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Peter Ling



Smart betting club Owner/Founder

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SBC MAGAZINE REVIEW: Bet Alchemist

FIRST PUBLISHED JUNE 2017

In each SBC magazine, you can find several independent tipster reviews as this example analysis of the Bet Alchemist service from June 2017 helps to showcase.

This review is typical of the level of detail we go into when analysing a tipster service as we examine every aspect of what they offer from profits made to odds availability. No stone is left unturned in our quest to help find the best, most profitable tipsters for you to profit from.

NOTE: All details, results and information inside this review is accurate as of June 2017, the date this review was first published within the 2017 Best Tipster Guide.

For detail on the performance of Bet Alchemist subsequent to this review, please see the additional update on Page 13.

REVIEW: BET ALCHEMIST

REVIEWER: ROWAN DAY / DATA ANALYSIS: NICK WARD

NAME:	Bet Alchemist	EMAIL:	info@betalchemist.com
WEBSITE:	www.betalchemist.com	TWITTER:	@BetAlchemist
BET DELIVERY:	Emailed notification and details published on website.	COST:	£39/month; £95/quarter
BET FREQUENCY:	Approx. 50 bets/month	SBC DISCOUNT:	75% off your first month, then 25% off ongoing subs only (<i>Link only available to SBC members</i>)
BET SUPPLY TIME:	GMT: Majority 9-10pm, some at 10am and some 1pm. Aus/NZ members: majority at 7 am, some at 7pm and some 10pm.		
LANGUAGE:	English Good command of English essential if following tip rationale; basic English for basic tip information.		
BOOKMAKERS:	Essential: Bet365, Paddy Power, Bet Victor, William Hill, Smarkets, Matchbook, Betfair Recommended: All other major UK high street firms		

Service Snapshot:

- 15% ROI from 2,599 bets issued over 4+ years.
- Suffered a losing year in 2015 but has bounced back exceptionally well.
- Excellent odds availability.
- Provides a particularly viable option for Exchange only bettors.
- Only a 1% ROI drop taking odds at 10.30 am betting via Smarkets
- Worthy of its recent induction into the Hall of Fame.

Service in Brief: Bet Alchemist is a Horse racing tipster based in Ireland specializing in higher grade racing and Festivals on both sides of the Irish Sea. The service was originally reviewed in January 2015 (SBC91) and was recently granted a place in the SBC Hall of Fame in March 2017.

Service in Detail: Bet Alchemist is run by Nicky Doyle, a racing enthusiast who was immersed in the Sport of Kings from a very early age. Growing up in racing-mad County Wexford and with older brother's crazy about the game, it was almost inevitable that Nicky's passion for racing would lead him into the sport in some form of professional capacity in his adult years.

Not only does Nicky run Bet Alchemist, he is also a shareholder in several racehorses, and writes a free-to-view racing blog that is published on his website. The site also includes free tips for selected big races and all of Bet Alchemist's results.

To give you a further insight into Nicky's background and his approach to tipping, we asked him a series of questions...

Why did you decide to set up the Bet Alchemist service and can you outline more behind how it works?

It's just myself running the service although I do have some help with content writing for my blog this year such as our new Sharpshooter Ante Post Weekly Column. I set up the service due to bookie restrictions along with believing I could help punters to succeed at betting rather than enduring a horrid time both financially and mentally as the losses mount! I've been through the mill but come out the other side and want to help punters win off the bookies not the other way round. It's all about control, patience and learning a new way of betting.

The service has been going strong since 2012 – what do you think has been the secret to your success over the past 5 years?

Hard Work and long hours of form study! It's not easy with a young family but thankfully my wife is a big support and allows me the time and space to work most days of the week studying racing form and replays. However, knowing the form well is only one key part of the success as knowing what prices represent value relative to a horse's chance of winning is the most important factor. I like to think that I have a very good eye for spotting value prices in the betting markets following years of practice.

Where do you feel your betting edge lies and what do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses?

Expertise lies in spotting value in the price of a horse winning relative to its true chance. I specialize in big field class 2 handicaps and sprint handicaps are my favourite puzzles to work out. My strengths are my bombproof belief after many successful years that I will make profits from backing horses.

No losing run be that short or long will change my attitude to picking the correct value priced selection for each race assessed. Subscribers should know that double the number of races we back in are assessed so in fact 50% of the work is totally redundant (well some form study not used will come into play in the future)

My weakness is that when winning I tend to fly too near the sun like Icarus by going higher in the prices of selections I pick rather. I get braver and seek angles that just might not exist!

What do you expect to make in terms of a long-term Return on Investment?

My aim every year is to make an average of 10 points profit per Month so 120 points a year. A return on investment of 20% or higher is fine. I say there will be racing for the rest of our lives so relax and enjoy the ride and take a 3-5 year view if you want to truly treat your betting professionally.

Keep profits accumulating and increase your stakes every quarter or half year or else lower the risk by increasing the number of points in your betting bank.

Nicky tends to concentrate on the bigger race days/meetings and Festivals as the source of his picks. The advantage this brings to Bet Alchemist members is that the stronger markets Nicky tips into mean the bookmakers are likely to play ball for longer – they are less likely to close or restrict accounts if the bettor is targeting highly liquid markets that see plenty of action.

Theoretically too of course, prices ought to hold up for longer; this is something we will examine closely in the 'Odds Tracking' section of this re-review.

Most bets are advised each way (84%), with the rest made up of win only bets (15%) and the occasional multiple tip (1%).

All bet detail including tip rationale is published within the members section of the website, accessible only with a username and password. An email is sent to all subscribers to alert them to the fact that new tips have been posted. The vast majority of bets are issued the evening before racing between 9.00 and 10.00pm. It is not unknown however for bets to be issued at 10.00am the next morning or 1.00pm on the day of racing.

