

TASMANIAN ATHLETIC LEAGUE SPRINT HANDICAPPING GUIDELINES (updated November 2025)

INTRODUCTION

Handicapping in the TAL is on a discretionary basis. The guidelines are designed to facilitate athlete participation and regular competitive racing.

OBJECTIVES

To encourage athletes to regularly and consistently compete to the best of their ability, and to provide athletes with the best opportunity to be competitive and have wins on the TAL circuit.

HOW DOES IT WORK

The TAL Handicapping Guidelines are to provide a process for athletes to receive incremental lifts in their handicap by competing consistently, and to the Handicapper and Stewards satisfaction. Each athlete is assessed on their PB's and on their current ability across the range of events that they participate in. It is the intent of the handicapper to have athletes as competitive as possible, with the intent that there will be a broad range of winners throughout the season.

INITIAL AND STARTING HANDICAPS

When a TAL registered athlete enters an event for the first time they will be allocated a starting handicap based on their best performance over that or a similar distance.

The TAL Handicapper will take into account an athlete's track performances, track and wind conditions of personal best performances when determining an initial handicap allocation.

If a new athlete cannot supply at least three legitimate times from the previous 12 months, over relevant distances entered, they will initially receive a novice mark. These performances need to state the date, venue and type of meeting, position in race and time.

Eg: 15/10/24. Penguin	Inter High sports	100m, 1 st , 11.71 sec
30/10/24. Domain track	Tas All Schools	100m, 2 nd , 11.56 sec
13/11/ 24 Launceston Track	Interclub	100m, 4 th , 11.40 sec

NOTE: Performances from school house sports will not be taken into consideration.

Current Novice handicaps for athletes with no amateur performances:

- 4.00 metres – 70 metre handicap
- 6.00 metres - 120 metre handicap
- 15 metres - 300 metre handicap
- 20 metres - 400 metre handicap

Current Novice Masters handicaps (30 years +) for athletes entering open events with no amateur performances or athletes returning from a long absence in the sport.

- 6.00 metres – 70 metre handicap
- 8.00 metres – 100 metre handicap
- 9.00 metres - 120 metre handicap
- 25 metres - 300 metre handicap
- 30 metres – 400 metre handicap

SEASON START MARKS

Prior to the commencement of each season the Handicapper will determine the starting handicap for each registered athlete. This handicap is based on the last allotted handicap from the previous season and is subject to any penalties that may apply from results obtained in various competitions and carnivals after the completion of the previous TAL season.

There is an expectation that young runners will improve with hard work over the off season, as well as maturing and growth spurts. Consequently, their start marks will be reduced at the start of each season and then increased if deemed necessary.

Older, more established runners will maintain their finish marks from the end of the previous season. Runners will be rewarded in handicap the more they compete, providing they race to the Stewards' and Handicapper's satisfaction. Marks in the Men's Gift races in the lead up to Burnie will generally be back 2 metres, or the equivalent for 100m. After Burnie, the marks will be back at the Handicappers discretion.

HANDICAPS

An athlete's handicap will generally be calculated for 70m, 120m and 400m and adjusted for the following distances:

100 metres - proportional to 120 metres handicap (5/6)

200 metres - 1.66×120 metres handicap - (generally but there may be a Handicappers discretion +/-)

300 metres - 0.75×400 metres handicap then -5 metres (for Hobart 300m the -5 does not apply)

The handicapper reserves the right to adjust the marks over all distances, depending on entries for each meeting. For instance, Men's 120m marks will generally be pulled 2m across the board at all meetings except Burnie.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

The TAL Handicapper has the discretion to review performances of all athletes in order to make that athlete more competitive, and as such can adjust the athlete's handicap on more regular occasions.

Winners of Gift races at the Richmond and Rosebery meetings and events at other smaller carnivals will retain their handicap as a minimum for Burnie, dependent on the times that are run. However, they will have their marks reassessed for Hobart and other meetings. (see notes on Bonuses at the end of these notes).

Any new athletes competing for the first time, with the relevant 3 amateur or school performances from the previous 12 months, should have marks that should see them running around 12.90 sec in the Men's Gifts and 14.90 in the Women's. Again, they will be continually reassessed.

There is also an expectation that athletes will be genuine with their form throughout the season. Vast improvements in form in the Gifts at Burnie will not be looked upon in a favourable light and will have consequences. Athletes that win races will be given every chance to have a competitive mark at Burnie and Devonport. So, if you can win, do so.

Athletes that cannot reproduce good form from the previous season or seasons cannot expect to be lifted for Burnie or Devonport and any lift given after these meets to aid them to be competitive, may not necessarily be kept for the following season.

