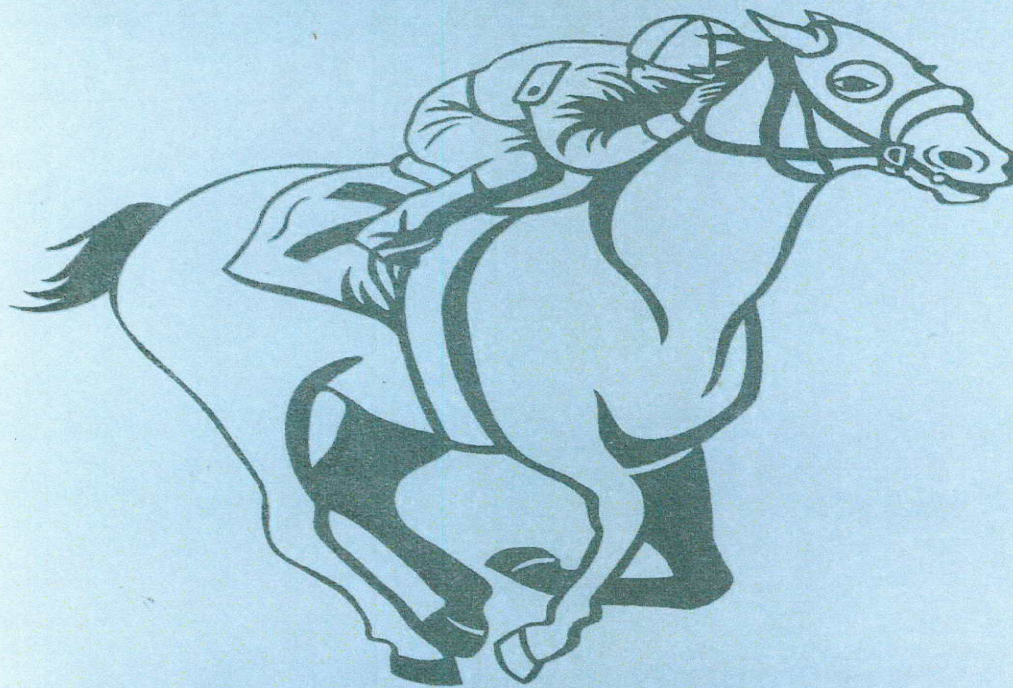


HORSE RACING
HANDICAPPING
GUIDELINES



Published by the

National Horseracing Committee

*Belize, Central America
2000*

Handicapping Guidelines

Definitions:

Birthday: The birthday of every horse is January 1 of the year in which it was born.

Upgraded Native Horse: A horse whose bloodlines are at least 50% thoroughbred.

Thoroughbred: A horse whose bloodlines are 100% thoroughbred.

Debut Races:

All untried two-year old horses will debut in an “Untried Race for Two Year Olds” whose distance will be 4 furlongs and for which the following assigned weights will be set: Colts – 110 lbs., Fillies – 105 lbs. The “Untried Races for Two Year Olds” will be held in September of each calendar year. This race will be promoted as the “Derby”.

If possible, an “Untried Race for Two Year Olds” will be held separately for Thoroughbreds and for Upgraded Native Horses. If not possible and Thoroughbreds and Upgraded Native Horses have to debut together in the same race, the Thoroughbreds will carry 4 lbs. for the Upgraded Native Horses.

Native two year olds not making, “Upgraded” status will debut in a “Catch Weight” race of a distance of 3 Furlongs specified for such native horses.

Horses, three years and older (inclusive of Thoroughbred or Native, Imported or Local) and two year olds (Thoroughbred and Upgraded) not having debuted in the “Untried Races for Two Year Olds” making a debut race will be subject to classification and weight handicap as assigned by the handicap committee.

If an imported horse has raced abroad and is only debuting locally, it will automatically be classified in the “A” Class at the top weight specified for the distance of the debut race.

After completing a debut race all horses will then be further classified and handicapped based on their respective performance in the debut race.

Class Races:

Classes are designated alphabetically in descending order from A through H, with the A-Class being the highest performance class. The following maximum distance limitations are specified for each Class: H Class – 3; G Class - 3 Furlongs; F Class – 4 Furlongs; E Class – 4 Furlongs; D Class – 5 Furlongs; C Class – 6 Furlongs; B Class- 8 Furlongs; A Class – 10 Furlongs.

“Open” races may be offered in which horses from two consecutive classes will be allowed to compete. Open races are to be used as a handicapping tool to facilitate the running of races in instances where the possibility of a class race being scratched because of insufficient horses exists.

For example, if there are only two horses competing in the A Class and there is a strong possibility that one of those horses will not make it to the race, then the Handicap Committee can place on the racing card an Open A and B Class race wherein B Class horses have the option if they so desire to enter and run with the A Class horse. The A Class horses will be handicapped as normal and the B Class horses would enter at the minimum weight of 100 lbs.

