JCapper Program Update – Dec 23, 2012 (Build 190)

What's Inside
This new program update has LOTS of new features. It WILL take me several days just to publish write ups in these release notes for everything in this new version (so check back frequently.)

The primary reason I'm publishing now (as opposed to waiting until I have a write up about everything) is to get the new Live Play Module out to JCapper Platinum Customers.

Happy Holidays,

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Live Play Module -
A few weeks ago, Brisnet made some changes to the web pages being parsed by the JCapper Live Play Module.

Relevant Background Info
The primary change involves the characters "type=0" (without the quotes) found in the query string of their tote urls:

"type=0" (without the quotes) was changed to "type=1" (again without the quotes.)

The second change involves track codes embedded in their tote urls:

Previously, all Brisnet track codes embedded in their tote urls had 3 characters and these always matched the first 3 characters of the data file names.

For example, the track code in their tote link for Fingerlakes was FLX - and this matched the first 3 characters of the Fingerlakes data file - also FLX.

That's no longer the case. Now the track code in the tote link is "FL" but the first 3 characters of the data file is still "FLX."

The next change has to do with changes to both track code and tote code. In the Brisnet world, Hollywood Park is now "BHP" and Philadeplphia Park is "PRX" (also tote code "PRX".)

At this point, managing these and similar future changes starts to get complicated for us programmers...

1. I can't just assume that the presence of an X character means that a track will have a 2 character tote code. "PRX" is both a valid tote code and a valid track code. This differs conceptually from tracks like "GGX" that have 2 character tote codes (the tote code for Golden Gate is "GG.")

2. The Live Play Module also has to work for HDW customers.

Unlike Brisnet, in my opinion, HDW did the right thing and left the track code for Hollywood Park unchanged at "HOL" - HDW also left the track code for Philly Park unchanged at "PHA" - this makes things easier to manage in a database.

3. Up to this point in time, ALL of the tote links have been hard coded into the Live Play Module. It wasn't overly difficult because the track code and the tote code always matched and there were only a handful of track names that needed special handling.

I thought about just recoding the above changes into the Live Play Module and publishing it as a one time fix. (In fact that WAS my initial intention when I made the posts at the top of this thread.)

However, maintaining the current info model where tote links for 100 or more tracks are hard coded into the Live Play Module is just asking for trouble every time Brisnet makes a change to their tote link schema.

Need for a Redesign
The more I thought about this, the more I realized that the better info model would be to enable the USER to handle changes by Brisnet to tote links on the fly.

I decided to create a new table (it's called the ToteCodes table) and I added it to the JCapper2.mdb file beginning with this new program update. The ToteCodes table in the JCapper2.mdb file included with this new program update includes valid entries for most of the tracks currently running. In the next section (titled ToteCodes Table Mgr) you will find basic operating instructions so that you can create your own valid table entries (for enabling the Live Play Module to parse the tote stream) as the need arises.

I also created a new screen called the ToteCodes Table Mgr. You will find a launch button for it on the left side of the Live Play Module beginning with this new program update.

The new Live Play Module empowers you the user to persist entries to the ToteCodes table (you need one record persisted to the table for each track code that you want to enable the module to parse.) The new Live Play Module reads the ToteCodes table and

uses tote links read from the table to parse the win pool, exacta pool, and get auto scratches for each requested track.

ToteCodes Table Mgr

BASIC OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Launch the module** by finding the ToteCodes Table Mgr button on the face of the Live Play Module and clicking it. Note that when you launch the ToteCodes Table Mgr Interface, the Live Play Module is automatically put into ML/Manual Mode. Once you are done with the ToteCodes Table Mgr you can kick the Live Play Module back into Live Tote Mode by unchecking the Manual Mode and ML Mode boxes – after which you will be able to operate the module normally.

2. **Pull Up or Find** the entry for a track code by keying a valid 3 character track code into the Find field and click the Find button. If an entry exists in the table for the track code you are searching for the interface will pull it up. If not, the interface will tell you that the track code you are searching for was not found.

