

RATINGS HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

Commenced 13 March 2017 - Updated 1 August 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 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.

B. RACE WINNERS

1. Winners of races \$10,000 or less (advertised programmed stake) to receive 8 points.
2. Winners of races \$10,001 or more (advertised programmed stake) to receive 10 points.
3. Any previous race winner winning any totalisator race will incur a Rating Penalty to elevate that horse to at least 52 rating points.
4. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) of \$10,000 or less will receive 8 points but will not be rated above R55 and must be rated to at least R52.
5. Winners of non-win (MR) races (or a horse winning its first race) of \$10,001 or more will receive 10 points but will not be rated above R58 and must be rated to at least R55.
6. 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 shall receive a one (1) point concession for races \$10,000 or less and a two (2) point concession for races \$10,001 or more. The winning filly or mare would still however be rated based on the above guidelines for non-winners - the concession will only be applied within the aforementioned bands, if applicable. That is; R52-R55 for races up to \$10,000 or R55-R58 for races of \$10,001 or more.
7. Though a non-winner may have a Rating higher than 50 points, when a horse wins its first race (MR) 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 2YO horses (pacers and trotters) winning a race with an advertised stake of \$15,000 or greater will have the standard Guiding Principles applied.

11. 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.
12. 3YO horses 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 \$10,000, 5 points for races \$10,001 to \$14,999.
13. 3YOs winning races with an advertised stake of \$15,000 or more will be rated per the standard Guiding Principles; i.e. 10 points.
14. 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.
15. The Handicapper may apply downward discretion to any winner's point's allocation.
16. *See Note 1 for an explanation as to the methodology regarding the varied Rating allocations for race winners.*
17. A 'Diminishing Rating Scale' will apply to more 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, in a race will be subject to an increase in Rating of one (1) point, at the discretion of the Handicapper. However, no horse shall be re-rated higher than the Rating it received following its last winning start, subsequent highest Rating, revised rating or first confirmed Rating, unless rated R51 or below.
2. A race-winning horse placing second or third in a race, from a Rating of R51 or below will receive a one (1) point Rating increase regardless of its last Winning Rating.
3. Horses placing second, third in Maiden (non-winner) races will receive a one (1) point increase. No maiden however shall be rated higher than 55 points.
4. Unplaced horses (5th to last) will lose at least 1 point.
5. Any placed or unplaced horse may be subject to Handicapper's Discretion.
6. Handicappers have discretion to drop unplaced horses up to a maximum of 3 points, if warranted.
7. *Note 3: Explains in greater detail the rationale behind placed horses increasing in rating points.*
8. *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 that have not previously won a Drivers' Rating Penalty Free race that place second or third in a Junior Driver Rating Penalty Free race will 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 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 fifth 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 – 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 (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).
12. 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.
13. The only races permitted to be run as Official Non-Tote races up to \$2000 will be 2YO trotting races.
14. 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.
15. Should a 2YO race prior to being qualified it will not carry a Rating until such time that it is qualified.
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. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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 are several 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 higher stakes in superior-quality races should be accruing a relative number of points.

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 (\$10,001 or more) 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 re-rated 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 very low rating would be able to drop back into the lower tier of horses, should it struggle following its 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. 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.

Note 3: Rating increases for placings

If a horse is racing consistently within its Rating band and running regular placings such a horse should not fall down the ratings but maintain a fairly static rating. If horses that race competitively without winning do not incur some form of Rating Penalty then too many horses will slide down the Rating scale, clogging up the lower end of the racing population, thinning out higher levels disproportionately.

Under the Guiding Principles a restriction has been placed on increasing a horse's rating via placing. Though horses will gain a point for placing second and third, horses will not increase to a Rating higher than that of: their last winning start, subsequent highest rating, first confirmed rating or revised rating, unless rated R51 or below.

For horses rated below R52, 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 those horses that are not in form. Lowly rated horses that are placing consistently may slowly move up, away from the low rating level they were in, thus pushing them into a slightly higher bracket and allowing those horses right at the bottom of the Rating scale an opportunity.

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 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 much less cause to drop them additional points, as they are already within a weaker group.

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