



maintaining the integrity of the sport of horseracing

HANDICAPPING GUIDELINES

Effective 1 August 2019

Introduction

Flowing from the blanket domestic merit rating adjustments, the new Guidelines below are to be implemented for the new Racing Season. The purpose of this document is to assist industry participants to gain a greater understanding of the method and decision-making process used when arriving at the weight horses will be allocated by virtue of their performances in the races they compete in.

It is imperative that Handicapping principles remain fair, consistent and transparent and with the highest level of integrity, whilst ensuring compliance with:

NHA Rule 47.3.2: *A handicap, which shall be a RACE in which the weights to be carried by the HORSES are allocated by the handicapper for the purpose of equalising their chances of winning.*

All racing participants, as well as the general public, have every right to gain an understanding into the way in which horses are handicapped. Handicapping is about personal and professional judgements.

In all instances, Handicappers must be able to provide logical and reasoned explanations for their decisions made. As such, Press Releases will be issued explaining the Handicappers' assessment of all Graded, Listed and high-stakes (Non-Black Type) feature races, and any other extraordinary performances.

Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity and act as a guideline regarding the factors considered by the Handicappers whilst rating races. This document shall, however, not limit the discretion of the Handicappers, who shall be entitled to deviate from the guidelines below in order to give effect to the Rules of The National Horseracing Authority.

Race type	Guideline
Maiden Juvenile/Juvenile Plates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rated as separate crop, all Juvenile ratings are provisional and may be adjusted retrospectively.
<p>Maiden Plate Winners:</p> <p><i>The Handicappers reserve the right to rate horses higher than the above Maximums in exceptional circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>In the event of the above occurrence, the Handicappers will issue a written explanation in the form of a Press Release.</i></p>	<p>4yo + Maximum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Centre: Net 75, PE: Net 68, Kimberley: Net 60, Zimbabwe: Net 58 <p>3yo – Maximum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Centre: Net 85, PE: Net 75, Kimberley: Net 60, Zimbabwe: Net 58



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<p style="text-align: center;">Minor Plate Races</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Novice, Graduation, Progress, Allowance, Pinnacle, Conditions and Superior)</i></p>	<p>The following Guidelines will be applied as per Local Racing Operator Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winners shall be adjusted to a maximum of 6 points were applicable and placed horses shall not be adjusted upwards. • Higher ratings, where applicable, may be requested with the approval of the Handicapping Panel. Handicappers' discretion will be applied to any such requests.
<p style="text-align: center;">MR Handicap Races</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner: Minimum 2 Merit Rating points adjustment. • The maximum adjustment applicable to any handicap winner shall not be more than 8 merit rating points. This limitation is not applicable to horses carrying over-weight or weighted under sufferance.

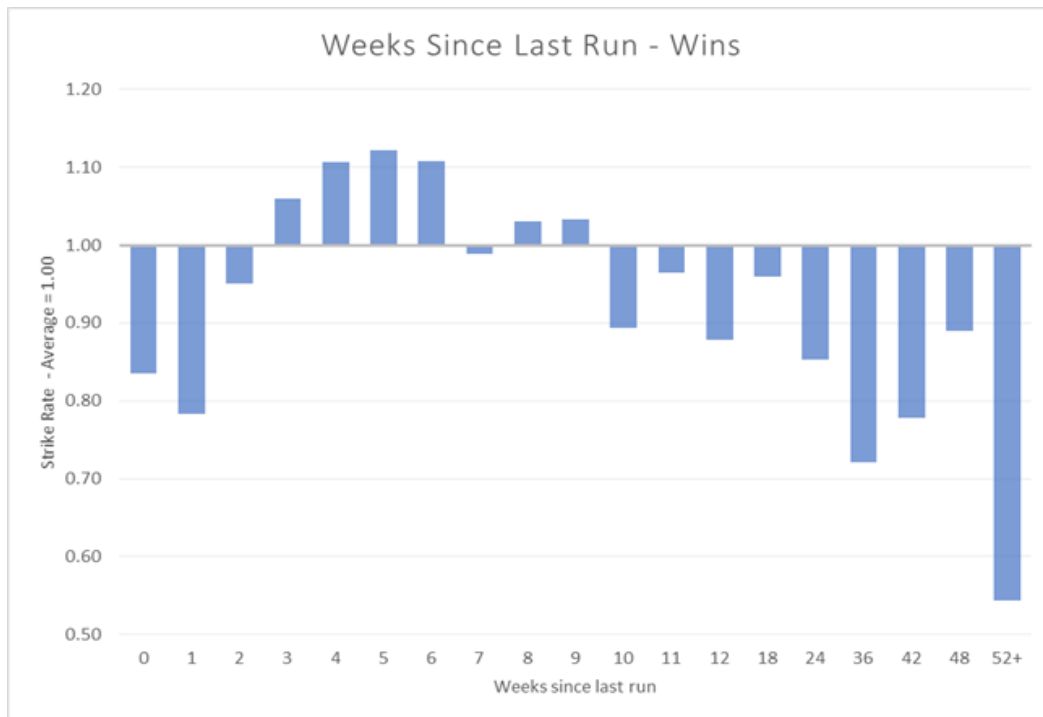
<p>Lay Off Allowance:</p> <p><i>Data analysis of the last six years (2014 – 2019, see graph below) indicates that horses returning from lay-offs exceeding 24 weeks have a progressively low or negative winning strike rate and as such the Handicapping Panel will apply the following lay off allowances</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">210 days and more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses four- years- old and older where no WFA was applicable at last start; to receive up to a 3-rating-point allowance. • Three- year-old horses to where WFA was applicable at last start; to receive up to a 5-rating-point allowance.
<p style="text-align: center;">365 days and more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses four-years-old and older where no WFA was applicable at last start; to receive up to a 5-rating-point allowance. • Three- year-old horses where WFA was applicable at last start; to receive up to a 5-rating-point allowance.



