

2026 Southern Surge Series Conditions

Following the success of the inaugural Southern Surge in 2025, HRNZ and Southern Harness are again partnering to provide a late winter incentive for southern harness racers. The main change within the Southern Surge for 2026 will be that all races will be mobile starts. In 2025 the trotters competed in standing start events.

Across eight races on August 2 and 9 southern based harness horses will compete in \$15,000 heats to qualify for eight \$25,000 finals on 23 August at Central Southland Raceway (Winton).

The below Series Summary and General Conditions govern the running of the 2026 series.

Southern Surge

- \$15,000 Heats and \$25,000 Finals will be run for the following divisions on these race days.
- First Round of Heats Sunday 2 August Wyndham HRC 1609m mobiles
- Second Round of Heats Sunday 9 August Invercargill HRC 2200m mobiles
- Finals Day Sunday 23 August Winton HRC 1609m mobiles

Pacing Divisions:

1. 3YO+ Non-Win (Open Draw)
2. 3YO+ R35 (Open Draw)
3. 3YO+ R36-R40 (Open Draw)
4. 3YO+ R41-R55, also R56-R60 with Concession Junior Driver (Sequential PBD) Section 1
5. 3YO+ R41-R55, also R56-R60 with Concession Junior Driver (Sequential PBD) Section 2

Trotting Divisions:

1. 3YO+ Non-Win (Open Draw)
2. 3YO+ R35-R40 (Open Draw)
3. 3YO+ R41-R50, also R51-R55 with a Concession Junior Driver (Sequential PBD)

2026 Southern Surge General Conditions

1. The Southern Surge is restricted to horses aged 3YO & Older.
2. To be eligible to contest this series horses **must** be registered through HRNZ with a harness racing trainer(s) whose primary training establishment is South of the Waitaki River, prior to or from 1 June 2026 through Sunday 23 August 2026; or, having not been notified in training prior, is notified in training with HRNZ by a trainer whose primary training establishment is South of The Waitaki River prior to or from 1 July 2026 through Sunday 23 August 2026.
3. Horses cannot become eligible for this series via Horse Movement Notifications.
4. Eligibility for division heats will be determined at the time of Acceptance.
5. Field selection for division heats will be based on race form, as determined by the HRNZ Bureau, pursuant to the HRNZ Handicapping Regulations. In the event horses need to be split within divisions this will be done by ratings. Where separation is required of horses on the same rating, Winning Stakes (highest to lowest) will be the determining factor, then money won in last four starts (first to fifth).
6. Horses' eligibility for heats will be determined by their actual Rating at the time of acceptance.
7. To be eligible to contest a division Final on 23 August 2026 a horse(s) must have competed in at least one heat of its respective Southern Surge division. Horses that have been eliminated or are forced scratchings, as emergencies, will not be eligible to contest a final unless they have competed in another heat.

8. Horses that are balloted out or eliminated from the first round of heats on 2 August 2026 will be given selection preference for the second round of heats on 09 August 2026, if nominated.
9. All Southern Surge Finals will be selected as follows, within respective divisions raced in: First Preference; horses placed first, Second Preference; horses placed second, Third Preference; horses Placing Third, Fourth Preference; horses placing fourth. In the event of a tie for any qualification position that affects Final selection, horses' second series start, if applicable, will act as tiebreaker. If a tie still exists, the HRNZ Bureau will make the final determination of selection order.
10. The balance of the fields for Finals will be selected by the HRNZ Bureau based on performances in heats in the respective divisions. For Sections 4 & 5 of the Pacing Divisions 26 qualifiers will be selected then split on Ratings (highest to lowest). In the event horses on the same Rating require separation this will be done by Winning Stakes. If a tie still exists horses will be separated by stake money earned in the last four starts (first to fifth only).
11. Heat winning horses remain eligible for their respective finals, even if their rating ascends above the designated rating range for that category.
12. In the event a horse qualifies in two separate divisions the trainer concerned may choose which Final his/her horse will compete in, prior to the close of Acceptances for the meeting.
13. Where races are run as Preferential Barrier Draws, races will be conducted as Sequential Preferential Barrier Draws based on Ratings then Winnings Stakes. One emergency may be selected. In Open Draw mobile races one emergency may also be selected.
14. A horse must be nominated in the normal manner, with the HRNZ Bureau for a Final.
15. All races of the Southern Surge will be run in accordance with the regulated Track Safety Numbers.
16. In the event of extraordinary entries for any division heats in this series, the HRNZ Bureau reserves the right to run an additional heat(s).
17. HRNZ and Southern Harness reserve the right to alter or amend these conditions, as they see fit. Any alteration in conditions will be communicated by the HRNZ Bureau.
18. The HRNZ Head of Racing & Wagering will make the final determination on any aspects not covered by the above conditions or disputes.