

# Scottish Horse Racing: An Overview of Scotland's Five Active Racecourses

When it comes to horse racing venues, the UK is spoiled for choice. The number of great locations and courses, there are a sizeable amount of high-quality options. This is great in terms of both the horse racing ecosystem as a whole but also a huge bonus when it comes to the betting industry that pretty much supports it.

Indeed in terms of the amount of money backed on horse racing events across the UK, the sums are quite staggering. Cheltenham festival generates upwards of £500m, bet across the four days, and on that subject, why not check out [Cheltenham Gold Cup tips](#)? Doing so could help secure you a tidy payout.

When it comes to a varied selection of racecourses, Scotland has a great collection of venues, each of which has its own unique place in the history of horse racing.

Let's take a closer look at each of the venues.

## Ayr

Ayr plays host to arguably Scotland's best-loved racecourse, and it's one that hosts flat and National Hunt racing. It is the venue of the most significant event in the Scottish race calendar, the [Scottish Grand National](#), which takes place every April.

Its location, a short distance from the west coast of Scotland, helps to provide the racecourse with the sandy ground and amenable climate that makes Ayr a location for excellent horse racing almost all year long.

Opened in 1907, Ayr racecourse was originally based on the

Newbury course, and the Scottish Grand National was subsequently moved to the racecourse, from Irving, in 1966, and the track hasn't looked back since.

## **Kelso**

Kelso has the reputation of being the friendliest of the British racecourse, albeit this is the title that is self-bestowed; it's a fair assessment. Kelso has actually been running horse racing events, of some form or another, since 1734, which is quite astounding.

The current course was built in 1822 and suffered an arson attack during the early 20th century during the peak of the suffragette movement.

Races are run from September to May, and one of the key events is the Premier Hurdle, which takes place in March.



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## **Musselburgh**

This racecourse is just outside Edinburgh and is Scotland's second-biggest in size, behind Ayr, and hosts the Sensational Six, races that are considered the most prestigious in the country.

There's no formal dress code on this course, and as such, it's quite a relaxed place. There have been races taking place here since 1777, and it has battled hard times (with the threat of closure being a very real one back in the 1960s) but is still a shining light in the racing calendar today.

In 2022 [Musselburgh](#) is a revitalised racecourse, thanks to major investment via the Lothians Racing Syndicate.

## **Perth**

The most northerly racecourse in the UK, Perth is an excellent

course for jumps racing of just over a mile long. This is another of the Scottish racecourses with a long history, dating back to the 17th century.

Perth is host to the hugely popular Gold Cup, which takes place in June, and in August, the Summer Carnival Raceday is another that brings in the punters in their droves.

### **Hamilton Park**

This racecourse may well be the most scenic in Scotland and is a popular flat racing venue from May to September.

The course isn't too far from Glasgow, which means any event that occurs is usually well attended, and though there aren't massive races at the Hamilton Park course, they are entertaining spectacles nonetheless.

Hamilton Park first started hosting horse races in 1782 and was the first location to offer evening racing, which first took place in 1947.

### **Trying Times**

Over the past two years, the coronavirus has, of course, plagued many industries, and the hospitality sector has been especially hard hit.

The lack of races, and the reduction in attendance at those where spectators have been allowed to attend, has hit the [Scottish horse racing industry](#) hard, and there has been a fear that one of these five magnificent courses may become the victim of the pandemic, but thus far this hasn't proven the case, and we can only hope that better times are ahead for these historic venues.