

A decorative graphic consisting of three blue circles of varying sizes and two thin blue lines. One line starts from the top left and extends towards the center, passing through the top and middle circles. Another line starts from the top right and extends towards the center, passing through the middle circle. A third, larger circle is positioned in the bottom right corner, partially overlapping the page's border.

Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters

Enjoy this book

“Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters” is years of writing about sport and racing and working with some of the world’s biggest punters and bookmakers up close

SW
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Author

“Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters” is author first e-book after years of writing about sport and racing and working with some of the world’s biggest punters and bookmakers up close.

The underpinning philosophy that propelled the writing of this e-book was undoubtedly the charismatic personalities of each of the characters profiled who Scott has met, and with many became close friends. Each one of the characters has overcome overwhelming odds to be highly successful in a market place where 98% of people fail. Each one has stamped his very own brand on how to be successful in the cut throat world of gambling and each one has a fascinating story to tell.

“Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters” is a work of non fiction, a perfect read for anyone interested in what makes some of the icons in the gambling world tick and how they made it to the top of a very steep pile.

Shrinking violets cannot survive in the “dog eat dog” world of gambling and you will note that each profile shares an unwavering quest for success with an ego to match. No University in the world can teach you what knowledge rests in the minds of these men. It is a combination of common sense, streetwise, mathematics and a touch of entrepreneurial flair.

Many years studying and rubbing shoulders revealed that there is no miracle formula, but there is a right and wrong way and some successful strategies that can be successfully copied by the rank and file.

Author's inspiration to write this e-book is to pass on some valuable secrets that may inspire and fast track readers to experience that incredible feeling of "winning".

Life is too short.

Introduction

I have been exposed to thousands of gamblers and in this e-book have touched on a few who I have met and studied closely that have defied the trend and become big winners, but only history will determine if they will be remembered that way.

They are all vastly different, and have diverse philosophies and personalities. They are all immensely talented and I am sure that you will be able to relate with many of them, but it is my expectation that you may be able to pick up on one or two tips that will help you experience that amazing feeling of being a winner.

#

Pound for pound Australia is regarded as the greatest sporting nation in the world.

With a tiny population of only 22 million, no country can compete on a per capita basis for producing champion sportsmen in most of the high profile sports, and you can add punting to the list.

Australia finished fifth in the Beijing Olympics for Medals per capita, but the countries ahead Bahamas, Jamaica, Iceland and Slovenia, do not rate with sports like golf, tennis, motor racing, swimming, cricket, football etc which makes the land down under number one overall by as far as Adam Scott can hit a two iron.

When it comes to producing punters Australia also stands alone, and could boast the two biggest punters in the world in 2008.

Enter Hobart born Zeljko Ranogajec, 48, now based in Sydney and Alan Woods, born in the northern NSW town of Murwillumbah, who sadly died suddenly in Hong Kong on Australia Day 2008 while undergoing an operation for a rare cancer at the age of 62. He left behind an estimated \$670 million fortune.

The famous Hong Kong Jockey Club recorded a betting turnover of \$US64billion (\$AUD\$71.46bn) for their 2006-07 racing season and it

has been estimated the input to annual turnover by Woods and his syndicate was about 2 per cent, or \$AUD 1.4 billion.

“I would not think that estimate is an exaggeration,” said John Schreck, former chief steward for Sydney racing and later for the HKJC during the late 1990s and into the early years of the new millennium when Woods’ syndicate was operating.

It is expected that the world’s biggest Betting Exchange Betfair has at least three Australians in their top ten punters headed by Zeljko Ranogajec with Steve Fletcher and the Bartholomew brothers Sean and Kingsley also apparent big players.

Information Technology has changed how we bet today and attracts a different breed of punter. As a copy boy at the Greyhound Recorder Newspaper in the 70’s my idol was Gary Manning, who was regarded as the best judge and biggest punter in Australia on greyhounds. Gary, later to become my brother in law, would have no trouble betting sums of \$10,000 at provincial greyhound meetings, but most tracks these days do not even have a bookie as they have succumbed to the inane tax laws, but to even think about a \$10,000 bet on a city track today even would be folly.

Gary made his fortune before video recorders were invented and race meetings were video taped. I have never seen anyone as methodical as he would write an essay about every runner in every race. There was nothing he would not know.

As a wet behind the ears kid, I ran into Gary leaving the Grafton horses during the famed July carnival and asked him what he was doing. We were both there for the greyhounds that night but Gary ran out of cash and asked me if I had any. You can imagine how I felt; it was like Tiger Woods asking an amateur golfer if they had any spare balls. I was stoked that he had asked me and I would have robbed a bank for him, so I ran back to my caravan and produced my life’s savings of \$2,000. It was a major thrill to actually fund one of the most successful punters in the country, even if it wasn’t much in his terms. I learnt so much from Gary who never went to a greyhound meeting under prepared. He was and still is a walking encyclopedia on greyhounds.

It was always a highlight of my week to get a lift with him and the legendary scribe Jeff Collerson in his big gold Merc (now Blue) every

Friday night to Richmond dogs. As a kid trying to learn the ropes, I could not have been in a better seat.

It was never easy to get a compliment from Gary, but he did acknowledge that the best tip I ever gave him was when I introduced him to my wonderful sister Julie. He is right about that and they have been inseparable for over 30 years since.

Gary still spends the majority of every day analyzing races and recording details by hand into each race book. He knows that the market has caught up with him and that there is an easier way, but you get the impression that he loves the hard work. The TAB should send Gary some bonus shares as he single handily eliminated many of their opposition bookies in his hey day.

It will be a sad day when we say goodbye to the last bookmaker, but the draconian tax laws make that prospect a certainty, unless some thinking legislator realizes the value of having odds makers at the track and implements a fairer viable tax plan based on gross profit as opposed to turnover.

It is clear to survive in the bookmaking game that high turnover is a pre requisite as betting margins will continue to shrink and the operating cost to revenue ratio is also looking less appealing, especially as marketing has become crucial to attract the punting dollar. Most bookies struggle with the new phenomenon called “on line marketing”. They know what it is, but few know how to exploit it, but they are starting to learn and Affiliates are popping up everywhere.

This is attractive to the punter, who once only had his SP bookie or the TAB to choose from. Today he can bet with over 500 bookies world wide literally within minutes and can ensure that the price will be competitive.

The new breed of punter are comfortable with a PC and know their way around the internet, those that are not can still make a phone call or just visit a TAB outlet. The next generation will be betting over the net via their mobile (cell) phone or utilizing one of the thousands of kiosks that will be strategically placed everywhere we go.

Punters will be able to pick up a slab of stubbies at the drive through bottle shop and have a “monkey” on the favourite in the next, or throw a “red back” on Arsenal while you are re-fuelling at the local servo.

Wow, it's not that long ago that I remember having \$5 each way on Roy Higgins mount with a dodgy SP bookie in an intimidating lane in suburban Newtown. Wonder if he has an I-Phone today?

Prologue

The words in this e-book were sitting in my PC for a long time as I pondered what to do with them. Like many of my late night writings I could file them or trash them.

I shared a draft copy with a couple of people I respect and they encouraged me to go ahead and publish. One of the "sub editors" added that he could not put it down and had read it ten times and would have paid to read it.

My problem was that "Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters" is personal, very personal and cuts to the nerve. Most of the "stars" are friends of mine and talking out of school never goes down well. The fact is, these guys are all known to the public, and what I have disclosed in this e-book is honest and based on my experiences.

I reasoned that the public had a right to know how these guys tick, and if someone is going to write about them, then they would probably prefer that I did it. The media have a way of "stretching" the truth in the interests of a good story and they often get the facts wrong.

Some of the documentaries aired on Australian TV in 2009 about the Underworld were testimony that the truth goes out the window and attaining pride in accurate journalism holds no water.

