

Ratings Explained

Yearlings by the top sires in North America are rated for pedigree and performance potential including all yearlings at all major sale venues.

A Rating Report identifies all yearlings for sale that have correct pedigrees that match the profile of their sire and ranks them according to a Performance Rating (PR) based on the earnings and speed in their immediate family. An estimate is also given for three year old record on a mile track as part of the rating. The PR number is used to prioritize the inspection process for yearlings that can be expected to be top performers based on pedigree. It is very possible that a yearling with a rating in the 60-80s can turn out better than any of the top rated yearlings as a result of conformation and other factors such as something special in the pedigree that cannot be quantified. A PR of 60 for pacers and 45 for trotters is usually the minimum required to produce a performer capable of earning \$100K lifetime. The maximum possible is 150.

A major consideration is whether the pedigree shows one or other of two significant pedigree patterns that I call Double/Double DD or Top and Bottom TB. Such patterns are common to many of the very best in harness racing and in thoroughbreds as well. In the 2020 Breeders Crown finals 7 of the 8 winners were either DD (5) or TB (2) pedigrees.

Mcwicked was originally bought as a two year old largely in part due to his DD pedigree and although his 2YO racing was limited it showed he had closing speed. The only horse faster than him to date is Always B Miki, also a DD pattern pedigree. The richest trotter of all time Moni Maker, is a TB pattern, and such top trotters as Mission Brief, Tactical Landing, Manchego, Hannelore Hanover, Emoticon Hanover and many more are DD pattern. I give 20 bonus point for yearlings with either pattern. There are, occasionally, horses that exhibit both patterns.

The bottom line here is that learning to recognize pedigree patterns of success, how to prioritize your inspection lists through ratings based on speed and earnings, and paying attention to the established profiles of the sires, all are part of the homework you should do to protect your investment. It is like the difference in buying a stock recommended by a friend versus digging out the fundamentals of the company behind the stock to ensure it has a real probability of being a good and successful investment.

One big factor not included in my ratings is conformation. I am assuming that each of your purchases is made with someone, usually a trainer, with experience in identifying potential problems due to visible conformation flaws. To the extent that some of these horses are more "perfect" with respect to conformation can still affect their future prospects.

When it comes to perfection, an assessment of conformation flaws is subjective and often biased by a trainers personal experience and I have witnessed trainers making excuses for bad conformation because of personal preferences for a particular sire or positive experiences with another horse from the immediate family. I have also witnessed the

opposite effect when trainers pick out a relatively obscure and often times unfounded flaw to justify rejecting a particular yearling. Beauty is, indeed, in the eye of the beholder.

That being said conformation is still a very important consideration and a trustworthy inspection is invaluable. How much weight you put on it, or value in terms of a score or a rating adjustment, is also subjective. I suggest to my clients that they consider a plus/minus score to add to the ratings I supply, just as I add or subtract points based on pedigree factors that I have found to be important considerations in addition to the basic rating that is calculated using the speed and earnings in the pedigree.