MAZing Trading & Forecasting
RESEARCH

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NQ FUTURES · MAJOR SWINGS · 2026

The 85% Rule

For about five years I have noted the same pattern in my daily NQ forecasts on TradingView: most major moves get retraced about 85%, and once price gets there, it usually heads back to where the move started. This piece tests that observation against every major swing in NQ so far in 2026.

60%
Major swings retraced at least 85% (300-point swings)

90%
After reaching 85%, share that went on to the swing's start before turning back

100%
Median retracement of the prior swing: the typical move is given all the way back

196
Swings that reached 85% and were followed to a finish

The idea in one line. 85% is a point of no return: once a big move has been given back that far, the rest of the trip to its starting point is the high-odds outcome.

DATA

NQ1! 15-minute bars, January 2 to October 7, 2026. Swings are measured three ways: 200, 300 and 500 points, so the result does not depend on one setting.

INSIDE

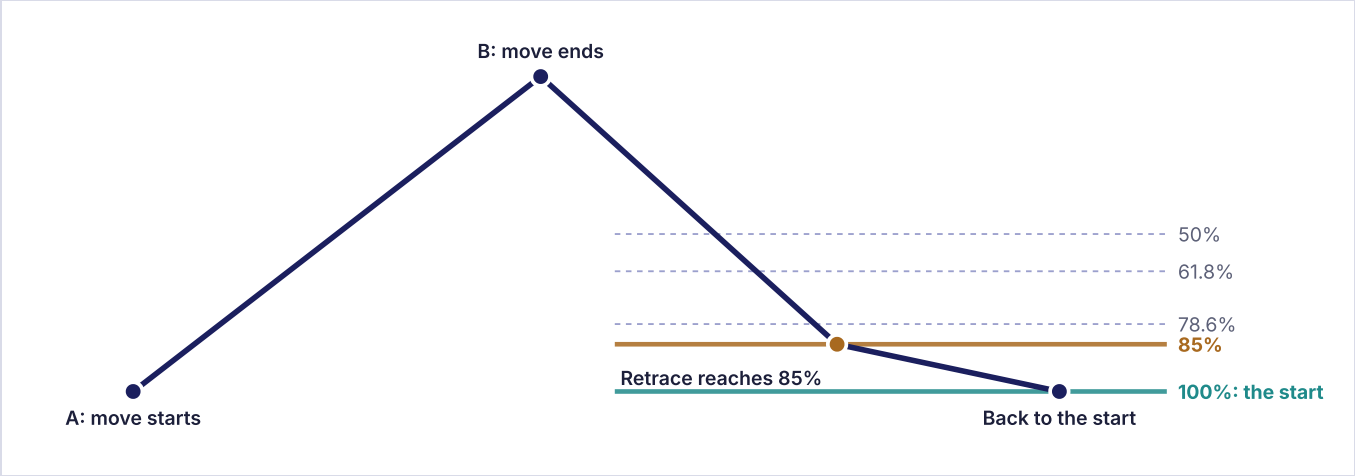
The rule, how often swings are retraced, what happens after 85%, four real examples including one that failed, and how to use the level.

For education only. Not investment advice.

THE RULE

01 Most moves are given back

A major swing runs from a starting point (A) to an end (B). The next move retraces it, giving back part or all of the distance. The 85% rule says two things: retracements of 85% are common, and once one gets there, price usually finishes the trip back to A rather than turning around toward B.



How a swing is defined

A swing high is confirmed when price falls a set number of points from its peak; a swing low when it rises that far from its trough. Using 300 points, NQ produced 291 swings in 2026, with a typical size of about 492 points. The 200- and 500-point versions give smaller and larger swings for comparison.

