

**NEW ZEALAND
THOROUGHBRED RACING**

**HANDICAPPING
GUIDE**

Note: This Policy applies from 1 August 2019

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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 to understand:

- The weight horses will receive by virtue of their performances in the various races in which they compete.
- Provide a greater understanding of the New Zealand handicapping system and methodologies that are used.

The Guide will also provide greater transparency as to how the Handicappers operate and will ensure that the handicapping system remains fair and consistent at all times.

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 two working days) 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, which 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 82 in a rating 82 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 differing ability, to 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.
- The Rating of the top weighted horse determines 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 75, Horse B has a Rating of 67 (both male horses). In a Rating 72 Benchmark race Horse A would carry 4kg more than Horse B. In an Open Handicap they will 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 top 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 based on the Handicappers assessment of the horses performance in the race, taking into account factors such as previous form and performance, the size and strength of the field and the authority 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.
- Horses can 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 graduating from Maiden class will be rated between 62 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 form. A Maiden horse may be re-rated higher than 65 if it wins a Black Type race, a ratings based or open handicap race.
- 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.
- The Handicapper will take into account any overweight carried when adjusting Ratings and/or weights, but no allowance will be taken of Apprentice allowances, as these have been designed to allow for the inexperience of the rider, and consequently are not relevant to the handicap assessment of the horse
- 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.

4. Methodology

4.1 Penalties

There are no automatic or fixed adjustments for a win or placed performance and in all circumstances the Handicapper has the discretion to assess the horse's performance outside generally applied rating adjustments.

It is in the best interest of racing that the handicappers have the discretion to take into account all the considerations and deliberations that are necessary when re-rating races and framing weights.

The key principle that the handicappers 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.

The maximum rating a horse can receive is 10 points for a win and 5 points for finishing second to fifth. The maximum re-rating does not apply to:

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

All horses that win their maiden race (regardless of the class of race), will receive a rating of 62 or higher.

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 takes into account 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 races, winners may expect (with exceptions) to be raised 1kg to 2.5kg.

The actual individual re-rating may not necessarily equate to a formulae where one point equals 0.5kg. This is due to factors such as race strength/size and horses rating below the minimum weight for the race. Winners of Open Class races can generally expect to be re-rated between 3-7 points subject to the handicapper's determination as to the strength of the race 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- 5 points.

Horses winning an Open Class race racing out of their grade can expect a re-rating of 6-12 points providing it is not a Group or Listed race.

4.3 Penalties Rating 82 Races

In Rating 82 races horses winning may expect to be raised 1kg to 3kg.

Winners of a Rating 82 race can generally be expected to be re-rated between 3-6 points.

Horses winning a Rating 82 race racing out of their grade off a rating below 70 can expect a re-rating of between 5-12 points and will generally remain in the Rating 82 grade.

4.4 Penalties Rating 72 Races

In Rating 72 races, horses winning may expect to be raised 1kg to 3kg.

Winners of an Rating 72 race can generally be expected to be re-rated between 3-6 points.

Horses winning a Rating 72 race racing out of their grade off a rating below 60 can expect a re-rating of between 6-12 points and will generally remain in the Rating 72 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 depending on the relative strength of the race. In almost all cases, horses winning off a rating of 61 or above will be assigned a minimum rating of 67 or higher.

Winners of a Rating 65 race can generally be expected to be re-rated between 3-6 points.

4.6 Maiden Races

All Maiden horses begin with a Rating of 45, unless they win a trial. Winners of trials receive 2 points to take their initial rating to 47.

A Maiden horse will not receive a rating above 54 unless that horse is placed 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 Black Type race will almost always (though there may be exceptions) receive a higher Rating than 54.

As Maiden races are run set weight races Maiden horses are rated for balloting purposes only.

Maiden horses that are rated above 54 and start in any ratings 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:

- If the horse is racing at an unsuitable distance (such as a stayer in sprint events);
- Horses that have won their most recent race.
- 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;
- Horse resuming from a spell.
- Other reasons that the Handicapper considers relevant to the horses performance.

Furthermore, if a horse falls, bleeds, is brought down, pulled up, runs off, disqualified, or loses its rider there may be no adjustment to its Rating.

As a consequence of the introduction of Ratings based programming, the Handicapper may also take into account 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 penalised 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 has to take into account when assessing each horse's performance:

- 1st Win** Maiden to R62-64
- 2nd Win** to R68 (more if winning R82 race)
- 3rd Win** to R73 (more if winning R82 race)
- 4th Win** to R78
- 5th Win** 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 '2nd win'.

