



ROYAL  ASCOT

# BETTING GUIDE

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ROYAL ASCOT

# BETTING GUIDE



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# RACE SCHEDULE

## TUESDAY - JUNE 18, 2024

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
02:30 PM	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Queen Anne Stakes (Group 1)	4+	£750,000	Straight Mile
03:05 PM	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Coventry Stakes (Group 2)	2	£175,000	Six furlongs
03:45 PM	2:45pm	10:45am	9:45am	8:45am	7:45am	The King Charles III Stakes (Group 1)	3+	£650,000	Five furlongs
04:25 PM	3:25pm	11:25am	10:25am	9:25am	8:25am	The St James's Palace Stakes (Group 1)	3 colts	£650,000	Old Mile
05:05 PM	4:05pm	12:05pm	11:05am	10:05am	9:05am	The Ascot Stakes (Handicap) (Class 2) (0-100)	4+	£110,000	Two miles, four furlongs
05:40 PM	4:40pm	12:40pm	11:40am	10:40am	9:40am	The Wolferton Stakes (Listed)	4+	£120,000	One mile, two furlongs
06:15 PM	5:15pm	1:15pm	12:15pm	11:15am	10:15am	The Copper Horse Stakes (Handicap) (Class 2) (0-105)	4+	£110,000	One mile, six furlongs



## WEDNESDAY - JUNE 19, 2024

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
02:30 PM	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Queen Mary Stakes (Group 2)	2 fillies	£150,000	Five Furlongs
03:05 PM	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Queen's Vase (Group 2)	3	£265,000	One Mile, Six Furlongs
03:45 PM	2:45pm	10:45am	9:45am	8:45am	7:45am	The Duke of Cambridge Stakes (Group 2)	4+ F/M	£225,000	Old Mile
04:25 PM	3:25pm	11:25am	10:25am	9:25am	8:25am	The Prince of Wales's Stakes (Group 1)*	4+	£1,000,000	One Mile, two furlongs
05:05 PM	4:05pm	12:05pm	11:05am	10:05am	9:05am	The Royal Hunt Cup (Heritage Handicap) (Class 2) (Open)	3+	£175,000	Straight Mile
05:40 PM	4:40pm	12:40pm	11:40am	10:40am	9:40am	The Kensington Palace Stakes (Handicap) (Class 2)	4+ F/M	£110,000	Straight Mile
06:15 PM	5:15pm	1:15pm	12:15pm	11:15am	10:15am	The Windsor Castle Stakes (Listed)	2	£110,000	Five Furlongs

## THURSDAY - JUNE 20, 2024

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Norfolk Stakes (Group 2)	2	£150000	Five furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The King George V Stakes (Handicap)	3	£110000	One mile, four furlongs
3:45pm	2:45pm	10:45am	9:45am	8:45am	7:45am	The Ribblesdale Stakes (Group 2)	3 fillies	£250000	One mile, four furlongs
4:25pm	3:25pm	11:25am	10:05am	9:25am	8:25am	The Gold Cup (Group 1)	4+	£650000	Two miles, four furlongs
5:05pm	4:05pm	12:05pm	11:05am	10:05am	9:05am	The Britannia Stakes (Heritage Handicap)	3 C/G	£120000	Straight mile
5:40pm	4:40pm	12:40pm	11:40am	10:40am	9:40am	The Hampton Court Stakes (Group 3)	3	£150000	One mile, two furlongs
6:15pm	5:15pm	1:15pm	12:15pm	11:15am	10:15am	The Buckingham Palace Stakes (Handicap)	3+	£110000	Seven furlongs

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## FRIDAY - JUNE 21, 2024

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Albany Stakes (Group 3)	2 fillies	£125000	Six furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Commonwealth Cup (Group 1)	3 C/F	£650000	Six furlongs
3:45pm	2:45pm	10:45am	9:45am	8:45am	7:45am	The Coronation Stakes (Group 1)	3 fillies	£650000	Old mile
4:25pm	3:25pm	11:25am	10:25am	9:25am	8:25am	The Duke of Edinburgh Stakes (Handicap)	3+	£110000	One mile, four furlongs
5:05pm	4:05pm	12:05pm	11:05am	10:05am	9:05am	The Sandringham Stakes (Handicap)	3 fillies	£110000	One mile
5:40pm	4:40pm	12:40pm	11:40am	10:45am	9:340am	The King Edward VII Stakes (Group 2)	3 C/G	£250000	One mile, four furlongs
6:15pm	5:15pm	1:15pm	12:15pm	11:15am	10:15am	The Palace of Holyroodhouse Stakes (Handicap)	3	£110000	Five furlongs

## SATURDAY - JUNE 22, 2024

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Chesham Stakes (Listed)	2	£100000	Seven furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Hardwicke Stakes (Group 2)	4+	£225000	One mile, four furlongs
3:45pm	2:45pm	10:45am	9:45am	8:45am	7:45am	The Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Stake (Group 1)	4+	£1000000	Six furlongs
4:25pm	3:25pm	11:25am	10:25am	9:25am	8:25am	The Jersey Stakes (Group 3)	3	£150000	Seven furlongs
5:05pm	4:05pm	12:05pm	11:05am	10:05am	9:05am	The Wokingham Stakes (Heritage Handicap)	3+	£175000	Six furlongs
5:40pm	4:40pm	12:40pm	11:40am	10:40am	9:40am	The Golden Gates Stakes (Handicap)	3	£100000	One mile, two furlongs
6:15pm	5:15pm	1:15pm	12:15pm	11:15am	10:15am	The Queen Alexandra Stakes (Conditions)	4+	£100000	Two miles, six furlongs





