

Looking ahead to the Scottish Grand National this spring



It may be a while away yet but canny horse racing punters are already sizing up the likely odds for the [Scottish Grand National](#), which will be held at Ayr on 11 and 12 April 2014. We may have a few meets before then but let's forget the January weather and take a look forward to the biggest race of the season.

All about Ayr

The home of the Scottish Grand National is, of course, [Ayr](#) and we're looking forward to the highlight of our National Hunt racing calendar. But before we get into that, how much do you know about Ayr?

It's the premier racecourse in Scotland and was officially opened in 1907. However, fascinatingly, racing in Ayr can be traced way back to the 1500s. No wonder it still causes such a buzz. It may have fewer entrants than the Aintree Grand National but it's no less hard won an honour.

The course is four miles and 110 yards long with 27 fences between the starting point and the victory point. Typically there are around 25 entrants and this year it looks like there should be around that number, although it's early days yet.

History of the Scottish Grand National

When all the Aintree excitement has died down the eyes of the racing world turn to Ayr. But how much do you know about our very own Grand National? Originally the course was at Houston, Renfrewshire for a short time before moving in 1858 to Bogside, near Irvine. It was then a race of around three miles

and wasn't known as the Scottish Grand National until 1880.

Although several winners have also won at Aintree, none in the same year apart from the aforementioned Red Rum. Horses who have won the double but in different years include Music Hall who won the Aintree race in 1922 and much more recently [Earth Summit](#).

The Coral Scottish Grand National 2014

Although odds aren't available as yet, soon enough you'll be able to search for the best odds at bookmakers.co.uk and work out who you think is likely to be following in Red Rum's footsteps and winning this year's race.

As the Scottish Grand National is held a week after the English Grand National, it's often a fact that horses who could have competed are out of the running, but it still remains the highlight of our local calendar, and along with the Gold Cup at Sandown, forms the traditional ending to the steeple chasing season. Red Rum's double victory in 1974 of the Aintree Grand National and the Scottish Grand National within a week remains unique – maybe it can be beaten this year?

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