

## Enhancements made to the National Hunt Pattern programme

Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) has today announced a number of enhancements and alterations to the Irish National Hunt Pattern race programme for the remainder of the 2020/2021 season.

Jason Morris, HRI Director of Racing, said: “A number of changes, agreed on a once-off basis for 2020, will be implemented during the months of October, November and December to provide additional opportunities in the intermediate (second season) category. This is to compensate novice horses which lost out on Grade 1 and Grade 2 races due to the cancellation of the Fairyhouse Easter and Punchestown Festivals in the Spring, with the 2019/2020 National Hunt season coming to an early close when racing was suspended on March 24 due to Covid-19.

“A series of enhanced or in some cases new intermediate races will be run with elevated status in the coming months and the contests with Grade 2 status will all offer Grade 1 prize money levels in 2020. Opportunities will be provided across the spectrum of distances for last season’s novices, including two races restricted to 4yos and one event for mares, allowing them to gain further experience against their peers before progressing into open Graded competition.”

The following intermediate races will be run in October, November and December 2020:

### Hurdles

Galway	25 Oct 2020	21f	5+	New Grade 3 intermediate hurdle
Down Royal	30 Oct 2020	16f	4+	Existing Grade 2 intermediate hurdle
Punchestown	15 Nov 2020	22f	4+	New Grade 2 intermediate hurdle
Naas	21 Nov 2020	16f	4yo	Fishery Lane upgraded to Grade 2
Fairyhouse	28 Nov 2020	20f	Mares 4+	New Grade 2 intermediate hurdle
Limerick	29 Dec 2020	16f	4yo	4yo Hurdle upgraded to Grade 2*

\*This is a permanent change

### Chases

Wexford	26 Oct 2020	23f	5+	Bettyville upgraded to Grade 3
Down Royal	31 Oct 2020	20f	4+	Existing Grade 2 intermediate chase
Punchestown	14 Nov 2020	20f	5+	New Grade B intermediate handicap chase
Naas	21 Nov 2020	16f	4+	Poplar Square upgraded to Grade 2
Navan	22 Nov 2020	24f	5+	New Grade 2 intermediate chase
Fairyhouse	12 Dec 2020	17f	5+	New Grade B intermediate handicap chase

In addition, a number of permanent National Hunt Pattern race enhancements have been agreed for the 2020/2021 season. These changes are primarily targeted at further improving the programme for mares over both hurdles and fences. They include a new Listed Mares’ Novice Hurdle at Navan in February 2021 and a new Listed Mares’ Chase at next year’s Fairyhouse Easter Festival.

The following races are permanent changes to the Pattern:

### Upgrades:

Listed to Grade 3

Naas	14 Mar 2021	Kingsfurze	2m Novice Hurdle
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**Grade 3 to Grade 2**

Limerick	29 Dec 2020	Sporting Limerick	2m 4yo Hurdle
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**New Listed Races**

Navan	21 Feb 2021	Apple's Jade	2m 5f Mares Novice Hurdle
Fairyhouse	Easter, 2021	Maid Of Money	2m 4f Mares Chase

**Date Change**

Fairyhouse	3 Jan 2021	Fowler Memorial	Grade 3 Mares Chase (from Easter)
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**Name Change**

Limerick	26 Dec 2020	Faugheen	2m 3½f Grade 1 Novice Chase
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