



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Racing and Horse Terms

Act

Describes a horse's suitability for different conditions e.g. going, racecourses etc. If a horse 'acts on soft ground' it means that horse has shown previous ability to handle soft ground.

Allowance

Inexperienced riders (apprentices, conditionals and amateurs) are allowed a weight concession to compensate for their lack of experience against their colleagues. The 'allowance' is usually 3lb, 5lb or 7lb, with it decreasing as the young jockey rides more winners.

Also-ran

A horse that finishes 'down the field' in a race (i.e. out of the prize money).

At the post

When all the horses have arrived at the start before a race, they are said to be 'at the post'.

Backstretch / Back Straight

The straight length of the track on the far side of the course from the stands

Backward

A horse that is either too young or not fully fit.

Bay or Brown Horse

Horse colour - any brown horse with a black mane/tail and legs.

Bit

Metal part of the bridle that sits in a horse's mouth. The reins are then attached to the bit and used by the jockey to control the horse.

Black Horse (rare)

The horse is a uniform black colour (except possible white markings on its head and lower legs).

Blanket Finish

When the horses finish so close to the winning line you could theoretically put a single blanket across them.

Bleeder

A horse that tends to break blood vessels during a race.

Blinkers

A form of headgear consisting of a hood with cups around the eyes. Used to limit a horse's vision and reduce distractions, with the aim of making it concentrate.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Blowout

A short workout, usually a day or two before a race, designed to clear the horse's airways before the race.

Boxed in

A horse that cannot overtake another horse because it is blocked by other horses.

Breather

Restraining or easing off on a horse for a short distance to permit him to fill his lungs during the race.

Breeder

Someone that breeds racehorses. They own the dam (mother) at time foal is born.

Breeze

Galloping a horse at a moderate speed.

Breeze-Up

Type of auction, usually for two-year-olds, at which the horses for sale run for a short distance to allow prospective buyers to assess them.

Bridle

The equipment on a horse's head used to control it.

Bridle, won on the

Won easily, without being hard ridden or challenged by other horses.

Broke down

When a horse sustains an injury during a race.

Broodmare

Mare kept at stud for breeding, and not usually raced, although likely to have done so when younger.

Brought down

A horse that falls during a race when impeded by another horse.

Bumping

Interference during a race where one horse collides with another. Often results in a Stewards' Enquiry, particularly when interference takes place in the closing stages of the race

Chaser

A horse that takes part in steeplechase races.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Checked

When a horse's run during a race is momentarily blocked by another horse or horses.

Cheekpieces

Strips of sheepskin that are attached to the side of a horse's bridle. They partially obscure a horse's rear vision, with the aim of getting the horse to concentrate on racing.

Chestnut Horse

Horse colour varying from light, washy yellow to dark liver orange, and in between are red, gold and liver shades.

Chute

Extension of racecourse, usually at the top of the home straight, to allow straight run from the start.

Clerk of the Course

Racecourse official responsible for the overall racecourse management, including the preparation of the racing surface.

Clerk of the Scales

Racecourse official whose chief duty is to weigh the riders before and after a race to ensure proper weight is carried.

Colours

Jacket ('silks') worn by jockey to identify a horse. A horse runs in its owner's colours which are registered with Weatherbys. The colours to be worn by each jockey are shown on racecards.

Colt

Ungelded (entire) male horse below five years of age.

Conformation

A horse's build and general physical structure; the way he is put together.

Connections

People associated with a horse, such as the owner and trainer.

Course specialist

A horse that is proven at a track in previous races.

Covered up

When a jockey keeps a horse behind other runners to prevent it running too freely in the early stages of a race.

Covering

The mating of horses.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Cut in the ground

A description of the ground condition where the racing surface has been softened by rain.

Dam A horse's mother.

Damsire (broodmare)

The sire of a broodmare; in human terms, the maternal grandfather of a horse.

Dark horse

A horse regarded as having potential but whose full capabilities have not been revealed. A trainer will plan a horse's campaign carefully so that it does not carry too much weight in a major handicap. Punters often perceive these types of horses as a 'dark horse'.

Dead-heat

A tie between two or more horses for first place, or for one of the other finishing positions. In the event of a dead-heat for first place, when a winning bet has been made, half the stake is applied to the selection at full odds and the other half is lost. If more than two horses dead-heat, the stake is proportioned accordingly.

Declared (runner)

A horse confirmed to start in a race at the final declarations stage.

Disqualification

When a horse is demoted in the finishing order due to an infringement of the Rules following a Stewards' Enquiry.

