



NEW ZEALAND THOROUGHBRED RACING

RACING OPERATIONS REPORT
APRIL 2024

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A photograph of several horses and jockeys in a starting gate, ready for a race. The horses are in various colors, and the jockeys are wearing colorful silks. The background shows a green field and some structures.

TRACKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE | APRIL 2024

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Te Aroha

Continuing to monitor Te Aroha as it recovers, unfortunately, the track was not ready to resume over easter as previously hoped. But it continues to improve and should be ready to race at the next scheduled raceday. NZTR and NZSTI have been monitoring the track weekly to ensure we keep moving in the right direction towards the resumption.

Awapuni

The construction phase of the project is very near completion with the final soft spots being dug up over the past week. Currently stone burying and decompaction work is being undertaken and the track will then be prepared for grass sowing. A maintenance plan will then be put in place through to the resumption of racing so that all required works are completed when required. This will be agreed by the Club, NZSTI and NZTR and compliance to this will be monitored regularly. Progress has been very pleasing with regard the project.

Hastings

Following the Abandonment Committee reviewing the partial abandonment of the Lowland Stakes raceday, NZTR has withheld a portion of the Club Funding from HBRI. As previously advised after the abandonment HBRI have undertaken a full renovation of the turf to return to racing on April 27. A final decision on this return will be made on Thursday 28 March. The Hawke's Bay Cup Day scheduled for April 13 has been transferred to Otaki Racecourse.

Ellerslie

The Ellerslie track continues to improve with racing. They will host the NZEA New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders Stakes raceday transferred from Te Aroha over Easter.

Trentham

The track raced well on the Al Basti Equiworld Dubai New Zealand Oaks Day, the inside 6m which had been renovated performed well although the riders did get off the rail during the day.

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NZSTI Track Reports

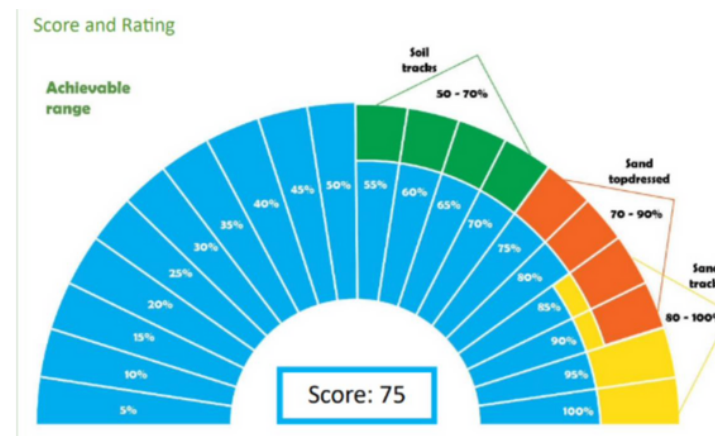
During the 2023/24 Season, NZSTI performed track audits on 25 race tracks. All the major tracks are tested annually, while the smaller, less used tracks are tested every two years. Each track is given a score and then that score is compared to the track's 'Achievable range' as per the graph below. An achievable range is outlined to provide a more specific measurement of the capability of the surface being tested.

There were 25 tracks tested in the 2023/24 season:

- 23 out of 25 (92%) were inside the desired Achievable range.
- Of the 18 tracks tested in both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons, 12 of them (66.6%) showed a positive variance in the current season.
- Five tracks that were outside the Achievable range in 2022/23, are now inside the Achievable range.
- Two tracks that were in the Achievable range in 2022/23, are now outside the Achievable range. These are due to various reasons such as severe weather, over-use of the track, and there is a lack of consistency between old/new staff at the venue. These Clubs and 'negative' scores have been addressed by NZTR and NZSTI.

It should be noted that the annual timing of the NZSTI reports is critical to be able to measure progress and provide relevant, comparable data. There are currently only two years of data from the NZSTI reports. Renovation periods and the racing calendar dictate when these tests and reports can be compiled, but it is understood by NZSTI that they must remain relevant across the years.

All reports and future recommendations are discussed with the relevant Club, with an RTA present.



A photograph of several horses and jockeys in a starting gate, ready for a race. The jockeys are wearing colorful silks, and the horses are dark-colored. The background shows a green field and a fence.

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Health and Safety

A reminder to all Clubs to ensure they keep the relevant First Aid certificates for the training of Track Supervisors up to date. NZTR recommends Clubs source a Defibrillator to keep on course. Most Class Four Community Trusts are very happy to support applications for these.

Hot Weather Policy reminder

Given the very hot temperatures around the world in the last few months, and the likely probability of high temperatures around the country this Summer, please ensure that if you are forecast for high temperatures on a raceday, you take all precautions to protect the welfare of both horses and humans. NZTR's Hot Weather Policy can be found [here](#).

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Race Day Vet Checks

- We have been working with clubs, trainers, and the RIB to develop a better system for raceday vet checks. This has been well communicated to trainers with runners at acceptance and in the month of March, we have trailed at Riccarton, Matamata and Pukekohe. To date feedback has been well received and positive feedback from trainers and veterinarians.
- This system will enable us to quickly locate and examine a horse within 10 minutes of race completion – improving the race day experience for trainers, handlers, veterinarians, and horses. Race Day veterinarians work under significant pressure and time constraints. The lack of stall allocations at most Thoroughbred meetings means that vets face difficulties locating horses.
- Thank you to these Clubs who have been so cooperative and going forward we hope a simple whiteboard will be utilised by all clubs to assist raceday veterinarians.

Kick Up For Kiwis

- It would be great if stakeholders and Clubs could share this information – great work from Vicky Leonard and Chris Rogers before the Golden Slipper, as a result of our Kick Up for Kiwis collaboration and hoping to secure Vicky to return. If you are interested in her SLO workshops please let me know Justine.sclater@nztr.co.nz.

