



**New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR)**

## **Handicapping and Jumps Racing Guide**

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## **1. Introduction**

The New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) Handicapping Panel has the responsibility of ensuring that races in New Zealand are run competitively, through the allocation of weights to be carried by each horse in a race.

The weight given to each horse is based on the individual merits of that horse, taking into account the:

- Conditions and regulations relating to that race;
- Ratings Based Handicapping System; and
- Judgment of the Handicapper.

The aim of the Handicapping Guide is to assist industry participants with a greater understanding of the method and decision making process used when arriving at the weight horses will receive by virtue of their performances in the numerous races, they compete in.

Furthermore, the Guide outlines that Handicapping principles remain fair, consistent, transparent and with the highest level of integrity at all times.

Handicapping is about personal and professional judgments. Handicappers must be able to provide logical and reasoned explanations for their decision making.

## **2. Overview**

The Ratings Based Handicap System (Ratings System) is a flexible numeric based domestic ratings system allowing horses to move up and down the ratings bands, which enables horses to remain competitive for longer periods of time and allows out of form horses to move down the rating bands.

Domestic Rating (Rating) compares the relative performance and eligibility of horses competing in races in New Zealand. Under the Rating System all horses are rated as mature age males, with sex and age allowances deducted (where applicable) once the field for a race is determined.

With the Ratings System, the Handicappers allocate horses a numeric Rating within 48 hours following a race performance within New Zealand. These Ratings give an indication of the weight a horse may receive in each rating band. In accordance with the NZTR Rule of Racing (216), the Handicappers have the discretion to amend Weights or Ratings after they have been allocated.

Other than Maiden Races, in which non-winning performances are assessed using a set formula, there is no automatic upgrade to a horse's Rating for a win or placed performance and no automatic downgrade to a horse's rating for an unplaced performance. There are a number of circumstances whereby the Handicapper may apply

judgment or discretion in determining the final Rating of a horse after a race performance.

The application of age and sex allowances will mean that in many circumstances two horses on the same rating will have different weights. For example, a 4YO mare and a 4YO gelding are both rated 75 in a rating 75 race, with the gelding allocated 60kg and the mare 58kg after the 2 kg mares allowance is applied.

### **3. Principles of New Zealand Handicapping**

- Handicappers allocate relative weights for horses to carry in races in an attempt to have each horse, despite performing differently, be competitive in handicap race events.
- Rating penalties are allocated on a discretionary basis by the handicapper in accordance with this policy.
- In New Zealand horses are handicapped from the top weight downwards to the required minimum.
- The credentials of the top weighted horse ultimately determine the spread of the weight scale in a race.
- There may be circumstances where the lowest weighted horse or horses are allocated a weight that is higher than the advertised minimum weight.
- A horse may not be able to claim all of their age and/or sex allowance if this means it will go below the advertised minimum.
- There may be circumstances where there are a number of horses weighted on the minimum that hold different Ratings. These horses could be deemed to be disadvantaged by the scale of weights, however these lower weighted horses may be eligible to enter more suitable (lower rated) races, while the majority of horses weighted above the minimum will be better weighted in the applicable rating band race.

*Example: Horse A has a Rating of 77, Horse B has a Rating of 69 (both male horses). In a Rating 75 Benchmark race Horse A would carry 4kg more than Horse B. In an Open Handicap they may both carry the minimum 54kg disadvantaging Horse B.*

- The Ratings provide an indication of what weight a horse may be allotted in a particular rating band. The eventual spread of weights is determined by the rating of the highest rated horses in the race.
- Horses that have competed in a race will have their Rating assessed at the end of each performance.

- A winning performance will usually attract a weight and /or ratings increase. Any increase is at the Handicapper's discretion and is based on the Handicappers assessment of the horses performance in the race, taking into account factors which include: previous form and performance, strength of the opposition, authority and merit of the win, track conditions, position in running, Stipendiary Stewards reports, having regard to the weight carried, winning margin and time for the race, stake level of the race, as well as any other relevant factor.
- Horses that are placed second to fifth may also have their Rating increased, depending on the merit of the performance and their proximity to the horse(s) ahead in the finishing order. However, this may not always be the case. Horses finishing further back may or may not have their ratings change, based on performance and the quality of the race.
- With the exception of horses competing in Rating 65 races, horses may graduate from one rating 'band' to another through placed performances.
- As a general rule, a horse that moves back to a lower rating band race will go up in weight, and a horse that moves up to a higher rating band race will go down in weight.
- Horses winning a Maiden will be rated between 61 and 64, based on the Handicappers assessment. This will be assessed with reference to the relative strength of the field, strength of the win, Stipendiary Stewards report, position in running, track conditions and previous race performances. A Maiden horse may be re-rated higher than 64 if it wins or places in a Black Type race, a ratings based or open handicap race. A Maiden winner that is rated at 61 may have his or her rating dropped to 60 after their first race out of Maiden grade if deemed warranted.
- A Maiden horse will not be rated higher than 54 unless it is placed outside of Maiden company. A Maiden horse rated higher than 54 remains eligible for Maiden races, and the horse may have its rating dropped back to 54 if it is subsequently beaten in a Maiden race.
- A horse that is not a Maiden may have their Rating reduced over time, to 50 being the minimum rating for a flat winner.
- The Handicapper will take into account any overweight carried (extra weight carried when a jockey is unable to make the allocated weight) when adjusting Ratings and/or weights, however Handicappers do not factor in apprentice allowances, as these have been designed to allow for the inexperience of the rider, compared to his or her more senior counterpart.
- Overseas horses, or New Zealand horses that have raced overseas, will be allocated a Rating when nominated in New Zealand or if requested by the horse's connections, based on their overseas performance and their rating in the overseas

jurisdiction. NZTR Handicappers may also consult with Handicappers from that horse's home jurisdiction or the location of the horse's overseas performance.