Distance

The margin by which a horse has won or has been beaten (e.g. a horse might have a winning distance of three lengths) OR in Jump racing, if a horse is beaten/wins by a long way (more than 30 lengths) it is said to have been beaten/won by a distance.

Draw

A horse's starting position in the stalls allotted in races on the Flat. Stall numbers are drawn at random by Weatherbys (except in a handful of top races that allow each horse's connections, having been randomly selected, to choose the stall number for their horse). A horse with a seemingly advantageous draw is said to be "well drawn". Stalls are used for Flat racing only.

Drop in class/trip

A horse racing in a lower class of race than he has recently run in/running over a shorter distance.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Dwell/dwelt (at the start)

To start slowly.

Enquiry – Stewards' Enquiry

Review of the race to check into a possible infraction of the Rules made by the Stewards. If the enquiry could affect the result of the race, an announcement will be made on course.

Entire horse

An ungelded horse.

Eye Shields

To protect the eye, in rare cases, where a horse is blind in or missing one eye.

Field

The number of horses in a race or, in betting, all of the horses in a race except the favourite.

Filly

Female horse four-years-old or younger.

First string

Where a trainer and/or owner has more than one runner in a race, the horse considered to be the stable's main fancy is referred to as the stable's first string. Clues to which horse this is can be whether it carries the owner's first colours, is ridden by the stable jockey and/or is shorter odds in the betting than a stablemate.

Fixture

The race meeting.

Foal

A horse from birth to January 1 of the following year (when it becomes a yearling).

Form

A horse's race record. Denoted by figures (and letters) next to its name on a racecard i.e. 1=first, 2=second etc. The form figures are read backwards from right to left - ie a horse's latest run is denoted by the figure nearest to its name on the racecard.

Front-runner

A horse whose running style is to attempt to get on or near the lead at the start of the race and stay there as long as possible.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Furlong

220 yards (one eighth of a mile). The numbered posts on British racecourses count the furlongs back from the winning post.

Gallop

Top gait for a horse – the speed they race at.

Gallops

Training ground where horses are exercised. The major training centres in Britain are Newmarket and Malton (mostly Flat), and Lambourn (mostly Jump) with the Curragh in Ireland. Many trainers have private gallops of their own.

Gates

The front section of the starting stalls, which open at the start of a Flat race to release the horses. Used as another term for starting stalls.

Gelding

A male horse that has been castrated. Most male horses that compete over jumps have been gelded, and a Flat horse may be gelded. Geldings are not allowed to run in some of the top Flat races, such as the Derby, that are important for identifying potential breeding talent.

General Stud Book

Register of all thoroughbred horses, maintained by Weatherbys.

Get the trip

To stay the distance.

Going

The condition of the racing surface. Ranges from heavy to firm.

Going Stick

Computerised Stick manually placed into the ground. This takes two readings: Penetration reading and Shear reading (stick lifted at 60% so reads root strength). The computer takes the average of 100 readings and rates from 1 to 10 – lower the reading means softer the ground.

Going down

When horses are on their way to the start.

Green

Used to describe an immature or inexperienced horse.

Grey Horse

Many shades and types! ie Dappled, Fleabitten, Light, Dark, Rose to name a few. All greys that start as a darker grey will go lighter as they age.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Guineas (currency)

A guinea was one pound and one shilling (£1.05 in decimal currency) and, traditionally, the prices of horses sold at public auction were given in guineas. Some sales companies still use guineas, though most have changed to pounds.

Hacked up

Describes a horse winning easily.

Half-brother/sister

When two horses have the same mother (dam), they are half-brothers/sisters. Horses are not referred to as half-brothers/sisters when they share only the same father (sire).

Handicapper

Official responsible for allocating a handicap rating to each horse that has qualified for one, and for allotting the weights to be carried by each horse in a handicap. Employed by the British Horseracing Authority.

Hard ridden

Used to describe a horse whose jockey is expending full effort on the horse, and using his whip.

Headquarters Newmarket, traditionally seen as the home of Flat racing, is often called Headquarters.

Home straight

The length of straight track, from the final bend to the finish line.

Hood

A hood covers the horses ears and head leaving eye holes clear. Not used for concentration but to help calm nervous horses with crowds and noises. They are padded around the ears and so restrict various noises.

Hurdler

A horse that races over hurdles, which are lighter and lower than fences.

Hurdles

The smaller obstacles on a jumps course. Horses usually have a season or two over hurdles before progressing to fences, though some continue to specialise in hurdling and never run over fences, while some horses go straight over fences without trying hurdles first.

