

## RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

*Commences 13 March 2017 (Amended as at 11 May 2017)*

### Guiding Principles:

These Guiding Principles are subject to ongoing review by the Handicapping Sub-Committee and HRNZ Board.

#### A. GENERAL

1. The Ratings Handicapping System is designed to treat all horses as fairly as possible and 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.
5. Highest possible rating is 130 points.
6. A non-winner is a horse that has not previously won a race. It will be displayed as an 'MR' followed by their rating points.
7. All race winners will be displayed with an 'R' followed by their rating points.

#### B. RACE WINNERS

1. Pacing winners of races \$9,000 or less (advertised programmed stake) to receive 8 points.
2. Pacing winners of races \$9,001 to \$19,999 (advertised programmed stake) to receive 10 points.
3. Trotting Winners of races \$9,000 or less (advertised programmed stake) to receive 6 points.
4. Trotting winners of races \$9,001 to \$19,999 (advertised programmed stake) to receive 8 points.
5. Winners of races worth \$20,000 or greater (advertised programmed stake) to receive between 10 - 12 points.
6. Winners of Group or Listed races to receive between 10-15 points.
7. Any previous race winner winning any totalisator race will incur a Rating Penalty to elevate that horse to at least 52 rating points.
8. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) of \$9,000 or less will receive 8 points but will not be rated above R55 and must be rated to at least R52. As per the Guidelines above trotters receive 6 points but must also be rated between R52 and R55.
9. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) between \$9,001 and \$19,999 will receive 10 points but will not be rated above R58 and must be rated to at least R55. As per the Guidelines above trotters receive 8 points but must also be rated between R55 and R58.
10. In the event a filly or mare wins a non-winners pacing race, either restricted to fillies and mares or an unrestricted sex race, that filly or mare shall receive a one (1) point concession for races \$9,000 or less and a two (2) point concession for races \$9,001 to \$19,999. The winning filly or mare would still be rated per the above guidelines for non-winners - the concession would be applied within the aforementioned bands. That is; R52-R55 for races up to \$9,000 or R55-R58 for races from \$9,001 to \$19,999.

11. Though a non-winner may have a Rating higher than 50 points, when a horse wins its first race it shall only be re-Rated from the basic starting number of 50 points. Non-Winners that have a Rating less than 50 points will be re-rated from their actual Rating but be rated to fall within the appropriate bands for winners of non-win races.
12. 2YO pacers winning a totalisator race will receive a maximum of five (5) points for races of \$14,999 or less (advertised stake) but shall move to a Rating of at least R52 for their first win. 2YO fillies will not receive any further concession. Handicapper discretion downwards may be applied.
13. 2YO trotters winning a totalisator race will receive a maximum of four (4) points for races of \$14,999 or less (advertised stake) but shall move to a Rating of at least R52 for their first win. 2YO fillies will not receive any further concession. Handicapper discretion downwards may be applied.
14. 2YO horses (pacers and trotters) winning a race with an advertised stake of \$15,000 or greater will have the standard Guiding Principles applied.
15. Fillies and Mares racing their own sex (excluding non-win and 2YO only races) in races up to \$19,999 will receive at least a 2-point concession, from the standard principles as outlined above.
16. 3YO pacers will receive half points for every second win providing that 'second' win is under \$15,000. If it is not, the following win will be at half points, if under \$15,000 - minimum of 4 points for races up to and including \$9,000, 5 points for races \$9,001-\$14,999).
17. 3YO trotters will receive half points for every second win providing that 'second' win is under \$15,000. If it is not, the following win will be at half points, if under \$15,000 - minimum of 3 points for races up to and including \$9,000, 4 points for races \$9,001-\$14,999).
18. 3YOs winning races with an advertised stake of \$15,000 or more will be rated per the standard Guiding Principles.
19. A win by a filly or mare in any race other than a fillies and mares' may be subject to Discretion downwards when being re-rated by the Handicapper.
20. The Handicapper may apply downward discretion to any winner's point's allocation.
21. *See Note 1 for an explanation as to the methodology regarding the varied Rating allocations for race winners.*
22. A 'Diminishing Rating Scale' may apply to highly Rated winners. *See Note: 2 for full explanation of the Diminishing Rating Scale and its application.*

### **C. PLACED OR UNPLACED HORSES**

1. Any horse placing second, third, fourth or fifth that earns a stake of \$2,000 or more in an Official Race will be subject to an increase in Rating by a minimum of one (1) point, at the discretion of the Handicapper. A horse placing fifth in a race with an advertised stake of \$20,000 or greater, that earns less than \$2,000, will remain on the same Rating, subject to the discretion of the Handicapper.
2. Any horse placing second or third in race worth more than \$9,000 (advertised stake) will be subject to an increase in Rating of one (1) point, at the discretion of the Handicapper.
3. In races up to and including \$9,000 (advertised stake) a horse will increase one (1) Rating point for placing second or third, at the discretion of the Handicapper. However, no horse shall be re-rated higher than the Rating it received following its last winning start or subsequent highest Rating, unless rated R54 or below.
4. A race-winning horse placing second or third in a race, from a Rating of R54 or below will receive a one (1) point Rating increase.
5. Horses placing second, third and fourth in Maiden (non-winner) races will receive a one (1) point increase. No maiden however shall be rated higher than 55 points.
6. Unplaced horses (5<sup>th</sup> to last) will lose at least 1 point.

