

2024 Fixture List

Headline developments

1. Premier Racedays

Enhancing the sport's premier racing product is based on using the best of British racing to drive interest levels in the sport. It will involve investing in Premier Racedays to support the quality of British racing in the face of ever-increasing competition from overseas, whilst also seeking to ensure that a consistently attractive product is provided to customers.

If successful, this will lead to additional revenues which cascade through the sport to all levels.

The key components of this approach include:

- Creating Premier Racedays – making it easier for the fan to identify what is the best of the sport's 1,500 fixtures
- Investing in Premier Racing – making it consistently attractive for customers
- Providing the Premier Racedays with the space to breathe – ensuring the most is made of our premium product and that it is not crowded out by other fixtures
- Developing a promotional plan for Premier Racing to maximise its appeal to customers

Premier Racedays have been created to assist customers identify racing's premium events with new criteria for these fixtures including the quality of racing, prize money levels and terrestrial television coverage.

The appetite of racecourses for Premier Racedays, and the associated higher funding, has been significant. The 2024 Fixture List includes 170 Premier Racedays, staged across 38 different racecourses. If racecourses had simply replicated this year's behaviour in 2024, around 115 fixtures would have met the Premier Raceday criteria, illustrating the extent of change and investment this initiative has driven.

Creating two-tiers including 170 Premier Racedays will help to point customers towards racing's headline meetings. By investing in those meetings, creating more space around them and presenting them in new and innovative ways, Premier Racedays can grow customer interest in the sport which, for many, may extend to the rest of the fixture list as their interest grows and develops.

Premier Racedays will be supported by significantly enhanced promotion, broadcast innovation and fan engagement, with proposals being developed through the Commercial Committee, with more detail to be published in the coming months.

The criteria for Premier Racedays is as follows:

Saturday & midweek afternoon fixtures:

- At least four races at Class 3 and above, including at least:
 - Two Class 1 races; or,
 - One Class 1 and one Class 2 race, with one of those worth £100k+; or,
 - Two Class 2 races with at least one worth £100k+.
- Minimum total prize money requirement of £250k Flat and £200k Jump.
- Minimum prize money for any race at a Premier Raceday of £20k Flat and £15k Jump.
- Must have terrestrial television coverage.

Sunday & midweek evening fixtures:

- At least four races at Class 3 and above, of which at least one race must be Class 1 or one Class 2 race worth £75,000.
- Minimum total prize money requirement of £225k Flat and £180k Jump.

- Minimum prize money for any race at a Premier Raceday of £20k Flat and £15k Jump.
- Not require terrestrial television coverage in 2024 or 2025 for Sundays, however fixtures with ITV coverage will receive preferential status. Midweek evening fixtures however will require ITV coverage.

Richard Wayman, Chief Operating Officer for the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), said:

“The concept of a sport investing in its shop window, to make a product which is more recognisable and easier to sell to new and existing audiences, is well established. It leads to trickle-down effects for the whole sport through the greater engagement and an increased fan base, as has been shown in examples such as the Premier League.

“An objective for Premier Racedays is that they can make it easier for the public to identify our premium events. Investing in these so they are as attractive as possible to customers will help racing to compete with other sports for public attention, interest and betting activity. Over time, new fans are then more likely to engage with the sport’s Core fixtures.

“We have been delighted with the appetite shown by racecourses for staging Premier Fixtures. 170 is far more than we expected, and this will already, on its own, make a tangible difference to the prize money and quality on show at our higher profile meetings in 2024.”

Premier Racedays by code

Code	Premier Fixtures	
Flat	100	59%
Jump	70	41%

Premier Racedays by day of the week

Day	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Premier Fixtures	1	3	7	18	23	89	29

2. Prize money

The introduction of a new set of elevated Minimum Values will be applied at Premier Racedays, with the objective of encouraging owners to continue to train and run horses here in Great Britain.

Premier Racedays will benefit from a total of £3.8m in funding from the Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB), with £1.9m being paid directly from the HBLB, and £1.9m being transferred from the Core Fixture Ratecard.

As a result, Premier Racedays on a Saturday or midweek afternoon fixtures must offer minimum prize money of £250k on the Flat or £200k over Jumps. On Sundays and midweek evenings this changes to £225k on the Flat and £180k over Jumps.

Moreover, no race at a Premier Raceday can be worth less than £20k on the Flat and £15k over Jumps. The benefits of this will be felt by many participants as the race values of lower-class races staged at Premier Racedays will generally be noticeably greater than in the past.

