Chapter 1
How the Sire and Dam Influence a Runner

It has long been my belief that the single most important thing about pedigree handicapping is understanding that although the sire and dam are equally significant factors in a pedigree, each plays a different role in determining how the racehorse will run.

I cannot emphasize enough the distinction between what the sire and his tail-male sire line (sire, sire’s sire, sire’s grandsire, etc.) bring to a pedigree, and what the dam and, most importantly, her tail-female family (dam, dam’s dam, dam’sgranddam, etc.) bring to the pedigree.

The male parts of a pedigree (primarily the sire, and secondly, the damsire, or broodmare sire) determine the distance and surface where the runner will be most effective. The female parts of a pedigree (dam and her tail-female family) determine racing class.

When looking at a pedigree, the female family will determine the quality of the individual. Whether the horse has the right stuff to become a stakes winner or whether he is more likely to be a common horse is chiefly—the result of the quality of the tail-female line. The key to racing class runs through the dam and her tail-female family, going back generation after generation. If quality mares are bred to inferior stallions, this high class may be diluted for a generation or two, but is usually restored by breeding back to a superior stallion.

For general everyday pedigree handicapping, however, players should concern themselves primarily with the sire and the damsire. That is because when analyzing a maiden race, the first thing to look at is the distance and surface of the race and how the sire/damsire of a runner fits that condition. Of course, class (dam and her family) is important, but most players do not have the time, inclination, or resources to research the dam’s family, which can be laborious.

EXAMPLE 1

ANALYZING A SEVEN-FURLONG MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT RACE

This is the kind of high-quality and competitive race that Gulfstream Park is known for during its premier winter meet. Below is a pedigree analysis of each filly’s chances at this particular distance (seven furlongs) and surface (dirt).

Present Danger: The first thing that catches the eye is sire Souvenir Copy, a young stallion whose name is synonymous with speed. One of 2002’s best freshman sires, who had 17 2-year-old winners in his first crop, Souvenir Copy was a good 2-year-old himself, winning the Del Mar Futurity and Norfolk Stakes, and is by Mr. Prospector (speed). A check mark immediately goes next to Souvenir Copy as a speed influence. A check mark also goes next to Storm Cat as the damsire, since his presence adds more speed than stamina to the pedigree. If the pedigree has this kind of speed from both the sire and damsire, I label it SP² (speed x 2).

(If a player wants to know the class of the horse, the next step is to find out who the dam is. In this case, Stormy Gal comes from the female family of multiple stakes winner Gay Serenade, and other prominent runners produced by this family are Navesink, Imah, Ring Dancer, Cefis, and Run Smartly. So, this is a pedigree of speed and class, or SP²/C).

Joyful Chaos: Rahy has had broad success as a sire of turf and dirt runners, and his fillies, in particular, have shown speed on dirt, including Serena’s Song, Raw Gold, and Exotic Wood. The damsire is Deputy Minister, a champion at 2 and a world-class sire. While many of his runners have raced successfully at classic distances at late-maturing 3-year-olds and as older runners (Touch Gold, Awesome Again, Deputy Commander, Flag Down, etc.), Deputy Minister’s presence in a pedigree indicates speed. Thus, this filly has a double dose of speed, but is better bred for grass and figures to be a price because her trainer, Christophe Clement, has had better success with turf runners and has a low percentage with first-time starters on dirt. (The female family is high-class and has produced Carson City, General Meeting, Prides Profile, and Dixie Dot Com.) With Rahy, Deputy Minister, and Pleasant Colony up close in her pedigree, Joyful Chaos will get better with maturity and be best from seven furlongs to 1 1/8 miles on all surfaces, preferably on grass.
**My Time Now:** The late Unbridled was known for siring very big offspring, the majority of which have needed time to mature and have been best stretching out in distance. In addition, grass influence Roberto is the damsire of this filly, which makes this a pedigree heavily laced with stamina (or $ST^2$), with little speed. This is a strong pedigree for distances of more than one mile on dirt and turf. (My Time Now’s dam, Darby Trail, is a full sister to Darby Creek Road and is closely related to Dynaformer.) She finished third in a 6 1/2-furlong maiden race at Churchill Downs in her only race at 2, indicating talent, and she should only get better at 3 and 4. Gets first-time Lasix and will probably need the race. Regardless of today’s outcome, this is a filly with a future as the year progresses.

