

HANDICAPPING RULES AND REGULATIONS 2015

The Handicap Panel have reviewed the handicap rules and have finalised the system for 2015.

Amendments are:

[a] Age Lift

All horses on reaching their 8th year (and subsequent years) will have their handicap reduced to the middle of the grade below

[b] Delete Grade 11 and 12

[c] Alter lower bands as follows:

Grade 1 - 0-349

Grade 2 - 350-799

Grade 3 - 800-1249

[d] Open Preferred Handicaps

These races will be restricted for Grade 8 to 10 horses only

Conditioned races whereby the draw is determined by monies won may be staged provided that the conditions are advertised prior to the fixture date and they do not contravene section 8[a] of the Handicap Regulations (i.e. not more than seven consecutive grades racing together)

[e] Mercy Drop System

For horses 6YO+ (i.e. looking at horses race record from 5YO)

Minimum of 12 runs in the season

Less than £250 prize money within the season

No race wins within the season

Horses that meet the criteria will have their handicap reduced to the middle of the grade below

[d] Non-Winners Races

Grade 1 or Grade 2 races (straight only not mixed) with a purse of less than £400 for horses with no race wins within the season and less than £250 in earnings in their last five, may be offered as penalty free after 15th June

[e] Young Drivers Initiative

Horses entered with a conditional young driver that meets the below criteria will receive a reduction in handicap of one grade within the race. Horse must be entered with a driver that meets the criteria and a change of driver will only be permitted to another driver of the same status (*if no such driver is available then the horse must be scratched from the race and normal rules re payment of entry fees apply*)

Drivers to be under 25 years of age

Driver must hold a BHRC Driver C Class licence

Driver must have driven a minimum of six betting races without incurring a penalty

Horse must be Grade 2 to 7

Race to have a maximum first prize of £400

Not available for any Penalty Free races or during Penalty Free periods

[f] Mixing of Gaits

Trotters and Pacers are not permitted to race together under any circumstances

Clarification:

[a] Reducing this allowance from the tenth year to the eighth will encourage owners and trainers to keep horses in training for further years.

This allowance will be applied to horses prior to any changes to grades to ensure that no horse will move from Grade 11 or 12 and be below Grade 10.

[b] As there are very few horses in the top two bands, when racing opportunities have been afforded to them they are in Free For Alls or Preferred racing, making the top two grades were obsolete.

[c] Many horses in Grade 1 struggle to move on from the bottom as no money is brought forward from Maiden and Novice racing, therefore altering the allocation of money in the bottom bands will aid horses to move on from Grade 1 sooner.

[d] The format of Open Preferred Handicaps was intended as an alternative for Free For All races, not a format for all racing. This format will now be reserved for Grade 8 to 10 horses. Conditioned races where the draw is determined by monies won can still be staged provided that the above conditions are met.

Please note that Juvenile Stakes races (Sire Stakes, Welsh Dragon, Breeders Crown etc) are not limited by these conditions.

This condition will not apply to trotters due to the lesser pool of horses in that gait and the limited racing opportunities for them.

[e] The Mercy Drop System was introduced to aid uncompetitive horses, but without scripted criteria a portion of discretion had to be utilised. Setting the criteria in black and white aids both owners/trainers and the Handicap Panel. The system set will be applied to horses performances in 2014. The criteria may seem harsh or unreachable to some, but the panel have considered the racing patterns in all areas of racing and also the number of horses already eligible for a lift in others areas of the handicap system. The criteria for this system will be reviewed annually.

[d] The idea behind this initiative is to give opportunities for the horses in Grade 1 and 2 that are not competitive. As horses move through the reduced lower bands, the horses that remain cannot benefit from a lift, thus an initiative has been designed for them. Offering the races as Penalty Free ought to encourage Promoters to offer the races although it will obviously mean the horses will remain in the same handicap area, but the connections have the chance of that elusive race win.

[e] A new initiative for young drivers to gain race knowledge and perhaps be offered horses to drive with more experience that they would not have before. The plan is to build a system around this initiative which may be based on points and will progress to a championship for the younger drivers involved. More structure is needed to further this idea, but sponsorship and prizes (colours, trophy etc) have already been pledged. Any ideas on how to progress this initiative will be gratefully received.

[f] The BHRC, with STAGBI and Trot Britain, are working towards UET membership for the BHRC and to further the progress it must be clear that trotters and pacers do not mix.

Licence Holders are invited to give feedback/comments to the BHRC via email (bhrc.office@yahoo.co.uk) or text (07834539292).

The Handicap Panel will be discussing the option of modifying the panel to provide an even representation of regions at the Committee meeting scheduled for 7th February 2015. The Handicap System will be monitored throughout the season with a comprehensive report, findings and recommendations produced by the Panel at the end of every season. Anyone interested in this proposal is asked to contact their local Committee representative to confer and bring forward to the meeting.