At the same time, Minimum Values at Core fixtures will remain at 2023 levels. In addition, as soon as financial benefits are accrued because of these developments, Core fixtures will be the priority when it comes to distributing any additional industry funds.

Richard Wayman added:

“Without investment in the top end of our sport, British racing faces a continued exodus of owners and its best racing talent to our international competitors.

“Through significant funding into the top echelon of the sport we hope to create a regular drumbeat of quality racing, showcasing our finest talent and better rewarding those who own, train and run their horses here.

“At first this has required some movement of funds from the Core Fixture List into the Premier product, albeit minimum values for Core Fixtures will remain unchanged.

“However, many Premier Racedays will include supporting races at lower levels and these races will be run for at least £20,000 on the Flat and £15,000 over Jumps, this means that the benefits will be felt across the sport.”

3. The protected window

On Saturdays, to allow more space for Premier Racedays and to provide a better spread of fixtures across the day, limits will be applied to the number of fixtures that can take place in a two-hour protected window between 2pm and 4pm.

Major racing days already play a significant role in attracting customers to the sport. The top 20% of fixtures generate 77% of raceday (non-betting) revenues, whilst betting companies report that a new customer is seven times more likely to place their first bet on racing on a Saturday or during a major festival.

It is projected that whilst this may impact attendances at the meetings that change times, spreading racing would generate increased revenues through additional levy and media rights payments, as well as helping racing to better tell its stories and build the profile of star performers to new and existing audiences.

89 Premier Racedays will take place on Saturday afternoons, with 33 Saturdays limited to three fixtures being staged between 2pm and 4pm. On the remaining 19 Saturdays, four fixtures will be staged in the two-hour slot.

41 fixtures will move as a result of these changes, with, in effect, 36 starting later in the afternoon and 5 fixtures starting in the morning. There is also a new fixture at Chelmsford City which is being run on the morning of the Grand National.

With thanks to the HBLB, courses will receive additional prize money funding to support the particular fixtures involved.

Richard Wayman said:

“Customers tell us that our most important days and our best fixtures are, occasionally, lost amongst the sheer volume of racing that we stage, especially on a Saturday afternoon. This does not allow the sport to easily tell its stories and showcase the quality racing that is likely to attract and retain fans, which will in turn have a beneficial impact on interest levels.

“Moreover, betting data is clear that staging more than three fixtures at the same time adds little to the total amount bet, with betting turnover spread more thinly across fixtures.

“It is acknowledged that for those courses who have had to move their fixtures by a couple of hours, there might be an impact in terms of attendances. We expect that, in the longer term, this will be offset by the benefits of creating a more easily identifiable, high-end product on the busiest days of the year. However, we’ll measure the impact of this on the sport’s various customers over the course of the next two years and learn more about this element of the strategy.”

4. Sunday racing

Two key opportunities were identified to make much better use of Sundays. Firstly, to stage better quality racing by creating new Premier Racedays on Sunday afternoons. Secondly, to introduce a new betting session on Sunday evenings during the winter. This is a time of day when betting companies report that betting activity is strong, including on racing staged overseas.

As a result, a significantly stronger Sunday Fixture List has been created, with Premier Racedays staged on 29 Sundays during the year.

A pilot of six Sunday evening fixtures will be staged in the first quarter of 2024, with prize money for each fixture, which will comprise races at Class 3 and below, totalling at least £145k. There will also be additional payments for jockeys and grooms servicing these meetings.

The Commercial Committee agreed to the following terms for the six fixtures:

- Seven programmed races, with the ability for races to divide, up to a maximum of eight
- £145k+ prize money per fixture
- Programmes to be made up of Class 3-6 races
- Races at Class 4 and below run at least 3x the relevant minimum value
- Races at Class 3 run for no less than a lower-class race on the card
- Additional payments for jockeys and racing grooms
- Last race scheduled for 8:30pm
- Additional HBLB funding to support racecourse investment

Date	Venue
7 January	Wolverhampton
21 January	Chelmsford City
4 February	Newcastle
18 February	Kempton Park
3 March	Newcastle
10 March	Southwell

A full review of the pilot will be undertaken once the six fixtures have been staged, including the impact on those servicing the fixtures.

Richard Wayman said:

“The appetite for racing on Sundays, in particular for hosting Premier Fixtures on these days, has significantly exceeded expectations and will mean that, generally speaking, Sundays become a much stronger day of racing in Britain from 2024.

“This represents a significant opportunity for the sport to grow engagement and establish itself more firmly as a fixture over the course of the full sporting weekend.