# 2024 ROYAL ASCOT FAQ: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## WHAT IS ROYAL ASCOT?

One of the annual highlights of the English social calendar, Royal Ascot is a five-day fixture held at Ascot Racecourse outside London which offers a mixture of unparalleled, high-class racing, royal pageantry, and high fashion. Memorably depicted in the Oscar-winning musical "My Fair Lady," Royal Ascot is a highly formal affair where attendees adhere to a strict dress code. In all enclosures, ladies are required to wear hats or headpieces while suits with ties are required of gentlemen. Black or gray morning dress with top hats is required for gentlemen in the famed Royal Enclosure.



## WHEN IS ROYAL ASCOT AND HOW MANY PEOPLE ATTEND?

Royal Ascot runs from Tuesday, June 18 through Saturday, June 22. Upwards of 300,000 racegoers attend across the five days in normal times.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE RACECOURSE ITSELF?

Racing has been held at Ascot since 1711, when Queen Anne chose the site as an ideal spot for racing while on a drive from her nearby residence at Windsor Castle. The current grandstand, considered among the finest in the world, opened in 2006 with a budget of £220 million. The course is right-handed and triangular shaped with a circumference of approximately 1 3/4 miles. One-mile races begin from one of two chutes. The Old Mile starts from a chute near Swinley Bottom, while mile races are also held over a straight course that extends beyond the head of the stretch. All races contested at seven furlongs or less are run over a straight course.

## WHAT TIME DO THE RACES START AND HOW MANY ARE THERE?

Post time each day is 9:30 a.m. (EDT) (2:30 p.m. local time). Seven races are held daily, and purses over the five-day meet will total more than £10 million.

## WHAT IS THE ROYAL PROCESSION?

Approximately 30-40 minutes before the first race each day, His Majesty King Charles III and the Royal party are driven down Ascot's one-mile straight in horse-drawn carriages to the cheers of those in attendance. The procession ends when The King disembarks from his carriage in the saddling ring.

## IS ROYAL ASCOT AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT?

Technological innovations in communications and the continued ease in transport of horses have made Royal Ascot an increasingly global event. Enticed by its prestige and prize money, Royal Ascot has attracted leading Thoroughbreds from Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Dubai, and the United States to compete against the very best from England, Ireland, and France. Trainer Wesley Ward has been a trailblazer among American horsemen pointing for Royal Ascot, primarily with juvenile runners. He's trained a dozen Royal Ascot winners since 2009. The most prominent American-based horse to win a race at Royal Ascot was the two-time champion turf mare Tepin, who beat the boys in the 2016 Queen Anne (G1).

## WHAT KIND OF RACES ARE HELD AT ROYAL ASCOT?

Of the 35 races, 22 are Group or Listed stakes. Eight of these 22 are Group 1s. The remainder are long-standing handicaps, most of which have been Royal Ascot features for decades. They tend to attract disproportionately large fields.

## WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 1?

Arguably the classiest of the five racing days with three Group 1 events. The Queen Anne, for older milers, is always the first race of the meet. Three-year-old colt milers compete in the St James's Palace, while the King Charles III (formerly the King's Stand) is a premier five-furlong sprint. The Coventry (G2) is traditionally the first stakes of the week for two-year-olds, while the Ascot Sakes (handicap) is one of the longer races of the meet at 2 1/2 miles.

## WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 2?

The Prince of Wales's (G1), weight-for-age over 1 1/4 miles, is one of the two richest races held at Royal Ascot with a purse of £1 million. The Duke of Cambridge (G2) for filly-and-mare milers, the Queen Mary (G2) for two-year-old fillies, and the Queen's Vase (G2) for three-year-old stayers are the other Group offerings. The Royal Hunt Cup (handicap) is a figurative stampede over the straight mile course.

### WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 3?

The largest crowd of the week (Ladies Day) is in attendance for the centerpiece of every Royal Ascot meet, the famed Gold Cup (G1) over 2 1/2 miles. The Ribblesdale (G2) is an historic middle-distance test for three-year-old fillies over 1 1/2 miles, while the Norfolk (G2) attracts some of the more precocious two-year-olds to dash five furlongs.

### WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 4?

The Coronation (G1) for three-year-old fillies milers is the traditional highlight but now shares the day with the Commonwealth Cup (G1), a relatively new race for three-year-old colt and filly sprinters run over six furlongs. The King Edward VII (G2), for three-year-olds over 1 1/2 miles, is colloquially known as the "Ascot Derby."

### WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 5?

A fifth day of Royal Ascot was added in 2002. The most lucrative race is the £1 million Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee (G1), a six-furlong sprint renamed in honor of the late Queen, who passed away in September 2022. The 1 1/2-mile Hardwicke (G2) often attracts top-notch middle-distance performers. Two-year-olds are featured in the Chesham Stakes, while the meet-closing Queen Alexandra Stakes (conditions) over 2 3/4 miles remains the longest race run under Flat racing rules.

### ARE THERE ANY BREEDERS' CUP CHALLENGE RACES AT ROYAL ASCOT?

The Queen Anne (Mile) and King Charles III (Turf Sprint) on Tuesday, the Prince of Wales's (Turf) on Wednesday, and the Norfolk (Juvenile Turf Sprint) on Thursday are all Breeders' Cup "Win & You're In" Challenge preps.

### WHERE CAN WE WATCH ROYAL ASCOT RACES AND WHAT BETS ARE OFFERED?

In addition to the daily coverage available on NBC's Peacock streaming service and Saturday on the main NBC network (on Saturday), you can watch and wager on all 35 Royal Ascot races at TwinSpires.com. Win, Place (first three or four, depending on field size), Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, and Omni (pick two of the top three finishers in any order) wagering are available on virtually all races.

### WHERE CAN WE FIND MORE ROYAL ASCOT INFORMATION AND PAST PERFORMANCES?

Check out the TwinSpires EDGE throughout Royal Ascot week for opinions and analysis.





# ROYAL ASCOT GROUP RACE HISTORIES

## TUESDAY

### QUEEN ANNE (G1), 4YO/UP, ONE MILE (STRAIGHT COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Triple Time	Layoff since October
2022	Baaeed	1st Lockinge
2021	Palace Pier	1st Lockinge
2020	Circus Maximus	Layoff since 4th BC Mile (US)
2019	Lord Glitters	13th Lockinge
2018	Accidental Agent	6th Lockinge
2017	Ribchester	1st Lockinge
2016	Tepin (f)	1st CD Distaff Turf Mile (US)
2015	Solow	1st Prix d'Ispahan
2014	Toronado	Layoff since August

### COVENTRY (G2), 2YO, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	River Tiber	1st Naas race
2022	Bradsell	1st York novice
2021	Berkshire Shadow	1st Newbury maiden
2020	Nando Parrado	5th Newmarket maiden
2019	Arizona	1st Curragh maiden
2018	Calyx	1st Newmarket novice
2017	Rajasinghe	1st Newcastle novice
2016	Caravaggio	1st Marble Hill
2015	Buratino	1st Woodcote
2014	The Wow Signal	1st Ayr maiden

### KING CHARLES III (G1), 3YO/UP, FIVE FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Bradsell	3rd Sandy Lane
2022	Nature Strip	1st T J Smith (AUS)
2021	Oxted	3rd Duke of York
2020	Battaash	Layoff since October
2019	Blue Point	1st Al Quoz Sprint (UAE)
2018	Blue Point	9th Chairman's Sprint Prize (HK)
2017	Lady Aurelia (f)	1st Giant's Causeway (US)
2016	Profitable	1st Temple
2015	Goldream	7th Temple
2014	Sole Power	1st Palace House

### ST JAMES'S PALACE (G1), 3YO COLTS, ONE MILE (ROUND COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Paddington	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2022	Coroebus	1st 2000 Guineas
2021	Poetic Flare	2nd Irish 2000 Guineas
2020	Palace Pier	1st Newcastle handicap
2019	Circus Maximus	6th Epsom Derby
2018	Without Parole	1st Heron
2017	Barney Roy	2nd 2000 Guineas
2016	Galileo Gold	2nd Irish 2000 Guineas
2015	Gleneagles	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2014	Kingman	1st Irish 2000 Guineas

## WEDNESDAY

### QUEEN MARY (G2), 2YO FILLIES, FIVE FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Crimson Advocate	1st Royal Palm Juv Fillies (US)
2022	Dramatised	1st Newmarket maiden
2021	Quick Suzy	2nd Naas Fillies Sprint
2020	Campanelle	1st Gulfstream maiden (US)
2019	Raffle Prize	1st Chester maiden
2018	Signora Cabello	1st Marygate
2017	Heartache	1st Bath novice
2016	Lady Aurelia	1st Keeneland maiden (US)
2015	Acapulco	3rd Churchill maiden (US)
2014	Anthem Alexander	1st Tipperary maiden

### QUEEN'S VASE (G2), 3YO, 1 3/4 MILES (2 MILES PRIOR TO 2017)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Gregory	1st Cocked Hat
2022	Eldar Eldarov	1st Newcastle novice
2021	Kemari	1st Yarmouth maiden
2020	Santiago	Layoff since September
2019	Dashing Willoughby	3rd Chester Vase
2018	Kew Gardens	9th Epsom Derby
2017	Stradivarius	2nd Chester handicap
2016	Sword Fighter	3rd Naas race
2015	Aloft	Layoff since October
2014	Hartnell	2nd Lingfield Derby Trial

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**DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE (G2), 4YO/UP, F&M, ONE MILE (STRAIGHT COURSE)**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Rogue Millennium	2nd Middleton
2022	Saffron Beach	4th Dubai Turf (UAE)
2021	Indie Angel	4th Dahlia
2020	Nazeef	1st Snowdrop
2019	Move Swiftly	Layoff since November
2018	Aljazzi	3rd Sandown Mile
2017	Qemah	2nd Chartwell Fillies'
2016	Usherette	1st Dahlia
2015	Amazing Maria	3rd Lanwades
2014	Integral	2nd Dahlia

