Why does the Melbourne Cup stop the nation?

The Melbourne Cup horse race captures the attention of millions of people around the world. What are the reasons behind this? Is it the record length of the course, the prize money, the high prestige placed upon the winning trio (jockey, trainer, owner)? Whatever the reason, we love to see teams strive to reach their potential and that is why our Analytics and Actuarial teams have returned in 2013 to 'have a go' at predicting the winning combination. Using all of our analytical firepower, we have crunched the numbers to give you our best insights.
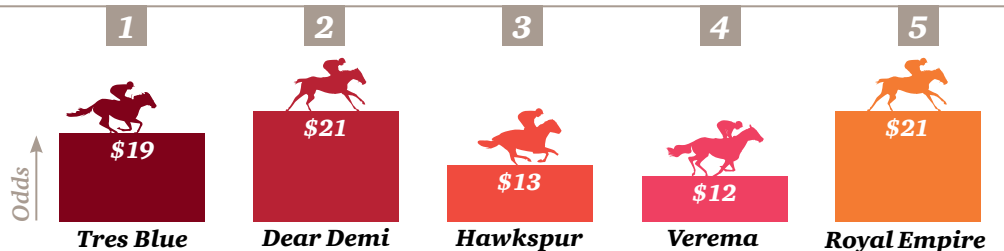
We take no responsibility if you lose

Our 5 top performers

We are back for a second year to bring you the top performing horses from PwC's analysis of historic race data (provided by RacingNetwork.com.au).

1	2	3	4	5
$19	$21	$13	$12	$21
Tres Blue	Dear Demi	Hawkspur	Verema	Royal Empire

Odds

Winning horse profile...

Based on historical trends, we have put together a profile reflecting the features of top performing Melbourne Cup horses.

Barrier:
5,11
(generated winners 7 times each)
No horse has ever won from barrier 18

Age:
4 years old
Youngest: 3 years old (2 times)
Oldest: 8 years old (23 times)
Average Age: 4 – 5 years old

Gender:
Stallion
(Stallion: 5 year old male)
Least likely: Filly

Horse Nationality:
Irish
Top 7 horses last year were Irish

Number:
4,12
(11 times each) 62% of winners have come from numbers less than or equal to 12

Odds:
Less than $20

Weight:
54.5kg
Lightest: 33.5kg (in 1862)
Heaviest: 66kg (in 1890)

Trainer:
Bart Cummings

Here are the top horses scored against the above winning horse profile

= Fiorente, Seville and Tres Blue

Instinct versus Analytics:

Our horsey panel

Tips from three of our veterans who have historically been good at horsing around.

"Richy" Rick		
Brown Panther	Fawkner	Sea Moon

"In-the-know" Hadlow		
Dandino	Ibicenco	Green Moon

"Mac Attack"		
Dear Demi	Simenon	Hawkspur

Fun facts

4.85m
people watched all or part of last year's race

Top buzz
Last 5 days on Twitter

Brown Panther
Simenon
Fiorente

AskU

People more likely to bungee jump were twice as good at picking winners last year

Is picking a winner pure luck?

73% agree   **55%** agree

Source: PwC analysis. Data sourced from RacingNetwork.com.au. All odds as of 9.00pm Sunday 3rd November 2013

Are the tips you hear really that useful?

Myth busters

When looking for top performers, far too often the focus is on the attributes of winners, rather than how those attributes compare to the rest of the field.

In reality, these characteristics are only important if they are stronger drivers in top performers than they are in the rest of the population.

Our team has looked at the *propensity* of each horse to win, rather than looking at the *frequency* of winners having certain attributes.

Caulfield Cup
runners are most likely to do well...

28% Proportion of *placed* Melbourne Cup horses that have been in the Caulfield Cup

Proportion of *all* Melbourne Cup horses that have been in the Caulfield Cup **44%**

Cox Plate
runners are most likely to do well...

22% Proportion of *placed* Melbourne Cup horses that have been in the Cox Plate

Proportion of *all* Melbourne Cup horses that have been in the Cox Plate **9%**

Caulfield Cup runners made up 28% of placed horses over the last seven Cups, but they also made up nearly half the field! **They should have been placing more often.**
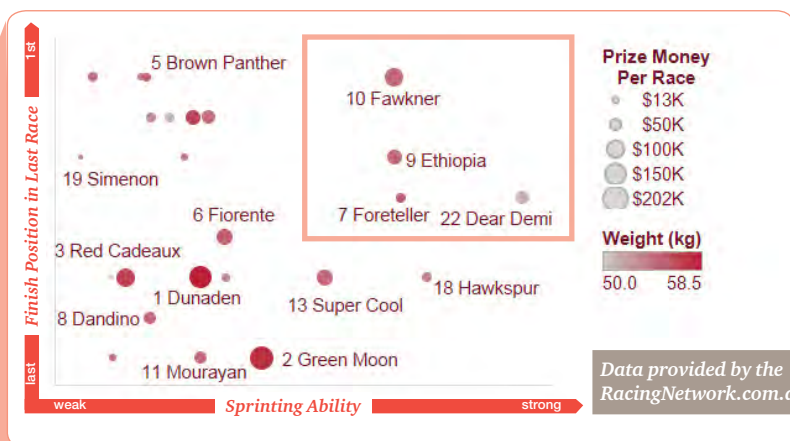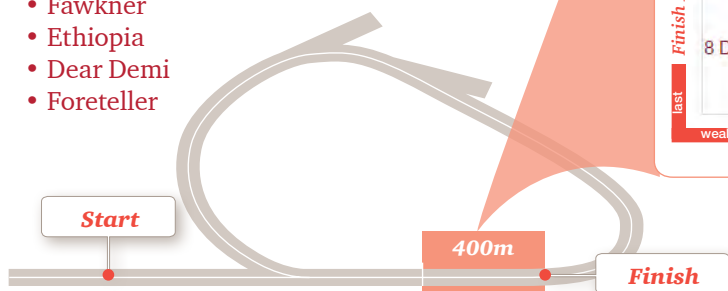
Cox Plate runners have a much better chance of placing in the Cup, once we take account of how many of them are in the race.

