

BRITISH HORSERACING AUTHORITY
FUNDAMENTAL TURF MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

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A series of Fundamental Turf Management Principles in relation to fixture planning was outlined in the inaugural “Optimum Use of the Turf” Report in the mid 90’s. These principles still apply today.

- 1.21 Racecourses must allow sufficient time each year for essential maintenance work (ie levelling of take offs and landings, fence refurbishment, drainage, re-seeding of worn areas etc). This is likely to be 7-8 weeks in the growing period between mid April and late September/early October for Jump courses and a month over the same period for Flat courses. [NB these dates can vary slightly in relation to geographical location around Great Britain].**
- 1.22 As a general principle it is better for racecourses to be allocated fixtures more frequently at the time of year best suited to their climate, soil and irrigation equipment rather than expecting the course to race over a longer timescale but during periods of markedly different weather conditions.**
- 1.23 Notwithstanding 1.22 above, it is essential that courses staging Jumps fixtures regularly during the Summer take into account the cumulative wear and tear on the track by late Summer/early Autumn. This cumulative effect should be managed by either a gap of 4+ weeks in high Summer and/or fewer fixtures in August/September.**
- 1.24 Where a course is expected to produce optimum racing ground in the Summer and early Autumn, it should avoid racing regularly through the Winter. Long term equine injury rates tend to be highest in the Summer months (based on 5 year data).**
- 1.25 Jump courses should aim to have a 14 day break between fixtures when racing during the October to March period. Racecourses therefore need to take the current year’s October – December fixture pattern into account when they consider their January – March dates for the following year.**
- 1.26 Courses with Flat turf fixtures during March and April should stage their first two meetings at least 14 days apart to allow some recovery and reduce early season damage to the surface, which**

could otherwise have a detrimental knock on effect on several subsequent meetings.

- 1.27 **Dual Purpose courses with Flat fixtures throughout the Summer must have the ability to irrigate the track for each code of racing to achieve the going aims of BHAGI 3.2 Para 2. Otherwise, there is an increased likelihood of early Autumn Jump fixtures being run on very fast ground.**
- 1.28 **Jump Racecourses with only a few fixtures in late Spring, Summer, early Autumn combined should consider transferring these “shoulder” meetings to specialist Summer Jumping – based venues. Furthermore, Jump racecourses without watering systems (ie Exeter and Taunton) should not be allocated fixtures at a time when Firm or Hard ground is probable (ie late Spring, Summer and early Autumn). The same applies to Flat racecourses (ie Bath) without watering systems in relation to Hard ground.**
- 1.29 **Caution and careful planning needs to be exercised regarding the staging of NHF races in December, January and February. These races generally have large field sizes and at this time of year can cause considerable damage across the width of the track which will affect racing later in the year.**
- 1.30 **Courses staging fixtures on Sundays, Bank Holidays, or just after Bank Holidays are advised to clearly define their track manpower provision to ensure a) the course is in the appropriate condition for the meeting in question; b) the course is given the best possible chance (through treading in, irrigation etc) to be in a similar condition for the next fixture.**

Racecourses which, for whatever reason, are unable to meet the Fundamental Principles (1.21 to 1.30) are strongly encouraged to review their fixture pattern, track manpower, working practices and equipment. It is also essential that they investigate course widening and maximise the use of dolling in/out as well as dedicated “treading in” teams.

BHA Racecourse Department – January 2012