

Tracking the Danger Zone

The Dangers of Horse Racing in New York State

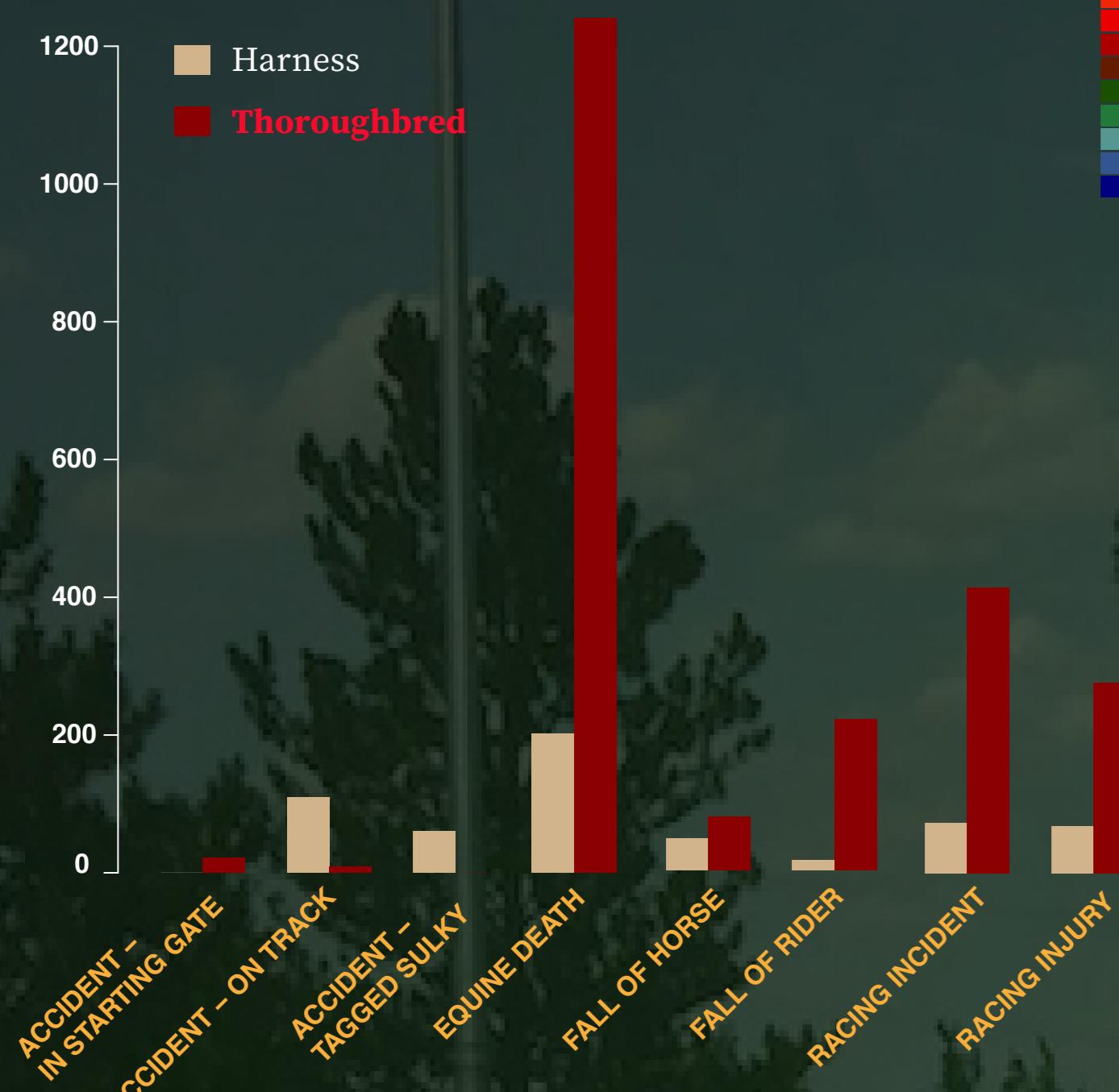
Joyce Woznica, Syracuse University, IST 719

Incidents at NY Tracks

Are specific tracks worse than others?

The data indicates that thoroughbred racing is significantly more dangerous than harness racing overall with a much higher incident rate of equine death and racing incidents.

