

National Ratings Based Handicap System

Introduction.

What is a handicap rating?

In essence a handicap rating is a numeric representation of a horse's form and, therefore, its perceived level of ability at any given time.

This system is designed to help provide a fluid racing environment so horses can compete against those of similar ability. It is loosely based on the NZ system, where it was introduced due to a dwindling horse population which led to their old system causing many horses to become uncompetitive (that was a very similar system to our current one and we have the same problem with horse numbers).

The principles of the National Ratings Based Handicap System (NRBHS) are that it is fair, consistent and transparent and provides for the highest levels of integrity at all times. It is also extremely user-friendly and offers the opportunity to provide a more appealing racing product.

Under the NRBHS, a horse will receive an automatic numeric rating based on its finishing position after every race. Therefore, an owner, trainer or any interested party would be able to easily update a horse's rating using the simple matrix that follows below, which details the ratings points applicable to each finishing position within a particular prizemoney band.

The rating of each horse should be published on the website and on the race card next to the horse's name.

The minimum possible rating would be 10 and the maximum possible rating would be 120.

This system would favour preferred racing but for races with a wide spread in the ratings one rating point would equate to one yard.

The following table shows how to convert the current BHRC system to the NRBHS.

BHRC Handicap grade	NRBHS equivalent
Maiden	18
Novice	26
Grade 1	34
Grade 2	42
Grade 3	50
Grade 4	58
Grade 5	66
Grade 6	74
Grade 7	82
Grade 8	90
Grade 9	98
Grade 10	106

The following tables show the Ratings Points Matrix and the Place money penalties on a sliding scale.

Win Points Matrix

Prizemoney	1 st Racehorse	1 st 2 yr. Old approx40 %	1 st 3 yr. Old approx70 %	10 yrs. & older 75%	2 nd & 3 rd	4 th & 5 th with money	4 th & 5 th no money	6 th to 10 th	11 th & 12 th
Up to £300	+8	+3	+6	+6	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£301-£600	+10	+4	+7	+8	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£601-£1000	+12	+5	+8	+9	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£1001-£1500	+14	+6	+10	+10	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£1501-£2500	+16	+7	+11	+12	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£2501-£5000	+20	+8	+14	+15	*	*	-1	-2	-3
£5001 or more	+24	+9	+16	+18	*	*	-1	-2	-3

* See table below for place money penalties

Place money Matrix (can be for 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th place)

	Racehorse	2 year old 40%	3 year old 70%	10 year old & older 75%
£0-£100	0	0	0	0
£101-£200	+1	0	0	+1
£201-£350	+2	0	+1	+2
£351-£500	+3	+1	+1	+2
£501-£700	+4	+1	+2	+3
£701-£900	+5	+2	+3	+4
£901-£1200	+6	+2	+4	+5
£1201-£1500	+7	+3	+5	+5
£1501 +	+8	+3	+6	+6

General information.

1. **Maidens/Qualifiers** enter the system on a rating of 18 points
2. **2 year olds** enter on a rating of 14 points
3. **3 year olds** shall not begin the season rated below 18 points
4. All BHRC horses will be imported to this system using the conversion chart above.
5. A non-winning horse will carry the letter **M** next to its rating number.
6. Any points are added to or subtracted from a horses existing rating. See the Win Points Matrix table above for the win points relevant to each race.
7. Penalise **placed horses** only for place money in excess of £100, see the Place money Matrix above.
8. The lowest rating will be 10 points
9. The highest rating will be 120 points.
10. One point equals one yard for handicapping purposes.
11. Once a horse achieves **one win** it cannot drop below a rating of 18
12. Once a horse achieves **two wins** it cannot drop below a rating of 26
13. **2 year olds** get penalised 40% of the total points accumulated in 2 year old only races.

14. **3 year olds** get penalised 70% of the total points accumulated in 3 year old only races.
15. **10 year olds and older** get penalised 75% of the total points accumulated.
16. **10 year olds** will receive a deduction of ten points and for each birthday thereafter.
17. **Claiming race winners** would receive no penalty but non-placed would lose points in line with the matrix.
18. **Dead heaters.** The relevant points would be totalled and divided by the number of dead heaters and rounded down to a round number.
19. **Mares** can receive up to a FIVE point allowance at the promotor's discretion if advertised in advance.
20. **Mares only races** with a first prize of £450 or less get a 50% penalty reduction
21. **Veteran horse only races** (ten years and older) with a first prize of £300 or less get a 50% penalty reduction.
22. **Non-winners races** with a first prize of £300 or less get a 50% penalty reduction limited to non-winners in the last 6 or more starts.
23. Downward **handicap freeze** for 5 races, if a horse is found not running on their merits.
24. **C-class drivers**
 - a) C class drivers only races. For four year and older horses rated 26 or higher. Horses are entitled to one c-class win penalty free in their career (to be marked with a * next to the horses rating).
 - b) C class drivers will get a concession point's lift in races with a first prize of £1000 or less and only on a 4 year old or older horse rated 26 or higher. 16 points for 0 to 3 wins, 8 points for 4 to 7 wins. A horses rating cannot be dropped below 26 irrespective of the drivers points claim.
 - c) When a C-class driver wins the final permissible concession claim race at a meeting where the driver has further driving engagements, the driver will be permitted to claim the relevant concession for the remainder of the meeting and any other meeting on the same day.
 - d) When a C-class driver claiming a concession is unable to fulfil a race engagement he/she shall only be replaced by a driver who is eligible to claim a concession of equal or greater rating points.
25. **Preferred races** can only be ran with a spread of 30 points or less, (unless clearly advertised by the promotor in advance of the entries being taken). If a spread of more than 30 points occurs the race shall be ran as a handicap, using the top rated horse in the event to form the yardage bands.
26. **Race clubs and promoters** who wish to run a handicap shall take the yardage bands from the top horse entered in that particular event in increments of ten yards e.g. if the top horse entered is rated 120 the bands would be 120,110,100,90,80 etc. but if the top horse entered was 87 the yardage bands would be 87,77 67,57,47 etc.
27. Horses have to achieve a rating of at least 32 to compete in handicap heat and finals.
28. **Race clubs or promoters** who run one or more heat and final events are to advertise, that the runners for the top handicap, are being taken from the top of the ratings and working downward to find the advertised amount of entries. With the exception being if a FFA or OPH race is ran. If a promotor does run a FFA/OPH alongside a heat and final then it is at the promoters discretion whether that race is comprised of horses that choose to enter that specific event or to take the top rated X number of horses to make up that race. The heat and final will then be comprised of X number of horses taken from the top of the handicap ratings downward. (X is the advertised number of horses required to make up that event).

