

## FAQ: optixNOTES


### What is optixNOTES?

optixNOTES is a proprietary trip-handicapping platform that includes performance ratings, form projections, and trip reports from our team of expert handicappers and race-watchers. With optixNOTES, we have created a new, interpretive methodology for visually rating a horse's overall performance or trip, using four core components to our methodology:

- TripGrades
- TripDescriptors
- Form Projections
- Free-Form Comments

### What does optixNOTES look like?

Here is a screenshot of our optixNOTES platform:



OptixNOTES®

DMR 2015-09-07 Race 8

Previous Race

Create TripNotes

Next Race

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This Race: DMrFut-G1 \$300000 Sprint(7f) 2 year olds Only -

PN	HorseName	Racedate	Track	Race	RaceClass	Surf	Dist	TripGrade	TripDescriptor	Comment
2	ANNIE'S CANDY	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	C+	NO_FINISH	
		2015-08-08	DMR	5	BestPal-G2	D	Sprint(6.5f)	B		sat good trip, ran hard, no match for winner
		2015-07-11	LRC	2	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(5.5f)	B	BOS	heavy favorite handled his business, edged clear in final stages
		2015-06-05	SA	6	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(5f)	B+		always on top of pace, ran a winning race but had to settle for second, well clear of rest of field
		2015-05-08	SA	1	Md Sp Wt	D	Dash(4.5f)	B	WIDE	steady effort when just missing the win late
4	SWIPE	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	B-		picked up pieces for the place
		2015-08-08	DMR	5	BestPal-G2	D	Sprint(6.5f)	B	TROUBLE(- STRETCH? IMPROVE?)	not ideal trip when placed under a hard hold early stages, gave up important position to the eventual winner, a bit sluggish to level when finally able to rally, still learning, should keep improving with distance
		2015-07-12	LRC	8	SmrJvnlChB75k	D	Sprint(5.5f)	B+	SAVED	showed some legit grit when determinedly running down a speed horse that was not slowing
		2015-06-05	BEL	4	TremontB250k	D	Sprint(5.5f)	B-	MOVE GREEN	
		2015-05-22	SA	2	Md Sp Wt	D	Dash(4.5f)	B-	SLOG IMPROVE?	broke slowly, steady late progress when in fight for 2nd
5	NYQUIST	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	B		
		2015-08-08	DMR	5	BestPal-G2	D	Sprint(6.5f)	B+	PERFECT	very nice win, sat the trip and went about his business with an authoritative win
		2015-06-05	SA	6	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(5f)	B+	GRIT BOS	big effort from the rail, dug in with grit down the lane to hold off favorite, well clear of field
6	ARCHAEO	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	C		
		2015-08-08	DMR	3	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(6.5f)	C+		disappointing effort when never able to get involved
7	BLAMEITONTHELAW	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	B-	TROUBLE	not the most comfortable of trips, stuck between horses and did not look to be enjoying himself on turn
		2015-08-02	DMR	7	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(5.5f)	B+	BURST SAVED	sat behind dueling pace setters, loaded at the top, nice burst on rail to go on with a nice win
8	ROCKIN BAYOU	2015-09-07	DMR	8	DMrFut-G1	D	Sprint(7f)	B-	SHORTER? SLOG	broke straight in the air while awkward first couple strides, might have briefly poked head in front before faltering in lane, like the idea of this one cutting back
		2015-07-18	DMR	3	Md Sp Wt	D	Sprint(5f)	B	GRIT	always close up, challenging pace three wide turn, won stretch battle

User: frank@venturelitterary.com —<—

### ***What are the elements of this optixNOTES page?***

- *Track*: the track you are viewing.
- *Date*: the date you are viewing.
- *Race*: the race number.
- *Previous Race*: allows users to click to the pervious race from that date and track.
- *Next Race*: allows users to click to the next race from that date and track.
- *Condition*: a listing of the conditions of the race, including the surface, class level, purse, distance, age, and sex.
- *PN*: the program-number of the horse entered for that day's race.
- *HorseName*: the name of the horse.
- *Racedate*: the race date for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *Track*: the track for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *Race*: the race number for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *RaceClass*: the class/condition for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *Surf*: the surface for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *Dist*: the distance for a horse's prior TripGrade.
- *TripGrade*: the actual color-coded letter-grade assigned to the horse for that specific race.
- *TripDescriptor*: the keyword/descriptor associated with a horse's trip, as well as any "form projections" our domain-expert has given a horse.
- *Comment*: the free-form comment the domain-expert has used to describe, in greater detail, a horse's trip.

### ***Why is trip-handicapping so important?***

Trip-handicapping is one of the most underrated aspects of handicapping, simply because it is so time-consuming and subjective—and most players don't have the time or energy to do it, nor do they have a consistent approach or methodology in order to fully maximize what they are documenting.