Number of Incidents by Racing Division

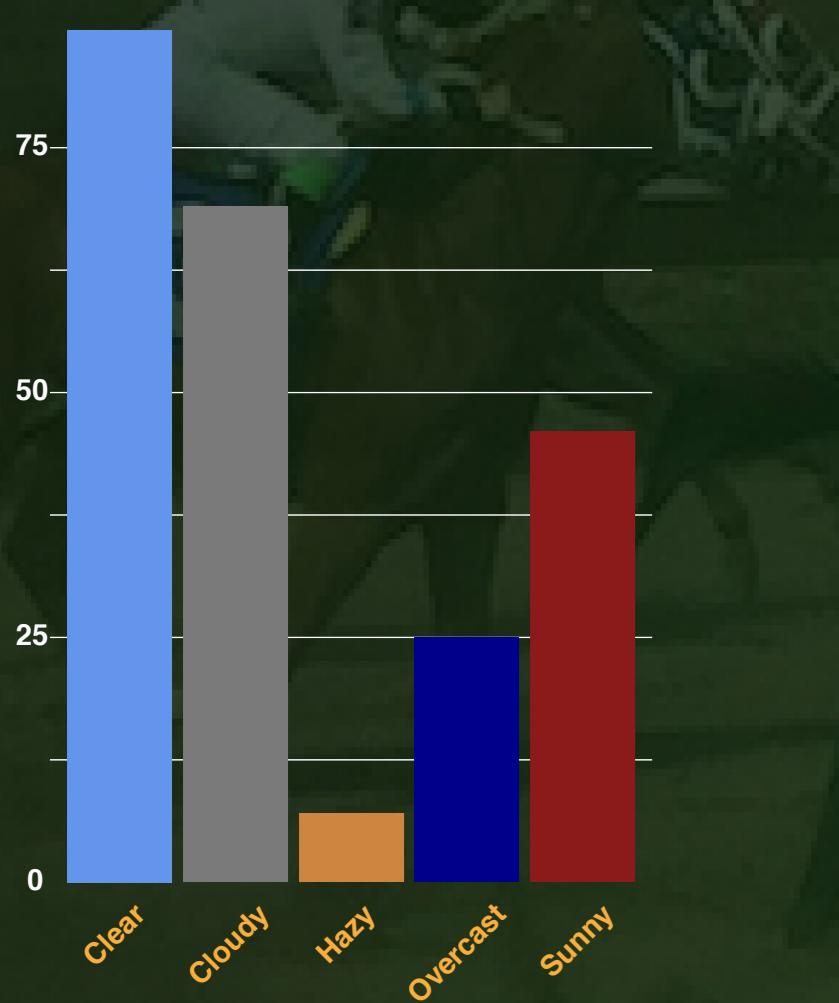


The Weather

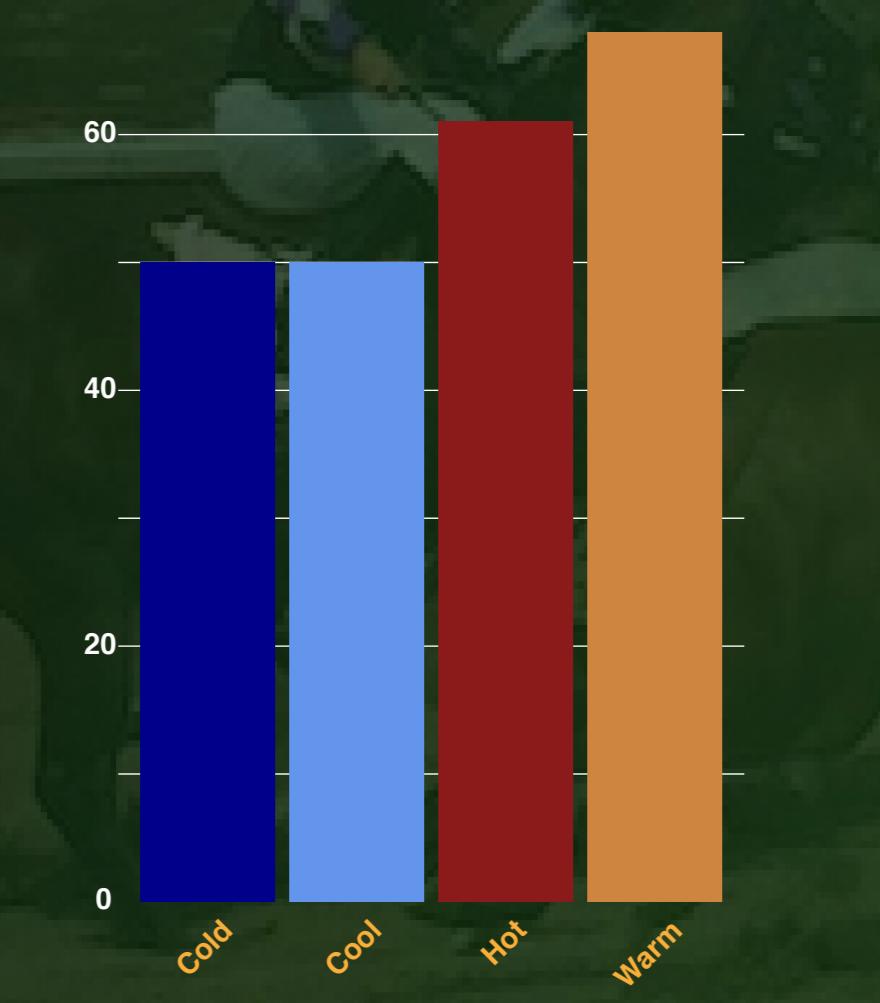
What weather conditions should be avoided?

Incidents are much higher when there are showers or it is raining - this could be related to a sloppy and wet track which can lead to accidents. Hot, warm or humid weather is also an issue. Horses get overheated in this type of weather and can colic which can lead to death.