**Pretty Jane:** By Subordination, a multiple stakes winner on turf who had high speed (from his sire, Mt. Livermore). Gets more speed from damsire, Afleet. (The female family traces to foundation mares cultivated by Christiana Stables.) Wait for maiden race on turf, where her speed will be dangerous. T/Sp$^2$ pedigree.

**Magical Illusion:** Gets a Sp$^2$ rating, as well as HT$^2$ (hidden turf x 2). Her sire, Pulpit, is very capable of getting runners who win first time out (as he did), especially when they are out of mares by speed influences, such as Baldski. (Dam Voodoo Lily was a stakes winner and this filly is a half-sister to stakes-placed Shah Jehan.) Combining pedigree with high-profile connections (trainer H. James Bond and jockey Edgar Prado), this filly is a logical contender.

**Maren Approved:** By Canadian Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old With Approval (a half-brother to Touch Gold), a multiple stakes winner on grass in the U.S. whose sire line is all turf (Caro). This filly is strictly bred for grass, or $T^2$.

**Platinum Heights:** The $2.8 million purchase price first grabs the attention, and is important as it denotes that her conformation obviously matched her star-studded pedigree. By Storm Cat (a speed influence and a stakes-winning 2-year-old), who is an excellent sire of first-time starters, this filly is out of a mare by Bold Hour, one of Bold Ruler’s best runners. Bold Hour, who was from the same crop as Dr. Fager, Damascus, Successor, and In Reality, won the 1966 Hopeful and Futurity Stakes and is a source of speed. In addition, Platinum Heights is out of an exceptional broodmare, Amelia Bearhart, who produced stakes winners Chief Bearhart, Ruby Ransom, and Explosive Red. High-speed top and bottom, with high-class from female family (Sp$^2$/C), in the hands of a winning trainer/jockey combination, Todd Pletcher and John Velazquez.

**Aimer:** By Swain, a champion older runner in England and Ireland who is best known in this country for Frankie Dettori’s extremely wide ride in the 1998 Breeders’ Cup Classic, in which Swain finished third behind Awesome Again and Silver Charm. While his runners do win on dirt, they are really bred for grass (e.g., American Oaks winner Dimitrova). This filly’s damsire, Clever Trick, does add speed to the mix, but I can’t wait to see Aimer on turf. The T/Sp rating means the sire provides turf while the damsire imparts speed.

**Evasive:** Showed speed before tiring in wide Saratoga debut. This filly gets first-time Lasix and is by Elusive Quality, whose runners are known for their high speed on all surfaces. Trainer Richard Dutrow Jr. has been red-hot and this was Jerry Bailey’s second call (behind Peer, an also-eligible who got into the race). A must-use in all exotics, and with the $T^2$ (Elusive Quality/Strawberry Road) cross, this filly should be on a “Horses to Watch” list on turf.

**Stormy Season:** Another Storm Cat, this filly has shown very little in five starts against inferior competition on dirt. An immediate toss.

**Holy Kate:** By Holy Bull out of a Mt. Livermore mare, this filly is bred for high speed (Sp$^2$). (Her dam, Angel Kate, is a half-sister to the stakes-winning sprinter For Really.) For future reference, both Holy Bull (Great Above) and Mt. Livermore (Blushing Groom) are hidden turf sires, thus she also has an HT$^2$ rating.

**Peer:** Another filly by Pulpit, out of a Devil’s Bag mare from a strong Claiborne Farm female family. Peer was an also-
eligible who got into the race. Trained by Bill Mott and ridden by Bailey, this filly figured to be an underlay, and although bred for speed, she had to contend with a far-outside post and others with speed. Runners by Pulpit are showing a strong affinity for grass, and Devil’s Bag has been a better sire of turf runners than dirt. Would not be surprising to see this filly do her best running on grass.

Considering her pedigree and high-profile connections, Platinum Heights offered value at nearly 4-1, and the second-time starter by Elusive Quality, Evasive, was very attractive at 8-1, providing a $2 exacta of $76.40. While I would not have selected Present Danger to win, she was certainly a candidate to finish in the money because of her speed. A creative trifecta ticket keying Platinum Heights and Evasive in the first and second spots, and Present Danger, Joyful Chaos, My Time Now, Magical Illusion, Holy Kate, and Peer in the third spot, would have cost $12. The $1 trifecta returned $520.80.

