



August 2024

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

### AMENDMENTS TO HANDICAPPING REGULATIONS, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND RACE WINNERS' MATRIX

On 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the Special Committee of the Harness Racing New Zealand Board approved amendments to the Handicapping Regulations, Guiding Principles of the Ratings System and Race Winners' Matrix, effective from 1 August 2024.

These amendments are designed to bring together the concepts proposed by Entain, which the HRNZ Board accepted, and to reflect the move to lower-staked racing, primarily at Cambridge. Such amendments include:

- Updated Race Winners Handicapping Matrix – five points as standard for totalisator races with an advertised stake of \$8,000 or less.
- Ratings System Guiding Principles - Fillies & Mares Concessions – removed for races \$8,000 or less.
- Ratings System Guiding Principles - Amended Junior Driver Concessions for races \$8,000 or less. For race winning 4YO & older horses driven by a junior driver the following applies:
  - 0 to 25 career wins a two-point reduction in rating penalty
  - 26 or more career wins a one-point reduction in rating penalty.
- Alteration to Section 4 of the Handicapping Regulations (also covered in Guiding Principles) – Heats & Finals. Allowing for additional Rating Penalty Free races to be created to stimulate greater activity in the North Island by way of Heats and Finals Concessions.
- Alteration to Section 10 of the Handicapping Regulations (also covered in Guiding Principles) – Junior Driver Events. Regulations reflecting the amended junior driver concessions for races \$8,000 or less.
- Addition of Section 12 of the Handicapping Regulations (also covered in Guiding Principles) – Rating Penalty Free Races. Provision for Extraordinary Rating Penalty Free Races for horses aged 3YO and older, which require HRNZ Board approval.

The amended Handicapping Regulations and Guiding Principles with the amendments marked up is attached, along with the amended Race Winners' Matrix. A full copy of the Handicapping Regulations are available on our website.

**Brad Steele**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## HANDICAPPING

The following Regulations are made by the HRNZ Board pursuant to the Rules of Harness Racing and take effect on 13 March 2017. These Regulations were last amended by the HRNZ Board on 1 August 2024.

Attached are the Guiding Principles of the Ratings Handicapping System which shall be the basis for the ratings assessment of horses.

### 1. Programming

- a) Races may be programmed using the following provisions or alternatively “open nominations” may be used as stated in the programme for the meeting.
- b) Races may be programmed as handicap events, mobile starts, standing starts or Free For All's (FFA).
- c) Any horse may be combined with other horses regardless of Rating, earnings, sex or winning stakes as set forth in the programme for that race.
- d) Any horse which falls below the set conditions for **that race** shall nevertheless be eligible for selection. Any horse which exceeds the set conditions shall be ineligible unless the conditions are altered as per regulations set in the “General Conditions of all Programmes”.
- e) The following conditions may be used in any race to determine eligibility and/or handicap and/or barrier.
  - Rating
  - Placings/Earnings/Number of Wins over a specified period of time, e.g. lifetime, seasonal, number of starts, date period, etc
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Claiming Price
  - Any combination of the above
- f) Any horse competing in any race where it 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.
- g) Where earnings are used in the conditions of a race, they will only reflect earnings for placings 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and will include assessment and Rating penalty free winning stakes.
- h) Where a club programmes more than one race with the same conditions and expresses the intention that those races will be split, at acceptance time the club will 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.
- i) Where a club programmes a totalisator race it shall be programmed for an advertised stake no lower than \$4,000.
- j) For Group and Listed totalisator races a club shall pay 55 per cent of the stake monies for first place, 15.5 per cent for second place, 9 per cent for third place, 5.25 per cent for fourth place, 3 per cent for fifth place, and 1.75 per cent each for all other placings.
- k) For races other than Group and Listed totalisator races a club shall pay 55 per cent of the stake monies for first place 15.5 per cent for second place, 9.5 per cent for third place, 6 per cent for fourth place, and 1.75 per cent each for all other placings.
- l) At the request of any Club 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.
- m) Paragraphs (j) and (k) 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.