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Sand and Turf Ratings

- A horse must have had at least 3 runs on each surface (Sand/Turf) to be eligible for dual ratings, subject to handicapper's discretion.

Sustaining the Handicapping System

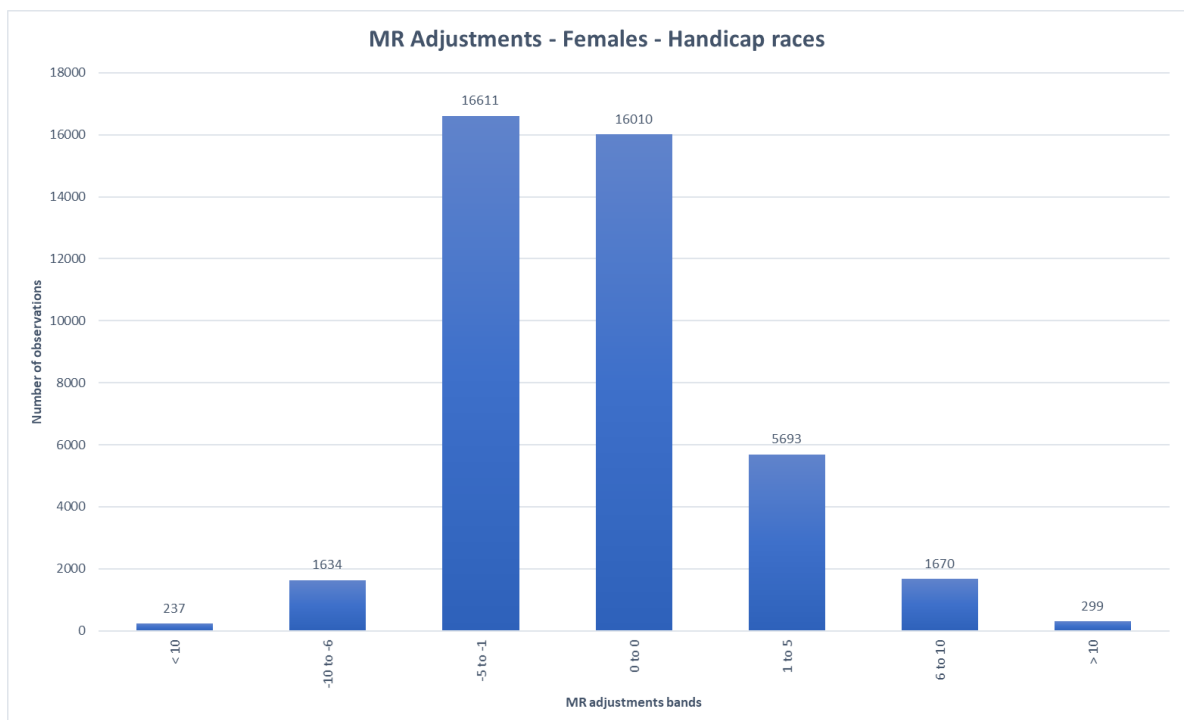
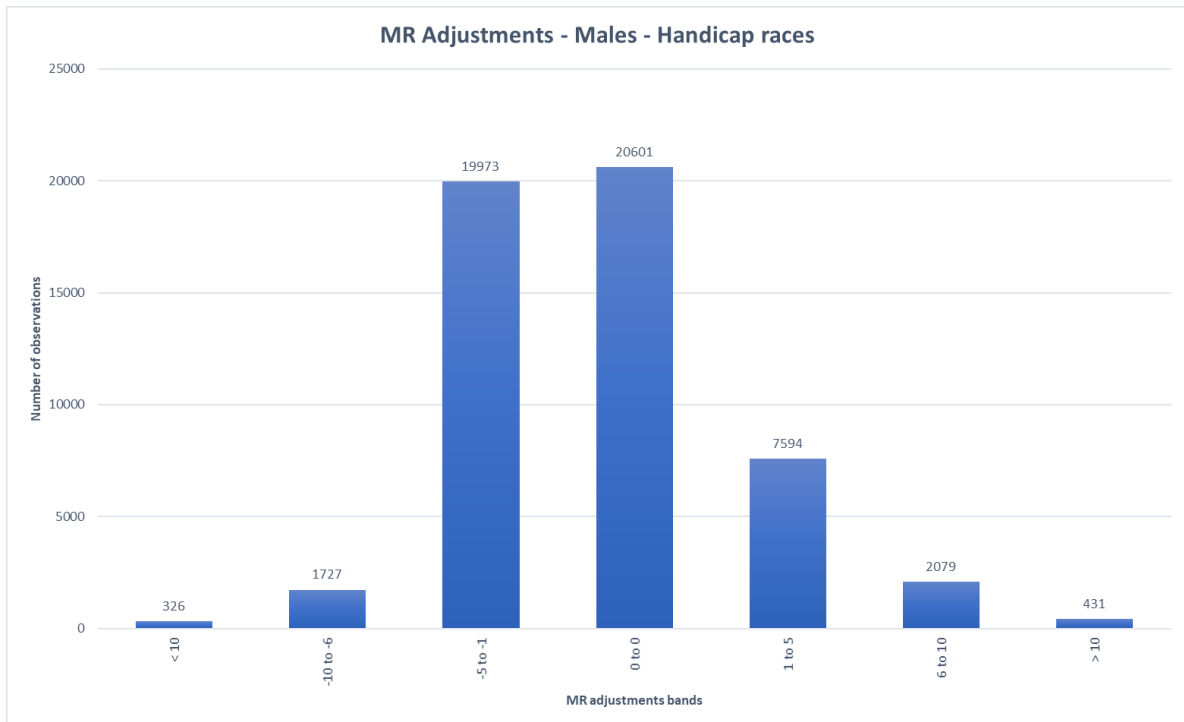
The Handicapping panel undertake to continually observe the merit rating data and monitor the National Merit Rating Profile in order to mitigate any accelerated degeneration of the Handicapping System as seen under the previous guidelines. Such maintenance (quality control) will ideally ensure a balanced Merit Rating system. The graph shown below (6 year period 2014 - 2019) shows an imbalance in the application of the MR system as almost 20 000 male horses were dropped by between -1 to -5 MR points while less than 7 600 male horses where increased between 1 to 5 MR points. This clearly highlights the "slippage" factor. A similar trend is observed with the fillies' graph (see below).



