The Country Championships

Race Series Terms and Conditions

Eligibility

To contest The Country Championships in 2017, horses must legitimately be under the care of a NSW country trainer with a current stable return lodged on or before midnight on 27 September 2016, being the eligibility date.

The trainer must be licensed and operate from one of the eight designated country racing regions in NSW.

For the avoidance of doubt, horses trained in country regions outside of NSW in accordance with the definition of country area in the Racing NSW Local Rules of Racing, are not eligible to compete.

Horses trained by a trainer that is the holder of a metropolitan or provincial licence are not eligible to compete. Horses trained by a trainer who holds a licence to train at both a country and provincial or metropolitan track are not eligible to compete. Horses with a stable return at Canberra or the Australian Capital Territory are ineligible to compete.

Horses transferred to a country stable after the eligibility date are not eligible to contest The Country Championships, unless they were eligible prior to the transfer. A horse that transfers from one of the eight designated country racing regions to another region after the eligibility date is not eligible to contest The Country Championships.

Racing NSW the Sole Judge of Eligibility

Racing NSW may at its absolute discretion allow the nomination of a horse or refuse the nomination of a horse to the qualifying races and Final of The Country Championships for any reason it sees fit.

Qualifying Series

Qualifying Race Conditions

The Country Championships qualifying races will be Class 5 set weight plate races.

Races in the qualifying series will be restricted to horses Class 5 and below that have had had no more than 20 race starts prior to contesting the regional qualifying race.

Weight Conditions

Country Championships Qualifiers will be run under the following weight scale:

59.0kg	Class 5
57.5kg	Class 4
56.0kg	Class 3 or below

Fillies and mares will receive an allowance of 2kg from the above scale.

Ballot Conditions

In the event of a ballot being required for a race in the qualifying series, the order shall be as follows:

1. First eliminated shall be the lowest benchmarked runner(s) in ascending order;
2. If benchmarks are equal, the highest average prizemoney over the previous five starts;
3. No ballot exemptions are recognised.

Apprentice Claims

Apprentices cannot claim.

Eligibility for Qualifying Series

To be eligible for each regional race the horse must be trained by a trainer domiciled and licenced in that particular region. Horses cannot contest more than one qualifying race, or a race outside the region in which the horse is trained, with the exception of horses from the Broken Hill and Far West Racing Region as outlined below.

To be eligible for the Wild Card race, horses need to have nominated and accepted for the regional qualifying race in the region in which they are trained and not have qualified for the Final by finishing first or second in that race.

Qualifiers to Contest the Final

Horses contesting regional qualifying races or the Wild Card and finishing first or second must contest The Country Championships Final, unless a veterinary certificate to the satisfaction of Racing NSW Stewards is provided stating that the horse is unfit to race.

Racing NSW reserves the right to have a horse inspected by a Racing NSW approved veterinarian.

Notification

The trainer of any horse qualifying for the Final must as soon as possible, notify Racing NSW stewards if there is any doubt over the fitness of the horse to take their place in the Final.

Alteration of Conditions

Racing NSW may at its absolute discretion alter any conditions or other elements of The Country Championships qualifying series at any time.

Series

The qualifying series of races will be staged regionally, one each in each Country Regions as follows:

Northern Rivers Region
Mid North Coast Region
Hunter & North West Region
Central Districts Region (excluding Dubbo)
Western Region (including Dubbo)
South East Region
Southern Districts Region

Horses trained in the Broken Hill and Far West Racing Association are able to compete in any of the other association races but once they compete in a heat then they are ineligible to compete in any other heat other than the Wild Card.

Wild Card – horses from any region not previously qualified.

The dates and venues for qualifying races in 2017 are outlined in the table below.

Date	Venue	Distance	Region
Saturday 12 February 2017	Grafton	1400m	Northern Rivers
Saturday, 18 February 2017	Goulburn	1400m	South-East
Sunday, 19 February 2017	Dubbo	1400m	Western
Sunday, 26 February 2017	Taree	1400m	Mid North Coast
Sunday, 5 March 2017	Scone	1400m	Hunter & North West
Sunday, 12 March 2017	Wellington	1400m	Central Districts
Sunday, 19 March 2017	Albury	1400m	Southern Districts
Sunday, 26 March 2017	Muswellbrook	1280m	Wild Card - All
Saturday 1 April 2017	**Royal Randwick**	**1400m**	**Final**

Prizemoney

Prizemoney for the regional qualifying races will be $150,000, divided as follows.

Placing	Prizemoney
1st	$80,000
2nd	$32,000
3rd	$15,500
4th	$7,500
5th	$3,500
6th	$2,000
7th	$2,000
8th	$2,000
9th	$2,000
10th	$2,000
Equine Welfare	$1,500

Prizemoney for the Wild Card race will be $50,000, divided as follows.

Placing	Prizemoney
1st	$27,750
2nd	$10,000
3rd	$5,000
4th	$2,375
5th	$1,250
6th	$625
7th	$625
8th	$625
9th	$625
10th	$625
Equine Welfare	$500

The Country Championships Final

The field for The Country Championships Final at Royal Randwick will comprise 16 starters, being the first two finishers in each regional qualifying race and the Wild Card race.

In the event that either the winner or second placed horse from a regional qualifying race or Wild Card race cannot contest The Country Championships Final, the vacant place in the field will be offered to the third, fourth or fifth placed runners from that region's qualifying race, in that order.

Weight Conditions

The Country Championships Final will be run as an open set-weight plate race for qualifiers under the following weight scale:

59.0kg	Class 6 and above
57.5kg	Class 5
56.0kg	Class 4 and below

Fillies and mares will receive an allowance of 2kg from the above scale.

Order of Emergencies

Up to seven emergencies will be declared following acceptances. These will comprise the highest placed runner from each of the regional qualifying races.

In the event of a scratching, accompanied by a veterinary certificate, the emergency runner from the scratched runner's regional qualifying race will be elevated into the field.

Apprentice Claims

Apprentices cannot claim.

Alteration of Conditions

Racing NSW may at its absolute discretion alter any conditions or other elements of The Country Championships Final at any time.

Prizemoney

Prizemoney for The Country Championships Final will be $400,000, divided as follows.

Placing	Prizemoney
1st	$210,000
2nd	$86,000
3rd	$43,000
4th	$21,000
5th	$10,000
6th	$4,000
7th	$2,500
8th	$2,500
9th	$2,500
10th	$2,500
11th	$2,000
12th	$2,000
13th	$2,000
14th	$2,000
15th	$2,000
16th	$2,000
Equine Welfare	$4,000