Here is a typical example of bet instructions and rationale:

<i>Racecourse & Time</i>	<i>Advised Stake & Bet Type</i>	<i>Name of Horse to Back</i>
Ascot – 14:30	1/2 Point Each Way	Santry

Current Odds:

13/2 Bet365 4 places 1/4 odds else 13/2 1/5 place Odds Paddy Power, Ladbrokes & Coral, use BOG bookies

Compare odds at <http://www.oddschecker.com/horse-racing>

Selection Reasoning:

Santry is the bet here thanks to a high draw close to the pace horses Havana Gold and Cardsharp. He won very impressively at York albeit on soft ground carrying a 6lb penalty. He's a bit of an anomaly breeding wise as he's bred for middle distances. However, on both his runs thus far he has shown plenty of pace and the quicker they go here the better as he will be doing his best work nearing the line while the others are running on air! He had It Dont Come Easy and Consequences behind at York giving weight away and the Richard Fahey trained Dont Come Easy went and broke the track record at Musselburgh next time out in a hard race against Rebel Assault. The draw looks like playing a big part here and drawn high in stall 16 ensures Santry is our bet ahead of Don't Come Easy.

At £39/month or £95/quarter, Bet Alchemist falls into the mid-range category in terms of the cost of joining. Please note however that SBC members can secure a significant discount on the advertised rates with a 75% discount off your first month available, followed by a 25% ongoing discount. Full details on how to take up this saving are available via the SBC members area.

Service Proofing: All Bet Alchemist tips issued from October 2013 have been proofed to the *Smart Betting Club*. Nicky also maintains an up-to-date and accurate record of all results which he made available to our data analyst.

Before we get onto the actual results, a few notes about the staking and betting banks as it's important to discuss them first.

Staking: Bet Alchemist adopts a very simple staking system, as explained on the website:

"Win selections are normally advised to one point (and very occasionally up to two points). Each way selections are normally advised to 0.5 points each way."

Our analysis supports this assertion with over 90% of bets following the basic 1 point win/0.5 points each way approach. As such, Nicky is virtually adopting a level stakes approach.

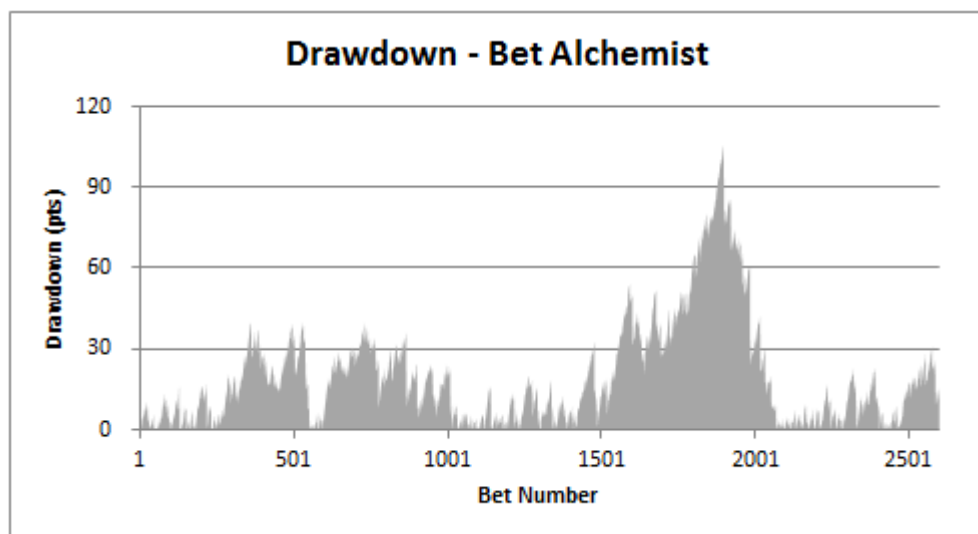
In terms of the Win/Each Way split, Nicky explains his rule of thumb:

"If you want to be following my staking, I will be backing one point win at 4/1 or shorter, and half a point each way at bigger than 4/1."

Betting Bank: In our original review of 2015 we recommended a betting bank of 100 points to be used if following Bet Alchemist, which was based on the data we had at that time. We now have a further two and a half years of results to analyze, and our findings lead us to now suggest a **150 point betting bank** as being appropriate. The reasons for this are twofold:

- The service endured a prolonged period of weaker performance through 2015. The drawdown reached a low point of -105.8 points in the December of that year which actually broke our official bank recommendation; and
- The average odds of the selections has actually increased a little since our 2015 review – the average odds since the original review stand at 9.5 compared to 8.0 prior to the review. If we plug these new stats into our simulator, we are given a recommendation of 125-150 points.

The table illustrating historical drawdowns is here:

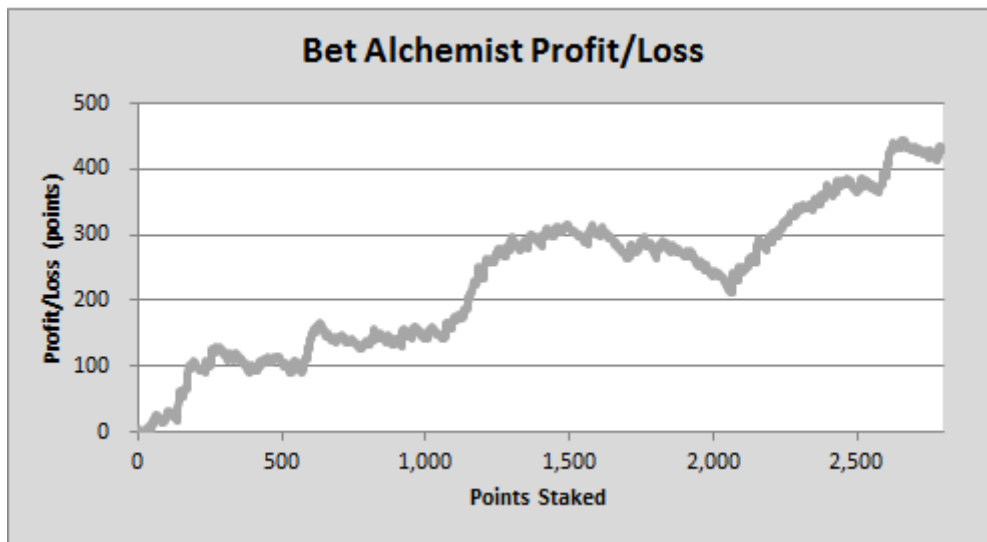


Service Results: Moving onto the actual results, let's first look at the headline figures achieved by Bet Alchemist since the service started back in December 2012:

Performance Summary

Year	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI	ROC
2012	56	59.0	23.0	39.1%	15.4%
2013	646	682.8	117.1	17.2%	78.1%
2014	664	691.3	160.2	23.2%	106.8%
2015	542	639.4	-53.7	-8.4%	-35.8%
2016	497	518.5	128.2	24.7%	85.5%
2017	194	206.0	54.9	26.6%	36.6%
Total	2,599	2,797.0	429.6	15.4%	286.4%

An overall ROI of 15.4% from a sample of 2,599 bets represents an excellent level of performance. The profit and loss graph highlights the poor time had of it through 2015, but pleasingly shows a consistently strong level of profit-making achieved since:



Performance Analysis: The effect of 2015

As we have seen in the 'Betting Bank' section, 2015 was a year of struggle for Bet Alchemist. This had a knock-on effect on the size of bank we recommend, but what have been the other effects?

We asked Nicky for his thoughts on the *annus horribilis* and why it happened:

"The bottom line is that I was responsible and didn't pick the right horses on the right day! It was a frustrating time that summer as it seemed horses we backed previously that lost "came good" on their next run but I had decided to leave them alone!"

A business partnership to ease the administrative load and website maintenance just didn't work and was a major draw on my time and efforts that year. Once that partnership ended in November 2015 and I got back to basics the results picked up and we went on an amazing run of 11 subsequent Months of turning a profit. The lesson I learnt is be very careful about changing something that is already working "If it ain't broke don't try and fix it."

We previously noted that since the losing run was ended, the level of performance had been pleasingly strong. This is borne out in the figures that split results prior to our initial review in

January 2015 to those posted since:

Performance Since Last SBC Review

	Bets	Stake	Av Odds	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Original Review	1,364	1,431.1	8.0	14.3%	301.0	21.0%
Since Last Review	1,235	1,365.9	9.5	11.5%	128.7	9.4%

Naturally the 9.4% ROI attained since the last review includes results posted through 2015, which drag the total down. If we take the results posted from January 2016 (i.e. once the losing spell had been broken) up to the present day, then we see the ROI running at 25%, very much in line – and in fact a little better - than the pre-2015 performance.

That this is the case increases our level of confidence in Nicky as a tipster – he’s been through a prolonged bad spell and come out of it to perform extremely well and in line with historical levels.

Performance Analysis: Win Only vs Each Way betting

A comparison of the advised staking approach vs an alternative win only approach suggests that, although the latter shows a slight uplift in terms of ROI, the ROC is quite a bit lower as a larger betting bank is required to offset the longer losing runs of backing win only.

This table is also interesting for those of you limited to betting with exchanges – something we will explore further on in this review.

The full stats comparing the advised bets (mostly each way) versus win only are as below:

Advised Approach vs Win Only Betting

	Bank Size	Max Drawdown	P/L	ROI	ROC
Advised (mainly EW)	150	105.8	375.2	13.6%	250.1%
Win Only	250	186.6	411.5	14.7%	164.6%

Nicky explained his approach to us re. advising horses each way at prices of 4/1 and upwards:

“I did a review of my results a year ago and found that Each Way betting was more profitable than win only betting on all my selections by around 10%. Both methods are profitable but because I am betting each way my focus is not as narrow as it would be if looking for win only betting opportunities. I’m looking for value prices on selections in a race rather than the most likely winner. Long term I know value will deliver us profits not a high strike rate.”

Nicky continues...

“If I was to bet win only, we would have longer losing runs for sure. That can be a worry for some bettors who lose confidence in a service quickly if not producing winners.”

To conclude, those subscribers with access to the bookmaker accounts that will allow them to bet each way, following the ‘Advised’ approach is recommended.

For those who perhaps have fewer accounts or those who rely more on the Exchanges, win only betting could provide a good alternative, provided it is accepted that a 200-250 point bank is needed.

Performance Analysis: Different odds ranges and racing code

With just a handful of All Weather picks, Nicky’s approach to betting focuses on flat turf and National Hunt racing.

Performance has been strong across both racing codes:

Racing Code

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
Flat (turf)	901	977.0	164.4	16.8%
National Hunt	1,120	1,198.0	135.2	11.3%

A good ROI has also been achieved at the various odds ranges advised:

Odds Breakdown

	Bets	Stake	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
11/2 or less	586	647.0	25.1%	51.6	8.0%
6/1 to 9/1	637	686.5	12.7%	43.4	6.3%
10/1 to 14/1	666	699.5	9.9%	153.6	22.0%
Over 14/1	685	723.0	5.8%	126.6	17.5%

Performance Analysis: Irish racing

In our original review of Bet Alchemist, we noted both the relatively high proportion of bets advised in Irish races and the success levels of these picks. Looking at the data now, we can see that the figures have levelled out somewhat but overall the figures still favour Irish racing somewhat:

Country

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
UK	1,555	1,693.0	124.7	7.4%
Ireland	969	1,009.0	259.3	25.7%

Performance Analysis: Festivals

Given that a focus of the service is on the various racing Festivals that take place throughout the year, it made sense for us to examine how Bet Alchemist has performed at these events.

The Festivals we analyzed included: Cheltenham (March), Aintree (April), Fairyhouse (Easter), Newmarket Guineas (April/May), Punchestown (April/May), Chester (May), Epsom (June), Royal Ascot (June), Newmarket (July), Glorious Goodwood (July), Galway Summer (July), York Ebor (August) and Cheltenham (November).

The results are impressive at the Festivals as these stats prove:

Festivals

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
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Festival Races	838	916.0	189.2	20.7%
Other Races	1,736	1,840.0	186.0	10.1%

Funds Required For Meaningful Profit: One vital aspect to be considered when weighing up whether a tipping service is for you, is how big a Financial Betting Bank you will need once deductions for subscription costs have been made.