EXAMPLE 2

ANALYZING A MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT RACE ON TURF

Betting Obscure but Well-Bred Turf Stallions

Many stallions who achieved success in Europe over the grass but were relatively unknown in the U.S. have a limited number of starters in this country. One such sire is King of Kings, a son of Sadler’s Wells out of a mare by champion turf miler Habitat.

King of Kings won 4 of 5 starts (including the Group 1 National Stakes and Group 2 Railway Stakes) at 2 in Ireland, and won the prestigious English 2000 Guineas at 3. He started off his stud career as a Southern Hemisphere stallion, and then was based at Ashford Stud in Kentucky. His first North American foals were 2-year-olds of 2002 and not surprisingly, they were ill-suited for dirt racing and showed poor form sprinting at 2 and 3. It did not take long for King of Kings to be sent back overseas.

Given a chance on grass, however, his runners sprang to life. Never was this more apparent than on January 24, 2004, in a maiden race for 3-year-old fillies on the grass at Fair Grounds.

Beach Side: Beach Side is by Lit de Justice, a late-bloomer who became a champion sprinter at age 6 when he captured the Breeders’ Cup Sprint. Lit de Justice was bred for turf but was inexplicably better on dirt. But his sire line (El Gran Senor-Northern Dancer) is known for turf, and it is not surprising that runners by Lit de Justice are performing well on grass. Beach Side’s dam is by Lion d’Or, a son of Secretariat out of champion racemare Fanfreluche (Northern Dancer), and thus a full brother to champion Medaille d’Or, and a half-brother to Canadian Horse of the Year L’Enjoleur, stakes winners D’Accord, La Voyageuse, and Grand Luxe. Secretariat is a powerful turf influence, thus Beach Side’s pedigree is T^2.

True Blonde Beauty: Plenty of turf and stamina in this pedigree. Although her sire, Proudest Romeo, was 0 for 2 on turf, he is a son of Proud Truth (Graustark-Ribot sire line), and her dam sire, Lyphard’s Ridge, adds more turf.

Pleasure Hunt: On paper, a classy pedigree, but only so-so for grass. Coronado’s Quest is more than capable of getting winners on turf, but was deemed a disappointment at stud and was shipped to Japan. Dam is a half-sister to major stakes winner Quiet American, but it is noteworthy that this royally bred filly brought only $25,000 as a yearling, indicating something amiss physically.

Lively Number: By Mt. Livermore out of a mare by Senor Pete (Green Dancer), this filly has turf from both sides of her pedigree, but the class is very questionable.

Madame Galore: Another filly with many turf influences in her pedigree (Fantastic Fellow, Deputy Minister, and Star Appeal), but the female family is weak.
**Praire Katydid:** By underrated sire Deerhound (Danzig), a half-brother to Weekend Surprise, the dam of A.P. Indy, Summer Squall, and Honor Grades. Deerhound is the sire of champion 2-year-old filly Countess Diana, Sassy Hound, and Deer Run. Anytime you see Danzig in the sire line, the runner automatically moves up dramatically on turf and wet tracks. Praire Katydid’s dam, Groovy, was a champion sprinter, but surprisingly, his runners were superior on grass.

**Gran Lady Jade:** Jade Hunter started his career in Europe on grass and is a good, if not spectacular, turf sire. The dam is turf influence El Gran Senor, and the fourth dam is a half-sister to Arts and Letters, but this filly has shown nothing in three lifetime races, which include a dull effort on turf.

**Richwood Royal:** By an outstanding turf stallion, Royal Academy (Nijinsky II), this filly is out of a mare by Magical Wonder, a half-brother to Mt. Livermore, by Storm Bird (Northern Dancer). Her pedigree, combined with a good effort in her last race behind the promising Michael Dickinson-trained filly Dynamia, points her out as the one to beat.

**Sasafras:** Since her sire, Tomorrows Cat, is by Storm Cat, she has a license to like turf, and dam sire World Appeal (Valid Appeal) was a very good turf runner. She should show better speed on grass, but her female line is very poor. $T^2$.

