

C0 class races to be restricted to 4yo+ from Nov 1

Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) will restrict all C0 class races in Victoria from November 1 to four-year-old and older pacers.

The programming adjustment follows analysis of open-age C0 races in the 2017-18 season, which revealed:

- From 162 races run, 74 comprised one or more 3YO starters (45.68%)
- Of those 74 races, 52 were won by a 3YO (70.27%)
- A 3YO started favourite in 62 of those 74 races (83.78%), winning on 42 occasions (67.74%)
- Of those 42 wins, 36 were odds-on favourites (85.71%), while 30 were \$1.40 or shorter (71.43%)

“The data clearly showed that the practice of three-year-old pacers competing in, and more often than not, winning open-age C0 races is detrimental to our racing product from a wagering perspective,” HRV General Manager of Racing Stephen Bell said.

“It also shows that it is difficult for a four-year-old and older horse to win a C0 race, which obviously makes it harder for owners and trainers to keep that horse on the racetrack.”

The change means that a three-year-old pacer having won two three-year-old races – thus being assessed as a C0/3C2 – will now be required to have its first open-age start in a C1 race.

Under the Australian Handicapping Rules, a horse only incurs one career penalty for a win. Therefore a C0/3C2 pacer will become a C1/3C3 pacer after winning its first C1 class race.

Such horse will remain eligible to again contest a C1 class race, now as a C1/3C3 pacer.

Effectively, a three-year-old pacer will not be adversely affected, as it will still be able to win four races and be assessed C2/3C4, now in most cases by winning two three-year-old races and two C1 class races, whereas in previous seasons it will have won two three-year-old races, a C0 class race and a C1 class race.

The analysis also highlighted that 22 open-age C0 only races were deleted, 18 of which contained one or more three-year-old nomination.

“This amendment will provide more competitive racing in the four-year-old and older C0 races and will enhance the prospects of four-year-old horses winning their \$7000 Vicbred First Win Bonus,” Mr Bell said.

“It will also assist five-year-old and older horses winning their \$3500 Vicbred First Win Bonus.”

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