



These Principles have been compiled by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) to promote turf management best practice and seek to ensure turf racecourses race at times best suited to their individual site and track(s).

It is vital from a participant safety and welfare perspective that turf racecourses do not stage more fixtures than their track might be able to cope with.

The Principles are reviewed annually, as necessary and are sent to all licensed Racecourse Managing Executives before BHA starts the following year's fixture compilation process.

All racecourses also receive from BHA a detailed 5 year statistical summary of their fixtures staged and abandoned, average field sizes and the "going" produced. This summary also includes key recommendations from the Authority's four Inspectors of Courses on how (if necessary) each course might alter its pattern of fixtures to help maximise the likelihood of ideal track conditions on race day.

The Principles, together with the all-course data highlighted above, is consolidated in one comprehensive annual report – the Optimum Use of the Turf Report – compiled by the BHA Racecourse Department. All members of the Fixtures Allocation Committee receive that report at the outset of the annual fixture list process.

## 1.2 FUNDAMENTAL TURF MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

A series of Fundamental Turf Management Principles in relation to fixture planning has previously been developed by BHA and reorganised by racecourses. 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 In general, 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 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 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 recovery and reduce early season damage to the surface. This 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. 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.
- 1.29 Caution needs to be exercised regarding the staging of NHF races in December, January and February. These races generally have large field sizes and 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 drolling in/out as well as dedicated “treading in” teams.

BHA Racecourse Department – May 2014

