


Course **Example**

Inspection Dates:

Date	Weather	No of Races
19/06/07	Rain races 1 – 4, becoming sunny later <i>Included to indicate prevailing conditions, clearly a wet windy day will have an impact on crowds and general atmosphere etc.</i>	6 (Flat / evening) <i>If the course stages both flat and jump then type of racing will be mentioned. Meetings are afternoon meetings unless otherwise stated</i>

 <p><i>Map showing approximate location of course</i></p>	<p>Description</p> <p>Although Example is a dual purpose course, it is primarily known for its flat racing and in particular the Festival meeting in August.</p> <p>The round course is, in fact, oval in shape, with a chute hosting races up to a mile in length, although to confuse matters some one mile races are also run on the round course. The round course is about 1½ miles. Jump races take place exclusively on the round course. The course is right handed (clockwise). The straight course is uphill nearly all the way, whilst the round course is basically downhill to the furthest point from where it is then steadily uphill to the finish.</p> <p><i>A brief description of the course and its characteristics the same as shown in the summary.</i></p> <p>Draw Advantage: <i>Horses drawn low have an advantage in races up to 7 furlongs when the going is good to firm or firm For flat courses only, any draw bias will be indicated. Only if significant, no mention of bias means no proven bias exists</i></p> <p>Race Dates 2007</p> <p>Jumps: January 16th February 27th November 26th December 29th</p> <p>Flat: May 22nd June 19th (Eve) August 15th, 16th, 17th & 18th (Festival Meeting) September 18th, 19th & 20th</p> <p><i>Details of fixtures where course has agreed for them to be used</i></p>
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Admission Price Guide

Example operates a three enclosure system. The Premier enclosure charges £17 (£20 at the Festival meeting), juniors age 18-21 are admitted for £15 (not the Festival). The Grandstand enclosure is £12 (£15 Festival) with seniors / students admitted for £7 (£10 Festival) and the course enclosure a bargain basement £4 (£3 for seniors).

Discounts are available for groups of 20+ (booked in advance). Accompanied under 18's are admitted free of charge.

Details of admission charges and any concessions

Dress Code: Smart casual in Premier. Jeans and trainers are acceptable as long as they are clean and tidy.

Any dress code that may apply

Access and Car Parking

Access is via a single, narrow road with free parking on grass. Arriving wasn't too bad but leaving was an absolute nightmare, it took 43 minutes to get out of the car park and a further 8 minutes to leave the course itself, this just isn't acceptable and it spoilt what could be an otherwise enjoyable days racing. Even worse this is on a day when there was a free concert after racing so a large number of racegoers had remained behind, one can only begin to imagine how bad it would have been if everyone was leaving at the same time.

Details of parking and any costs involves, plus any issues identified

The station is 1½ miles from the course served by an hourly service from London (45 mins journey time). A free shuttle bus meets all arrivals from two hours before the first race and a transfer back to the station departs 20 minutes after the last race.

Details of public transport access

Enclosures

Example has the most amazing grandstand which wouldn't look out of place on any coastal towns promenade, whether it is ideal for a 21st century racing grandstand is another issue, however the course is constrained in there is a railway line running immediately behind the stand so any scope for redevelopment is limited and would probably also result in the course having to be realigned. Having said that, on balance, it is no bad thing to have an eccentric stand.

The main stand, with its cast iron colonnades and flat roof is shared between the Members and Grandstand enclosures. There are a couple of cosy bench seats at the rear in both enclosures and a few rows of seats in the members side. Viewing is generally good although there are some "blind spots" as the result of the infrastructure of the building and the integrity tower. Also the golf club clubhouse obstructs the view turning into the back straight of the chase course and of the 2 mile 5 furlong chase start. Having said that there is a big screen and plenty of TV monitors allowing viewing of the entire race.

The highlight of the stand though must be the flat roof which provides excellent views of the course, although there are still some blind spots from the integrity tower and clubhouse. The only downer is the roof isn't covered so if the weather is wet or windy it could be a tad uncomfortable.

The areas in front of the stands are shallow and concrete.

The course enclosure is very basic with a small stand and little else apart from a bar / canteen which has seen better days. Natural viewing is limited however it is adjacent to the big screen so races can be viewed on there.

A description of the stands and enclosures is given

Commentary and PA

The sound system was generally good, except down towards the children's play area where there was a very bad echo and reverb.

There were some post race interviews.

Description of the sound system and any poor areas

Paddock

Seating Yes ... there was seating all the way around the public area of the paddock

Tiered Viewing Yes

The first area of the course you come across as you come through the main entrance. The pear shaped paddock also includes the winners enclosure at the 'fat' end. One side fronts onto private boxes, however the remainder of the paddock is surrounded by seating, indeed a slightly more comfortable version of the usual button seating. Behind this seating at the 'fat' end there is also tiered viewing. A small pre-parade ring and saddling boxes are located beyond the thin end. The centrepiece is a brilliant piece of topiary of a horse jumping the fence.

It's a pleasant paddock and the proof of this is the large number of racegoers who crowd round it before and after each race.

Description of the parade ring area, including details of any seating or tiered viewing areas.

Racecard

Cost £2.50 Pages 48 Advertising 15 pages

The first three pages are all advertising so it takes a while to reach the editorial pages. There is a colour plan of the enclosures. There are two pages of notices.

The tipping page yielded 3 winners of the seven races.

The racecards were in full colour and were detailed. There were colours for the away jump meeting (but not the flat meeting), unusually found in the centre of the racecard.

