



April 2019

## **OFFICIAL NOTICE**

### **UPDATED RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

On 23 April 2019, the HRNZ Special Committee approved updated Ratings Handicapping System Guiding Principles, in line with current handicapping practice with respect to dead heats and policy regarding downward discretion for unplaced performances.

The updated Ratings Handicapping System Guiding Principles are attached (with changes marked).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Jensen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Peter Jensen**  
**Chief Executive**

# **RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM**

Commenced 13 March 2017 - Updated as at 1 April 2019

## **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 for non-winner and winners.
5. Highest possible rating is 130 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.

### **B. RACE WINNERS**

1. All winners of totalisator races receive a maximum of 8 points.
2. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) of \$20,000 or less will receive 8 points but will not be rated above R55.
3. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) of \$20,001 or more will receive 8 points but will not be rated above R58.
4. In the event a filly or mare wins a non-winners race, either restricted to fillies and mares or an unrestricted sex race, that filly or mare will receive a minimum of one (1) point concession. The winning filly or mare would still however be rated based on the above guidelines for non-winners - that is; up to R55 for races up to \$20,000 or up to R58 for races of \$20,001 or more.
5. 2YO pacers winning a totalisator race will receive a maximum of five (5) points for races of \$20,000 or less (advertised stake). 2YO fillies will not receive any further concession. Handicapper discretion downwards may be applied.
6. 2YO trotters winning a totalisator race will receive a maximum of four (4) points for races of \$20,000 or less (advertised stake). 2YO fillies will not receive any further concession. Handicapper discretion downwards may be applied.
7. 2YO horses (pacers and trotters) winning a race with an advertised stake of \$20,001 or greater will have the standard Guiding Principles applied.
8. Fillies and Mares racing their own sex (excluding non-win and 2YO only races) in races up to \$20,000 will receive at least a 2-point concession, from the standard principles as outlined above.
9. 3YO horses will receive half points for every second win providing that 'second' win is \$20,000 (advertised stake) or less. If it is not, the following win will be at half points, if \$20,000 or less.
10. 3YOs winning races with an advertised stake of \$20,001 or more will be rated per the standard Guiding Principles; i.e. 8 points.
11. 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.

12. Horses winning from a Rating of 70 and above will be rated in accordance with the Higher Rating Winners Matrix. The matrix prescribes the maximum amount of points permitted given the stake of the race and rating of the winning horse.
13. A 'Diminishing Rating Scale' will apply to more highly Rated winners. *See Note: 1 for full explanation of the Diminishing Rating Scale.*
14. The Handicapper may apply downward discretion to any winner's point's allocation.

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

1. Horses placing second, third, fourth or fifth in an Official Race will have no change made to their Rating (up or down).
2. Unplaced horses (6<sup>th</sup> to last) will lose at least 1 point.
3. Any unplaced horse (6<sup>th</sup> to last) may be subject to Handicapper's Discretion.
4. Handicappers' have discretion to drop unplaced horses up to a maximum of 3 points, if warranted.
5. *Note 2: 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. 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 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 (World Drivers Championship) may be Rating Penalty Free, at HRNZ Board discretion.
3. Claiming horses racing in Claimers only races receive no point increases. Horses placing sixth to last will drop by at least one point per standard Guidelines.
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 trotter shall be rated in higher than R65.
6. No 2YO pacer shall be rated in higher than R75.
7. No 3YO trotter shall be rated in higher than R85.
8. No 3YO pacer shall be rated in higher than R95.
9. 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.
10. *Dead-heats – no points increases by horses dead-heating for first in an official race. A non-winner that dead-heats for first race shall remain a non-winner (MR).*
11. Official Non-Tote races - these will be run under Guiding Principles; however the Rating of these races will be subject to Handicappers' Discretion, with one exemption applying. This primarily applies to \$2,000 or other similar Non-Tote races such as Australasian Breeders Crown Heats (\$5,000). 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.
12. The only races permitted to be run as Official Non-Tote races up to \$2000 will be 2YO trotting races.
13. 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.
14. Should a 2YO race prior to being qualified it will not carry a Rating until such time that it is qualified.
15. 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.
16. 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 a similar 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.

17. Any owner/trainer wishing to appeal the Handicapper's point's allocation following a race can appeal in writing to HRNZ's Chief Executive who will co-ordinate a review by the Handicapping Review Group.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. At the end of each racing season horses identified by the Handicappers as being rated as uncompetitive or considered to be disadvantaged in relation to other horses may be subject to re-rating.

### **Note 1: 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. Approximately 80% of the racing population is rated R60 and below.

The Diminishing Rating Scale takes into account where points earned will put a winning horse in relation to others. It considers the treatment of how other horses of similar kind 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.

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 race performances.

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.

The Diminishing Rating Scale formed the basis for which the 'Higher Rating Winners' Matrix' was formed.

### **Note 2: Downward Discretion for unplaced performances**

For any horse placing sixth 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 points will be rare; however a two-point drop will be more commonly applied when horses are deemed to be struggling in the environment they are racing in. Such deductions are more likely to occur in more highly rated races but will occur across the spectrum. This will be less likely for those rated under R50.

Where horses are already lowly rated there is less cause to drop them additional points, as they are already within a weaker racing group. Struggling non-win horses will be the exception to the above, where those clearly struggling are more likely to dropped additional points for poor performances.

The intention with this element of discretion is to ensure horses are not uncompetitive for too long.

*Note: Unplaced horses that had won at their previous start will not be dropped additional points, but for cases of exceptional circumstances.*