

FROM THE WELLINGTON RACING CLUB COMMITTEE

JUNE UPDATE

TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2026

Winter Racing - Saturday 27 June

This weekend Trentham hosts its final meeting of the 2025-26 season, with the unique figure-eight course taking centre stage for one of New Zealand's premier jumping days.

A true test of stamina and skill, the 136th running of the Grant Plumbing Wellington Steeplechase promises plenty of excitement as the country's best jumpers tackle the 4900m contest. Supporting races include the Wellington Hurdles, along with maiden hurdle and steeplechase events, ensuring a full programme for jumping enthusiasts.

The Club will also acknowledge the tragic loss of West Coast, with the Committee sponsoring a race in his honour. A big, raw-boned horse in the mould of the old-fashioned jumper, West Coast failed to win in 23 flat starts but was a star over fences, winning 13 of 26 jumps races, including the Grant Plumbing Wellington Steeplechase.

It will also be time to break out the tartan, furs and winter fashion, with the rescheduled Stephanie Murray Mortgages Winter Ladies Day Fashion in the Field celebrating the best of winter racewear.



The banner features a jockey in a yellow and white silks riding a dark horse over a jump. On the left, the text reads: **WELLINGTON** -- Racing Club --, **GRANT PLUMBING LTD**, **136TH WELLINGTON STEEPLECHASE**, and JOINTHEACTION.CO.NZ. On the right, it says **SAT 27 JUNE 2026**.



Race 4 - Shamelia Kirk



Race 7 - Ima Brazen One

Review - 10 June Meeting

After torrential rain forced the postponement of our scheduled 6 June meeting, racing finally got underway at Trentham on Wednesday, 10 June.

Despite the delay, those on course were treated to a competitive day's racing highlighted by jockey Emily Farr's double in the day's two ITM Manawatu-sponsored headline jumps races. Happy Star won the Manawatu Hurdles, while Never Look Back took out the Manawatu Steeplechase.

While it was disappointing to lose the Saturday betting audience, the Club was pleased the decision to postpone was made early and that the meeting was ultimately completed in its entirety. The raceday also marked an important milestone as the first held following Trentham's recent track renovations.

Track Update – Jamie Phillips

The track had come through its renovation programme in excellent order leading into the June meeting, but surface water following heavy rain meant racing was postponed from Saturday 6 June until the following Wednesday.

Track Manager Jamie Phillips was pleased the call was made to delay and happy with the way the track played.

"For a first raceday after the renovations, we couldn't have been happier with how the track performed," Jamie says.

The lead-up to this weekend's meeting has again been challenging, with the track currently saturated and more rain forecast through the week. Ever pragmatic in his approach, Jamie says it is what it is and racegoers can expect a genuine Trentham testing winter track. The rail will remain in the same position as the previous meeting, out six metres.

Fortunately, the Club will have a two-month break following Saturday's meeting before racing returns for the 2026-27 season on 19 September, giving the track a valuable recovery window.

Jockey Profile – Emily Farr

Fresh from winning both the Manawatu Hurdles and Manawatu Steeplechase at Trentham on 10 June, jumps jockey Emily Farr heads into Wellington Steeplechase day leading the national jumps jockeys' premiership. We caught up with Emily to talk about her move to the Central Districts, life away from racing, and her love of New Zealand's premier jumping contests.



After 16 years in New Zealand jumps jockey Emily Farr thinks her recent move to the Central Districts might be one the best she's ever made.

"I've had incredible support from all the trainers in the CD, everyone has been so friendly and happy to have me here," she says.

Now based in Otaki with partner John Benner, Emily is enjoying the quieter lifestyle.

"You get to do things, I play squash, go to the beach quite often and it's a beautiful place to live."

Another thing she is hoping to pursue is her passion for singing, not unexpected given the Welsh penchant for song!

"There are a lot of amateur dramatic societies around here though, so it's something I'm looking into now I'm settled. Once winter's over, I'll probably think more seriously about it."

But during winter Emily's sole focus is the jumps scene and maintaining her lead on the Jump jockeys' premiership. She added two major wins at the rescheduled Trentham meeting taking out the ITM Manawatu sponsored Manawatu Hurdles on Happy Star, and Manawatu Steeplechase on Never Look Back.

