

Southwell

Location, Parking and Access



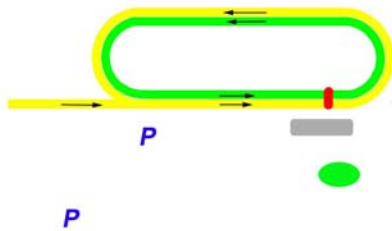
The racecourse is situated outside of the town of Southwell, which itself is 4 miles from Newark and 14 miles from Nottingham.

The approach to the racecourse is initially inauspicious as it involves driving through a bleak industrial estate then down a 2 mile private road.

Once there two car parks await the racegoers. The 'public' car park has a cinder surface whilst the members car park has a tarmac surface. Parking is free.

Public transport access is by train with Rolleston station adjacent to the course. Trains run from (Newark – infrequently, Nottingham – infrequently and Lincoln – infrequently)

Course Layout



The track is a fibresand oval of 1¼ miles with a chute on the home straight for 5 furlong races. It is a left handed (anti-clockwise) course.

There is a shorter 1 mile 1 furlong grass track inside the all weather which is used for jump racing and the very occasional flat grass meeting.

On the grass track speedy adaptable sorts do well. Although there are long straights long striding horses seem to be inconvenienced by the close proximity of two of the fences in the back straight.

On the AW track watch out for course specialists.

Draw Advantage: Generally none, except that over 6-7f horses drawn high do not do that well.

Admission

Southwell operates a two enclosure policy Premier (£16 - £20) and Grandstand (£11 - £12)

Diamond Club members, 65 and over and £2.50 to join, get £2 off standard admission prices. A special package, bookable in advance, is available for groups of twelve or more. Registered carers for disabled guests and accompanied under 16's are admitted free of charge.

Annual membership: £250

T-shirts, shorts and trainers are not permitted in the Premier enclosure.

Discounts: Seniors **Disabled** **Group**

Overview

In the Premier enclosure, access is good with shallow steps, which are also rubber coated thus increasing grip. There is no seating and the stand is 75% under cover. Viewing is not particularly brilliant, most of the round course is visible but the straight course is only visible from the lower most steps. Also the finishing post is in the grandstand enclosure so it is questionable as to the value of using the members enclosure in terms of viewing

In the Grandstand enclosure access is, again, good with shallow steps, which are also rubber thus increasing grip. There is no seating and the stand is 75% under cover. Viewing is reasonably good, arguably better than in the Premier section of the stand. The area in front of the enclosures is a combination of concrete and grass and viewing from this level is reasonable.



I think even the most ardent supporter of Southwell would be hard pressed to argue it is the prettiest racecourse in the country. Despite its central location it isn't easy to get to and, on the whole, the quality of racing is decidedly bottom draw.

All this is evidenced by the habitual low attendances at the course, especially at some all weather meetings. There is a standing joke in racing that the racegoers at Southwell are all on first name terms with one another.

Whilst the course may not be glamorous it is, however, functional and the welcome is warm and racegoers are looked after. Southwell provides bread and butter betting fodder for the betting shops. Despite the lower grade, however almost every race had the maximum number of runners possible so it must be doing something right.

Southwell does also stage National Hunt racing, over temporary obstacles, and that has an ardent following, attracting reasonable size crowds to the all too few fixtures. It is interesting to note that 2009 sees an increase from seven to eleven jump fixtures.

From the rear the grandstand looks as though it wouldn't be out of place in the industrial estate down the road. However once inside it is spacious and airy. Following the floods in the summer of 2007 they took the opportunity to effectively gut and rebuild the inside of the ground floor of the main stand. The finished item is a great improvement. They say talk about the benefits of an ill wind, in Southwell's case it was an ill flood that eventually worked in their favour.

For all the shortcomings in terms of quality Southwell does have a lot going for it and it is a pity more racegoers don't give it a go. There are plenty of so called 'better' tracks who could learn something from Southwell on how to treat their customers.

The only thing I would perhaps question at Southwell is their two enclosure policy, it is questionable as to whether paying the extra £5 to go into the Premier enclosure is really worth the money. They may be better off having a single enclosure policy and charging everybody, say £12.

Catering

There is a restaurant in the members enclosure with some of the tables having a view of the racecourse.

The food at Southwell is very good, nothing fancy but well presented, good quality food at a reasonable price.

Beer prices were cheaper than most other courses (Bitter £3.20 / Lager £3.40).

Beef rolls are available for £4.30, pork rolls £4.20, I was even asked if I wanted the roll buttered. The beef was succulent and two very generous slices were provided.

Mid-afternoon, once I had discovered the fish and chip shop I indulged in a portion of lovely crispy chips smothered in gravy.

Sample Prices: Sandwiches from £2.00, Baguettes from £2.50, Soup and Roll £2.20, Pork Roll £4.20, Beef Roll £4.30, Jacket Potatoes £2 - £4.20, Fish £4.40, Chips £1.30 and fish shop pies £2.70.

There is also a pie stand with various combinations of pies, with mash, peas or any combination thereof – prices £3.20 through to £5.00.

Water was £1.50 a bottle

There is also an excellent, old fashioned, sweet shop behind the stands.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

Ten bookmakers were standing, operating to an average over round of 1.7% a runner.

Racecard

Cost £2.50 and I am pleased to report a colour card. When I first reviewed the course the card contained no jockey colours, which is inexcusable in this day and age.

It has to be said the card, compared with others, is basic – however it is a step in the right direction.

Toilets

Toilets are plentiful and clean.

Parade Ring

The paddock is one of the better points of the racecourse, located behind the stands it is a reasonable size and is adjacent to the pre-parade ring and saddling boxes allowing a good view of the pre-race action. There is a separate winners enclosure.

Non Racing Attractions

Southwell village is attractive and the market towns of Newark and Nottingham are not far away.

Contact Details	
	www.southwell-racecourse.co.uk
	0870 220 2332
	Southwell Racecourse Ltd, Rolleston, Near Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG25 0TS

Ownership	Arena Leisure
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Fixtures 2012
<p><i>Jump</i></p> <p>January 4th & 18th February 15th & 29th March 19th April 20th (eve) May 2nd & 15th June 6th (eve) July 15th & 27th August 19th November 12th December 4th</p> <p><i>Flat AW</i></p> <p>January 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 12th, 24th & 31st February 2nd, 7th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 21st & 23rd March 1st, 6th, 8th, 13th, 14th, 20th & 27th April 3rd, 10th & 17th May 9th & 23rd June 10th (eve) July 16th & 17th (eve) August 9th (eve), 15th (eve) & 28th (eve) October 4th & 25th November 6th, 14th, 15th, 20th, 26th & 27th December 11th, 14th, 15th, 18th, 20th, 21st, 27th & 29th</p>

Inspection Dates		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
21/11/06	Mainly sunny but a cold wind	7 AW midweek
11/12/07	Sunny spells but a bit chilly	8 AW midweek
11/08/08	Warm with sunny spells	6 Jump midweek
27/05/09	Warm and sunny	6 jump midweek evening
19/01/10	Misty and cold	7 jump midweek

05/01/10

Overcast and showery

7 jump midweek

