

2026 Fixture list

Headline measures

This document provides more information about the [fixture list](#) and funding package, including an overview of some of the key measures that will be introduced or expanded for 2026.

The measures set out below have been approved by the BHA Board following agreement by the Commercial Committee, which includes representatives from the sport's main stakeholder bodies.

1. Boosting the supply and retention of horses in Britain

Increasing the number of horses being bred, owned, trained and raced in Britain, with a particular focus on developmental pathways and boosting the number of high-quality horses.

A range of measures will be introduced in 2026 with the overarching aim of growing the number of horses – and particularly high-quality horses – bred, owned, trained and raced in Britain.

This extends across the horse population, with a focus on developmental races that are crucial to horses in the early stages of their career. There's also an emphasis on increasing the number of high-quality horses – those with a performance figure of 90+ on the Flat and 135+ over Jumps. This is supported by an additional £4.4m funding from the Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB).

The supply and retention of horses in Britain are inextricably linked to greater and sustained investment, both through enhanced prize money and the use of incentivisation schemes. This is crucial to maintaining our global relevance on the Flat and primary status over Jumps.

The focus on quality is particularly significant, as it is the top horses and headline events that have the greatest potential to attract more people to watch and engage with the sport at all levels. Central to this is ensuring Britain remains an attractive proposition for both domestic and overseas connections. It is via this route that British racing can achieve and sustain greater investment and interest in the sport, which in time the whole industry can benefit from at all levels.

Work around the sport's supply chain is being supported by stakeholder representatives from across the sport, including a cross-industry group looking at the development and retention of high-quality horses. This work will inevitably take time and patience, but the following initiatives are being introduced in 2026 as a first phase of this longer-term programme of improvements:

(i) Enhanced prize money for developmental races

£3.2m will be invested in prize money for developmental races in 2026, which will help support wider and ongoing efforts to address the funding disparity with Ireland and France and make Britain a more attractive location for horses at all levels to be based.

The developmental race programme comprises novice and maiden races on the Flat and over Jumps and makes up around 20% of the race programme. These are the races in which most horses begin their careers and gain crucial early experience. They therefore play a central role in supporting the domestic breeding market and the racing of young talent in Britain.

On the Flat, this means increasing minimum values so that no Open novice or maiden race is run for less than £10k (£12k for stayers) and no Restricted novice or maiden for less than £8k (£10k for stayers). The additional prize money for staying races (two-year olds at 7f+ and three-year-olds at 10f+) provides an added incentive for owners to keep a diverse range of horses in training.

Over Jumps, a total of approximately 50 novice and beginners' chases will be programmed in 2026, with minimum values at £20k (Class 2) and £15k Class 3. The same values will apply to novice and maiden hurdles. Class 4 races will be permitted with a minimum value of £10k.

(ii) Increasing Class 1 minimum values on the Flat

A further rise in Flat Black Type minimum values will help support the longer-term investment strategy to continually strengthen and refine Britain's Pattern races.

This seeks to increase the retention and campaigning of high-quality horses in Britain and encourage better horses (i.e. below Group 1 level) from around the world to compete here. Raising the minimum values can help maintain the quality of the races and increase the chances of horses remaining in Britain for racing and breeding purposes.

With the boost to minimum values, and taken alongside wider changes elsewhere in the programme, Class 1 races on the Flat are expected to offer more than £2m in additional prize money next year.

Race Type	2025 (Core)	2025 (Premier)	2026 (All)
Group 1 3yo+	£250,000	£250,000	£375,000
Group 2 3yo+	£100,000	£125,000	£165,000
Group 3 3yo+	£60,000	£85,000	£95,000
Listed 3yo+	£37,000	£55,000	£60,000

Group 1 2yo	£200,000	£200,000	£275,000
Group 2 2yo	£80,000	£100,000	£125,000
Group 3 2yo	£40,000	£65,000	£75,000
Listed 2yo	£25,500	£40,000	£45,000

These changes will be delivered through increased funding from the HBLB and racecourse executive contributions, alongside changes to the use of money from supplementary fees in Flat Pattern races. Until now, these fees have been added to the prize money of the specific race concerned, but for 2026 the payments will be used to help fund general increases across the wider Flat Black Type programme.