- The trainer of a horse that has not raced for twelve months or longer may apply to have the horse's previous published rating reviewed and potentially reduced at the discretion of the Handicapper.
- Only ratings issued by the NZTR Handicapping Panel will be recognized. Ratings for horses that have raced overseas will be given at the time of nomination.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Penalties

When arriving at a penalty for winning and placed performances, there are no automatic or fixed adjustments. In all circumstances the Handicapper has the discretion to assess the horse's performance outside generally applied rating adjustments.

An example of one principle that the handicappers may use is, if the race was to be run again the next day, what would be the weight turnaround be to equalize the chances of all horses. This is firstly assessed by weight, and then reflected in the ratings change.

Every race is different and is considered on its own merits and is not compared to other races.

A winning performance will usually see a horse have its rating increased. Horses that are placed second or third may also have their rating increased, depending on the merit of the performance and their proximity to the horse(s) ahead in the finishing order. This methodology may not always apply when assessing performances in Weight – For – Age, Set Weight and Set Weight and Penalty races. Example: When winning the Tarzino Trophy at Hastings, CALLSIGN MAV was rated 14 points higher than the 2<sup>nd</sup> placed horse. In terms of a weight differential in a handicap race this would equate to 7 kilos. From a rating perspective the specified conditions of the race where all runners carried WFA advantaged him enormously. Such a winning performance would not attract an increase in Rating.

The maximum rating a horse can receive is 10 points for a win and 5 points for finishing second to fifth. With the exception of:

Group and Listed Races  
Races restricted by age  
Jumps Races  
Maidens/MAAT/Special Condition Races

All horses that win their maiden race (regardless of the class of race), will receive a rating of 61 or higher provided that if their maiden win is in a Maiden race, their rating will not exceed 64 unless their rating is already higher than 64.

Horses may receive an increased rating for placing within their own rating or higher rating bands, which may mean that this horse moves into the next ratings band.

The reassessment of a horse's rating factors in the Rating of that particular horse going into the race. Horses with relatively low ratings that compete in strong races are effectively disadvantaged by the scale of weights. Therefore, if they win or place, they can expect to have larger Rating adjustments than horses in the same race that had higher Ratings. This is particularly relevant in Set Weights or Weight-for-Age events. Where horses with large Rating discrepancies meet at equal weights and finish relatively close together the horse with the lower rating may incur more Rating points even where it has finished behind the higher rated horse.

#### **4.2 Penalties Open Class Races**

In Open Class handicap races, winners may expect (with exceptions) to be raised 0.5kg to 3.0kg. Horses may not be penalized for winning in races where there is no handicap, such as WFA, SWP or SW, as the horse may be meeting horses at the same (or similar weight) that have not performed as meritoriously.

The actual individual re-rating may not necessarily equate to a formula where one point equates to 0.5kg. This is due to factors such as race strength and horses rated below the minimum weight for the race.

Winners of Open Class, with a weight (within the handicap) can generally expect to be re-rated between 1-5 points subject to the handicappers assessment as to the strength of the race, their overall race profile and any other contributing factors

Generally, placed horses in an Open Handicap may receive the equivalent weight penalty of 0.5 to 1.5kg. This penalty will generally equate to between 1-3 points, but will sometimes not receive any penalty

Horses winning an Open Class race racing out of their grade will have their rating determined based on the strength of the race, their previous race performances and /or the minimum rating of the race in which they have won off.

#### **4.3 Penalties Rating 75 Races**

Winners of a Rating 75 race (within the handicap) can generally be expected to be raised 1kg to 3kg (re-rated between 2-6 points).

Horses winning a Rating 75 race racing out of their grade off a rating below 63 can expect a rating increase of between 6-10 points and will generally remain in the Rating 75 grade.

#### **4.4 Penalties Rating 60 Races**

In Rating 60 races, horses winning can generally expect to receive a weight penalty of 2kg to 2.5kgs (4 to 5 points) A winning performance in this grade will not see horses being taken out of a Rating 65 race. In addition, horses winning a Rating 60 race will no longer have to be re-rated out of the Rating 60 grade.

#### **4.5 Penalties Rating 65 Races**

In Rating 65 races, horses winning can generally expect to receive a weight penalty of 1kg to 3kgs (2 to 6 points) depending on the relative strength of the race. When assessing a winning performance, the Handicapper using their discretion may decide to keep a horse in this rating band based on the horse's overall profile and previous race performances. Mostly, however horses winning off a rating of 61 or above, will be assigned a minimum rating of 67 or higher.

#### **4.6 Maiden Races**

All Maiden horses begin with a Rating of 45, unless they win a registered trial. Winners of a trial receive 2 points to take their initial rating to 47. Only the first trial win of a horse will apply to an increase in rating.

When assessing trial performances for unraced maiden horses three years and older, two year old trial form is not taken into account.

A Maiden horse will not receive a rating above 54 unless that horse performs meritoriously outside of Maiden company and in the opinion of the Handicapper a rating in excess of 54 is appropriate. A Maiden horse that is placed in a Group or Listed race will almost always (though there may be exceptions) receive a higher Rating than 54.

As Maiden races are run at set weights, maiden horses are rated for balloting purposes only.

Maiden horses that are rated above 54 and start in any rating, based Benchmark Handicap or a three year old Maiden in restricted age group race, will be weighted based on their rating.

#### **4.7 Exceptions**

The Handicapper may decide not to lower a horse's Rating despite that horse having finished well back in a race in the following circumstances:



- Where a horse is racing at an unsuitable distance (such as a stayer in sprint events);
- Horses that have won their most recent race. (outside of winning a maiden race which will be at the discretion of the handicapper, in almost all cases the rating will be held for one run.)
- Where the horse suffers interference in running;
- Where the horse misses the start;
- Horse being wide throughout the race;
- Horse contesting a significantly higher rating band race;
- Where a horse resumes after an extended period;
- Unsuitable track surface;
- Saddle slips;
- Rider loses use of their irons;
- Other reasons that the Handicapper considers relevant to the horses performance.