When assessing the ratings of 2 & 3YO horses in Black Type races, the Handicapper must take into account 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.

Where handicappers choose to scale weights differently to the template, the reasons for the variation will be published on NZTR's website at the time of declarations.

	Group	Group 3	Premier	Feature	Industry	Rating	Rating	Rating
	1 & 2	&	Open	Open	Open	82	72	65
		Listed						
Rating	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt	Wgt
107	60							
106	59.5							
105	59	61						
104	58.5	60.5						
103	58	60	61					
102	57.5	59.5	60.5					
101	57	59	60					
100	56.5	58.5	59.5					
99	56	58	59	61				
98	55.5	57.5	58.5	60.5				
97	55	57	58	60				
96	54.5	56.5	57.5	59.5				
95	54	56	57	59				
94	53.5	55.5	56.5	58.5	62			
93	53	55	56	58	61.5			
92	52.5	54.5	55.5	57.5	61			
91	52	54	55	57	60.5			
90		53.5	54.5	56.5	60			
89		53	54	56	59.5			
88			53.5	55.5	59	63		
87			53	55	58.5	62.5		

86				54.5	58	62			
85				54	57.5	61.5			
84					57	61			
83					56.5	60.5			
82					56	60			
81					55.5	59.5			
80					55	59			
79					54.5	58.5			
78					54	58	63		
77						57.5	62.5		
76						57	62		
75						56.5	61.5		
74						56	61		
73						55.5	60.5		
72						55	60		
71						54.5	59.5	63	
70						54	59	62.5	
69							58.5	62	
68							58	61.5	
67							57.5	61	
66							57	60.5	
65							56.5	60	
64							56	59.5	
63							55.5	59	
62							55	58.5	
61							54.5	58	
60							54	57.5	
59								57	
58								56.5	
57								56	
56								55.5	
55								55	
54	Highest Rated Maiden (Unless performed out of class)								54.5
53								54	
52									
51									
50									
49									
48									
47									
46									
45	Lowest Rated Maiden								

6. Weights

6.1 Minimum Weights

As provided for in NZTR Racing Policy 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, Listed Race or Premier Day Open Race;
- 54.0kg in all other Handicap Races.

6.2 Minimum Top Weights (including stayers Group and Listed top weights)

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

- 60.0kg in all Handicap races Group 3 and below, that are run at a distance up to and including 2199 metres.
- 59.0kg in Group 3 and Listed races that are run at a distance of 2200 metres or further, for horse rated up to and including 97. Those rated 98 will receive 59.5kg and those rated 99 to 103 will receive 60kg. Horses rated above 103 will receive 0.5kg per rating point on top of the 60kg.
- 59.0kg in Group 1 and Group 2 Handicap races.

In accordance with Standard Regulation 8.3:

- If at the closing time of withdrawals for any Handicap flat race (except a Two & Three year old race or, all Group 1 and Group 2 races, all Group 3 and Listed races run at 2200m of more Flat races), the top weighted horse has been allocated less than 60kg, such top weighted horse or horses shall be allocated 60kg, and the weights allocated to the horses comprising the remainder of the field shall be adjusted by the Handicapper in line with the Handicapping Policy rating guidelines with a view to achieving a minimum 6kg spread of weights.*
- For a non-Group or Listed Two and Three Year Old Set Weights and penalties Flat Races, 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 shall be adjusted by the Handicapper.*
- If at the advertised withdrawal deadline 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.*
- The set weights for Maiden Two Year Old, Maiden Three Year Old, and Fillies and Mares races are 57.5kg and 55.5kg.*

Furthermore, in accordance with Standard Regulation 8.13:

All Benchmark Rating races are Handicap races in which horses with a handicap rating equivalent to the nominated benchmark, after the application of any applicable age and/or sex allowances, will be allocated 60kg. Horses will receive an additional 0.5kg for each rating point above the nominated benchmark. In the event that the highest rated horse nominated for the race has a rating below the nominated benchmark the top weight of 60kg, the allocated weight for that horse will be reduced by the Handicapper by 0.5kg for each point below the nominated benchmark, subject to the provision that the top weighted horse must be allocated a minimum of 59kg. In determining the highest rated horse in the race the Handicapper will reduce the rating of any horse eligible to receive an age and/or sex allowance in accordance by the rating equivalent of the relevant allowance where one rating point is equal to 0.5kg.