With optixNOTES, our experts combine their handicapping ability along with their visual expertise to create an accurate assessment of a horse's past, present, and future performance, enabling you to isolate contenders and eliminate pretenders in a way that no other handicapping product can provide.

### ***What are the optixNOTES TripGrades?***

optixNOTES consists of several important elements, but the first thing you'll want to assess is the "TripGrade" assigned to a horse's past-performances. We have created five levels of performance ratings, which are color-coded for easy visibility. Above-average performances are coded **green**; average performances are coded **black**; poor performances are coded **red**.

- **A, A-, B+**: represents an impressive performance (color-coded in **green**).
- **B**: represents a good performance (color-coded in **green**).
- **B-, C+**: represents an average performance (color-coded in **black**).

- **C:** represents a poor performance (color-coded in **red**).
- **EX:** represents a race in which a horse had a noticeable excuse (color-coded in **black**).

### ***How are optixNOTES TripGrades assigned?***

Grades are assigned based on the finish position, race dynamics, and overall trip of a horse, accounting for troubled trips, ground loss, race-shapes, track biases, etc. TripDescriptor keywords (see below), like “BTL,” which stands for “better than looked,” describe the factors impacting the horse’s performance either positively or negatively. These factors are also involved in assigning the final TripGrade.

### ***What letter-grade does it typically take to win a race?***

Typically, it takes a letter-grade greater than or equal to a “B” to win a race—but keep in mind that all “B” grades are not created equally. A “B” in a stakes race holds more weight than a “B” in a maiden-claiming race. You need to make appropriate class adjustments on your own.

### ***What are the optixNOTES TripDescriptors and Form Projections?***

optixNOTES TripDescriptors offer added information to a horse’s performance rating. These descriptors are often factored into a rating, but they also offer handicappers some keywords associated with a given trip or performance. We use certain keywords for two reasons: first, so that important trip notes can be easily viewed; second, so that we can run analytics to determine which keywords are more impactful at certain tracks or at various class levels.

Also note that our TripDescriptors might include our “Form Projections” to let players know that a horse might appreciate a surface, distance, class, or equipment change in an effort to try to predict a horse’s evolving form and/or his future success. The purpose of our “Form Projection” is for our domain-expert to make a fair assessment of a horse’s future potential (e.g., improvement or regression) as well as a trainer’s future intentions (e.g., turf, route, etc.).

### ***Are the TripDescriptors and Form Projections color-coded as well?***

Yes, like our TripGrades, the TripDescriptors and Form Projections are color-coded for easy visibility:

- Negative keywords (e.g., **NO\_LINE** or **OUCHY**) are color-coded in **red**.
- Positive keywords (e.g., **BTL** or **GRIT**) are coded in **green**.
- All Form Projections (e.g., *Stretch?*) are coded in *italics*.

### ***Can you separate the contenders from the pretenders just by using TripGrades and TripDescriptors?***

Our optixNOTES platform is unique in that we've created a handicapping tool that allows players to quickly assess a horse's form, based on his previous trips, in relation to the other runners in the race. So when trying to select contenders, you should be looking for horses capable of running at least a "B" at today's class level. In some cases, you'll want to look for horses who are ready to improve (based on our improvement keywords) or who are returning to more suitable conditions (i.e., a surface, class level, and/or distance change) that might bring out an optimal performance.

***How can Form Projections be used to predict future performance?***

Form Projection keywords are extremely important, and they are used to predict future success based on our expert's opinion of a horse's potential or where he is in his form cycle or career. For example, a projection of "***improve?***" might suggest that a horse who had run a "B-" in his previous race could be ready to run a "B" or a "B+" in his next race at the same level. This is based on the potential our expert saw during the previous race. Perhaps the horse had a troubled trip or didn't get the right race-shape he needed to show his best stuff. Form Projections are valuable when it comes to distance and surface changes, as well as when horses don't get a favorable set-up. They are also very useful in young, developing horses.

***Is there a complete listing of all TripDescriptors and Form Projections?***

The optixNOTES TripDescriptors can be viewed on our website, but here is a screenshot of the TripDescriptors currently in use.