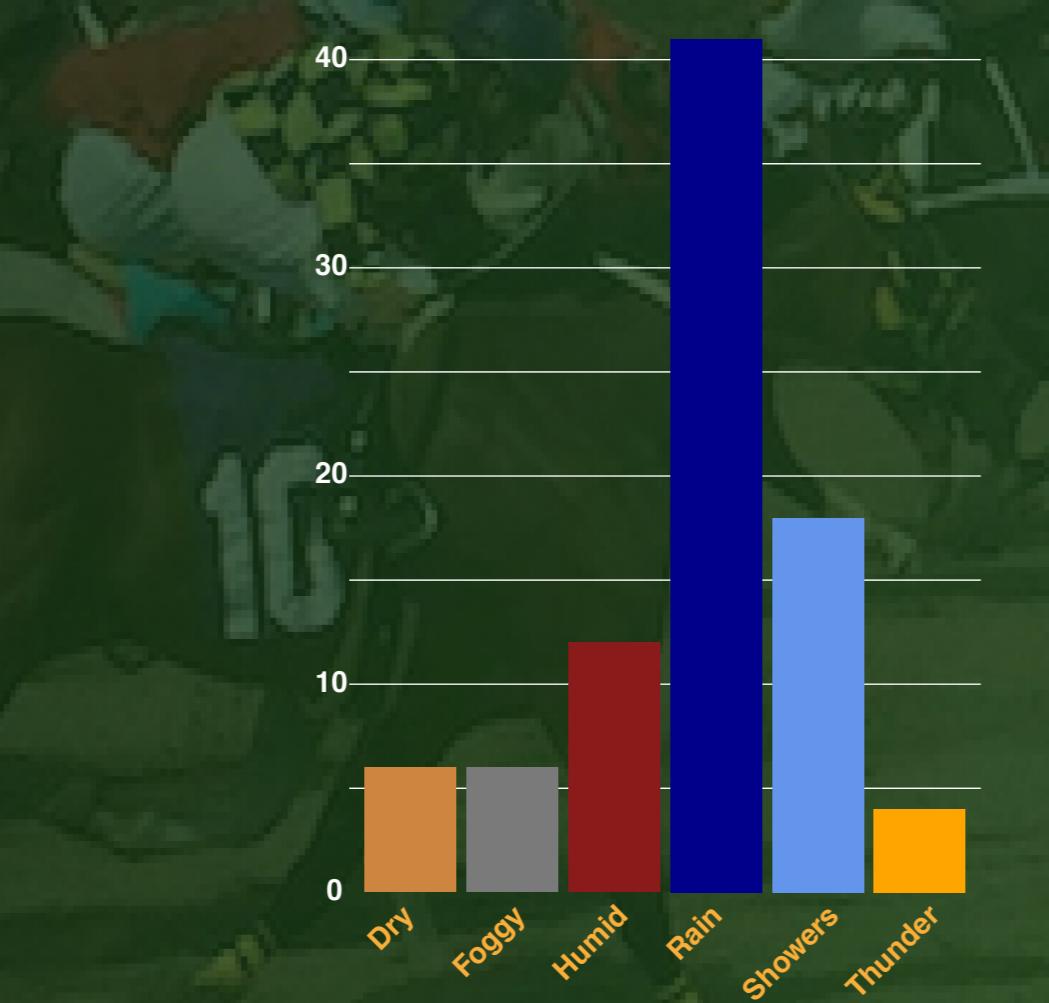
Incident Frequency by Sky Condition



Incident Frequency by Temperature



Incident Frequency by Precipitation



The Data

Within the state of New York, any incident, death, or breakdown of any horse at any facility under the Gaming Commission's jurisdiction is reported. Once the data is verified, it is entered into a database that contains thirteen components that detail over four thousand incidents at New York State equine racetracks starting in 2009 to present day. For this discussion, data from 2009 to 2019 was used.

