.

01 PILLAR ONE

Mindset

> *The number one thing that I think everybody should work on, and even myself at times, is their mind and their mindset.*

> *After a race is over, and obviously if we lost it, we got five minutes to complain or throw a tantrum or do whatever you want. But after that five minutes is up, we got to forget about it and go on to the next race.*
>
> THE FIVE MINUTE RULE

Five minutes by the clock. Then that race is closed, and the next one gets a clear head.

When your horse gets bet down late

You liked him at a price. By the time they load, the price is gone, a lot of it to the computer players (the CAWs) betting at the bell.

> *When the horse goes way down at the end and you got screwed, I know that's a terrible thing. I hate it as well as everybody, but we have to stay focused.*

Losing runs: think long term

> *It's not daily. It's not even weekly. There's always another race. There's always another opportunity.*

- **Two or three in a row will go wrong.** We can't worry about that. We got to keep our mind focused. Don't chase it in the last race.
- **Let your bankroll slow you down.** My bet is a percentage of what I have, so a losing run shrinks it for me. You can't chase with that.
- **After a hit, go up slowly.** When we hit one, we can start increasing. But we don't want to increase too much.
- **No impulse bets.** I don't bet a name I like, or a horse because he's grey. I bet what I see, what I analyze, and value.
- **Get in the zone.** You have to be positive, almost cocky. When your head's right you go through the form quickly and accurately, and see what you'd miss if you were mad.

In the room: I post the races I'm passing, with the reason. Sitting one out is easier when you watch me do it. Take your seat

How I set up before the first race

- **Play a track you know.** Every track has tendencies: certain distances, certain surfaces, speed favoring, inside or outside favoring. You only see them at a track you've watched.
- **Keep your bets simple.** Win bets, exactas, daily doubles. Win bets are very important. Stay away from 10 cent supers (too hard, and they play into the CAWs' hands) and jackpot pools for now.
- **50 cent trifectas, one exception.** I think they're no value wagers and I stay away from them, except when I'm keying a longshot. You'll see that ticket in Money management.
- **Narrow the race down.** Get a ten horse field down to about four. Then I only play it if one of those four is a price.

> *Value is what we're looking for in this game. Value is everything.*

Money management keeps you in the game long enough for value to pay. Structure makes sure it pays you when it comes.

02 PILLAR TWO

Money management

> *Bankroll management is the key to horse racing.*

Your bankroll is the money you've set aside to play. Every bet I make is a set percentage of mine, never a number that felt right that afternoon.

How much I put on a race

On a $1,000 bankroll:

A normal play, or a longshot	3%	$30
A race I really like	up to 5%	$50

That's **everything I put on the race**: win bet, exactas, trifectas, all of it together.

In my course videos I call these "B or C" plays and "A" plays. In this Playbook I only use A, B and C for horses.

Passing is money management

> *Passing races is a very good thing to control our bankroll, because we don't want to waste any money.*

The number moves with the bankroll

Hit one and the bankroll grows, so the 3% grows with it. Lose a few and it shrinks.

BANKROLL	NORMAL 3%	REALLY LIKE 5%
$800	$24	$40
$1,000	$30	$50
$1,200	$36	$60

> *Let's say our bankroll's 800. We might risk $24 the next time.*

Keep the score

3% only works if you know your bankroll today, not last week. Keep one line for every race you play, and every race you pass:

- **Bankroll before,** which sets your 3% or 5%.
- **Track, race, your A horse,** and why.
- **Every ticket and its cost,** then what came back.
- **Bankroll after.** That's your next number.

$33 on a 20-1 shot, line by line

Here's my example. The 2 is my key horse at 20-1, and I like the 3, 4 and 5 with him. A longshot play on $1,000 is about $30. I'm using an eight horse field so the trifecta costs add up.

$12	2 to win
$3	$1 exacta 2 / 3,4,5
$6	$2 exacta 3,4,5 / 2
$9	50c trifecta 3,4,5 / ALL / 2
$3	50c trifecta 3,4,5 / 3,4,5 / 2
$33	total, about 3% of $1,000

- **He wins:** I have the win bet (at 20-1, $12 gets back about $250), plus the exacta if the 3, 4 or 5 runs second.
- **He runs second:** I have the reverse exacta, if the 3, 4 or 5 wins.
- **He runs third:** I have the trifecta if the 3, 4 or 5 wins, and twice if two of them run first and second.