**Make My Heart Sing:** This first-time starter is bred strictly for grass. By King of Kings (Sadler’s Wells), a multiple Group 1 winner who was the 1998 3-year-old champion in Ireland, this filly is out of the stakes-winning turf mare Songlines, who is by another strong grass influence, Diesis. Plenty of class as well; Songlines is a half-sister to stakes-winning sprinter Binalong.

**Cimmaron Summer:** By Repriced (a son of powerful turf influence Roberto), this filly is certainly bred for grass but has a very weak female family.

**Wood Not:** Sire Kissin Kris is a son of Kris S. (Roberto), and it is hardly surprising that he is getting a fair amount of winners on turf. DAM sire Baederwood is a son of grass star Tentam (Intentionally), whose offspring were naturally gifted on that surface. Nothing notable, however, from the dam’s family.

Richwood Royal, who had a $T^2$ pedigree (by Royal Academy out of a mare by Magical Wonder) and had finished a closing fourth in her last race at 15-1 on turf, was the logical favorite at 7-5. But catching my eye was a first-time starter, Make My Heart Sing, who also had a $T^2$ pedigree (King of Kings—Songlines, by Diesis). Not only was Make My Heart Sing bred for turf, she was also bred to handle the distance of about one mile in her debut. Her dam, Songlines, was a half-sister to top-class sprinter Binalong (Known Fact), and won the 1999 Susquehanna Handicap and finished third in the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup Invitational, also on turf, at Keeneland.

American horseplayers were generally in the dark about King of Kings and dismissed Make My Heart Sing, but astute handicappers who realize pedigrees can make a difference, especially on turf, took heed, especially at 21-1. Unfortunately, Make My Heart Sing ran second behind Richwood Royal, but the exacta still returned a very healthy $879.20. Beach Side, who clipped heels and fell in her last start (where Richwood Royal finished fourth), finished a closing third at 9-2 and capped off a $1 trifecta of $243.70.

**EXAMPLE 3**

**BETTING MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT RACES**

Another example of how the sire and dam affect the running style and class of a young horse was demonstrated in a six-furlong maiden race for 3-year-old fillies on dirt at Ellis Park on July 18. Below is a pre-race pedigree analysis:

**Lovers Bend:** By Arch (Kris S.) out of a Deputy Minister mare, she figured to benefit from a move to the turf after three dull starts on dirt and improved slightly on that surface in her last start. Dubious move back to dirt. Toss.
Crafty Closure: By Hennessy out of a Time for a Change mare, this filly has a SP² pedigree (speed from both sides of her pedigree). That being said, she started her career at Mountaineer Park vs. inferior fillies, and ran poorly. Toss.

La Tache: Hennessy, out of a full sister to stakes winner Lakeway. This Hennessy filly also showed little in her debut, but in this instance that race should be dismissed. Gets Lasix today after showing two very sharp works since last race, the red-hot Mark Guidry takes the call, and the pedigree screams class. Her second dam is a full sister to Saratoga Six and the third dam is a full sister to Bold Forbes. Top play at possible price due to last race.

Trulips: While she is bred for high speed (SP² pedigree with Elusive Quality and Clever Trick), she has shown nothing in two starts against lesser at Turfway Park in January. Toss.

Freedom Fries: A pricey ($300,000) Keeneland September yearling purchase, she finished a fast-closing second in a six-furlong Churchill debut in April, then threw in two clunkers. Although her last effort on grass was dull, it came over a yielding turf course and her T² pedigree suggests she should remain on grass (by hidden turf sire French Deputy out of an Affirmed mare). Consider for minor award only.

Present: By Subordination out of a mare by Eskimo (Northern Dancer), this filly has poor dirt form and showed speed but tired in her only try on a yielding grass course. She also has a strong T² pedigree and is a toss on dirt.

Miss Magnolia: Showed good speed in her debut before stopping in a seven-furlong maiden race at Churchill. Her trainer has a gaudy win percentage (37 percent) with runners making their second start, and most importantly, she has a speed/class pedigree. By Forestry, one of the best young speed sires, she’s a half-sister to stakes winner Anklet. Expect a much improved effort today.