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NHA Rule 54.16 reads as follows:

54.16 ADJUDICATION OF APPEALS AGAINST MERIT RATING

- 54.16.1 *In the event of a TRAINER and/or OWNER being dissatisfied with the published adjusted merit rating of a HORSE owned or trained by such TRAINER or OWNER, then either of them may lodge a written appeal with the CHIEF EXECUTIVE within 10 DAYS of the date of the published adjusted merit rating.*
- 54.16.2 *The written appeal shall be motivated and set forth the grounds upon which such appeal is based. A fee, as determined from time to time by the CHIEF EXECUTIVE, shall accompany the written appeal.*
- 54.16.3 *On receipt of the written appeal, the CHIEF EXECUTIVE shall forthwith forward the written appeal to the handicappers with a request that their response be furnished to him within 24 hours.*
- 54.16.4 *On receipt of the written response from the handicappers, CHIEF EXECUTIVE shall convene an Appeal Panel of not less than three persons to adjudicate upon the written appeal. The Appeal Panel shall reach a decision within 48 hours of being convened and shall notify the CHIEF EXECUTIVE of their decision. The CHIEF EXECUTIVE shall then act thereon and shall be entitled to issue a directive as provided for in RULE 54.2.5.3. If the Appeal Panel is of the view that the appeal was unwarranted, they may declare the fee forfeited.*
- 54.16.5 *The CHIEF EXECUTIVE shall be entitled to delegate his powers in terms of RULE 54.16.3 and RULE 54.16.4 to any person so authorised by him.*

Fee in terms of Clause 10.3 of the NHA Fees as published on our website.

10.3	Fee for lodging an Appeal against Merit Ratings	R4 630
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