Further, if a horse falls, bleeds, is found to be lame, is brought down, fails to finish, (with the exception of jumping races), is injured during the running of a race, runs off, is disqualified, or loses its rider there may be no adjustment to its Rating.

As a consequence of the introduction to Ratings based programming, the Handicapper may also consider the future eligibility of a horse for a particular rating band when assessing a beaten performance. This means that a horse may have its rating lowered, even though it suffered interference or was caught wide in a race. The rationale for this is that the connections of that horse should not be effectively penalized twice as a result of bad luck in running, provided the horse's overall performance history warrants its eligibility for the rating band it is dropping back into.

#### 4.8 Indicative Guide as to How Horses may Move through the Grades

This is an indicative guide only as to how horses may move through the grades for each win. However, this will not necessarily always apply due to a range of factors that the Handicapper needs to consider when assessing each horse's performance:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Win</b>	Maiden to R61-64
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Win</b>	to R67 or R68 (more if winning Open race)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Win</b>	to R73 (more if winning Open race)
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Win</b>	to R78
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Win</b>	to R83 or above

Horses who drop back from unplaced performances to the Rating 65 grade and win can be considered in the above explanation as a '2<sup>nd</sup> win'.

When assessing the ratings of 2 & 3YO horses in Black Type races, the Handicapper must factor in the relative strength of these races, especially early in

the season when most restricted 2 & 3YO fields may have very little exposed form, and penalties will be assessed accordingly.

## **5. Rating Template Guide**

Final weights are subject to any scaling that may be required.

The Handicapper will, after assessing the nominations and the strength of the field, determine if and how the weights should be scaled.

Whilst the scaling of weights remains at the discretion of the handicapper, the following template is provided as a guide as to the weight a horse is likely to be allocated in a standard New Zealand flat race.

The weights shown are for those of a 4YO+ male horse and are still subject to any applicable age and sex allowances. In all races against male horses, fillies and mares receive a 2kg allowance against the template weight. 3YO allowances are applied in accordance with the time of year.

	Group 1 & 2	Group 3 & Listed	Open Handicap	Rating BM 75	Rating 65
Rating	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt
107	60				
106	59.5				
105	59	61			
104	58.5	60.5	63		
103	58	60	62.5		
102	57.5	59.5	62		
101	57	59	61.5		
100	56.5	58.5	61		
99	56	58	60.5		
98	55.5	57.5	60		
97	55	57	59.5		
96	54.5	56.5	59		
95	54	56	58.5		
94	53.5	55.5	58		
93	53	55	57.5		
92	52.5	54.5	57		
91	52	54	56.5		
90		53.5	56		
89		53	55.5		
88			55		
87			54.5		
86			54		
85			53.5		
84			53		
83					
82					
81				63	
80				62.5	
79				62	
78				61.5	
77				61	
76				60.5	
75				60	
74				59.5	
73				59	
72				58.5	
71				58	63
70				57.5	62.5
69				57	62
68				56.5	61.5
67				56	61
66				55.5	60.5
65				55	60
64				54.5	59.5
63				54	59
62					58.5
61					58
60					57.5
59					57
58					56.5
57					56
56					55.5
55					55
54					Highest Rated Maiden (Unless performed out of class)
53					54

## 6. Weights

### 6.1 Minimum Weights

As provided for in the Standard Regulations no horse shall be allocated less than:

- 52.0kg in a Handicap Group 1 or Group 2 Race;
- 53.0kg in a Handicap Group 3, or Listed Race
- 54.0kg in all other Handicap Races.

### 6.2 Minimum Top Weight – Declaration of Weights

The top weight allocated in a Handicap flat race, at the time of weight declaration, shall not be less than:

- 58.0kg in all Group 1 and Group 2 Handicap races (if the top rated horse is rated 103 or lower.) Horses rated above 103 will receive 0.5kg additional weight per rating point above 103.
- 59.0kg in all Group 3 and Listed Handicap races run at a distance up to and including 2199 metres (if the top rated horse is 101 or lower. Horses rated above 101 will receive 0.5kg additional weight per rating point above 101.)
- In Group 3 and Listed races that are run at a distance of 2200 metres or further, 58.0kg (if the top rated horse is rated 99 or lower), 58.5kg (if the top rated horse is rated 100) and 59.0kg (if the top rated horse is rated 101 to 103 with horses rated above 103 receiving 0.5kg additional weight per rating point above 103.)
- 62kg in Open Handicaps if the top rated horse is rated 92 -102. Horses rated above 102 will receive 0.5kg additional weight per rating point above 102.
- In Open Handicaps if the top rated horse is rated 89-91 a gradual weight increase of 0.5kg will apply in addition to the 60.0kg.
- 60kg in Open Handicaps if the top rated horse is rated 88 or lower.
- 60.0kg in all Ratings Based Handicaps.

