

3 August 2009

## **CHANGES TO CAPTAIN COOK STAKES AND CUDDLE STAKES**

The Graded Stakes Committee (GSC) and the Pattern Review Committee (PRC) have jointly approved a request from the RACE group of clubs to move the Wellington Racing Club's Captain Cook Stakes (Weight For Age, Group 1, 1600m) and Cuddle Stakes (Fillies and Mares, Set Weights and Penalties, Group 3, 1600) from their present dates.

The Captain Cook Stakes will now be run on 5 December (from October), three and a half weeks after the Coupland's Bakeries Mile [Churchill Stakes] at Riccarton on 11 November and three weeks before the Zabeel Classic [Galaxy Stakes] at Ellerslie on Boxing Day.

The Cuddle Stakes will now be run on 24 October (from Melbourne Cup day) as a Set Weight and Penalties race (formerly a Handicap), which will be two weeks after the Postponed Stakes [Evergreen Stakes] at Hawera.

Chas Amon, Chairman of the GSC, commented: "Both committees acknowledge that the Captain Cook Stakes was not working in its current position due to its proximity to the running of the Hawke's Bay Spring Carnival. It is likely that the Cuddle Stakes will be improved with the Set Weights and Penalties conditions and the earlier date."

"These changes are aimed at addressing the disadvantages of both these races while retaining the balance and flow of the Pattern."

Brent Wall, Racing Manager for the RACE group of clubs commented: "The Wellington Racing Club believe that the change in dates to these major races will help strengthen the quality of the fields. The Captain Cook has struggled in recent times being three weeks after New Zealand's biggest WFA race. The pattern of these races allows trainers to have valuable lead ups to races at Riccarton and Ellerslie".

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