**PRINCE OF WALES'S (G1), 4YO/UP, 1 1/4 MILES**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Mostahdaf	4th Dubai Sheema Classic (UAE)
2022	State of Rest	3rd Tattersalls Gold Cup
2021	Love (f)	Layoff since August
2020	Lord North	1st Brigadier Gerard
2019	Crystal Ocean	1st Al Rayyan/Aston Park
2018	Poet's Word	1st Brigadier Gerard
2017	Highland Reel	1st Coronation Cup
2016	My Dream Boat	5th Prix d'Ispehan
2015	Free Eagle	Layoff since October
2014	The Fugue (f)	11th Dubai Duty Free (UAE)



**THURSDAY**

**NORFOLK (G2), 2YO, FIVE FURLONGS**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Valiant Force	5th Marble Hill
2022	The Ridler	3rd Two-Yr-Old Trophy
2021	Perfect Power	1st Hamilton maiden
2020	The Lir Jet	1st Yarmouth novice
2019	A'Ali	2nd Ripon novice
2018	Shang Shang Shang (f)	1st Keeneland maiden (US)
2017	Sioux Nation	6th Marble Hill
2016	Prince of Lir	1st Brian Yeardeley
2015	Waterloo Bridge	1st Tipperary maiden
2014	Baitha Alga	1st Woodcote

**RIBBLESDALE (G2), 3YO FILLIES, 1 1/2 MILES**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Warm Heart	1st Bouquetot Fillies' Trial
2022	Magical Lagoon	2nd Salsabil
2021	Loving Dream	5th Lingfield Oaks Trial
2020	Frankly Darling	1st Newcastle maiden
2019	Star Catcher	3rd Bouquetot Fillies' Trial
2018	Magic Wand	4th Oaks
2017	Coronet	5th Oaks
2016	Even Song	3rd Pretty Polly
2015	Curvy	1st Gallinule
2014	Bracelet	14th 1000 Guineas

**GOLD CUP (G1), 4YO/UP, 2 1/2 MILES**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Courage Mon Ami	1st Goodwood Handicap
2022	Kyprios	1st Saval Beg
2021	Subjectivist	1st Dubai Gold Cup
2020	Stradivarius	3rd Coronation Cup
2019	Stradivarius	1st Yorkshire Cup
2018	Stradivarius	1st Yorkshire Cup
2017	Big Orange	1st Henry II
2016	Order of St George	1st Saval Beg
2015	Trip to Paris	2nd Henry II
2014	Leading Light	1st Vintage Crop

**HAMPTON COURT (G3), 3YO, 1 1/4 MILES**

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Waipiro	6th Epsom Derby
2022	Claymore	15th French 2000 Guineas
2021	Mohaafeth	1st Newmarket S.
2020	Russian Emperor	2nd Derrinstown Stud
2019	Sangarius	3rd Heron
2018	Hunting Horn	6th French Derby
2017	Benbatl	5th Epsom Derby
2016	Hawkbill	1st Newmarket S.
2015	Time Test	1st London Gold Cup (h'cap)
2014	Cannock Chase	1st London Gold Cup (h'cap)



## FRIDAY

### ALBANY (G3), 2YO FILLIES, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Porta Fortuna	1st Naas Fillies' Sprint
2022	Meditate	1st Naas Fillies' Sprint
2021	Sandrine	1st Kempton novice
2020	Dandalla	1st Newcastle maiden
2019	Daahyeh	1st Newmarket novice
2018	Main Edition	1st Goodwood novice
2017	Different League	1st Angers conditions
2016	Brave Anna	1st Curragh maiden
2015	Illuminate	1st Salisbury conditions
2014	Cursory Glance	1st Kempton maiden

### COMMONWEALTH CUP (G1), 3YO, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Shaquille	1st Carnarvon
2022	Perfect Power	7th 2000 Guineas
2021	Campanelle (f)	Layoff since 4th BC Juv Fillies Turf (US)
2020	Golden Horde	Layoff since September
2019	Advertise	15th 2000 Guineas
2018	Eqtidaar	4th Carnarvon
2017	Caravaggio	1st Lacken
2016	Quiet Reflection (f)	1st Sandy Lane
2015	Muhaarar	8th French 2000 Guineas

### CORONATION (G1), 3YO FILLIES, ONE MILE (ROUND COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Tahiyra	1st Irish 1000 Guineas
2022	Inspirat	Layoff since October
2021	Alcohol Free	5th 1000 Guineas
2020	Alpine Star	Layoff since August
2019	Watch Me	6th French 1000 Guineas
2018	Alpha Centauri	1st Irish 1000 Guineas
2017	Winter	1st Irish 1000 Guineas
2016	Qemah	3rd French 1000 Guineas
2015	Ervedya	1st French 1000 Guineas
2014	Rizeena	7th 1000 Guineas