### 2. Handicap Races

- a) Races may be run as special handicaps with all set marks stated in the programme for the race.

- b) Races may be run as discretionary handicaps where the handicaps are at the discretion of the Handicapper.
- c) Any handicaps set shall be done so with the proviso that there should be at least ten metres between each mark unless expressly stated in the programme for that race. Approval of such shall be at the sole discretion of the Handicapper.

3. **Futurity Races**

- a) Subject to the approval of the Handicapper, a club may conduct a "Futurity Race" where enrolments are taken prior to the advertised running of the race.
- b) Subsequent nominations and acceptances for the race shall be taken in the normal manner.
- c) All monies received from enrolments, nominations or sustaining payments shall be included in the Futurity race stake.
- d) Futurity races must be conducted in accordance with all other handicapping regulations.

4. **Heats and Finals**

- a) Races may be conducted in heats and a final and may include a consolation(s).
- b) Heats and Finals must be conducted in accordance with all other handicapping regulations.
- c) Conditions for all heats and finals may vary and approval of such shall be at the discretion of the Handicapper.
- d) The published conditions of the series of Heats and Finals must state exactly how the finals shall be selected from those horses competing in the heats.
- e) The winners of the heats, finals and consolations incur the normal handicapping penalties except where a horse is three-year-old or older and wins both a heat and final/or consolation it shall incur only one Rating Penalty for the two wins.
- f) Notwithstanding the above, if the final is a Group race, a race administered by the NZ Sires Stakes Board e.g. Sires Stakes Series, Yearling Sales race, or a race worth \$40,000 or more, all wins are rating penalty bearing.
- g) The normal handicapping penalties shall apply in the final and consolation(s) for any win(s) in races other than the heats, unless otherwise stated in the published conditions.
- h) Notwithstanding the above provisions a horse may only win one driver-based (Junior Driver or Invited Driver) Rating Penalty Free win per season, and one heats and finals or Extraordinary Rating Penalty Free win per season (1 January – 31 December).

5. **Race Status**

- a) Unofficial Races are all races of \$1,000 or less (These are treated as either Official Barrier Trials or Work Outs as per the Rules of Harness Racing.)
- b) Official Races are all races in excess of \$1,000.
- c) Only Official Races are included as form and in a horse's statistics and lifetime record.

6. **Re-Handicapping/Eligibility Check**

- a) Any horse winning a race shall be subject to either a re-handicap if applicable in a standing start event or an eligibility check in a mobile start event, for any race in which it is already accepted, unless otherwise stated in the programme for that race.
- b) Any horse winning or incurring any stake money for placings 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> only, after the barrier draw has been completed for any race, shall not alter the order of the preferential barrier draw for that race, provided it remains eligible.
- c) Any other horse placed or also-ran runner shall remain eligible to compete in any race in which it is already accepted, even if it falls outside the conditions of that race as a result of its placing, unless otherwise stated in the programme for that race.

7. **Conversion of Gait**

Any horse's eligibility shall be determined by its performances in the gait it is competing in only.

8. **Trotters Competing Against Pacers**

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.

9. **Imported Horses**

The provision of the reciprocal handicapping system shall apply to all horses winning races in Australia. That is; for the purpose of handicapping, races won in Australia shall be treated as if such races had been won in New Zealand. All other horses shall be at the discretion of the Handicapper.

10. **Junior Driver Events**

Junior Driver Rating Penalty Free races may only be programmed as 4YO and older races. A horse may only win one such race per racing season. That is, previous winners of a rating penalty free race within the active racing season shall receive a rating penalty for any subsequent drivers rating penalty free race.

