



27 June 2025

OFFICIAL NOTICE

AMENDMENTS TO HARNESS RACING NEW ZEALAND REGULATIONS CONDUCT OF MEETINGS, PROGRAMMING, HANDICAPPING AND RATING REGULATION

On 27 June 2025, the HRNZ Board approved the introduction of the Conduct of Meetings, Programming, Handicapping and Rating Regulation.

This regulation is effective from 00:01 hours on Monday 30th June 2025.

The full Conduct of Meetings, Programming, Handicapping and Rating Regulation is ***attached***.

This regulation replaces the Handicapping Regulation, the Programming Condition – General Regulation, and the Ratings Handicapping System Guiding Principles effective 1 January 2023.

Background

The Utilisation Reference Group (URG) was formed in February 2024 with 15 members representing the sport. The URG produced two reports (June and September 2024) which were published on the HRNZ website recommending extensive changes to handicapping, programming and the rating system. Views from the industry were invited. The URG considered the submissions received.

The National Forum and Regional Forums were established to enhance consistent communications with the clubs. HRNZ has consulted with the National Forum and Regional Forums on these proposals over the last 12 months, and particularly after the two reports were released.

The September 2024 URG Report was approved by the then Board for implementation in February 2025. HRNZ delayed implementation until 30 June to allow for further internal consultation and roadshows at eight venues across the country. The current Board was briefed on the project in March 2025 and endorsed the project.

Further consultations were conducted internally and through the recent roadshows. These resulted in further refinements, including:

- Junior driver concessions were retained in a modified form, with some extensions. A submission from the NZ Trainers & Drivers' Association for a more extensive reform of junior driver concessions will be considered separately.
- The proposed changes to scratching penalties has been dropped and a new approach will be developed and circulated.
- The rating transition proposal was modified slightly so that all two-win horses will drop to R45 and all three-win horses to R50, not just those with their most recent win in their last five starts.

- Updating Bureau procedures based upon the last two months of operations. HRNZ thanks trainers and drivers for their cooperation and increased use of online services.
- A submission from Canterbury trainers advocated for a new one-win grade. This has not been adopted as it is HRNZ's view that a specific one-win grade is unnecessary at this stage. Rating all maiden winners to R40 basically creates a one-win grade without complicating the system. Races can be programmed accordingly if so desired.
- Updating the wording of some existing regulations to fix minor anomalies.

At all meetings and in all written submissions concerns were expressed about 'programming'. HRNZ acknowledges these concerns. One of the reasons for establishing the Bureau is to achieve significantly improved programming performance consistent with the aims of the new system. These outcomes will be closely monitored.

HRNZ is awaiting the report from the Independent Panel reviewing conducting of the final of the Young Guns 2YO Trot Final. Based upon the recommendations the Heats and Finals regulation may be amended.

Explanatory Note

Attached is a presentation explaining the current issues identified, programming policy, ratings basics and conditioning races.

Review

HRNZ intends to establish a small external team to monitor and review the implementation of these changes. The formal report will be due in February 2026.



Brad Steele
Chief Executive



CONDUCT OF MEETINGS, PROGRAMMING, HANDICAPPING AND RATINGS REGULATION

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CONDUCT OF MEETINGS, PROGRAMMING, HANDICAPPING AND RATINGS REGULATION

1. NAME AND COMMENCEMENT

- 1.1 This regulation is the Conduct of Meetings, Programming, Handicapping and Ratings Regulation made by the Board under the New Zealand Rules of Harness Racing and clause 31.1 of the Constitution of Harness Racing New Zealand Incorporated.
- 1.2 This regulation comes into force at 00:01 hours on 30 June 2025.
- 1.3 This regulation replaces the Handicapping Regulation, the Programming Condition – General Regulation, and the Ratings Handicapping System Guiding Principles Effective 1 January 2023.

2. INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL

- 2.1 In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

Bureau means the HRNZ National Racing Bureau established under Clause 19.

chairperson means the chairperson of the Board of HRNZ.

chief executive means the chief executive or the chief executive's nominee.

earnings means are all stakes paid for a horse for all placings including Rating Penalty Free winning stakes.

programme means the programme for each day of racing.

rules means the New Zealand Rules of Harness Racing,

season or racing year means the period from 1 January to 31 December.

stake money won means all stakes paid for a horse placed in the first five places, including Rating Penalty Free winning stakes in a particular gait.

wagering means race betting as defined under section 5 of the Racing Industry Act 2020.

