

Taunton

Location, Parking and Access

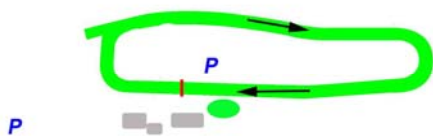


The course is located a couple of miles outside of the town. If approaching from the M5 exit at junction 25. It has to be said that signposting from the motorway is not brilliant, although there is a good route map on the course website.

Parking is on grass and free.

The nearest railway station is Taunton, which has regular services from London. There is no public transport from the town to the course, however a courtesy bus operates. This departs from the railway station one hour before the first race, also calling at the bus station. It returns 30 minutes after the last race.

Course Layout



Taunton is a tight oval circuit 1¼ miles round. It's a right handed (clockwise) course and it is very undulating.

The fences are relatively easy and the final three furlongs is on the rise.

The turns are tight and Taunton is a course that seems to attract course specialists.

Admission

There are two enclosures, the Portman Grandstand (£16) and Tattersalls (£13).

Annual membership: £150

As is generally the case accompanied under 16's are admitted free of charge.

Discounts: Juniors (16-24) Advanced Group

Overview

Purchasing a Portman Grandstand badge doesn't really afford any great advantage over Tattersalls, except that you will have access to the Portman Stand overlooking the parade ring and winning post. Inside the stand there is a bar and a café, offering a smaller selection than in Tattersalls. The stand has tiered viewing with a single row of seats at the back. Viewing is generally good except the first hurdle in the home straight is not visible, nor is the exit from the home straight.



The Orchard Stand is the stand serving the Tattersalls enclosure and it consists of tiered viewing, with no seating. Viewing restrictions are the same as in the Portman Stand with the only real difference being the stand is located beyond the finishing line.

The areas in front of the stands are hardstanding and the public area is relatively narrow. Indeed the course itself is quite narrow,

so when the horses are on the "far side" of the course there are a great deal closer to the stands than at many other courses.

There is a big screen so the horses can still be viewed when in the "blind spots"

Taunton is another of those courses which I would define as a typical small jumping track. It has no pretension to be something it isn't. It is a small local track, staging moderate jump racing but with a loyal following. The day of the inspection it certainly had a good sized crowd for a November mid-week meeting. It is another of those courses where the racegoers know their stuff and are there for the racing rather than getting hammered.

Indeed Taunton is one of those courses which almost exclusively races midweek.

If you turn up at Taunton expecting the grandeur of Ascot or York you will be disappointed. If you are happy with generally basic, but adequate, facilities and a very friendly welcome then Taunton will be the place for you. This is racing at the grass roots level and I love it.

Catering

Lets face it this ain't going to be the Ritz and the choices are limited. However what there is good quality and exceptionally good value for money.

The Orchard Restaurant is the main eating option offering views of the course. The package includes a three course lunch and afternoon tea, all for a very reasonable £48 including admission and a window seat. This is one of the cheapest packages I have come across.

There is a cafeteria on the ground floor of the Orchard Stand, which seems to do its utmost to undersell itself. If you look at the menu board it seems, on first impression, all they have on offer is pies, pasties, sandwiches or bacon baps. They also have some full meals but this is not

immediately obvious. The bacon bap looked to be very generously filled and at only £2.80 it seemed great value. Pies and pasties were priced at £1.80 each. Fish and chips were available, as was an excellent home made steak and kidney pie with peas and chips for only a fiver.

The cafeteria in the Portman Stand has a range of pies and sandwiches on offer.

There was a single mobile unit in the centre of the course. Each stand had a bar.

Whilst there may not be a huge range of food on offer at Taunton, what is offered is good quality and, compared with other courses, exceptionally good value for money. They should be commended.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were 26 bookmakers standing in what was a rather crowded betting ring. The cramped ring must have put the layers in a miserable mood as they were betting to a rather mean average over round of just over 2% a runner.

Racecard

Costing £2.50, I think the most generous description would be "modest". There was very little more than the racecards themselves, although there was an interesting piece in the centre commemorating the 80th anniversary of the course. There was a good colour guide to the course, however this was hidden inside the back cover.

Toilets

Once you find them they are large and more than adequate to cope with the numbers. They were also clean and presentable.

Parade Ring



In keeping with the rest of the course it is functional rather than pretty or attractive. Oval in shape it is located in front of the stands. It has some button seating but no tiered viewing.

The winners enclosure is contained within the parade ring and the pre-parade ring is located almost adjacent to it.

Non Racing Attractions

Cheddar caves and Wookey Hole are not too far away.

Devon and Exmoor are also in easy striking distance as are the resorts of Mindhead and Burnham.

Contact Details

	www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk
	01823 325035
	Taunton Racecourse Orchard Portman, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 7BL

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012

January 9th, 19th & 31st

February 9th & 21st

March 1st, 12th & 28th

April 12th

October 30th

November 15th & 29th

December 13th & 30th

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
15/11/07	Sunny with a cool breeze	7 jump midweek
13/11/08	Wet	7 jump midweek
21/1/10	Overcast with a few spits and spots	7 jump midweek