Some of the guys would often blow up when they were "misrepresented" in the print media, but I was never sure deep down if they still loved the exposure as it runs with having an ego, a pre requisite to be good at this caper.

So it was decided.

I charged my glass of Coonawarra after a Monday night of footy and made the commitment to make it happen. There was no point in publishing "Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters" unless it was accurate, and in the interests of commercialism that would mean I would have to take some liberties with the keyboard.

Some times it was difficult to know how far to go. As I juggled with the “meaty” bits of copy and the balance of privileged information I would often consult with my glass of red knowing that if I had written everything that I knew “Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters” would be a New York Best Seller, but the focus was on punting and the different ways that each profiled punter had made it to the top.

I will leave the soap operas for some other writer who is comfortable mixing “Dallas”, “Dynasty”, “Boston Legal” and the “Sopranos”.

Now who would play J.R., Denny Crane and Tony Soprano?

“Each player must accept the cards life deals him or her: but once they are in hand, he or she alone must decide how to play the cards in order to win the game.”—Voltaire

Zeljko Ranogajec



“behind that enigmatic demeanor and shyness is one of the world’s dynamic businessmen, and clearly the biggest punter the world has ever seen or likely to see”

He had just invested a lazy \$19.7 million in a Mosman mansion. The very private Zeljko Ranogajec must have hated to see his name in the weekend newspapers, especially as it had nothing to do with punting.

Zeljko values his privacy and goes to enormous lengths to remain clandestine, unlike his high profile colleagues who are media favourites.

I feel privileged to have met the great man over a steak at the trendy Oaks Hotel at Sydney’s Cremorne and found him to be an amiable,

fascinating individual who had mastered the art of delegation like a well drilled General.

Zeljko is a strategic thinker with a computer like mind, but like all good generals, he wisely nominates a hand picked "Lieutenant" to do his qualifications before he offers the final decision.

Our lunch was set up by a mutual friend "Nick the Thief" who first met Zeljko at Sydney's Star City playing blackjack before they both were banned for card counting. We were to discuss a proto type that I had developed to allow punters to bet against each other. Unfortunately the backward Australian government was still coming to grips with the internet and gambling laws and was stalling with reform. It made it virtually impossible to launch such an enterprise in this country back then when you mix red tape politics with the forbidden word "gambling".

It would have been interesting if we had brain stormed the initiative again in more depth before two bright guys in the U.K. Andrew Black and Edward Wray, who had a similar vision and a more innovative government, and were able to launch their business without the red tape. That business today is known as Betfair.com and is the world's biggest Internet gambling website that produces 15 million bets every day and just posted a 29 million pounds net profit. Ouch!

Maybe Zeiljko should have left his front men at home that day, but he has not done much wrong since.

Zeljko was not what I expected and certainly he could have a security guard on his toes if he boarded a plane, but looks can be deceiving, and behind that enigmatic demeanor and shyness is one of the world's dynamic businessmen, and clearly the biggest punter the world has ever seen or likely to see.

So why is he so private and why does one of the world's biggest winner's consciously masquerades as a loser?

Not even the majority of his huge staff employed at his company Humbletons are aware that he is the "boss", or even that he exists. He does not even turn up at the company staff Xmas parties. Maybe he thinks that someone in the street may try to "snip" him, or maybe he is just a Russell Crowe fan and wants to copy his wardrobe and barber.

Although he is private and would never win a David Jones best dressed contest at Royal Randwick on Doncaster Day, Zeiljko knows that he is the best at what he does and has no problems in saying so when he wants something. This is a powerful leverage when negotiating as most people want to be involved or do business with someone who turns over such vast sums of cash and who wakes every morning to see how much bigger his bank account has grown overnight, although not always. Zeiljko's inflated ego is known to have curtailed a huge business opportunity early in 2009 as listening would have been more productive instead of dictating.

It has been alleged that Zeljko actually owns his own Betting Exchange as he has his own software development group to ensure that he has leading edge information technology and importantly all the "secrets" remain in house. The Exchange is known as WBX, or World Betting Exchange and in April 2007 a forum mite posted this:

WBX: Anonymous

I understand that a betting syndicate is involved with the operation of WBX & has 3rd party ownership of WBX. The betting syndicate includes one of the world's biggest gamblers Zeljko Ranogajec. The public are betting against the syndicate's computer generated bets.

It has often been mentioned that Zeiljko has developed his own software robots who automatically claim a wager on Betting Exchanges when the prices fall under 100%. The software is so intelligent and so fast that it makes it impossible for a human to compete.

For the uninitiated, if Betfair posted odds on a soccer game with Blyth Spartans at 19.13, the Draw at 7.08 and Blackburn Rovers at 1.24 the total odds percentages would equal 100%. If any of those prices firmed the Robots would instantly place a wager. Because the Robots are betting under 100% they (and Zeiljko) cannot lose regardless of the result.

Because of his sheer turnover Zeljko commands the red carpet treatment from every Tote in the world, and he gets it. If he asks for the top floor in the High Performance room at Randwick race course for some of his staff to crunch numbers, the answer is "no problem sir, anything else, what would you like for lunch?"

It does not matter if it is horse racing at Randwick, football or trots in Holland. You name it and chances are that Zeljko is betting on it, and if he is not then he likely will be soon.

Dave Jay from Scotland posted this on a Punting forum:

“Studying the form and all that good stuff is fine, but things change all of the time and the market is dynamic. That’s why the big lads, I reckon no more than a handful world wide, employ statisticians, programmers and market analysts to keep ahead of the game. People like Zeljko Ranogajec, who is rumored to account for around 25% of all Betfair liquidity.”

Zeljko recently set up his head office in Sydney’s plush Pymont, which is five star all the way and the size of a football field overlooking beautiful Darling Harbour.

The security is like Fort Knox with special card keys for each board room that have a defined revenue stream like “Hong Kong Speed and Bias”, “U.K Races” etc..

Logic would tell you that with massive monthly operating expenses which include almost 100 skilled video analysts and countless management and admin staff, it is difficult to survive with tiny margins of 1% and 2%.

So, how does he do it?

When you are turning over literally billions small margins are enough and as a separate profit contribution Mr. “Zee” has negotiated a kick back commission from most of the world totes which range from 2% to 10% based on turnover and vary between racing and sports. Now we are talking big potatas.

If the “mail” is even remotely close that Zeiljko is responsible for 5% of the Australian Tabcorp turnover then we are talking about an institution. Alan Woods was said to be responsible for 2% of the giant Hong Kong Jokey Club hold where he turned his \$100k card counting winnings into over \$700 million.

Zeiljko, like Woods, is also a mathematical genius, and got his start from being able to count the cards at Casinos also, which must have disappointed his Croatian immigrant parents who had ear marked a legal career for him in a modest Hobart office.

A mathematician would advise you that 98% of people lose punting on the TAB as they take out over 17% profit before the event starts. Zeiljko is one of those 2% who win or break even because his vast form data base recognizes when there is a “mistake” and the value available more than counters the take out rate.

He employs analysts world wide who receive a weekly satchel with computer CD's of their designated territories to analyze. The meetings are all manually analyzed and each horse gets a comment and a rating which is in code.

The highest rating for a horse is deemed an “SQ” (Special Quality) and if it earns the highest rating of SQ5, which in layman's language means it is unbeatable next start. It would be like a Class 1 horse racing in a Class 1 race that would have Group Class potential, or Billy Slater playing for Cessnock Goannas.

All the analysts are English, even though the CDs may arrive in German, Chinese or Japanese. Every horse is rated and logged into the central data base.

To emphasize how private Zeiljko is, the majority of his staff have no idea that they work for him. All they know is that they are employed by a company called Humbletons and that their pay cheque turns up every week.

Forumite “Shifty MP” had this to say on the Sportal Forum in Oct., 2007:

Humbleton is a very insular, very incestuous, very tight-knit group that is hard to get in / out of.

Said to be the monkeys that feed Zjelko his information - this is unconfirmed, but likely.