> *We're getting all three positions.*

Why a 50 cent trifecta here

> *I'm not a fan of 50 cent tris. I'd rather have dollar tris. But in this case, when you have a longshot...*

A longshot key is the one place a cheap trifecta earns its spot. It covers him running third without eating into the win bet.

A race I really like: up to $50

I go up to 5% and make the win bet bigger. Maybe I won't even play the trifecta. I'll play exactas with my horse on top, and reverse with my others. Here's one way I'd split it, with the 6 as my horse at 5-1 and the 1, 3 and 8 under him:

$32	6 to win
$9	$3 exacta 6 / 1,3,8
$9	$3 exacta 1,3,8 / 6
$50	total, 5% of $1,000

If he wins at 5-1, the win bet alone gets back about $192, plus the exacta if the 1, 3 or 8 runs second.

In the room: every play I post says how big it is. This pillar, on every race I play. Take your seat

03 PILLAR THREE

Structure

> *You need to play tickets where you maximize your profits when you're correct.*

How I grade every horse: A, B or C

- **A:** the horse I like best, the one I build around. Usually one, but not always. In the Pick 3 coming up I've got three A's in the last leg.
- **B:** horses I like underneath my A who can still win.
- **C:** live, but only worth using at a price. My C's only go in when the prices are long all the way through, or as an ALL on a cheap backup.

Grade every leg before you build a single ticket. I draw a grid for every sequence, and the next pages are mine.

> *Remember, we're keying. We're not boxing. We only box if we have three longshots.*

STRUCTURE, CONTINUED

A daily double, $30 two ways

	LEG 1	LEG 2
A	3	2
B	1, 4	5, 6

A short price in there: I play two tickets, both through my A's.

$15	$5 double 1,3,4 / 2
$15	$5 double 3 / 2,5,6
$30	3 then 2: I have it twice ($10). An A with a B: once ($5).

Everything in there is a price: I play the whole thing, pressed on my A's.

$18	$2 double 1,3,4 / 2,5,6
$6	$2 double 1,3,4 / 2
$6	$2 double 3 / 2,5,6
$30	3 then 2: $6. An A with a B: $4. Two B's: I still have it for $2.

> *I don't like wagers where we can possibly lose money. That's when we think pass.*

A Pick 3 with A's, B's and C's

	LEG 1	LEG 2	LEG 3
A	8	4	1, 2, 3
B	4, 6	7	none
C	ALL	5, 6	ALL

I'm using 50 cent tickets and eight horse fields so the costs add up:

COST	LEG 1	LEG 2	LEG 3
$6	8	4,5,6,7	1,2,3
$4	8	4	ALL
$12	ALL	4	1,2,3
	My key, then two backups that bring the ALL in with only my A's. $22.		
$18	4,6,8	4,5,6,7	1,2,3
$9	4,6,8	4,7	1,2,3
	I add these only with prices all the way through: the spread, and the press on my A's and B's. $49 in all.		

If all my A's win (the 8, the 4, then the 1, 2 or 3), all five tickets have it. If we catch all A's, we're going to hit a lot of times. If an outsider wins leg one, the ALL backup still has it.

Some sequences take a little more than $30. Just keep the total inside your 5%.

A late Pick 5 at Churchill Downs

One I posted for my members. I liked the 9 a little better than the 3 in leg one. In the last leg I liked the 2 and the 12, and I faded the 9 there because I didn't like his workouts.

COST	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
$36	3,9	5,7,9	6,8,10	6,7	2,12
Every horse I liked, minus the 9 I faded. 2 × 3 × 3 × 2 × 2 = 72 combinations at 50 cents.					
$54	9	ALL	6,8,10	6,7	2,12
I cut leg one to my top horse and opened up leg two (nine runners).					
$27	9	5,7,9	6,8,10	6,7	2,9,12
My backup: the 9 I faded goes back in.					

> *I didn't want to completely lose if I was wrong about the workouts.*

- **Size it like any other play.** The $36 main ticket fits a $1,000 bankroll. All three tickets, $117, is a 5% play on about $2,400. On less, play the main ticket.

> *I like to play all the horses I like across. Then I like to narrow some legs down.*

You don't need to start with Pick 5s. I don't think everyone should get involved with them right away. But a ticket around $36 is a good amount for a beginner, or even a high level player.

When I pass

- I don't like the race.
- I can't get it down to a few horses with value in them.
- Everything I like is a short price.
- The only way to play it is a ticket that can hit and lose money, or break even.
- I can't see five times my money back.