3. **To create a New Entry** for a 3 character track code:
a. Click the New button.
b. Key a 3 character track code into the Track Code field. Hint: Use the first 3 characters of the data file name.
c. Key a 2 or 3 character tote code into the Tote Code field. Hint: Tracks that have 3 character track codes such as AQU-BEL-SAR, etc will have 3 character tote codes. Tracks that have 2 character track codes such as GG, SA, WO, etc. will have 2 character tote codes. You might try looking closely at the tote url itself for that track by loading SuperTote into a web browser. If you still can't figure it out, goto the JCapper Message Board and ask.
d. Key a numeric 1 character into the Type field.
e. Click the Assist button. The Interface will auto generate tote urls for you using the tote code and type that you supplied.
f. Key a valid NHPlay track description (if you know it) into the NHPlayDescr field. This will prove helpful later if you are an NHPlay customer and want to import a CSV file containing your own tickets directly from the NHPlay site into the JCapper WagerHistory Module. If you don't know what the NHPlay TrackDescr is for a give track just leave this field blank.
g. Key your own track description into the Notes field. (Optional)
h. Click the Save button to save your work. Or, alternately, click one of the paging buttons (Back, Next, etc. to abandon your work.)

That's it!

Once you create a valid entry in the ToteCodes table for a given track, the Live Play Module will be able to parse the tote stream for that track from then on.

Troubleshooting:
If the Live Play Module refuses to parse the tote stream for a given track the first thing you should ask yourself is: Q. Do I have a valid entry in the ToteCodes table for that track?

Link to a screenshot of a valid entry for Gulfstream Park:
http://www.jcapper.com/messageboard/avatars/totecodesgpx.jpg

What you need to know about the screenshot:
1. **GPX** is the Track Code (also the first 3 characters of the data file name.)
2. **GP** is the Tote Code (embedded in the tote urls.)
3. **1** is the Type (embedded in the tote urls.)
4. **Both of the tote urls were auto generated by clicking the Assist button** after keying in GPX as the Track Code, GP as the Tote Code, and 1 as the Type. (Alternately, I suppose you could have keyed both urls out by longhand if for some reason you hate the idea of an Assist button.)
5. **Gulfstream** is the NHPlay Track Description (You would know that once you downloaded a CSV file from the NHPlay site containing tickets for wagers made on Gulfstream races.) Entering the correct NHPlay Track Description in the ToteCodes table here saves you the added step later of having to resolve the characters Gulfstream to track code GPX when importing Gulfstream tickets from the NHPlay CSV file directly into your WagerHistory table using the new CSV Import Screen in the WagerHistory Module.

--end section for the Live Play Module and ToteCodes Table Mgr

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JCapper2 Import Screen
Beginning with this new program update the JCapper2 Import Screen is now a stand alone module. That means no matter where you launch it from: The User System Definitions Screen, Trip Notes, Wager History, or the System Settings Interface – the JCapper2 Import Screen you get is identical across the entire JCapper platform. That may not mean much to you – but it definitely makes things easier on me going forward. I no longer have to maintain 4 separate JCapper2 Import Screens. I just have to maintain one. (This is something I've wanted to do for the longest time.)

Append Where Applicable Option
The JCapper2 Import Screen in this program update has a new option labeled Append Where Applicable that applies to the following tables:
StarterHistory, TripNotes WagerHistory, and UDMPlays.

Checking this box prior to running an import causes the Interface to append data (rather than force a clear first in the target) from the source file to the StarterHistory, TripNotes

WagerHistory, and UDMPlays tables in the target file. This is useful if you want to append data from multiple source JCapper2.mdb files into a single target file.

