



## **RATINGS BASED HANDICAPPING SYSTEM (RBHS)**

### **Principles of the Ratings System**

The Ratings Based Handicapping System (RBHS) is inspired by the highly regarded thoroughbred model introduced in 2006. This system prioritizes fairness, consistency, transparency, and integrity in all aspects of handicapping.

It is essential for all racing participants and the public to understand how horses are handicapped. Therefore, the system must be user-friendly, significantly improving upon the current model.

The RBHS aims to enhance the racing product, leading to better wagering returns and fairer prizemoney opportunities for all horses, regardless of their ability.

### **Ratings Matrix**

Horses start their careers with a rating of 50 points, as outlined in the following matrix which will take effect on 1 January 2025:

<b>Stakemoney Range (\$)</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th+</b>
0 – 5,000	3	0	0	0	0	-1*
5,001 – 8,000	4	0	0	0	0	-1*
8,001 – 11,000	5	1	0	0	0	-1*
11,001 – 16,000	6	1	0	0	0	-1*
16,001 – 26,000	7	2	1	0	0	-1*
26,001 – 50,000	8	2	1	0	0	-1*
50,001+	9	3	2	0	0	0*

### **Dropbacks**

- Dropbacks apply only to horses finishing 6th or worse in the last four horses of the race.
- In races with a total purse of up to \$16,000, horses rated up to 70 drop back 1 point, while those rated over 70 drop back 2 points.
- In races from \$16,000 to \$50,000, horses rated 56-69 drop back 1 point, and those rated 70 or more drop back 2 points.
- No dropbacks apply in races with a total purse of \$50,000 or more.



## Fundamentals of the RBHS

1. **Simplicity:** The RBHS is designed for easy understanding by all stakeholders, especially owners, trainers, and punters. Movements within the system occur along a single line, avoiding the complexity of the current classification system.
2. **Accuracy:** A horse's rating must accurately reflect its overall performance profile.
3. **Uniformity:** The harness racing benchmark values should closely align with the thoroughbred RBHS, aiding punters in evaluating horse ability and fostering familiarity with the system.
4. **Equality:** All horses will progress through the system via a consistent allocation of designated rating points.
5. **Real-Time Adjustments:** Ratings will change automatically after each start, ensuring a horse's ability and current form are immediately reflected in its rating points.

## Objectives

### Competitive Racing and Wagering

By allowing horses to progress and drop back in ratings, the RBHS will create more competitive racing and better wagering opportunities. This means dominant horses will face tougher fields sooner, while struggling horses can find more suitable competition.

### Improved Utilization of the Population

With about 50% of the standardbred crop not racing, the RBHS will facilitate better use of these horses by enabling them to win at lower levels, encouraging connections of lower-ability horses to race with that increasing field sizes and population.

### Encourage Longevity

Real-time handicapping will enable horses to drop ratings until they find a competitive level, allowing more horses to race effectively for longer periods.

## Functionality

### Programming

Ratings Based Programming (RBP) will follow the RBHS framework. It includes a careful number of races programmed for 2YO and 3YO maidens and a number of lifetime races. This programming encourages maiden races and specific conditions to support horse placement.



### **Barrier Draws**

To function effectively, a portion of races should have a preferential barrier draw, especially in mobile start events. This allows trainers to place horses advantageously based on their ratings and draws.

### **Ratings Transition**

#### **Transition to Ratings**

Effective January 1, 2025, WA horses will transition directly to the RBHS. On December 1, the current 50 ratings floor for WA horses will be removed.

### **Other Ratings Considerations**

#### **Concession Drivers**

A Novice Concession Driver, defined as having less than five years of licensing, will result in a reduction of a horse's National Rating based on the driver's lifetime wins in a specific race:

- 5 Rating points for 0 – 100 wins
- 3 Rating points for 101 – 250 wins
- 5 Rating points for Metro races with 0 – 50 Metro wins in metropolitan races.

The listing of concession drivers and their career wins and allocated point discount is available on Harnessweb.

#### **Caps on Ratings Points**

- No horse will be rated below 30 points or above 120 points.
- All horses having their first start will commence at 50 points.

#### **Winning at Less Than 40**

Horses that win when less than 40, will jump to at least 40 when winning:

- A horse with a NR33 will jump to NR40 for winning a race with 5 points to the winner
- A horse with a NR39 will jump to NR44 when winning a race with 5 points to the winner.

#### **Two-Year-Old Transition**

- Two-year-olds receive a half-point discount upon turning three.
- Two-year-olds that finish the season with a rating over 50 points will have their rating halved over 50 and rounded up.

Example:

A two-year-old on 60 points will return as a 55 at three.



### **Events Conducted as a Series**

- Starters in a series accrue ratings points as usual, but points from series races do not apply to other series races.
- Points accrued in non-series races apply to the series unless specified otherwise.

### **Mare's Concession**

A concession of 5 rating points will be offered in designated races which is designed to increase opportunities for fillies and mares.

### **Claiming Races**

No points are accrued in claiming races, which are ratings-free.

### **Handicaps in Standing Starts**

Handicaps can be based on rating brackets, with each 5-point increase corresponding to a 10-meter handicap.

### **Horse Movements**

The RBHS simplifies eligibility for races, both locally and interstate, making it easier to determine ratings for international horses.

### **Field Selection Points and Balloting**

Balloting procedures and field selection points will remain unchanged under the RBHS.

### **Westbred Bonuses**

Existing Westbred bonuses will not change.

### **Racing in Advance of Rating**

Horses can race above their rating but will not have their rating reduced for performances in such races.

### **Discretion**

Discretion in allocating ratings points has been intentionally excluded, reflecting the industry's previous negative experiences with discretionary practices.



### **Not Eligible for Ratings Points**

A horse will not earn or lose ratings points if it:

- Does not finish the race
- Is declared a non-starter
- Is disqualified after the all clear
- Competes in a ratings-exempt or claiming race
- Competes in a novice driver-only race.

### **Dead Heats**

In the event of a dead heat, ratings points will be totalled and apportioned equally, rounded down to whole numbers.

### **New Zealand Imports**

New Zealand imports will be rated based on their lifetime performances, with a floor of 50 upon importation unless prior performances in Australia warrant a lower rating.