

Test your turf knowledge



This shot shows the grey winner of the 1989 Sun Alliance Novices Hurdle. Can you name:
1. The horse?
2. His very stylish jockey?
3. The trainer?
...for the answers turn to the inside pages

You're on TV... but which one?

We've had several requests from owners on advice as to which racing channel it's best to sign up with. To help you make a decision here are the facts and figures:

RACING UK

RUK covers 31 UK racecourses: Aintree, Ayr, Bangor, Beverley, Carlisle, Cartmel, Catterick, Cheltenham, Chester, Doncaster, Epsom, Goodwood, Hamilton, Haydock, Huntingdon, Kempton, Ludlow, Market Rasen, Musselburgh, Newbury, Newmarket, Nottingham, Pontefract, Redcar, Salisbury Sandown, Thirsk, Warwick, Wetherby, Wincanton and York.

Programmes are produced by Highflyer, which also produces Channel 4 Racing.

Subscription is £20 a month or £200 a year on Sky Channel 432, Telewest 537, NTL 719. 32,500 subscribers.

Not making an operating profit yet but expecting turnover to exceed £10 million this year, including £6 million from subscriptions. Will return over £2 million of the money racecourses have invested by end of this year.

AT THE RACES

ATR covers 28 UK racecourses: Ascot, Bath, Brighton, Chepstow, Exeter, Fakenham, Folkestone, Fontwell Hereford, Hexham, Kelso, Leicester, Lingfield, Newcastle, Newton Abbot, Perth, Plumpton, Ripon, Sedgefield, Southwell, Stratford, Taunton, Towcester, Uttoxeter, Windsor, Wolverhampton, Worcester, Yarmouth.

Also covers all 27 Irish racecourses and several US racecourses. ATR is owned by BSKyB and Arena Leisure/with Northern Racing, Ascot, Newton Abbot, Plumpton and Ripon. Programmes are produced by SIS, which also broadcasts into betting shops.

ATR is available free-to-air on Sky Channel 415, Telewest 534, NTL 908 (Ireland 418) and Chorus 64. Average of 40,000 to 50,000 viewers

The channel is covering costs and expects to be making operating profit from early 2006. Has paid £2 million to courses in first year of business as part of agreement giving them a percentage of revenues. Courses have not had to contribute financially. Shareholders will get share of future profits via dividends - expect to make first dividend payments within next year.

Your Choice

Ultimately your decision will be governed by which courses you want to watch and whether you're prepared to stump up £20 every month for Racing UK. But in the not too distant future the two channels may yet merge.

Memorable Quotes...

Sir Clement Freud has been many things - gourmet, raconteur and an MP. But most consistently he's been a racehorse owner and currently owns 6 furlong handicapper Orpen Wide who recently ran at Redcar. In an effort to produce an improved performance numerous jockeys were tried culminating in a claiming apprentice prompting Sir Clement to exclaim in the paddock "I have things older than him in my refrigerator!"

Snapshot

Our 2 year old Most Welcome colt being ridden away for the first time by Sheena Hill



WINNING POST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

5/2005

Peter Bowen picks his team to follow

Homebred trainer Peter Bowen has given a list of ten of his team to follow this season. Although racing pundits viewed Take the Stand's Gold Cup run as a flash in the pan the truth may be very different!

And reports of top hurdler Genghis not being a good jumper may also prove to be wide of the mark...

Here are Peter's thoughts on his 'Top Ten':

Argonaut: A very classy horse from Sir Michael Stoute's yard - if we can rekindle his enthusiasm he should be very, very good over hurdles

Celtic Gem: He'll be a real nice horse, jumps well and will soon be ready for hurdling

Decisive: He's very good - we'll keep him to hurdles this season

Farlington: I think he's very well handicapped and should win quite a few handicap classes

Genghis: He's not good enough to go for the top hurdles so he'll be chasing - he's actually better over fences and prefers the ground on the easy side



McKelvey: The further he goes the better. He's tough and I hope he'll be good enough for the Grand National in April

Snoopy Loopy: He'll be a different horse when he gets soft ground

Take the Stand: He wasn't 100% when second in the Gold Cup - he'll be a lot closer to Kicking King next time! He needs good ground and to go left handed. We'll give him an easier campaign this year and aim him at the top conditions races

Tashkandi: Now he's gelded his attitude has changed and potentially he should be a very good novice hurdler this season

Yes Sir: has just kept improving but is now weighted up to the hilt over hurdles and will go novice chasing. I'm hoping he'll stay 3 miles



Snapshot

Our promising 2 year old filly Divine White being led out onto the course for her debut in a 6 furlong maiden race at Newbury by her lass Andrea

Let us have your ideas and views...



