TESTEDNQ · FREE GUIDE

10 NQ MYTHS TESTED ON 5 YEARS OF DATA

What every Nasdaq futures trader believes,
and what 1.8 million one-minute bars actually say.

+ Free tool: the 60-second pre-market gamma check

+ The one system that survived: one alert, one bracket order

CME NQ front-month 1-minute data, 2021-10-20 to 2026-11-04 · 1,256 regular sessions

Educational content only. Not financial advice. Hypothetical results have inherent limitations.

The backtest that lied to me

I've traded for 18 years. I started in 2008, in the middle of the financial crisis. I bought what I was sure had fallen enough. It kept falling. I taught myself from chart books and trader forums until dawn, and I learned to cut losses the expensive way: with my own money.

Years later, I built a backtest that made 42% a year. I was ready to trade it. Then I found the reason it looked so good: a data bug. The real number was nothing special. On one strategy alone, I've since thrown out 58 filters that looked great on paper and did nothing in the real market.

That's when I stopped trusting what traders *say* and started counting. This guide is the result. I took ten things almost every Nasdaq futures trader believes and tested each one on five years of NQ, every one-minute bar from October 2021 to November 2026. That's 1.8 million bars, the 2022 crash, and the wild swings of 2025 and 2026.

Some beliefs held up. Most didn't. A few were the exact opposite of the truth.

I wrote this for two kinds of traders. If you've been burned by screenshot gurus and don't believe anyone's numbers anymore: good. Neither do I. Every number here comes with its sample size and its costs. And if you can't watch the screen all day because you have a job, or because the US open lands in the middle of your night: the last part of this guide is for you.

> **How to use this guide: each myth gets a verdict, the numbers behind it, and what I actually do instead. Times are New York (ET). "Regular session" means 9:30 to 16:00.**

Inside

01	“There's opportunity all day long.”
02	“Just trade the opening range breakout.”
03	“Gaps always fill.”
04	“You can't know what kind of day it'll be.”
05	“Some weekdays are special.”
06	“Tight stops protect you.”
07	“Costs don't matter if the strategy is good.”
08	“Fair value gaps are the edge.”

09	“A 94% win rate means it works.”
10	“If it backtests well, it works.”
TOOL	The 60-second pre-market gamma check
LIVE	The system behind TestedNQ signals

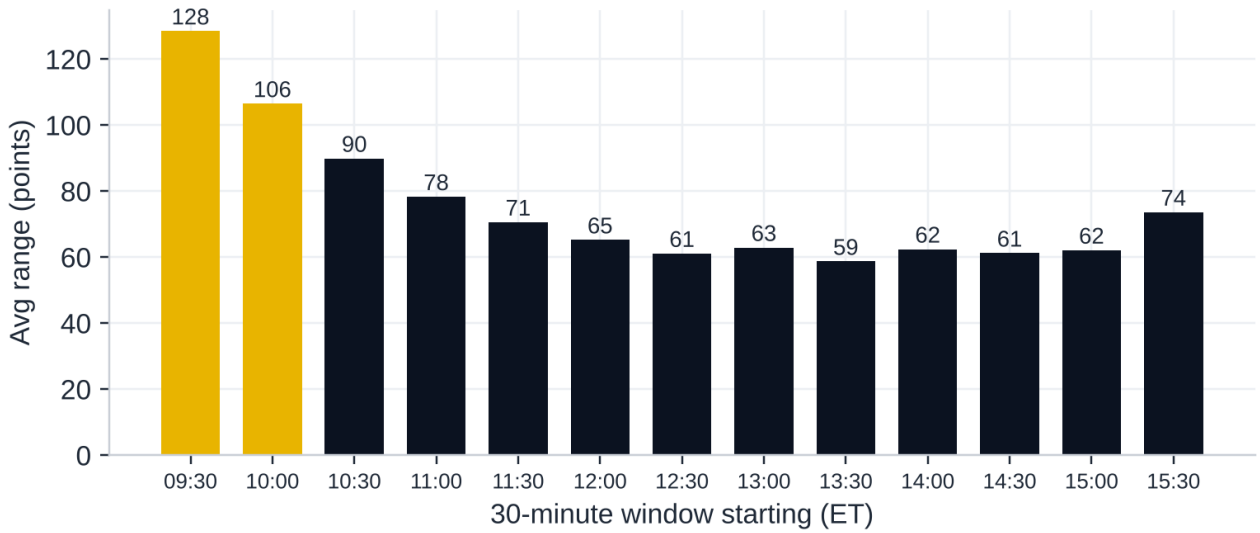
MYTH 01

“There's opportunity all day long.”