- 2.2 Where stake money won is used in conditions of a race it will only be the earnings from the first five places, including Rating Penalty Free winning stakes.
- 2.3 Any race conditions will be for what a horse has achieved in the gait it is competing in.
- 2.4 Subject to these regulations and the rules eligibility is determined firstly at acceptance time and again at time of start.
- 2.5 Any matters that arise regarding these regulations, their implementation, or any matter that is not covered by the regulations and which is necessary to give effect to them shall be determined at the discretion of the chief executive, in consultation with the chairperson, in a manner that supports the efficient and fair conduct of racing.

- 2.6 For the avoidance of doubt where these regulations permit a programme or any conditions to be altered that alteration is deemed to be approved by the Board under rule 820 unless the Board states otherwise.
- 2.7 Implementation of this regulation will be regularly monitored and formally reviewed in February 2026.

PART A: CONDUCT OF RACE MEETINGS

3. CONDUCT OF RACE MEETINGS/PROGRAMME - GENERAL

- 3.1 Unless otherwise approved by the chief executive, a club's programme for each day of racing:
- (a) must not have more than 12 races on which there is race betting; and
 - (b) must not have fewer than four races; and
 - (c) shall have at least two trotting races on which there is race betting; and
 - (d) may have a maximum of one race for junior drivers, subject to these regulations.
- 3.2 It shall be a condition of every programme that all fees or other amounts payable must be paid, or credit arrangements satisfactory to the club, HRNZ, or the NZ Sires Stakes Board as appropriate be agreed before a horse can start in a race.
- 3.3 The chief executive in consultation with the club reserves the right to:
- (a) Change the venue of the race meeting.
 - (b) Transfer the meeting to a different venue.
- 3.4 The Head of Racing and Wagering at HRNZ reserves the right to:
- (a) Alter the order in which the races may be run.
 - (b) Alter the starting time of the races.
 - (c) Vary the conditions set for any race after nominations open to ensure the fullest possible fields are carded, except where clause 10.4 applies.
- 3.5 If the conditions are varied under clause 3.4(c) every attempt will be made to advise the nominator of the horses concerned.
- 3.6 A race to be started from the mobile barrier may be started from a standing or moving start by the Stipendiary Stewards in the event of any unforeseen circumstances.
- 3.7 A horse must be nominated for a race by its trainer or owner.
- 3.8 If the number of nominations or acceptors for any one race is nine or less, the club may elect to either:
- (a) run the race as programmed;
 - (b) cancel that race and replace it with another race included in the approved programme;

- (c) divide another race on the programme, in which case the conditions for the substituted race will be the same as for the race being divided or a split of the nominations for the race to be divided if approved by the Handicapper; or
 - (d) subject to entries received, where a club intends to run more than one race of a particular class or type, the club may divide one of these races into an event for which eligibility is restricted to a specified age and/or sex.
- 3.9 Subject to nominations received, where a club intends to run more than one race of a particular class or type, the club may divide one of these races into an event for which eligibility is restricted to a specified age, or sex, or both.
- 3.10 Any horse not selected to start in a race for which it was nominated may be transferred to any race for which it may be eligible.
- 3.11 Where a race or races are programmed "To be announced", the said races shall be made up from acceptors received for events on the programme. Conditions will be determined at acceptance time.
- 3.12 A trainer shall notify HRNZ of the driver engaged to drive the horse by the date and time stated in the programme and if no date and time is notified within 24 hours of the fields being published.
- 3.13 Where a programme provides for a Junior Drivers' race, it shall be the responsibility of the owner and trainer of a horse nominated for the race to ensure that a Junior Driver is available to drive the said horse.
- 3.14 Should a conflict of interest occur with a driver's sponsor and the club's race-meeting sponsors, the club's racing manager or secretary has the right to inform a sponsored driver that they may be unable to wear such sponsored gear or cover the offending logo for that race or meeting.
- 3.15 The trainer of any horse engaged in a race at a betting race shall ensure that such horse is available with an attendant in the official stabling complex (or in its allocated stall):
 - (a) at least one hour prior to the advertised starting time of the first race of the meeting where it is entered in that race, or, if entered in a subsequent race, at least ninety minutes prior to the advertised starting time of the race; or
 - (b) prior to such other time as may be notified in the advertised programme.
- 3.16 The time prescribed in clause 3.15 may be varied upon being notified in the advertised programme for the race meeting.
- 3.17 A horse shall not be removed from the racecourse until after the race it is engaged in has been completed, unless approved by a Stipendiary Steward.