Trip Notes Keywords		+ Add new
Keyword	Description	
•	Select	
BIAS	Horse took full advantage of track bias	
BOS	The horse was best of speed duel	
BTL	This is hard to describe but horse had a subtle bad trip or effort was better than it looked (BTL).	
BURST	This is an explosive move or finish short in duration, but very noticeable move (could be 1/4m or 1/8m).	
CLOSE	Late interest shown w/o being set found. Found best stride late	
COLD	The trainer is mired in a slump during the phase of the meet this horse competed	
DELAY	When a race start is delayed because of gate issues and/or late scratches	
DIRT?	This indicates that a horse might prefer dirt based on his gait, his running style, or his physical make-up	
DROP?	A projection that horse needs drop in class.	
DUEL	Horse duels for lead	
EQUIP?	Horse may require equipment change to improve in future. Blinkers on or off is an example. First time gelding is another.	
FLOW	When a horse's performance is positively affected by a perceived race flow.	
FREE	A horse free from stress, generally described as a horse with no horse <2L in front and no horse <2L behind them	
FTQ	The horse was first to quit in speed duel.	
GALLOP	This can denote a strong gallop out (i.e. Gallop +) or a weak gallop out (i.e. Gallop -).	
GALLOP(-)	When the horse has a weak gallop out.	
GATE	Gate issues prior to race include horse being fractious, breaking through gate early, and trouble loading.	
GREEN	Horse may still be learning to run or finding running style and preference, potentially may need equipment change.	
GRIT	This is hard to describe, but you know it when you see it. A horse digs in and refuses to let horse(s) go by	
GRIT-	This horse lacks grit. A horse that hangs fits here.	
HARD	The horse had to work every step of the race. A few examples are in Optix Trip Note Documentation.	
HOT	The trainer has horses firing on all cylinders during the phase of the meet this horse competed	
IMPROVE?	This is an improvement projection based on this trip	
LONE	This is a horse who makes clear lead w/o much pressure and is not really challenged.	
MANIC	The horse is unmanageable or extremely unsettled.	

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Trip Notes Keywords		<a href="#">+ Add new keyword</a>
Keyword	Description	
MOVE	When a horse makes an noticeable move at any point during the race (usually a middle move or a turn of foot in the lane).	
NASAL_S	Horse is wearing a nasal strip	
NO_FINISH	The horse lacked a finish. Generally a speedster who is giving an easy lead up or a closer who just gets out kicked	
NO_HANDLE	Horse not handling surface	
NO_KEEP	In a perfect, or competitive position and cannot keep up or advance position	
NO_LEAD	Horse not changing leads in lane.	
NO_LINE	Horse not keeping a straight line in turns or on lane (i.e. lugging in or drifting out)	
NO_PUSH	No push usually late in the race after outcome decided must be at least 1/8m. Generally after horse encounters some trouble.	
OTHER	This is kind of a catch category (see extended comment for more information)	
OUCHY	Horse doesn't look physically right. Might be stiff, sore. Jockey riding up high or steering.	
PADDOCK(+)	Positive physical appearance in paddock and/or on track prior to race	
PADDOCK(-)	Negative physical appearance in paddock and/or track prior to race	
PERFECT	Horse gets a perfect trip	
PLODDY	The horse seemed ploddy or grindy just kind of tries to inch forward.	
POCKET	The horse sat in good position covered up just behind pace setters. This is good trip if horse can find room and get out.	
POP	The horse popped gate. This could be indication of improving fitness, especially if horse typically slow starter.	
PREP?	Horse was not fully cranked and trainer appears to be prepping for race in future	
PRESSED	When a frontrunner is pressed by other horses but is not actually dueling.	
RANK	The horse is having a hard time relaxing. This is wasted energy	
REGRESS?	A projection that horse might regress next out.	
ROOM	The horse lacked running room generally at important stage of race (i.e. in stretch	
RUSH	Horse is push hard out of gate after slow start wasting energy	
SAVED	The horse saved all the ground on every turn.	
SCARED	When a horse seems intimidated by other horses, especially when inside of them or stuck down at the rail.	
SETUP	Horse falls into right pace flow and almost inherits position by default.	

(continued)

Trip Notes Keywords		+ Add new	
Keyword	Description		
SHORTER?	A projection the horse much want to travel shorter distance.		
SLOG	This is just the opposite from pop. The horse is breaking slowly.		
STRETCH?	A projection the horse much want to travel longer distance.		
TACTIC	Jockey's riding tactics cost horse a chance at optimal performance. Never put horse in race or moved way too early.		
TACTIC(+)	When a jockey's riding tactics gives the horse a chance at an optimal performance.		
TRAFFIC	The horse is surrounded by horses on all sides during a portion of race (needs to be at least 1/4m in duration).		
TRAINER	Trainer comment associated with this race		
TROUBLE	Normal trouble see Notes documentation for examples		
TROUBLE(+)	High degree of trouble		
TROUBLE(-)	When a horse has slight trouble but not enough to strongly impact its overall performance.		
TROUBLE_S	Trouble that occurs to a horse within the first few strides out of the gate.		
TURF?	A projection the horse might want to run on grass.		
TWO_MOVES	Horse actually makes two or more separate moves during course of race.		
WARM	Horse was noticeable lathered up and hot looking prior to race.		
WARM_UP	Horse was put to good warmup prior to race.		
WASTED	Horse wasting energy with lead pony prior to race.		
WIDE	This is a noticeably wide trip.		
X_BIAS	Horse's trip was against the bias of race track		
X_FLOW	When a horse's performance is negatively affected by a perceived race flow.		