### 6.3 Minimum Top Weight – Withdrawal Deadline

In accordance with Standard Regulation 8.3, if at the advertised withdrawal deadline:

- (a) for any Open Handicap flat race (except a race for Two or Three year olds only, or Group and Listed Handicap flat races), the top weighted horse(s) left in the field has or have been allocated less than 60.0kg, such top weighted horse or horses shall be allocated 60.0kg (irrespective of the weight that had been allocated to the top-rated horse(s) at the time of withdrawal deadline), and the weights allocated to the other horses in the field shall be adjusted by the Handicapper in line with the Handicapping Policy rating guidelines.*

*b. for;*

*Group 1 or Group 2 Handicap Races, the highest weighted acceptor (including any extra weight by way of re-handicap or penalty) has been allocated less than 57.0kg, then the allocated weights must be increased until the highest weighted acceptor is weighted at 57.0kg;*

*Group 3 Handicap or Listed Handicap Races run at a distance of up to and including 2199 metres, the highest weighted acceptor (including any extra weight by way of re-handicap or penalty) has been allocated less than 58.0kg, then the allocated weights must be increased until the highest weighted acceptor is weighted at 58.0kg;*

*Group 3 Handicap or Listed Handicap Races run at a distance of 2200 metres or more, the highest weighted acceptor (including any extra weight by way of re-handicap or penalty) has been allocated less than 57.0kg then the allocated weights must be increased until the highest weighted acceptor is weighted at 57.0kg*

*c. For a non-Group or Listed Two and Three Year Old Set Weights and penalties Flat Race, the then top weighted horse has been allocated less than 57kg, such top weighted horse or horses shall be allocated 57kg and the weights allocated to the horses comprising the remainder of the field adjusted accordingly.*

*d. For a Maiden Flat Race (except a Maiden Two Year Old Race, Maiden Three Year Old Race, or Fillies and Mares Maiden Race), the then top weighted horse has been allocated less than 58.5kg, such top weighted horse or horses shall be allocated 57.5kg and the weights allocated to the horses comprising the remainder of the field adjusted accordingly.*

*e. For a Maiden Two-year-old or Maiden Three-year-old Race, the then top weighted horse has been allocated less than 57.5kg, such top weighted horse or horses shall be allocated 56.5kg and the weights allocated to the horses comprising the rest of the field adjusted accordingly.*

#### **6.4 Three Year Old Allowances**

Three Year Olds competing against older horses in open age races receive a weight allowance, dependent on the time of year (as per the table below). The scale reflects the developing maturity of the horse as the season progresses. The 3YO allowance is subject to Standard Regulation 8.1 where a 3YO cannot be allocated less than the minimum weight for that race.

Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan	Feb-Apr	May-Jul
2.5kg	1.5 kg	0.5kg	okg

## 6.5 Fillies and Mares Allowance

The fillies and mares allowance was introduced into New Zealand in 2011 and allows fillies and mares to receive a 2kg allowance year round in all open sex races. Three-year-old fillies will also be eligible to receive their age allowance on top of this sex allowance. The application of the Fillies and Mares Allowance is subject to Standard Regulation 8.1 where a Filly or Mare cannot be allocated less than the minimum weight for that race.

## 6.6 Application of Allowances

Three-year-old allowances can be claimed in all open age races, and fillies and mares allowances can be claimed in all open sex races but cannot be claimed below the advertised minimum weight for that race. See the example of New Zealand Handicapping in Action below, to see how this works.

## 7 Ratings Based Races

Eligibility for Ratings based races is determined at the time of Nomination (unless otherwise stated in the conditions of a particular race). Therefore, if a horse's Rating is adjusted upwards and beyond that particular Ratings band subsequent to nominations closing, the horse remains eligible for the race as eligibility is determined at the close of nominations. It may, however, incur a weight penalty which will be determined by the Handicapper.

## 8. Open Races

Open races are open to all horses except two-year-olds.

The top weight will determine the spread of the weights, down to the required minimum. For any transferred horses from another race that then creates a larger rating spread after declaration of weights than 15 points, the top weighted horse of 60kg and /or 62kg will remain unchanged. The top weighted horse is required to carry 60kg for Black Type races.

In non-Black Type races, if the top rated horse is rated 88 or lower they will be allocated 60.0kg. A gradual weight increase of 0.5kg will apply for horses rated 89-91. Male horses rated 92 or higher and female horses rated 96 or higher will be allocated 62.0kg at the time of declaration.

In Open races it is possible for the actual weight of a horse to drop from one race to the next despite that horse winning an Open race at its previous start. This is a

reflection to the strength of opposition in subsequent races that the horse competes in.

The field is weighted in relation to the top weight and other horses in the field, not to what the horses have carried in their previous race(s).

**a. Benchmark Races**

Benchmark Handicapping differs from other ratings systems, in that it opens the top of the weight scale to include more horses, by allowing the nomination of horses above the race's benchmark number. This allows horses the opportunity to race in a wider selection of races, albeit carrying extra weight.

Benchmark races are designed to allow horses to nominate with a rating above that of the 'benchmark' race rating and carry weight above the minimum topweight of 60kg. An extra 0.5kg is allocated for each point above the benchmark figure. For example, if a race is advertised as a Rating 75 Benchmark, a male horse with a rating of 77 can nominate and carry 61kg. All sex and age allowances are still applicable to benchmark races.

The majority of races in New Zealand are programmed using, but not restricted to, the following classifications, and races may be programmed using other ratings. The descriptions provided below are a guide only. Ratings are determined by the Handicappers based on the race performances of an individual horse and in accordance with the principles and methodology set out in this Guide.

**7.2.1 Rating 75 Benchmark**

These races are open to all horses. Those horses rated above 75 will carry 0.5kg extra for each point above 75. This Rating band may generally include two and three win horses however may also include horses with more than three wins that have subsequently deteriorated in form. Regardless of ballot order, a last start Rating 65 winner at a Feature and / or Premier meeting will be guaranteed a start in a R75 next start at a Feature and / or Premier meeting its next start. (This guarantee of a start will lapse if the horse is scratched from the relevant Rating 75 race without a vet certificate.)

**7.2.2 Rating 65 Benchmark**

These races are open to all horses rated 65 and below. Entry for horses rated above 65 is restricted to those with one win or less. This Rating band may generally include one win horses, however, could also include horses with two or more wins that have subsequently deteriorated in form. Placed horses with a rating of 65 will remain in this grade. Preference in the order of entry will be given to flat winners over Maidens.

