

# Down Royal

## Location, Parking and Access



Down Royal racecourse is situated in Down Royal Park, a few miles outside the City of Lisburn.

Travelling from further afield the course is located about 10 miles south of Belfast with access from junction 8 of the M1.

There are brown signs in the local area.

By rail Lisburn Station is about 4 miles from the course and both Belfast International and Belfast City airports are close by. The latter being about a half hour drive (45 minutes at peak periods) away.

There is plenty of free parking on a grass / cinder mix.

## Course Layout



The course is an almost square, right handed, undulating circuit about 1m 7f round.

There is a steady climb up the back straight reaching a summit before the home turn where the straight is generally downhill before rising again for the final furlong.

The turns on the course are quite tight.

There is a small chute at the start of the home straight.

## Admission

Admission is £10 with concessions for students and seniors (£8).

A "punters package" is available for £20, including admission, racecard, a pint, a £5 betting voucher and admission to the Beef and Salmon Suite

Under 12's are admitted free of charge.

Annual membership is £120 (£110 for seniors).

## Overview

Down Royal is Northern Ireland's only Grade 1 track and it surely deserves that accolade.

Situated close to Lisburn and a mere half hour's drive from Belfast the course is conveniently located and, compared with many Irish courses, the signposting is excellent.

There is an airy, open feel to the course and there was plenty of space to move around, having said that by the courses own admission the day of the inspection was one of their quieter days.

Their feature meetings do attract large crowds and, by all accounts, can be quite congested.

It says a great deal for the course that Paul Nicholls chose Down Royal for Kauto Star's 2008 – 2009 seasonal debut and Kauto has not been the only top horse to be attracted to this course.

As you enter the course the first building you encounter will be the Hospitality pavilion, which is effectively what it says on the box. It house a couple of suites and a number of hospitality boxes.



Next is the main grandstand, which has covered, tiered viewing offering reasonably good viewing of the course.

I use the word "reasonable" because although there is excellent viewing of most of the course, views are obstructed of certain parts of the track.

Most specifically the far corner of the track, visibility of which is restricted by a farmhouse. However to help alleviate the problem there is a big screen, so the action can still be followed.

Inside the grandstand is a bright, spacious area with a bar located in the centre and a food outlet at one end. There are also Tote facilities in this area.

Beyond the main Grandstand is Governor's Stand, which appears to be a reserved stand, although on the lower level it houses the Winning Post Café.

The parade ring is located behind the stands.

The course and facilities are well maintained, the staff friendly and welcoming and the course can attract some decent horses.

Compared with some of the Spartan facilities at some Irish courses, Down Royal sets a high standard and is well worth a visit and at £10 the admission is very reasonable.

Watch the racing from the stands and you will miss little of the action.

The course operates in sterling although for visitors from south of the border there is a currency exchange facility by the main entrance.

Certainly a course worth visiting and one I will want to return to again.

### **Catering**

The usual range of offerings are available in the main Grandstand and Winning Post Café.

Sample prices: -

Burger £3.50, Sausage Bap £3, Bacon Bap £3 (add an egg for 50p)

Soup £3, Stew £4, Sandwiches £3, Sausage and Champ £5.

### **Ancillaries**

#### ***Bookmakers***

The betting ring is situated in front of the stands and as is usual at Irish meetings, well frequented with around 40 layers. Unfortunately despite the large number of layers they were betting at an appalling over-round of 3%.

#### ***Racecard***

Costing £2.50 or €3 it is a standard Irish card with all the basic information you need but light on editorial. It did contain a crossword to test the old grey matter.

#### ***Toilets***

Certainly adequate for the quieter meetings, they are modern and well maintained.

I do wonder how they would cope on the busier days.

### **Parade Ring**



Situated behind the stands it is an elongated elliptical shape with good viewing.

<b>Contact Details</b>	
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<b>Fixtures 2012</b>
February 1 <sup>st</sup> March 17 <sup>th</sup> May 7 <sup>th</sup> June 1 <sup>st</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 27 <sup>th</sup> August 31 <sup>st</sup> September 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> December 26 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Inspection Dates</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Type</b>
03/02/10	Sleet and rain drying out later	7 jump midweek