

Eligibility Date

To contest The Country Championships in 2021, horses must legitimately be under the care of a NSW country trainer with a current stable return lodged on or before either:

- For raced horses - midnight on 1 July 2020, being the eligibility date;
- For unraced horses - midnight on 1 September 2020, being the eligibility date;

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

Regions

- Mid North Coast
- South East
- Central Districts
- Southern Districts
- Northern Rivers
- Hunter & North West
- Western
- BHFWRRA

For the avoidance of doubt, horses trained in country regions outside of NSW and not in accordance with the definition of a 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 with a stable return or trained by a trainer at Canberra or the Australian Capital Territory are deemed to be in the South-East region.

Horses transferred to a country stable after the eligibility date are not eligible to contest The Country Championships, unless eligible to compete in that region prior to being transferred. A horse that transfers from one of the eight designated country racing regions above to different region after the eligibility date, is not eligible to contest The Country Championships.

Must Remain within Eligible Stable for Twelve Months

Horses contesting the 2021 Country Championships must for twelve months after the conduct of the Final in 2021, remain under the care of a trainer eligible for the Country Championships.

Where a horse is transferred from an eligible stable to a provincial, metropolitan, interstate or international stable within twelve months of the Final, failing to comply with this important race condition, Racing NSW may impose a penalty on the connections including the forfeiture of any prizemoney won contesting races in the 2021 Country Championships Series which includes the qualifying heats, Wild Card and Final.

Racing NSW will require that owners undertake to abide by this condition.

Horses may be transferred between trainers eligible to compete in the Country Championships, during the twelve-month period following the Country Championships Final.

This provision does not apply to horses retired from racing within a twelve-month period.

Minimum of One NSW Race Start

Horses must have had at least one NSW race start to be eligible for Country Championships qualifying races.

Dual Training Locations

Horses trained by a trainer who holds a licence to train at one of eight designated country racing regions in NSW and at a provincial, metropolitan or interstate racecourse are not eligible to compete in The Country Championships.

Location and Training of Horses

Whilst in training, from the eligibility date, the horse must remain located at the trainers nominated training location and under the care of the nominated trainer. A horse that is spelled during the eligibility period must have a stable returned lodged advising the location of the said horse. The spelling of a horse will not render the horse ineligible for The Country Championships, provided it is immediately returned to the original nominated trainer when returning from the spell and the stable return amended accordingly.

Location of Horse Prior to Final

Location of Horse Prior to Final Subsequent 28 March 2021, all horses included in the final field (including emergencies) may be relocated to a metropolitan or provincial region. A horse that is found to be located in a metropolitan or provincial region prior to 29 March 2021, other than short term domicile in order to contest a race, becomes ineligible to compete in The Country Championships Final.

Racing NSW the Sole Judge of Eligibility

Racing NSW will be the sole judge to determine eligibility to compete in The Country Championships.

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 20 or less 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. There shall be no age allowance applied.

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 (including ACT)
- Southern Districts Region

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

Wild Card – horses from any region not previously qualified.

The dates and venues for qualifying races in 2021 are outlined in the table below.

Date	Venue	Region
Sat 13 Feb 2021	Coffs Harbour	Northern Rivers
Sun 14 Feb 2021	Nowra	South East
Sat 20 Feb 2021	Wagga Wagga	Southern Districts
Sun 21 Feb 2021	Taree	Mid North Coast
Sun 28 Feb 2021	Mudgee	Central Districts
Sun 7 Mar 2021	Tamworth	Hunter & North West
Sun 14 Mar 2021	Coonamble	Western
Sun 21 Mar 2021	Muswellbrook	Wild Card
Sat 3 April 2021	Royal Randwick	Final

Prizemoney

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

PLACING	PRIZEMONEY
1st	\$76,500
2nd	\$27,500
3rd	\$13,250
4th	\$6,750
5th	\$5,000
6th	\$4,000
7th	\$3,500
8th	\$3,500
9th	\$3,500
10th	\$3,500
Equine Welfare - \$1,500	
Jockey Welfare - \$1,500	

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

PLACING	PRIZEMONEY
1st	\$22,000
2nd	\$8,950
3rd	\$5,000
4th	\$2,400
5th	\$2,000
6th	\$1,650
7th	\$1,500
8th	\$1,500
9th	\$1,500
10th	\$1,500
Equine Welfare - \$500	
Jockeys 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 or fourth placed runners from that region's qualifying race, in that order. Should the third or fourth placed runners from that region not be available to fill the vacant place, the vacant place for that region will be offered to the third or fourth placed runner, in that order, from the Wild Card qualifier.

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. There shall be no age allowance applied.

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 \$500,000, divided as follows.

PLACING	PRIZEMONEY
1st	\$270,000
2nd	\$100,000
3rd	\$50,000
4th	\$22,300
5th	\$12,000
6th	\$4,500
7th	\$4,500
8th	\$4,500
9th	\$4,500
10th	\$4,500
11th	\$2,200
12th	\$2,200
13th	\$2,200
14th	\$2,200
15th	\$2,200
16th	\$2,200
Equine Welfare -	\$5,000
Jockey Welfare -	\$5,000