- a) All clubs may programme one Junior Drivers Rating Penalty Free race per day at each meeting, except where that meeting is designated as a Premier meeting or Super Feature meeting.
- b) More than one Junior Drivers Rating Penalty Free race per meeting may only be approved by the Handicapper.
- c) Provision is made for the NZ Junior Drivers Championship and the Australasian Young Drivers Championship, when hosted in New Zealand, to be Rating Penalty Free.
- d) A horse may receive only one Junior Drivers Rating Penalty Free race per racing season although it may be eligible to compete in subsequent Rating Penalty Free races within that racing season in which a win would result in a Rating Penalty.
- e) In addition to these Rating Penalty Free Junior Driver races, other races may be programmed to allow Junior Drivers that have driven up to and including 50 lifetime wins at the time of nomination closing, to compete driving a better-performed horse. These conditions will be stated in the programme. A horse nominated under the Junior Drivers Concession condition shall be driven by a concession Junior Driver only. Wins by any horse using a Concession Junior Driver within the conditions of the race shall incur a Rating Penalty.
- f) 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.
- g) 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.
- h) Race-winning (R rated) 4YO and older horses driven by a licensed junior driver that has driven up to and including 50 career wins at the commencement of the meeting concerned will receive a half penalty if that win is not a Rating Penalty Free race. The exact application of the half penalties is contained within the Rating Handicapping System – Guiding Principles.
- i) In races with an advertised stake of \$8,000 or less 4YO & older race-winning horses winning a totalisator race driven by a Junior Driver will receive a Rating Penalty reduction from the standard (five-point) penalty. Junior Drivers that have 0 to 25 career wins receive a two-point reduction in rating penalty if that win is not a Rating Penalty Free race. Junior Drivers that have 26 or more career wins receive a one-point reduction in rating penalty if that win is not a Rating Penalty Free race. The exact application of these rating reductions is contained within the Rating Handicapping System – Guiding Principles.

11. **Invited Drivers, Other Drivers Events**

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

For the purposes of these Regulations in Rating Penalty Free Drivers' races a horse may only win one per racing season.

**12. Rating Penalty Free Races**

Races designated as Rating Penalty Free will be restricted to four-year-old and older Junior Driver only races, four-year-old and older Invited Driver races approved by the HRNZ Board, any Extraordinary Rating Penalty Free race for race-winning horses aged three-year-old and older horses approved by the HRNZ Board, or a Rating Penalty Free win pursuant to the Heats & Finals Regulations above in section 4 of these Handicapping Regulations.

A horse may only win one driver-based (Junior Driver or Invited Driver) Rating Penalty Free win per season, and one heats and finals or Extraordinary Rating Penalty Free win per season (1 January – 31 December).

**13. Claiming Races**

- a) Claiming races may be run.
- b) Claiming horses may be included in other race programmes.
- c) Any Claimer competing in any race will do so subject to the HRNZ Claiming Regulations.
- d) Claimers Only races will be Rating Penalty Free.
- e) A Claimer can win more than one Claimers Only Rating Penalty Free race for life.

**14. Monté Races**

An alternative method of handicapping horses in Monté races will be applied at the discretion of the Board.

**15. Glossary Of Terms**

- a) Winning stakes are all stakes for first placings including Rating Penalty Free winning stakes.
- b) Earnings are all stakes paid for all placings including Rating Penalty Free winning stakes.
- c) Where earnings are used in conditions of a race they will only reflect earnings for placings 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and will include Rating Penalty Free winning stakes.
- d) Conditions regarding Gait. Any race will only reflect what a horse has achieved in the gait it is competing in.
- e) Eligibility for Races: Is determined firstly at Acceptance Time and again at Time of Start, subject to the Handicapping Regulations 9. Re-handicapping/Eligibility check unless otherwise stated in the programme.
- f) Racing Season: 1 January to 31 December

Any matters that arise regarding the Ratings Handicapping System and its implementation that are not covered by the above Regulations and/or attached Guiding Principles shall be determined at the discretion of the Handicapper or his duly appointed deputy, in consultation with the Chairman.

# RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

## Guiding Principles:

**Effective 1 August 2024**

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 - subject to clauses 3, 4, 5, and 6 in this section.
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.
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 races run for an advertised stake of \$8,000 or less, where no fillies and/or mares' concession will apply. 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 of 1 August 2024. 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. 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 with an advertised stake greater than \$8,000, 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.**
4. **4YO & older race-winning horses winning a totalisator race driven by a Junior Driver in races with an advertised stake of \$8,000 or less will receive a Rating Penalty reduction from the standard five-point penalty (see Race Winners' Matrix). The reduced penalties are as follows: for Junior Drivers that have zero to 25 career wins (at the start of that race day) a two-point reduction in rating penalty will apply. For Junior Drivers that have 26 or more career wins (at the start of that race day) a one-point reduction in rating penalty will apply - unless the win results in a Rating Penalty Free win, which takes precedence. There will be no fillies or mares' concession applied to totalisator races with an advertised stake \$8,000 or less.**
5. **Additional Rating Penalty Free conditions may be applied to races for race-winning horses aged 3YO & older, in extraordinary circumstances. Such conditions will only apply to Extraordinary Rating Penalty Free races, as approved by the HRNZ Board or Heats & Finals Conditions. Refer to point 12 of the Handicapping Regulations for more information.**
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. 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.

## Race Winners' Matrix

1-Aug-24

	Up to \$8,000	\$8,001 to \$12,500	\$12,501-\$20,000	\$20,001-\$39,999	\$40,000+ / Group & Listed
R35-R49	5	7	8	8	8
R50	5	7	7	8	8
R51	5	7	7	8	8
R52	5	7	7	8	8
R53	5	7	7	8	8
R54	5	6	7	7	8
R55	5	6	7	7	8
R56	5	6	7	7	8
R57	5	6	7	7	8
R58	5	6	7	7	8
R59	5	6	7	7	8
R60	4	5	6	7	7
R61	4	5	6	7	7
R62	4	5	6	7	7
R63	4	5	6	7	7
R64	4	5	6	7	7
R65	4	5	6	7	7
R66	4	5	6	6	7
R67	4	5	6	6	7
R68	4	5	6	6	7
R69	4	5	6	6	7
R70	4	5	6	6	7
R71	3	4	5	6	6
R72	3	4	5	6	6
R73	3	4	5	6	6
R74	3	4	5	6	6
R75	3	4	5	6	6
R76	3	4	5	6	6
R77	3	4	5	6	6
R78	3	4	5	6	6
R79	3	4	5	6	6
R80	3	4	5	6	6
R81	2	3	4	5	6
R82	2	3	4	5	6
R83	2	3	4	5	6
R84	2	3	4	5	6
R85	2	3	4	5	6
R86	2	3	4	5	6
R87	2	3	4	5	6
R88	2	3	4	5	6
R89	2	3	4	5	6
R90	1	2	3	4	5
R91	1	2	3	4	5
R92	1	2	3	4	5
R93	1	2	3	4	5
R94	1	2	3	4	5
R95	1	2	3	4	5
R96	1	2	3	4	5
R97	1	2	3	4	5
R98	1	2	3	4	5
R99	1	2	3	4	5
R100	1	2	3	4	5
R101	1	1	2	3	4
R102	1	1	2	3	4
R103	1	1	2	3	4
R104	1	1	2	3	4
R105	1	1	2	3	4
R106	1	1	2	3	4
R107	1	1	2	3	4
R108	1	1	2	3	4
R109	1	1	1	2	3
R110	1	1	1	2	3
R111	1	1	1	2	3
R112	1	1	1	2	3
R113	1	1	1	1	2
R114	1	1	1	1	2
R115	1	1	1	1	2
R116	1	1	1	1	1
R117	1	1	1	1	1
R118	1	1	1	1	1
R119	1	1	1	1	1
R120	0	0	0	0	0