The following table provides a comparison of Class 1 minimum values in Ireland, France and Britain, with the latter factoring in the changes that will come into effect in 2026:

Race Type	2025 IRE	2025 FR	2026 GB
Group 1 3yo+	€300,000	€250,000	£375,000
Group 2 3yo+	€120,000	€130,000	£165,000
Group 3 3yo+	€60,000	€80,000	£95,000
Listed 3yo+	€45,000	€48,000	£60,000

Group 1 2yo	€300,000	€250,000	£275,000
Group 2 2yo	€120,000	€130,000	£125,000
Group 3 2yo	€50,000	€80,000	£75,000
Listed 2yo	€37,500	€48,000	£45,000

An additional change to HBLB funding as provided by the ratecard will see support up to £1.5m for Group 1 3yo+ races – having previously been capped at £1m. This recognises the importance of the most elite races and their role in supporting the global standing of British racing.

(iii) Extra investment in midsummer flagship races

This will see a minimum of £200k added to the prize money of each of the four flagship races detailed below, with the aim of growing their appeal as domestic and international targets and retaining and strengthening Britain's global relevance:

- Al Basti Dubai July Cup, Newmarket – 6f
- King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, Ascot – 12f
- Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes, Goodwood – 1m
- Juddmonte International Stakes, York – 10f

The period from mid-July to mid-August has been identified due to it featuring a series of all-aged Group 1 races at some of the country's biggest tracks at a time where ground conditions should be optimal.

The aim is for each of these midsummer races to be run for internationally competitive prize money values, providing an increasingly compelling proposition for overseas connections and enhancing fan engagement on and off the racecourse. Ascot Racecourse has already [announced](#) that the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes will be run for £2m in 2026, making it Britain's richest race.

Investment in and increased promotion of the four flagship races also has the potential to incentivise international trainers to send a larger team of horses to compete in supporting Black Type contests at these fixtures – a trend experienced in other racing jurisdictions that can help generate additional interest in and revenue for the sport.

(iv) Bonus series for point-to-point horses

A new bonus scheme will be introduced for point-to-point horses, with the aim of strengthening that sphere as a development ground for future stars and enhance the pipeline of quality horses progressing to race under Rules.

The Maiden Series, which will be supported by £250k of funding, will take place at selected Point to Point Authority (PPA) tracks during the 25/26 season. It will comprise 15 maiden races for 4- and 5-year-old horses, with the winners of those races qualifying for a bonus when they win their first developmental (novice / maiden) race over hurdles or fences under Rules.

(v) Extension of the Elite Mares' Scheme

The Elite NH Mares Scheme will be enhanced in 2026 with £200k of additional investment to increase grants for mares and widen access to mid-to-upper-tier-priced British NH stallions, potentially increasing the quality of their progeny.

The [scheme](#) rewards owners of those mares proven on the racecourse or at stud by providing subsidised, and in some instances free, nominations to eligible British-based NH stallions.

As part of wider initiatives such as changes to the race programme, the scheme has helped contribute to a marked increase in the number of elite Jump broodmares in Britain, from around 150 a decade ago to 300 at present.

2. A refined number of Premier Racedays

A more selective approach to Premier Racedays and clearly defined Flat and Jump seasons to make it easier for customers to identify and engage with British racing's elite occasions.

There will be 52 Premier Racedays in 2026, down from 162 in 2025. The full list is available [here](#). These have been selected according to various criteria, including the quality of the races and the prize money on offer, as well as customer data such as attendances and betting returns.

Premier Racedays by day of the week and code

Flat		Jump		Total	
Mon		Mon		Mon	
Tues	2	Tues	1	Tues	3
Weds	3	Weds	1	Weds	4
Thurs	5	Thurs	2	Thurs	7
Fri	6	Fri	2	Fri	8
Sat	13	Sat	14	Sat	27
Sun	1	Sun	2	Sun	3
	30		22		52

With the reduced number of Premier Racedays, there will also be a more targeted approach to funding. During the two-year trial, all races at Premier Racedays – regardless of their status – were required to meet minimum prize money thresholds.

For 2026, the separate Premier and Core ratecards (the primary funding mechanism) will return to a single ratecard, with individual races rather than entire fixtures identified for additional prize money support. This will include channelling funds more efficiently towards higher-profile races, particularly those broadcast on ITV Racing:

- All Class 1 races (Flat and Jump) will be required to meet the current minimum values required of Premier Racedays, whether they are staged at a Premier fixture or elsewhere. Additional incentives will be in place for these races to be run in excess of these values, and, as referenced [above](#), Flat minimum values will be increased in 2026.
- To protect the value of the highest profile Class 2 races, adjustments in the ratecard will support those run for £75k upwards.

The 2026 fixture list will more clearly define the different seasons and codes. Flat Premier Racedays will be staged between the 2,000 Guineas meeting at Newmarket in May and British Champions Day at Ascot in October. Jump Premier Racedays will take place between the November meeting at Cheltenham and the Jump Finale at Sandown in April.