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### ***What are the free-form “Comments”?***

In addition to the TripGrades, TripDescriptors, and Form Projections, optixNOTES might also include a free-form comment written by our expert, in case some additional information is needed to describe a horse's trip or performance. These extended handicapper comments offer a more in-depth description of what occurred before, during, or after a race.

### ***So how do optixNOTES differ from traditional chart-comments and other “notes”-based handicapping products?***

With our optixNOTES, EquiLytix has created a unique way of visually rating a horse's overall performance or trip. Typically, chart-callers describe a horse's trip in literal terms (i.e., how the horse actually traveled around the track; for example, three-wide first turn, dueled in lane, etc.). While this helps the handicapper visualize a horse's running line, it does very little to interpret the horse's overall performance. With optixNOTES, we've tapped the vast knowledge of our experts to actually give an interpretation/grade of the horse's performance and what that interpretation/grade means to the horse's overall form or condition.

optixNOTES has revolutionized trip-handicapping, not only in terms of how a horse's trip is documented, but also in the way it's cataloged. Unlike other "notes"-based products, optixNOTES uses a structured approach, consistent language, thorough methodology, and a standard grading system that can give handicappers an excellent idea of how a horse performed during a given race—and how that performance fits in with a horse's current form cycle.

***What are the benefits of using optixNOTES as opposed to doing my own trip-handicapping?***

Watching race-replays is incredibly time-consuming and subjective. Our analysts have a methodological approach toward watching replays and incorporating important notes into our proprietary handicapping platform. Therefore, our optixNOTES information:

- is unique and not available anywhere else.
- is more consumable than traditional chart notes.
- reduces the effort of watching hours of race replays.
- aids in form-cycle analysis.
- is full of information you can trust.

***How do the analysts create optixNOTES?***

There is much more to optixNOTES than just watching replays and chronicling trips. Our analysts are intimately involved with their assigned circuit, knowing all of the horses as well as the human connections involved in racing them. In addition to knowing the circuit, our analysts handicap and analyze every race, so there is plenty of prep work being done before the race-watching even begins. Our process has several steps. Our experts:

- handicap the race prior to the actual running of the race.
- watch all pre-race (paddock, warm-ups) and post-race (gallop-out, final times, emerging track bias) activity.
- re-watch replays several times (both pan and head-on views).
- confirm ground-loss and fractional times (especially the final quarter) in order to determine a horse's TripGrade and TripDescriptors.
- review the previous race card to complete validation (can include asking for colleague review).
- use optixNOTES every day in their own handicapping and assessing of today's races.
- participate in quarterly "quality-assurance" team reviews.

***What are some things to look for when using optixNOTES?***

One aspect of our optixNOTES is to help recognize improving or declining patterns of horses. Here are some specific things to look for when using optixNOTES:

**Positives:**



- Horses with three consecutive improving performance grades.
- Horses whose form projection predictions (*IMPROVE? PREP?*) suggest an improved performance in their next race.
- Horses whose form projection predictions (*TURF? STRETCH? DIRT? DROP? SHORTER? EQUIP?*) suggest an improved effort if they undergo some kind of surface, distance, class, or equipment change in their next race.
- Horses who had a *major* excuse last time out (EX).
- Horses who might have run a subpar effort but encountered adverse conditions during the running of the race (TROUBLE(+), TRAFFIC, X\_BIAS, X\_FLOW, ROOM, NO\_HANDLE, GATE, WASTED, BTL).
- Horses with further potential upside (“B+” or better and able to move up in class).
- Horses who have “dirtied up” form, where they’ve run seemingly poor races (i.e., a “C”) at the wrong level, distance, or surface. Look for a return to form when back in the right spot, based on previous good performances under similar conditions.

**Negatives:**

- Bad favorites with negative keyword descriptors (NO\_LEAD, NO\_FINISH, HARD) that suggest a regression in their next race or consistent losses at short odds.
- Horses with three consecutive declining performance grades.
- Horses that might have had advantageous set-ups and race-flows and are now coming back in a more competitive race (PERFECT, BIAS, FLOW, FREE, SETUP).

***Who are the optixNOTES analysts?***

We employ professional horseplayers with years of experience handicapping and watching races. Our analysts understand the importance of trip-handicapping and how it can be integrated into a comprehensive approach toward playing the races. The Equilytix team is comprised of a vast array of successful industry professionals—from clockers and handicapping authors to analytical experts and NHC-tournament champions.

***What tracks does optixNOTES cover?***

We will be expanding to several other tracks, but as of now, optixNOTES covers the following major circuits:

- Kentucky (CD, KEE)
- New York (BEL, SAR)
- Florida (GP winter)
- Southern California (SA, DMR, LRC)
- Arkansas (OP)