It is debatable how much longer Zeljko can remain “invisible” as he is fast becoming not only one of the world's wealthiest men, but one of the most influential.

He is already the leading player in most countries with legalized wagering so where does it stop?

If we are to judge Zeljko, we know him to be methodical and based on previous initiatives then surely owning his own betting shop and tote would be on the drawing boards.

Hold fire!

There are over 500 betting shops in the world already and Zeljko is NOT a “me two” guy, he is an innovator, who breaks new ground and likes to tread where others would not dare.

A global tote perhaps that would accommodate pools from every wagering country world wide is a mouth watering thought. Now that is more like it. That sounds like Mr.”Zee”.

“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.”—Phillips Brooks

Matt Tripp



“.....his office called to seek his approval of a \$1m bet.... he thought about it for two seconds and replied: ”sweet”.”

Leviathan punter Eddie Hayson told me once that Matthew Tripp is “just the best”. “He is the only bookie that will take a decent bet”, he added.

A decent bet to Eddie is to win over a million dollars.

Even the \$15 billion empire TabCorp will not bet you those huge amounts and I am not aware of another bookie world wide who will take million dollar plus bets on a regular basis.

I first met Matt at Harold Park trots at a bar in 1999 when he greeted me with one of his popular lines: “what are we drinking”. He would have said that to me hundreds of times since and hardly a day passes without some type of communication about footy, sport or just life. He is a remarkable person from a remarkable family.

As the CEO of the \$2 billion company Sportsbet.com.au, Matt is responsible for one of the biggest betting operations in the world, and normally with that handle comes enemies, but I have never heard anyone say a bad word about him, which is unheard of in the cut throat betting industry. It is “dog eat dog” but Matt will always go the way of the punter in a 50/50 dispute. He is astute enough to know that whatever he may give away, he will likely get back down the track. Undoubtedly a tip he picked up from his celebrated dad Alan, who founded the Number One Betting Shop prior to selling to Sportingbet (U.K.).

Alan was regarded as the Kingston Town of Aussie bookies when operating at his peak, and once let a punter, a well known boxing promoter, on a winner even though he never got on.

The punter, known affectionately as “Blue Gum”, asked his agent to back a horse but was late dialing and never got on before the jump and the horse went on to win. When Alan was informed about his client’s misfortune he immediately comforted him by declaring:” you’re on”.

You may not think that is such a big deal but “Blue Gum” wanted \$10,000 each way on the winner at odds of \$3.50 (5/2). Now that is class.

Alan, now retired and living in his “citadel” on the Murray River at the holiday resort town Yarrawonga, invented the betting term still used today “Top Fluc”(Top Fluctuation), and is probably Australia’s most successful bookmaker if the criterion is how much did you end up with. He is from the old school who liked to take on the favorites and bet the heads.

Ah, but back to the son.

Matt is comfortable as the “main man” but relies heavily on his lieutenants to implement the strategy that he has put in place.

Wealth has not caused Matt Tripp to forget how to say “please” and “thank you”, and he would prefer to help an old lady to cross busy Collins Street than socialize with “big names”. He is superstitious and always wears his under pants inside out and insists on double strength toilet paper and a bottle of water near his bed.

Plane travel is another phobia which once diverted a trip that we had planned to visit our mate, former Soccerroo Scott Ollerenshaw, in Malaysia to Port Douglas as terrorists were reported.

Port Douglas is a fun place but very hot and I took the opportunity to play a few practical jokes on Matt.

He had just staggered in after 18 holes of golf in the oppressive humidity and predictably Matt headed straight for the fridge. He was not impressed when he skulled a stubby that I topped up with tomato sauce and pepper. The next morning I screamed out “fire” at 4.a.m. and he charged out of his bedroom as the bucket of water that I placed over his door missed his head and managed to break his toe. Ouch!

Para sailing only 10 feet above a tiger shark didn't go down that well either.

It seems a pre requisite to be successful in the betting game is that you need to be a whiz at mathematics. Matt is exceptional the way he rattles off prices and matching lines straight off his head, and at all hours of the early morning from a friendly bar.

When his father Alan sold Number One Betting Shop in Vanuatu to the to the U.K. colossus Sportingbet.com it was Matt who was responsible for setting it up in Darwin. To transfer all of the clients and staff to a new country was no mean feat, but not one staff member pulled out and the loyal client base grew quickly and within 12 months the new look Sportingbet.com.au was one of the leading players in Australia.

An Australian bookmaker's license was required to legally run Sportingbet prior to setting up in remote Darwin, so Sydney bookie Michael Sullivan was recruited and was made CEO. He had an ego the size of Ayes Rock, but was savvy enough to know that he had just walked into a gold mine and there was no need to rock the boat.

“Sullo” loves a friendly drink and a fishing trip and he knew that the foot print that Matt had left him meant that he would never have to fish from a row boat.

Matt Tripp’s real passion is Australian Football (AFL) although he continually surprises me with his knowledge on Rugby League (NRL), which is rare for a Victorian, but then we are talking about a rare person.

One of the reasons behind the success of Sportsbet is the key staff that Matt has hand picked. Many of them life long friends and ex school buddies who he knows he can trust, but importantly have the talent that he needs.

His speed dial would match any “A” List and former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, a close family friend, was happy to fax through some commentary on the last federal election as Matt was betting on the outcome.

I thought the comments from the great man were insightful and I asked Matt if I could copy them onto my website. The only problem was that they were always late, especially if the PM was at a function the previous night. One day they didn’t arrive at all and I enquired what the problem was.

It seemed arguably our greatest Prime Minister and the man who led our country for ten years, had to hand write his piece as he could not use a PC and he had to wait for his better half to get back from the hair dressers as he could not use the fax machine.

Betting on Politics was a massive success and is one the real growth markets world wide.

There is nothing worse when you are desperate to get set for a bet and your bookie takes a while to answer then puts you on hold to get your bet approved. Try calling Sportsbet and you will notice that you are answered instantly and your bet approved within seconds. It is all about customer satisfaction to Matt and the customer is always right. It is a winning formula.

Matt has inherited that philosophy and added his twist including the use of Information Technology, kiosks and innovative advertising where he openly compares his product with Tabcorp.

Tipping contests have been adopted by most betting agencies to attract punters with prizes ranging from a trip to Las Vegas to \$50,000 in cash. You can imagine the raised eyebrows when the product called “Million Dollar Matt” was launched which offered \$1million in cash for both AFL and NRL tipsters. The initiative generated 80,000 new sign ups in the first week.

Matt is highly intelligent, and perhaps his greatest asset is that he knows what he is good at and where he is weak. He ensures that he has an expert to compliment his weaknesses. Sometimes he is adamant something will not work, but if it is clear he has been a slow adopter, then he will soon become an aggressive follower until he is a leader.

He relies heavily on the accuracy of his prices and knows that if he has high turnover, then he will win.

I remember sharing a beer with him on the wharf at Darwin’s beautiful Cullen Bay, when his office called to seek his approval of a \$1million bet on champion sprinter Miss Andretti, who was racing in England at odds of 6/4 (2.5). He thought about it for two seconds and replied: ”sweet”, then promptly skulled his Crownie.

I know from personal dealings that I once had \$700k for a footy game and asked him how much does he want at 1.72. He took the lot. I do not know of another bookie anywhere in the world that would have done that.

Punter wagers \$700K on Maroons

By Christian Nicolussi
May 21, 2008

A PROMINENT New South Wales punter stands to collect a whopping \$1.2 million should Queensland win the Origin opener.

The well-known punter placed \$700,000 on Queensland on Sunday at \$1.74 with interstate bookie Matt Tripp. He said the bet was one of the biggest sports bet of its kind with millions more expected to be wagered on the Origin encounter around the country.