Jocked off

Term used to refer to when one jockey is replaced by another on a horse he usually rides or for which he has already been booked to ride in a particular race.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Judge

Racecourse official responsible for declaring the finishing order of a race and the distances between the runners.

Juvenile

A two-year-old horse. Every horse officially turns two on January 1, at the start of the second full calendar year following its birth e.g. a horse born in 2010 will turn two on January 1, 2012.

Juvenile hurdler

The youngest category of hurdler - juvenile hurdlers are those that turn three years of age (on January 1) during the season in which they start hurdling.

Left-handed track

Racecourse where horses run anti-clockwise.

Length

A unit of measurement for the distances between each horse at the finish of a race; the measurement of a horse from head to tail.

Level weights

When all horses are carrying the same weight. Major championship races, such as the Derby on the Flat or the Cheltenham Gold Cup over jumps, are run at level weights. There are still some allowances for age and sex (e.g. mares receive a 5lb allowance from male horses in the Cheltenham Gold Cup).

Maiden

A horse that has yet to win a race; maiden races are restricted to such horses, though sometimes the conditions of the race allow previous winners (e.g. maidens at closing, i.e. those that have not won a race up to the time the entries close), in which case penalties are allotted for later wins.

Mare

Female horse aged five years old or above.

Middle distances

On the Flat, races beyond a mile and up to 1m6f are the middle distances. A middle-distance horse is one that runs mainly over such distances or is regarded as being suitable for those distances.

Minimum trip

The shortest race distance: five furlongs on the Flat, two miles over jumps.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Names

Horse names have to be registered with Weatherbys, racing's administrative body, and are subject to approval. Names cannot be longer than 18 characters (including spaces) and must not be the same, in spelling or pronunciation, as a name already registered. In addition, there is a list of 'protected' horse names that cannot be used - these include past winners of big races such as the Grand National and the Classics on the Flat.

National Hunt

Racing over fences and hurdles; officially referred to as Jump racing.

Neck

Unit of measurement in a race finish about the length of a horse's neck.

Non-Runner A horse that was originally meant to run but for some reason has been withdrawn from the race.

Nose

Smallest official distance a horse can win by.

Noseband

A noseband can restrict the field of vision so encourages the horse to lower its head and focus on the race. Used mainly on horses that throw their heads or carry their heads to high.

Non-trier

A horse that is prevented by the jockey from running to its full ability. Non-trying is a serious offence prohibited by the rules of racing, and jockeys (as well as the horse and owner) can be banned from racing if they are found guilty, while the horse's trainer risks a fine and/or a ban.

Objection

A complaint by one jockey against another regarding the running of a race.

Off the pace

When a horse is some distance behind the front-runners in a race.

One-paced

Describes a horse that is unable to raise its pace in the closing stages of a race.

On the bridle

Describes a horse running comfortably, still having a bite on the bit. A horse that wins 'on the bridle' is regarded as having won easily.

Open ditch

Steeplechase jump with a ditch on the approach side to the fence.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Out of the handicap

When handicap races are framed, there is a maximum and minimum weight that horses can carry. When a horse's rating means that its allocated weight is lower than the minimum for that race, it is said to be 'out of the handicap'. e.g. in a Flat handicap where a horse set to carry the minimum weight of 7st 7lb is rated 65, a horse rated 62 would be allocated 7st 4lb in the long handicap but would have to carry the minimum 7st 7lb in the race - this horse would be described as being '3lb out of the handicap' (ie it would be carrying 3lb more than its 'true' handicap weight).

Overnight declarations

Horses entered for a race must be 'declared to run' and this usually happens the day before a race - horses left in a race at this stage are known as 'overnight declarations' and they comprise the final field for each race which appears on the day of the race in newspapers and in racecards. At this stage a trainer must also 'declare' the jockey who will ride the horse and any equipment (e.g. blinkers) the horse will carry - this information also appears on racecards in newspapers and at the racecourse.

Over the top

When a horse is considered to be past its peak due to too much racing/training and needs a rest.

Overweight

When a horse carries more than its allocated weight, due to the jockey being unable to make that weight. e.g. if a horse is allocated 9st in the handicap but carries 9st 2lb, the jockey is said to have 'put up 2lb overweight'. This is usually a disadvantage, though sometimes the trainer of a horse may decide to accept overweight in order to have one of the best jockeys on board his horse.

Pacemaker

A horse that is entered in a race with the intention that it will set the pace for another horse with the same connections.