### KING EDWARD VII (G2), 3YO COLTS & GELDINGS, 1 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	King of Steel	2nd Epsom Derby
2022	Changingoftheguard	5th Epsom Derby
2021	Alenquer	1st Sandown Classic Trial
2020	Pyledriver	2nd Classic Trial
2019	Japan	3rd Epsom Derby
2018	Old Persian	1st Fairway
2017	Permian	10th Epsom Derby
2016	Across the Stars	10th Epsom Derby
2015	Balios	2nd Newmarket S.
2014	Eagle Top	4th Leicester handicap

## SATURDAY

### HARDWICKE (G2), 4YO/UP, 1 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Pyledriver	Layoff since July
2022	Broome	5th Tattersalls Gold Cup
2021	Wonderful Tonight (f)	Layoff since October
2020	Fanny Logan (f)	2nd Pinnacle
2019	Defoe	1st Coronation Cup
2018	Crystal Ocean	1st Al Rayyan/Aston Park
2017	Idaho	6th Coronation Cup
2016	Dartmouth	1st Ormonde
2015	Snow Sky	1st Yorkshire Cup
2014	Telescope	2nd Huxley

### QUEEN ELIZABETH II JUBILEE (G1), 4YO/UP, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Khaadem	3rd Cathedral
2022	Naval Crown	4th Al Quoz Sprint (UAE)
2021	Dream of Dreams	1st Leisure S.
2020	Hello Youmzain	Layoff since October
2019	Blue Point	1st King's Stand
2018	Merchant Navy	1st Greenlands
2017	The Tin Man	5th Duke of York
2016	Twilight Son	5th Duke of York
2015	Undrafted	2nd TwinSpires Turf Sprint (US)
2014	Slade Power	1st Greenlands

### JERSEY (G3), 3YO, SEVEN FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2023	Age of Kings	10th Irish 2000 Guineas
2022	Noble Truth	1st King Charles II
2021	Creative Force	1st Carnarvon S.
2020	Molatham	Layoff since October
2019	Space Traveller	7th Tourisme de Maisons-Laffitte
2018	Expert Eye	10th 2000 Guineas
2017	Le Brivido	2nd French 2000 Guineas
2016	Ribchester	3rd 2000 Guineas
2015	Dutch Connection	7th 2000 Guineas
2014	Mustajeb	3rd Irish 2000 Guineas

# HOW TO HANDICAP ROYAL ASCOT STAKES FOR JUVENILES

by Vance Hanson

One of the distinguishing features of Royal Ascot is the six stakes devoted to two-year-olds during the annual five-day meeting. Ranging in distance from five to seven furlongs, these races typically attract fields of more than a dozen and often approach 20.

To American bettors generally unfamiliar with English racing, and increasingly used to not having to sift through large fields, attempting to find a winner among a group of green, inexperienced runners being asked to careen down the long Ascot straight sounds like a virtually impossible task.

Let me argue otherwise.

Having provided daily selections for Days 3 and 4 at Royal Ascot since 2011, first at Brisnet.com and now on TwinSpires.com, I've had an opportunity to hone skills for this handicapping puzzle. Two races I proffer an opinion on every year are the Norfolk (G2), a five-furlong event on Day 3 (Thursday), and the six-furlong Albany (G3) for fillies on Day 4 (Friday). I have publicly endorsed the following winners of the Norfolk and Albany over the past 13 years:

## NORFOLK

Year	Horse	Closing UK Odds
2019	A'Ali	5-1
2020	The Lir Jet	9-2
2021	Perfect Power	14-1
2022	The Ridler	50-1

## ALBANY

Year	Horse	Closing UK Odds
2011	Samitar	16-1
2012	Newfangled	7-4
2013	Kiyoshi	10-1
2015	Illuminate	4-1
2019	Daahyeh	4-1

My approach to handicapping these juvenile features generally involves a three-step process:

### 1. CHECKING BRISNET.COM PEDIGREE REPORTS

Once the final fields are announced 48 hours out, I immediately run Brisnet.com's Catalog page product (#750) and other reports to get an overview of the family history of the runners involved. In particular, I note horses whose sires and/or dams were precocious enough to earn black type in short races like these early in the season. A winning family history over the Ascot course itself is a plus. I also take note of any horses who might be closely related to others that share these qualities.



### 2. VIDEO WORK

Whether using TwinSpires.com's library for full race coverage or condensed footage uploaded to social media services like Twitter, watching replays is essential. For myself, I don't generally need to watch full races. Re-watching the final two or three furlongs of a past race is enough for me to judge whether something about the horse "catches the eye" or not.

Admittedly, this is the most subjective part of the process. It's hard to put into words what I look for or what impresses me, but I know it when I see it. It's basically judging how the horse moves and whether he or she shows enough signs of relative maturity for its age to potentially handle the task at hand. I'll make a mental or short note whether a past victory impresses the eye enough, or whether a troubled trip might have cost the horse a better placing.

### 3. CONSULT THE RATINGS

There are several prominent ratings services in Britain that provide opinions on the quality of past races for not only juveniles but for all horses running in the major countries of Europe. While these and their accompanying analyses won't make me reconsider horses I've decided to eliminate after steps 1 and 2, they often help determine my final selection when the choice is down to a handful of prospects or fewer. Unlike speed figures generally, higher ratings don't necessarily mean the horses are faster or the right play.

