

## Some Frequently Asked Questions:

*If I have an earlier version of Fast Fred PRO, do I need to upgrade to Version 4.00?*

There are significant changes made from the 3.5x series to Version 4. First of all, all of the class and pace calculations have been reviewed and updated, including changes like adjusting Canadian purses to American dollars, adjusting statebred and allowance conditions, revising the change in distance adjustments, etc.

Other important additions include the ability to manually select a pace line and the ability to store analyses, add results, and export these files to spreadsheets.

Best of all, the upgrade is very inexpensive. To receive your upgrade to Version 4, order the \$20 upgrade (we've increased our prices) via the shopping cart.

*How about future updates. Are any planned?*

We will issue updates to **FAST FRED PROfessional** as often as feasible. In the past minor revisions have been issued as necessary, with major revisions every 18-24 months. All registered users will be notified of new versions.

Version 4.0 is a major upgrade, with over 36 new features added to the program. We do not anticipate any additional major revisions in the near future, but will issue minor revisions as necessary.

We've received a number of user requests over the years and many of them have been implemented into Version 4.

Once you have installed Version 4.0, all additional updates can be downloaded from the Internet and installed. A menu choice on the main screen automatically connects you to our support page, which shows if an update is available.

*How about the Internet? Will I always need to purchase software?*

No. The next major revision, Version 5.0, will be to develop a Web-based version of our software. You will still provide the input data, but will not need to install software on your computer. This will greatly improve our ability to add updates and upgrades on a constant basis. We do not expect this to be available until late in 2006.

*Is the software usable for all tracks and distances?*

The software has been tested on a variety of tracks and surfaces. The numbers work, but need to be tempered with post position and distance bias for any particular track. In other words, the numbers are a step in handicapping, not the be-all and end-all. In addition, due to the smaller number of races run at distances

over 1-1/4 miles, it's less well tested for those distances, particularly when converting distances from a past performance to match today's distance.

*Is there a difference in the data provided by different vendors?*

Yes and no.

Each of them gets their raw data from the same source, Equibase. They format it for use in their own software and for exporting for use in software like **Fast Fred PROfessional**.

They may also provide some “smoothing” of the data. For instance, let’s suppose the raw data includes an obviously incorrect interim time due to a “typo” that wasn’t caught. Over the years, I have found that some vendors catch this and attempt a correction, others leave the incorrect data or just delete it.

In addition, each vendor has a different method for determining track variants and these variants do impact Fast Fred’s analysis of past performances. Certain vendors offer a low-end data file with no track variant and I do not recommend using these files as input.

The smoothing and difference in variants impact pace and are the largest single difference among vendors. But there are other differences too. Axcis does not include the sex limitations in today’s race, except as shown in the race description. This is not significant if all entrants are the same sex, but could have an impact on Fast Fred’s class rating for the race. Some vendors only include the base value of the purse; others include add-ins such as statebred bonuses. Some vendors round claiming levels to the nearest thousand; others show \$12,500 claiming races exactly.

The bottom line is that you will find small differences in the data and the results Fast Fred shows. However, you should not expect the differences (other than variant) to impact your analysis significantly. Thus, your choice of vendors should be based on other ways you’ll be using the data and price plan comparisons.

*I’ve downloaded the data, but the program can’t find it. What’s wrong?*

First, make sure you know where your Internet downloading program is storing the data. Typically, each time you start a download, your Internet browser asks you where to store the data file.

If you still cannot find the data file, here’s a hint for finding the files. Each of the vendors names the file using the three-digit track code followed by the month and day. Thus, the February 8<sup>th</sup> file for Aqueduct includes “aqu0208” as part of the filename. For ITS, this is preceded by a “v”; for the others it just starts with the

name. Just go into the Windows Explorer, then under the Tools menu choose Find and search your entire hard drive for the file name.

Once you know where the data is stored, go to the Preferences in Fast Fred Pro. This is a choice under the File menu. Click on the CHANGE button next to the Input Data Directory. This will show you a choice of directories. Scroll up and down until you highlight the correct directory. If you need to select a subdirectory, double click on the main directory to see a list of the subdirectories. Click OK to accept the directory.

Before closing the Preferences screen, make sure you've chosen the correct data source (vendor) at the lower left of the Preferences screen.

*I use Bris data and the program seems to take longer to load it than to analyze it. Is this normal?*

We originally wrote the program to input ITS data. Thus, all of the analysis is done using the ITS data format. For instance, ITS records distances in feet, Bris uses yards.

Inputting Bris data is not just a matter of importing. The data must also be pre-analyzed. This primarily involves converting the data to the same measures of time and distance as the ITS data. This takes a little longer with Bris, but should have no impact on the final calculations.

We have noticed that Bris single files load somewhat faster than multi files, with no difference in the final calculations.

TSN and DRF files also take somewhat longer to load, while Axcis data loads almost as quickly as ITS data.

*Why isn't the program more suited to use right on the computer at the track? Do I have to print everything out before I go to the track?*

We designed the program not only to work with the traditional "one track a day" approach, but also with modern simulcasting at multiple tracks. So we designed the program to allow the user to print out multiple reports, including very detailed reports. In a simulcast situation, a user might have as many as 100 races a day to select from... and there's no way those selected would all be from the same tracks.