Daily Telegraph

While Matt can discuss any subject on sport, he is absorbed by AFL and he controls the market place from the time he does his prices on the Monday to kick off. He knows every player intimately and with his Director of Sports, Phil Hannah they have the uncanny ability of knowing in advance which way the market will go based on injuries and player changes.

As someone who studies the NRL, I was blown away at how the AFL form is done. Each player is matched up with an emphasis on how tall he is, and if any “mismatches” turn up or an odd man out appears, then you will likely see a change in prices. Sounds easy, but few have a better feel for it than Matt Tripp.

The 2008 Flag is a good example.

Matt had been firm all season that there was not much between Hawthorn and champions Geelong even though the betting and all the “experts” considered the Cats were unbeatable.

“Matey, they are huge overs and providing the Hawkes can get the right players fit on the day, there is not a lot in it. They only need a bit of luck” Matt said.

Matt backed Hawthorn in from double digit odds all season and on Grand Final day they got the luck and won the Flag 115 points to Geelong’s 89.

His luck ran out the next month in Australia’s greatest race the \$5.5 million Melbourne Cup when Bauer, a horse Matt part owns, was nosed out after he had thought it had done enough to win. He celebrated for 30 seconds before the “wrong” number was semaphored.



Bauer beaten a nose by Viewed in Australia's greatest race, the 2008 \$5.5 million Melbourne Cup

I owned a racehorse with Matt and a few other punting buddies once, which I laugh at now, but it was a disaster at the time.

Our neddy was unraced and he was beating open class sprinters in track work. He was a budding super star we thought so we set him for a first up "kill".

He was that good; we purposely put the worst jockey in Victoria on him to help with the odds. All he had to do was sit on. Everything was set and we backed him from 4.50 (7/2) into get fucked.

The gates flew open and our little champion stumbled out last and kept running up the back of the horses. Every time the jockey pulled him out he would collide. What an embarrassment!

The trainer was red faced and Matt, who had arranged the syndicate, was lost for words. We found out later that week that our horse would go blind in the sun and the reason why he would do exceptional track work is because it was dark at 5 a.m.. And I thought that I had seen every way that you can lose.

When Matt Tripp took over Sportsbet.com.au in 2005 it was in trouble and about to go under. Re engineered and re staffed, over 1 billion dollars was turned over in 2008 and following the acquisition of Mark Read's International All Sports in 2009, Sportsbet are set to hit trading revenues in excess of 2 billion dollars in 2010.

Mark Read is a living legend in the bookmaking world and he could have chosen who he wanted to sell his high profile business to. Although highly respected, he has a reputation as a "hard man" and not the ideal guy you would want to take on in a negotiation. For an icon like Read, it is not about money, it is about the best fit, and he knew his "baby" would sit well with Matt Tripp's Sportsbet, who share a similar vision, especially claiming market share from leader Tabcorp.

The success of Sportsbet had attracted the attention of global giant Paddy Power who had the option of virtually any bookie in the country and was courted by most. An 11th hour phone call to Matt Tripp by Paddy's executives as they were literally heading to the airport after they had checked out what was available in Australia convinced them to re think and turnaround.

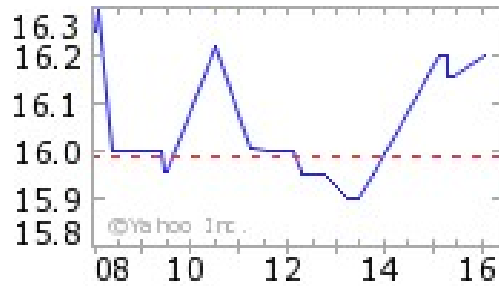
Paddys were puzzled why Sportsbet were not for sale and why nobody tapped them on their shoulder.

Paddy Power, Ireland's biggest bookmaker, attract over 114 million punters to their website every day making them the 14th most popular from a field of over 500 world wide, and they liked what they saw of Matt Tripp and Sportsbet and wanted to add the winning culture to their list of shops that boasts over 260 world wide.

It was easy for the Sportsbet business partners, just kiss the Blarney Stone and say "yes, where do I sign", but the thought of selling his "baby" was an agonizing decision for Matt. He knew that if the USA and China opened up that his business could double in four years, and the prospect of retail kiosks in every state was no Irish joke. Betting "in the run" is also another option that is finally legal that is capable of more than doubling the game hold which will multiply again when punters can bet online during play.

When I congratulated Matt on being wooed by Paddy's his body language suggested that he did not want to sell, but he is running a business and when the price is right, you bet, or in this case, sell. The price was right.

The late Kerry packer sold his beloved two Channel Nine TV Stations to maverick Alan Bond for \$1 billion which made him his first \$ billion. He didn't want to sell, but the market suggested he would be crazy not to, and three years later, Bond was in financial trouble so Packer bought the stations back for just two hundred and fifty million dollars. Based on share market response Paddy Power are all green and not likely to ever go red.



Paddy Power market friendly

It is not every day that you can grab a small business that has gone broke and in five years pocket upwards of a quarter of a billion lovelies during a world economic recession – now that would certainly make an Irish stew and a glass of Guinness go down well.

The show stopper for completing the biggest bookie deal in Australian history was that Matt was to maintain management control which would mean that the staff and clients would also continue to benefit, but also maybe a sub clause in fine print was included that Matt does not have to wear a green tie on St Patrick's Day.

“If your ship doesn’t come in, swim out to it.”—Jonathan Winters

Eddie Hayson



“There was no indication that Eddie would soon become Australia’s most feared punter.”

Eddie Hayson punts like he drives his turbo charged Porsche - foot flat to the floor.

When I first met this fascinating man I was a bookie in Sydney at Wentworth Park dogs and Eddie was just a knock about punter who was easy to miss in the crowd. We had a mutual friend in high profile Rugby League player Terry Hill who he would always turn up with.

When you are in the company of the flamboyant Terry Hill, no one notices anyone else, which suited Eddie fine as he liked to dress down and fly under the radar.

There was no indication that Eddie would soon become Australia’s most feared punter.

The new Eddie had dispensed of low flying and decided to shoot for the stars. He was not content to have a bet to win \$10,000 or even \$100,000. He wanted to bet to win \$1million, and he was prepared to put up everything he had including the kitchen sink to get on.

He is so confident in his opinion, it does not occur to him that he may lose and that he may have to settle accounts.

Just like punting legends Zeljko Ranogajec and Alan Woods, Eddie has acute memory retention, especially on race horses and NRL footballers. He is uncanny how he recalls the idiosyncrasies of race horses and jockeys. There is no grey with Eddie, he is decisive. His network for information is vast and imposing and his mobile phones host conversations from all walks of life that may be able to contribute.

Eddie listens to everyone, but if he has an opinion of his own, and he rarely doesn't, he will always back it up with cash – and plenty of it regardless of if he has it or not. He puts his own clarity on the word fearless.

He would watch a video tape of a race or barrier trial and if he was unsure about something, he would find out who the jockey was and call him within seconds just to ask something that he may have missed on the tape. He would then likely call the trainer of the horse. Amazingly Eddie has all these numbers and when he calls he doesn't even say who it is, he just makes an enquiry and whoever is on the other end will recognize his identifiable well mannered voice and automatically know who it is and answer without question. He is very good at working his network.

“You can watch all the videos in the world and do all the form, but it doesn't mean much if the horse has not had a good week in the stable”, Eddie would say.

I consider Eddie Hayson one of the best judges I have ever known, which is counted by the fact that he is one of the worst punters I have studied.

He breaks every rule in the book, but can still make any bookie quiver, because he has the power to send most of them broke. When he places a bet on say a footy game at least five to ten bookies will get a piece of the action even though the original bet was placed with only one. Everyone lays off and tries to make a margin on Eddie because they know the price will continue to tumble. Very few are prepared to take him on one out. Matt Tripp, Alan Eskander and Lloyd Merlehan would be exceptions, but not always.

