

Race Planning News



18th January 2024 (repeat from 05.01.24)

Many of you will be aware of a number of changes to race planning matters sent by the BHA in their December communication. We felt that it would be helpful to remind trainers of all of these changes and have collated them below.

Programme Book Reverting to Four Versions

2024 will see the Programme Book reverting to four versions (previously three). These will have period dates as follows:

- Programme Book 1: 1 January – 22 March
- Programme Book 2: 23 March – 23 June
- Programme Book 3: 24 June – 15 September
- Programme Book 4: 16 September – 31 December

This is intended to deliver a more consistent volume of races per book and align publication with key dates in the Racing Calendar.

Premier Racedays

2024 will see the introduction of Premier Racedays. These fixtures will be run for at least £250k on the Flat (£225k Sunday) and £200K over Jumps (£180k Sunday). Higher Minimum Values will apply at Premier Racedays, where, in addition, no Flat race will be worth less than £20,000 and no Jump race less than £15,000.

Jump Programme

1. Race volume reduction

As part of plans to improve competitiveness of Jump racing in 2024, 300 races overall will be removed across the whole year, with c.60 of those taken out of PB1.

2. Pattern Changes – Jump Review

The announced changes to the Pattern as part of the Jump Pattern's Review continue to take shape through this season, with the following taking effect in PB1:

- Dipper (Cheltenham) and Altcar (Haydock) Novices' Chases have been removed from the programme

- Grade 2 Towton Novice Chase (Wetherby) now takes place a month earlier (13th Jan) and will be run at 2m3f.
- Peter Marsh Chase (Haydock) is now a Premier Handicap (20th Jan)
- Grade 2 Lightning Novice Chase now takes place at Lingfield (21st Jan)
- Grade 2 International Hurdle now takes place on Cheltenham Trials day (27th Jan)

3. 74-95 Handicaps

In order to meet demand and the current shape of horse population, a small number of 74-95 Novices' Limited Handicap Hurdles have been programmed.

4. National Hunt Flat Races

A reminder that changes have been made to the Rules of Racing which mean that:

- A horse may only run in three NHF races but may have a fourth run in a Listed Race or a Pattern Race and a fifth run in a Pattern Race during the same season as the fourth run.
- 6YOs will only be eligible to run in NHF races from 1st Jan until the end of that Jump season.

Flat Programme

1. Divisions

A trial will take place in PB1 on the All-Weather of dividing at 16 declarations as opposed to 18. This will see divisions at Chelmsford City, Kempton Park, Lingfield Park, Newcastle, Southwell and Wolverhampton instigated at 16+ declarations, with two divisions of 8+, from 1 January – 22 March inclusive. Where a race has 27+ declarations and is the only race eligible to divide, the race will be divided three times.

2. Trial removal of +1/+2 in Class 5 & 6 Flat Handicaps

Following the permanent removal of +1/+2 in Class 5 Jump handicaps, a trial of its removal is being applied to Class 5 & 6 Flat Handicaps in order to assess its impact on the distribution of runners and to support competitiveness.

3. Sunday Evening Floodlits

Six Sunday Evening Floodlit fixtures have been scheduled. These cards will be run for at least £145,000, made up of Class 3-6 races, with races at Class 4 and below run at least three times the Minimum Value. These fixtures will be programmed to finish at 20:30, with 7 programmed races and the ability to divide to 8.

4. Removal of March Flat Break

The March Flat Code break that had previously fallen the week after Cheltenham will not take place in 2024 and five Floodlit fixtures will be scheduled this week Monday-Friday. The first two of those fixtures (Monday 18 and Tuesday 19) will be run as rider restricted fixtures.

5. AW Championships

There will no longer be Fast-Track Qualifiers, but horses will still have to have run a minimum of three times during the AW season; normal elimination rules will apply in the finals. Two trial days will be run with races mirroring Finals Day. These will be staged at Newcastle on 1 January and Lingfield Park on 1 March.

6. Re-ordering races at the declaration stage

A trial will be staged at All-Weather fixtures between January and March which will allow races to be re-ordered at the declaration stage with the aim of maximising revenue streams. No race will be moved by more than 1 hour 10 minutes from its originally published time. The trial will only take place at meetings with no Class 1 or Class 2 races.

Overall

1. Division Thresholds

The 2024 maximum prize money threshold for races dividing will be:

- £15,000 at Core Flat and Jump fixtures (other than NHF races which will be £6,000)
- £15,000 at Premier Jump fixtures
- £20,000 at Premier Flat fixtures

Racecourses can opt out of dividing races to £15,000 at Core fixtures only, on a per Programme Book basis. Should they do this then the maximum prize money threshold for races dividing will be £12,000 (Remains at £6,000 for Jump NHF).

2. Blank Races

A number of blank races will be left in the programme, which will be updated nearer to the race date. Race details will be confirmed approximately two weeks ahead of the fixture. A list of these races will be published on NRAS.

3. Cancellation of Races

Any Class 4-6 Handicap on the Flat or 4-5 Handicap over Jumps that receives three or fewer declarations will be cancelled, subject to a minimum of at least 6 races remaining on the card.

4. Early Closing Races

Where an early closing race is abandoned at the original venue and is subsequently re-scheduled and transferred to a new venue, other than in exceptional circumstances, entries will be deleted, and the race will be re-opened. If such a race is a handicap, weights will be re-published based on those new entries, ensuring that all runners are running off their latest mark. If the race is re-scheduled at the same venue, it may be re-opened if it is considered there is a significant delay between the new and original date.

5th January 2024

Renew Internet Access with France Galop

Trainers are now able to re-register with France Galop ahead of the 2024 season. In order to do this, trainers will need to log in to the France Galop website www.france-galop.com

Click on Entraineur/Coach and then click on "Renouvellement d'Access internet/Internet Access Renewal". Trainers will need to check your details and then pay by debit/credit card.

While completing this it is recommended to check any possible French Classic entries for 2024 in your stable are up to date with all their vaccinations as the French Classics close in mid-February. Under the new rules issued by France-Galop they are allowed to refuse an entry if the vaccinations are not on their system.