- 3.18 Failure to comply with the conditions outlined in clause 3.15 or 3.16 may result in the horse being deemed ineligible to start and may be scratched by the Stipendiary Stewards under rule 213.

PART B: PROGRAMMING

4. PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The principal programming considerations will be maximising wagering turnover through providing opportunities for horses to race “like for like” fairly to the greatest extent possible, while maintaining high animal welfare standards.
- 4.2 Other programming considerations are:
- (a) The number of horses available for a race day.
 - (b) The number of acceptors for the race.
 - (c) The number of acceptors for other races.
 - (d) The quality of acceptors.
 - (e) Alternate racing opportunities.
 - (f) Available stake distribution.
 - (g) Impacts on other races or subsequent meetings.
 - (h) Number of available races to be conducted at the race meeting.

5. PROGRAMMING AND ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1 A race may be programmed using the following provisions, or “open nominations”, or a combination of both.
- 5.2 A race may be programmed as a handicap event, mobile start, standing start, or free for all (FFA).
- 5.3 The following conditions may be used in any race to determine a horse’s eligibility, handicap, and barrier, alone or in combination:
- (a) Gait.
 - (b) Rating.
 - (c) Placings, earnings, stake money won, earnings from first place or other aggregation of placings, number of wins - over a specified period of time including lifetime, seasonal, number of starts, date period, either alone or in combination.
 - (d) Age.
 - (e) Sex.
 - (f) Claiming Price.
- 5.4 A horse which falls below the set conditions for a race shall be eligible for selection.
- 5.5 Any horse which exceeds the set conditions for a race shall be ineligible unless the horse is otherwise eligible under these regulations.

- 5.6 Any horse that falls below the set conditions but remains eligible shall for the purposes of preferential barrier draws be deemed to be at the lowest limit of the conditions set for that race. That is, if a horse races above its rating it shall be treated at the lowest limit of the race, even if it is rated lower than that.
- 5.7 Where a club programmes more than one race with the same conditions and expresses the intention that these races may be split at acceptance time, the Bureau may change the race conditions to reflect the horses that are competing in those races. These amended conditions shall become the programmed conditions for the race in question.
- 5.8 Any horse's eligibility shall be determined only by its performances in the gait it is competing in.
- 5.9 Trotters shall be permitted to start in pacing events. The handicapping of trotters and their eligibility when competing as trotters against pacers shall be at the sole discretion of the Handicapper.

6. HANDICAPPING

- 6.1 Races may be run as special handicaps with all set marks stated in the programme for the race.
- 6.2 Races may be run as discretionary handicaps where the handicaps are at the discretion of the Handicapper.
- 6.3 Any handicaps set shall be done so with the requirement that there should be at least ten metres between each mark or line unless otherwise stated in the programme for that race, approval of which will be at the sole discretion of the Handicapper.

7. OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL RACES

- 7.1 Only official races are included as form and in the horse's statistics and lifetime record.
- 7.2 Official races are races in which the total stake payable is over \$1,000.
- 7.3 An unofficial race is a race in which the total stakes payable is \$1,000 or less.

8. STAKES

- 8.1 The minimum total stake for a betting race is \$7,000.
- 8.2 For Group and Listed the club shall pay:
- (a) 55 percent of the stake monies for first place;
 - (b) 15.5 percent for second place;

- (c) 9 percent for third place;
- (d) 5.25 percent for fourth place;
- (e) 3 percent for fifth place; and
- (f) 1.75 percent each for all other placings.

If there are less than 12 starters the balance of the stake shall be retained by HRNZ in the race stakes pool.