For example, suppose you have multiple JCapper2.mdb files where each has a StarterHistory table spanning a single calendar year. By using this option and appending Starterhistory table data from multiple source files you should be able to end up with a single target JCapper2.mdb file that has a StarerHistory table populated with data from multiple time periods (years) of your own choosing.

--end section for the JCapper2 Import Screen

TripNotes Module

The TripNotes Module Data Entry Screen user interface in this program update now expands (just like the Data Window and other JCapper Modules) when you grab the lower right corner of the module with your mouse cursor and drag it across the screen. I've wanted to enable this functionality in the TripNotes Module for a while now. I don't know about you but I hate having to work while being confined to a tiny area.

--end section for the TripNotes Module

WagerHistory Module

CSV Import Screen – *New!*
Starting with this new program update, if you are an NHPlay customer, you can generate a CSV file that contains detail data for your own tickets at the NHPlay website, download it to your local machine, and import the file directly into the JCapper WagerHistory Module.

Personally, I *really like* this new feature because importing wager history data directly into the WagerHistory Module is sooo much faster than creating wager history by keying tickets manually.

There's a LOT of cool stuff to found in this new interface. That said, a full write up WILL take me some time. I'm also working on a video and will post links to it in the PRIVATE area of the JCapper Message Board just as soon as I have it ready. (Right now ETA for this looks like about Jan 7, 2013.)

If you are not an NHPlay customer and want to be (not having a player account there is probably costing you money) shoot me an email.

 Jeff @ jcapper . com

(remove the blank spaces first)

--end section for WagerHistory Module

UPR Tools – Impact Values Table Wizard

New Menu Item – Find Factors In Use Tool
To launch the Find Factors in Use Tool, Click MENU and then click Find Factors In Use.

The Find Factors in Use Tool is a new tool that makes it easy for you to create a sql query designed to query the Profile table or the ImpactValues table to generate a report that tells you the names of the SQL UDMs and/or UPR or UserFactor GroupNames where specific factors are being used.

The interface is simple to operate and includes check boxes for specifying whether you want to search SQL UDMs or UPR GroupNames, Assist buttons that enable you to generate default sql expressions that you can edit once they appear in the Search Phrase field, a Search button for executing the sql expression in the Search Phrase field, a Results field for displaying the generated report, and a ? button that behaves just like the Display Factors buttons in the SQL Data Window and SQL UDM Wizard.

For example, clicking the SQL UDMs Box followed by clicking the Single Factor Assist button auto generates the following default sql expression and pastes it into the Search Phrase field:

SELECT * FROM PROFILE WHERE INSTR(NOTES, 'F01') > 0 ORDER BY PROFILE, ACTIVE

From there, clicking the Search button generates a report in the Results field that shows you the name of every sql udm where you are using F01.

Hint: If you wanted to see a list of UDMs where you are using F32 instead of F01, you would simply edit the default sql expression before clicking the Search button.

In addition to the Menu in the Impact Values Table Wizard, you will also find a button for launching the Find Factors in Use Tool in the upper left hand area of the very first screen on the UDM Wizard.

Introducing Two New Behaviors
Two new behaviors are being introduced with this new program update:

14 Avg Num Val – Enables you to take the numeric values of multiple factors and work them into an expression so that the final expression is the weighted average of the sum of each of its parts.

15 Avg Gap – Enables you to take the gaps of multiple factors and work them into an expression so that the final expression is the weighted average of the sum of each of its parts.

Important Note (PLEASE READ) - You will find that the new behaviors 14 and 15 are now active in the original Impact Values Table Wizard and recognized by the Main Module during the number crunching algorithms that fire in Calc Races and Build Database routines. **If you want to test the new behaviors out and use them in existing UPR GroupNames or UserFactors I strongly recommend that you stick to the original Impact Values Table Wizard** or the original ImpactValues Table Interface.

Expression Builder – *New!*
The UPR Tools Interface in this program update includes a new screen called the Expression Builder. This new screen makes it easy (perhaps easier is the right word) to visualize how each new element being added to a UPR GroupName or (UserFactor) fits in the overall factor mix – and how each of the factors in your mix shapes your final expression.