29. **Finals** ran with a qualifying heat on the same day will be classed as one race when calculating the penalty to be applied. The win matrix will be used to calculate the penalty for a horse that wins either a heat or final or both but the place matrix will be used for a horse that places in a heat or final or both. E.g. a horse winning £100 for 2nd in a heat and £2000 for 1st in the final will be penalised for a total of £2100 using the win matrix. But a horse winning £100 for 2nd in a heat and £500 for 2nd in the final would be penalised for a total of £600 using the place matrix.
30. **Race clubs and promoters** will have the ability to programme races based on conditions e.g. non-winners, winners of one race, non-winner last five, unplaced last 5 starts etc.
31. **Heats** having a final run on the same day, with the final carrying a first prize of £1001 or more **must be framed** in correct ratings order from the top rated horse to the bottom. No O/T/D splits.
32. **Splitting for Owner/Trainer/Driver** It is recommended under this system that all races be framed around the ratings of the horses entered rather than the O/T/D of the horses as this will enable the ratings system to work at its optimum level in terms of providing a fair handicapping system based on a horse's ability and current form. However it is recognised that this is not always possible in some circumstances when promoters are framing a card. To ensure as much fairness as possible in this situation a promoter should ensure where splits for O/T/D do occur that they retain the essence of the handicap.
33. **The best horses race for the most money.** It is recommended promoters use a tiered system when calculating total prize money per race. E.g. for a regular meeting the highest rated race would carry a purse of at least 50% more than the lowest rated race on the card.
34. **Purse distribution.** No more than 70% of the total race purse will go to the winner.
35. **Draws for starting position.** Promoters are encouraged to develop a track grid for preferred races. Races can be drawn using the following.
1. A random ballot.
 2. Preferential using the horses rating.
 3. On the horses winnings last 5 starts.
36. **Non BHRC horses.**
- a) Horses coming from **W&BC** would need to provide a detailed lifetime history of all races and monies won to get a rating. See the accompanying chart. A horse that has previously raced with the BHRC cannot return on a lower rating than that which they left with, for a minimum of 2 racing seasons. A horse who has raced as Grade B or higher with W&BC can enter this system with a rating no lower than 34.
 - b) Horses coming from the **IHRA** would need to provide a detailed lifetime history of all races and monies won to get a rating. See the accompanying chart. If the horse in question has previously held a BHRC handicap grade, this would be converted to NRBHS using the conversion table and any subsequent runs from the date of their last BHRC race would be factored into calculating its current rating. The exchange rate on January 1st of the current year will be used for currency conversions.
 - c) Horses coming from **USA /Canada** would need to provide a detailed lifetime history of all races and monies won to get a rating. See the accompanying chart. Horses that have not won a race will remain a maiden. The exchange rate on January 1st of the current year will be used for currency conversions.

IHRA and Wales & Borders conversion chart (place penalties are the same as the earlier chart)

Prizemoney	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th & 5 th with prizemoney	4 th & 5 th no prizemoney	6 th - Last
£0-£50	+2	*	*	*	-1	-2
£51-£125	+4	*	*	*	-1	-2
£126-£200	+6	*	*	*	-1	-2
£201-£300	+8	*	*	*	-1	-2
£301-£600	+10	*	*	*	-1	-2
£601-£1000	+12	*	*	*	-1	-2
£1001-£1500	+14	*	*	*	-1	-2
£1501-£2500	+16	*	*	*	-1	-2
£2501-£5000	+20	*	*	*	-1	-2
£5001 or more	+24	*	*	*	-1	-2

Prize money bands for USA/Canadian imports based on overseas earnings

Lifetime earnings	Rating
£500 to £5,000	40 points
£5,001 to £10,000	50 points
£10,001 to £20,000	60 points
£20,001 to £30,000	70 points
£30,001 to £40,000	80 points
£40,001 to £50,000	90 points
£50,001 or more	100 points