

October 2023

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

### AMENDMENTS TO HARNESS RACING NEW ZEALAND REGULATIONS

#### STARTING REGULATIONS LATE SCRATCHINGS

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the HRNZ Board considered and approved amendments to the Starting Regulations to allow a second line horse to fill the vacant position of a late scratching, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, whereby the regulation will now read as follows (changes underlined):

*“4.5.3 In the case of late scratching in a mobile or moving start:*

*4.5.3.1 On the front line outside runners move in to fill the vacant position(s).*

*4.5.3.2 On the second line outside runners move in to fill the vacant position(s) on the second line.”*

This amendment was proposed by the RIB, reviewed by the HRNZ Rules Sub-Committee, and supported by the Board in order to provide consistency and fairness across both lines of runners.

#### PASSING LANE REGULATIONS

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the HRNZ Board considered and approved amendments to the Passing Lane Regulations, effective from 4 October 2023, whereby the regulation will now read as follows (changes underlined):

*“3. (a) Except after entering the home straight for the last time in any race, no horse may use the expanded inside lane in an attempt to pass any other horse or horses or improve its position. Any horse which does so may be disqualified, or relegated ~~under Rule 869A~~ and the driver shall be in breach of Rule 869(3).*

*(b) Where a horse is to be disqualified or relegated rule 870(5) and 870A shall apply with necessary modification.”*

These amendments were on recommendation of the RIB, were reviewed by the HRNZ Rules Sub-Committee, and supported by the Board.

The reason for this regulation change are concerns in relation to protests for passing lane breaches being brought under Rule 869A(2) which relates to interference with the onus being on the applicant to establish to the required standard that but for the interference that the affected horse (required to finish in the first five placings) would have beaten the offending horse.

This is fine for situations where actual “physical” interference occurs – for example where the leading horse shifts in and checks the passing lane horse, but not all passing lane protests are as clear cut. A situation whereby an unfair advantage that affects the outcome of a race has been gained by a runner using the lane other than in the final lap to obtain a more forward position may well result in a protest being warranted.

Another example of an unfair advantage being gained would be a driver allowing his runner to shift down into the lane rather than risk losing momentum by taking the required corrective action to straighten his drive.

The reason to change Rule 869 (3)(f) which states the driver has driven the horse ‘improperly’ to just Rule 869(3) gives greater clarity and means a driver may be charged for any of the following:

869(3) No driver in any race shall drive:-

- (a) incompetently;
- (b) carelessly;
- (c) recklessly;
- (d) dangerously;
- (e) in a foul manner;
- (f) improperly;
- (g) in any manner capable of diminishing the chances of his horse winning.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM**

At its meetings on 7<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the HRNZ Board considered and approved two minor amendments to the Guiding Principles for the Ratings Handicapping System, effective from 2 October 2023, as follows:

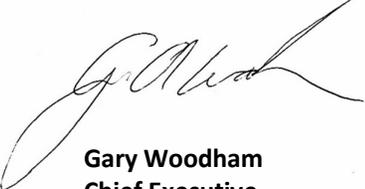
1. Concession points for 3YOs to 6 points (from 5) for males and 5 points (from 4) for fillies; and
2. Races run by clubs that are specifically for 4YO & older horses rated R35-R39, for an advertised stake of \$7,000 will be penalised five rating points. However, there will be no junior driver or mares' concessions applicable, and those races will not be permitted to be run as Junior Driver Penalty Free races, of any kind.

The amended Guiding Principles are attached.

These amendments were on the recommendation of:

- Management for the concession points for 3YOs to moderate the advantages given to 3YOs that are effectively half a season older than they were prior to the birthday change while also having an elongated 2YO season.
- Management for the \$7000 stake and conditions after consultation with industry stakeholder groups to provide a conditioned, lower-staked opportunity for struggling aged horses.

Dated this 4<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023



**Gary Woodham**  
Chief Executive

# RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

## Guiding Principles:

Effective 2 October 2023

These Guiding Principles are subject to ongoing review by the HRNZ Board.

### A. GENERAL

1. The Ratings Handicapping System is designed to treat all horses fairly & to provide a fluid racing environment so horses can compete against those of similar ability.
2. These Guiding Principles of the Ratings Handicapping System operate in conjunction with the Handicapping Regulations.
3. All qualified horses start with a rating of 50 points.
4. Lowest possible rating is 40 points for non-winner & 35 points for race winners (R rated).
5. Highest possible rating is 120 points.
6. Non-winners will be displayed as an 'MR' followed by their rating points.
7. Race winners will be displayed with an 'R' followed by their rating points.
8. Any winning points are added to a horse's existing rating.
9. Any reference to 'stake' means to the total race stake advertised, as per the Official Programme.
10. The racing season refers to 1 January to 31 December.