There are, of course, other minor factors to consider. For example, surface condition is somewhat intertwined with pedigree and past performance, while past trainer success in the race you're handicapping is always something to keep in mind. However, the three main steps above take precedence over these.



# REVIEWING MY 13 YEARS OF HANDICAPPING ROYAL ASCOT

by Vance Hanson



The 2024 Royal Ascot meeting will be my 14th at offering selections on Thursday and Friday of the five-day fixture, which runs from June 18-22. My colleague Kellie Reilly and I began covering Royal Ascot in 2011, tag-teaming to provide a Daily Selections tipsheet that was initially sold at Brisnet.com. After a few years, we began offering our insights on a complimentary basis at Brisnet, and they have since gravitated to their permanent home on the TwinSpires Edge.

For me, Royal Ascot is one of the most anticipated weeks of the racing year. It's an intellectual handicapping challenge par excellence, affording an American like myself the opportunity to match wits against bettors in the U.K. and around the world, many of whom have the advantage of having their finger on the pulse of European racing on a more frequent basis. With generally large and competitive fields, the rewards for being right can be extremely lucrative.

As intellectually stimulating, fun, and colorful as Royal Ascot is, it's also a pressure cooker. Concentrating exclusively on Group stakes and omitting handicaps, which requires a significant time investment and a skillset I have not yet attempted to hone, my success or failure is determined by the results of a mere eight races over two days.

In an effort at transparency, the accompanying table lists the Royal Ascot winners I have publicly selected over the past 13 years. This also affords an opportunity to discern trends and make noteworthy observations about my selection-making process. Please note these are results of my Thursday and Friday selections only and do not account for published spot plays on other days of the meet I've made over the years. I've had varying success trespassing on Kellie Reilly's turf on the other days but attempts at such have been highly infrequent and those records are very much incomplete.

YEAR	RACE	WINNER	U.K. ODDS	U.S. PAYOFF
2011	Ribblesdale	Banimpire	3-1*	NA
	Albany	Samitar	16-1	NA
2012	Ribblesdale	Princess Highway	17-2	NA
	Tercentenary	Energizer	15-2	NA
	Albany	Newfangled	7-4*	NA
	Queen's Vase	Estimate	3-1*	NA
2013	Albany	Kiyoshi	8-1	NA
2014	Tercentenary	Cannock Chase	7-4*	NA
	Gold Cup	Leading Light	10-11*	NA
2015	Albany	Illuminate	4-1	NA
	King Edward VII	Balios	3-1	NA
2016	Ribblesdale	Even Song	15-8*	NA
	Gold Cup	Order of St George	10-11*	NA
	Commonwealth Cup	Quiet Reflection	7-4*	NA
	Coronation	Qemah	6-1	NA
2017	Commonwealth Cup	Caravaggio	5-6*	NA
2018	Commonwealth Cup	Eqtidaar	12-1	NA
2019	Norfolk	A'Ali	5-1	\$13.70
	Gold Cup	Stradivarius	1-1*	\$3.60
	Albany	Daahyeh	4-1*	\$12.50
	Commonwealth Cup	Advertise	8-1	\$17.50
2020	Jersey	Molatham	11-2	\$13.90
	Gold Cup	Stradivarius	4-5*	\$3.00
	Norfolk	The Lir Jet	9-2	\$14.50
2021	Norfolk	Perfect Power	14-1	\$31.60
	King Edward VII	Alenquer	15-8*	\$4.20
2022	Norfolk	The Ridler	50-1	\$90.70
	Hampton Court	Claymore	7-1	\$14.80
	Commonwealth Cup	Perfect Power	7-2*	\$6.80
2023	King Edward VII	King of Steel	11-10*	\$3.50

\*Favorite



### ROYAL ASCOT BETTING HISTORY TAKEAWAYS

The first thing to note is I've made selections for 105 races on Thursdays and Fridays since 2011. There was an additional Group race in 2017, so I selected nine races that year. All have been Group events, with one exception; in the pandemic year of 2020, Day 3 of Royal Ascot had just two Group races scheduled, so I also ventured an opinion (a mistake, as it turned out, and one not to be repeated) on the Chesham, a listed event for two-year-olds. There was still a total of eight races selected that year.

- Of those 105 races, I have selected the winner in 30 (28.6%).
- Given my desire to stand against favorites whenever possible, I'm somewhat miffed that 16 of my 30 winning selections were the betting favorite, based on U.K. odds (access to U.S. payoffs before 2019 are limited, thus I'm obliged to refer to U.K. odds for some stats). On the plus side, only four were odds-on and another four were at 3-1 or higher.
- Based solely on U.K. odds and the minimum the horses would have paid if the price were the same in a U.S. pari-mutuel pool, my ROI on the 105 races would be \$4.13 for every \$2 wagered to win.
- My selections on Thursdays and Fridays have shown a flat-bet profit in 10 of the 13 years. My worst year was 2017, when the odds-on Caravaggio (Commonwealth Cup) was my only winner among nine races. My other losing years were 2023, when King of Steel (King Edward VII) saved me from being shut out completely over the two days, and 2014, when two short-priced winners out of eight weren't enough.
- While welcome, my success in the two-year-old features astounds me. I've tabbed four of the last five winners of the Norfolk, including two long-priced ones. It's been a perfect race to hold a contrarian view, as no post-time favorite has won it since 2008.