35%
of Accidents are Equine Death

79%
on Thoroughbred Racetracks

2%
Improvement over the last decade

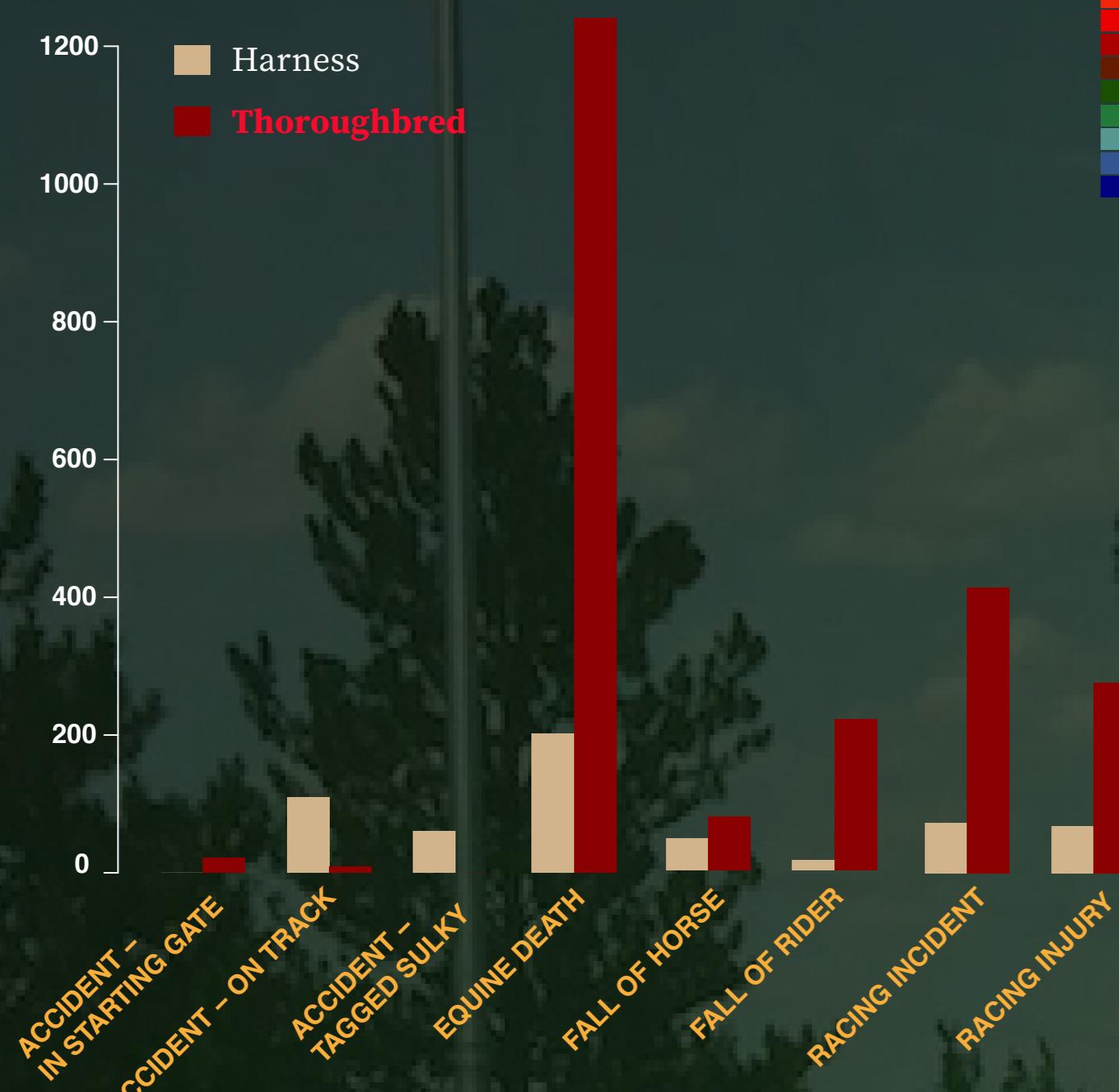
The horse racing industry is plagued with accidents resulting in equine injury and often death. Equestrian lovers and race track enthusiasts are concerned about the travesty that exists on our tracks. The welfare of these majestic animals should be protected if the sport is to thrive. Further investigation can shed light on contributing factors and provide insight into what leads to the high number of racing track incidents. Armed with this information, tracks can put the proper constraints in place in the future to minimize incidents. To begin such an investigation, a subset of both harness and thoroughbred racetracks within New York State (NYS) has been studied.

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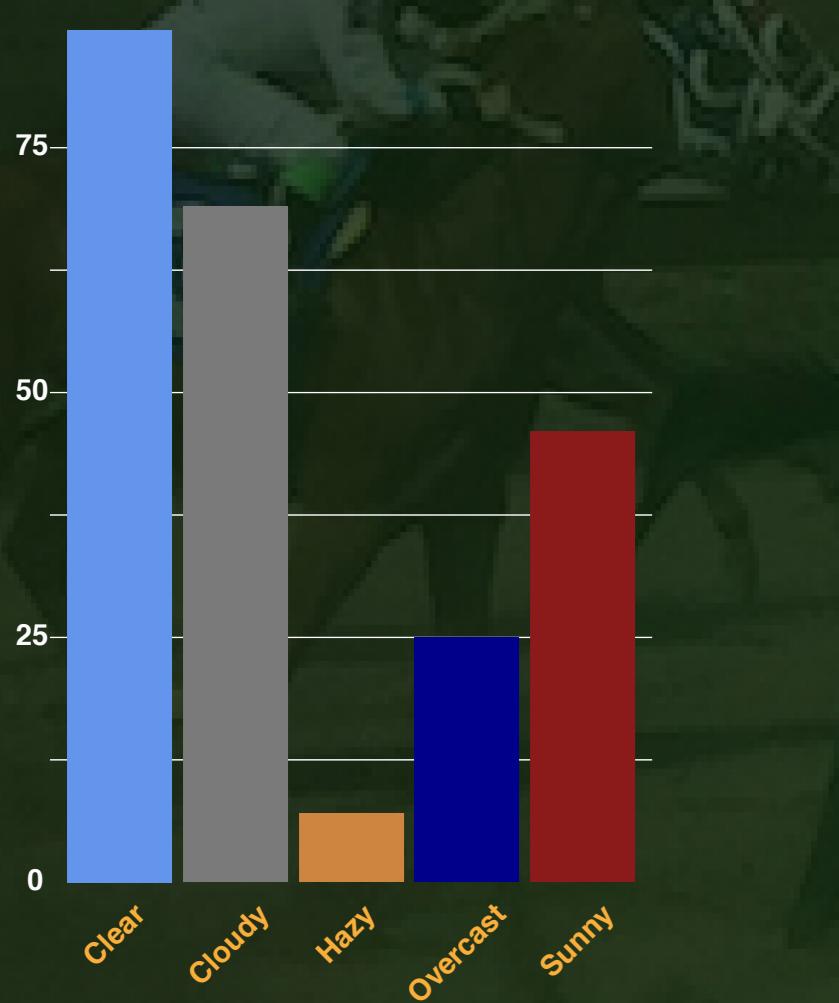