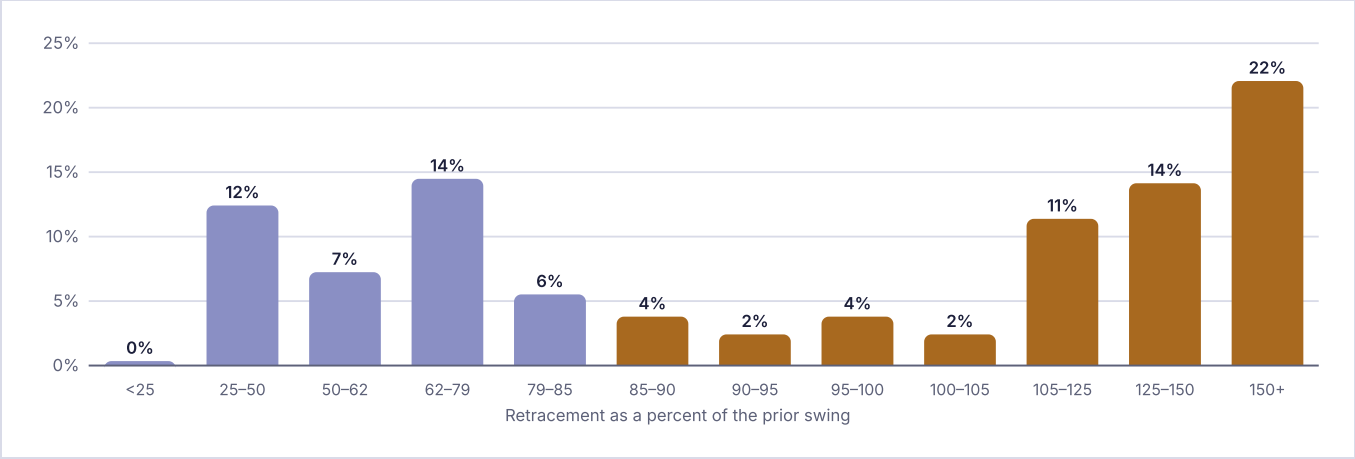
Swing size	Swings	Typical swing, pts	Retraced 85%+	Median retracement	Went past the start
200+ pts	705	322	**62%**	102%	49%
300+ pts	291	492	**60%**	100%	48%
500+ pts	89	940	**65%**	99%	44%

"Went past the start" means the retracement exceeded 105% of the prior swing, becoming a new swing in the other direction.

HOW FAR SWINGS RETRACE

02 The typical move goes all the way back

Each bar shows the share of 300-point swings whose following move retraced a given percent. The gold bars are retracements of 85% or more: together they account for 60% of swings. The median retracement is 100%.

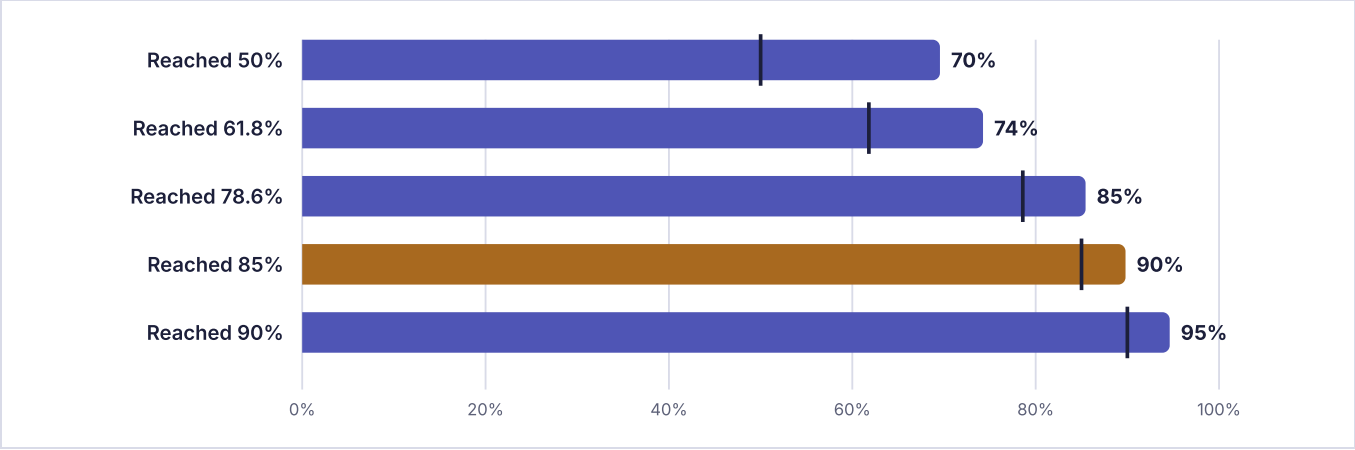


290 retracements of 300-point swings. About 48% went beyond the swing's start.

AFTER 85%

03 Once there, it usually finishes the trip

For every swing whose retracement reached a level, this shows the share that went on to the swing's start (100%) before returning to the swing's end. At 85%, 90% of 300-point swings finished the trip.



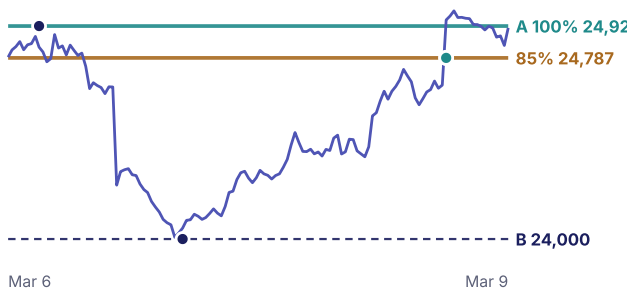
EXAMPLES FROM 2026

04 Four swings on the chart

Three swings where the rule played out, and one where it did not. Gold marks the moment the retracement reached 85%; the aqua line is the swing's start.