The Print to Text File option allows the user to save text files after running the analyses, then use a word processor to edit the reports to just those races desired before printing.

For those who want to use the computer at the track to analyze last minute scratches and changes in racing surface, the Summary to Screen report allows that.

*The FAST FRED default uses "best performance" for Pace and Class calculations. The preferences allow me to change this, but still seem weighted towards "best performance" rather than an average. Wouldn't it be better to average the horse's past performances?*

We're not interested in how the horse will finish if it runs an average performance, we want to know if the horse can win if it runs well... and then to assess the chances that it'll run well. And we are certainly more interested in recent performance than older performance and many of **FAST FRED PROFESSIONAL**'s calculations look more strongly at recent performance.

The default calculations for Class and Pace in **FAST FRED PROFESSIONAL** are the "best performance", but you can choose to average the best two or three... or weight the calculation towards the very best or the most recent.

Effective with Version 4, you can set up as many different Preference Settings as you desire, then use the appropriate one for a particular track, track conditions, or any other factors you choose.

*I want to pick the race to include in Pace calculations. Why doesn't the program let me choose a specific race instead of making me select a preference?*

In the Summary section of the reports, the program is only designed to work with up to four races in the current form cycle... or in the absence of races in this cycle, to use up to four races in the last cycle. While the user cannot choose which of the four races to use (other than to set preferences), the user can see all the pace calculations for each of the races in the cycle by reviewing the Lines section of the detail report.

Starting with Version 3.5, the user can select to print up to 8 past performances in the Lines section of the report.

Starting with Version 4.0, you can manually select which of the past four races to use for pace calculations.

*Is there a suggested way to set the preferences for computing Class and Pace?*

The system sets a default on set-up. However these settings can be modified at any time. One way to use the software is to print detailed reports at one setting, then add summary reports or One-Pagers at other settings for additional analysis.

*What pace calculations are shown?*

We compute and print Early Pace, Sustained Pace, and Average Pace, showing the numbers for all recent races and the projection for today's race based on your preference setting. We also show the times for the interim calls make computing any other pace numbers very easy for those so inclined.

We also include Quirin speed points for all non-maiden races. Finally, we print energy distribution numbers, both projected for today's race and actual for past performances.

For turf races, we include the projected time for the final call, based on the last four races, instead of Speed Points.

*I read lots of articles on Class, Pace, and Speed. What is this Performance Class rating?*

Between the information in the Daily Racing Form and the myriad other resources available today to handicappers, there is hardly a bettor at the track or in the simulcast parlor who doesn't have these rankings at hand. That makes it harder and harder to find horses with (for instance) a hidden pace advantage... unless it's already reflected in the race time odds.

Performance Class is, at its heart, a measure of back class. However, it doesn't just look at the class of up to 10 previous races, it looks at how the horse performed at the second and final calls compared to the other entrants in the race. The comparative class levels and performance are compared to today's class level. Thus, a rating of 100 suggests that the horse would be in the middle of the pack at the second call and final call in races at today's class level. A higher rating suggests better performance.

Like other calculations, Performance Class is not the sole handicapping angle to use, but it is a powerful measure. And best of all, very few other handicappers will be using it.

This measure was first developed by Bill Scott and we strongly recommend his book Total Victory at the Track (Liberty Publishing).

*What is the Kanga Power Number?*

The Kanga Power Number is whatever you make it! By setting the preferences for the various factors computed by the program, you determine the relative importance of each of the factors. You can adjust the weightings by type of race (Allowance, Claiming, Turf, Maiden) and by length of race. You can choose to include running style or not include it in the analysis. The software was originally preset to factors based on an extensive study of races run at a variety of tracks during the first half of 1998. With version 4, we added race shape as a factor, as

well as including trainer moves. You simply increase or decrease the weightings to fit your handicapping style and the biases of the tracks you analyze.

*Is there a correlation between the Kanga Odds and the morning line?*

The morning line shows the odds line established by the track handicapper in advance of the race. The Kanga Odds are the actual odds for the race using the settings you make in the preferences file, and are calculated by comparing the Kanga Power Numbers for each of the entrants in the race.

*Should I ever be changing my Kanga Odds weightings in the preferences file?*

Yes! Certain tracks favor speed types, others don't.

At certain tracks, particularly the better tracks, back class is a very important predictor of performance. At lower level tracks, back class is less valuable as a predictor of performance. Similarly, a track with tight turns (like Pimlico) favors early speed more than other tracks.

You should test the settings at tracks you play and modify as appropriate.

*Can I use the program for foreign tracks or non-thoroughbred races?*

The program supports files published by I.T.S., Axcis, DRF, TSN, and Bris. If that data is for a foreign track, you can use the program.

Generally, the program is only useful for handicapping thoroughbred races. You're welcome to try it on other types of races if you want, but all development was keyed to thoroughbreds.

*Are there any other types of races I should avoid?*

The program is not well tested for race distances less than 5 furlongs, for marathons, or for steeplechase races. In addition, bullrings and other special track configurations should be handicapped with care.

*If I have suggestions for additional information in the program, would you consider them?*

Sure. But we are mainly interested in calculations, not in information readily available in the Racing Form.