

Media Release

Monday 04 December 2023

Phase three of Ellerslie's return to racing plan completed successfully by Auckland Thoroughbred Racing.

Auckland Thoroughbred Racing (ATR) has successfully completed the third phase of the Club's 'return to racing' plan for the Ellerslie track on Monday, 04 December.

Today saw jumpouts take place at New Zealand's premier thoroughbred racecourse as the next phase in the testing of the new StrathAyr track ahead of Ellerslie's proposed return to the racing scene in 2024.

Five heats took place from 10.30am today with 23 horses taking to the track. In attendance were senior jockeys Warren Kennedy, Sam Weatherley, Sam Spratt, Kelly Myers and Masa Hashizume.

Sam Weatherley, who took to the new Ellerslie track for the first time today, was very positive about how the StrathAyr is riding.

"It's absolutely beautiful.

"It's like a carpet, and there wasn't any kick back even with the little bit of rain we're having.

"We're on track, that's for sure."

Warren Kennedy echoed his sentiments, commenting that the track has improved from last week if anything.

"There's just a really nice spring to it.

"I felt it was ready to race last time and if there was a raceday tomorrow, I'd be putting my hand up, that's for sure."

ATR Executive General Manager – Racing & Operations, Craig Baker, continues to be heartened by how the track is performing.

"It was really pleasing to continue to get such positive feedback from the jockeys today especially from Sam Weatherley and Kelly Myers, who were riding on it for the first time.

"It gives us great confidence as we head towards the final stage of trials on Monday, 11 December."

The fourth and final phase of the 'return to racing' plan will see trials take place on Monday, 11 December with the Club expected to formally announce its return date in the following days in consultation with New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing and the Racing Integrity Board.

All going well, ATR anticipates returning to racing on Sunday, 14 January, ahead of the highly popular TAB Karaka Millions on Saturday 27 January.

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For more information please contact:

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