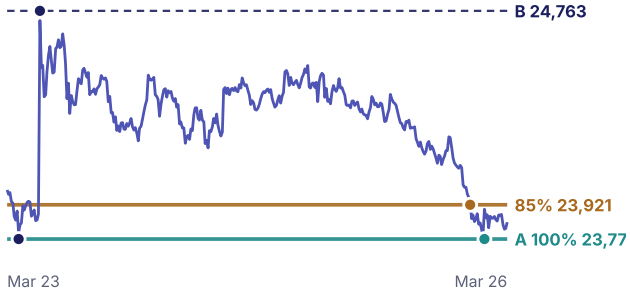
March: down swing, round trip in a day

Down swing of 926 pts, Mar 6 to Mar 8; after 85%, reached the start in under an hour



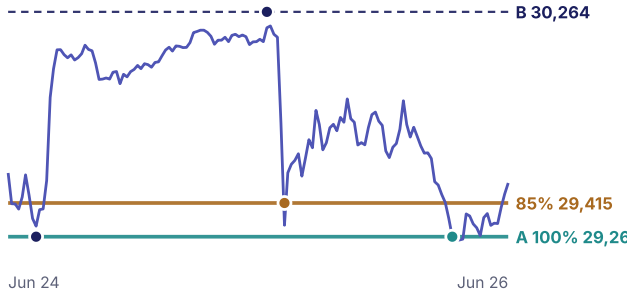
March: up swing, given back in three days

Up swing of 990 pts, Mar 23 to Mar 23; after 85%, reached the start in 2 hours



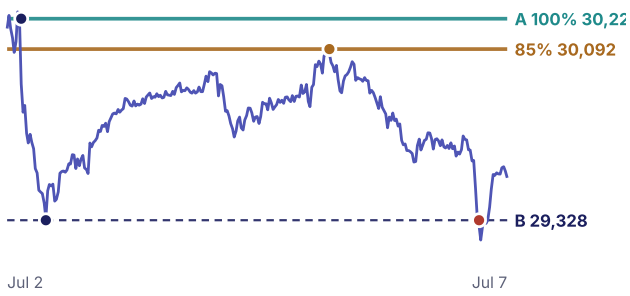
June: up swing, full round trip overnight

Up swing of 999 pts, Jun 24 to Jun 25; after 85%, reached the start in 13 hours



Counterexample, July: 85% reached, then back

Down swing of 898 pts, Jul 2 to Jul 2; after 85%, turned back to B in 22 hours



Every swing size

Level reached	200-pt swings	300-pt swings	500-pt swings	Distance-only
50%	70% (598)	70% (253)	67% (79)	50%
61.8%	75% (563)	74% (237)	73% (73)	62%
78.6%	83% (505)	85% (206)	80% (66)	79%
85%	**89%** (475)	**90%** (196)	**83%** (64)	85%
90%	92% (458)	95% (186)	87% (61)	90%

Share that went on to the swing's start before returning to its end; number of swings in parentheses. Ties within a single 15-minute bar are excluded.

READING THE RESULT

05 A point of no return, not a turning point

The observation holds

About six in ten major swings are retraced at least 85%, and once a retracement reaches 85%, it goes on to the starting point roughly nine times in ten (89%, 90% and 83% for 200, 300 and 500-point swings).

Distance does much of the work

At 85%, only 15% of the trip is left, against 85% to go back the other way. Distance alone would predict reaching the start about 85% of the time. NQ does a little better, and the odds rise smoothly from level to level rather than jumping at 85%.

Use it as a map

When a major swing starts to retrace, its starting point is a realistic destination. A retracement that reaches the 78.6–85% zone has, more often than not, committed to the full round trip.

Don't fade it

Treating 85% as a place to bet on a reversal would have been on the wrong side about nine times in ten. The failures, like the July example, tend to come in strong trends.

This is the same theme as the rest of the MAZing research: the market covers far more ground than its net change shows. Big moves are given back more often than not, and the trip back usually goes all the way.

Limits. One year of data on one market; swings are identified after the fact, once the reversal is confirmed; 15-minute bars hide the order of moves within a bar. Figures describe historical price movement, not trading results.

About the author

Michael A. Zingale, the "MAZ" in MAZing, was licensed in life insurance in 1988 and built the early part of his career around cash value life insurance used to pay estate taxes. As the federal estate tax exemption rose, from $600,000 per person in the 1990s to about $15 million today, he kept his life insurance practice and added investment services in the early 2000s. About twenty years later he added short-timeframe index forecasting and trading. Since January 2021 he has published a daily NQ futures forecast on TradingView before each U.S. open.

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