6.3 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	0kg

6.4 Fillies and Mares Allowance

From 14 November 2011, fillies and mares have received 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 Jumping Races

For both Steeple and Hurdle races, there are five categories of race:

- Maiden – 66kg Mares and 68kg Geldings and Entires - set weights
- Restricted Open Races – 65kg minimum

- Open Race – 65kg minimum
- Set Weights and Penalties Race – 63kg Mares and 65kg Geldings and Entires. Penalties for wins applied from here.
- Prestige Jumping Race – 65kg minimum, 72kg maximum.

7. Ratings Based Races

Ratings based races were introduced on 1 August 2005.

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 is still eligible for the race because eligibility is determined at the close of nominations. It may, however, incur a weight penalty which will be determined by the Handicapper.

7.1 Open Races

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

The top weight will determine the spread of the weights below it. The top weighted horse is required to carry 60kg 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 of the makeup of the field in subsequent races that the horse starts in.

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

7.2 Benchmark Races

Benchmark Handicapping differs from the previous ratings system, 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 72 Benchmark, a male horse with a rating of 74 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 the following classifications. 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 82 Benchmark

These races are open to all horses. Those horses above rating 82 will carry 0.5kg extra for each point above 82. This Rating band may generally include three, four and five win horses, but may also include horses with more than five wins that have lost form.

7.2.2 Rating 72 Benchmark

These races are open to all horses. Those horses above rating 72 will carry 0.5kg extra for each point above 72. This Rating band may generally include two and three win horses, but may also include horses with more than three wins that have lost form.

7.2.3 Rating 65 Benchmark

Are open to all horses rated 65 and below, as well as those horses rated above 65 with one win or less. This Rating band may generally include one win horses, but may also include horses with two or more wins that have lost form.

7.3 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 54 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:

- Maiden win re-rated between 62-64 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.
- Placed second re-rated to 52
- Placed third re-rated to 51
- Placed fourth re-rated to 50
- Placed fifth re-rated to 47

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 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.

Unplaced runs in Group or Listed races are ignored for Maiden horses.

Examples:

Form	Rating
0287.....	Rating 50
8202.....	Rating 53
4522.....	Rating 54
3908.....	Rating 45
796.....	Rating 46
769.....	Rating 45
500.....	Rating 45

7.4 Set Weight and Penalty (SWP) Races

In SWP races weights are determined by a system of fixed penalties for winning performances. These penalties are set out in the race conditions.

Conditions may vary from one SWP race to another and are advertised in the Thoroughbred Racing Monthly (TRM) magazine.

7.5 Set Weight and Penalty 2YO and 3YO Races

The weights for all Set Weight mixed gender open Two-Year-Old and Three-Year-Old Group and Listed races will be 56.5kg for Colts and Geldings, and 54.5kg for Fillies. For all other non Group and Listed Set Weight races, the weights will be 57.5kg for Colts and Geldings and 55.5kg for Fillies.

8. Weight-For Age (WFA) Races

The WFA scale is designed for horses to meet on even terms once consideration has been given to age, sex and the time of year that the race is being conducted.

From 1 August 2008 Australia changed their Fillies and Mares allowance from 2.5kg to 2.0kg. Accordingly New Zealand made the decision to adopt a 2.0kg Fillies and Mares allowance for WFA events from 8 December 2008.

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
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
2000 m	To	4	57.5	57.5	57.5	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
2400 m	To	4	57.5	57.5	57.5	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
Fillies and Mares to be allowed 2.0kg from 1st August to 31st July													

9. New Zealand Handicapping in Action

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

R72 Benchmark Handicap min 54kg				
	Horse	Age/Sex	Rating	Weight
1	Fighting Blossom	6g	74	61.0
2	Rafa's Pride	5g	72	60.0
3	Dirty Red	5m	75	59.5
4	Luck O'theirish	5g	70	59.0
5	Bluebags	6h	67	57.5
6	The New Black	4m	70	57.0
7	Jefferson	7m	69	56.5
8	Tommy Twister	3g	69	57.0
9	Friendly	3f	64	54.0
10	Rhodes	6g	62	55.0
11	Bumper Farrell	6m	60	54.0