When Eddie bets the impact is so pronounced that the team or the horse will firm with the 500 plus bookies around the world. If he happens to bet on a race horse, the bookies will bet back on the tote to minimize the payout and also make an arbitrage on the Betting Exchange, Betfair where they can lay the horses that Eddie has not backed as they will drift and also back his horse as they know it will firm.

Eddie could do this himself and make a good profit as he is controlling the market, but the liquidity on the Betting Exchange is not big enough to excite him so he leaves the “bone” for his “enemies”, the bookies to fight over the scraps. One commission agent has made a healthy living on the “scaps”.

Nobody influences the prices on the track, the tote and on Betfair in Australia more than Eddie Hayson. Others would turnover more money, but they do not bet with the ferocity and set off bookie panic stations like Eddie.

If Eddie really likes something then he will back it regardless of the price. He just gets off on having a bet, he loves it, it is his drug.

I told Eddie that he should move to London, Hong Kong or the U.S.A. as he is too big for Australia. It is very difficult to get set for the huge amounts that he wants which means he is forced to take “under the odds”, which makes it mathematically impossible to win over the long term.

He is conscious that there is a smarter way to go, but the fact is, he just loves to bet and loves to cheer even more.

You would pay money to just watch Eddie cheering in a horse race. He thrusts his pelvis forward as the lids open and he calls every jockey by his first name and tells him what to do before he does it. He generally knows by the home turn if he has to pull the whip and start blasting the jockey and trainer. He is a funny guy and I have no doubt he would have been a champion jockey in a past life.

It gets very vocal if it is tight finish, and if his horse goes down in a close photo and the jockey slaughtered his mount, then the quarter inch thick glass desk is likely to get a karate chop, so one day I took the initiative and cushioned it with six place mats.

Footy is something else.

As the ball goes to the dummy half, then the half back, to the pivot and as it moves along the line towards the wing, Eddie calls every player by his “nick” name and as he does, the office chair on wheels gets closer and closer to the screen. By the time the wing man has the ball; Eddie is sitting on top of the TV set. He is a scream, and you cannot help but enjoy the ride.

It would be nothing for Eddie to have million dollar plus swings on a game.

I often thought that being so animated during and after a race or sports event cannot promote longevity, but there is an abundance of data to suggest the opposite. Better out than to keep it in they say.

We have a mutual friend Jeff Harrington who would make Eddie look like Pope Benedict on heroine when it comes to dummy spitting. Jeff has been known to karate his bedroom door and punch a brick wall when results have not gone his way, but one night at Wenty Jeff put a stack on this dog and it strolled to a 10 length lead halfway down the straight, before deciding to stop cold and play with the crowd. Unfortunately Jeff's car keys were never found as they broke the speed of sound zooming over the three meter track fence. It would be entertaining to watch a close controversial game with them together.

Every time Eddie disagrees with the ref, he would make a phone call to a sympathetic ally and voice his opinion. It could be the former great Andrew Johns or just a punting buddy, but he loves a phone call during a game. He carries two phones and they are like oxygen tanks for him. He cannot relax and I would back him to beat anyone to eat two hamburgers first, plus drink 90% of a coke. (he only ever drinks 90% of anything) I would be just starting my first mouthful and I would look up and Eddie would have already devoured two of “Charlies” finest and he would be making a phone call.

Like all intelligent people, Eddie has a small attention span, especially if you are not famous and cannot contribute. He never walks very far which means his glove box in his Porsche is filled with parking fines. I was flabbergasted once to see that he parked on the point of two streets as the thought of a legal spot 50 meters away was not a consideration. He detests small talk, and has poor people skills, but if he had to, he could charm the pants off any super model.

Nearly every major bookmaker and commission agent in Australia has fallen for Eddie's velvet tongue and given him a credit facility even though pay back time is always controlled by him.

He was able to convince the Council that they should allow him to build a ritzy bordello on busy Parramatta Road at Camperdown across the road from the University just out of the CBD and a sand wedge from the RPA Hospital.

Eddie personally designed and hand picked everything and named it Stiletto. It is a 5 star palace and regarded as the number one men's short stay Hotel in town with 19 special theme rooms and 150 stunning ladies that Hugh Hefner would be proud to take a Viagra for.

Despite media reports to the contrary, Stiletto is Eddie's brainchild and there has never been any other partners. He owns it lock, stock and fishnets and all that comes with it that he personally created and ensured were built to his specifications. Price was not an issue, but it had to be the best.

Stiletto is simply a goldmine and enhanced Eddie's reputation as an astute businessman. Many people thought of him as only a "mug" punter who was propped up by his affluent mother Sally who founded the Northbridge Shopping Plaza and is a remarkable story in her own right.

The Eddie Hayson that I know would have carved out a niche in any environment at any time. He never stops thinking of an angle to make money.

Stiletto is Eddie's pet project and aside from being a timely cash cow, it has proven to be the ideal leverage when wanting information or closing a deal.

The Stiletto clientele is the "Who's Who" and includes many "A" Listers. Household names from TV, business, politics and sports are regulars. A son of an infamous world leader jetted in once and spent \$40,000 on a harem of Penthouse Pets and jetted back out the next morning. Heidi Fleiss eat your heart out.

It appeared that Eddie had the perfect life.

He has his own brothel and could punt on every race and on every footy game - what more does a man want?

People who do not know Eddie Hayson, including many members of the media, would automatically “smell a rat” when ever he backed a big winner.

They would often naively think that he used his “network” to give him an unfair or illegal advantage. This was never true in all of my association with Eddie. He is his own man, does his own homework and makes his own decisions. Sure, like all big players he gets information from various sources, but often it was more of a hindrance than help, or he just would stick solid with his own opinion.

I remember once that he liked a horse and I rang the jockey’s manager who is a mate of mine, and he told me that he did not like the horse at all. Eddie listened to the information and then still put \$20,000 on it just to watch it run unplaced.

Another night he was bored at home but he managed to find a twenty/20 game of Cricket on in India just before midnight.

I had previously opened an account for him with CricketBetLive.com through the owner and a buddy of mine Craig Nott which had a real balance of \$50,000 and unlimited credit. Eddie wanted to have an interest in the game between two teams that we had never heard of so I asked “Notty” for his thoughts as he is the best cricket judge in the world and one of the biggest players.

“Notty’ declared Team A was a moral to win as Team B had injuries and could not score quick runs. I passed this wisdom on to Eddie and went to bed only to wake and note that “Notty’s” prediction was spot on but Eddie had the \$50,000 on the other team as he thought they were good value. That’s Eddie.

I had known Eddie Hayson for nearly 15 years but it was not until the later period when we worked closely that I really got to know him well.

To my surprise and delight, I discovered a side of him that I did not expect.

He is completely besotted by his two young children and would rather stay home and play with them at his "Ponderosa" acreage than watch a Group one event at Randwick.

I loved the way that he would talk about his children and how he would help out people quietly on the side who were down on their luck. He went to great lengths so people would not know his charitable side and he would not hesitate to help someone who he had a regard for.

Like most people who tend to be influenced by what they read and the rumors and innuendo that is dropped, I completely underestimated Eddie's intellect and his compassion for people close to him. Eddie is super smart and his streetwise does not allow him to trust anyone. He has been bitten big time more than once.

Like many people with some lazy cash, he ventured in to race horse ownership. This is where he learnt that you cannot trust horse trainers or bloodstock agents to buy on your behalf. Eddie got burnt to the tune of millions and he discovered later that he had paid hundreds of thousands of dollars above the real worth of many race horses that never even made it to the track.

The bloodstock agents and the trainers are still laughing. They saw Eddie coming with a fat wallet and an inviting brothel and milked the cash cow dry. Did I say Eddie was smart?

He decided to sell everything he owned that neighs with four legs and I am sure any future racehorses will be personally picked by him and will go to a straight shooter.

The problem with buying million dollar yearlings every time you have a good win is that when you have a losing trot and the horses turn out to be better suited to the Police Force, you will have a cash flow problem.