**7.2.3 Rating 60 Non- Benchmark**

These races are open to flat winners and maiden horses rated 60 and below. Horses with a rating above 60 will not be able to benchmark. This rating band may generally include one win horses, however, could also include horses with two or more wins that have subsequently deteriorated in form. Horses winning a Rating 60 race may potentially remain in the Rating 60 grade based on the horse's overall profile and race performances. Preference in the order of entry will be given to flat winners over Maidens.

**b. Maiden Races**

As all Maiden races are conducted set weight races, Maiden horses are rated for balloting purposes only. Maiden horses that are rated above 53 and start in a Ratings race will be weighted based on their Rating.

Maiden horses start with a Rating 45. Ratings are then adjusted based on race performances:

- Winners of a Maiden race will be re-rated between 61-64 depending on the strength of the performance which will be determined by the Handicapper having regard to the advertised prizemoney for the race and the relative strength of the field.
- Maiden horses who have placed in Group or Listed races may have a rating higher than 64
- Raceday 2<sup>nd</sup> add 2 points – minimum 7 points, maximum 9 points
- Raceday 3<sup>rd</sup> add 1 point – minimum 6 points, maximum 9 points
- Raceday 4<sup>th</sup> minimum 5 points, if presently higher stays as is
- Raceday 5<sup>th</sup> minimum 2 points – if presently higher stays as is
- Raceday 6<sup>th</sup> in one of a horse's first 3 starts can accrue 1 point. This is not accumulative.

Subsequent second placed performances will result in a horse being given an extra two rating points, subject to the condition that a horse having run second at its most recent start will not be rated below 52 or above 54.

Subsequent third placed performances will result in a horse being given an extra one rating point, subject to the condition that a horse having run third at its most recent start will not be rated below 51 or above 54.

Subsequent fourth or fifth placed performances will not result in any change to a horse's rating subject to the condition that a horse having run fourth at its most recent start will not be rated below 50 and a horse having run fifth at its most recent start will not be rated below 47.

Maiden horses will lose a point for an unplaced effort (sixth or worse) and after three unplaced performances will revert to 45, which is the minimum rating a horse can receive in New Zealand.



Horses with a rating of 45 that finish sixth at any of their first three career race starts will be re-rated to 46. That Rating reverts to 45 after one start unless the horse again finishes sixth or better.

Trial winners with a rating of 47 that finish sixth at any of their first three career race starts will remain on 47. That rating reverts to 45 after one start unless the horse again finishes sixth or better.

Handicappers can apply discretion in maiden races in fields of (8) or less, for beaten margins.

Unplaced runs in Group or Listed races are usually ignored for Maiden horse, however the handicapper may apply judgement or discretion in determining if a reduction in rating is warranted.

*Examples:*

<b>Form</b>	<b>Rating</b>
0287.....	Rating 50
8202.....	Rating 53
4522.....	Rating 54
3908.....	Rating 45
796.....	Rating 46
769.....	Rating 45
500.....	Rating 45

#### **c. Set Weight and Penalty (SWP) Races**

The weights for SWP races are determined by a system of fixed penalties for winning performances. These penalties are set out in the Standard Regulations

Clubs may run a race with different SWP conditions, and such races will be advertised in the Racing Programme Guide.

#### **d. Set Weight and Penalty and Set Weight 2YO and 3YO Races**

For all Non Group and Listed Set Weight and Penalty races, the weights will be 57.0kg for Colts and Geldings and 55.0kg for Fillies.

- Penalties:
- Winner of a Group 1 3.0kg
  - Winner of a Group 2 2.0kg
  - Winner of a Group 3 and / or three or more races 1.5kg
  - Winner of a Listed and / or winner of two races 1.0kg
  - Maiden weight allowance 1.0kg
  - Penalties not cumulative

The weights for all Set Weight mixed gender open Two-Year-Old and Three-Year-Old Group and Listed races will be 57.0kg for Colts and Geldings, and 55.0kg for Fillies.

The weights for all Two – Year – Old and Three – Year – Old fillies only Group and Listed set weight races will be 56.5kg

For all Non Group and Listed Set Weight races, the weights will be 57.5kg for Colts and Geldings and 55.5kg for Fillies

## Maidens As At (MAAT) and Special Conditions (Spec Cond) Races

MAAT and Spec Cond races are unique to New Zealand. MAAT races allow horses to be nominated based on the date at which they were still a Maiden runner. These conditions will be advertised in the Racing Programming Guide.

Spec Cond races allow horses to “run out” a nomination in a nominal Maiden race after winning (usually with a 2kg penalty). These races are usually programmed during racing carnivals (such as the West Coast summer circuit). These conditions will be advertised in the Racing Program Guide.

## New Zealand Handicapping in Action

In all Benchmark races the Benchmark weight can be set at 60kg, 59.5kg or 59kg in accordance with the minimum topweight provision:

R75 Benchmark Handicap min 54kg (1 December)				
	Horse	Age/Sex	Rating	Weight
1	Fighting Blossom	6g	76	60.5
2	Rafa's Pride	5g	75	60.0
3	Dirty Red	5m	77	59.0
4	Luck O'theirish	5g	72	58.5
5	Bluebags	6h	69	57.0
6	The New Black	4m	72	56.5
7	Jefferson	7m	71	56.0
8	Tommy Twister	3g	71	56.5
9	Friendly	3f	66	54.0
10	Rhodes	6g	64	54.5
11	Bumper Farrell	6m	62	54.0

- #1 **Fighting Blossom** – As a rating 76 6YO gelding in a R75 benchmark, Fighting Blossom is eligible to start and will be weighted at 60.5kg and carry 0.5kg (equivalent of 1 ratings point) above the 60kg nominal topweight.
- #2 **Rafa's Pride** – As a rating 75 5YO male he is handicapped to carry 60kg as determined by the weights template.
- #3 **Dirty Red** –As a R77 mare in a R75 Benchmark Handicap Dirty Red is also eligible to start and is 2pts (1.0kg) above the Benchmark weight (equivalent of 61.0kg), which is reduced to 59.0kg when the 2kg mares allowance is included.
- #4 **Luck O'theirish** – As a 5YO male, in a R75 race is 1.5kg (3pts) less than the R75 Benchmark horse.
- #5 **Bluebags** – As a 6YO male rated 69 he will carry 57.0kg.