- In the early years, the Albany for two-year-old fillies was my best race, though it must be noted that three of my five winning selections also happened to be post-time favorites.

- The Gold Cup, the meet centerpiece over 2 1/2 miles, is not a race you should expect to make a killing on. All four of my winners were sent off at even-money or less, while favorites have won eight of the last 13 runnings.

- I generally find the Commonwealth Cup, the relatively new six-furlong sprint for three-year-old colts and fillies, truly baffling when I first sit down to handicap it every year. Despite that, it's been a consistently good race for me. I've selected five of the nine winners since its inauguration in 2015, and it would have been six had Dragon Symbol not been disqualified from the win in 2021.

- From a purely personal standpoint, I'm highly disappointed in my record in some of my favorite races of the week. I'm especially embarrassed about my record in the Coronation (1-for-12), arguably the deepest and most competitive race for three-year-old filly milers in Europe all season (I even eschewed taking the short-priced winner last year, Tahiyra). I'd much prefer it be a race I have a great feel for, but it simply hasn't worked out that way.

I very much look forward to once again sifting through the Thursday and Friday cards of Royal Ascot week. Obviously, past performance does not guarantee future results, but I'll be working hard to ensure that it does.



# 2024 ROYAL ASCOT: U.S. SHIPPERS INCLUDE PROVEN COURSE PERFORMERS

by Kellie Reilly

The U.S. shippers descending on Royal Ascot this year include not only the usual batch of speedy juveniles, but also past winners at the meeting.

John Sadler sends Missed the Cut, who scored in a handicap for original trainer George Boughey in 2022, for a tougher mission in the June 22 Hardwicke (G2). Last year's Queen Mary (G2) victress, Crimson Advocate, has prepped stateside with George Weaver ahead of her engagement in the June 18 King Charles III (G1). Having just switched to John and Thady Gosden, she now counts as British-trained, but we'll include her as a fresh expat.

The center of gravity for U.S. interest, however, remains the two-year-old squad.

Wesley Ward launches his annual raid in hopes of regaining the winning touch. Although responsible for 12 of the overall tally of 14 U.S.-based winners, Ward has been out of luck here since 2021. That last victory came via disqualification in the stewards' room, as his three-year-old Campanelle was promoted in the Commonwealth Cup (G1). She is also Ward's most recent winner of a Royal Ascot juvenile race, courtesy of her narrow score in the 2020 Queen Mary.

Jose D'Angelo earned his way here in Gulfstream Park's Royal Palm Juvenile, while Eddie Kenneally has a once-raced maiden who exemplifies the global ambitions of John Stewart's Resolute Racing. Let's look at the U.S. shippers in race order.

## TUESDAY'S KING CHARLES III (G1) - CRIMSON ADVOCATE

If that race name looks unfamiliar, it's the rebranding of the five-furlong dash formerly known as the King's Stand (G1). Thus Crimson Advocate returns to the same course and distance as her signature win in the Queen Mary.

Yet in more significant ways, the conditions are much tougher here. The sophomore filly is taking on older males, as well as her conqueror from last fall's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint (G1), Big Evs. With rain in the forecast, the ground is expected to be riding at least slower, if not a lot softer, than the good course she handled a year ago. Even then, she barely lasted by a diminishing nose.

Another difference is that Crimson Advocate has had just one prep run this time. As a juvenile, she had two starts under her belt before venturing abroad – a third on debut at Keeneland followed by an impressive score in the Royal Palm Juvenile Fillies that booked her Royal Ascot ticket.

Thanks to adverse weather that rained off a couple of her intended comeback spots, Crimson Advocate didn't reappear until the May 18 Roar S. versus sophomore males back at Gulfstream. The daughter of Kentucky Derby (G1) champion Nyquist showed that she still has speed in abundance. Despite bobbling to her knees at the start, she recovered well to chase an unsustainable pace in splits of :20.12 and :42.78. The others were run off their feet until well into the stretch,



when Crimson Advocate capitalized on her prominent early position. Passing the exhausted pacesetter, she prevailed by one length in a final five-furlong time of :54.77.

Crimson Advocate is eligible to move forward from that tightener, and she's likely better than her sixth behind Big Evs and Valiant Force in the Breeders' Cup. She was pitched straight into that without the benefit of a prep, but was only beaten 2 1/2 lengths at Santa Anita. Still, she'd need to find a fair bit more than that to factor versus elders at this level.

Owned by the rising powerhouse of Wathnan Racing, the nom de course of the Emir of Qatar, Crimson Advocate was transferred to the Gosdens to pursue additional European targets following Royal Ascot. Note that she's Wathnan's second-stringer in the King Charles III, with Rogue Lightning the main hope.