Horses to watch out for - the last minute sprinters

A horse's ability to sprint up through the field in the last 400m of a long race (>2km) can indicate good Melbourne Cup form. We have compared this to performance in their last race, weight, and prize money won per race, to really highlight their potential.

Horses to watch are:
- Fawkner
- Ethiopia
- Dear Demi
- Foreteller

Finish Position in Last Race (1st ... last)

Sprinting Ability (weak ... strong)

5 Brown Panther
10 Fawkner
19 Simenon
9 Ethiopia
6 Fiorente
7 Foreteller   22 Dear Demi
3 Red Cadeaux
1 Dunaden   13 Super Cool   18 Hawkspur
8 Dandino
11 Mourayan   2 Green Moon

Prize Money Per Race
- $13K
- $50K
- $100K
- $150K
- $202K

Weight (kg)
50.0 — 58.5

Data provided by the RacingNetwork.com.au

Start

400m

Finish

And finally... Predicting the unpredictable?

Analytics provides insight and value when making a decision, yet generally should be combined with more subjective elements like experience when making a final choice. If we (or any other predictors) could actually pick the winner of this race, we may very well be on a beach somewhere...with that in mind, best of luck!

Guiding informed decisions by delivering insights through analysis

If you would like to discuss how you can use analytics to deliver powerful insights to your organisation, please contact:

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For more fascinating Melbourne Cup information visit

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Data provided by The Racing Network

Horsing around

Horse Name	Weight	Wins %	Place %	Max winning distance vs Melbourne Cup distance	Best track condition	Prize money per race	Horse type[1]	Horsey Panelist vote	Our top 5
1 Dunaden 5yo	58.5	24%	71%		rain	💵💵	Stamina		
2 Green Moon 6yo	57.5	28%	40%		sun	💵💵💵	Speed	✓	
3 Red Cadeaux 5yo	56.5	18%	58%		rain	💵💵	Volatile performance		
4 Sea Moon 6yo	56.5	43%	71%		sun	💵	Stamina	✓	
5 Brown Panther 4yo	55.0	41%	65%		sun	💵	Stamina	✓	
6 Fiorente 4yo	55.0	20%	60%		sun	💵💵	Improving race performance over time		
7 Foreteller 5yo	55.0	28%	42%		rain	💵	Speed		
8 Dandino 5yo	54.5	31%	69%		sun	💵	Volatile performance	✓	
9 Ethiopia 6yo	54.5	8%	31%		sun	💵	Speed		
10 Fawkner 4yo	54.5	45%	75%		sun	💵💵	Speed	✓	
11 Mourayan 5yo	54.5	12%	44%		sun	💵	Stamina		
12 12 Seville 6yo	54.5	11%	47%		sun	💵	Stamina		

3.2km

Legend

Stamina	Speed	Volatile performance	Improving race performance over time	Prize money won per race	
				$0-50k	"Richy" Rick ✓
				$50-100k	"In-the-know" Hadlow ✓
				$100-150k	"Mac Attack" ✓

Horsing around

A little more detail...

Horse Name	Weight	Wins %	Place %	Max winning distance vs Melbourne Cup distance	Best track condition	Prize money per race	Horse type [1]	Horsey Panelist vote	Our top 5
13 Super Cool 4yo	54.5	29%	64%		☀	💵			
14 Masked Marvel 5yo	54.0	24%	41%		☀	💵			
15 Mount Athos 6yo	54.0	31%	38%		☀	💵			
16 Royal Empire 4yo	54.0	38%	85%		☀	💵			✓
17 Voleuse De Coeurs 5yo	54.0	38%	77%		☀	💵			
18 Hawkspur 6yo	53.5	30%	57%		☀	💵		✓	✓
19 Simenon 5yo	53.5	19%	50%		☀	💵		✓	
20 Ibicenco 6yo	53.0	19%	43%		🌧	💵		✓	
21 Verema 4yo	53.0	33%	58%		☀	💵			✓
22 Dear Demi 5yo	51.0	21%	61%		☀	💵		✓	✓
23 Tres Blue 6yo	51.0	40%	70%		☀	💵			✓
24 Ruscello 4yo	50.0	28%	67%		☀	💵			

3.2km

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Data provided by The Racing Network