8.3 For races other than Group and Listed a club shall pay:

- (a) 55 percent of the stake monies for first place;
- (b) 15.5 percent for second place;
- (c) 9.5 percent for third place;
- (d) 6 percent for fourth place; and
- (e) 1.75 percent each for all other placings.

If there are less than 12 starters the balance of the stake shall be retained by HRNZ in the race stakes pool.

8.4 The Board may approve an alternative proposal for the payment of stakes for a race(s) and in which case the stakes shall be paid in accordance with the approved proposal. The approved proposal must be included in the programming conditions for the race.

8.5 Clauses 8.2 and 8.3 do not apply to races administered by the New Zealand Sires Stakes Board Incorporated (NZSSB) and for such races, the stake shall be paid in accordance with the NZSSB conditions. Those conditions must be included in the programming conditions for the race.

9. FUTURITY RACES

9.1 The chief executive may designate a race a Futurity Race.

9.2 A club may conduct a Futurity Race with the approval of the chief executive.

9.3 Futurity Races are subject to these regulations.

9.4 All monies received from enrolments, nominations, or sustaining payments shall be included in the Futurity race stake and shall be held on trust by HRNZ or other entity approved by HRNZ pending the running of the race.

10. HEATS AND FINALS RACES

10.1 Races may be conducted in heats and a final and may include a consolation(s).

10.2 Heats and finals must be conducted in accordance with these regulations.

10.3 Conditions for all heats and finals may vary as approved by the Handicapper.

10.4 The published conditions of the series of heats and finals must state how the finals shall be selected from those horses competing in the heats.

11. JUNIOR DRIVER RACES

11.1 Junior Driver Rating Penalty Free races may only be programmed as 4YO and older horse races.

11.2 A horse may only benefit from winning one such race in a season.

11.3 A horse that has won such a race is eligible to compete in rating penalty free races if otherwise eligible, however it shall receive a rating penalty for any subsequent driver's rating penalty free race wins.

11.4 All clubs may programme a maximum of one Junior Driver Rating Penalty Free race each race day of a meeting, and additional such races may be programmed:

- (a) if approved by the Handicapper; or
- (b) for the NZ Junior Drivers Championship and the Australasian Young Drivers Championship.

11.5 For eligibility purposes a concession Junior Driver will be one that has driven up to and including 50 lifetime wins at the time of nominations closing for the said race. Subsequent wins by the said driver prior to the race shall not deem that horse ineligible.

12. INVITED DRIVERS, OTHER DRIVERS' EVENTS

12.1 Invited Drivers Rating Penalty Free races require approval of the chief executive and shall only be programmed and run as 4YO and older races.

13. CLAIMING RACES

13.1 Claiming races may be run.

13.2 Any Claimer competing in any race will do so subject to the HRNZ Claiming Regulations.

13.3 Claimers Only races will be rating penalty free, called a Claimers Only Penalty Free race.

13.4 A Claimer can win unlimited Claimers Only Rating Penalty Free races.

14. MONTÉ RACES

14.1 An alternative method of handicapping horses in Monté races may be applied at the discretion of the chief executive.

PART C: RATING SYSTEM

15. RATINGS SYSTEM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 15.1 The following principles are intended to introduce and retain integrity over the rating population structure.
- 15.2 This is a flexible system designed to penalise winners with a rating re-handicap of five points, acknowledge placegetters (2nd, 3rd 4th or 5th) as being competitive at their present rating levels with no rating adjustment and give a rating relief to any unplaced runner (6th or further back) so that each horse can return to where it was competitive.
- 15.3 All penalty-free races will be just that with no penalty given for a win and no points deducted for an unplaced effort.
- 15.4 Non winners (maidens) will be recognised without any attached rating.
- 15.5 Upon winning its first race a horse will enter the rating system at R40 and progress from there under the above principles.
- 15.6 This rating structure, supported by limited conditioned programming, will be used to programme:
 - (a) even and competitive fields; and
 - (b) consistent opportunities for all classes of horses.