VERDICT: FALSE

> *It's 12:40. You've been staring at a 1-minute chart for an hour. Price drifts up 20 points, back down 25. You take a trade because you're bored. It goes nowhere, then stops you out.*

Here's why. NQ's average session covers 293 points high to low, and it's growing: 203 points in 2023, 399 in 2026. But the movement is crammed into the edges of the day.



Average high-to-low range of each 30-minute window, regular session, 5 years. The first hour is highlighted.

The first 30 minutes average **128 points**. The early afternoon averages about **59**. The open moves more than twice as much as lunch. Before the bell, the busiest hour is 08:00 ET, when economic data drops at 08:30 (80 points).

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

I treat 9:30 to 11:00 as the main event and lunch as dead time. If a setup needs the market to move, it gets taken near the open or not at all.

MYTH 02

“Just trade the opening range breakout.”

VERDICT: HALF TRUE

> *9:46. NQ pops above the first 15-minute high. You buy the breakout. Twenty minutes later it's back inside the range, and by 10:30 it's broken the low. Sound familiar?*

Mark the high and low of the first 15 minutes. That opening range is about 86 points wide on a typical day. 75% of the time, price breaks out of it before 10:00. Then what?

After the first break of the opening range	Share of days
Price runs one full range-width further	58%
Price also breaks the other side later	49%
Session closes beyond the side that broke first	54%

On about half of all days, the market breaks **both** sides of the opening range. A raw breakout is close to a coin flip. The breakout isn't the edge. What you require before you trust it is.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

I never take a raw ORB. My breakout signals only fire when the biggest Nasdaq stocks break the same direction at the same time. That confirmation is what turns the coin flip into a trade (see the last section).

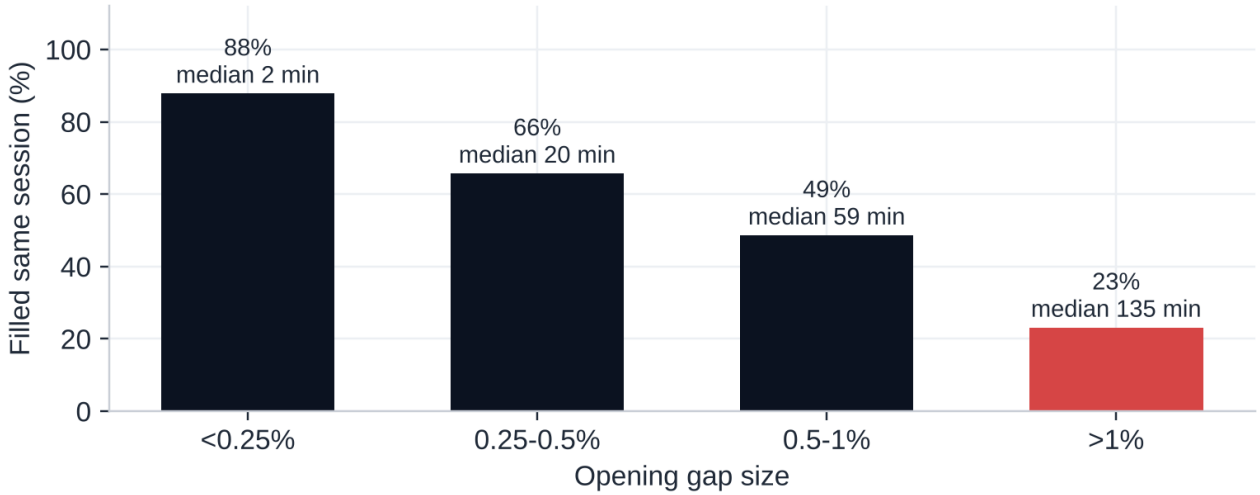
MYTH 03

“Gaps always fill.”