7. Handicappers have discretion to drop unplaced horses up to a maximum of 3 points, if warranted.
8. *Note 3: Explains in greater detail the rationale behind placed horses increasing in Rating points.*
9. *Note 4: Explains how downward discretion will work in the treatment of unplaced horses.*

#### **D. OTHER CONDITIONS AND 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. Horses placing second or third in a Junior Driver Only Rating Penalty Free race shall receive no increase in Rating points. A horse shall only win one such Rating Penalty Free drivers' race in its career. These concessions are reserved for horses that are 4YO and older. *Refer to point 11 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 (World Drivers Championship) may be Rating Penalty Free, at HRNZ Board discretion.
3. Claiming horses racing in Claimers only races receive no points - upwards or downwards. This includes winners, placed and unplaced runners.
4. 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.
5. No 2YO pacer or trotter shall be rated in higher than R85.
6. No 3YO pacer or trotter shall be rated in higher than R110.
7. 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.
8. Dead-heats – points shall be evenly shared between the dead-heaters. In the case of a dead-heat for first the Rating points for winning the races shall be shared evenly, however in the event race conditions mean the dead-heating horses accrue differing Rating Penalties, the Handicapper may use discretion. A non-winner that dead-heats for first race shall remain a non-winner.
9. Non-tote races: these will be run under Guiding Principles; however the Rating of these races will be subject to Handicappers' Discretion. This primarily applies to \$2,000 or other similar non-tote races.
10. As per the Handicapping Regulations 2YO horses may compete in 2YO only races without being qualified, as long as they have passed to the satisfaction of a Stipendiary Steward at the starting method for the particular race they have entered.
11. Should a 2YO race prior to being qualified it will not carry a Rating until such time that it is qualified.
12. 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.
13. Horses racing as Claimers will be subject to a Rating Review on 1 August and 1 February. To be eligible for a Rating Review, a Claimer must have been registered as such for a constant period of no less than three months prior to the re-rating date and raced as a claimer for a minimum of three starts within that same period. Horses that have been claimed within that period and not re-registered as claimers will not be considered for re-rating. Horses claimed within said period and re registered as a claimer with 14 days of being claimed will be considered for re-rating. Claimers whose ratings are reviewed are not guaranteed to be re-rated.
14. Any owner/trainer wishing to appeal the Handicapper's points allocation following a race can appeal in writing to HRNZ's Chief Executive who will co-ordinate a review by the Handicapping Review Group.

15. Imported or returning horses from overseas will be re-Rated by the Handicapper as if they had raced in New Zealand under a Ratings system. The Handicapper may apply discretion downward as he/she would under a Ratings System in New Zealand.

### ***Note 1: Rating of race winners - methodology***

The unique capability of a Ratings system is that horses can be 'Rated' for winning, relative to the stake of the race they won and the quality of the opposition. Under the Guiding Principles there is a range of guidelines that allow the system and the Handicapper(s) to create differentiation within Ratings.

One of the key objectives of the Ratings system is to move horses that are successful upwards through the Ratings. Horses that win high stakes in superior-quality races should be accruing a relative number of points. Horses winning Group, Listed or Premier races will incur higher Rating penalties than those horses winning standard, lower-staked, lower-rated races.

Under the previous Assessment System there was no substantial differentiation between a \$6,000 win at a lower level meeting and a \$20,000 win at a Premier meeting. In general, both wins moved the successful horse up one assessment.

When considering the Rating of non-winners the system has broken them up into two categories. Winners of lower-staked and potentially weaker non-win races will be re-rated to between R52 and R55. Those that win higher staked (\$9,000-\$19,999) non-win races will be re-rated to between R55 and R58.

Another key aspect in creating a fairer racing environment within the Ratings System is to move lowly rated, previous race winners that win out of the lower tier they have been competing in. If a horse wins a race from a low rating (under R50) that horse will be penalised up to at least R52. Such a penalty takes the successful horse out of the lower tier that it was racing in but it does not increase said horse too far up the Rating scale. Any horse moving to R52 from a low rating would be able to drop back into the lower tier of horses, should it struggle following its lowly rated win.