In this first table, we have approximated the annualized profit figures, including a year's subscription cost (using the SBC member discounted rate of £79/quarter):

Betting Bank Size (£) vs ROC

Period	Bets	Stake (pts)	ROI	Bank (pts)	Subscription Fees
12 Months	575	620	15%	150	£316

The subsequent table shows the monetary figures achieved using the above annualized returns if betting from just £5/point up to £50/point:

Betting Bank (£)	£ per Point	Profit**	ROC**
£750	£5	£149	19.9%
£1,500	£10	£614	40.9%
£3,000	£20	£1,544	51.5%
£7,500	£50	£4,334	57.8%

** This ROC figure is net profit after subscription fees deducted

Given the big jump in net profit after joining costs, we suggest that potential subscribers be able to commit a betting bank of at least £1,500 (i.e. £10/point) for this service.

Following Bet Alchemist Using the Exchanges: For those of you limited to betting win only on the exchanges then the service does offer potential on this front.

We've already observed that although not as profitable (in terms of bank growth) as following the exact Bet Alchemist bets as advised, we can still forge a profit by backing all the tips win only.

We broke this down further and took a sample of 2027 bets, comparing the win only returns from those at Next Best Odds and at Betfair SP. The results indicated that at Next Best Odds the returns drop from 13.8% to 4.7% ROI and down to 3% ROI at Betfair SP (after 5% commission).

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
Advised Odds	2,027	2,181.0	300.1	13.8%
Next Best Odds	2,027	2,181.0	102.6	4.7%
Betfair SP	2,027	2,181.0	65.3	3.0%

*We were only able to compare 2027 bets, rather than the full set of 2599 tips as these were the only tips we had Betfair SP data for

This alerted us to the possibility that members who have suffered from heavy bookmaker account restrictions may be able to utilize the Exchanges profitably if obtaining close to the advised price.

To gauge this - between March 2016 and May 2017, our data analyst conducted a personal experiment to investigate the viability of betting on each of the Bet Alchemist selections using the betting exchange, Smarkets on the morning of race day. Unlike Betfair, for whom the

baseline commission charge is 5% (a figure which reduces the more you use them), Smarkets charge a flat 2% commission to all customers.

Allowing for this 2% commission charge, the ROI attained using the exchange was within 1% of the official ROI. Bear in mind however that this strategy is only really viable if prepared to back win only but is based on real-life results obtained.

Exchange Testing Summary

Time	Av Odds	Est ROI Diff
Advised Odds	10.77	
Exchange Odds**	10.91	-0.6%

**Note: Sample size = 243. Odds taken at Smarkets over period 8:30 - 11AM race day. 2% commission applied.

Odds Testing: Our odds testing exercise was executed from 22nd April to 2nd June, 2017. This period covered 76 bets issued.

64 of the 76 bets were advised the evening before racing and they were subjected to the following testing schedule: advised odds, odds available on receipt of email, 15 minutes after receipt, at 8.00am, at 10.30am and SP.

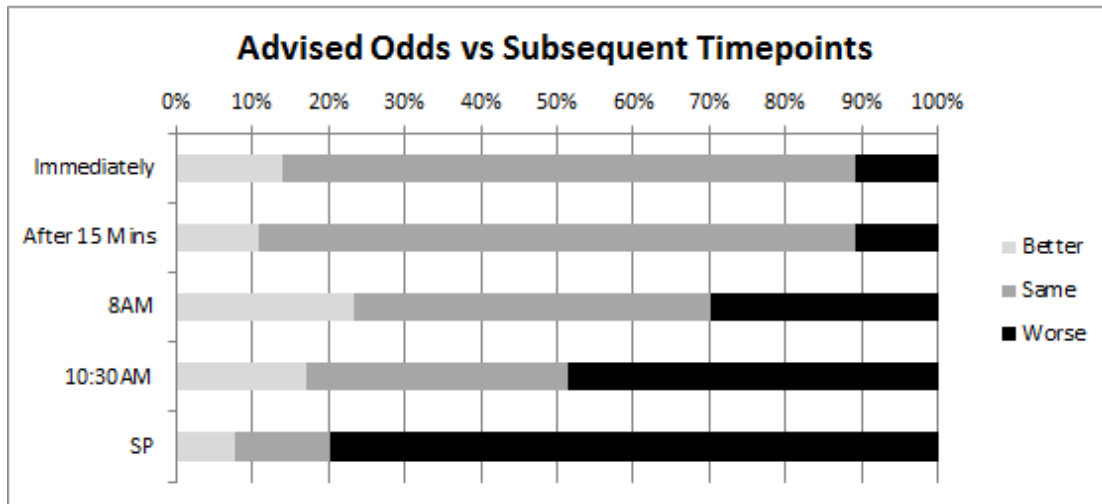
The odds of the remaining 12 bets were recorded to advised odds, odds available on receipt of email, after 15 minutes, at 10.30am or 60 minutes later (whichever applies), and to SP.

The bookmaker panel utilized consisted of Bet365, BetVictor, BlackType, Betfair Sportsbook, Coral, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, Skybet, Tote, and William Hill.

Upon analysis of our results, we can see a clear pattern emerge: odds hold up well during the evening and early morning, there is some more noticeable movement by the 10.30 checkpoint, and there is a significant contraction to industry SP:

Odds Testing Summary

Time	Av Odds	Est ROI Diff
Advised Odds	8.90	
Immediately	8.88	-0.2%
After 15 Mins	8.84	-0.6%
8AM	8.74	-1.6%
10:30AM	8.38	-5.2%
SP	7.48	-14.3%



From the above we can conclude:

- Those getting on immediately could expect to roughly match the official ROI.
- If betting later in the evening, you could expect to lose 1% ROI.
- If betting early in the morning of race day, you can expect to lose 2% ROI.
- If not betting until mid-morning, a more significant ROI reduction of 5-6% should be expected.
- There is no expected profitability is betting at Industry SP.