If nothing else, Eddie is totally fearless and it would never occur to him that he would have a losing trot on the punt, or even that he has just purchased a stable of horses that will never return anything but massive bills, but put them both together and you have a headache that a packet of Nurofen 4 cannot fix.

Charm and smooth talking will get you a long way, and it invariably did.

“It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly.”—Mabel Newcomer

Steve Fletcher



“...he knows that he is very good and has an ego to match his talent. He is not frightened of anyone and will “handle” anyone’s money”

If you like to hang around positive people who like to smile like Luna Park and win at punting nearly every day then Sydney's Steve Fletcher is your man.

I had the pleasure to sit alongside of Steve for almost five years in the high performance "commission" room at Randwick Racecourse and it was uncanny how he would always finish the day with a big smile on his face.

I am still not sure how he did it.

It was like going to University and majoring in "Winning on the Punt". I attended the classes every day and considered myself an excellent student as I were always first in and was set up and had a cuppa ready when the teacher "professor" Fletcher would amble in just as the first race was about to be run.

It was difficult not to listen to his strident phone calls and observe what he did, but you cannot go to University and learn a god given gift.

Many of the professionals in the room would be up all night studying video tapes and speed maps and churning out their ratings systems. They would then turn up early and make the late adjustments after the scratchings and the official track conditions were declared.

Not Steve Fletcher.

He would be more likely to have spent the previous night at a five star restaurant and then hang out at one of his favourite bars in Darlinghurst till the early hours.

I have enjoyed many fun nights with Steve including the time we watched the State of Origin at a pub in town and ended back at his place with the former Manly fullback Brendan Reeves who I called "Weetbix" (because I told him he couldn't tackle a Weetbix). We were all in a jovial mood after celebrating our footy win and decided to lean over Steve's terrifying balcony and sing at full voice the hit song "You're Beautiful" to his neighbour at 4 a.m. Our justification was that we were singing to James Blunt, who made the song famous.

The next morning Steve would turn up bright and bubbly just as the first race was being run and would not even know a runner or

sometimes even where the races were on that day. It is irrelevant to his genius.

Steve is very loyal to many of his school friends and often would take them out and give them jobs, sometimes to his detriment. But like many high profile punters, Steve is attracted to celebrities and has a long list that he hangs with. He doesn't seek them out; they just seem to find him.

One morning at Randwick Steve mentioned that he had a great night at Sydney's Wild Fire Restaurant and met some fun guys in a band who he invited for a drink back at his lavish 33rd floor apartment overlooking the length and breadth of Sydney Harbour.

I asked him the name of this band, and he wasn't sure but thought they said "Green something". I replied: "don't tell me Green Day?" "yeah, that's them, he said." I told him that they were the number two band in the world behind U2 and they are walking talking superstars, so he decided to accept their offer of a front row seat ticket to their next gig.

The congenial Steve Fletcher would probably be the only person in Sydney who would be able to literally "pick up" one of the world's great bands and invite them back to his home for a drink. The ironic thing is that he did not know who they were, and they did not know who he was.

Steve is much more accomplished at recognising winners at the track than famous rock bands.

He wins most of the time because he understands mathematics and can formulate the answer quicker than an electronic spreadsheet. He has honed his gut and nose over the years and they rarely let him down. His money management skills would make JP Morgan blush.

He is able to read trends in advance and understands that if you keep betting at the top of the market and laying at the bottom of the market you will have a big year.

Steve knows that he is very good and has an ego to match his talent. He is not frightened of anyone and will "handle" anyone's money. He knows that they do not have the network that he has and is able to make a margin, or if the signs are strong and the person is a noted

winner backer, then Steve will likely go with him, but only at the right price.

He must dictate to the market and will never back a so called good thing after the price has tumbled. In fact, he is more likely to lay it. It is all about mathematics to Steve and investing at the right price.

If 98% of punters lose on a regular basis and another 1% break even, how do you become a member of the elite 1% of winners?

The theory of working hard and doing your homework goes out the window. Steve's work starts at race one and finishes after the last race. He does no preparation.

He never studies a video of past races or understands or cares about weights and measures and barriers are inconsequential.

The key factors are price and liquidity, and importantly, which way the market will trend. Nobody is better at influencing the market better than Steve Fletcher.

There is a huge skill in being able to manipulate betting markets both on course and with the three major totes in Australia. Steve knows where to bet and exactly how much to put on so that he can ensure that he is on at the right price but has not cannibalized the market.

Many punters or commission agents try to do this but none do it as well as Steve and few would go near some of the smartest punters in the country. These guys are noted winners and struggle to get on anywhere but not only will Steve accommodate them, but he wins off them.

How does he do this?

Many of these guys are outstanding judges and understand horse racing and/or sports betting intimately. They live and breathe it and there is not much they do not know. These guys are NOT a member of the elite 1% and what they are not strong at is money management which is one of Steve strengths.

Often they will bet in the same amounts of say \$5,000, regardless of the price and how highly they rate the bet. Steve would always weight his investments depending on the price and what factor his gut and nose are influenced. You cannot learn that in University.

Steve preys on the fact that most punters love to bet at any price and if they are losing, they will chase and continue to bet to try and get out of trouble even though they do not really like anything. This is punting suicide and Steve knows it and welcomes it. It is the fat.

Even the astute punter finds it difficult to get set at a fair price and they like to be invisible which makes a middle man like Steve an ideal option. Steve's vast network will ensure that he is able to accommodate the punter, but also ensure that if the bet wins, he will make a profit, or, if the punter has bet after the price has already firmed in, then Steve would likely hold the bet or have something back on the totes and or a Betting Exchange at a higher price than his client would get.

This would mean that he may take a bet of say \$10,000 at 3.00, but he would have \$2,000 back on a Betting Exchange at 3.50 and spread another \$3,000 on the various totes averaging around 3.10.

EXAMPLE	Bet	Odds	Win	Loss
Client	10,000	3.00	20,000	10,000
Steve	2,000	3.50	5,000	2,000
	3,000	3.10	6,300	3,000
Total	5,000	3.26	11,300	5,000

Steve knows that if the bet losses he will win \$5,000, and if it wins he will have to pay the client \$20,000, but he has cleverly cushioned his exposure by having half the stake back at a higher price than what he accepted which means he really only will lose around \$8,700, but can win \$5,000.

So, he has taken a \$10,000 bet at 3.00 but he can only lose \$8,700, trimming his exposure down \$1,300 and an upside of a \$5,000 win. Or, in layman's terms he has purchased shares for 3.26 and sold 50% of them for 3.00. Got it!

Alternatively, if the client was smart, Steve may elect to have 100% of the bet back averaging 3.26, which would give him a break even or a win of \$2,600.

He understands the system so well that he can legally manipulate it.

Like the time when he won the entire Trifecta pool on the first race at lowly Nowra greyhounds. He had a hot tip and "surprisingly" the race

was held up as one of the runners had broken his muzzle and as it was a small country track the small pools were easy to influence. The race was delayed around 10 minutes which allowed a normally small Trifecta hold of around \$5,000 to blow out to nearly \$30,000.

Go, they are racing and Steve's good thing that he stood out won easily and the Trifecta came in 1,2,3 and he got the lot. Not bad for a bush dog meeting.

It is legendary how Steve combined with Eddie Hayson to manipulate the price of the greyhound Lucy's Light from 1.10 to 13.00 just seconds before the race and won \$741,000. It is all about understanding the system and knowing how to exploit it legally.

Steve knows that over any 12 month period, he cannot lose with this strategy. He has an opportunity to have a good win, but also if he does lose it will be at the right price that he has controlled.

As soon as a substantial bet is placed you can guarantee that the price will tumble on course, with the Betting Exchanges and with the totes, particularly the home tote where the race is run as the others will follow.