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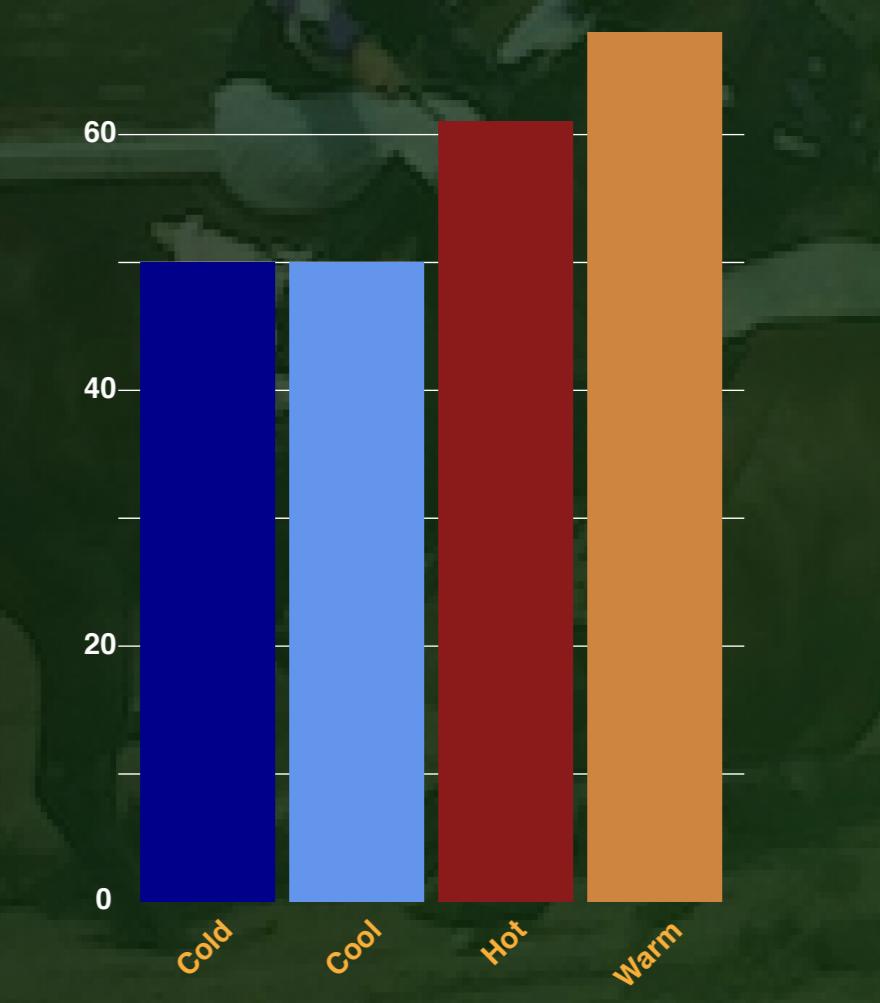
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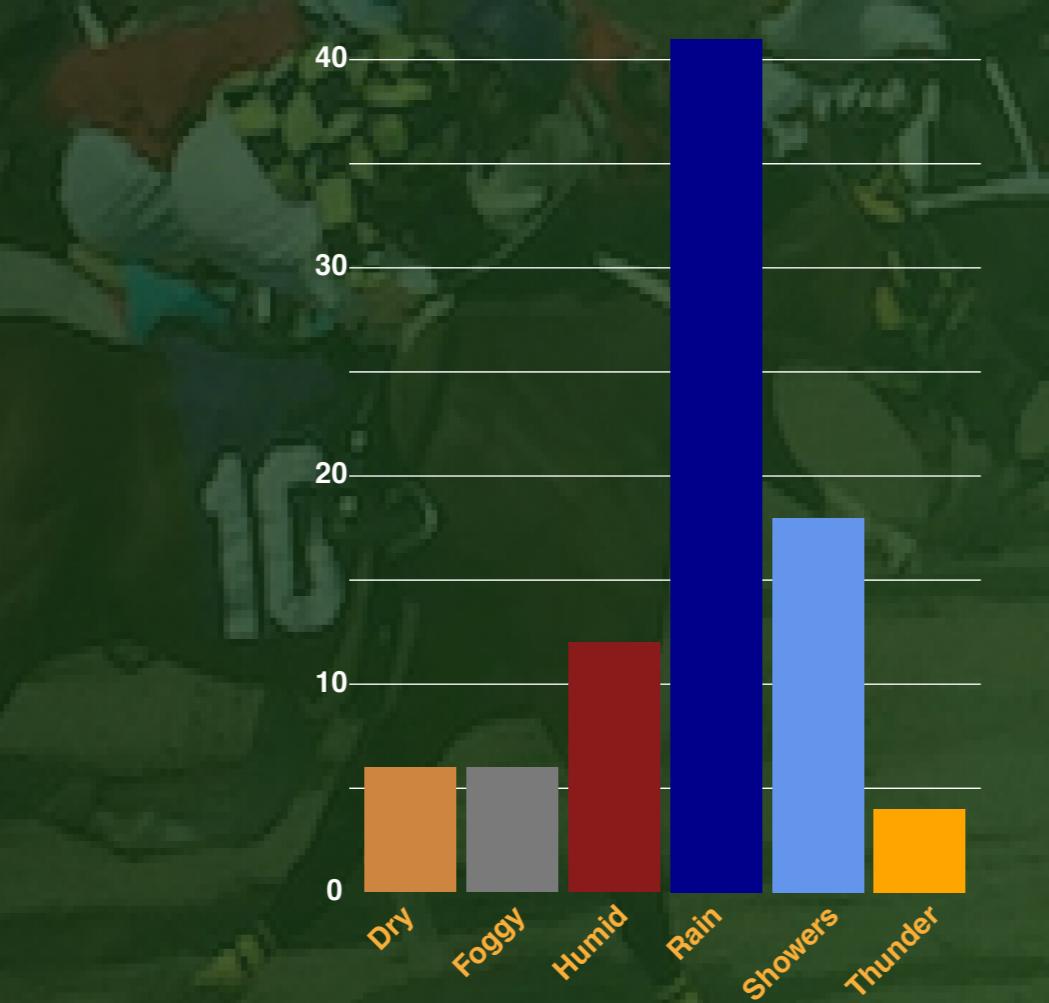
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Incident Frequency by Temperature