16. THE RATING SYSTEM BASIC FRAMEWORK

- 16.1 The ratings framework has a range of rating points from 35 points (R35) minimum to 120 points (R120) maximum.
- 16.2 A qualified horse takes a maiden (non-winner) status, with no rating, and takes its place in a field based on the conditions of the race.
- 16.3 Horses enter system at 40 rating points (R40) after their maiden win.
- 16.4 Except as in this regulation, all winning horses will incur a five-point rating penalty.
- 16.5 Horses placed second to fifth will have no rating point change.
- 16.6 Horses placed sixth to last will lose one rating point.
- 16.7 Penalty free races are penalty free, i.e. no rating points incurred by the winner and no rating points deducted from any horse.

- 16.8 No rating penalty increase will be given to horses dead-heating for first in a race. A non-winner that dead-heats for first shall remain a non-winner.
- 16.9 Maximum rating that will be carried forward at the end of a season:
- (a) Two-year-old 70 rating points.
 - (b) Three-year-old 90 rating points.
- 16.10 To facilitate a fair and equitable transition to this rating scheme:
- (a) All one-win horses rated 41 rating points or higher prior to the commencement of this regulation will be re-rated at 40 rating points (R40) as at the commencement of this regulation.
 - (b) All two-win horses rated 46 rating points or higher prior to the commencement of this regulation will be re-rated at 45 rating points (R45) as at the commencement of this regulation.
 - (c) All three-win horses having 51 rating points or higher prior to the commencement of this regulation will be re-rated at 50 rating points (R50) as at the commencement of this regulation.
- 16.11 In exceptional circumstances four-win and higher horses identified as being rated uncompetitively or considered to be significantly disadvantaged in relation to other horses may be subject to re-rating by the Handicapper.
- 16.12 Other than as recorded in clauses 16.10 and 16.11 above, no other ratings adjustments will be made.

17. JUNIOR DRIVER RATING CONCESSIONS

- 17.1 Race-winning 4YO and older horses driven by a junior driver that has driven up to and including 10 career wins at the commencement of the meeting concerned will receive a two-point rating reduction if that win is not a Rating Penalty Free race.
- 17.2 For Auckland TC, Central Otago TC, Forbury Park TC, Gore HRC, Invercargill HRC, Northern Southland TC, Oamaru HRC, Riverton TC, Roxburgh TC, Tuapeka HRC, Wairio TC, Winton HRC, Wyndham HRC, Hawera HRC, Kapiti Coast HRC, Manawatu HRC, Stratford TC, Taranaki TC, Waikato Bay of Plenty HR, Wairarapa HRC and Wanganui TC only, one race may be programmed at any meeting in place of a full Junior Driver Rating Penalty Free race, except at Super Feature meetings, whereby a horse winning with a Junior Driver aboard shall receive that win Rating Penalty Free if the horse has not previously won any type of Drivers' Penalty Free race. The Penalty Free win shall be that horse's one Penalty Free win for life under its entitlements within these regulations. This win is only available to 4YO and older horses.
- 17.3 In designated races or set of races, horses may be nominated for a race for which they would otherwise be not eligible, if nominated with and driven by a junior driver with the following rating point concession to bring the horse within the programmed conditions:

- (a) A Junior Driver with zero to 10 career wins (at the time of acceptances) a three-rating point reduction; or
 - (b) A Junior Driver with 11 to 25 career wins (at the time of acceptances) a two-rating point reduction; or
 - (c) A Junior Driver with 26 or more career wins (at the time of acceptances) a one-rating point reduction.
- 17.4 If a horse has nominated or accepted for a race and in the meantime incurs rating points that takes it outside the parameters of the race for which it is nominated or accepted, the trainer may:
- (a) in the case of a nomination request the horse be transferred to another rating race for which it is eligible (such horse will be treated as an original nomination), or
 - (b) in the case of a horse holding a place in a published mobile start race confirm the original acceptance by notifying a change of driver to an eligible Junior Driver (less than 50 wins), and the horse will remain eligible to race even though its rating points are outside the parameters of the race as published, or
 - (c) in the case of a horse holding a place in a published standing start race confirm the original acceptance by notifying a change of driver to an eligible Junior Driver (less than 50 wins), or taking the appropriate distance penalty for that race, and the horse will remain eligible to race even though its rating points are outside the parameters of the race as published.

