

Innovations of the Decade: #5 Trakus

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With the end of the Aughts rapidly approaching, the r2 collective polled industry insiders, horseplayers, and fans for their top five technological innovations in racing during the past decade. As voted by our panel, #5 is **Trakus**.



Trakus, in action

Developed by Massachusetts-based TKS, Inc., Trakus was initially used by the New England Patriots, the NHL, NASCAR, and the PGA for real-time data collection before the parent company switched their focus to horse racing. Now implemented at several tracks, including Woodbine, Keeneland, and Del Mar, Trakus has become an integral part of those track's simulcast and in-house productions.

Using a wireless radio frequency system with small radio antennas positioned around the racetrack and corresponding ultra-lightweight radio tags located within a horse's saddle-cloth, Trakus provides real-time data that the track can display. This is done with either the chicklets, which Woodbine uses to display the horse's position on the racetrack, or as part of an automatically updating full-field rundown,

which is used by both Keeneland and Del Mar. Following the completion of a race, Trakus can also be used to generate a three-dimensional replay or a race chart.

Furthermore, after tracking each horse during the race, Trakus also stores information in a database about the horse. This information includes how many feet the horse ran during the race, how much ground it covered in comparison to other horses, how fast it ran during the race, and the horse's final quarter. Trakus is also useful because no matter what kind of weather the track may be experiencing (fog, rain, snow, etc.) or what kind of camera angle the track uses, the Trakus system is always available to display the exact location of the horse.



Digital Replays

Trakus is taking a multi-pronged approach to the future. First, they are making races available via mobile phone through their website, trakus.com. After signing up for the service, a fan or bettor can access a Trakus feed of any race at their participating tracks. Trakus has also moved overseas this year, debuting at racetracks in France and Turkey. Finally, with their Trakus Network or T-Net, which is available at trakus.com, industry professionals, fans, handicappers, trainers, owners, etc. can get access to a myriad of features including full-field results databases and replays, discussion forums, and industry expert analysis.

With all the features Trakus has — its ability to display automatic full-field rundowns, its ability to chart and store information about horses for future use, and its ability to let fans and bettors know exactly where their horse is on the track at all times, it will be exciting to see where this technology goes and if it will be available at all tracks in the near future.

This article was written by Greg Reinhart, a web reporter for The Harness Edge. Prior to joining the Standardbred publication in 2007, Reinhart developed LucOuellette.com, the first web site used by a harness racing catch-driver.

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