“We recognise that hosting racing on a Sunday evening will not be viable for some parts of the sport’s workforce. Staging this trial will help us to establish the value of Sunday evening racing and whether it generates sufficient amounts to make it sustainable for those involved in servicing it.

“However, we are also aware that this is not only about money and will ensure that the impact on those who attend these fixtures is considered before any decision is made on whether to extend the trial.”

5. More competitive racing

With field sizes in 2022 at their lowest for over 30 years for both Flat and Jump racing, improving the competitiveness of races was viewed as a key intervention to retain existing customers and support new customer growth.

As part of the Fixture Policy, the Board has approved two approaches towards improving competitiveness, comprising changes to fixture and race volume, and several additional interventions designed to support race competitiveness.

To support improved field sizes and more competitive racing, volume changes include a reduction of 300 Jump races and the movement of Flat races from the summer to the autumn and spring.

Delivery of these changes involves a reduction of 20 Jump fixtures, with the total Fixture List comprising 1,468 fixtures (2023: 1,488).

In addition, the maximum number of programmed races at fixtures by month have been adjusted to deliver the target outcomes. Race volumes will be managed through the year to deliver the intended outcomes.

Other interventions to support race competitiveness will be introduced during 2024 and include:

- A blank race will be left in the race programmes at around 100 non-Premier meetings, with an actual race programmed at 10 to 14 days before the race based on latest data and trainer input.
- Races with eight or fewer entries to be reopened at entry stage for two additional hours.
- Class 4 and below handicaps with three or fewer declarations will be cancelled.
- Racecourses can apply to transfer a Turf fixture to the All-Weather when the going is expected to be predominantly firm or quicker.
- When rescheduling major races at an alternative venue, entries for the replacement race will be taken from scratch.
- Supporting more race divisions by increasing the prize money threshold at which races can divide to £15,000. In addition, at Flat Premier Fixtures, a race run at £20,000 (the minimum permitted at such fixtures) would be eligible for division.
- A trial to be staged in 2024 that will reduce the divisions threshold for All-Weather races from 1 January to the beginning of the Turf season (23 March) from 18 to 16 declarations.

Richard Wayman commented:

“It is essential that the Core product, comprising around 88% of the fixture list, is shaped in a way that maximises its appeal to existing customers.

“Moreover, whilst Premier Racedays are viewed as a way to encourage engagement with new customers – both on and off-course – it is the aim that once new customers develop an interest in racing, their engagement will extend across the wider sport.

“Without doubt, the most significant development in the Core segment of the sport is in the form of changes in race volume across the year, driven by data-driven target field sizes, which should deliver a much more consistently competitive and appealing product for the sport’s customers.”

Note: The 2024 Fixture List comprises six Sunday Series and six Racing League fixtures, with all 12 fixtures meeting the Premier Fixture criteria.

NOTE: Supporting participant wellbeing

The sport's ability to meet the changing preferences of its customers – including for racing to be staged at more audience-friendly times – is challenged by the capacity of an already constrained workforce. The Industry People Board, funded by HBLB and the Racing Foundation, has been created to lead the development of racing's long-term plan for its workforce, a key part of the wider Industry Strategy work.

Ahead of the Industry People Board developing its strategy over the coming months, several measures have been included within the Fixture List to assist the demands on those servicing a sport that is scheduled to race on 363 days in 2024.

They include:

Flat

Period	Recommendation
May to September	Use a combination of the following measures on 18 days across the five months: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A day with no Flat racing• A geographic Flat break (i.e., a day with no Flat racing in the north or, alternatively, in the south)• A day when all Flat meetings would be rider-restricted (would have to be on a day with no more than 2 Flat meetings)
November	Retain the 8-day Flat break, to be scheduled following the international football break in November.

Please note: The 5-day Flat break in March has been scaled back to a blank Sunday followed by two days of rider restricted meetings, with changes made that seek to provide riders with some assistance through the core of the Flat season between May and September

Jump

Period	Recommendation
April	Retain 6-day end-of-season break
Summer	Extend the Summer Jumping break to 19-days (late-July to mid-August)

Richard Wayman concluded:

“We already ask a lot of our workforce, and everyone involved in the industry strategy was keen that, as part of this work, a properly resourced and funded body was introduced to look in great detail at the issues around staff wellbeing, retention, recruitment and development. The newly formed Industry People Board has been given this responsibility.

In the meantime, we have taken a number of interim steps to introduce breaks in the racing programme which will allow some of our workforce and participants time to take a breather.”