The racecard was average compared with others. My biggest issue is the racecard was printed on grey paper which made it difficult to read if you were standing in the shadows and being a day with a cold wind standing in the shadows was obligatory.

Bookmakers

Enclosure	Number	Minimum
Tatts	15	£1 in a place, £2 generally
Rails	8	£5
Course	3	£1

Details of the number of bookmakers in each enclosure with the minimum bet available on the day. If the minimum bet is only available at a single bookmaker this is mentioned and the general minimum is also given. As a rule of thumb the more bookmakers there are in an enclosure the more competitive the market will be.

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Toilets

On the whole the toilets are good, adequately sized and generally clean.

The one exception are the gents urinals near the paddock. This is basically a bricked off area with no roof. So you get wet if it rains and on a hot day, as when inspected, it smelt less than appealing. Also there was no soap available at the wash basins.

General observations on the toilet facilities, comments are generally short and to the point. Anything out of the ordinary will be mentioned.

Food and Drink

The food and drink options at Example are a cut above what is usually found at a racecourse. True there are the usual burger vendors if that floats your boat but there is a more upmarket choice available and some of it reasonably priced.

There are two restaurants in the club enclosure with the Main Restaurant overlooking the track and offering packages at £75 or £87.50 a head, (the latter has a seafood platter and champagne).

The Club Restaurant has the disadvantage of no viewing but that is countered by its superb ambiance and the finishing line is only a short walk away. Packages cost £45 (two course) or £55 (three course)

The paddock lawn is surrounded by various food outlets with Carry Hope supplying sea food to his usual high standard. The gem for me though was a curry stall offering an excellent package of curry / Bombay (or should that be Mumbai now) potato / rice and samosa all for £6 and the quality wouldn't disgrace a high quality Indian Restaurant.

Topped off with Carte D'or ice cream - a good selection of foods.

Lager is £3 and bitter £2.70 with water £1 a bottle.

A summary of the food offerings at the course including sample prices. The examples are provided to give, excuse the pun, a flavour of what is available and it isn't intended to be a comprehensive list. Prices are those being charged on the day of the inspection and are, of course, liable to change. Facilities do change from meeting to meeting.

General Observations

This final section is probably the most subjective in that it summarises the experience of the course as a whole. There are courses where some areas are slated in the review, however they can be more than compensated by other above average aspects. The reviews are based on my criteria of an enjoyable days racing. A racecourse that provides a good racing experience in poor surroundings will rate higher than a racecourse that offers a great boozy afternoon out, but is substandard as far as the racing experience is concerned. We are fortunate in that we have a large, diverse, range of racecourses. As a result no two courses are the same and each offers a different experience. Indeed whilst there are courses I like more than others there isn't a single course that I would never visit again, although, in some cases, it may be a long time before my next visit. The following are some example comments from the general observations section.

“The executive appear to care about the racegoers and they are aware of why people are there – to see the racing. Other racecourses could learn a great deal from

“In terms of viewing alone it is hard to justify paying extra money for a Premier badge, however the saving grace of the extra expense is that it allows access to the first floor bar which is mercifully smoke free.”

“OK if you are going to compare it with the top tracks it will never come out favourably, but if you accept xxxxxxxxxx for what it is, a small track catering, generally, for the racing enthusiast then it's a reasonable course.”

“Another area where the course must be highly commended is with its signage. There are signs all over the place explaining all the ins and outs of a day at the races, excellent for the newcomer and a sometimes useful reminder for us more seasoned racegoers.”

“I don't think it would be too disrespectful to say that most of the annual members of xxxxxxxxxx racecourse have seen better days and, sadly, the same could be said of the fabric of some of the infrastructure”

“The key thing is to remember to pack your wellies and wear appropriate clothing I didn't and my shoes were almost ruined and my suit had to go straight to the cleaners.”

“This was my first visit to xxxxxxxxxx and my preconception was it would be a compact, overcrowded course with no room to swing a cat. I'm more than happy to admit I was wrong. Yes it is very bijou but the management have done an amazing job in making the most of the limited space that is available to them.”

“My initial impressions were that it had a dilapidated feel about it and it certainly could do with a lick of paint, but the more I explored the course the more I grew to like it.”

“There was an underlying atmosphere at the course which wasn't pleasant (even before racing started there were some groups in the enclosures who had clearly already been drinking for a couple of hours)

“There are those in racing who would be happy if xxxxxxxxxx and courses like it were consigned to the dustbin of history, it would be a crying shame if it were to happen. Courses like xxxxxxxxxx deserve to survive and it stages racing in its truest grass roots sense.”

“..... is a course that, on first impressions, you want to slaughter in a review; get under its skin and you quickly fall in love with the place. It is a course to treasure, it's certainly unique – I only wish I lived nearer to it, it's one of the few courses I would actually consider taking out an annual membership.”

First Timer Suitability

What is says on the box. The criteria being a course that is relatively compact, where racegoers can get close to all parts of the race from pre-parade ring through to a close viewing of the race from several vantage points.

It may be idiosyncratic but I would have no trouble recommending xxxxxxxxxx for the first time racegoer. The paddock is accessible, viewing is good and it's possible to get very close to the action.

Exit	
From Car Park	9 minutes
To A Road	13 minutes
To Trunk Network	17 minutes

* Times taken as time from leaving main enclosure to:

- a) Leaving the racecourse main entrance or car park entrance (whichever is latter)
- b) Joining the nearest A road
- c) Joining the nearest trunk road / motorway

Where racecourse entrance is off a trunk road all three times will be the same.