Premier Racedays were introduced as part of a package of measures to help grow engagement with the sport through delivering a more attractive, clearly defined and identifiable elite product – making it easier for customers to enjoy the best of British racing.

The reduced number of Premier Racedays in 2026 provides a bridge between the ongoing two-year trial of innovations and the approach that will follow in 2027 and beyond. This will be informed by evidence from the sport's major consumer research, known as Project Beacon, and work already underway into how Britain's best fixtures can be packaged and presented in the future.

It builds on the progress made towards supporting the races in the sport's shop window and recognises that the trial has delivered some clear benefits. Total prize money in 2024 at Premier Racedays was £7.3m higher than at the equivalent fixtures in 2023, with a further £400k increase in the first half of 2025. This investment has helped boost quality and competitiveness.

It is however accepted that the number of fixtures badged as 'Premier Racedays' was greater than expected, with 170 in 2024 and 162 in 2025. This had a positive effect in terms of increased prize money, but the number of fixtures has not helped with making the sport's most elite offering more identifiable for fans. There have also been challenges around defining the wider customer proposition, with innovations in the experience not having materialised as was hoped.

The newly available customer research data is telling us that there is a clear role for a premium tier of races, but that this needs to be refined so that it is easier for potential and casual fans to identify and engage with racing's biggest events. More work is now needed to fully understand how the research can support informed, evidence-based decisions for 2027 and beyond.

3. Creating space around Saturday's major races

A more targeted approach to showcasing the best quality racing on a Saturday afternoon, with 10-minute gaps prior to the biggest races to help better engage fans.

The concept of decongesting and providing a better spread of racing across Saturday afternoons – a day where the sport benefits from free-to-air ITV Racing coverage – continues to have merit.

The betting data shows positive signs, with turnover increasing when there is a sufficient lead time ahead of races – and in particular major races. But this needs to be balanced against the impact on racecourse attendances at those fixtures that moved out of their more traditional afternoon slot as part of the trial of a protected window.

For 2026, the approach will be more targeted than the protected window used during the two-year trial, with gaps of at least 10 minutes introduced prior to all major races that take place within the Saturday afternoon slot.

Fixtures that were moved out of the protected window in 2024 and 2025 will return to their previous start times, but the number of fixtures taking place will be limited to four on most Saturdays and gaps between races may be extended to up to 45 minutes in very small number of cases.

This will help ensure breathing space around Saturday's major races – supporting broadcasters in showcasing the quality of racing. Major races have been defined as races that take place during the sport's biggest festivals (for example the Grand National, the Derby and Royal Ascot), Group or Grade 1 races, contests worth £150k+ or the highest betting turnover race of the day from the previous year.

There will be a small number of exceptions to the four-fixture cap during Saturday afternoons, including on Easter Saturday and other days when historically racecourses have attracted large crowds. On these Saturdays, the 10-minute gap may not always apply, but every effort will be made to build in more time before the major races.

Programme protection payments, allocated to racecourses that were required to move out of their traditional slots in 2024 and 2025 will be redistributed within the wider prize money budget, including incentivising the delivery of target prize money values in core and grassroots racing.

4. Maintaining the progress made in strengthening Sunday racing

Continuing to support increased ITV coverage, an enhanced quality of racing and more appealing customer proposition on Sunday afternoons.

The two-year trial of innovations in the fixture list has seen a significant strengthening of Sundays, with 24 Premier Racedays taking place in 2025 that have helped to deliver increased prize money levels. Prior these changes, just five fixtures would have met the minimum prize money criteria required for Premier status.

Sundays will remain a focus in 2026. Data from the trial shows that the greatest benefit lies with aligning the increased quality of racing with ITV coverage. Securing this coverage supports the best use of our higher quality races and horses, as well as the most effective use of prize money and central funds on Sundays.

As is currently the case, Sunday fixtures will have a scheduled last race time of no later than 6pm. However, fixtures on ITV can apply to race up to 6.45pm, provided they expect ITV coverage on races taking place after 6pm.

In addition, racecourses can apply for the last race at a non-televised fixture to take place up to 6.45pm, but only if the total prize money for the fixture is at least £275,000.

5. More competitive racing throughout the programme

Providing sufficient opportunities for horses and connections across the whole race programme and delivering a consistently appealing product for the sport's customers

While total race volume will remain largely unchanged in 2026 with 1,458 fixtures (2025: 1,460), further tactical adjustments will be made to boost field sizes. Apart from during periods of extended dry or wet weather, overall competitiveness has been an area of improvement so far during the two-year trial.