VERDICT: HALF TRUE

> *NQ opens 1.2% higher after a hot earnings night. Everyone says gaps fill. You short it at 9:31. By lunch you're down 80 points and it never looked back.*

I checked every session where NQ opened away from the prior close (1,232 of them). Price came back to the prior close the same day 60% of the time. Not bad. But size changes everything.



Share of gaps filled before the 16:00 ET close, by gap size, with the median time to fill.

Small gaps under 0.25% filled 88% of the time, usually within two minutes. Gaps over 1% filled only **23%** of the time. Fading a big gap was wrong on roughly three days out of four.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

I measure the gap before I have an opinion about it. Under 0.25%: assume it fills. Over 1%: assume it doesn't, and never fade it just because "gaps fill."

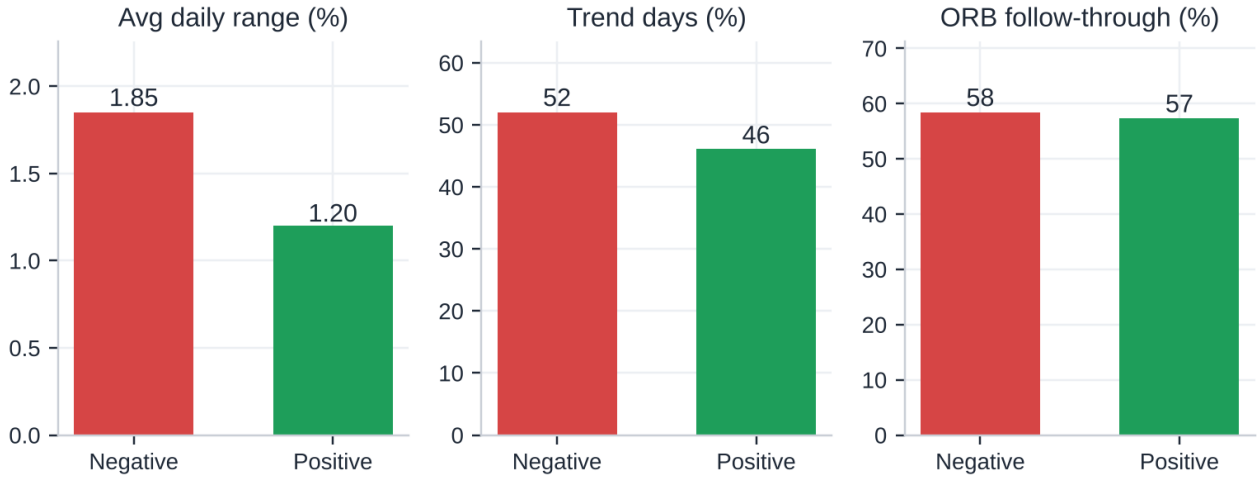
MYTH 04

“You can't know what kind of day it'll be.”

VERDICT: FALSE

Some days NQ crawls in a 200-point box. Other days it rips 500 points and never looks back. Most traders find out which one it is at 2 p.m., after they've already been chopped up.

You can know a lot of it before the open. Options dealers hedge. When their net gamma on QQQ is **negative**, their hedging pushes in the same direction as price, and moves get bigger. When it's **positive**, they lean against price, and moves shrink. I split all five years by the gamma sign known at the open.



Negative-gamma sessions: 827. Positive-gamma: 419. Trend day = close in the top or bottom 20% of the day's range.

On negative-gamma days, NQ's range averaged **1.85%** of price. On positive-gamma days, **1.20%**. That's 1.54 times bigger, known before the bell. At NQ 28,000, that's roughly 518 points versus 336.

But notice the right panel: the chance that a breakout carries a full range-width was about the same (58% vs 57%). Gamma tells you how big the day will be. It doesn't tell you which way. Hold that thought.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

Gamma is the first thing I check every morning. It sets the size of my stops and targets for the day. The free tool at the end of this guide shows you exactly how.

MYTH 05

“Some weekdays are special.”

VERDICT: MOSTLY NOISE

“Never trade Fridays.” “Mondays always gap.” Every trader has a weekday superstition. Here are all five days side by side.

Day	Avg range (pt)	Closed above open
Mon	273	60%
Tue	279	54%
Wed	301	50%
Thu	315	50%
Fri	296	53%

Thursday was the most active day (315 points). Monday closed green 60% of the time, the highest of the week. Interesting, but five years gives you only about 250 of each weekday, and these effects wobble from year to year.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

I don't skip days or trade differently by weekday. The gamma check from Myth 04 says far more about tomorrow than the name of the day.