### B. RACE WINNERS

1. Winners of totalisator races receive a maximum of eight points.
2. Any horse winning its first totalisator race will not incur any rating penalty (points increase) but will lose its MR (Non-Winners) rating, which will be replaced by an R (Race Winners) rating.
3. A 2YO male winning its first totalisator race as a Group or Listed race will incur a five-point penalty.
4. A 2YO filly winning its first totalisator race as a Group or Listed race will incur a four-point penalty.
5. A 3YO male winning its first totalisator race as a Group or Listed race will incur a six-point penalty.
6. A 3YO filly winning its first totalisator race as a Group or Listed race will incur a five-point penalty.
7. All subsequent wins to a 2YO male horse's first totalisator race win will incur a five-point penalty or fewer if specified by the Race Winners Matrix.
8. All subsequent wins to a 2YO filly's first totalisator race win will incur a four-point penalty or fewer if specified by the Race Winners Matrix.
9. All subsequent wins to a 3YO male horse's first totalisator race win, unless Group or Listed, will incur a six-point penalty or fewer if specified by the Race Winners Matrix. Group & Listed races will be rated per the Race Winners' Matrix
10. All subsequent wins to a 3YO filly's first totalisator race win, unless Group or Listed, will incur a five-point penalty or fewer if specified by the Race Winners Matrix. Group & Listed races will be rated per the Race Winners' Matrix, taking into consideration the mares' concession up to R70.
11. All race-winning 4YO & Older male horses will be rated in accordance with the Race Winners' Matrix, excepting \$7,000 races run for 4YO & Older horses rated R35 to R39 only.
12. All race-winning 4YO & Older mares & Group or Listed race-winning 3YO Fillies will be subject to a one-point concession from the Race Winners' Matrix, up to a Rating of R70, excepting \$7,000 races run for 4YO & Older horses rated R35 to R39 only. Wins by mares rated above R70 will be rated in accordance with the Race Winners' Matrix.
13. These Guiding Principles operate in conjunction with the Race Winners' Matrix as at 1 August 2023. *See the HRNZ, Official Documents web page.*

### C. PLACED OR UNPLACED HORSES

1. A horse placing second, third or fourth in an Official Race, which is not a Group or Listed race will have no change made to its Rating, unless the field has six starters or less, in which case the fourth placed horse will drop one point.
2. A horse placing fifth to last (including all other official placings) in an Official Race, which is not Group or Listed race will lose one rating point.
3. A horse placing second, third, fourth or fifth in an Official Race, which is a Group or Listed race will have no change made to their Rating, unless the field has six starters or less, in which case the fifth placed horse will drop one point.
4. A horse placing sixth to last (including all other official placings) in an Official Race, which is Group or Listed race will lose one rating point.
5. Handicappers may re-rate unplaced horses (5th to last, including Group & Listed races) up to a maximum of three points if the horse in question is rated from R55 to R70 & has had three unplaced starts since its last win or re-rating.
6. Handicappers may re-rate unplaced horses (5th to last, including Group & Listed races) up to a maximum of three points if the horse in question is rated from R71 to R89 & has had two unplaced starts since its last win or re-rating.
7. Unplaced horses (5th to last, including Group & Listed races) rated R90 or greater may be re-rated by the Handicappers up to a maximum of three points.

### D. OTHER CONDITIONS & EXEMPTIONS

1. Winners of Junior Driver Only Rating Penalty Free races or races won that carry a Rating Penalty Free status if driven by a Junior Driver condition, receive no re-rating penalty. A horse shall only win one such Rating Penalty Free drivers' race per racing season. These concessions are reserved for horses that are 4YO & older, however will not apply to races run for \$7,000 for 4YO & older horses rated R35 to R39. *Refer to point 10 of the Handicapping Regulations for more information.*
2. There are no Ratings concessions for Invited Drivers races, other than those races/series specifically exempted by the HRNZ Board. Special drivers' series races (Championships) may be Rating Penalty Free, at HRNZ Board discretion.
3. 4YO & older race-winning horses winning a race driven by a Junior Driver with 50 career wins or less (at the start of that race day) will receive half the rating penalty, unless the win results in a Rating Penalty Free win, which takes precedence. The prescribed half penalty concessions are as follows: races worth 7 or 8 points to the winner discounts to 4 points, 5 or 6 points discounts to 3 points, 3 or 4 points discounts to 2 points, 2 points discounts to 1 point, there is no discount for a 1-point win. This concession does not apply to races run for an advertised stake of \$7,000 for 4YO & older horses rated R35 to R39.
4. Clubs are permitted to programme specific races with an advertised stake of \$7,000 for horses 4YO & Older, rated from R35 to R39 only. These races will not be subject to any concessions related to junior drivers or sex and will not be run as Rating Penalty Free races. The Rating Penalty for winning these races will be **five** points.
5. Claiming horses winning Claimers Only Races receive no re-rating penalty. All other placegetters will be treated in line with Section C of the Guiding Principles.
6. Claiming horses may start in any race within their own rating band, if they are within the conditions of the said race. Claiming conditions may also be added to Ratings races, at the approval of HRNZ.
7. 2YO Trotters – no male shall be rated higher than R65. No filly shall be rated higher than R60.
8. 2YO Pacers - no male shall be rated higher than R75. No filly shall be rated higher than R70.
9. 3YO Trotters - no male shall be rated higher than R85. No 3YO filly shall be rated higher than R80.
10. 3YO Pacers - no male shall be rated higher than R95. No filly shall be rated higher than R90.
11. Racing Clubs will have the ability to programme races based on conditions: i.e., non-winners, winners of one race, money won, unplaced, age etc.
12. Dead-heats: no rating penalty increases will be given to horses dead-heating for first in an Official Race. A non-winner that dead-heats for first race shall remain a non-winner (MR).
13. Official Non-Tote races: will be rated in line with the Guiding Principles. However, the Rating of these races may be subject to Handicappers' Discretion.

14. Any Non-Winner (MR) winning an Official Non-Tote race up to a stake of \$5,000 will remain a Non-Winner, for Handicapping purposes.
15. The only races permitted to be run as Official Non-Totes up to a stake of \$2,000 will be 2YO trotting races.
16. Disqualified Horses: in the event a horse is disqualified for any reason other than a racing incident it shall be re-rated to receive 0 (zero) rating points for the race that it concerns.
17. Imported or returning horses from overseas will be re-rated by the Handicapper as if they had raced in New Zealand under the Ratings system.
18. Any horse returning to racing from an elongated break (over four months) may be eligible for re-rating by the Handicappers, upon application by connections.
19. On 1 August & 1 January each year horses identified by the Handicappers as being rated uncompetitively or considered to be disadvantaged in relation to other horses may be subject to re-rating.