

Perth Hunt

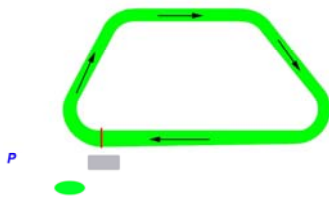
Location, Parking and Access



Access is via a single, narrow road with parking on grass. Arriving wasn't too bad but leaving was an absolute nightmare on the first visit where it took 43 minutes to get out of the car park and a further 8 minutes to then leave the course itself. However on the subsequent visit departure was a simple affair and there were even police controlling access to the main road, thus ensuring a good traffic flow. Clearly I was just unlucky the first time.

The course is 3 miles from the centre of Perth, which is the location of the nearest railway station. A shuttle bus runs from Perth to the course.

Course Layout



The jumps only course is a right handed (clockwise) circuit, of just over 1¼ miles and it is flat. Local trainers tend to do well here.

Nippy, adaptable horses who can cope with the tight bends do well at Perth.

Admission

Perth operates a two enclosure policy, Grandstand (£15 - £20) and Course (£10 - £15)

Accompanied under 16's admitted free.

Annual membership: £115 single, £200 dual

There is no published dress code.

Discounts: Seniors Disabled Student Group

Overview

I am not too proud to admit that sometimes I get things wrong and I have to confess after my first visit to Perth racecourse in 2006 I got it totally wrong, when I savaged the course in this review.

I am not saying what I reported was in any way incorrect, I did have a bad experience that day. However since then feedback I have received from others has all be contrary to my observations that day.

Consequently I looked forward to revisiting the course and now I am more than happy to put the record straight. I have changed my view of Perth racecourse.

I will however, for consistency, leave some of the earlier observations in the review as they illustrate what can happen on a "bad day", although by all accounts the bad days are very few and far between.



The enclosures are generally flat with some limited steppings in front of the buildings. There is very little cover should the weather be inclement.

The viewing isn't particularly brilliant at ground level, with the best viewing being on the middle to top of the steppings, however these prime spots are soon taken and can be jealously guarded, this was especially true at the evening meeting. At the midweek afternoon meeting this was less of an issue.

Apart from a few benches there is no seating. The area in front of the stands is generally laid to grass.

Having a corporate marquee in the centre of the course obstructs viewing of the turn into the back straight and, depending where you are standing, views of a the hurdle or the jump on the side of the course.

The course enclosure is in a flat area in the centre of the course with poor viewing.

There isn't a traditional grandstand as such, more a number of buildings with tiered steppings to the front, although they are not that high in most areas – even the commentator has to make do with a pitch on the steppings.

Most of the buildings are wooden and in keeping with the rural setting. Most contain permutations of bars and restaurants.

The Nelson stand is bright and airy inside with a betting shop and a couple of bars and slightly bigger steppings but it is well short of the finishing line. Unusually for the course this is a brick building which is in contrast to the remainder of the buildings.

There has been racing at Perth since 1613 and there is no doubt that it's located in a beautiful setting, in the grounds of Scone Palace.

Perth is a very popular course with the jump racing fraternity and they can attract some decent fields. Nigel Twistan-Davies is a frequent southern raider with a very good strike rate.

The facilities are basic compared with some of the bigger courses and when the weather is poor you have the option of being crushed in what little available indoor space there is or you just have to get wet.

In hindsight I wonder if Perth is a victim of its own success. The first meeting was an evening meeting with a top name entertainment after racing. This led to a huge attendance and the large numbers were probably behind the problems encountered.

Even at the midweek meeting there was a reasonably good crowd. They are also a friendly and knowledgeable crowd – it is a course where you are made to feel welcome by both the staff and fellow racegoers.

One of my complaints at the first meeting was the strong drinking culture with racegoers almost being encouraged to drink as much as possible. Mobile beer sellers, using the "hard sell" approach predominated. At the second visit these mobile vendors had disappeared. Even more encouragingly there were prominent signs at the bars saying drunken behaviour will not be tolerated and offenders will not be served and may be ejected.

After my review of the course following my first visit I wrote that I hoped my first visit coincided with a bad day and I would be more impressed when I revisited. I am delighted to report that I now come away with a much better impression of this course. My only regret is I live so far away from Perth and I cannot attend more often.

If you are ever in the area on a race day then make sure you get there.

Even if you don't live in the area make an effort to attend a meeting – it will be worth the journey.

Finally mention must be made of Sam Morshead, the General Manager, and his team. If the success of a racecourse could be measured by the passion and commitment of its management team then there would not be a course in the land that would match Perth. If only all racecourse management teams shared the passion and commitment shown by the team at Perth then racing in this country would be in a much better state than it is now.

Catering

The main restaurant offers packages for £65, advance booking is essential.

There is a popular fish and chip shop, offering fish and chips for £5.50 and scampi and chips for £6.00 and it seemed to be doing a busy trade.

A café in the main stand offers soup with a roll for £2.50 and sandwiches for £2.35 - £3.50. A hot dish of the day was available for £5.25 and a large sausage baguette for £3.50

At the evening meeting there was a unit selling Aberdeen Angus Beef rolls for £5.50, although the meat was a tad on the tough side.

For a "smaller" course Perth offers a good selection of food, catering for all tastes and budgets.

Bitter was being sold at £2.80 a pint, lager at £3 and a bottle of water was £1.20

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were 25 bookmakers in the main enclosure and only two in the course enclosure. Betting to an average over round of 1.6% a runner.

Racecard

Costing £2, a well presented race card. Including a reasonable colour plan of the facilities. There was a good review of the previous meeting with photographs of all the winners in action.

There was a list of runners at the evenings other meeting but little more information, so one wonders why it was included.

There was also an interesting page detailing the history of racing at Perth.

Toilets

They were more than adequate for the numbers present and were clean.

There is a sign in the gents warning about the hot water being very hot – ignore the sign at your peril.

Parade Ring

A small, compact parade ring which became very crowded, making it difficult to view the horses.




There are a number of tiered viewing stands.

Non Racing Attractions

Set in the grounds of Scone Palace, that is a good place to start. Perth itself is a charming city, well worth a detour.

Further afield you are too far away from some of the most beautiful scenery in the country.

Contact Details

	www.perth-races.co.uk
	01738 551597
	Perth Racecourse, Scone Palace Park, Perth, PH2 6BB

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012

April 25th, 26th & 27th
May 16th (eve) & 17th
June 10th
July 4th, 15th, 15th & 31st (eve)
August 1st (eve) & 18th
September 26th & 27th

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
01/08/06	Cloudy with showers then continuous rain.	6 jump midweek evening
24/09/08	Overcast but mild	7 jump midweek