- #6 **The New Black** –In this event The New Black is nominated off a R72 mark in an R75 event. The same as Luck O'theirish (58.5kg), before the 2kg mares allowance is applied, reducing her weight to 56.5kg.
- #7 **Jefferson** – as a R71 mare she carries 56.0kg.
- #8 **Tommy Twister** - A R71 older male would be weighted to carry 58.0kg in an R75 event, however as a 3YO Tommy Twister (Nov-Jan period) is entitled to 1.5kg (3pt) age allowance, reducing his weight to 56.5kg.
- #9 **Friendly** –A 4YO Male R66 would receive 55.5kg, however she is weighted at 54kg. In this instance her 2kg fillies and 1.5kg 3YO allowances cannot be taken fully and is carrying 54kg as no horse can be weighted to carry less than the advertised 54kg minimum.
- #10 **Rhodes** – As a R64 6YO male he is weighted on 54.kg.
- #11 **Bumper Farrell** –As the template shows and older male horse weighted at 53.5kg her 2kg mares allowance cannot be taken fully and therefore carries the minimum weight 54kg.

## Example of Standard Regulation 8.13 –

R75 Benchmark Handicap min 54kg (1 December)				
	Horse	Age/Sex	Rating	Weight
1	Bluebags	6h	69	59.0
2	The New Black	4m	72	58.5
3	Jefferson	7m	71	58
4	Tommy Twister	3g	71	58.5
5	Friendly	3f	66	54.0
6	Rhodes	6g	64	56.5
7	Bumper Farrell	6m	62	54.0

- #1 **Bluebags** – As the highest rated older male but rated 1.5kg below the minimum benchmark according to the weights template, he is assigned the new required minimum top weight of 59kg.
- #2 **The New Black** –In this event The New Black is rated 72 (3 points/1.5kg) above the top weight Bluebags. With her 2kg mares allowance her final weight is 58.5kg.
- #3 **Jefferson** – Rated 71 (2 points/1kg). With the application of her 2kg mares allowance she carries 58kg.
- #4 **Tommy Twister** – With a 3YO weight allowance applied to a standard R74 race, Tommy Tucker would be given 57kg. As this race has been “raised” 3 points (1.5kg) to meet the minimum top weight requirement, Tommy Twister now carries 58.5kg.
- #5 **Friendly** –As a R66 her 2kg fillies and 1.5kg 3YO allowances cannot be taken fully and is therefore carrying 54kg, despite the 3 point increase to the race, as no horse can be weighted to carry less than the advertised 54kg minimum.
- #6 **Rhodes** – As a R64 6YO male 5 points below Bluebags he is weighted 56.5kg.
- #7 **Bumper Farrell** –Rated 62 is 2 points/1kg below Rhodes however is unable to claim her 2kg mares allowance and is weighted 54kg.

## 9. Weight-For Age (WFA) Races

In horse racing, weight for age (WFA) scale is designed for horses to meet on even terms once consideration has been given to age, sex, the race distance and the month of the racing season that the race is being conducted.

Fillies and Mares are given an allowance of 2kg. Two-year-old, Three-year-old and Four-year-old horses are given allowances based on the time within the season.

A copy of the Standard WFA Scale is found on the following page.

**Standard Weight-For-Age Scale for Flat Races (effective 8 December 2008)**

		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Distance	Age												
1000 m	2						45.0	46.0	47.0	48.0	49.0	50.0	51.0
To	3	51.5	52.0	53.0	53.5	54.5	55.0	55.5	56.0	56.5	57.0	57.5	58.0
1200 m	4	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5
	5+	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5
Over	2						44.0	45.0	46.0	47.0	48.0	49.0	50.0
1200 m	3	50.5	51.0	52.0	53.0	54.0	54.5	55.5	56.0	56.5	57.0	57.5	58.0
To	4	58.5	58.5	58.5	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
1400 m	5+	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
Over	2						43.5	44.5	45.5	46.5	47.5	48.5	49.5
1400 m	3	50.0	50.5	51.0	52.0	53.0	54.0	55.0	56.0	56.5	57.0	57.5	58.0
To	4	58.5	58.5	58.5	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
1600 m	5+	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
Over	2						42.5	43.5	44.5	45.5	46.5	47.5	48.5
1600 m	3	49.0	49.5	50.0	51.0	52.0	53.0	54.0	54.5	55.5	56.5	57.0	57.5
To	4	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.5	58.5	58.5	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0

		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
2000 m	5+	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
Over	3	48.5	49.0	49.5	50.5	51.0	52.0	53.0	54.0	54.5	55.5	56.0	57.0
To	4	57.5	57.5	57.5	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.5	58.5	58.5	59.0	59.0	59.0
2400 m	5+	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.0
Over	3	48.0	48.5	49.0	50.0	50.5	51.5	52.5	53.5	54.0	55.0	55.5	56.0
To	4	57.5	57.5	57.5	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.5	58.5	58.5	59.0	59.0	59.0
3200 m	5+	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5

## 10. New Zealand Jumps Racing

### a. Race Types

The Handicapping of jumps races differ from flat racing. The rating assigned to a horse for a jumping discipline may not give a specific weight in a handicap race, and weights are assigned on a discretionary basis with the intention of providing the most equitable outcome.