Welfare Cases

- We have had an increase in requests for support both privately and from the SPCA mostly in the South Island. All of these requests have been retired Thoroughbreds in private situations, ranging from abandonment to neglect including a Hong Kong import that the HKJC are supporting. Through the SPCA we are currently providing assistance to seven Thoroughbreds.

Horse Health and Fitness Technologies

- The equimetre is now with Massey University waiting for Animal Ethics approval before we can proceed with the study examining variability in stride and ground surface, we are awaiting Animal Ethics approval before we can proceed. We will then look at it returning to a Cambridge Stable to collect data for this study.

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Hot Weather Policy plan for next season

- Currently working on a plan for next season, misting fans have well received and were showcased in action at Matamata and Te Rapa.

Un-retirement of horses

- We believe due to the increase in stake money have noted an increase in horses being unretired and are in need of a Return to Racing Policy.

Communications

- Completed Thoroughbred Welfare Advocate and working on 1% third quarter which is available to view [here](#).

Acknowledged Retrainers

- Supply demand pressures continue, the market for recently retired thoroughbreds is variable and, in many instances, horses are selling for low prices which are not covering costs, therefore a number of the network are struggling financially. We are still seeing horses arrive at retrainers with feet in poor condition requiring farrier attention. The alteration to the incoming horse form has been completed and sent to all the retrainers, and the hope is that this will place more onus on the person signing this form to ensure they are providing true and accurate information giving the retrainers (with our support) stronger grounds to push back if the horse arrives not in a condition to start work.
- Year to date we have supported the rehoming of 244 horses and euthansia of five which were deemed unsuitable for various reasons. We have yet to receive traceability paperwork from some retrainers for February we believe there will be an increase in numbers when they complete and return their paperwork.
- The drought conditions in the South Island give us reason for concern before winter.
- A reminder to complete an SR24 when a horse has been retired otherwise you remain the responsible person for the horse.
- We emphasise that our industry-standard must be that we ensure the horse has had a recent dental, is shod, drenched and is in condition to commence its retraining. The retrainers network is not for spelling horses as this is a significant cost to the welfare fund and can be better utilised.
- We have started contacting trainers who have taken horses to retrainers who are not meeting the standards we have asked for. Instances of telling the retrainers they will drop off one horse and then appear with three cannot be tolerated.

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Thoroughbred Second Career Sponsorship

- Attended HOY and presented Thoroughbred TiES and RAS Show Horse prizes. Gave us a great insight into our sponsorship of future events and made many contacts. TiES was well received across the equestrian community and NZTR's sponsorship of the Horse Ambulance over the entire event. Our Minister for Racing presented our awards in the main arena together with Darin Balcombe and Justine Sclater. We will also be meeting with ESNZ to discuss our future series sponsorship to ensure we are creating a strategic pathway for Thoroughbreds in equestrian. Have received some excellent feedback from competitors therefore we are committed to further developing the Series.

TiES 2023-24 Accumulator Series Winners

Accumulator Dressage/Para-Dressage winner – Alpha Tauri (Chloe Cann)

Raise The Flag x Missy's Filly, placed

Race name: Deebeewiththestars. Breeder: M J & P G Crooks Trainer: Ross Beckett

Accumulator Jumping Winner – Grassendale Enzo (Luce and Sofia Williams)

Reliable Man x Kaarera, unplaced

Race name: Boom Boom Basil. Breeder: GS Racing Ltd Trainer: Chris Gibbs & Michelle Bradley

Accumulator Show Hunter Winner – Volonte II (Kylie Lyndens)

Raise The Flag x Volonte, winner

Race name: Dontputytfootinit Breeder M J Crooks Trainer: Sophie Price

TiES Futurity Series North Island Final – Miss Eves (Isabelle Jameson)

Indy King x Max Facta, unplaced

Race Name Li'l Miss Eves Breeder: E D Foreman & A J Kearns Trainer: Kevin Gray



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Matamata Equestrian Group's 2024 Horse Trial Event

- Held on 22-23 March, run as a 3 Day Event this year for the National One Day Eventing Championships. The event saw 90 Thoroughbreds competing and our sponsorship in partnership with the HKJC for the five best-performed Thoroughbred classes with a \$500 cash prize. This strategically complemented the NZTBA Reddy Teddy Best overall and NZB's CCN95 Thoroughbred class.
- In discussions as to if next year we could host a Thoroughbred-only event run by the group as its great location and proximity to our central Thoroughbred population.

The International Society for Equitation Science (ISES)

- A Good Life for Horses conference was held in last week in Cambridge – Tracey attended unfortunately Justine was out with COVID-19 but turned in online. There were some very interesting learnings and research around Thoroughbreds that were insightful but also challenges we face from public scrutiny. An appreciation to Event Stars, Pike Racing and Cambridge Stud who were prepared to showcase the NZ Thoroughbred industry and were all well received by the international delegation. Working on providing a research booklet for anyone interested.
- The International Forum for the Aftercare of racehorses is being held in conjunction with the Asian Racing Conference in late August in Japan. A decision as to whether an NZTR representative should attend is being made.

Communications

- Completed Thoroughbred Welfare Advocate and worked on 1% third quarter.

2023 Trainer Stable Audits

- There will be a meeting with the RIB for a debrief and look at how this process can be improved and better managed.
- If there are any issues in completing your Improvement Notices, please contact the RIB to discuss this with them in the first instance. Any feedback on the process to Nick.Ydgren@Racingintegrityboard.org.nz. To help Trainers prepare for the process, NZTR has circulated communications and created a [Stable Audit Hub](#).
- Raceday fatalities for the 2023-24 season to date are at 14.