

# 2026 COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP – CONDITIONS

**Friday 22 May, Addington Raceway, 3200m Special Handicap, \$100,000**

## Championship Race

The Country Championship will be run at the NZ Metropolitan TC's meeting held on Friday 22 May. This race will be run over 3200 metres, with Special Handicap conditions.

The total stake for the race will be \$100,000. The status of the race is Listed. The final field will consist of a maximum number of 16 starters (15 off on mark), with up to two emergencies.

The Championship will be an Open-Age, R50 & Faster Special Handicap with the following Handicapping provisions:

- Front: R50-R65
- 10m: R66-R75
- 20m: R76-R85
- 30m: R86-R99
- 40m: R100 & faster

The stakes distribution will be as follows: First 55%, Second 15.5%, Third 9%, Fourth 5.25%, Fifth 3%, all other starters will receive 1.75% of the total stake. In the event there are more than 12 starters the total stake paid will be over \$100,000.

To start in the Championship a Nomination must be made with the HRNZ Bureau in the normal manner, prior to the advertised close of Nominations on Monday 18 May 2026.

There are no concessions for fillies or mares.

## Qualification

To qualify for the Country Championship a horse must have had at least **three starts** in the scheduled Country Championship Qualifying races. There are 41 qualifying races being run across New Zealand from 17 August 2025 through to 30 April 2026.

To be eligible to contest the Championship race on 22 May 2026, pacers must be rated at **R85** or below at the time of their first start in a Country Championship Qualifying race. Or, if rated higher than R85 when first contesting a qualifying race, fallen to a Rating of R85 or less prior to nominations closing for the final qualifying race to be run by Manawatu HRC on Thursday 30 April 2026.

Field selection for the Championship for those horses that have started a minimum of **three** times in qualifying races will be determined by points accrued in the respective races.

### The points system is as follows:

Gold Qualifying Races, Funded to \$25,000	-	First 10 points, Second 5, Third 3, Fourth 2
Silver Qualifying Races, Funded to \$20,000	-	First 7 points, Second 4, Third 2, Fourth 1

Some qualifying race stakes may differ from the advertised schedules, as clubs may add to the funded stakes.

The Championship Qualifying points table will be displayed on [hrnz.co.nz](http://hrnz.co.nz).

Any horses finishing on the same points will be separated, if required, via the following countback: the best placing within the qualifying races, if still equal then the second-best placing, if still equal then the most qualifying race starts. If a tie still exists horses will be separated based on total career stake money won.

The conditions of the qualifying races will be determined by the host clubs in consultation with the HRNZ Bureau. The intention being to run the qualifying races as close to what is normally programmed, accepting there may be required programming changes to ensure the optimum race fields.

Qualifying races will be run in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of Harness Racing New Zealand Inc. This particularly relates to starter numbers and front-line limits.

A schedule of the qualifying races and championship status is attached separately.

## **Other Information**

In the event a horse eligible to start in the Championship has its Rating drop below R50 it will remain eligible.

Being eliminated from a qualifying race or being an emergency that does not gain a start will not count towards a horse's eligibility for the Championship.

Should sufficient entries be received for the Championship a consolation may be run for a stake of \$20,000 - to be determined by the host club and the HRNZ Bureau.

Horses qualified to start in the Championship, that is; the top 16 qualifiers per the Country Championship Points Table will not be permitted to start in any other race at the NZ Metropolitan TC's meeting on 22 May 2026.

In the event a qualifying race is not run, for any reason, the HRNZ Bureau will determine if a replacement race is to be sought.

There are no pre-payments or fees required for the Championship race.

The Host Club and associated sponsor will provide a Trophy & Dress Rug for the winner.

Any other matters relating to this Championship that require adjudication will be determined by the CEO of HRNZ.