After Sunday's jumps meeting Emily sat on 7 wins leading into this weekend's Wellington Steeplechase meeting, two clear of her nearest challenger Matthew Gillies.

“This is the first season in five years that I’ve actually been in New Zealand for the whole season. Before that I was travelling home to see my father before he passed away and then helping to look after mum.”

After a good start to the season Emily thought this could be her chance.

“I’m 35 now, which is getting towards the older end for jumps jockeys. My body’s not great. I’ve had some horrendous falls in the past, including being resuscitated, and concussion is a major issue in jumps racing now with the stand down rules,” she says.

“The premiership would be the final major box to tick. I wanted 100 winners and I wanted to win a premiership.”

Emily plans to ride through to the end of the season hopefully pairing with the horses she loves riding - “Like The Bambino, Happy Star, Never Look Back, and Leitrim Lad.”



“I love every horse I ride, but the ones that carry you over 2000, 3000, 4000 even 5000 metres and jump anywhere from nine to 24 fences, there is something special about them,” she explains.

“We’re both taking risks out there. I’m trusting them and they’re trusting me. I always try to look after the horse I’m riding, whether it’s a maiden or an open horse. I never take risks I don’t have to.”

This weekend she is looking forward to the challenge Trentham in winter offers.

“There’s something unique and prestigious about the Wellington Steeplechase. I love it. The fences are a decent size and it’s a tactical race because horses have to change leads and jump off different legs. They have to learn to be genuine jumpers, not just flat horses that can get over a fence.”

Meet the Committee – Marc Schmid

A passion for racing, a background in leadership, and a commitment to helping secure the future of Wellington Racing Club are what drive committee member Marc Schmid.

Marc's connection with racing stretches back to his school days in Hawke's Bay, where he worked on the sheep and beef farm of renowned jumps trainer Paul Nelson. It was there that he developed an appreciation for the horses, people and traditions that make racing such a unique industry.



Today, that passion remains as strong as ever. Marc is a familiar face around Trentham, having worked as a raceday steward for the past three seasons. Away from raceday duties, he has also worked alongside fellow committee members to help promote sponsorship opportunities and strengthen connections within the industry.

His enthusiasm for racing extends well beyond Wellington. Each year Marc travels throughout New Zealand and Australia attending racing events, building relationships and learning from other clubs and jurisdictions.

Professionally, Marc brings extensive leadership and governance experience to the Committee. A former Officer in the New Zealand Army, he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at age 37 before moving into the business sector. Through both his military and commercial careers he has developed expertise in strategic leadership, organisational performance and business development, supported by a strong professional network across the Wellington region.

Marc is also a strong supporter of the Club through his business, Rothley, which has sponsored races at Trentham since 2023. Through those connections he has helped introduce new people to the sport and welcomed several new members to Wellington Racing Club.

As a Committee member, Marc is focused on helping ensure the Club remains commercially strong and well-positioned for the future. He sees sponsorship, membership growth and strong industry relationships as key ingredients in maintaining Trentham's place as one of New Zealand's premier racing venues.

For Marc, however, it all comes back to a genuine love of racing and a desire to contribute to an industry that has been part of his life since those early days in Hawke's Bay.

President's Wrap

As we wrap up the current season and look to the future, the Club remains focused on ensuring Trentham retains its place as one of New Zealand's premier racing venues.

An important step in that process will be the lodging of a building consent application for a proposed new infield shed. While relatively modest in scale, the project is a significant milestone as it begins the process of relocating the existing infield shed, tie-up facilities and float parking area.

These improvements form part of our ongoing commitment to providing modern, practical facilities for participants and ensuring Trentham remains fit for purpose for many years to come. There is still considerable planning and consultation ahead, but it is pleasing to see progress being made.

The successful return to racing following the recent track renovations, combined with continued investment in our infrastructure, gives confidence that the Club is moving in the right direction.

If I have one request, it is that members with questions about the Club's future plans feel free to approach me or any member of the Committee directly. We're always happy to have those conversations.

I would like to thank our members, sponsors, staff, volunteers, owners, trainers and jockeys for their continued support. Your commitment to Wellington Racing Club and New Zealand racing is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to welcoming you to Trentham for the Grant Plumbing Wellington Steeplechase and Wellington Hurdle meeting, our final fixture of the 2025-26 season.

Kind regards,

Simon Barber

President, Wellington Racing Club

On behalf of the Committee