What is undoubtedly helping the odds availability situation is the fact that tips are concentrated on big meetings and Festivals where the horse racing markets are at their strongest. We asked Nicky for his thoughts on this and for his opinion on the importance of prices when picking/backing his selections generally:

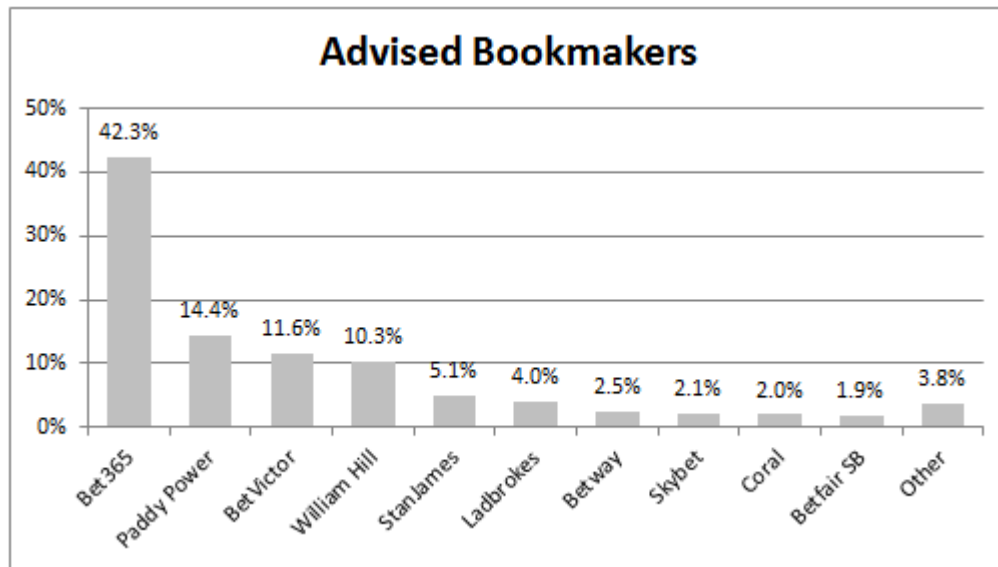
This is all about providing a proper value priced betting service to my subscribers. There is plenty of betting value to be had in the lesser races especially mid-week but the prices go super quick. There just isn't the market liquidity and any tipster shouting big point profits from daily racing is not been totally honest as we all know that the prices will only be there for those lucky enough to get on early.

Being conscious of this fact I like that the pattern and class 2 handicaps offer massive market liquidity. The bookies are much more willing to take bigger stakes and hold a price on the weekend racing as they have a much better spread of bets in their books. I do not back our selections until they are advised so I can 100% vouch that the prices advertised are available and only drop quickly if we are unlucky enough to have clashed with a big name tipsters like Tom Segal (pricewise), Gary O'Brien and Hugh Taylor of Attheraces.

As you can gather from above I place a big emphasis on price and that is what determines our edge. Unusually, my service is mainly each way and I find that in the 16+ runner handicaps on Saturdays there is great value to be had thanks to the bookies offering extra places. It is these class 2 handicaps that offer the best value as most punters or bookmakers do not have the time or zest for spending an hour or longer sifting through the form and race replays of 16+ runners. I'm a bit different in that I love those big field handicap puzzles where once I have a good handle on the form it is possible get value prices as high as 40/1!

Required Bookmakers: We felt it was important to see the spread of books used by Bet Alchemist, as that would provide a good indication of those needed to replicate the official ROI

figures. You can see the results in the following table whereby Bet365 is by far and away the most popular bookmaker quoted from with 42.3% of all bets:



Service Practicality: The only doubt we have over the service is the fact that to gain access to bet information, it is first necessary to log into the website. We are a little puzzled why bet details can't be emailed out to members as opposed to sending an email to notify that selections have been published on the site.

We asked Nicky for the reasons behind this system, and here is what he said:

Great Question and one I get asked plenty. I would love to keep it simple and only email out tips but the reality is email systems are not 100% guaranteed to deliver emails on time or even at all thanks to most email providers using overly zealous antispam filtering software.

Nothing irks a punter more than hearing about a tip that won at a big price and having not received that email or else receiving the email just after the event! I find that once everyone knows where the tips are going to be then it's their responsibility to ensure they login and access the tips.

Heck, it's not rocket science or very taxing to remember a username and password. I differ from a lot of services in that I let my subscribers know the date and time of upcoming bets so they can switch off. We are not a daily volume betting service but rather selective on quality racing with on average 45 bets per Month.

We can see where Nicky is coming from, but believe we are going to have to agree to differ; surely it would be easier for members to get their bet info via email? Logging on to websites is not necessarily the easiest thing to do from a mobile when on the move. Emailed bet details would solve this problem in a stroke.

Service in Summary: We have seen absolutely nothing in our analysis conducted for the purpose of this re-review to make us question our recent decision to elevate Bet Alchemist into the Hall of Fame.

The fact that the service has recovered superbly from a losing year in 2015 adds to our confidence in the tipster, Nicky, who throughout our review process has shown himself to be a diligent operator determined to provide an ultra-professional service.

The long term results speak for themselves; an ROI of 15% from 2,599 bets and over four years of tipping is extremely impressive. That our odds testing has shown that if you can get your bets on quickly, then the official figures can be matched is an undoubted positive too.

Furthermore, whereas with almost all other racing services that we put under the microscope which issue their tips the evening before racing (thus causing their followers severe problems in terms of odds availability and the ability to keep bookmaker accounts free of restriction), that Bet Alchemist release the majority of their picks at this time does not detract from the service at all. This is due to the nature of the racing that Nicky targets. Tipping into liquid markets at important meetings means that the bets you place if following are going to be about as bookie-friendly as it's possible for them to be. That there is room to produce a profit using the Exchanges during the morning of race day too, provides a different element to the Bet Alchemist service and means that if you already suffer from severe account restrictions then here is a viable solution.

From everything we've seen, our firm belief is that Bet Alchemist has the potential to be a member of our Hall of Fame for a very long time to come!

December 2017 Update: Bet Alchemist

The Profits Keep Coming In

The above review was first published in June 2017 and since then the Bet Alchemist service has continued to impress with 64.62 points profit at 20.98% Return on Investment. If judged on Return on Capital, this equates to a tremendous 43.10% betting bank growth figure.

Full details on the individual monthly performance can be found below.