On the Flat, this has involved moving races into the autumn period from elsewhere, with the effect of delivering more consistent field sizes across the year. Over Jumps, 300 races were removed from the programme and, while there remain periods where ground conditions have impacted overall competitiveness, 2024 performed consistently above the three-year average.

As referenced [above](#), with the separate Premier and Core ratecards returning to a single ratecard, and the [cessation](#) of programme protection payments for racecourses that were in place in 2024 and 2025, there has been scope in 2026 to redistribute and better target funding to invest in all areas of the programme and across each of the different Classes.

It is recognised that at a time when racing's revenue is under pressure, the funding changes and the investment racecourses will make in 2026 to boost certain areas – particularly in relation to developmental races across both codes and higher Class 1 minimum values – may have an impact on race values elsewhere in the programme.

However, funding is made available for each Class of race on the Flat and over Jumps with the intention of encouraging racecourses to deliver prize funds greater than the minimum values. This is framed in such a way that ensures that the prize money structure remains aspirational and meritocratic, with returns that are commensurate with the ability of the horses competing.

Other areas of focus for 2026 will be:

- The HBLB has increased the divided race fund by £100k, reflecting the growth in race divisions as the distribution of the volume allows the programme to more effectively cater for the demands of the horse population

- Blank races remain in the programme, with an expanded, but more targeted approach to their distribution to support more agile race planning, including responding to changes in the make-up of the horse population and input from trainers
- During periods of particularly prolonged fast ground, transfers of Flat fixtures onto the All-Weather or an alternative Turf course when the ground is firm or quicker are now permitted at least seven days before the fixture
- The 19-day summer jumping break is retained for 2026
- Entering from scratch has been introduced when rescheduling major races at alternative venues to encourage more interesting and competitive events.

6. Supporting our people with breaks and earlier finishes

Easing the demands on the people who work to deliver the fixture list, with measures like code breaks for riders and earlier finishes to support racing's workforce.

There has been a growing recognition, particularly in recent years, about the increasing need to prioritise the welfare and wellbeing of the people who are integral to racing taking place. For 2026, in addition to a reduction in the number of evening fixtures, there will be a focus on three main areas:

(i) Code breaks

Providing essential breaks for Flat and Jump jockeys, giving some of our busiest riders the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate. Rider-restricted meetings will continue to be utilised to not only ease the burden on jockeys, but give younger and less experienced riders the opportunities to hone their skills and develop relationships with trainers and owners. In addition to the usual Christmas period, the breaks for 2026 will be as follows:

Date range	Code	Details
16-20 Feb	Flat	5 days of rider-restricted fixtures in mid-winter
26 April – 1 May	Jump	6 days end-of-season break, excludes Hunter Chase evening at Cheltenham
27 July – 14 August	Jump	19-days Summer Jumping break
8-15 November	Flat	8 days end-of-season break, with rider-restricted meetings only on 16– 18

(ii) Trial of earlier finishes at floodlit fixtures

Throughout the development of the 2026 fixture list, consideration has been given to the impact that regular 8:30pm finishes at floodlit fixtures have on those servicing the meetings, especially during the winter period.

Working alongside licensed personnel (the National Trainers Federation, National Association of Racing Staff and the Professional Jockeys Association), a trial has been developed for the first nine weeks of the year, which will see two floodlit fixtures each week finishing by 8pm.

At the end of the trial there will be a full review. This will allow the industry to measure the benefits to participants of slightly earlier finish times, particularly in terms of supporting wellbeing, alongside an analysis of any financial impact, such as potential diminished returns to racing from reduced betting turnover.

(iii) Finish times during 'shoulder periods'

The 2026 fixture policy also seeks to address concerns from participants about finish times during evening racing, especially the period at the beginning and end of summer.

Previously, floodlit fixtures during the winter were required to conclude at 8.30pm, with evening fixtures in the summer permitted to run until 9pm. This created a discrepancy during so-called 'shoulder periods' either side of summer, where racecourses with floodlights could race until 9pm, but other evening fixtures were finishing much earlier due to the setting sun.

For 2026, it has been agreed that finish times will be determined by time of year, rather than the type of fixture. This will see evening fixtures between May Bank Holiday (4 May) and August Bank Holiday (31 August) permitted to run until 9pm. Outside this period, the last race at all fixtures will be 8.30pm.

This is anticipated to affect 18 fixtures at floodlit tracks, which will be required to conclude 30 minutes earlier in April, May and September.