Red Blaze: Some Red Ransom offspring win on dirt, but their specialty is turf and this filly gets a double dose of grass from her damsire, Royal Academy (T² pedigree). The biggest pluses are her trainer, Ronny Werner, who is exceptional with young runners, and her jockey, emerging superstar Rafael Bejarano. Wait for maiden race on grass, and longer distance.

Perspicacity: Bred to be especially fast and has a classy female family. By the highly successful sprint sire Carson City, she’s a half-sister to turf stakes winners Subordination and Domination. In addition, her dam is a half-sister to major group winner Cacoethes, and stakes winners Fabulous Notion and Margaret Booth. Showed nothing in sloppy-track debut at 15-1 and could turn it around today.

Send for an Angel: Has shown little against open company and her last two starts at the $50,000 maiden claiming level suggest she’s a notch below these.

As the chart shows, first-time starter Red Blaze was made the 8-5 favorite, and while she ran a good race, she was second best behind my top selection, La Tache, who drew off easily to win by 3 1/2 lengths, paying $10.40. While I expected Red Blaze to be a force when she tries turf, the tote action indicated she was well-meant, and could have been used in the exotics. Miss Magnolia, my second choice, dueled with La Tache early and finished third at 7-1. The $2 exacta paid $49.80 and the $2 trifecta returned $201.40. While the exacta and trifecta were feasible, the key to the race remained La Tache, and a substantial win bet at 4-1 was a gift in itself.

How Class in the Dam Translates into Betting Opportunities

The most intricate aspect of pedigree handicapping requires knowledge of female families. This is the kind of information that can yield staggering results, and below are four towering examples of how knowing class in the dam can produce a major score.

Hula Queen
Trainer Luis Seglin claimed Hula Queen (Irish River—Yafill, by Nureyev) for $25,000 in late 1997 after lackluster performances on the dirt. Since Hula Queen was impeccably bred for grass on both sides (T² pedigree), Seglin wisely placed her in an open maiden race on the surface she was bred for, and the filly responded with a super effort, just getting nosed at the wire at 100-1.

In October 1999, Hula Queen rewarded Seglin’s prescience by winning Santa Anita’s opening-day feature, the Sen. Ken Maddy Handicap, by 3 1/2 authoritative lengths at nearly 16-1, and became the latest stakes winner for her extraordinary female family. With her pedigree—and stakes victory—5-year-old Hula Queen turned out to be a great claim by Seglin, as she is easily worth $500,000 as a broodmare prospect.

Hula Queen’s sire, the late Irish River, was a champion at 2 and 3 in France, where he won 10 of 12 starts with one third. His name has been synonymous with class on grass since his first foals graced the track in 1983. Irish River was by far the most successful son of Riverman (Never Bend) at stud. Although his runners have won on dirt, they have been far superior on grass. Irish River’s champions include Paradise Creek, Hatoof, and Brief Truce. His son Exit to Nowhere, a Group 1-winning half-brother to Machiavellian (Mr. Prospector), is a leading sire in France. Another son, With the Flow, a Group 3 winner in France, won the Belmont Breeders’ Cup over Comic Strip (Red Ransom) at 17-1.

Irish River has also been an extraordinary broodmare sire. His daughters include Albertine, the dam of Breeders’ Cup Classic winner Arcangues; Ballinderry, the dam of Sanglamore; Irish Valley, the dam of Alhaarth; Litani River, the dam of The Editor; Or Vision, the dam of the full siblings Saffron Walden and Insight; Primevere, the dam of champion Priolo; and Seven Springs, the dam of champion Distant View.

It is Hula Queen’s female family, however, that makes her valuable as a future broodmare. Her fifth dam, Lady Be Good (Better Self—Past Eight, by Eight Thirty), is one of racing’s “blue hens,” a broodmare whose influence has had a profound effect over multiple generations.

Lady Be Good produced 13 foals, including four stakes winners: Discipline (Princequillo), Full of Hope (Bold Ruler), Disciplinarian (Bold Ruler), and In Hot Pursuit (Bold Ruler). Discipline played second fiddle to stablemate Queen Empress (Bold Ruler), the 1964 champion 2-year-old filly, but Discipline was a better broodmare, producing stakes winner Duty Dance (Nijinsky II), Sorority winner Squander (Buckpasser), and Fiddlesticks (Northern Dancer). Fiddlesticks was the dam of stakes winner Vivano (Island Whirl) and While Rome Burns (Overskate); the latter produced stakes winner Burning Roma. Party Manners (Private Account), All Gone (Fappiano), Lost Opportunity (Mr. Prospector), Mining (Mr. Prospector), and Goodbye Halo (Halo) all trace to Lady Be Good. Her daughter Uncommitted (Buckpasser) was not a stakes winner but produced the successful stallion Wavering Monarch (Majestic Light).