Paddock

Area of the racecourse incorporating the parade ring (where horses are paraded prior to the race) and winner's enclosure. Connections of the horses gather in the centre of the paddock before each race and jockeys mount before taking the horses out onto the racecourse.

Parade

Before major races, the horses often line up in racecard order (numerical order) and led in front of the grandstands to allow racegoers to see them. At the end of the parade the horses are released to canter down to the start.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Penalised horses

Horses that have incurred a weight penalty as a result of previous successes.

Penalty

Additional weight carried by a horse on account of previous wins. In a handicap, a penalty is added to a horse's original weight if it has won in between being entered for the race and running in it, as the handicapper has not had the opportunity to re-assess that horse's handicap rating. A penalty (commonly 6lb) is shown after the horse's name on Racing Post racecards - e.g. Horsename (ex6).

Photo-finish

In a close race, where the placings cannot be determined easily, the result is determined by the judge by examination of a photograph taken by a camera on the finishing line.

Pulled up

A horse that drops out of a race and does not finish.

Pulling

When a horse is unsettled during the early part of a race and uses too much energy, fighting the jockey by pulling against the bridle.

Pushed out

When a horse is ridden vigorously, but without full effort by the jockey.

Quarters

The hind parts of a horse, specifically between flank and tail.

Racecard

Programme for the day's racing, showing the times, runners and riders for each race.

Rails (racecourse)

White plastic rails are used to mark out the track on a racecourse. The stands rails are those nearest the grandstand and the far rails are those on the opposite side of the track from the grandstand. A horse referred to as being 'on the rails' or 'against the rails' is running close to the rails, which often helps a horse to keep a straight line in a race finish. A horse that has 'grabbed the rail' is one whose rider has manoeuvred to a position close to the rail.

Rating

A measure of the ability of a horse on a scale starting at zero and going into three figures. Flat Jump racing use different scales; the highest-rated Flat horse is usually in the 130s and the top-rated jumper in the 180s.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Right-handed track

Racecourse where horses run clockwise.

Schooling

Training a horse for jumping.

Second string

The stable's second choice from two or more runners in a race.

Silks

See 'Colours'.

Sire

Father of a horse.

Soft (going)

Condition of a turf course where rain has left the ground 'soft' (official going description).

Spread a plate

When a horse damages or loses a horseshoe before a race, it is said to have 'spread a plate'. The horse has to be re-shod by a farrier, often delaying the start of the race.

Sprinter

A horse that specialises in running over the shortest distances (five and six furlongs) on the Flat.

Sprint races

Flat races run over a distance of five or six furlongs.

Stallion

Male breeding horse.

Stalls handler

Member of a team employed to load horses into the stalls for Flat races and to move the stalls to the correct position for the start of each race.

Starter

Racecourse official responsible for starting a horse race.

Stayer

A horse that specialises in racing over long distances (two miles and above) on the Flat.

Staying chaser

A horse that races over three miles or more over fences.



LEICESTER RACECOURSE

A CLASSIC VENUE FOR RACING, DINING & EVENTS

Staying on

When a horse is finishing strongly in a race, possibly a sign of good stamina reserves.

Staying races

Flat races run over a distance of two miles or more.

Steeplechasing

A race over fences, open ditches and water jumps, run over distances from two miles up to four and a half miles.

Steward

One of the officials in overall charge of a race meeting, including disciplinary procedures. The stewards can hold inquiries into possible infringements of the rules of racing, or hear objections to the race result from beaten jockeys. Usually there are three stewards at each race meeting, assisted by a stipendiary steward. The stewards are appointed by the racecourse, subject to approval by the BHA, and are often prominent local figures.

Stewards' Enquiry

A hearing held by the stewards into a race to determine whether the rules of racing have been broken.

Stewards' room

On a racecourse, where stewards hold inquiries. A race is said to have been 'decided in the stewards' room' if the placings are altered by the stewards due to a transgression of the rules of racing.

Stick

A jockey's whip

Stipendiary Steward

Also known as a Stipe. Unlike raceday stewards, Stipes are professionals employed by the BHA and one is sent to each meeting to assist the stewards and advise on the rules of racing. The raceday stewards, not the Stipe, are responsible for decision-making.

Tongue Strap

Some horses can run with their tongue 'flopping' which can restrict the horses breathing. A tongue strap prevents this by keeping the tongue in place for the duration of the race.

Visors

Similar to blinkers but has a slit in either side to prevent the horse from worrying if it can't see other runners. The slit provides reassurance but keeps the focus forwards.