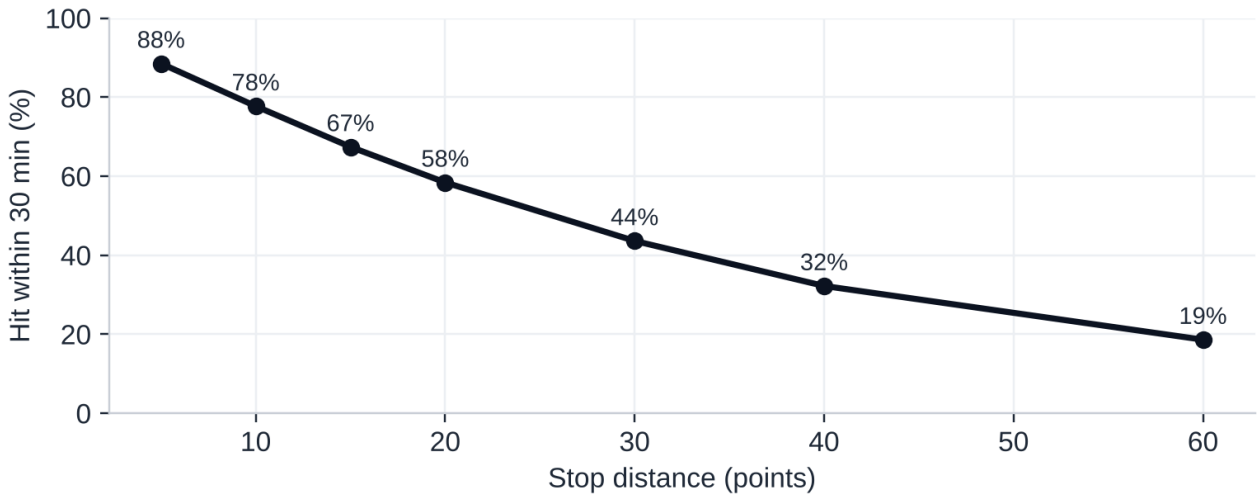
MYTH 06

“Tight stops protect you.”

VERDICT: FALSE

You read that good traders keep losses small, so you use a 10-point stop. You're right about direction half the time, and you still keep getting stopped out before the move.

So I ran an uncomfortable test: buy at 20,000 random minutes during the session. No setup, no skill. How often does price dip far enough to hit your stop within 30 minutes?



Share of random long entries whose stop would be touched within 30 minutes, by stop distance. Regular session, 5 years.

A 10-point stop got hit **78%** of the time, by noise alone. A 20-point stop, 58%. You need around 60 points before random wiggles stop you out less than one time in five (19%). On today's NQ, a 10-point stop doesn't measure your idea. It measures the noise.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

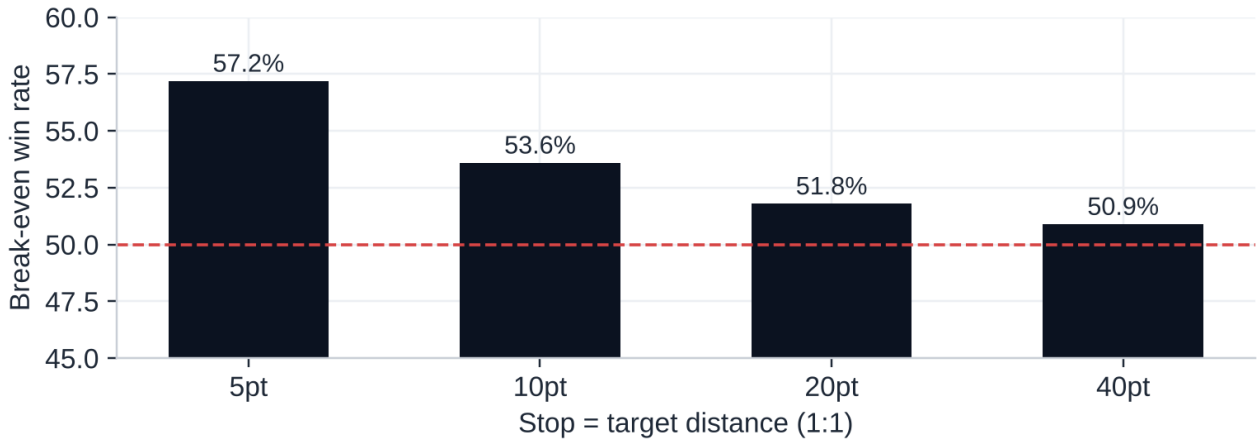
I put the stop where the idea is wrong, not where the loss feels small, then size the position down to fit. Smaller size, real stop.