18. DISCRETIONARY POWERS

- 18.1 Official non-betting races will be rated in line with the above framework. However, the chief executive may establish and publish a policy for the use of discretion to amend the standard rating points based upon the race stake or the number of runners, or both.
- 18.2 Imported or returning horses from overseas will be awarded rating points as if they had raced in New Zealand under this ratings system.
- 18.3 Any horse returning to racing from a break of six months may be eligible for re-rating at the discretion of the Handicapper upon application by connections.
- 18.4 If a horse is disqualified for any reason, it shall be re-rated to receive or lose zero rating points for that race.

PART D: NATIONAL RACING BUREAU & RACE ENTRIES

19. THE NATIONAL RACING BUREAU

- 19.1 The National Racing Bureau (the Bureau) will establish and maintain a racing system that operates online to the greatest extent possible.
- 19.2 The primary means for nominating a horse for a race or a trial will be online. Telephone nominations will be accepted. The chief executive may set a date after which telephone nominations will not be accepted after giving three months' notice.
- 19.3 The standard nomination and acceptance times for race meetings will be as set by the chief executive and published on the HRNZ website. The times may be varied by the Head of Racing and Wagering to meet the needs of a particular race day. In the ordinary circumstances:
- (a) Nominations will close at noon.
 - (b) Acceptances will close at 2pm, unless extended by the Handicapper.
 - (c) Driver notifications are required from trainers within 24 hours of acceptances.
 - (d) The published nomination and acceptance days and times will take account of two-day meetings, the summer circuits, public holidays or special circumstances.
- 19.4 The Bureau may extend the nomination and acceptance times.
- 19.5 All nominations must be sent to the Bureau.
- 19.6 Preferably trainers will nominate a driver at the time of nomination. A confirmed driver must be confirmed to the Bureau no later than 24 hours after acceptances close.
- 19.7 If a driver is named to drive two or more horses in a race it is the responsibility of the respective trainers to confirm the drivers for their horses. Driver changes required after confirmation may be made under special circumstances as approved by the Stipendiary Stewards.
- 19.8 Upon nominations closing a viewing window of two hours will be permitted for trainers to view all nominations.
- 19.9 Once the viewing window has been made available no new nominations will be accepted unless nominations have been extended.
- 19.10 Trainers, if upon viewing their nominations, discover an apparent error with their nomination should contact the Bureau as soon as possible. Should the apparent error be at the fault of the trainer the Bureau is under no obligation to correct their error after the 2.00pm deadline.

- 19.11 No trainer will be permitted to nominate a horse for a race, or any driver be declared for any engagement, unless the relevant person has their respective licence at the time of the nomination or declaration.
- 19.12 Trainers who nominate online should always check their confirmation email. This will confirm that nominations have been correctly lodged and provide a chance to rectify any problems or errors.
- 19.13 A horse must be qualified to race and passed at the specified gait prior to the close of nominations for the race they have nominated for.
- 19.14 If nominations for a race are extended beyond the close of acceptance deadline, in addition to online notification all trainers will receive a text message detailing which races are extended and the new closing time. Preference in field selection will be given to original nominations, subject to the specific race conditions which may specify otherwise.
- 19.15 If the trainer of a horse is required to produce a veterinary certificate prior to racing, the trainer must either ensure the certificate is received prior to raceday or arrange for a veterinarian to inspect the horse on course, failure to do so will result in the horse being declared ineligible to start.
- 19.16 If a horse is stood down to trial and is also accepted to race at an upcoming meeting, the horse will be scratched from its upcoming engagements.
- 19.17 When nominations have been extended for a particular race, any horse that has been withdrawn prior to acceptance time, may only be re-nominated on the same handicap mark in a standing start race or under the same assessment mark in a mobile start race.
- 19.18 A horse may be nominated for only one race on a race day.
- 19.19 Horses are always considered in the first instance for the race they are nominated for. The Bureau has the right to use discretion to place horses in a race other than the one they are nominated for, after consulting the trainer.
- 19.20 A horse may be considered for subsequent preferential race entry if they received a ballot from the previous meeting they were nominated for.
- 19.21 Should acceptances for more than one race meeting close on the same day and trainers wish to start their horse at more than one of those meetings, if circumstances allow, the trainer must indicate their intentions to the Bureau otherwise the nominated horse/s will be considered for one start only. If no contact is made the Bureau will use their discretion whether to include in the second start. The Bureau's decision will be final and binding.
- 19.22 Trainers are encouraged to communicate any special requests to the Bureau prior to the deadline when nominations close to avoid any disappointment.

