

AUCKLAND TROTTING CLUB - RACING POLICY DOCUMENT

This document forms the overarching guidelines and policies of the Racing Committee of the Auckland Trotting Club (ATC). This document is important as it will direct the Racing Committee towards obtaining the goals as set out by the racing club, to optimise its own position and invigorate harness racing in the region, meeting both the differing needs of both industry and non-industry participants.

As the premier harness racing club in the North Island, the ATC holds a key role in ensuring that harness racing is sustainable into the foreseeable future. Given its geographical location, associated assets and both the current and planned commercial development on its Alexandra Park site, the club is in a financial position to elevate stakes to a level that is both attractive and financially viable to industry participants.

Again, as the premier harness venue in the North Island, it is seen a vitally important that we are able to maintain as many Friday night race meetings as possible to ensure that we continue to work towards increased levels of participation across many levels that include turnover, hospitality, viewership and industry participation.

It is the ATC's objective to provide regular racing opportunities for all grades of horses and at stake levels that enable harness ownership to once again become a viable financial investment and not just for the purist (i.e. those already converted into ownership).

As a club the ATC must ensure that whilst racing remains the main focus for the club, with all financial gains to be re-invested back into racing, that we retain a strong commercial focus that allows us to best utilise our resources and in turns maximise the financial returns we are able to re-invest back into the racing/industry.

In Auckland particularly, the entertainment market is completely saturated with everyone fighting for a finite entertainment dollar. The ATC needs to ensure that its racing programme and product that we present to the market is both entertaining and engaging and encompasses facets that meet the needs of both industry and non-industry participants.

PROGRAMMING / FIELD SELECTION POLICY

Where applicable, fields will always be selected from the top downwards, with selection preference always going to those rated R55 & faster on any given week – with the spread of horses gaining preference in any given race to be chosen (at the club's discretion) using a combination of both ratings & form.

Non-winners trot

To be programmed every standard meeting (unless there is a back-to-back with HRW in the same week) as standing starts (even when an 'all mile' night is programmed). These races to only be advertised as non-winners races with the following text to be included – *"If insufficient nominations are received, to ensure this race is run the lowest rating horses (& thereafter on lowest earnings in last 4 starts) from race 2 & 3 (at the clubs discretion) may be transferred into this race off a handicap to be determined.*

R rated trots

To be programmed as stands in an open-nominations/R40+ type format with races split as evenly as possible on ratings using a combination of distances – with a mobile FFA 1609m/1700m preferential draw based on ratings to be programmed every 3-4 meetings (approx. 1 per month) for the highest rated trot. On these meetings where a mobile FFA is programmed, the R rated races are to be programmed as a 2700m handicap. In the case of an 'all mile' night proceeding any given meeting, a R40-64 stand will be included as cover for the movement of the FFA type horse should their race not receive enough nominations to go ahead as a standalone race.

Non-winners pace

To be programmed at every standard meeting and alternate between an open draw and a preferential draw based on sex. If nominations across any given programme allow for an additional race to be programmed, these races are to be split on sex in the first instance or secondly ratings where this is not applicable.

F&M races

To be programmed at every standard meeting and alternate between a R55+ handicap stand & a R55-75 + (R76-85 with a junior concession) - with a preferential draw based on ratings to apply to the mobile and to be run over both 1609m & 2200m. A minimum of 8 acceptors is required for this race to get off the ground.

2YO races

A non-winners race to be programmed every second standard meeting with a preferential draw based on sex. A 2YO open race will be programmed every other week for up to R60 with PBD's based on winning \$ then sex. (Please note this will not apply early season and a season long 2YO programme from November to July will be drafted and passed by the committee.)

Junior drivers races

To be programmed every second meeting for 4YO+ R40-60 pacers – with a 4YO+ R40-60 included for the trotters approx. once every 2 months Selection preference will be given to horses that have not previously won a Penalty Free Drivers Race. Where possible and to balance the mix of the R40 and Faster races, this race will be selected from the top rating downwards.

R rated paces

To be programmed in an open-nominations / R40+ type format with races split as evenly as possible on ratings using a combination of distances The highest rating race to include a mix of both mobiles & handicap stands and on the weeks where a stand is programmed, to avoid confusion for trainers/owners within the programmes, all supplementary R rated races will be programmed as R40-64 (mobiles) with a separate FFA handicap pace to also be included. From June to August, this will revert to R40-70 every meeting with a R70+ stand / mobile (alternating) only included every second meeting through this period.

To cater for those horses who find themselves uncompetitive in the R65+ grade for several starts, the following programming tool has been approved as an allowable method to accommodate these horses in a lower grade (if overall nominations permit). This may be applied to those horses that have earned \$4K or less in their last 5 starts.

Please note that the above points may be changed accordingly to accommodate any 'all-mile' racing that may be included into the overall racing programme and/or any specific meetings that it may pertain to with this 1609m distance.