All jump ratings are indicative therefore the handicapper has the discretion to alter a horses jump rating at the time of nominations to suit the desired weight spread.

New Zealand Jumps races are divided into the following categories:

#### **Maiden Races**

Are for horses that have not won a race in the discipline for which they are nominated (Hurdle or Steeple). These are run at Set Weights, with Geldings and Entires carrying 68kg and Mares 66kg.

There are no allowances for 3YO horses.

A horse that has won one or more Hurdle races may nominate for a Maiden Steeplechase race, and vice versa.

All unraced jump horses begin on a rating of 50. Hurdle ratings and Steeplechase ratings are completely separate and have no bearing on each other.

Points System for Maiden Hurdle and Maiden Steeplechase:

Raceday 2<sup>nd</sup> – horse to receive rating of 59, if presently higher stays as is.

Raceday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Horse to receive rating of 57, if presently higher stays as is.

Raceday 4<sup>th</sup> – Horse to receive rating of 55, if presently higher stays as is.

Raceday 5<sup>th</sup> – Horse to receive rating of 52, if presently higher stays as is.

Horses unplaced (including pulled-up, ran off, lost rider and fell) to lose points as determined by the handicapper.

#### **0-1 Races**

For horses that have not won more than one race in the discipline for which they are nominated (Hurdle or Steeple). Geldings and Entires will carry 68.5kg and Mares 66.5kg. A maiden allowance of 1.5kg will apply.

## Restricted Open and Open Handicaps

Are open to all horses eligible for the nominated discipline (Hurdle or Steeple). Minimum weights for these races is 66kg. Mares are entitled to a 2kg allowance, as long as these do not take it below the 66kg minimum.

There is no maximum topweight for these races, and the handicappers will endeavor to achieve a minimum 4kg spread of weights.

## Restricted Open and Open Set Weights and Penalties.

Are open to all horses eligible for the nominated discipline (Hurdle or Steeple). Set Weights are 66.5kg for Geldings and Entires and 64.5kg for Mares, with a 1.5kg Maiden allowance. Penalties are based on wins from 1 January in the 2 prior season and the current season:

Wins in nominated discipline	2	3	4	5+
Penalty	1.5kg	3kg	4.5kg	6kg

An additional 1.5kg penalty will be applied to a horse if they have won a race with a value above \$50,000 in the nominated discipline in the same time frame.

## Prestige Jumps Races

These are open to all horses eligible for the nominated discipline (Hurdle or Steeple). The minimum weight for these races is 65kg, with a maximum topweight of 72kg.

## 13. General

### a. Balloting

The majority of races balloted in New Zealand are applied under the conditions specified in section 9 of the Standard Regulations.

For those races that are not run under these conditions, and where the field is selected based on other criteria, the qualifying and balloting conditions will be advertised in the Racing Programme Guide.

### b. Domestic Versus International Ratings

The domestic Ratings Based Handicapping system should not be confused or judged against the end of season International ratings.

The International ratings are compiled at the end of each season by a panel of Handicappers representing the world's leading racing nations and are a peak performance rating based on the horse's best International performance for that season, taking into accounts the strength of the field that performance came in.

International ratings are based on a scale of ratings that differs from the scale of ratings used for domestic ratings.

The world's leading horses are announced at regular intervals by the IFHA, and a consolidated annual rankings list of those horses rated 115+ (considered to be the world's best) is published in January.

These ratings provide the basis for Black Type Race classifications, as published in the Blue Book.

**c. Website**

Ratings are displayed alongside nominations on the Love Racing website ([www.loveracing.nz](http://www.loveracing.nz)) at the time of their release. Ratings are also available online for all horses that are currently racing in New Zealand by the following sort options; by horse name, by descending Rating, by ascending Rating and by trainer.

## **15. Handicapping Complaints Process**

This Handicapping Guide has been provided to assist industry participants understanding of the method and decision-making process used by the Handicappers when arriving at the weight horses will receive by virtue of their performances in the numerous races, they compete in.

The aim of the Handicapping Guide is to provide greater transparency as to how the NZTR Handicappers operate that will ensure that the handicapping system remains fair and consistent, with the highest level of integrity, at all times.

However, from time to time participants may not agree with the rating or weight allocated to a horse.

In 2013 New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing initiated a formal process for handling complaints relating to the re-rating and/or the weighting of a horse.

The Handicapping Complaints Process provides for the owner or lessee, or the Trainer (as detailed in NZTR Rules of Racing 215) to make a formal complaint as to the re-rating and/or the weighting of their horse. NZTR will also respond directly to the New Zealand Trainers Association in regard to any formal complaint of behalf of one of their members,

NZTR will look to resolve any handicapping complaints received as quickly as is practical.

**a. Handling a Complaint or Query**



- In the first instance the owner/lessee or trainer should speak directly to the NZTR Handicappers to gain an understanding as to the way in which the re-rating or handicapping of their horse has been assessed.

In most cases it would be NZTR's expectation that the handicappers will be able to resolve the vast majority of handicapping enquiries or complaints in this manner. The Handicappers will be able to explain verbally, or via email if a more detailed explanation is required.

- If the owner/trainer is not satisfied with the response received from the Handicappers, they may escalate their complaint by emailing [complaintshcp@nzzracing.co.nz](mailto:complaintshcp@nzzracing.co.nz) or by making a complaint in writing to:

NZTR Handicapping Liaison Officer,  
PO Box 38386,  
Wellington Mail Centre 5045.

