

## **FLAT RACING PROGRAMME 2026 HIGHLIGHTS**

# **Building on 2025 Momentum to Boost the Competitiveness and Appeal of Flat Racing**

On Tuesday, 17 February 2026, at the Thémis, journalists were invited to a press conference about the Flat racing program.

At the outset of the conference, Arnaud de Seyssel, Vice-President of France Galop and in charge of Flat racing, was keen to “*remember the achievements of 2025, the result of an ambitious strategy combining elite sporting competition with strong public appeal, alongside adjustments made to the calendar and race program. That momentum was also reflected in the performances of French-trained horses on the international stage, led by Calandagan, who was named the world’s best racehorse in 2025 after securing Group 1 victories in France and abroad. In terms of runners, Flat racing continued its upward trend in 2025 following a strong year in 2024. The impact on betting turnover in 2025 is estimated at €45 million after reaching €50 million in 2024. Between 2023 and 2025, races with small fields decreased from 18% in the Premium program to 12.3%, while Premium races featuring 14 or more runners increased from 25.2% to 30.1%.*”

Among the adjustments introduced in 2025, the three *Arc Trials*, as in the Qatar Prix Vermeille, Qatar Prix Niel and Qatar Prix Foy, were brought forward by one week and held on the same day as the Qatar Prix du Moulin de Longchamp. That major race meeting at the ParisLongchamp racecourse was accompanied the day before by the “Horses in the City” event at the Place de la Concorde in Paris. From a sporting perspective, it is worth noting that the Qatar Prix Foy achieved a rating of 121.25, making it the second highest rated race in France in 2025. Meanwhile, the Prix du Moulin de Longchamp attracted 12 runners, a number not seen since 2003, with its prize money raised to €800,000 (thanks to a contribution from the Owners’ premium pool).

Continuing the trend of creating major highlights in 2025, one date stands out in 2026: Thursday, 21 May. On that day, the JeuXdi event at ParisLongchamp will feature the Prix Vicomtesse Vigier, promoted to Group 1 status in 2025. Its first edition was successful, achieving a rating of 112.25. The card will also feature the Group 1 Prix d’Ispahan and the Group 3 Prix du Palais-Royal. The aim is to showcase Group 1 races in a festive atmosphere and in front of large crowds, which is highly rewarding for racing’s stakeholders. It also strengthens the JeuXdi race card, giving young people who are discovering the sport the opportunity to witness top-level competition.

The ambition for 2026 is therefore to continue to strengthen the competitiveness and appeal of Flat racing, in order to pursue the goal of putting racing back at the heart of the French public.

### **Arc Races: maintaining the 2025 schedule**

In 2025, the Arc Races system was unveiled in the lead-up to the Prix Ganay. This first edition of the qualifying system for the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe delivered on its promise, allowing two fillies who had not been initially entered to compete in the major event on the first Sunday in October: Gezora, winner of the Prix de Diane Longines, and Quisisana, winner of the Sumbe Prix Jean Romanet. Following their performances in the "Arc", Gezora went on to win the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf, while Quisisana finished third in the Longines Hong Kong Cup.

In 2026, the Arc Races system will be maintained in the same format as its first edition.

### **Closer ties with Japan**

In 2025, a France Galop team travelled to Japan to introduce the French racing program to local stakeholders. This resulted in five Japanese runners in France that year: Alohi Alii, Ascoli Piceno, Byzantine Dream, Croix du Nord, and Go To First.

The Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, the Aga Khan Studs Prix Jacques le Marois, and the Qatar Prix du Moulin de Longchamp were strengthened by the presence of highly competitive horses, increased exposure in Asia, and were offered for betting in Japan. In total, Japanese punters wagered €52.8 million on these races, generating additional income for the Institution.

### **Merging of Group and Listed Races**

In 2025, a key program innovation was designed to combine two Black Type races into one, with the aim of offering higher prize money in the remaining race and reinforcing its competitiveness by attracting a larger field. Four races were thus combined, including the Prix de la Nonette, which was integrated into the Sumbe Prix Jean Romanet. This made it possible to open the Group 1 race to three-year-old fillies and increase its prize money to €400,000. Eight fillies ran in the Sumbe Prix Jean Romanet at Deauville, with the race achieving a rating of 113.75 — an increase of 3.5 pounds over the 2024 edition.

The Coupe de Maisons-Laffitte was incorporated into the Prix du Prince d'Orange, which became to a Group 3 for three-year-olds and older horses. The race, won by Croix du Nord from Daryz, achieved a rating of 117.5, which is higher than a typical Group 1 race.

In line with these adjustments, one Listed race will not be scheduled in 2026. This is the Prix Scaramouche, intended to protect the Qatar Prix du Cadran, which in 2025 was left with just two potential runners during the forfeit stage.

## **Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud and Prix Jean Prat rescheduled by one week**

Originally scheduled for Sunday, June 28, and Sunday, July 5, the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud and the Prix Jean Prat will now take place on Sunday, July 5, and Sunday, July 12, respectively.