MYTH 07

“Costs don't matter if the strategy is good.”

VERDICT: FALSE

Realistic costs on one NQ contract: a tick of slippage in, a tick out, and $4.50 commission. That's 0.725 points a trade. Sounds like nothing. Now compare it to your stop.



Win rate needed just to break even on a 1:1 trade, after costs.

Stop = target	Costs eat this much of each win	Win rate to break even
5pt	14.5%	57.2%
10pt	7.2%	53.6%
20pt	3.6%	51.8%
40pt	1.8%	50.9%

A 5-point scalper starts every trade 15% in the hole and needs a 57% win rate just to stay flat. Add Myth 06, where a 5-point stop gets tagged by noise nearly nine times out of ten, and tiny scalps start from a pit.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

Every backtest I publish charges costs on every trade. My own signals are tested at 2 points per trade, almost three times the realistic cost.

MYTH 08

“Fair value gaps are the edge.”

VERDICT: FALSE

A fair value gap video with over 1.5 million views teaches six rules for picking the right gaps. I coded all six and ran them on the same five years, costs included.

- **Every FVG, no filters:** about 50,000 trades. It lost money.
- **All six rules, first two years:** +0.4R per trade. Looks like a course-seller's dream. But it was 47 trades, and three of them made most of the profit.
- **All six rules, five years:** +0.08R on the 1-hour chart, -0.04R on the 15-minute, -0.07R on the 5-minute. None distinguishable from zero.
- **864 versions** of the vague rules tested. Not one was clearly above zero. Results flipped sign almost every year.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

I ask for the trade count before I look at the win rate. Under about 100 trades, a beautiful result is usually luck with good lighting.

Full test: “I Tested Every Fair Value Gap: 50,000 Trades” on the TestedNQ YouTube channel.

MYTH 09

“A 94% win rate means it works.”

VERDICT: FALSE

A well-known IFVG backtest shows 16 wins and 1 loss: 94%. Six or seven break-even trades were left out. I coded the full mechanical model and ran 1,152 versions over five years.

- **Real result:** about 50% wins across 1,075 trades, and around breakeven or a small loss per trade after costs. Not 94.
- **Leave out break-evens** and the win rate jumps 4 points without changing a single trade.
- **Move the target closer:** 36% wins at 1R, 70% at 0.25R, 90% at 0.05R. The average trade stayed a loss every time. Win rate is a dial.
- **Pick a lucky month:** July 2022 went 9 and 1. Over five years: 53%.
- **Run it on fake prices:** a random walk with the same volatility won 58% with the same rules. The structure creates the win rate, not the setup.

WHAT I DO INSTEAD

Before I trust any win rate, including mine, I ask three things: how many trades, how were break-evens counted, and how far is the target from the stop?

Full test: “I Tested the 94% Win Rate IFVG Strategy on 5 Years of NQ” on the TestedNQ YouTube channel.

MYTH 10

“If it backtests well, it works.”

VERDICT: HALF TRUE

My 42% backtest backtested beautifully. A good backtest is necessary. It's nowhere near enough. This is the checklist every strategy has to pass before I'll put money or my name on it.

1. **Write the rules first.** If a rule is vague, pick one definition, keep it, and test what happens when you change it.
2. **No peeking.** A signal may only use candles that have already closed.
3. **Charge real costs.** Slippage both ways plus commission. Stop and target in the same candle counts as a loss.
4. **Count the trades.** Under about 100, the result can be luck. Look at the 95% confidence range, not the average.
5. **Delete the best three trades.** If the profit disappears, it's a lottery ticket.
6. **Split the data.** Build on one half, check on the other.
7. **Look year by year.** An edge can have bad years. It shouldn't flip like a coin.
8. **Run it on fake prices.** If it wins just as often on a random walk, the edge isn't real.
9. **Then trade it live, in public, before you trust it.**

> **Most strategies fail by step 5. The FVG and the 94% IFVG both did. One system passed all of them. It's at the end of this guide.**

FREE TOOL

The 60-second pre-market gamma check

Myth 04 showed that NQ's range is about 1.5 times bigger on negative-gamma days, and that you can know which kind of day it is before the open. Here's the routine I run every morning. It takes a minute.