IMPORTANT Note #1 (PLEASE READ)
I hate to start any write up off with a warning but this IS critically important. **I STRONGLY recommend that you BACK UP your c:\2004\JCapper.mdb file BEFORE launching the Expression Builder Interface**. The Expression Builder Interface has a lot of cool new stuff – but unless you know what you are doing it is really easy to make one too many mouse clicks and use it (or mis-use it) to overwrite a perfectly good UPR GroupName or UserFactor.

Stop what you are doing and make that BACKUP right now!

Important Note #2 (PLEASE READ)
Parts of the Expression Builder User Interface are still under construction. As of this writing:

1. **IMPORTANT!** Do not attempt to use the new Expression Builder Interface to edit existing GroupNames until such time as I have brought it to a more complete state. That said, feel free to use the Expression Builder Interface to create brand new GroupNames and UserFactors.

2. The fields for defining Track Code, Avoid Track Code, Surface, min distance, max distance, min field size, and max field size on the Expression Builder

Interface are programmed in such a way that they are applied to every factor in the GroupName when you click the Propagate button. Note that I am currently working on adding the data fields for defining Track Code, Avoid Track Code, Surface, min distance, max distance, min field size, and max field size to the Template Selection Tool so that you can apply these data items to individual factors (rows) as opposed to having them applied to every factor in the GroupName. **READ the above paragraph again and be extremely careful about using the Expression Builder Interface to propagate entries to known good existing GroupNames**. That said, you should find that the Expression Builder Interface (even though parts of it are under construction) will work just fine when you are using it to create new UPR GroupNames and/or UserFactors.

3. The Template Selection Tool for individual factors F1 through F7 can be launched with the Apply button disabled so that you can see where I plan on going with it. When this part of the Interface is finished you will be able to use the Template Selection Tool to define Matched Pair Ranges, IVs, Track Code, Avoid Track Code, Surface, min distance, max distance, min field size, and max field size for specific factors (or the factor sitting in a specific row.)

4. **Important PLEASE READ** - The Template Selection Tool launch button labeled *Template All Line Items* launches the Template Selection Tool with the Apply button enabled. Be aware that when you click the Apply button, the template defined by you in the Template Selection Tool will be applied to EVERY 0 Rank Behavior line item (or factor row) in the GroupName you are working with. **Be extremely careful with this. I strongly recommend that you re-read item 3 above and wait until the Expression Builder Interface is finished before using it to add stuff to known good GroupNames**. That said, you should find the Expression Builder Interface to be quite useful for hand crafting entries for brand new UPR GroupNames and UserFactors.

The Expression Builder Interface provides you seven rows per page – labeled F1 through F7 – one factor per row – up to a max of 30 pages or 210 factors per GroupName. Use the More and Back buttons to move from one page to the next.

Basic Operating Instructions call for you to drag and drop factors from the factor list onto the factor name textbox in the row where you want that factor to go.

Use the Slider Control (there's one provided in each row) to dial in the Weight for the factor in each row.

Key a numeric behavior into the Behavior field to set the Behavior for the factor in each row. Valid Behaviors are: 0 rank, 1, numeric value, 2 gap, 3 translate, 14 create weighted avg using raw numeric values, and 15 create weighted avg using raw gap.

Key a numeric a Low Score (same thing as a Default Impact) and a High Score into the respective fields in each row to set Low Score and High Score for the factor in each row.

Alternately, click the Template button to the far right of each row to bring up a special Template Interface that enables you to select a Template to auto generate matched pair and IV data for the factor in each row. Alternately, you can use the Template Interface to manually key matched pair and IV data for the factor in each row. Hit the Apply button on to transfer data from the special Template Interface to the factor in each row.