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Course factfile: Worcester

Worcester has long been regarded as a fair track with good ground providing the ideal starting point for young jumpers. Consequently racing here is always competitive and its location also means it's well supported by all the top yards. Worcester is now run by Arena Leisure who took over from the local council who ran the racecourse which is close to the city centre. The 1 mile 5 furlong track is completely flat and its location on the banks of the River Severn ensure ample supplies to keep the track watered during the summer jumping programme.

Trainers to follow are Martin Pipe, Philip Hobbs and Peter Bowen.

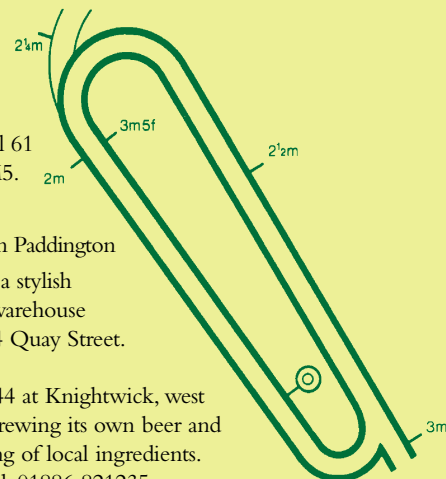
Location: London 124, Birmingham 26 and Bristol 61 miles. Signposted off the M5.

Telephone: 01905 25364

Trains: Direct from London Paddington

Celebrations: **Brown's** is a stylish restaurant in a converted warehouse overlooking the river at 24 Quay Street. Tel: 01905 26263

Talbot Inn just off the A44 at Knightwick, west of Worcester, an old pub brewing its own beer and renowned for great cooking of local ingredients. Bedrooms also available. Tel: 01886 821235



Kempton's new track on course

The choice of racing venues for those based around the capital has dwindled lately with simultaneous redevelopment projects at two of the south east's premier courses. Whilst Ascot's ability to reopen in time for next June's Royal fixture is still in doubt, executives at Kempton Park have given assurances that extensive work to lay an entirely new artificial racing surface was "well ahead of schedule." Delicate operations to cover the BAA oil supply lines to Heathrow that run beneath the Sunbury track are complete and the first layer of

foundation is being put down. Brian Clifford, Kempton's Clerk of the Course, is delighted with the progress. He said: "We are lucky that it is a free-draining track and therefore wet days don't impede the building process. We are aiming to install the surface itself this month and hope to have the track available for trialling from mid-January ahead of our first fixture on 25th March next year." Initial plans to abandon all turf racing at Kempton were shelved last year in favour of retaining the 11 existing jumps fixtures to

stand alongside 49 all-weather flat meetings. Clifford hopes that the jumping programme will ultimately be enhanced. "Whereas before our jumps season was in a restricted period between October and March, we are now able to run both codes adjacently throughout the year". The present priority for Kempton, though, is ensuring the success of all-weather racing and making the floodlit evening fixtures marketable to its natural metropolitan constituency.

Did you know?

The oldest horse to win a race is a record shared by 5 horses. Wild Aster (foaled 1901) won 3 races aged 18. Sonny Somers (1962) won two chases when aged 18. Other winners of the same age were Revenge (1779), Marksman (1808) and Jorrock (1883). The oldest horse to take part in a race is Creggmore Boy who finished fourth in a chase at Cartmel in 1962 at the age of 22, having finished second the year before.



Racing Legends: Dancing Brave

Dancing Brave (Pat Eddery) wins the Arc de Triomphe

In the first of our series recalling great racehorses it seems appropriate to start with Dancing Brave - so often described as 'the best horse of the 20th Century'. Dancing Brave is also of particular interest since he was trained by Guy Harwood, father of Homebred trainer Amanda Perrett, and was often ridden in his work on the Pulborough gallops by her now husband Mark Perrett.