While age-group concessions have been cited as a major problem affecting the Handicapping System it was decided that some moderated concessions were necessary under the Ratings System. Such concessions allow for discounted points; however no horse that has won a race shall be eligible to race against non-winners, unless specific races are Programmed as such.

### ***Note 2: Diminishing Rating Scale***

The Diminishing Rating Scale is a method that the Handicappers will use when re-rating winners of races rated higher than the bulk of the racing population. As horses move higher in the Ratings System, the need to penalise winners in line with the Guiding Principles diminishes due to there being fewer horses within that sector of the racing population.

The Diminishing Ratings Scale takes into account where Ratings will put a winning horse in relation to others. It considers the treatment of how other horses of similar nature have been treated previously. While there are a range of factors that are taken into account, the objective is to ensure as much consistency as possible, when applying any form of discretion in re-rating winners.

The difference between this Ratings system and previous systems is that in any race horses will spread their respective ratings by competing - whether its winners, placegetters earning a point or

staying on the same Rating or unplaced horses dropping points. Each race sees an ongoing re-adjustment of the racing population's ratings.

Similar diminishing scales are prevalent in other Ratings Systems around the world. A prime objective of any Ratings System is to move the better horses through the Ratings once they prove successful but allow all horses to race and find their appropriate level of competition via their performance.

Where the Diminishing Rating Scale is activated can depend on the nature of the races concerned, the region races are being run in and pool of horses within that Ratings sphere.

### ***Note 3: Rating increases for placings***

Under the Ratings System Guiding Principles there are several ways a horse can incur a Rating increase for placing.

The intention of these applications is threefold. Firstly, those horses that compete well at a higher level or in richer races and earn greater amounts of stake money have proven they are competitive. As such there is strong justification for increasing their Rating, by an incremental amount, as a result of their performance(s).

Secondly, if a horse is racing consistently within its Rating band or similar and running placings regularly such a horse should not be falling down the ratings but maintaining a fairly static level in the vicinity for which it sits. If horses that race well but do not win do not incur some form of Rating Penalty then too many horses will slide down the Ratings scale, clogging up the lower end of the racing population and thinning out the higher levels disproportionately.

Under the Guiding Principles a restriction has been placed on horses increasing their Ratings by placing in lower-staked races. Though horses will gain a point for placing second or third in a lower-staked race (\$9,000 or less), those horses will not increase to a Rating higher than that of their last winning start.

Thirdly, for horses rated below R50, especially those that have won a race(s) this is a tool to move those horses that are in form, in the lower tier, away from that horses that are not in form. Lowly rated horses that are placing consistently may slowly move away from the low rating tier they were in, thus pushing them into a slightly higher Rating bracket and allowing those at the bottom of the Rating scale an opportunity.

Those horses that do increase in points for placings will of course drop back down again for any unplaced (5<sup>th</sup> or lower) performances.

### ***Note 4: Downward Discretion for unplaced performances***

For any horse placing fifth or further back the standard Rating deduction is one point. The Handicappers however have discretion to increase that deduction by up to three points per start.

A deduction of three will be rare, however a two-point deduction will be more commonly applied when horses are deemed to be struggling in the environment they are racing in and appear uncompetitive. Such deductions are more likely to occur in more highly rated races but will occur across the spectrum.

The intention with this element of discretion is to ensure horses are not uncompetitive for too long a time span, which was one of the complaints surrounding the 'Dropback System' under the old Assessment Handicapping System.

***Rating of the South Island Horse Population:***

- *All non-exported horses currently racing in the South Island (2016/17 season) without a Rating will be rated.*
- *The assessment process will be undertaken by Andrew Morris (New Zealand Handicapper) and Kevin Smith (North Island Handicapper) with assistance from club Racing Managers. One from the greater Canterbury area and one to assist covering the Otago/Southland area.*
- *Horses will be rated using a combination of three measures.*
- *In the first instance horses given a points rating from their last win or reassessment (as at July 2016) - equating C0 with 50 points, C1 with 58 points, C2 with 66 points, C3 with 73 points, C4 with 80 points, C5 with 86 points, C6 with 92 points, C7 with 97 points, C8 with 102 points, C9 with 106 points and OC with 110 points. OC major race winners may be rated higher.*
- *Secondly; Ratings will also be produced based on the Guiding Principles, commencing from a horse's first race start. The two numbers generated (ratings) produced or the average thereof will act as the starting point for re-rating the horse population.*
- *Lastly; Handicappers will assess how each horse sits within the existing racing population and in cases of horses with greater experience, more emphasis may be placed on the horses' recent racing career.*
- *The Handicappers will have discretion to allow for or adjust any anomalies that become apparent throughout the assessment process.*
- *A list of all horses' points will be maintained on HRNZ website*
- *Once initial Ratings have been created horses will be re-rated as they race, in line with the above Guiding Principles.*