The reason for this is to minimize the payout. The bet may be taken at the best price fluctuation so it is important to ensure the price gets taken every time it looks like drifting. Alternatively, the bet may be specified on one or two of the totes. This is easy to control as the bet back will be on the home tote which will cause the others to also come in.

It is a numbers game and nobody plays it better than "Professor" Fletcher.

Steve loves to play tennis, but even more to bet on it. He is so good at it that he caused the rules to be changed world wide.

Just like a punter betting on football or even the races, injuries are a big factor, but this information was rarely made public and often players started a game with an injury. They maybe injured but would start the game and try and complete it because they were already on tour and often they would pick up appearance money, but it meant the betting odds were wrong - an opportunity for Steve to jump on.

Steve's skilled network would be aware of this and he would often take advantage of the "incorrect" odds.

Steve has a room reserved every year at Melbourne's Crown Hotel which is a lovely walk along the Yarra River on the way to the Australian Tennis Open.

One morning as we set off to catch the days play, Steve mentioned that he had a "good thing" as his spies had reported that one of the players was unable to make the early morning warm up and things didn't seem good. This would be like a halfback not being able to train just before a game, but the big difference with footy is that the public would know about it, not so with tennis.

We managed to find a comfortable seat right in the middle of the stand on one of the pretty outer grounds. Within minutes we were surrounded by hundreds of parochial Swedish supporters who were all painted and dressed in blue and yellow. As we were on their man, we decided to be Swedish and join in the cheering, and even sung the national anthem. They are very patriotic and get right in to it.

When the players arrived the hot favourite had more bandages than the Invisible Man. He was clearly restricted and could only put pressure on one leg, which unfortunately our dim-witted Swede did not realize and he managed to lose the first game as he played every shot to his "good" leg. The crazy crowd then got really excited and "our man" finally worked out he was playing "The Fugitive" and came good eventually going on to win 6-1, 6-0.

Steve's energy and enthusiasm rubs off and it is hard not to enjoy his company, but his mind is continually ticking and his mobile phone is always ringing. It is almost impossible to relax and enjoy a coffee with him as his mind will drift off or he will be interrupted by a ring. I have had many breakfasts with Steve and walked away and felt like I had just eaten scrambled eggs by myself. He has an incredible incisive mind, but outside of his comfort zone, he has a poor general knowledge.

He could be excused for not knowing who Green Day was, but it is hard to fathom how someone so highly intelligent does not know what the Oval Office is. But that's Steve, just asks him about what is wrong with the TAB or how the wagering industry can improve and he would give you a quick direct answer that would be closer to the money than what any billion dollar consulting firm would offer.

“A man’s character may be learned from the adjectives which he habitually uses in conversation.”—Mark Twain

Vince MacDonald

“I have learnt so much about life from Vince MacDonald that I feel almost privileged to be ripped off by him”



Vince MacDonald is without doubt the best salesman I have ever met.

You only have to look at his attractive life long partner Carol, who is a generation younger, to see that horse racing is not the only place where Vince has backed a winner.

Vince has this rare ability to totally convince himself that what he is saying is in your best interests. He is able to make you feel good, even though something deep inside you alarm bells are ringing and you know you are getting ripped off, but somehow you allow him to do it anyway because he makes you feel good about it.

Give him 20 minutes in a cave with Osama Bin Laden and after they had shared a short black and burnt an incense stick, Vince would have convinced the world’s number one terrorist to surrender with a smile because he had convinced him that Guantanamo Bay will be paradise.

I would have no hesitation and putting Vince in charge of Australia’s bid to win the 2018 Soccer World Cup. I can just see him making

Soccer boss, Sep Blatter his best mate and convincing him that they are twin brothers and its time for Down Under.



Vince's "twin brother", Sep Blatter

The amazing verity is that it has taken Vince over 60 years to kick a goal and reach the big time. If things were looking grim and we were in a trench and bombs were being thrown I do not know anyone better equipped to find a way out, or maybe negotiate a release agreement with a Thai prison guard, providing it did not involve walking anywhere. I once caught a taxi with him to drive us 100 meters from the Pymont Bridge Hotel to Star City Casino, but he has been known to even catch a cabbie to cross a road in the rain.

Vince MacDonald has finally been able to chisel out a successful business from one of his thousands of ideas and hundreds of failed attempts.

His key strategy has always been to find an easy target to fund his vision and he will be a major shareholder but without taking any risk or putting up any cash.

He has never had any trouble finding a sympathetic ear and, and incredibly most of them would call Vince his friend today. Now that is a man with a special charm.

Vince has an imagination so vast that he will consider anything. Some of his brain storms include training taxi drivers, paper boxes with

invisible folds and the old goodies, Betting Systems and Horse Syndications. Ouch, it hurt to write that!

You name it and Vince would have done it, or at least thought about

it. I have learnt so much about life from Vince MacDonald that I feel almost privileged to be ripped off by him. What he has cost me; I have got back ten fold in streetwise knowledge that no University could teach me, and yes, he is my friend.

Like the time when Vince sold an unraced racehorse to his “mates” once for \$120,000. He did such a great sales job that he could have sold the shares for \$500,000. Unfortunately the filly was no good which is part of the risk that everyone understands, but one of the owners later discovered from a contact in NZ that the real purchase price was only \$60,000.

I consider myself judicious but Vince managed to sell me a part ownership in a Doubles Betting business that he had purchased from the failed bookie Geoff Landry. The business came with some live bets and after the favourite had won the Caulfield Cup which was the first leg of the feature Double, we had inherited a potential multi million dollar loss on one of the Melbourne Cup favourites.

I called an urgent partners meeting to discuss contingencies including offering the live ticket holder a buy out option. I then mentioned to my fellow partners that short of shooting the horse we don't have any other options but to watch the race and pray.

Tongue in cheek, I said to the concerned quorum that I assume no one wants to shoot the horse.

I am still not 100% sure when Vince replied: “why not” if he was serious, but one thing is certain; there is not a great deal that Vince would not do to back a winner or to avoid backing a loser.

He backed his biggest winner ever when he charmed his ex brother in law Alex Kay into funding an online Bookmaking business. He had already failed previously with Sydney All Bets but I am sure Vince firmly believed that it was not his fault.

Alex Kay is no dummy as he had just retired as CEO of Tower Life Insurance, one of the biggest financial empires in Australia and New

Zealand. Like so many before him, Alex fell for Vince's silky pitch and AK Racing was created, later to be changed to BetEzy.

Vince is very good at spending someone else's money and spared no expense in setting up BetEzy. He knew who were good at recruiting punters and he made them a deal that they could not refuse to come on board.

It was not long before BetEzy had a substantial client base, but the operating expenses were quickly chewing up the cash reserves and the enthusiasm of Alex Kay was drowning in deep red figures.

Just when two crossed planks were about to be nailed across the door a good client managed to lose \$800,000 and from then on it has been all down stream.

Vince would tell you that he was never concerned but I am sure Alex would have looked up and seen the crows circling.

The Vince MacDonald philosophy is simple. He likes to play all heads regardless of their punting ability, and has masterminded a computer program that will automatically grade the punter placing the bet.

If you are graded as a "mug" or a losing punter your bet will be held, but if you are considered "smart" and a winner, then the computer will have your bet back but depending on how highly you are rated will depend on how many times your bet goes back. Vince has an impressive network so he can bet back if required and not harm the dividend.

It is like a rating system on horses, but with people.

The computer is intelligent enough to give you an overall reference on exactly where the punter does best as it is possible and very likely that a punter may win in Brisbane and lose in every other state. So if he happens to have a maximum bet in Brisbane then he should be followed with gusto.

Does this mean that the punters potential dividend is adversely influenced by the computers bet back strategy? Vince would look you straight in the eye and tell you with his hand on his heart that it will not. He has instant access to commission agents who happily take what is not wanted.