The performance of the horses in open races will not necessarily directly affect the overall classification and handicapping of the participating horses. For example, the B Class horses do not automatically become A Class horses having competed with A Class horses in an open race. However, the performance of the horses can be considered by the handicap committee in their deliberations; for example in the B Class handicapping.

Other Races

In instances where an individual or a company may want to sponsor a specific race, e.g. an Invitational or a Challenge, with specific conditions imposed, such as eligibility requirements and weight allotments, the sponsor must seek and obtain approval of the proposed conditions from the National Handicap Committee. The performance of the horses participating in such a race can be considered by the Handicap Committee in future handicapping and classification deliberations.

Age, Weight, and Distance

The following table provides the allowed relationship between age, weight, and distance in the handicapping deliberations.

	3F	4F	5F	6F	7F	8F	10F
Two Year Old	114	114	112	110	106	102	-
Three Year Old	130	130	129	128	125	122	122
Four Year Old & Older	130	130	130	130	126	126	126

Other Guidelines and Procedures

Classification and handicapping of horses should be based on the racing performance of the horses. In this task, the level of competing horses, the distance over which the race is run, the time in which the race is run, the track conditions, the weight carried, and the placement of the horse in relation to the other horses in the race must be taken into account. Weight adjustments among horses and movement between classes are the tools then used to obtain a fair and just competitive environment for the horses participating in a particular race.

Weight Adjustments:

Weights adjustments should take place within the weight, age and distance limitations contained in the table above.

If a horse defeats another horse, the weight difference between the two horses should be adjusted by allotting the winning horse a weight handicap of two pounds (2 lbs.) per horse length of winning distance over the other horse with the following limiting conditions.

Firstly, if a horse defeats another horse by greater than five (5) lengths, a maximum handicap weight of ten (10) pounds is allotted in adjusting the initial weight difference between the two horses.

Secondly, a maximum handicap weight of sixteen (16) pounds can be allotted to the initial weight difference between the first horse and the other horses including the horse placing last in the race.

Thirdly, if a horse is determined by the handicapping committee to have not performed in a manner to allow the horse to be handicapped then that horse will be allowed to return at the same weight assigned for the race in which it was determined to not be competitive. This applies to horses in situations wherein they do not start or are significantly delayed in the gate.

Example:

Horse	In. Wt.	Place	Lgths	Inc	New Weight
A	110	1	4	8	118
B	117	2	6	10	117
C	119	3	12	10	111

Class Adjustments:

If a horse, after being handicapped by weight allotments as described above, wins three consecutive races within a specific class, that winning horse will be required to ascent in class; e.g. Class C to Class B.

A horse is automatically eligible to move up one class if he has won the last outing in the class that he wants to ascent from. This ascension is the choice of the owner/trainer.

Horses moving up in class in this manner will enter the new class with a minimum entry weight of 100 lbs.

If a horse is clearly superior for the class in which it is running, as indicated by its performance in areas such as distance by which the horse is beating the other horses in the class, and the time run for the distance and track conditions, that horse will be required to ascent in class. The class to which it will be promoted and the handicap weight allotted will be assigned at that time by the Handicap Committee.

Similarly, if a horse is clearly inferior for the class in which it is running then that horse will be required to descend in class. Again the class to which the horse will descend and the handicap weight allotted will be assigned at that time by the Handicap Committee. This is the only way a horse will be allowed to descend in class considering that a basic tenet of the handicapping exercise is to promote upward mobility of the horses through the classes.

If an owner/trainer desires to enter a horse in a class above that for which it is classified and handicapped and it's not automatically eligible having won in its last outing, a request in writing with proper justification must be made by the owner or trainer to the Handicap Committee. The Handicap Committee after deliberation will determine if the request will be granted and if granted will assign a weight allotment to the horse in the new class to which permission was granted for ascension. This request must be made at least two weeks before the race day for which the horses are being handicapped.

In all cases above the weight, age and distance limitations mentioned above will apply.

Injured, Sick or Retired Horses

Horses returning to racing after a period of lay off due to injury, sickness or interim retirement will have to be passed as "fit to run" by a veterinarian appointed by the Stewards or in the absence of a veterinarian by the Stewards themselves. Horses will be returned to racing at the handicap weight and class allotted by the Handicap Committee based on the horses last racing performance and classification status.

Acknowledgements

These Handicapping Guidelines is the product of dedicated and unselfish commitment of time and effort by the Handicap Committee of the National Horseracing Committee. Special thanks must be given to the older members of the Committee whose vast experience over the years have made this publication an invaluable tool for handicapping in our present system of horseracing in Belize.