- In relation to the complaint process, ratings will not be altered (providing a clerical error hasn't been made), unless each of the following apply:
  - In relation to the complaint process, ratings will not be altered (providing a clerical error hasn't been made), unless each of the following apply:
  - the justified complaint is received within (5) working days of the published re-rating
  - the justified complaint is received prior to being nominated for a subsequent race (excluding early entry races)
  - a recommendation to alter the rating is given by way of an official independent review.
- All complaints received in writing will be directed to NZTR's Handicapping Liaison Officer.
- The Handicapping Liaison Officer is independent of the Handicappers and NZTR management. The Handicapping Liaison Officer is empowered to carefully consider and make a recommendation to the NZTR Chief Executive, where it can be established that there has been a material error in the re-rating or handicapping of a horse.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within one working day of being received. When writing to the Handicapping Liaison Officer, please provide in writing the full details of the complaint, along with an understanding of the explanation provided by the Handicappers and an expectation as to what you believe needs to happen. Please include your full name, address and contact details and confirm your relevant interest in the horse that is the subject of the complaint.

## **b. Investigating a Complaint or Query**

- Upon receipt of a complaint the Handicapping Liaison Officer after reviewing the information provided, will seek a formal response from the NZTR Handicappers. Depending on the complexity of the complaint the response from the NZTR Handicappers should be provided to the Handicapping Liaison Officer within two (2) working days of the request being made.
- The NZTR Handicapping Liaison Officer may also seek further information before making a recommendation to the NZTR Chief Executive.
- Please note Rule 216 (1) provides that the NZTR Handicappers may amend the allotted weight and/or rating of a horse only if the Chief Executive is satisfied that the allotted weight and/or rating was incorrect because of:
  - a clerical error at the time of release of such weight and/or rating;
  - incomplete or inaccurate information on the performances, age, sex or identity of that horse: or
  - an error by the Handicapper in the assessment of the age or sex of any entry or of the conditions of the race.
- Where the recommendation of the Handicapping Liaison Officer results in the NZTR Chief Executive supporting any amendment of the allotted weight and/or rating of a horse, as provided for by the Rules of Racing, NZTR will publish on its website a copy of the report findings that has supported the change.
- Where no action will be taken by NZTR regarding a complaint, NZTR will provide the complainant with the report findings that have been provided by the Handicapping Liaison Officer for their information.

## **17. Glossary of Terms**

### **Allowance**

A reduction in the weight to be carried by a horse conferred as a result of factors which include age or sex allowances.

### **Apprentice Allowance**

A weight allowance conferred to a horse as a result of that horse being ridden by an Apprentice Rider.

### **Balloting Order**

The order by which horses are eliminated from a race where the total number of horses remaining in the field at the close of final withdrawals exceeds the starting limit.

### **Benchmark Race**

A race which allows horses to nominate above the advertised benchmark rating. Horses that nominate above this figure will receive an extra 0.5kg for each point they are above the benchmark rating of the race. Applicable allowances are subsequently taken off this weight

### **Black Type Race**

A race that is classified as either Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 or Listed by the New Zealand Pattern Committee (also referred to as a Stakes Race). These races are considered the highest standard of thoroughbred horse race in New Zealand.

The list of Group and Listed races approved by New Zealand Pattern Committee is accepted by the International Cataloguing Standards Committee for publication by The Jockey Club (UK) in The Blue Book. Group and Listed races are broken down into Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 and Listed Races

### **Feature Race**

A high quality race usually run for high stakes (prizemoney) for which entries may be taken and weights declared earlier than would be the case for other races.

### **Handicap Race**

A race in which the weights to be carried by the horses are allocated by the Handicapper based on each horse's Rating for the purpose of equalising their chances of winning.

### **Maiden Race**

A Maiden flat race is restricted to horses that have not won a flat race. A Maiden Steeplechase race is restricted to horses that have not won a Steeplechase race, and Maiden Hurdle races are restricted to horses that have not won a Hurdle race.

### **Grade**

A category into which a horse might be placed based on its Rating and the types of race for which it is eligible.

### **Maidens As At Race**

A set weights and penalties race where the eligibility is determined by the Maiden status of a horse at a nominated date.

### **Minimum Weight**

The minimum weight that a horse can be allocated in a particular race. The minimum weight for each race type is advertised in Standard Regulations or in the Race Programming Guide.

### **Open Race**

A race open to all horses except for horses aged two years, unless this has been advertised as a race condition in the TRM.

### **Overweight**

An amount of weight, generally not exceeding 0.5kg, that a horse may carry in a race in addition to its allotted weight because its rider is unable to make the allocated weight.

### **Penalty**

The amount by which a Handicapper increases a horse's weight and/or Rating following a win or placed performance.

### **Race Programming Guide**

The official publication of NZTR detailing race dates and programs. This is published on the Love Racing website [loveracing.nz](http://loveracing.nz)

### **Rating**

A numerical assessment of a horse's prior performance(s) made by the Handicapper which is used to determine the weight to be carried by that horse in any Handicap race. Ratings are also used to determine the Balloting the order for some races.

### **Rating Band**

A category into which a horse might be placed based on its Rating and the types of Rating races regularly programmed.

*Example: A horse Rated 70 might be considered to be in the Rating 72 Band, because the most suitable races for which it is eligible (which are regularly programmed) are Rating 72 races.*

### **Set Weight Race**

A race where all horses carry the same weight subject to a sex allowance for fillies and/or mares and any applicable 3YO allowances.

### **Set Weights and Penalties Race**

A race where a set weight is given, and weight penalties are given for winning performances.

### **Special Conditions Race**

A race where winning horses are allowed to run, with a weight penalty, against maiden horses if nominated prior to winning.

### **Top Weight**

The highest weight allotted in a particular race.

### **Weight-For-Age (WFA) Race**

A race in which the weights to be carried by the horses are determined by the Weight-for-Age (WFA) scale. Under the WFA scale weights are determined according to a horse's age, sex, the race distance and the month of the year.

## **13. Contacts**

### **NZTR Handicapping Panel**

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