1. **Before 9:30 ET, look up today's QQQ net gamma exposure.** Several options-data services publish it daily. You only need the sign: above zero or below zero.
2. **Set your expected range.** Negative gamma: plan for a day of about 1.9% of price. Positive gamma: about 1.2%.

NQ price	Negative-gamma day (~1.85%)	Positive-gamma day (~1.20%)
22,000	~407 pts	~264 pts
25,000	~462 pts	~300 pts
28,000	~518 pts	~336 pts
31,000	~574 pts	~372 pts

3. **Size stops and targets to the day.** On a negative-gamma day, a target sized for a quiet day leaves money on the table, and a stop sized for a quiet day gets run. Scale both with the expected range.
4. **Size the position to the stop.** Bigger range means a wider stop, which means fewer contracts for the same dollar risk. Same risk, more room.
5. **Don't use it for direction.** Gamma said nothing about which way the day would go. Breakouts followed through about equally often on both kinds of days.

That last point is the gap this tool can't close: it tells you how big the day will be, not where to get in. Finding the entry is what my live signals do.

THE SYSTEM

The system behind TestedNQ signals

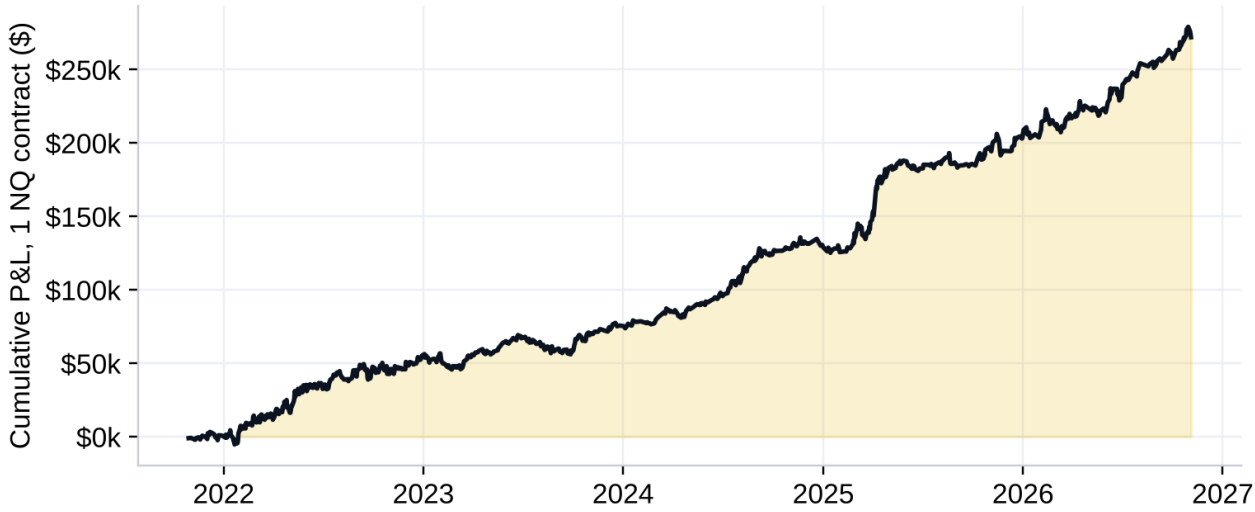
After throwing out the FVG, the 94% IFVG, and dozens of my own ideas, one system survived every step of Myth 10. It's built directly on what this guide found:

- It reads **gamma before the open** (Myth 04) and runs different setups on negative and positive days.
- It **never takes a raw breakout** (Myth 02). NQ has to break with the biggest Nasdaq stocks at the same time.
- Its stops sit **outside the noise** (Myth 06), and every trade in the test paid **2 points of costs** (Myth 07).