Month	Bets	Stakes	Points Profit	ROI (Return on Investment)	ROC (Return on Capital)
May-17	46	47	9.35	19.9%	6.2%
Jun-17	48	49	-7.50	-15.3%	-5.0%
Jul-17	40	41	1.35	3.3%	0.9%
Aug-17	55	55	32.72	59.5%	21.8%
Sep-17	32	38	-1.65	-4.3%	-1.1%
Oct-17	42	44	9.05	20.6%	6.0%
Nov-17	33	34	21.30	62.6%	14.2%
TOTAL	296	308.00	64.62	20.98%	43.10%

SBC MAGAZINE EXTRACT: The Punter That Made \$1M With Tipsters

In each SBC magazine, we also regularly publish in-depth interviews with a wide range of people - all designed to provide insight to help you make money betting.

Back in April 2017, I was lucky enough to be granted a detailed interview with one of our members, Billy McPherson about his significant betting success using tipsters. The interview was given following the interest in Billy after his **original shorter interview with me in February**, where he outlined how he had made \$1m dollars betting with tipsters in the past 5 years.

A quarter of these profits he attributed to Smart Betting Club rated and reviewed tipsters. It also should make for fascinating reading for those of you **unable to bet on horse racing because as Billy outlines, he doesn't follow the sport**. Instead he concentrates on sports such as Football, NFL, NBA, Golf & Tennis.

Alongside my own questions, several SBC members also put forward their own questions for Billy, which he answers throughout.

HOW I MAKE MONEY BETTING: BILLY MCPHERSON

AN INTERVIEW WITH SBC EDITOR PETER LING

SBC: Hi Billy, thanks for agreeing to be interviewed. Firstly, can you tell me a little bit about yourself and where you are based?

Billy: I am 52 years old. In my previous life, I was an oil trader for a large and very well-known bank. I left the firm around 15 years ago as I wanted a life with lower stress levels, and became a trader working from home using my own capital.

How does being based abroad impact your betting and the tipsters you follow?

Being based outside the UK, there is obviously a smaller choice of bookmakers due to regulations, and it is full of unmonitored tipsters which creates a big challenge in trying to find reliable and credible tipsters.

How exactly did you get started following tipsters and how long has it taken to build up to your current staking/profit levels?

My full time profession is trading the stock market. I believe any investor should have a diversified portfolio, so I decided to create a sports investment portfolio over a decade ago, and allocated a 20% stake of my capital to this portfolio. At the beginning of each year, I reallocate my portfolio, and I place anywhere from 1% to 4% of my portfolio on my bets depending upon the sport and the tipster.

It's a popular question and one posed by David and George to name just two SBC members. Can you reveal the names and identifies of the tipsters you follow?

The tipsters I follow that SBC track are Football Investor (Combo), AH Edge (Jon Roberts), Football Elite, and Football Value.

How about tipsters that we don't track here at SBC? Are there any you recommend and are willing to name?

A few of the non-SBC tipsters I would recommend are Swingform (UK based golf service), MG Tennis Tipster (European based tennis service), and AFLTipstar an Aussie Rules Football service on Twitter which is currently a free service to follow. All three of these services have performed admirably for me and are a core of my portfolio.

You don't follow any racing tipsters. Is that due to your location and the difficulties of betting on the sport or more a factor of the issues of bookmaker restrictions/closures on the sport?

I do not follow any horse racing tipsters, as due to where I am based, I know of only one bookmaker offering UK horse racing, and prices are settled on Tote payouts, so not of interest to me.

Which tipster(s) have made you the most money or the greatest Return on Investment or Return on Capital?

Out of the tipsters covered by SBC, Football Investor has made me the most money, and is my favourite service covered by you. Although now out of favour at SBC, and I can see the reasons why, Football Elite is still one of my best performing. I have been following Matt for almost 10 years, which has been very profitable even though the last few years have been lean. I only bet his 5 unit games, which continue to produce a good return.

Are you happy to share some of the performance standards achieved by the tipsters we don't yet track here at SBC?

My best performing ROI service is the golf tipster Swingform I mentioned previously with a ROI of just under 15%, however with the nature of large priced winners, a very patient long term strategy must be applied.

My best performing overall tipster isn't a tipster but a source in a Las Vegas sports book, whose acquaintance I made over 5 years ago, so I wish him to remain nameless for obvious reasons.

I am currently monitoring the Golf Monthly tipster, Tom Clarke who is now in his second season, and to date has an outstanding record, so this is one I will be considering adding next year.

Do you have any preference for the type of tipster you like to follow?

I will only follow a tipster that has a long track and verifiable record. I do not like tipsters that release bets within an hour of a game starting.

In your first interview, you described how you follow an extensive portfolio featuring 22 tipsters across several sports. Have you deliberately chosen as wide ranging a group of sports as possible to bet on or is it just a case of following any tipster that meets your requirements?

As a diversified investor, I believe this is important to any long-term success. Having all your eggs in one basket is never ideal, and as a stock market trader, asset allocation is important. This is the main reason for the wide range of sports I invest in.

Do you place every tip as it comes in? If not, what do you do if the odds move? Do you work to strict minimum value odds criteria?

Most of the tipsters I follow release picks while I am sleeping due so many times I am placing bets many hours or even the following day after release. Most markets are very liquid. With regards to odds movement, I have a strict criteria I follow with regards to placing bets. It is not uncommon though for odds to move in my favour too, especially when betting on totals.

How do you select the type of tipster you follow? Aside from using the SBC analysis of course on the tipsters we review!

SBC does all the hard work, and it is fairly easy to decide what tipsters to consider. I prefer low volume tipsters over a tipster that releases 10-20 selections a day. Of course, following many tipsters, mean I am a high volume trader, but the diversification is important to me. Following a tipster where odds move quickly after release is not my cup of tea, so I do not follow this type of tipster.

This is one reason I like the SBC football tipsters that I follow, as they release bets on Thursday or Friday and I like to wait until Saturday to place these bets as odds are normally better than when released, as the public loves to bet favourites and most of these selections are underdogs.

Another member, George, asked how do you identify and choose those tipsters that are not yet covered/reviewed by us here at SBC?

This used to be very much a trial and error process. With no regulation, there are many services with records that cannot be substantiated. This has changed in the past few years, where many tipsters release their plays once game starts so in effect you can follow and paper trade these tipsters to see how successful these tipsters really are. Whilst this can be time consuming, it is possible to identify successful tipsters.