Bred to 1964 2-year-old champion and 1966 Metropolitan Handicap winner Bold Lad (Bold Ruler), Lady Be Good produced her most important foal, Bold Example. Stakes-placed in the Polly Drummond and Blue Hen Stakes at 2, Bold Example became a prized broodmare, producing two stakes winners, Highest Regard (Gallant Romeo) and French Charmer (Le Fabuleux). How influential was Bold Example? Five different daughters produced Grade 1 or Group 1 stakes winners.

In 1989, three of Bold Example’s daughters—French Charmer, Past Example, and Highest Regard—produced two champions and a major stakes winner. French Charmer produced Zilzal (Nureyev), Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old in England; Past Example (Buckpasser) produced Polish Precedent (Danzig), champion 3-year-old in France; and Highest Regard produced Awe Inspiring (Slew o’Gold), winner of the Flamingo Stakes and the American Derby, and third to Sunday Silence and Easy Goer in the Kentucky Derby. To have three daughters produce three outstanding individuals in three different countries in the same year is extraordinary, and it was an incredible injustice that Bold Example was not named Broodmare of the Year.

Even Bold Example’s unraced daughters produced stakes winners. Perfect Example (Far North) produced Culture Vulture (Timeless Moment), champion 2-year-old filly in France and champion older mare in England and Italy. Gallant Youth (Youth) produced Sharp Youth (Sharpen Up), a stakes winner in France.

In addition to Awe Inspiring, Highest Regard also produced Recognizable (Seattle Slew), winner of the Distaff Handicap. Past Example also produced stakes winner Jasmina (Forli) and Zienelle, a full sister to Polish Precedent, who is the granddam of Intikhab (Red Ransom). Besides Zilzal, French Charmer also produced stakes winner Charmante (Alydar) and Taras Charmer (Majestic Light), the dam of stakes winner Naughty Notions (Relaunch). Taras Charmer is the dam of Yafill (Nureyev), the unraced dam of Hula Queen.

Although Lady Be Good is found in Hula Queen’s fifth generation (tail-female), her considerable influence is still felt through successive generations of female descendants.

This is what is known as class in the dam, and this in-depth information, combined with the powerful grass
influence of Irish River as the sire, made Hula Queen a tremendous pedigree play on grass.

**Nanogram**

When Nanogram (Quiet American—Nannetta, by Falstaff) roared home first in a maiden special weight event for fillies at 6 1/2 furlongs on Santa Anita’s downhill turf course in March 2000, she lit up the tote board at $152. When a racehorse wins at 75-1 it is noteworthy in itself, but what made this victory so exceptional is the fact that Nanogram was the product of a carefully planned mating, combining turf ability (Quiet American) and a high-class female family.

Her dam, Nannetta, scored her biggest victory in the 1994 California Cup Distaff at the same distance and racecourse. Her sire, Quiet American, blossomed at age 4 when he won the San Diego Handicap (defeating Bayakoa). He finished second in the Charles H. Strub Stakes (to Flying Continental) and in the Woodward (to Dispersal). In a questionable decision by the Breeders’ Cup selection committee, Quiet American did not make the cut for the 1990 Breeders’ Cup Classic. His scintillating victory in the NYRA Mile, where he ran the fastest mile of the year (1:32.90), only fueled the controversy regarding his exclusion from the Breeders’ Cup Classic.

Quiet American got off to a quick start at stud, siring Cara Rafaela, one of the best juvenile fillies of her generation. From the same crop came Hidden Lake, who matured late and became a champion older mare, winning three Grade 1 races, the Hempstead Handicap, Breeders’ Stakes, and Go for Wand Stakes.

Quiet American’s stock rose considerably when Real Quiet emerged as the 1998 3-year-old champion, winning the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes. Real Quiet went on to capture the Hollywood Gold Cup and Pimlico Special and is now at stud.

