

February 2018 – What’s Your Goal?

Where does horse racing fit into your life? Whether you attend the track or play from a simulcast facility or bet from home, what’s your goal?

“To win, duh!” you might answer. Seems obvious, no? But let’s look at the bigger picture.

A business owner’s goal *might* be to earn big profits, but not necessarily. Maybe he wants to be able to earn enough to survive but not work so many hours that he’d spend too much time away from his family. Maybe he wants to provide a congenial atmosphere where employees enjoy their work, even at the expense of some profit. Maybe he wants to keep his children employed, even though he might make more money with others in their place.

So the *obvious* goal (earning big money) is not always the *true* goal--and as a horseplayer, you need to understand that. Take two guys who go to the track once a week:

Robby meets the same group of buddies each Saturday and bets \$10 a race on every one of the 10 races at Local Downs. His goal is to have a good time in the company of pleasant companions. If he loses the takeout—20% at this track—Robby has lost \$20 at the windows. If he studies and improves from -20% to -8%, he cuts his losses to only \$8. But maybe to do this, he had to pay for an enhanced set of past performances from the Racing Form or Brisnet. And he had to order the pages, download them, print them, staple them, and handicap for two or three hours. So given the extra time and expense, is it worth it? Maybe not.

Kyle also goes to the track once a week. But he has taken on the races as an intellectual challenge. He doesn’t care what he spends on ancillary expenses—he just wants to prove he can beat the races. The amount of time and money he spends on the pursuit means little to him. It’s the battle, the venture itself.

Having different goals and expectations, why should Robby and Kyle do the same amount of preparation and study? Robby can reach his goal of having fun without worrying about checking the exacta probables or studying tedious betting charts; Kyle has to approach handicapping and betting as a job. To expect them to have the same experience—or to suggest that one of them is wrong--is foolish.

So, to the main point: Why do you go to the track? Answer this, and then you

decide on the extent of your future commitment.