

NZ JUNIOR DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP 2026

GUIDELINES

These conditions govern the conduct of the NZ Junior Driver Championship. They are made by the board pursuant to the Rules of Racing.

The qualifying period for the 2025 NZ Junior Driver Championship is January 1, 2026 to June 21, 2026 (inclusive).

Within that qualifying period Junior Drivers will earn points in every race for which a Junior Driver competes.

Points will be allocated to Junior Drivers within the qualifying period (January 1, 2026 to June 21, 2026) on the following basis:

- All races: 1st = 7 points, 2nd = 5 points, 3rd = 3 points, 4th = 2 points, 5th = 1 point.

The 12 drivers for the championship will be selected by a regional basis this will be by the following method:

- The top four points scorers in Canterbury, the top three points scorers in the North Island, and the top two points scorers in the Southern region (South of the Waitaki) at the conclusion of the qualifying period shall qualify to compete in the NZ Junior Driver Championship.
- The next two highest points scorer overall.
- A Wild Card selected by the Chief Executive of Harness Racing NZ

All 12 drivers will be required to accept their position in the 2026 Junior Driver Championship by July 1, 2026. All drivers will receive an acceptance letter outlining what is required of them during the running of the 2026 Junior Driver Championship. If a driver does not accept their position in the 2026 Junior Driver Championship the position will be offered to the next qualifying Junior Driver.

All horsepersons holding a Junior Driver's licence as at January 1, 2026 or have obtained a licence during the current licencing season will be eligible to compete (January, 2026 - December, 2026), however, if a Junior Driver moves to an Open or Graduation Driver during the qualifying period they will not be eligible to compete in the Championship. If a Junior Driver who has qualified for the Junior Championship moves to an Open or Graduation Driver after the qualifying period has ended an extension will be granted to that Junior Driver so they can compete in the Championship - they will move to an Open or Graduation driver at the conclusion of the Championship.

In the event of an equality of points for any position at the conclusion of the qualifying period (June 21, 2026), placings will be determined by the following count-back procedure:

- On the basis of the greatest number of lifetime wins.

The NZ Junior Driver Championship will be conducted over at least six races. Each race will comprise of a maximum of 12 starters with up to two emergencies in each race.

Championship races will be run under the track safety limits of the host clubs/venues.

The re-entry time for championship races shall be 12.00pm on the day of the meeting for a night meeting and 7.30am on the day of the meeting for a day meeting.

In the event a driver changes location (islands) within the qualifying period, the location where the greatest amount of time has been spent within the qualifying period shall be the island of representation for the championship qualifying.

Driver allocation will be by random draw.

Points awarded for each of the NZ Junior Driver Championship races shall be:

1st	17 points
2nd	12 points
3rd	10 points
4th	9 points
5th	8 points
6th	7 points
7th	6 points
8th	5 points
9th	4 points
10th	3 points
11th	2 points
12th	1 point

In the event of a dead heat for any place, the drivers of the dead heaters shall share equally the total points earned.

In the event of only 9 or fewer starters competing in a championship race, points will be allocated from first place through to the last placed runner as per the above schedule.

In the event of a tie for first place following the 2026 NZ Junior Driver Championship, final placings shall be determined by applying the following count back procedure:

- (a) On the basis of number of wins in the championship races.
- (b) On the basis of the number of seconds in the championship races.
- (c) On the basis of the number of thirds in the championship races.
- (d) On the basis of the total number of races won for the season.
- (e) On the basis of total lifetime wins.

In the event that a Junior Driver selected to compete in the NZ Junior Driver Championship being suspended or unable to compete due to accident, illness or for any other reason, prior to the close of the driver notification period for the first race of the championship, the next highest eligible qualifying Junior Driver, as per the Junior Driver Qualifying Points, will be offered the place in the championship.

In the event that a Junior Driver selected to compete in the NZ Junior Driver Championship being suspended or unable to compete due to accident, illness or for any other reason, following the close of the driver notification period for the first race of the championship, HRNZ shall arrange a substitute Junior Driver but no points shall be awarded to that driver. If no substitute Junior Driver is available the horse shall be scratched.

In the event of a scratching which prevents a selected driver from participating in any championship race, 7 points will be added to his/her championship tally.

In the event of a full field of 12 horses not being available, any driver who does not have a drive will receive 7 points.

In the event of a runner being disqualified, from any finishing position, the competing driver of the disqualified runner will receive 1 point.

Driving fees will be paid to Junior Drivers competing in the championship.

The Championship will be run from the 17th to 19th July 2026.

If any matter should arise concerning the NZ Junior Driver Championship which is not covered by these regulations, a resolution shall be determined by the Chief Executive of Harness Racing New Zealand, whose decision shall be final.