Nanogram was bred by Esprit de Corps, which was headed by the late Leon Rasmussen and noted pedigree scholar Rommy Faversham. Rasmussen had a 50-year career at Daily Racing Form, contributing his “Bloodlines” column for 37 of them. Faversham has written numerous articles for Owner-Breeder, Thoroughbred Times, Australian Bloodhorse Review, and Daily Racing Form, and along with Rasmussen, he co-authored the definitive book on female-family inbreeding, Inbreeding to Superior Females (Australian Bloodhorse Review, Sydney, 1999).

**Star Queen**

As noted in my chapter in Bet with the Best (DRF Press, 2001), one of the most sensational betting coups based solely on pedigree occurred on May 25, 2000, when Star Queen, a spectacularly bred filly by Kingmambo out of the Seattle Slew mare Starboard Tack, won a maiden special weight race and paid $101.20.

A one-mile maiden race for fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, featured a full field of 12 with no apparent standouts, but pedigree handicapping yielded an intriguing possibility in Star Queen.

Star Queen began her career in France, finishing second on a soft turf course in August 1999. Eight months later, she returned in a six-furlong dirt race and finished last after being bumped at the start. It was basically a non-effort.

Star Queen had opened at 20-1 and her odds kept rising. But her pedigree could not be overlooked. For starters, she was by the world-class stallion Kingmambo, predominantly a grass sire, but whose runners win often on dirt (led by Belmont Stakes winner Lemon Drop Kid). Star Queen had an imposing female family to boost her attraction. She was a half-sister to Derby Trial winner Patience Game (Woodman), and pedigree-wise, nothing in this field of underachieving maiden fillies was in the same league. At post time, her odds had skyrocketed to 49-1. Star Queen was always in good position behind the early pacesetters and took the lead around the far turn. She drew off in the stretch to win by 10 1/4 lengths. My modest $20 win bet at the Fiesta Hotel in Las Vegas returned a nifty $1,012.

With just a two-week rest, Star Queen came back in a turf race at 1 1/8 miles. Well-placed throughout, she finished an even third, beaten three lengths, this time at even money. Obviously, her connections held her in high esteem, for they sent her to Hollywood Park to contest the Princess Stakes. After a slow, awkward start, she finished fourth, a half-length behind 1999 Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies winner Cash Run, at 7-1. Returned to Kentucky, Star Queen easily won a grass allowance at 1 1/16 miles at 1-2. Obviously, the time to jump on Star Queen was when she was 49-1, as she never offered anything close that value again!

**Offlee Wild**
During the 2003 Daily Racing Form/NTRA National Handicapping Championship, one of the races that looked like a tasty pedigree play was Offlee Wild in the Holy Bull Stakes. At the time, Offlee Wild had raced just three times at age 2, with one win and one second. But I loved the idea of him going 1 1/16 miles.

Offlee Wild was by the successful sire Wild Again, but I was immediately drawn to him because of his dam, Alvear. A modest winner of two races in nine starts, Alvear is a full sister to stakes winner White Bridle (Seattle Slew), and more notably, a half-sister to Dynaformer. The high quality of Offlee Wild’s Darby Dan female family, which produced grass champion Sunshine Forever, Kentucky Derby winner Monarchos, and stakes runners Brian’s Time, Memories of Silver, Ryafan, and Darby Creek Road, was all I needed to know. Offlee Wild won the Holy Bull Stakes at 27-1 and looked like a bona fide Triple Crown aspirant. But physical problems hindered his talent and he finished 12th in the Derby behind Funny Cide, whom he had soundly beaten in the Holy Bull. Nagging problems followed Offlee Wild throughout his 3-year-old year, but he finally returned to that once-promising form as a 4-year-old under a new trainer, Richard Dutrow Jr., in an allowance race on May 14, 2004, defeating 3-year-olds Shaniko and Mustanfar. He proved that race was no fluke when he came right back to win his next start, the Massachusetts Handicap, over Funny Cide and Evening Attire, and joined the list of better older runners.

By a popular sire who is now 24 years old, Offlee Wild is from a female family known for producing stallions, and will be an attractive stallion after his racing days are over, especially if he can add more stakes to his resume.

From a pedigree-handicapping angle (stamina and class), Offlee Wild was a huge overlay and a delicious play at 27-1.