How often do you review your tipster portfolio and add in new services?

I review my portfolio annually, and may consider a new service. For example, this year I have added one new service.

On a practical level, how do you juggle following so many tipsters?

I dedicate 2 hours per day to my sports investment portfolio. This amount of time allows me opportunity to access the bets, check for best available odds, and place bets, and log them into my spreadsheet to enable easy analysis of sports, and tipsters themselves.

Do you ever take holidays or breaks from following tips? If so, do you switch off entirely or continue to bet when 'away'?

I take holidays each year. Trading and sports betting in Summer months is much quieter, so our summer holiday will be time taken out of trading or sports betting. It is important to take time off, and relax and spend time with your loved ones. Betting should be investing and not an addiction.

How do you deal with bad runs and losing form? At such high stakes, do you find it adds more pressure?

I follow a strict money management system, never chase losses, and appreciate that there will be losing runs. I do not get stressed, and know that this is inevitable and wait and am patient as I know the tide will turn.

What's the biggest loss you have experienced, what happened and how did you deal with it?

Earlier this year, I lost nearly \$30,000 in a week. Was just a week where Lady Luck was not on my side. By following a strict money management practice, whether you have a bank of \$1,000 or \$100,000 is immaterial, adhere to your rules and never chase losses.

Do you watch games/races/matches of the bets you place? If so, how do you deal with the 'emotion of betting'?

Not very often. I will watch my favourite teams play.

Do you keep records of your bets? If so, how detailed are they?

Yes. This is a must. I have a detailed spreadsheet which tracks all bets, sports, tipsters, and type of bets. This is essential for analysing the entire portfolio.

You previously revealed that you look for at least a 5% ROI from any tipster and make 'adjustments to the selections they provide to meet my own criteria'. Can you explain more as to how this works?

Let's say a tipster releases a bet on a NBA game where it is to bet the Over 200. If the line moves to Over 202 it will be a non-bet for me. If the total line moves by more than 1.5 points it is no longer a bet. However sometimes, the line moves by 3-4 points in my favour. In this instance, I will increase my bet size from 2% to 3% for example as the value has increased.

You turnover more than \$5m a year betting – what is an average stake for you?

My average stake will be between \$500 and \$1500 depending upon the sport. Golf ante-post bets are much smaller ranging from \$25 to a maximum of \$500.

Do you set aside individual betting banks for each tipster or do you follow from one bank?

No, I follow from one bank.

Michael asked about your staking plan and how/when you make staking adjustments?

I stake from 1% to 4% of portfolio per bet depending on sport and odds. I never change staking plan during a season.

Tom asked 2 questions, firstly about which bookmakers you use to place your bets? Are there certain firms you use more than others?

I use 10 different bookmakers, but the majority of bets are placed at 5Dimes, Heritage Sports, Betonline and Bookmaker.

Tom also wondered if you had suffered account restrictions and if so, how have you managed this or prevented it from happening?

No, this has never been a problem. Many of my bookmaker accounts accept bets of more than \$10,000 and up to \$50,000 on a NFL game, so my bets are quite small in comparison.

Finally, George asked what advice you had for novices keen to repeat your success?

As I have already said, follow strict money management, and never chase losses.

The Bet Diary - Real Life Betting Experiences

For those of you keen to understand more on how to make money betting with tipsters – I highly recommend reading the SBC blog - the '[Bet Diary](#)', as penned by profitable punter, and SBC writer, Rowan Day.

Each week on the Bet Diary, Rowan discusses his ongoing betting journey including the tipsters he follows, and his performance, using their advice (win or lose – he is always refreshingly honest!).

The idea behind the Bet Diary is to provide some **real-life, genuine, experiences of just how the tipsters we rate and recommend can make you a realistic extra income stream.**

Whether it's to simply make some extra pocket money, fund a family holiday, or to generate a sustainable second income – Rowan's [Bet Diary](#) will be able to help you achieve your goals.

To get you going, below I have copied 2 of his very popular posts entitled "**Why Betting is such a good investment...Part's 1 & 2**" below to give you a taste of what is on offer!

Updated weekly, you can read the very latest from Rowan at the [Bet Diary Homepage](#)

WHY BETTING IS SUCH A GOOD INVESTMENT... PART 1 BY ROWAN DAY

Betting is a great way of investing money, but that short sentence above in italics is an extremely important proviso. I don't personally know of a better investment vehicle than betting but only if executed properly, in a way that minimises risk and maximises potential returns.

Sure, betting carries risk. But then so does any "investment". I guess sticking your hard earned in the bank or building society will absolutely minimise the risk that your funds are exposed to, but even then, as the collapse of the banking system during the Credit Crunch of 2007-08 showed, your money is never 100% secure. More to the point, by setting up a sensible and well thought out betting operation, not only can you reduce your risk profile, but you also remain in complete control of your money. As soon as you invest in investment funds such as ISAs or higher risk hedge funds, property, bonds, precious metals, vintage wines or anything else that has the potential to provide a return, you become exposed to the will of other people (Fund Managers) or market forces. What's more, in areas such as property, you may find it difficult to withdraw your funds from your investment with any haste and can easily find your capital tied up. Not so with betting.

Let me make 100% clear, I am NOT recommending you ignore all these other investment vehicles completely and instead plough every spare penny into forming a betting bank. No. As we will come to see with setting up a well balanced portfolio of tipsters to follow, diversification is key. Spreading your risk and investments is vitally important. But that doesn't mean you can't have a *favourite* mode of investment, does it?

So let's begin to look at why betting is my favourite way of investing money (but not my only one!)...

Well, we've already mentioned the fact that I am in control of my betting, and my funds aren't at the disposal of someone I don't know and never will.

I guess the biggest benefit is that the potential returns are so good. For a strong, well-balanced portfolio of tipsters, returns should see annual bank growth of somewhere between 60 and 120%. What other investment can comfortably double your money in the space of a year? So £1,000 in a betting bank can easily become £2,000 in twelve months (some achieve far greater annual returns than this), whereas £1,000 stuck in a savings account offering a 5% interest rate will become £1,050. Some difference, eh?

