

Wetherby

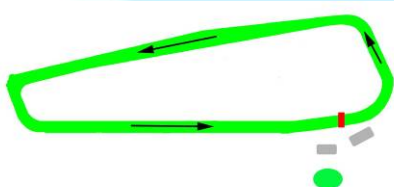
Location, Parking and Access



Best access from the course is off the A1(M) next to Wetherby Services.

Access by public transport is another story, especially from "down South". This basically entails a train to Leeds, from whence it is either a 16 mile taxi ride, or a 50 – 60 minute bus journey to Wetherby town centre and then either a cab (if you can find one) or a good 10 – 15 minute walk to the course.

Course Layout



Wetherby is a left handed (anti-clockwise) jumps course of 1½ miles. It is generally flat with a slightly uphill run-in.

The jumps are amongst the stiffest in the country.

A high class course Wetherby experienced problems with their chase course after having to realign the track following the widening of the nearby A1, however these problems now seem to be resolved.

The course favours brave, long striding types.

Admission

Wetherby operates a three enclosure policy, Premier (£19 - £27), Paddock (£13 - £16) and Course (£4 - £5)

Annual membership: Single (non-transferable) £165, joint (2 x non-transferable) £275, joint (1 x non-transferable and 1 x transferable) £295 and junior £65.

Discounts: Seniors Disabled Group

Overview



There are three enclosures at Wetherby. The Premier is the newest stand and the first thing that strikes you is the amount of seating, I made it 350 seats!! There is a tiered viewing area in front of the seats, the outside areas of the stand are under cover. A large bar with picture windows is located behind the seating area, however with the number of people standing in the row behind the seats this would obstruct the views of those in the bar. Viewing from the seating area was good with most of the track visible, the only 'blind spot' being behind the big screen. From the stepping area there was a slightly more restricted view as the buildings in the course enclosure obstruct the view on the start of the back straight, as there are no jumps in this area the impact is not too bad.

The Paddock enclosure has two stands. There is the old members stand which has tiered viewing on the lower level. The steppings aren't that high so if you get a tall person in front of you there may be a restricted view, as with the members enclosure the course buildings obstruct the view of the start of the back straight. The upper level of the stand has a seating area and dedicated bar. This can be accessed by paying a £2 supplement, for safety reasons there is a limit of 350 tickets for the area. Viewing from this stand is probably the best in the course.

The other stand is a tiered grandstand, with some seating on the top tier. Both stands are under cover. The area under the stand has recently been renovated and contains a brand new spacious hall containing a restaurant area and bar. Both main enclosures have both concrete and grass areas in front.



The course enclosure is in the centre of the course and is mainly on hardstanding. Viewing will be restricted. There are some basic buildings in the enclosure.



Many courses proclaim themselves the "friendliest" this or "friendliest" that, Wetherby does not profess to be the "friendliest" anything, yet of all the courses I have visited it has the friendliest welcome and friendliest staff. Believe me you will meet plenty of staff, it is the most well stewarded course I have visited, however the stewarding is firm yet

unobtrusive. You are met everywhere with a smile and even doors are opened for you.

The friendly welcome sets the scene for the course and it is actually hard to find anything to fault. Even during the rebuilding work care had been taken to alleviate the impact, even to putting walkways between the temporary buildings so racegoers avoid having to walk across the grass areas. They have even converted a room to provide a parenting room. Even as you walk from the main entrance to the main entrance to the premier stand there is delightful garden, full of colour.

As a bonus Wetherby also stages some good quality racing throughout the year.

If I was going to be picky it would be on two points, one of which is out of the courses control. The one out of their control is the difficulty of getting there by public transport, it is a shame as it will stop some racegoers visiting this gem of a course.

The second is a pedantic, personal gripe, about the angle of the members stand in relation to the track, it is angled to give a head on view of the home straight and indeed it is a spectacular view, however as someone who likes to see a race develop down the home straight I would prefer a more side on view, however there is a big screen available to get this view. However the alignment is now certainly a great deal better than it was before the course was re-aligned.

It must speak volumes for the loyalty to Wetherby that I have rarely seen such a large number of annual members badges at a course, they clearly have a loyal following and I can understand why.

Catering

The feature restaurant is the White Rose Restaurant offering an a la carte menu. A Premier badge is required for access. The menu is a-la-carte offering more individual choice.

In the Premier enclosure the Marston Moor bar is the main feature and there is a food area in one corner offering light snacks and sandwiches. The sandwiches ranged from £1.90 - £3.50.

In the paddock enclosure main meals were available for £5.50 to £5.95 and the range included Yorkshire Pudding filled with sausages and bubble and squeak, Roast Turkey or Roast Pork, steak and ale pie or seafood pie.

There were a number of mobile units from the ubiquitous burger. There was a hog roast van (£4.50 in a roll, £5.50 in a baguette), fish and chips (£5.30), with chips at £2 a portion or £2.80 with gravy (very nice) or curry sauce. Finally there was a pasty van selling well filled, Cornish pasties for £3.50.

Bitter was £3.10 and lager £3.20

The general food offering at Wetherby is certainly not of gourmet standard, I cannot speak for the main restaurant which may well be different. Compared with many other courses the food is reasonably priced.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were 35 bookmakers standing in the main enclosure and five in the course enclosure. Betting was to an over round of 1.37% a runner, very generous.

Racecard

Cost £2.50 and yet another course now starting to include an index in the racecard, an idea so simple one wonders why it has taken courses so long to implement.

There were the usual "parish announcements" and a review of the previous meeting.

The racecards were clear and easy to read, although some were over three pages so the entire card for some races could not be seen at once.

There were also colour details for both the "away" meetings, with the bonus they were in the race card in the correct place, chronologically, in relation to the Wetherby races, which makes more sense than lumping them all together at either the beginning or end of the card.

Toilets

The toilets in all the enclosures were new and clean.

There was a parenting room available for baby changing.



Parade Ring

Set in the bottom of a dip there is excellent viewing of the parade ring, which is the centrepiece of the area behind the stands. With the tiered viewing and natural banks, viewing of the horses is excellent.

The pre-parade ring / saddling boxes is in the form of an American style barn, with one side open for public viewing and this proved to be a popular area for racegoers, so much so it was, at times, difficult to get close enough for a good view.

Non Racing Attractions

The countryside of Yorkshire surrounds the course. The spa town of Harrogate is close by as is the historic city of York.

Contact Details	
	www.secure.wetherbyracing.co.uk
	01937 582 035
	The Racecourse York Road Wetherby West Yorkshire LS22 5EJ

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012
January 14th & 23rd
February 4th & 21st
March 30th
April 29th
May 24th & 31st (eve)
June 7th (eve)
October 17th
November 2nd, 3rd, 17th & 28th
December 8th, 26th & 27th

Inspection Dates		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
16/04/07	Overcast with some sunny spells and drizzle	7 jump midweek
28/11/07	Overcast with some late drizzle	7 jump midweek
15/11/08	Overcast	7 jump weekend
07/04/10	Overcast and breezy	7 jump midweek