HRNZ Explanatory Note

Utilisation: Handicapping, Ratings,
Programming, Junior Drivers
Introduced 30 June 2025

CURRENT ISSUES

- A. Horses that do not enter the racing system - do not meet the current qualifying time standard.
- B. Horses that meet the qualifying standard and then never race, with trainers assessing them as not competitive. Consistently around 20% of qualifiers.
- C. Horses that cease their racing career early: lack of opportunities to race or perception that they cannot race fairly or competitively.
- D. Poor utilisation of foals: only 46% of fillies, 55% C&Gs race, target should be 60% of the crop gets to the races.

CURRENT ISSUES ctd

- E. The current rating system creates slippage in the median rating of the horse population i.e. it does not have any structural integrity.
- F. Maiden winners enter the rating system around R50, too high for many.
- G. Horses move up the ratings too quickly. Many examples of a two and three race winner racing in wide rating band races against more experienced horses. Horses going up too quickly generate export sales and loss of owners.
- H. Too many unplaced efforts are required to return a horse to a competitive level after a win.

PROGRAMMING POLICY

The principal programming considerations will be:

1. Maximizing wagering turnover; through
2. Providing opportunities for horses to race "like for like", fairly to the greatest extent possible; while
3. Maintaining animal welfare standards.

A horse needs to move up the rating bands when it wins, race fairly there, and return to where it was previously competitive

RATING BASICS

- A. One entry point for all horses at R40, i.e. about the 20th – 25th percentile of the horse population.
- B. A qualified horse is a maiden, with no rating, and takes its place in a field based on conditions as programmed.
- C. Ratings to range from R35 to R120.
- D. All winning horses will receive a five-point penalty.
- E. Horses placed second to fifth will have no rating change.
- F. Horses placed sixth to last will lose one rating point.

RATING BASICS continued

G. Penalty free races are penalty free, i.e. no points to the winner.

H. Junior driver concessions:

- Available on designated races to allow a horse to nominate for a race with lower rating band: junior drivers with 0 to 10 career wins a three-point programme reduction, 11 to 25 wins a two-point reduction and 26 to 50 wins a single point reduction.
- Penalty free winning 4YOs & older: one per year per horse, but horse can enter with a junior driver and incur a rating penalty of three points, i.e. two point reduction.

RATING BASICS continued

- I. It is not intended to re-rate all horses.
- J. Targeted re-rating:
 - A. One-win horses currently above R40 back to R40;
 - B. Two-win horses R46+ return to R45; and
 - C. Three-win horses R51+ return to R50.
- K. There will be a gap in the horse population above R50 that will take some time to work through.
- L. The Bureau can re-rate individual disadvantaged horses in exceptional cases

RATING BASICS continued

- M. Maximum rating carried forward at the end of the year:
- a. Two-year-old 60 rating points
 - b. Three-year-old 90 rating points.

CONDITIONING RACES

1. The rating system provides the principal framework for programming races: conditioning seeks to make races fair.
2. By using ratings simple conditions such as the number of starts, earnings in last five starts, wins in last five starts, wins in last six months or a year, or career earnings can be used to optimise racing opportunities.
3. Conditioned programming with the rating structure will produce even and competitive fields and create consistent opportunities for all classes of horses.
4. We need to avoid extraneous ad hoc programme conditions that do unintended harm to a particular set of horses.

WINNING HORSE WITH A CURRENT NOMINATION or ACCEPTANCE

If a horse incurs rating points that takes it out of the parameters of a future race for which it is entered:

- a. If a nomination it transfers to an eligible ratings race on the programme.
- b. If it is an acceptor in a mobile race, it can retain its eligibility, if driven by a Junior Driver (<50 wins) OR scratches.
- c. If it is an acceptor in a stand race, it can retain its eligibility if driven by a concession Junior Driver (<50 wins), OR take the appropriate distance penalty OR scratches.

REVIEW

HRNZ will monitor and review the implementation of these new arrangements.

HRNZ will select industry members for a small review committee.

Changes will be made to address unintended consequences.

A formal report will be made to the HRNZ Board in February 2026, after 6 months implementation.