

# Racing this Easter Weekend at Musselburgh



## Musselburgh Flat Season Reaches £1 Million Peak

Musselburgh Racecourse gets the Scottish flat season underway tomorrow with the double header Betfred Easter Festival and is putting up more than £1 million prize money over its 17 fixture campaign.

The Easter Saturday Royal Mile Handicap meeting boasts a £108,000 prize pot and has attracted a quality field vying for the £50,000 feature race, the [totepool.com](https://www.totepool.com) Royal Mile Handicap and supporting £20,000 Totepool Borderlescott Sprint Trophy, while the Easter Sunday family day meeting features the £25,000 Musselburgh Gold Cup.

Other seasonal highlights at the East Lothian course include the Totepool Edinburgh Cup Day on June 1 and a glamorous double header on June 14 and 15 with Stobo Castle Ladies Day on the Friday, followed by the £100,000 plus William Hill Scottish Sprint Cup meeting on the Saturday.

Musselburgh Racecourse chief, Bill Farnsworth said: “We have broken the £1 million prize watermark for the first time and that has been a continual progression, tweaking the programme to make the best use of what we have at Musselburgh and working closely with our sponsors.

“Kicking off the season with the £50,000 [totepool.com](https://www.totepool.com) Royal Mile Handicap on Easter Saturday, this sets out our stall for quality racing over the summer months. In June we have a cracking line up starting with the Totepool Edinburgh Cup which has increased from £50,000 to £60,000 and we hope to improve on last year’s 7000 attendance.

“The Scottish Sprint Cup weekend will be a fantastic combination of racing and fashion with Stobo Castle’s Ladies Day followed by one of the richest and fastest sprint meetings. Ladies Day always pulls in a massive crowd and we hope to repeat the success of the last few years with another 8000 plus attendance, while the Scottish Sprint Cup has jumped up from £40,000 to £70,000 and its little wonder its popularity continues to grow.

“Increasing prize money to attract the best owners, trainers and jockeys will remain a priority because that boosts attendance, which in turn means we can continually invest in the facilities which make Musselburgh such an attractive place to come racing.”

Kingsley House trainer Mark Johnston will make a bold bid to land tomorrow’s [totepool.com](http://totepool.com) Royal Mile Handicap with a powerful hand of four runners headed by recent all weather winner Fraserburgh. This consistent gelding by Shamardal had been placed in five of his six previous outings before quickening away from his rivals at Southwell to beat Gebayl by a decisive six lengths.

The Royal Mile Handicap has attracted a field of 11 runners including the tough as teak Top Notch Tonto from the yard of Ian McInnes. Top Notch Tonto progressed to win a valuable Ayr nursery in September before ending his 2012 campaign with a commendable third in Pontefract’s listed Silver Tankard.

Horses trained by David Barron always merit consideration at Musselburgh and his Newstead Abbey must not be underestimated. This improving three year old is bidding for a three timer after two clear-cut wins at Wolverhampton. Last time out Newstead Abbey showed an impressive burst of speed to quicken through a narrow gap and beat Skytrain by an ever increasing margin and his finishing speed could be the key to a third success.

Seven runners go to post for the £20,000 totepool Borderlescott Sprint Trophy staged in honour of the Scottish owned multiple listed and group race winner who retired last year. This valuable conditions race would appear to be a match between the evergreen course specialist Hamish McGonagall and the 2011 Prix de l'Abbaye hero Tangerine Trees.

The latter is set to receive plenty of weight from Hamish McGonagall and trainer Bryan Smart has been in winning form on the all-weather circuit. Musselburgh regulars however are unlikely to desert Tim Easterby's old favourite Hamish McGonagall who has such an impressive record in this race over the past seasons.

Jim Goldie is regularly in the money at Musselburgh's first turf meeting of the season and the Uplawmoor trainer will fancy his chances of going close in the £13,000 7f handicap at 4.45 with his course winner Rasaman. This proven handicapper has to be held up for a late run and should the gaps not come in time then Ruth Carr's Klynch, an unlucky third at Southwell, could be the one to take advantage.

- Gates opens at 11.30am on both days. First race on Saturday is at 1.50pm and 2.20pm on Easter Sunday.