What I would say is that your realistically annual returns do depend on certain circumstances and not just on the performance of the tipsters you follow. This is worth bearing in mind as you set up your operation – set it up properly and carefully; plan for the future whilst acting in the present. Your returns will be greater all the time you have access to Best Odds Guaranteed concessions on your bookmaker accounts, access to a large number of bookmaker accounts that are unrestricted, etc. So it's worth right from the very start, setting yourself up in such a way that you maximise the lifespan of these accounts (which is something we'll explore in this blog a little further down the line).

Another advantage betting has over other forms of investment, in the UK anyway, is that all returns are tax exempt. As your betting operation grows, this can be a huge positive, worth £000s a year. And that brings in yet another positive – it is so easy to reinvest your money as you make a profit. The process of reinvestment is rapid – stakes can be raised literally overnight – and this cumulative snowball effect can be used to your advantage, making a higher bottom line profit whilst keeping your exposure to risk exactly as it has always been.

And finally for now, it's worth bearing in mind that you don't need years of experience to form a strong, high performing betting portfolio. Sure, you need to demonstrate certain skills and you need to train yourself to become a good bettor, but you don't need a university degree or vocational qualifications.

What's more, you can get ample help and guidance from the *Smart Betting Club!*

November's betting to date

Of course, after extolling the virtues of betting, I now have to report on a losing start to November! Typical!

The overall situation isn't so bad, and the last few days' betting have been much improved on what came before, so hopefully we're about to enter a good period.

The SBC's **Jason James** service is the top performer in November to date, and another strong week means that the ROI for the month is running at a staggering (and unsustainable) 64.4%! Other than that though, strong performers are not so much a little thin on the ground as non-existent!

Northern Monkey has had a horror month so far, down -65.7% ROI, but form is temporary, class permanent and all that. All in all, of 12 services in the portfolio, only five are in profit, and two of those only marginally so.

Here are the figures:

Chasemaster: Staked 8pts, -4.25pts.

Jason James: Staked 30.5pts, +19.65pts.

Morning Value Service (Doubles): Staked 14pts, -11pts.

Morning Value Service (Lite): Staked 22pts, -1.5pts.

Northern Monkey: Staked 19.5pts, -12.825pts

Racing Service A: Staked 4.75pts, +1pt.

Racing Service B: Staked 29.5pts, -6.1pts.

Combo Horse Racing System: Staked 3pts, +1pt.

Football Service A: Staked 2pts, +2.28pts.

Football Service B: Staked 3pts, +0.1pt.

Football Service C: Staked 4pts, -2.5pts.

Pinpoint Golf: Staked 43.25pts, -5.84pts.

WHY BETTING CAN BE SUCH A GOOD INVESTMENT... PART 2 BY ROWAN DAY

Well, last week's post got one or two social media tongues wagging!

For anyone not following @SBCinfo on Twitter (and if not, why not!?) my post on why betting is such a good investment was criticized, albeit mildly, by a pre-eminent author of various books on the subject of betting and tipsters. One such, *How To Spot a Black Cat in a Coal Cellar* is something of a classic and well worth a read.

Anyway, the author of these books believes my post to be a little misleading, stating that it is very difficult to make a long-term profit via gambling but that my post made it appear that profits from betting is easy money. All I can say is that wasn't my intention. First, I acknowledge that the skill and ability to build and maintain an *ongoing* edge over the bookies by a tipster is a task beyond all but a few very talented individuals. And second, following tipsters profitably takes a great deal of self-discipline, mental fortitude, and proper planning and organisation. The point of last week's post was to show how, when *executed properly*, betting can be a great investment and the reasons why...a subject I wish to continue discussing this week. But to make sure that we're all on the same page, I've subtly but importantly altered the title of this post and emphasised the word "can"!

So, last week we saw that betting profits are tax free – to residents of the UK at least – and that we are very much in control of our own funds. The rate of return can outshadow many other forms of investment with the potential to generate a strong Return On Capital by being able to turn over a bank of funds quickly and repetitively, and that a betting "operation" can be grown whilst not increasing exposure to risk. Of course, all of these points have caveats attached, in that each process involved in generating a long-term profit has to be executed in an appropriate manner.

There are other advantages too.

One is a direct consequence of the last point made above. Because it is easy to reinvest any profits made from betting, which in turn means growth is possible without increasing risk, you

can start betting with a small initial investment. In fact, I would strongly recommend starting small. If you were learning to swim, you wouldn't start by attempting to cross the Channel, would you? And the reason for that is that if you did, you'd drown!

Well, when it comes to investing money in betting then it is best to exercise caution, especially when setting out. That way any mistakes you make as you embark upon a steep learning curve don't cost you too much. A constant and continuing theme that you'll see as we go along with this blog is of exercising caution. I am risk averse, and I feel strongly that anyone involved in betting as a means of investment should be too.

Finally, the return for the time invested can be excellent. Sure, running a large portfolio of tipsters can become time consuming, especially as there is obviously a lot of records to be kept, but ultimately, the possible returns in comparison to the time needed for the work involved is excellent.

ENJOYED THIS? GET MORE WITH AN SBC MEMBERSHIP

I hope you have enjoyed this free Smart Betting Club review and started to understand a little bit more about how the service can help you and your betting.

Over the past 12 years, the SBC team have reviewed hundreds and proofed thousands of tipster services – with the very best and most profitable tipsters listed in the Hall of Fame and featured in our Betting Magazines.

My team and I constantly track and monitor these very best tipsters and feedback to you as a member on their ongoing progress with tipster league tables, ratings, charts and analysis.

Because SBC is funded by our members, this ensures we are fully on the side of the punter and can speak the truth about the betting industry. SBC is proud to be different and fiercely protective of the people we represent – you the punter.

The goal is to help you make money betting, whether for the first time ever or to build on existing profits.

So, why not try out the [Smart Betting Club](#) service to see how we can help you and your betting?

Don't forget either that membership to the Smart Betting Club comes with a 100% money back guarantee if not satisfied with our service in anyway. Thus, you can join with full peace of mind.

Peter Ling
Smart Betting Club Editor

Save & Make Money - Join Today!

Join Now »

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