Hint: Use your High Score to impose a max numeric value for any given factor in conjunction with Behaviors 14 and 15. Example, if 999 is the High Score keyed into the High Score field in the row for a given factor, chances are that max numeric value will never apply. (Most factors have max values well below 999.) However, suppose your Behavior is 15 and your factor in that row is CompoundAP. If you use a High Score in that row of 12, then the Interface will treat a horse having CompoundAP gap of positive 37 the same as if it had CompoundAP of positive 12. You might consider doing this if CompoundAP gap analysis in the Data Window tells you that CompoundAP positive 37 gap horses are really no better in terms of win rate and roi than CompoundAP positive 12 gap horses. This feature helps you avoid overweighting CompoundAP gap for horses that happen to fall in the extreme upper area of the data distribution.

Hint: Use the spread between Low Score and High Score to control how the Interface scores horses in conjunction with Behavior 15. Consider, for most factors, every horse in the race except the one with the race top for the factor under consideration will have a negative gap value for that factor. (The horse with the race top for that factor is the only horse in the race that will have a positive gap value.) Example: If -999 is used as the Low Score and 999 is used as the High Score the Interface is programmed to ignore the spread between Low Score and High Score. (Most factors have min gap values well above -999 and well below 999.) However, suppose your Behavior is 15 and your factor in a given row is FigConsensus. If you use a Low Score for that row of -80 and a High Score of 20, then the Interface will calculate the spread between low score of -80 and high score of 20 to arrive at 100. The calculated spread value of 100 becomes the max value awarded by the Interface when FigConsensus gap (the factor in that row) is evaluated during Calc Races and Build Database routines. Applying some critical thinking ahead of time based on what you see in the Data Window when you set Low Score and High Score will enable you to make the Interface award positive values when the GroupName expression is calculated (rather than the negative values that would have been awarded to most horses had you used -999 and 999 as your low score and high score.)

There's a LOT of meat on the bones here. That said, I still need to finish the Interface. I'm also working on a video and will post links to it in the PRIVATE area of the JCapper Message Board just as soon as I have it ready.

. --end section for UPR Tools

FAQs:

Q. Do I need to check the box on the Installer to make it give me a new JCapper2.mdb file?

A. Yes. This new program update contains new JCapper2.mdb table content - which requires that you make the Installer give you a new JCapper2.mdb file by checking the Overwrite JCapper2.mdg file box on the face of the Installer.

Q. After checking the box to make the Installer give me a new JCapper2.mdb file, do I need to use the JCapper2 Import Module found on the User System Definitions Screen to import data from my old JCapper2.mdb file into the fresh blank JCapper2.mdb file copied onto my c:\JCapper\Exe folder by the Installer?

A. Yes, any time you make the installer give you a new JCapper2.mdb file, this is critical - an absolutely must - especially if you have a custom sql factor setup or a custom sql html report.

Q. How do I run a JCapper2 Import routine?

A. Link to video:

http://www.jcapper.com/podcasts/j2import.wmv

Note: I generally recommend checking the Overwrite JCapper2.mdb File box on the face of the Installer as a best practice each time you install a new program update.

I also recommend importing data out of you old JCapper2.mdb file into your new file too.

If you get in the habit of doing this with each new program update, you're never left guessing whether or not the new program update you just installed contains new required table content. Checking the box makes the Installer give you new table content whenever it's there.

Q. Do I need to rebuild databases from scratch after installing this program update?

A. No. Not if you've kept current with the downloads.

Now if you haven't kept current with the downloads then yes, chances are you will have to rebuild databases from scratch before using the Data Window to query playlist files built using older program versions.

Q. I've been using the same (older) program version for quite some time and haven't kept current with the downloads. Do I download and install each of the new program updates that I missed? Or does downloading and installing the latest new program update bring me "current" again?

A. The new program updates are written in such a way that getting the latest one brings you "current" – meaning that you can skip the ones you missed and just install the latest one. Afterwards, you will be "current" again.

Enjoy,

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