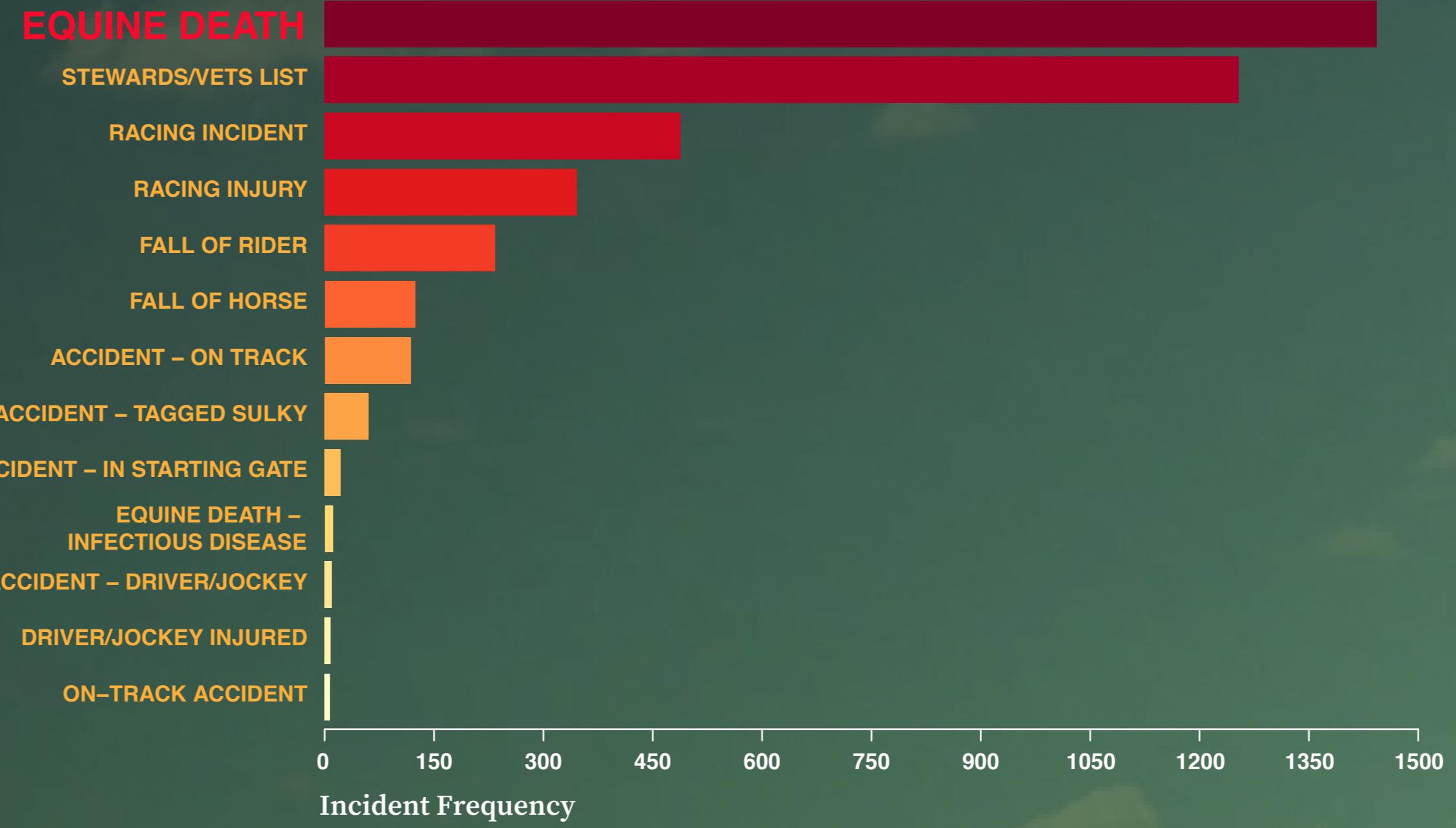


Incident Frequency by Precipitation



What are the most common incidents on New York State Tracks?

Number of Incidents by Type



There is a substantially larger number of Equine Deaths that take place on NYS Race Tracks than any other incident type resulting in 1,443 deaths over the last 10 years. These are deaths that are not attributed to a Fall of the Horse or Rider or Driver.