Three short prices: the Remsen

The Remsen at Aqueduct, a two year old race. I liked the 11 on top, the 9 second and the 2 third. All three were favorites. There was no value, and if I box all three I've got losing tickets in there. So I had two choices: the 11 to win, because he was the longest of the three and I liked him most, maybe keyed over the 2 and 9 with a small reverse. Or pass.

> *You got to decide either to play the longer of the three, which was the 11, but you better like the 11 the most. Or we pass.*

A short priced favorite you don't trust

I handle him like the 9 in that Pick 5. He stays off my main ticket, and he only goes on a cheap backup if I can't stand to lose to him. The value is in the horses I like at the prices behind him.

In the room: my tickets go up written out, A's, B's and backups, before the race goes off. Take your seat

Had the winner and still went home with nothing?

Sometimes you just lose. But you should never lose a race you had right because of how you played it.

1. **No win bet.** He won, your exacta didn't. Fix: when I key a horse, I start with a win bet on him.

2. **One direction only.** You had him on top and he ran second. Fix: key him, then reverse it smaller.

3. **Boxing short prices.** If we box all three, we got some losing tickets in there. Fix: key the one you like most, or pass.

4. **A spread full of favorites.** It hits and pays less than it cost. Fix: spread only with prices all the way through.

5. **One ticket, no backup.** The horse you doubted wins. Fix: a cheap backup with him in it, like the 9 in my Pick 5.

> *We want to make wagers where we can make at least five times our investment.*

Belmont, exactly as I posted it

Duke Matties
Duke's Insights

Bel 7th and 8th

7th (1 unit play)

7 SPECIAL OPS rough start at Del in last, old races makes him a winner in here

9 CHIPS AND FISH turf to dirt cut-back here, should come running late

6 SUPREME GOOD 2yo race at BAQ in Sept makes him a major player here

key 7/69 · 679 exacta box (1 unit)
D/D 7/10 (2 units) · 69/10 (1 unit)

8th (2 unit play)

10 MAGNANIMOUS MAX against the bias Jul 3rd, working well for this, love the draw here

7 FREDDIE B ran 2nd to Stimulate, should fit well here

1 CHIEF WALLABEE adds Lasix here back vs Allow company, now or never for him, don't like the draw

2 GULFY adds Lasix and has a B+ work, has shot

10 win · mainly key 10/17 and reverse smaller 10/2 · saver 10/9

The three pillars in one post

MONEY MANAGEMENT

"1 unit play" and "2 unit play." I liked the 8th more, so it got twice the stake, set before either race went off.

STRUCTURE

In the 8th the 10 is my A: a win bet, then exactas through him. The 7 and 1 both ways, a smaller one with the 2, a saver with the 9.

The double runs through the 10 too: my top horse in the 7th gets 2 units, my other two get 1. Same shape as the $30 double.

MINDSET

A reason for every horse, and not one is there for a name. I say what I don't like, too: the 1 is "now or never," and I don't like the draw. So the 1 only goes in with the 10.

Both races are long over. That's two of them. In the room it's every race I play, every race day.

BEFORE YOUR NEXT RACE

The checklist

MINDSET

- [ ] A track I know.
- [ ] Last race closed. Five minutes, then move on.
- [ ] No names, no greys, no chasing.
- [ ] Narrowed to a few horses, with a price in them.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

- [ ] Bankroll today $____ · 3% $____ · 5% $____
- [ ] Every ticket on this race, added up, fits the number.
- [ ] Logged it, or logged the pass.

STRUCTURE

- [ ] Every horse graded A, B or C.
- [ ] Keyed, not boxed. A win bet on the horse I'm keying.
- [ ] No spread full of favorites. Doubted horse on a backup.
- [ ] Five times my money back is possible.
- [ ] Can it hit and lose money? Then pass.

NOW WATCH IT DONE

You have my rules. Come watch me use them.

Every race day I put these three pillars to work in the Members' Room, on every race I play, and you're in there with me.

MINDSET
The races I'm passing, with the reason. And you're never alone: ask me anything, any race, and I answer.

MONEY MANAGEMENT
Every play I post says how much I'm putting on it.

STRUCTURE
My tickets written out, A's, B's and backups, before the race goes off.

AND MORE
Live Zoom sessions where we work a card together, plus my tools and full course library.

TAKE YOUR SEAT: TRY A WEEK

Or go monthly

New here? Check the email we sent with this Playbook. It has the easiest way to start.

Prefer video? Watch me teach each pillar at dukespicks.com/foundation

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