

Warwick

Location, Parking and Access

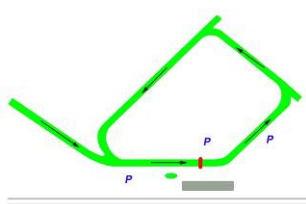


If approaching from the M40 ignore the signs for Warwick Town centre, instead follow the signs for the castle. As you head towards the Castle you then pick up the signs for the racecourse. If you choose to approach via the town centre you will get stuck in the inevitable traffic congestion.

If you are an annual member, owner or trainer you get to park on a nice hardstanding near the entrance. Everybody else has to park in the centre of the course with the resultant bottlenecks when trying to leave.

Warwick station is a short walk from the racecourse. Warwick is served from Birmingham and Leamington Spa by a half hourly service.

Course Layout



The course is a left handed (anti-clockwise) circuit of 1 mile 5 furlongs with some undulations on the far side. There is a dog-leg extension to the home straight which is used to stage 5 furlong flat races.

The course has some sharp turns.

The course is appreciate by handy types who can cope with the sharp turns and also fast front runners. Horses who are one-paced or need time to settle tend not to do well.

On the jumps course front runners are favoured, bearing in mind the short run in. There are also five fairly stiff fences in the back straight, so sound jumping is a strong requirement.

Draw Advantage: When the going is soft horses drawn high have an advantage

Admission

Warwick generally has a single enclosure policy (£15 - £18), however at some summer meetings the course enclosure (£8) is opened.

Concessions are available for OAP's. Discounts are available for advance bookings or for group bookings for groups of ten or more, must be booked in advance. Accompanied under 16's are admitted free of charge.

Annual membership: Full £170, Joint £310, Junior (18-24) £85, National Hunt £95

Discounts: Seniors **Advanced** **Group**

Overview

Warwick now operates a single main enclosure policy, with the course enclosure being open for summer weekend and Bank Holiday meetings.



The main grandstand is on two levels with tiered viewing but no seating. Viewing is generally good ... I say generally because Warwick is one of those strangely designed courses where there is a hill in the middle of the course, this means there is no "naked eye" view of the section leading into the far side of the course. Aware of this there is a big screen available at all meetings.

The hard standing area in front of the stand is relatively narrow. The old Members Stand has upper level viewing only (the lower level is now a seafood restaurant) – this stand is set further back from the track.

The enclosures at Warwick are best described as long and relatively narrow, with all the action taking place in front of the stands. There is plenty of cover in inclement weather although with the main grandstand having an open end there can be little escape from the wind when it blows. There is also a horsewalk in front of the enclosures allowing racegoers to have a close look at the runners as they go down.

The course enclosure has basic facilities with limited viewing of the racing. It wasn't open at any of the inspected meeting and it will be inspected in more detail in a future review.

Warwick is what I would best describe as an average racecourse and I don't mean that in a disparaging way. It isn't as good as the top courses but it doesn't pretend to be, on the other hand there are many courses offering worse facilities and less value for money.

It's situated fairly close to the town centre and if you approach from the "wrong way" you will get caught in the town centre traffic jams. Parking is in the centre of the course, which has the serious disadvantage that if you do need to get away early for any reason then you can only get out well before or well after any races.

The course is well laid out with good access to the pre-parade ring and paddock and the walkway is an added bonus.

Viewing of the action is relatively good, within the physical constraints of the course ... I'm sure if a new course was being built now it wouldn't be designed with a hill in the middle of it. Then again they have been racing at Warwick for 300 years, so they must be doing something right. The course has seen a great deal of development in recent years and it is certainly better than it was when I first visited it some ten years ago.

The management have done very well with recent development work, especially considering the physical constraints they face – the stands back on to a main road so there is no room for expansion to the rear and the configuration to the front of the stands allows for little leeway, anything more adventurous would entail very expensive track realignment, so given those constraints the course executive should be very pleased with what they have achieved so far.

The atmosphere at the course is friendly, staff are helpful and stewarding is unobtrusive but efficient.

The only real gripe concerns the quality of the PA system in the upper level of the main enclosure and I am wondering if it is something to do with the fact the commentary box is actually situated in the same part of the stand and the speakers are set up in such a way as to avoid feedback.

If you want a good days racing, quite often of a reasonable quality, especially over jumps, then you could do a lot worse than go to Warwick.

Catering

There are two main restaurants. The new 1707 Restaurant (named after the founding date of the course), is next to the main stand. Packages costs £53 + VAT for a two course meal or £78 (£85 12th May or 21st Aug) + vat for a three course meal plus afternoon tea.

For the casual diner there are a limited number of choices. There is a new seafood and champagne outlet under the old members stand. A platter is available for £10.50, seafood pie for £7.50. Plus a chowder with a roll for £4.50 also afternoon tea for £4.75

The Westgate Bar, serves meals. On offer was a selection of hot meals for around the £6 mark. Assorted sandwiches were available for between £3.10 and £3.70. Underneath the main stand is the dark, dingy Castle Bar.

There are, of course, the ubiquitous mobile units. An Italian unit disappointed as I approached it expecting some pizza and pasta choices but was disappointed to find it was a tea and coffee vending unit. Tea was priced at £1.50 and Coffee from £2.00 - £2.80.

There was a hog roast unit selling bacon rolls at £3.50 and bacon and egg rolls at £4.30. Last but not least was the obligatory burger van with ¼ pounders at £3.50 add cheese for 50p.

Beer and lager are both charged at £3.50 a pint.

The price of water does vary, the cheapest I found was £1.30 a bottle from the confectionery outlet up to £3.25 a bottle in the seafood restaurant. In summary all tastes and pockets are catered for at Warwick.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

Generally around 30 bookmakers stand at the course, although this has been as low as ten at some meetings.

Racecard

Costing £2 the racecard is basic but functional.

Toilets

There are plenty of toilets throughout the course all are clean and presentable.

Parade Ring

An oval parade ring in front of the stands it is possible to get close to the horses as they parade before the race and, more importantly, see how fit the runners are. There is also a very good pre parade ring at the far end of the parade ring (indeed there are often larger crowds round the pre-parade ring than the parade ring itself).



The winners enclosure has recently moved to inside the parade ring.

Non Racing Attractions

Warwick Castle is the nearest tourist attraction and very much worth a visit.

Slightly further afield is Stratford-Upon-Avon with all its Shakespearian connotations.

Contact Details

	www.warwickracecourse.co.uk
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	Warwick Racecourse Hampton Street Warwick CV34 6HN

Ownership	Jockey Club
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Fixtures 2012*Jump*

January 14th & 26th
February 11th & 24th
March 11th & 21st
November 7th & 21st
December 9th & 31st

Flat

April 9th
May 7th & 12th (eve)
June 18th (eve), 21st & 28th
July 6th & 12th
August 21st (eve) & 27th
October 4th

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
11/03/07	Overcast, sunny periods and windy	7 Jump weekend
28/06/07	Sunny with a cool wind	7 Flat midweek
04/07/08	Sunny with a stiff breeze	7 flat midweek
03/07/09	Sunny	7 flat midweek
28/01/10	Overcast and cold	7 jump midweek
27/01/11	Overcast and bitterly cold	7 jump midweek
26/02/12	Overcast	7 jump midweek

Racing