Established Interstate runners will be handicapped to a start mark to run 12.45 sec in Men's Gift races and generally 14.0 sec in Women's Gift races, depending on the quality of entries. In 400m races established Interstate men will be handicapped to a start mark of 47.6 secs and women to 53.90 sec.

Young interstate runners will be handicapped with discretion, as they have the ability to improve vastly from one year to the next.

In an effort to minimize the number of changes to handicaps in the Burnie program, entrants in the PCCCT and Rosebery events may receive handicap adjustments in advance for Burnie. If entrants do not then compete, or compete but not perform to the Handicapper's and Stewards' satisfaction, the adjustments may be reversed.

ATHLETE OBLIGATIONS

A TAL registered athlete achieving a new personal best must advise the TAL within seven (7) days of that achievement, advising race time, wind reading where applicable and venue.

A TAL registered athlete competing in other sanctioned professional events (e.g., VAL, NSWAL, SAAL) must advise the TAL within seven (7) days, or prior to competing in a TAL Carnival, whichever may come first, of updated performances and any prize money.

Failure by an athlete to adhere to the above may result in a fine and/or a suspension.

ATHLETE CARNIVAL DAY OBLIGATIONS

Athletes are not to approach the Handicapper at Carnivals on race days regarding their handicaps. Once handicaps are released there is a process within the TAL Constitution for an athlete to dispute their handicap. The Handicapper will not discuss with an athlete or trainer/coach a third-party athlete. Should any further clarification be required an athlete should contact the TAL Runners and Trainers representatives.

HANDICAP INCREMENTS / ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The TAL Handicapper and TAL Stewards will assess every run that the athlete has with the TAL, each performance will be assessed based on the athlete's time run and appropriate effort throughout the run. The expectation is that the athlete will present themselves in race condition, unhindered by lack of fitness, sickness, or injury, and display the appropriate degree of effort in their performance. Their performance should not be affected by any participation in a previous event or round.

Please note that all finalists in a Classic listed event will not receive a lift in handicap at their next subsequent starts as clearly they are very competitive.

For any Handicapping review and Appeals please refer to the TAL Constitution for details.

PENALTIES – Subject to Handicapper discretion, the following minimum penalties will apply.

Devonport

400 metres Gift 1st- 8 metres, 2nd - 3m, 3rd - 2m, 4th – 1m.

Burnie

70 metres 1st - 0.5m.

120 metres Gift 1st - 2m, 2nd - 0.75m, 3rd - 0.5m, 4th - 0.25m.

400 metres 1st - 3m.

Launceston, OVA, Richmond, Rosebery, Hobart, Central Coast, and St Helens Gifts - 1st - 0.50m for all 100m/120m events except for Burnie which is at the Handicapper's discretion. Minor carnival sprint races such as PCCCT will incur a handicap reduction of 0.25m – 0.50m for forthcoming Gift events other than the Burnie 120m. (see notes on Bonuses at the end of these notes).

The same will apply to the 300m/400m winners at these meetings. They will incur a minimal handicap reduction for events other than the Devonport 400m and Burnie 400m.

Richmond 300m, Rosebery 400m and Hobart 300m 1st - 2m for forthcoming events other than Devonport 400m and Burnie 400m which will be at the Handicapper's discretion.

Central Coast 400m, St Helens 400m and OVA 300m 1st - 2m.

Richmond and Rosebery 70m winners will receive a 0.5m penalty, however, they may retain their winning mark for Devonport and Burnie 70m races only.

Central Coast and St Helens 70m winners will receive a 0.5m penalty.

HOBART GIFTS – On current prizemoney for the Men's and Women's Gifts at Hobart, the winners of these Gifts may retain their equivalent marks for Burnie. This is conditional on the winning time not being below 10.20 seconds (men's) and 11.41 seconds (women's). Again, the conditions on the day will be taken into account by the Handicapper given the league does not have a wind gauge.

Penalties for winning Gifts at Hobart will be applied to local events post Burnie. An increase in prizemoney would see penalties applied for Burnie.

BONUS RACES

A bonus of half metre (.5m) will be applied for the Burnie Gift for a gift win at the Tasmanian leadup meetings, as below. This is conditional on the winning time not being below 12.45 seconds (men's) or 13.75 seconds (women's) at Richmond or Rosebery, or 10.31 seconds (men's) or 11.44 seconds (women's) at Launceston, OVA or PCCCT. This is because the lift must not take the runner under the ceiling time of 12.35 seconds (men's) or 13.70 seconds (women's) when the local lead up race handicaps are readjusted for the Burnie Gift.

The conditions on the day will be taken into account by the Handicapper given the league does not have a wind gauge.

A second Gift win (PCCCT included) prior to Burnie will negate the half metre lift.