I do not know of a bookmaker who will constantly take big bets from a winning punter and not bet back. If you are considered a winning punter by most bookies then chances are that you will be sacked, but if not your bets will be passed on to other bookies. If you are considered a punter who will lose over 12 months then you should be accommodated and none of your bet will go back, unless it lines up with all the “smart” money.

By allowing all comers to bet, Vince has maximized his turnover and knows that the more you can turn over the more options you have to grow profit. He has devised a clever way to “manage” the smart money so that it accommodates the “mug” money.

He has negotiated an attractive deal with each of the totes as only Vince can, so that he can get a commission from all of his bets which can be up to 5% of the total turnover.

That can be a big bottom line when you are turning over millions of dollars for no risk, but at 63, retirement is the last thing on Vince’s non stop mind. He may very well sell his chunk of the BetEzy pie, but there is still plenty more ideas to churn out.

It is no surprise that Vince’s’ favourite Movie is “The Sting” as I am sure he would see himself as Paul Newman, but you can examine the Life and Times of Vince MacDonald anyway that you wish, and laugh at his countless failures, but BetEzy has made it all worthwhile.

When it is time for Vince to say goodbye to this world, he would be the first to tell you that he would be odds on to go to the devil, but I would bet that when he reaches the pearly gates he will convince the angels that they should allow him into heaven.

“Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.”—Will Rogers

Sean Bartholomew



”Sean openly admits that he is not good at doing form even though he was taught how to study videos by the master Mark Read”

You only have to look at Sean Bartholomew to see that he is a winner. He drives the latest Porsche, is always impeccably dressed and just expects to win on every race, giving him the media tag of “Australia biggest punter”.

Sean formed a formidable combination with his affable brother Kingsley, who like Zeljko Ranogajec shuns the limelight, but is every bit as fearless, and few punters would invest more on sport or on the betting exchange Betfair.

It would be nothing for the Bartholomew’s to back six or seven runners in a race. They have an excellent network and combine that with their rating system to find value bets.

They bet that big that \$50,000 can get lost after a days play. I remember after a days racing that Steve Fletcher yelled out to Kingsley that he made the settling an even \$50,000. “Kings” replied: “ok fine, whos way?”

Even though I sat only two meters from them every day, I never really understood what they did and what their secret to winning all the time was. I really got to know them well when I invited them to join our Indoor Cricket Team which included some of the countries biggest punters including Michael Cook, Steve Fletcher and Luke MacDonald.

Our wicket keeper was Sky Racings Nick Robin, who everyone loved, but tragically died of a heart attack on Cox Plate day 2004 after being told that he had stomach cancer only two weeks earlier when in the prime of his life. Nick and Kingsley made sure there was never a dull moment during the game.

Kingsley was hopeless with both bat and ball, but he was better than his brother Sean who gave lie to looking good does not translate to being coordinated with simple things like preventing a trickling ball to the net.

As much as I like Sean, it was hard to justify his selection every week, but what Kingsley lacked in ability he made up for in enthusiasm as he made it his prime job to rev all the players up and he never stopped – a real trench man.

Both Bartholomews are excellent with figures and soon became one of Betfairs best customers. They did not care what was on and where it was. If it moved they could and probably would bet on it either to win or to lose.

Their network would throw up a red flag when someone had made a mistake and they would generally be first on. More often than not they could bet back again after the bet has firmed allowing an arbitrage.

Like many big punters Sean became frustrated with the Australian bookmaking scene as he could never get set for the vast amounts that he wanted, so he decided to cross the fence and take out his own licence under the name www.RacingOdds.com.au.

The interesting aspect of Sean’s winning philosophy is that he has opposite views to several other high profile punters.

Many believe that to win one must bet at the top of the market, but Sean would rather back a horse at 2.50 (6/4) after it has firmed from 3.00 (2/1), than back it if the same horse had drifted out from 2.00 (even money).

He also does not get stuck up on track bias as most professionals do as it can change and often be misleading.

Sean openly admits that he is not good at doing form even though he was taught how to study videos by the master Mark Read. He soon realized that videos was not going to make him wealthy so he set about developing his own brand based on 35 key statistics that he considered pivotal.

The statistics that Sean weights the most in his ratings system are jockeys, trainers, barriers and how long since the horse had raced. Fitness is a key factor.

Some of his systems rules are unusual but he sticks solid with them and they work for him over any 12 months period.

Sean cleaned up over the 2008 Melbourne Spring Carnival as he opposed the favourites of the three major races the Caulfield Cup, the Cox Plate and the Melbourne Cup. It is all about statistical figures and lining up the right heads for Sean and his figures said that Weekend Hussler could not stay the 2400m distance of the Caulfield Cup.

He opposed the NZ champ Princess Coup in the Cox Plate as his stats are against short priced runners winning Group one races at their first start in this country of the preparation. For the record, he also went public prior to the race to say that he backed the winner Maldivian at 19.0 (18/1).

The Melbourne Cup was full with overseas runners and Sean bet against all of them especially the Irish champion Septimus as he was asked to win our greatest race at his first start here and he was short odds. Septimus, like Weekend Hussler are two of the highest rated Time Form horses in the world, but that counts for little if their stats do not line up on the day. Both horses finished down the track shocking connections. If only they had have asked Sean.

Conclusion

Academy Award winner Russell Crowe only lived a short doggy paddle from me in 2008 along the Wharf at Woolloomooloo Bay, and he could easily make a riveting movie of each one of the characters I have chosen to chronicle in “Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters”.

I never had the pleasure to meet Alan Woods but he also was certainly an amazing character and what he created and achieved with exotic betting in Hong Kong is legendary. It is a shame that most Australians have never heard of him.



The late Alan Woods on top of the punting world

Woods, like his fellow Australian colleagues in this e-book, experienced a “bad trot” and like nearly every punter came close to the brink of going broke. Having big wins and chewing the paint off the wall is all part of the swings and roundabout of punting. Our e-book friends would tell you that is what makes winning so sweet. It is how you handle the tough times, how you believe in yourself, your methods and turning things around.

It would be so easy if you could choose someone and make them your role model to follow their path to prosperity, but if it were that simple we would not have any bookies left and the TAB would increase their already rude take out fees.

If readers can take something to help them become a winner it should be to have a plan and stick to it. The majority of punters lose because they do not have a plan and allow the system to control them. They get sucked in to have another bet, then another, and another.

I have never met a more consistent winner than Steve Fletcher and his methodology is simple. By betting at the top of the market and laying at the bottom you are turning the mathematics into your favour. The trick for the rank and file of course is to know what is the best price and when to bet before the price tumbles. As Steve has proven, this skill has nothing to do with spending hours watching videos and reading the form.

Peter V'Landys, the CEO of Racing NSW, rightly points out that punters do not know the difference between a 4% tax and a 14% tax. Very few punters are also aware that when they bet with the TAB their winnings are round down to the nearest 10 cents. This can mean the difference between winning and losing over 12 months and boosts the TAB coffers by hundreds of millions.

If a punter backs a winner and it pays \$2.09, the dividend will be round down to \$2.00 or less 4.5%. Any professional would be delighted to earn 4.5% on their turnover.

Here is a list a list of the take outs and why 98% of punters lose:

Product & Take Outs

Win	14.50%
Place	14.25%
Quinella	14.75%
Exacta	16.50%
Trifecta	21%
Doubles	17%
First 4	22.50%
Quaddie	20%
Duet	14.50%
FootyTab	25%
Big Six	25%

Punters chances are enhanced when a jackpot is added to the exotic pools. Depending on the amount of “new money” combined with a substantial jackpot punters can often bet into PLUS exotics pool instead of giving away up to 25% making it impossible to win on a regular basis.

Most of the punters in “Learn Secrets from Greatest Punters” are very conscious of what margins that they are betting into and ensure that they are in control and use the market instead of being used.

Hope you have enjoyed the read.

Now you have learnt from old timers, now the time is for automated betting, have a look

www.autoprofitsoccer.com

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thanks

Michael

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