

Speedway in Scotland – How the Sport Has Evolved Over the Decades

The 2023 speedway season is now well underway, including up here in Edinburgh after the Monarch's first Championship meeting of the year against the Redcar Bears. For many fans of this methanol-fueled, adrenaline-inducing sport, this means the return to making predictions on the outcome of the major speedway competitions. As a result, in the coming months, we'll see a rise in the number of people searching for [good deals and similar offers](#) from major online bookmakers as they look to get more value from their wagers.

As with other sports in Scotland, online sports betting is a fairly new phenomenon for speedway as, before the widespread adoption of the internet and smartphones, anyone wanting to place bets on speedway meetings would have to physically travel to a betting shop.

It's not just sports betting that has changed over the years, either. The entire landscape of speedway in the UK and here in Scotland has radically shifted over the last few decades. In many ways, the sport has faced some very difficult times as promoters have fought hard to keep their teams alive but it's also enjoyed some good times thanks to television broadcasting and the internet.

So with plenty more action to take place at the Armadale Stadium in the coming months, let's get in the mood by taking a look back at how speedway in Scotland has been shaped over the years.

Teams Folding

Like many sports that struggle with funding, speedway has had a perpetual problem with promoters having to pull the plug on their clubs. This isn't an exclusively Scottish problem, it's the case right across the UK as speedway has struggled to recover from the decline in popularity that it suffered in the 1980s.

Since the sport found its feet in the country, Scotland has seen at least three clubs open and then close. Sadly, with the exception of the Edinburgh Monarchs and the Glasgow Tigers, none of these clubs managed to survive longer than just a few years.

The first of these was Glasgow's Ashfield Giants which started its engines in 1949 after many riders from the former Newcastle Diamonds moved north. The Giants only lasted four years, folding in 1953. They were also briefly resurrected in 2000, but didn't make it to a second season.

Next, in 1951, came the Motherwell Eagles who, despite winning the Northern Shield in 1954, folded at the end of that season. The team didn't manage to run in 1955 because clubs from England didn't want to travel north of the border to compete there due to the added costs of doing so.

The Paisley Lions were a club that managed just two seasons, starting in 1975. Racing in red and gold, the team only managed 15th and 16th in the National League and folded due to financial difficulties.

Then There Were Two

This left just two speedway teams, the Edinburgh Monarchs and the Glasgow Tigers. The two clubs were founded in 1928, meaning they've managed to weather the rise and fall of speedway over the last century.

Unlike sports like football, both of Scotland's speedway teams have found themselves moving around a lot as their stadiums have been moved, closed, or leases terminated. For example, the Tigers began racing at White City Stadium, a greyhound racing venue, near to Rangers' Ibrox Stadium.

However, they were turfed out in 1969 to make way for the M8 motorway through Glasgow. Just a few years later, the club moved again, racing at Coatbridge until 1986. For one year, the team even moved to Cumbria before returning to Lanarkshire. Things have become more steady since 1999 following the move to Ashfield Stadium in Possilpark.

The Monarchs had endured a similar fate too, albeit not having to move quite as many times.

Success

The greater stability that both teams have enjoyed in the 21st century has allowed them to enjoy greater success. After a sizable drought through the 1990s, the Monarchs were Premier League Champions in 2003, 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2015, as well as picking up three Premier Trophies, a Premier League Knockout Cup, and several other pieces of notable silverware.

The Tigers have also seen more success in the 2000s and 2010s, with four Premier League Pairs victories, a Premier League championship, and the Premier League Knockout Cup.

Things have come off the boil a little for both teams in more recent years, but this could be turned around in the not too distant future.



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