A medium-sized bay horse by Lyphard, Dancing Brave ran just twice as a two-year-old, winning minor races over a mile at Sandown and Newmarket. After overcoming soft ground in the Craven Stakes and winning comfortably by a length, he started 15-8 favourite for the 2000 Guineas, despite never having beaten an opponent of

real quality. His performance, however, was spectacular - brilliant acceleration enabling him to win by three lengths from the Free Handicap winner Green Desert.

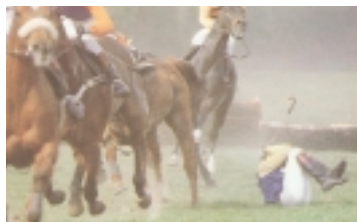
His trainer now had to decide whether to restrict him to a mile - or take a chance on his stamina in the Derby. Encouraged by his jockey, Greville Starkey, (who made a public statement shortly before the race that 'The Brave' was 'bomb-proof and was 'sure to win'), Guy Harwood grasped the nettle and sent his star colt to Epsom.

As with Colombo's Derby, the race will be argued about for many years, and, as with Colombo, the jockey again received the blame! Starkey was accused of setting The Brave an impossible task.

It was Dancing Brave's only defeat in Europe. He later won the Eclipse Stakes by four lengths and the King George (ridden by Pat Eddery).

His autumn campaign was directed towards the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe where, ridden again by Eddery, he came alarmingly late to win in brilliant style and record time from one of the strongest fields since the War. Dancing Brave was almost the complete racehorse. He had speed, acceleration and he stayed (just) a mile and a half. He was blessed too, with a perfect temperament. He retired to stud at Newmarket with a valuation of £14 million, but was later exported to Japan. As has often proved the case of such individual brilliance, he never sired a racehorse of his equal.

Homebred's 10 to follow over jumps



Now that the clocks have gone back and the turf flat season is over it's time to put a line under our selections. Our six included the fillies Suez, Intriguing and Dash to the Top whilst the colts were Oratorio, Montgomery's Arch and Raydan. They only managed 20 runs between them and £10 staked each way on every run did at least produce a profit - of just £1!

Picking horses to follow over jumps is even more difficult as injuries are far more likely to keep selections on the sidelines. As always, this list comprises those that may provide a little more value for being less obvious!

Ashley Brook
Colonel Frank
Don't be Shy
Exotic Dancer
Genghis
Laharna
Missed That
Rasharrow
Take the Stand
Villon

Good luck - and as always, exercise your own judgement about suitability of race conditions, going and riding arrangements!



Taking a closer look at horses

How does a horse's eyesight compare to ours?

Do horses see colour?

Many scientists believe that horses cannot see colour, however, there is no scientific proof of this.

Can horses see much detail?

Horses see less detail than the human eye, but they have a much broader field of vision than we do. Their vision is very sensitive to movement, which allows them to watch for possible enemies, even in the dark.

The horse has a hard time seeing depth. This is why many hunter/jumper riders will experience that it is harder to jump wider (deeper) fences than a single fence. Horses also cannot easily sense how far an object is from their body.

How well can horses see in the dark?

They can see better in the dark than humans. However, they take longer to adapt to light and dark than other animals.

This explains why many horses become frightened or anxious when being led from a lighted barn into a darker area (such as a dark trailer, or to an outside paddock at night).

Where are the horse's blind spots?

Horses have a blind spot that extends about 4 feet in front of their face, which may vary depending on the shape of head. If your horse has a wider head, he will have a longer blind spot. If he has a narrow head, he will have a shorter blind spot.

You should never approach your horse directly from the front. If you approach him from the front, he cannot see you until you are about six inches from his face (this explains why horse will raise and/or tilt or turn their head if you approach directly from the front). Even when you are that close, he only sees your shoulders and not the middle of your body - and even that much is distorted.

Horses cannot see the ground near their front feet, and they cannot see their own knees and chest. Horses also have a blind spot directly behind them. This is the most dangerous blind spot, should the horse become frightened and kick at you. Always be careful and alert when walking behind your horse. A horse may kick at any sudden, unexpected noise. Due to many blind spots, horses

have to raise and lower their heads in order to see objects in their proper focus. This will explain why many horses will raise their head (as if to spook) when a person walks up to them directly in front and reaches to pat the horse's forehead ...most likely, he is just trying to focus better on what he cannot see clearly.