Built for people with a day job

- **One alert, one bracket order.** Entry, stop and target are fixed the moment the signal fires. Place them together and walk away.
- **Mostly in the first 90 minutes.** 72% of entries came between 10:00 and 11:00 ET. Median time in a trade: 48 minutes. 55% of trades were finished before noon.
- **Not every day.** About 160 signal days a year, usually one trade, never more than one position at a time per setup.

Three setups: a confirmed opening-range breakout and a failed-breakout fade on negative-gamma days, and a long-only cluster reclaim on positive-gamma days. Entry, stop and target are fixed the moment a signal fires.



Cumulative hypothetical P&L;, 1 NQ contract per signal, Oct 2021 to Nov 2026, 2 points round-trip cost. Not a live account.

Five years, year by year

Period	Trades	Win rate	P&L (1 NQ)
Oct 2021 - Oct 2022	255	50.6%	+$43,822
Oct 2022 - Oct 2023	211	52.1%	+$26,192
Oct 2023 - Oct 2024	153	56.2%	+$58,862
Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	165	55.2%	+$67,342
Oct 2025 - Nov 2026	154	58.4%	+$75,755
Total, 5 years	938	53.9%	+$271,975

- Profitable in all five yearly periods and in 48 of 62 months. Worst month: -$8,890. Worst drawdown: -$15,640.
- About 187 signals a year, less than one a day. Average winner +86 points, average loser -70.
- At 3 points of cost per trade it still made +$253,215. On micro contracts (MNQ), divide every dollar figure by ten.

Proof, not screenshots

- Every signal is time-stamped in public **before** the result is known. Wins and losses are posted the same way.
- A weekly report puts live results next to what the backtest expected, so drift shows up fast.
- Expect losing streaks. The backtest had 6 losses in a row. At the same win rate, 8 or 9 in a row over a few years is normal. You'll hear it from me before you see it.

What a signal looks like

LONG NQ · Confirmed ORB · 10:15 ET
Entry 28,450 · Stop 28,410 · Target 28,510

TARGET HIT · +60 pts · 11:02 ET

Example format. Everyone gets the same alert at the same time. No personal advice, no account management.

Watch it live. Free.

Here's my offer. Don't trust the numbers in this guide. Watch the system trade in real time first. Most strategies I test die on camera. This one has to keep earning its place in public, too.

- **Free Telegram channel:** every live NQ signal, time-stamped, with the result posted when the trade closes. Link in the TestedNQ YouTube channel description.
- **Weekly report by email:** live results next to what the backtest expected. If live trading drifts from the test, you'll see it there first.
- **YouTube:** search **TestedNQ**. Every week, another popular strategy gets the same five years of data. Tell me in the comments what to test next.

Trading a prop-firm account? Most prop firms prohibit following signal services or copying trades from others. Check your firm's rules before you act on any signal there. TestedNQ signals are meant for your own personal account.

Methodology and disclosures

Data: CME Globex NQ front-month one-minute bars, all sessions, 2021-10-20 to 2026-11-04; sessions with fewer than 350 regular-session bars excluded. Gamma regime: daily QQQ net gamma exposure available at the open, used only to split sessions. Myth 06 uses 20,000 randomly sampled regular-session minutes. Myths 08 and 09 summarize backtests published on the TestedNQ channel; rule definitions are in each video's description. System results: hypothetical backtest of the TestedNQ signal rules on NQ front-month 1-minute bars plus 1-minute bars of large-cap Nasdaq stocks, Oct 29, 2021 to Nov 4, 2026, one contract per signal, 2 points round-trip cost, stop assumed hit first when stop and target fall in the same minute. Range examples at a given NQ price are illustrations, not forecasts.

HYPOTHETICAL PERFORMANCE (CFTC Rule 4.41): These results are based on simulated or hypothetical performance results that have certain inherent limitations. Unlike the results shown in an actual performance record, these results do not represent actual trading. Also, because these trades have not actually been executed, these results may have under-or over-compensated for the impact, if any, of certain market factors, such as lack of liquidity. Simulated or hypothetical trading programs in general are also subject to the fact that they are designed with the benefit of hindsight. No representation is being made that any account will or is likely to achieve profits or losses similar to these being shown.

Not financial advice. Educational content only. Futures trading involves substantial risk of loss and is not suitable for every investor. Past results, real or hypothetical, do not guarantee future results.