

New Program Update – July 8, 2012

What's Inside –

WagerHistory Module Ticket Calculator

Auto Generation of Field Size

Beginning with this program update, when the WagerHistory Module Ticket Calculator is launched, the field size drop down will auto set itself to display the correct number of horses in the current race.

Note that this behavior is only enabled for tickets generated on race day. If you use the Data Entry Sheet to record (older) tickets from previous race days – the system default of 20 horses is used by the Ticket Calculator.

Enhanced Settings Module

What's This? – Clickable Help Text

I've added clickable help text labeled "What's This?" in red above a few of the settings on the latest version of the Enhanced Settings Module. As the text itself implies, if you want to know what the setting does: Click the "What's This?" label and you will be presented with a help message explaining what the setting does.

Bug Fix

Description of bug: I managed to write a bug into the Enhanced Settings Module that was shipped with the 5/30/2012 new program update. The bug impacts the following JCapper user types only – those of you who are attempting to use the module to save your very first Enhanced Settings change (any setting) to the UserSysDefs table in the c:\2004\JCapper.mdb file. The bug shows itself in the form of an annoying error message the very first time the Save button is clicked.

When I tested the Enhanced Settings Module shipped with the 5/30/2012 new program update I didn't catch this because I had already made hundreds of settings changes to my current UserSysDefs table (and it never occurred to me to test the new module using an empty table.)

I spent some time working on a bug fix and have a working Enhanced Settings Module at my end. I'm happy to report that the issue (and the ensuing error message) appears to have been solved. The Enhanced Settings Module in this new program update contains a bug fix that addresses the problem.

Scratch BOT

Verify Folder Number of XML Parse Routine

This is one of those details I've been meaning to add for some time now. Have you ever clicked one the XML folder parse buttons - and parsed the XML for scratches and changes – and clicked OK at the message box that tells you the folder number and number of scratches parsed from the xml - *without paying attention to that message box* - and then just before x-ing out of Scratch BOT wished you actually had looked at the message box - (or better yet) - had a way you could *verify the folder number* - before leaving Scratch BOT and proceeding on to a Calc Races routine?

I know I have.

After each XML parse routine, the Scratch BOT module shipped with this program update displays the Folder number and a timestamp in the title bar atop of the module for the XML parse routine just run. This (cosmetic) change provides the player a way to verify (with a glance) that the XML was in fact parsed for the correct folder number before x-ing out of Scratch BOT and proceeding on to a Calc Races routine.

PPs Generator - Bug Fix

Background Info:

There's an algorithm in the PPs Generator that makes a pace of race calculation.

The PPs Generator doesn't (yet) display results of this (but the foundation is written into the module.)

The idea would be to (eventually and at the request of the user based on a setting in the Enhanced Settings Module) mark up or highlight running lines for a horse that are par or better for the pace call, final call, or both.

Note that functionality for marking up running lines for horses that are par or better is not (repeat not) being published at this time. That topic is being discussed here for the purpose of providing background info about an error message reported in the PPs Generator while rendering R5 at CRC for June 08, 2012.

Error Message - Specific Cause:

Screenshot:

<http://www.JCapper.com/messageboard/avatars/missingtimes.jpg>

The reason for the error message in the PPs Generator when CRC R5 for June 08, 2012 is rendered is that multiple horses in the race have running lines from R8 on Jan 07, 2012 at Gulfstream – a race where the timer "malfunctioned."

Unlike the pace of race calculations made in the JCapper Main Module, the code that I wrote to make the pace of race calc in the PPs Generator doesn't anticipate this - and as a result - "chokes" when the race being evaluated has missing pieces.

Solution:

The PPs Generator shipped in this JCapper program update contains a revised pace of race calc algorithm that anticipates races where internal fractions might be missing – and handles them by setting pace of race for such running lines equal to 0.

DFM Card Loader

The Post Time List

In the last program update I introduced a button that provided a look at post time for the first race in *a single data file*.

In this program update I've expanded on that. There's a new File Listbox called the Post Time List. The files that you drag and drop onto it will sort in post time order for the first race in each file. Further, the interface displays a text list of the files in the Post Time List (always sorted in post time order) along with the first race post times for each to the immediate right of the Post Time List itself.