The aim is for a better harmonisation of the European racing calendar by avoiding a clash with the Royal Ascot meeting, while remaining at least three weeks ahead of the following opportunities:

- King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes for the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud
- Deauville Barrière meeting for the Prix Jean Prat

## **2-year-old program: Following up on 2025 success**

The autumn two-year-old program was reshaped in 2025 to provide a better distribution of the various opportunities, which led to the Prix Thomas Bryon being run on the Fiber Sand track on 18 November. The race achieved a rating of 103.75, up from 99.75 in 2024. The Prix de Condé, run over 2000m in early October at Saint-Cloud, also saw its rating increase from 99.25 to 103.25. Overall, across the five races that were adjusted in 2025, there were 33 runners, compared with 29 in 2024 and 30 in 2023.

In 2026, further adjustments are being made to the two-year-old program. The Prix Miesque will join the Prix Thomas Bryon meeting to be run over 1400m on the all-weather track in November. This change is part of an effort to reduce competition between the Prix Miesque and the Darley Prix des Réservoirs, which had previously been run just one week apart. The Prix des Réservoirs, along with other turf races at Deauville during the October meeting, are also evolving. To allow the Deauville racecourse team to begin work on the turf track immediately after the August meeting, the October races at Deauville will be run exclusively on the all-weather track. In this context, the Darley Prix des Réservoirs and the Critérium de Vitesse will be moved to the turf at Chantilly, and the Prix Vulcain to Saint-Cloud in early November.

## **A new Group 2: The Prix Paul de Moussac**

Reconfigured in 2023 to serve as a prep race for the Prix Jean Prat rather than as a consolation race for the Emirates Poule d'Essai des Poulains, the Prix Paul de Moussac has been promoted to Group 2 status in 2026.

Since 2023, the Prix Paul de Moussac has consistently achieved a rating of the level of a Group 2 race, and five future Group 1 winners have emerged from this race: Good Guess (2023), Lazzat (2024), Sajir (2024), Puchkine (2024), and Maranoa Charlie (2025).

Reshaping the road to the Prix de Diane Longines

For three-year-old fillies, the route to the Prix de Diane Longines is evolving.

In 2026, the Prix Rose de Mai (Listed), traditionally run in early March, will take place on Tuesday, 24 March. It is the start of a sequence that continues with the Henri Matisse

Coolmore Prix Cléopâtre (Group 3) on 17 April, followed by the Camille Pissarro Coolmore Prix Saint-Alary (Group 2) on 10 May.

In addition, the Prix Finlande (Listed – 1800m) will see a racecourse change as it is moved to Chantilly on Tuesday, 19 May, providing a “Black Type” prep race for fillies for the classic race on the same track as the Prix de Diane Longines.

Finally, in the context of these changes, the Prix Pénélope (Group 3) will cease to exist. Its prize money (€73,200) will be transferred to a new 1600m Listed race, the Prix Esotérique, which is open to fillies and mares aged 4-years and older, on Thursday, 14 May at ParisLongchamp. This Listed race is positioned as an ideal stepping stone for horses that want to run at Royal Ascot.

### **Other Changes to the Black Type Program**

- Prix Alec Head (Prix de Pomone)
  - Group 2 – 2500m, 3yo+ fillies and mares
  - Brought forward by one week to Saturday, 15 August at Deauville
- Prix Allez France
  - Group 3 – 2000m, 4yo+ fillies and mares
  - Scheduled for 1 May at Saint-Cloud
- Prix du Bois
  - Group 3 – 1200m, 2yo
  - Moved to the “Oh ! Courses” day on Saturday, 27 June at Chantilly
- Prix Maurice Zilber
  - Listed – 1400m, 4yo+ fillies and mares
  - Brought forward to 23 April at ParisLongchamp to create more time in the run-up to the new Prix Esotérique
- Prix de l’Avre
  - Listed – 2400m, 3yo
  - Postponed to 14 May at ParisLongchamp to allow more time to “build” a stronger field over 2400m
- Derby du Languedoc
  - Listed – 2400m, 3yo
  - Delayed to the autumn, Friday, 9 October at Toulouse
- Prix Bedel
  - Listed – 2400m, 4yo+
  - Pushed back by 15 days to be run on Saturday, 30 May at Lyon-Parilly
- Prix Isola Bella
  - Listed – 1600m, 3yo+ fillies and mares
  - Relocated to Deauville on Saturday, 8 August, run over 1500m straight
- Prix Occitanie
  - Listed – 1900m, 3yo fillies
  - Brought forward to Wednesday, 19 August at La Teste to create more time in the run-up to the Prix de Liancourt
- Grand Prix des Provinces
  - Regional Listed “rotating” race
  - To be run this year at Lyon-Parilly on Saturday, 26 September over 2400m

## Races at risk of downgrading following the 2026 Season

Four Listed races are at risk of being downgraded at the end of the 2026 racing season. *These four events must be awarded FEE (European Livestock Fund) premiums of €20,000 (distributed among the first three finishers) this year.*

<b>Race</b>	<b>Racecourse</b>	<b>Required rating in 2026</b>
Derby du Languedoc (Listed)	Toulouse	98
Prix Panacée (Listed)	Toulouse	96
Grand Prix Anjou Bretagne (Listed)	Nantes	102,75
Grand Prix de Fontainebleau (Listed)	Fontainebleau	95