- #1 **Fighting Blossom** – As a rating 74 6YO gelding in a R72 benchmark, Fighting Blossom is eligible to start and will be weighted at 61kg and carry 1kg (equivalent of 2 ratings points) above the 60kg minimum benchmark weight.
- #2 **Rafa's Pride** – As a rating 72 5YO male he is handicapped to carry the 60kg minimum topweight.
- #3 **Dirty Red** –As a R75 mare in a R72 Benchmark Handicap Dirty Red is also eligible to start and is 3pts (1.5kg) above the Benchmark weight (equivalent of 61.5kg), which is reduced to 59.5kg when the 2kg mares allowance is included.
- #4 **Luck O'theirish** – As a 5YO male, in a R72 race is 1kg (2pts) less than the R72 Benchmark horse.
- #5 **Bluebags** – As a 6YO male, in a R72 race he will carry 57.5kg.
- #6 **The New Black** –In this event The New Black resumes off a R70 mark in an R72 event, so she will 1kg (2pts) less than Rafa's Pride (59kg), before the 2kg mares allowance is included, reducing her weight to 57kg.
- #7 **Jefferson** – as a R69 mare she carries 56.5kg.
- #8 **Tommy Twister** - A R69 older male would be weighted to carry 58.5kg in an R72 event, however as a 3YO Tommy Twister (Nov-Jan period) is entitled to 1.5kg (3pt) age allowance, reducing his weight to 57kg.
- #9 **Friendly** –She is weighted at 54kg, her 2kg fillies and 1.5kg 3YO allowances cannot be taken fully so is carrying 54kg as no horse can be weighted to carry less than the advertised 54kg minimum.
- #10 **Rhodes** – As a R65 6YO male he is weighted on 55kg.
- #11 **Bumper Farrell** –Because she is already weighted at 55kg her 2kg mares allowance cannot be taken fully so carries 54kg.

Example of Standard Regulation 8.13 –

R72 Benchmark Handicap min 54kg				
	Horse	Age/Sex	Rating	Weight
1	Bluebags	6h	67	59.0
2	The New Black	4m	70	58.5
3	Jefferson	7m	69	58
4	Tommy Twister	3g	69	58.5
5	Friendly	3f	64	54.0
6	Rhodes	6g	62	56.5
7	Bumper Farrell	6m	60	54.0

- #1 **Bluebags** – As the highest rated older male but rated over 1kg below the nominated benchmark, he is assigned the new required minimum top weight of 59kg.
- #2 **The New Black** –In this event The New Black is rated 3 points (1.5kg) above the top weight Bluebags. With her 2kg mares allowance her final weight is 58.5kg.
- #3 **Jefferson** – Rated 2 point (1kg) above Bluebags who is carrying 59kg. Minus her 2kg mares allowance puts her on 58kg.
- #4 **Tommy Twister** – Normally a R69 3YO gelding would be weighted 57kg (Nov – Jan) but as the top weighted horse is 3 points lower, he receives 1.5kg more on this occasion.
- #5 **Friendly** –She is weighted at 54kg, Her 2kg fillies and 1.5kg 3YO allowances cannot be taken fully so is carrying 54kg as no horse can be weighted to carry less than the advertised 54kg minimum.
- #6 **Rhodes** – As a R65 6YO male 5 points below Bluebags he is weighted 56.5kg.
- #7 **Bumper Farrell** –Rated 60 is 1kg below Rhodes however with her 2kg mares allowance she finishes on 54kg.

10. General

10.1 Balloting

Ratings are utilised in the Balloting Conditions of the NZTR Standard Regulations for the purpose of determining the order of ballots and eliminations. The majority of races conducted in New Zealand are run in accordance with the Standard Regulations.

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

10.2 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 and are a peak performance rating based on the horse's best 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.

10.3 Website

Ratings are displayed alongside nominations on the NZTR website (www.nzracing.co.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.

11. Handicapping Complaints Process (from 25 March 2013)

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing has initiated a formal process for handling complaints relating to the re-rating of horses 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.

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.

11.1 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.

- If the owner/trainer is not satisfied with the response received from the Handicappers, they may escalate their complaint by emailing complaintshcp@nzracing.co.nz or by making a complaint in writing to NZTR Handicapping Liaison Officer, PO Box 38386, Wellington Mail Centre 5045.
- All complaints received in writing will be directed to NZTR's Handicapping Liaison Officer.
- The Handicapping Liaison Officer is independent of 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. Please note: 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.

11.2 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 in regard to a complaint, NZTR will provide the complainant with the report findings that have been provided by the Handicapping Liaison Officer for their information.

12. 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 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.

Grade

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

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.

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 NZTR's Thoroughbred Racing Monthly (TRM) magazine.

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.

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.

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. NZTR Handicapping Panel

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14. NZTR Handicapping Liaison (Complaints and Queries)

Email complaintshcp@nzracing.co.nz