



21st May 2024

CHANGES TO THE GRADING AND PENALTY SYSTEM FOR THE 2024 DRAGON TV PONY RACING RACECOURSE SERIES

Following discussions with the handicapper, Phil Smith, we have decided to stay with a grading and penalty structure for 2024 with a few alterations to try to make the Series more competitive. In addition, we will introduce the concept of ratings linked to the grading structure.

REASONS FOR ALTERATIONS

1. The increasing amount of overweight put up by the riders through the season. Over the recent season just over 30% of all riders carried overweight and after 1st August, just under 40% of all riders put up overweight. This is having an adverse effect on results.
2. The inadequacy of the penalty system as it stands. Handicaps, including penalties, purport to give each pony an equal chance in the races, but the fact that just two ponies won 11 of the 29 races in 2023 indicates that the aim is not being fully achieved at present. The idea of grading and penalties is a good one and has made races more competitive, but the current system could now be improved further to make even more competitive races.
3. These two issues affect each other, so a solution to the propensity to carry overweight clearly means that the bottom and top weights should be looked at so this will a) reduce overweight, but also b) raise the weights carried by the better ponies. It would also be clearer and more effective to have regular increases in weights between grades.
4. The current system is inflexible as you can have one pony at the top of a Grade rated as much as 4lbs more than a pony at the bottom of that Grade and yet they will both carry the same weight.

CHANGES TO GRADING SYSTEM AND PENALTIES IN 2024

A revised grading system will be introduced for both classes within the Series. In the 138cm classification, at the lowest category in E Grade, the minimum weight to be carried will be increased to 7st 6lbs from 7st 2lbs. The weights will increase by regular 4lb blocks and a new Grade of A* will be introduced. In the 148cm category, the lowest weight in E Grade remains the same as otherwise the top weight may be too high but the weights should increase by 5lb blocks. Again, a new level of A* should be introduced.

In the 138cm category, penalties for wins should be 3lbs up to a maximum of three wins. Therefore, the highest weight that can be carried is 9st 7lbs. In the 148cm category, penalties will be 3lbs per win up to a maximum of three wins so that the highest weight that can be carried will be 10st 9lbs.

The effect is that in the 138cm category, the lowest weight to be carried goes up from 7st2lbs to 7st6lbs. while the highest weight that can be carried has gone up from 8st9lbs. to 9st7lbs. In the 148cm category the lowest weight stays the same but the highest weight that can be carried goes up from 10st 2lbs to 10st 9lbs.

The weights will look like this:

138cm

A* & 3 penalty	9st 7lbs
A* & 2 penalty	9st 4lbs
A* & 1 penalty	9st 1lb
Grade A*	8st 12lbs
Grade A	8st 8lbs
Grade B	8st 4lbs
Grade C	8st 0lbs
Grade D	7st 10lbs
Grade E	7st 6lbs

148cm

A* & 3 penalty	10st 9lbs
A* & 2 penalty	10st 6lbs
A* & 1 penalty	10st 3lbs
Grade A*	10st 0lbs
Grade A	9st 9lbs
Grade B	9st 4lbs
Grade C	8st 13lbs
Grade D	8st 8lbs
Grade E	8st 3lbs

We must bear in mind that 3 penalties on top of an A* pony is going to be very rare.

To check your rating for the start of the season please refer to the Pony Racing Authority website <https://www.ponyracingauthority.co.uk/>

We are looking forward to getting the series started and would like to take the opportunity to thank our sponsors Dragon TV, RaceTech and Zilco. Its great that these wonderful sponsors continue to support the series and we would ask that you thank them as competitors when you meet them throughout the series.