What details are being reported?

Comments are noted for most race track incidents. The most common word found in those reports was **death**.

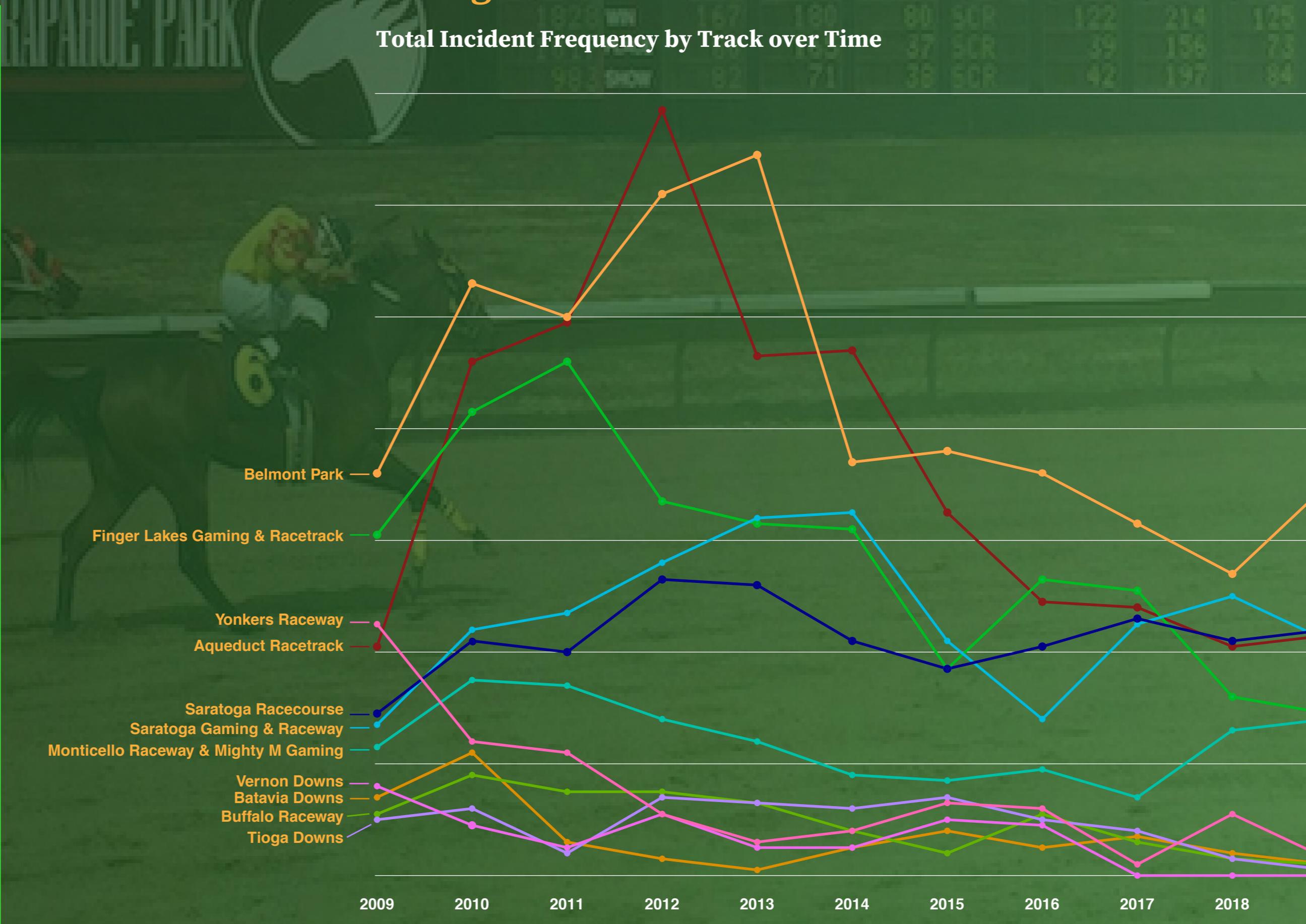
Other words that appear frequently in incident reports are:

- lame
- retired
- vanned (taken off by van)
- died
- leg
- broke
- tendon
- flipped
- fell
- bone

This information indicates the types of injuries, if not death then broken legs, bones or some other lameness injury.