Amateur Racing

The decision was made to not include Amateur racing in the totalizator programme of the ATC. Alternatively, Regan has responded to the N.I Amateur Association and advised that the ATC is happy to offer regular exhibition type Amateur racing prior to the first race on any given standard meeting. The ATC is happy for the Amateur Association to do source sponsorship on their own behalf for these exhibition type races if they so choose to accept the above offer.

Conditioned Type Racing Series

Continue with the successful S.O.T.B Series in June & July and carry this through the early part to the season (August – October) to complement a strong lead-in to early Spring racing.

Monte Racing

It has been decided that there will be two defined periods across the season in which we will programme up to 10 Monte races for a stake of \$6K each. Firstly, during the winter months of June – August & secondly during the C.A.T.R period in December for the lower grade meetings that sit in between any of the Premier / IDOM19 type meetings. This will be reviewed annually.

Use of junior concessions

After receiving the feedback (see below) from HRNZ, the decisions has been made to leave the use of junior concessions at the sole discretion of the Racing Manager & will be solely applied for the movement of horses in the R55+ grade where he sees applicable (based on nominations received for any given standard meeting) to balance fields and achieve the industry defined KPI's.

Use of Junior Concessions – Feedback from HRNZ Handicappers

To avoid on-going issues with trainers/owners feeling they have unfairly been denied the use of this on any given occasion (when on another occasion a different horse was allowed the use of it), HRNZ feel these should be clearly stated in the original conditions of each race we wish to allow the use of this in i.e. R40-70 + R71-75 with junior concession.

As it stands, the special conditions cover us for the use of these concessions & the movement of horses where we deem this practicable to the overall make-up of fields for any given meeting. HRNZ have the sole discretion of setting handicaps and this is not something that the club is able to allow/deny the use of a junior concession handicapping claim in any instance.

The 'regional junior driver concession' was approved by HRNZ for the ATC to use as a tool to allow for a greater % of horses to compete for the chance of a penalty free win. This was approved on the basis that it would take away the need for 'discretionary junior concession use' which in-turn only creates further issues as these are something that without stating the use of them (and the relative rating points concession to be applied) in the conditions for any given race, only leads to further confusion amongst industry participants as the spread of nominations (and other permitting factors) are different on a week-to-week basis.

The HRNZ Handicappers also wanted to advise that while they are in support of using a '\$4k earnings in last 5 starts' programming tool for the movement of out-of-form higher rated horses into a more competitive grade where we deem applicable, this is only for the movement of horses in mobile races & not allowable for a handicapping let-up. They are confined by the regulations that state that no horse rated higher than another shall be allowed to start ahead of it in the handicaps.

Preferential Draws – Mobiles Only

A preferential draw will not be applied to the lowest rating race (at any given standard meeting) for both the trotting & pacing grades. All remaining races on the card that have a rating split of 7 points or greater will be subject to a preferential draw with discretion to be applied by the Racing Manager where he sees fit to balance the overall fairness in these races.

Use of Claiming Price

Any horse may be nominated with a claiming price attached. These horse/s will take their place in whichever race split is determined (by the club) & its R rating. This will not allow horse/s nominated with a claiming price to transfer to a lower rating split (unless it is deemed allowable and necessary for the movement of horses and/or final split of races) as determined on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the racing manager.

Please note that while these programming policies are in place, the Racing Manager needs to ensure that we are maximising our horse population and achieving industry / club defined KPI's so field selection / final programme make-up is subject to nominations received on a week-to-week basis.

STAKES DISTRIBUTION POLICY

For all R rated races R40 - 70 (outside of 'juniors only' & 'conditioned-type races' that always race for \$15K) the stakes applied to each of these races will be dependent on the spread of ratings within each race i.e. if the total amount of horses in any of these races (at final acceptance time) have a majority of 50% or more rated R55 - 70 then these races will be at \$20K. Alternatively if any of these races has a majority of 50% or more horses rated R54 & below, these races will be at \$15K. For any race to be included at \$25K on the final confirmed programme (for any standard meeting) again a majority of 50% of horses rated R70+ is needed for this to occur. During the winter period of June – August, there will be no races programmed above \$20K regardless of final race rating split (outside of any features during that period which may carry a higher stake).

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Regan is already covering off a large proportion of this with his regular (min. 1 per month) attendance at the T&W's in Pukekohe and this is proving a successful way to discuss any on-going issues / concerns anyone has in a more in-formal and less emotionally charged environment.

The implementation of inviting one trainer / driver to each RC meeting has been very well received and going ahead into the 2019/20 season, this will be increased to two invitees each month with a meeting time of 2.30pm-4.00pm preceding the Board meeting on that day.

Regan will work alongside get Kelly (Graphic Designer) to re-design the old O&T newsletter template and monitor the next 6-12 months results to see if this improves the hit-rate % of opens /click-throughs.

The Board have agreed upon the implementation of an on-going series of meetings with those owners who have numerous horses racing here at The ATC by inviting them to specific 'owners meetings' meetings on a case-by-case basis to recognise the importance these owners have in the longevity of the ATC.