There are two ways to get files ON the Post Time List:

1. Highlight files on the Available Files List (it's the file Listbox on the left hand side of the interface) and click the button labeled "Paste to Post Time List" (located just above the Post Time List.) As soon as you click the button, the interface will populate the Post Time List with the highlighted files.
2. Drag and Drop file names onto the Post Time List (from either the Available Files Listbox, or the File Listboxes for Folders 1, 2, or 3.) As soon as the drag and drop event completes, the interface will populate the Post Time List with the highlighted files.

Use the following methods to get files OFF the Post Time List:

1. Click the Clear Post Time List button located beneath the Post Time List.

2. Highlight individual files on the Post Time List and click the Delete Key on the Keyboard.
3. Highlight files on the Post Time List and Drag and Drop them to another File Listbox.

Each time the file count of the Post Time List changes, the interface will re-sort the Post Time List by post time for the first race found in each file.

Screenshot:

<http://www.JCapper.com/MessageBoard/Avatars/DFMCardLoaderPostTimeReport.jpg>

Hint: Using the Military Time setting for post times (instead of AM/PM) in the Enhanced Settings Module helps facilitate this report.

The Purpose of the Post Time List

Once you have the files that you want on the Post Time List – *where they are sorted by post time for the first race in each file* – simply drag and drop them onto the File Listboxes for Folders 1, 2, and 3.

The objective here is to make short work of grouping your card files by post time for the first race in each file.

For example, as I write this (today is Sunday June 24, 2012) and I have downloaded 31 thoroughbred tracks from HDW. I plan on loading about 24 of them into JCapper and want to use the DFM Card Loader to arrange them on my active data folders by post time for R1. CTX, LSX, and NPX normally start late in the day (weeknights my time) but today (Sunday) they are running daytime cards. With so many tracks running this time of year, staying on top of which one runs when can be frustrating.

Having the ability to display every track running – sorted by post time for the first race in the file – is a nice touch. Beyond facilitating the loading of track codes into JCapper so that tracks with like post times can be grouped together on the same folder – by the way this increases the efficiency of XML Parse and Calc Races routines – beyond that – getting an advance look at first race post times for each track helps me map out my race day.

JCapper Main Module

Bug Fix - Data Type Mismatch Error during SQL Build Database Routines

This bug appears to impact some (but not all) users. Because only 3 of you have reported it (out of a community of more than 200 active users) – I can make an educated guess that the bug occurs only for those of you whose machines have the same specific chipset configuration. *(But that's only a guess on my part.)*

Bug Description

In races with short fields, sometimes the host track decides to cancel show (and once in a while place) wagering on the race. For races that fit that description, JCapper .DAT files on most machines render with a numeric zero "0" (without the quote characters) in the data fields for the cancelled place and show mutuel amounts. For races that fit this description, on some machines - *and I'm only guessing it's a quirk caused by a specific chipset configuration* - the data fields for the cancelled place and show mutuel amounts are rendered as empty.

The original SQL Mode Build Database routines that I wrote for JCapper were written under the assumption that an actual numeric value could always be read from all of the data fields in a JCapper .DAT file. In the event the horse did not earn a placing that paid the bettor a mutuel payoff for a given wager type – the amount in the data field would be a numeric "0" character (without the quotes.) When I wrote the routine, I never anticipated that some quirk - *chipset configuration or otherwise* – would produce a data field for a mutuel payoff in a JCapper .DAT file containing a null value.

During a SQL Build Database Routine - those users unfortunate enough to have a configuration – *chipset or otherwise* - that produces a null value are given the error message – while all other users whose configuration produces a .DAT file with a "0" characters in it are able to process the race in question smoothly.

Yesterday, I created an FTP account for a JCapper user who was getting the error message so that he could upload his entire JCapper install, along with a quarterly data folder, to a folder on the JCapper.com server. From there I downloaded all of his files and folders. After getting them installed on one of my machines – the difference between his JCapper .DAT files and mine began to shed some light on what was causing the error for him – and not for me.

Solution

From there, writing a bug fix into the Main Module was easy. *(But because I had been completely unable to replicate the error at my end until I was able to physically see the data field content inside of .DAT files created on a machine that was producing null values – debugging this had eluded me.)*

Starting with new JCapper program updates published 7/8/2012 and later – those of you who were experiencing this bug should now find it to be a thing of the past.

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.mdb 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,

-jp

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