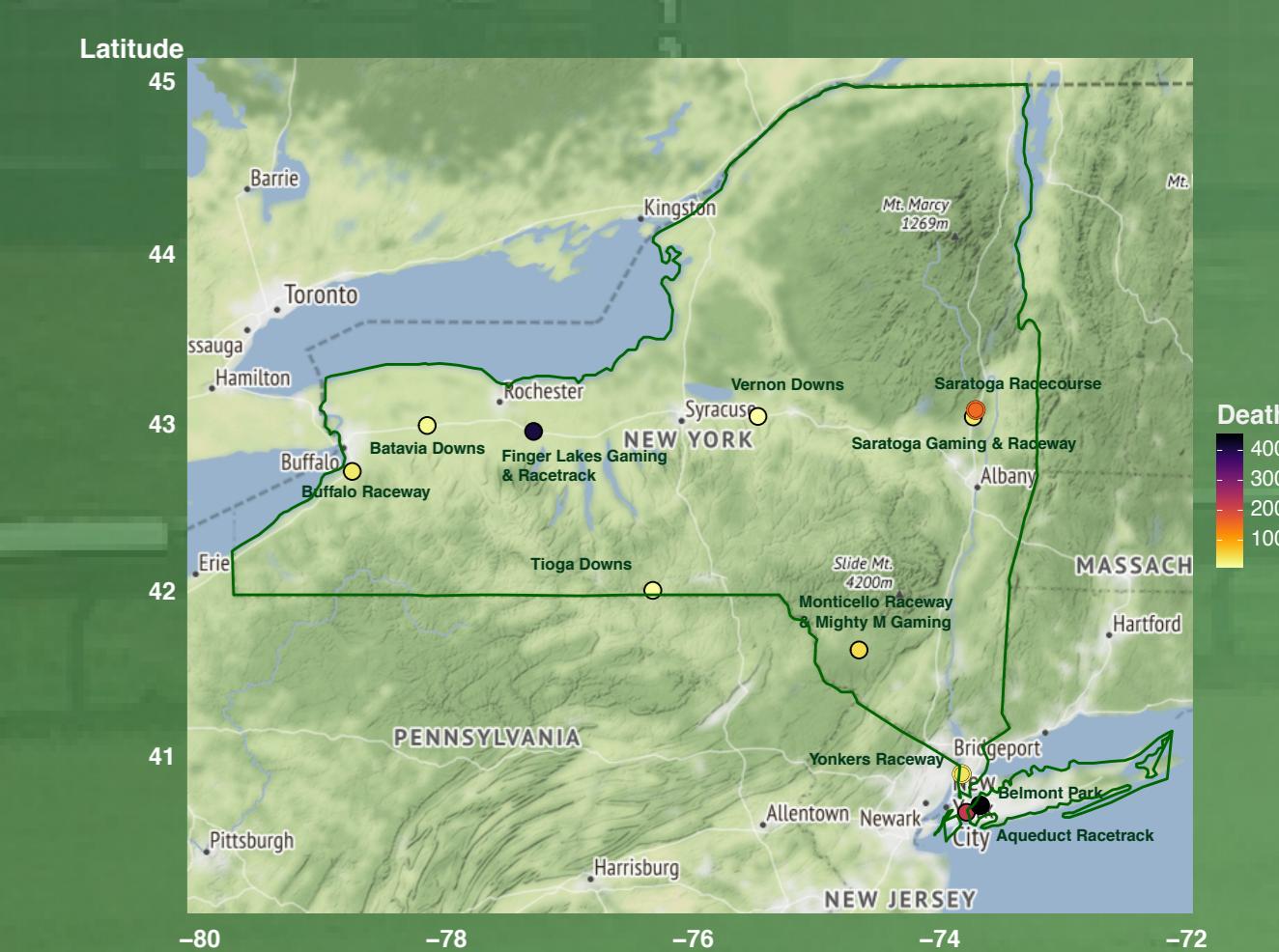
Any Improvement?

Are incidents decreasing over time?



Despite track improvements that have been made as well as the publishing of track incidents, the race industry remains a very dangerous equine sport. Injuries have decreased at most tracks, but the overall improvement is only 2% in the last decade. In this industry, horses are often pushed to their limits at a young age when their bones and bodies are not yet mature which results in life threatening injuries and death.

Does Track Location matter?



Track location does not seem to have any impact on number of incidents within the NYS system.

Sources

Source: New York State Government
Equine Death and Breakdown
Updated 2/18/2020

Date Created: 2/20/2013

Dataset Owner: Division of Horse Racing and Pari-Mutuel Wagering

4148 Rows, 13 Columns

Geocoding function: OSM Nominatim API
<http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Nominatim>
by: D.Kisler