Are blue eyes inferior?

Most horses have dark coloured eyes (usually brown). Some people believe that blue eyes are inferior. However, there is no scientific evidence that this is true. Blue eyes are the result of a lack of pigment in the iris. This does not affect the horse's vision.

Did you know?

The most races won by a trainer in a single day is 12 - achieved by Michael Dickinson on 27th December 1982.

He had 21 runners in 20 races at 6 different courses within a period of 3 hours! The winners included Wayward Lad in the King George VI Chase at Kempton Park and the nine 'losers' produced 5 seconds, 2 thirds and a fourth - only 1 runner out of 21 failing to contribute to prizemoney.

A flutter at the races

What is it that conjoins one of the world's most popular steeplechasers and the British Prime Minister? It is ironic that a horse described by his trainer Howard Johnson as "awesome" and the man famously dubbed "Teflon Tony", should have both exhibited the same physical flaw, not to mention one whose impact can so significantly impair performance and that can spark fears (or hopes) of retirement! Blair's fibrillating heart sent similarly uneven impulses through the national press, but there will not be many, even within racing, that will have taken stock of Grey Abbey's medical notes. Fewer still perhaps, are in full realisation that

his instances of atrial fibrillation are symptomatic of a problem within the racehorse that is becoming more widely diagnosed. In addition, the condition can present itself variously as an isolated incident (paroxysmal) or as sustained. Atrial fibrillation is a rapid, uncontrolled heart rhythm caused when the upper chambers of the heart (atria) quiver rather than beat. The primary reason for the equine susceptibility is the size of the horse's heart - the fact that it is so comparatively large leads to a lack of efficiency when it comes to conducting electrical impulses. Studies have consistently shown that aside from racehorses, those most

prone to AF are heavy hunters and draught horses - to put it simply, the bigger the horse, the greater the risk. With this in mind, it is no surprise that the condition appears to manifest itself more regularly, or at least for more prolonged periods, in jumpers. What is more intriguing is the notion that high class individuals are disproportionately affected. Far from being the stuff of legend, data has shown conclusively that good horses have bigger hearts. This is likely to provide scant comfort for connections of the likes of former topclass hurdler Dato Star and Grade One winner Hand Inn Hand, two of the higher profile sufferers in recent years.



Other contributory trigger factors may include the after-effects of a viral infection, abnormalities or deficiencies in electrolyte levels or the stress of long journeys and the duress of the race itself. AF will dramatically affect a horse's performance often causing it to pull itself up. However it's encouraging that high profile horses such as Grey Abbey can be successfully treated by medication and go on to win top races.

Know your rules Walk Overs

Changes to regulations now allow race entries to 're-open' in an attempt to eliminate small fields or races with a single runner declared. Rule 151 states "If only one horse is declared a runner, or all others are withdrawn prior to the start, the race will be deemed a 'walk-over'. In such cases it shall not be necessary for the horse to walk the entire course but that horse shall be ridden past the Judge's box and shall then be deemed the winner". An interesting footnote is that

this is the only way a horse can legally win two races in a day since the rules also allow the same horse to run in another race on the card. No horse is normally allowed to run twice on the same day. Any horse lucky enough to benefit from a walkover also receives all the prizemoney originally allocated for the placed horses as well as the winner.

Did you know?

The world's oldest jockey was Harry Beasley (1852 - 1939) who started his career in his early teens. He won the Grand National on Come Away in 1891 and partnered his own filly Mollie on 10th June 1935 - aged 83!

Cheats face clampdown



Dr Webbon wants to stop cheats

New procedures mean that samples collected as part of routine dope testing will now be frozen and stored for potential analysis years later. On average one in every ten runners is randomly dope tested and it's hoped that this new initiative

will deter cheats from using substances for which there is currently no test. Dr Peter Webbon is the Jockey Club's Director of Veterinary Science says "We will be looking for drugs that have been used with the sole intention of affecting the way a horse runs - and we are now reserving the right to go back and have another look at it later". In the event of a sample testing positive retrospectively any prizemoney will need to be repaid and the trainer will be liable to Jockey Club Disciplinary procedures.

Test your turf knowledge answer

The grey hurdler is Sayfar's Lad ridden by Mark Perrett - husband of Homebred trainer Amanda - and trained by Martin Pipe