American fans will remember Valiant Force for his sojourn at Gulfstream this winter. After a fourth in the Hutcheson S. for Jorge Delgado, it was plain that he wasn't going to pan out on dirt. The Amo Racing brain trust sent him back to his original trainer in Ireland, Adrian Murray, for whom he stunned last year's Norfolk (G2) here at odds of 150-1. Like Crimson Advocate, Valiant Force can boast a major course-and-distance win, but resurfaces in a more challenging spot.

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### WEDNESDAY'S QUEEN MARY (G2) - ULTIMA GRACE

Ward has had more success in the Queen Mary than any other race, with four winners on his resume. His 2024 hope is For the People Racing's homebred Ultima Grace. By Triple Crown champion American Pharoah, she is out of past Ward trainee Ultima D, whose only win came in the 2017 Juvenile Fillies S. at Kentucky Downs. Ultima D, a daughter of Scat Daddy, is closely related to Ward's No Nay Never, the sensational winner of the 2013 Norfolk.

Pedigree could be significant in assessing Ultima Grace, since she has yet to race on turf. Her lone start so far came in an April 18 maiden on the Keeneland dirt, where she galloped by 3 3/4 lengths under a hold. Ultima Grace's time for 4 1/2 furlongs was a tepid :53.48, and she beat a very suspect bunch as a lopsided odds-on favorite.

On paper, that's not up to Queen Mary standard, but Ultima Grace is bred to excel on the switch to turf. Ward told attheraces.com that she's clearly indicated her surface preference in her turf works. If Ward's characteristic effervescence makes all his juveniles sound wonderful, this one could lend some substance to his comments.

Stablemates Saturday Flirt and Burning Pine were also made eligible for the Queen Mary, but they're reportedly targeting races later in the week (see below). Joel Rosario, who has ridden two of Ward's dozen winners here, is expected aboard his 2024 team.

### WEDNESDAY'S WINDSOR CASTLE S. - GABALDON, CHEVAL DE GUERRE, HONORARY AMERICAN

D'Angelo has the most accomplished American entrant in the Windsor Castle S., as his Gabaldon upset the May 11 Royal Palm Juvenile in his career debut. Connections are wisely going for the five-furlong option that might not be as daunting as Thursday's Norfolk.

That placement may help him fare better than last year's Royal Palm Juvenile winner, No Nay Mets, who flopped in the Norfolk. Even so, Gabaldon didn't necessarily look like one who'd enjoy carrying his speed down a stiff straightaway.

The \$9,000 OBS October yearling, who was purchased as a prospect for the Florida Sire Series on dirt, was overlooked at 16-1 in the Royal Palm Juvenile. Indeed, as a son of Gone Astray and a Value Plus mare, Gabaldon did not bring the pedigree buzz of others. But he did bring bags of speed, vying through an opening quarter in :21.33, forging clear by the half in :43.80, and finishing five furlongs in :56.20.

While Gabaldon held sway by 1 1/4 lengths from the congregating closers, he did appear to be looking for the wire, as track announcer Pete Aiello observed.

Royal Palm runner-up Reach for the Rose, who rallied in a promising debut effort, had been mentioned as a Royal Ascot hopeful himself. Trained by Saffie Joseph Jr., the Ken Ramsey homebred was supposed to breeze at Churchill Downs, but he hasn't worked back.

"He's a horse that came in early to point to Royal Ascot," Joseph told Gulfstream publicity May 30, "because Mr. Ramsey wanted to go. It's his dream to win a race there. He ran a big race first time out. He broke on top, dropped back and came with a good run. If he didn't drop back maybe he could have won that race that day. It gave us confidence to go forward."

Kenneally's Cheval de Guerre and Ward's Honorary American will try to break their maidens in the Windsor Castle.

Cheval de Guerre has not raced since his debut second at Keeneland April 25. But he advertised his potential well enough, selling the next day for the joint top price of \$450,000 to Stewart's Resolute Racing.

"I'm not really surprised," Kenneally told Keeneland publicity following the sale. "I was expecting a good number for the horse. He did everything right but was a little unlucky not to have won. He ran a good race. We had some good people on him and we're delighted to get it done. We've had a good little run with this horse in a short period of time."

In that 5 1/2-furlong turf maiden, Cheval de Guerre led through fractions of :21.89 and :45.08 and spurted clear, only to be caught late by Into Diamonds in 1:03.29. The third, Bright Skittle, came back to finish a dead-heat third to Gabaldon at Gulfstream.

You could say that Royal Ascot is in Cheval de Guerre's blood. Sire Caravaggio was a Royal Ascot star for Aidan O'Brien, and broodmare sire Declaration of War was likewise a Group 1 winner at the meeting for Ballydoyle. Cheval de Guerre comes from a fine American turf family, as a descendant of multiple Grade 1-winning millionaire Memories of Silver. Cheval de Guerre was slated for a May 24 maiden at Aqueduct, but scratched when it was transferred to the main track. Ward's Honorary American stayed in the race and went off as the even-money favorite. The Irish-bred son of Churchill faded to third after forcing the pace, displaying a high head carriage and an action perhaps more suited to turf.

On probation for Royal Ascot until a bullet move over the Keeneland turf June 8, Honorary American will take his chance. Yet Ward said that he left it up to his ownership group, which isn't the usual boosterism coming from his quarter.





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### THURSDAY'S NORFOLK (G2) – SATURDAY FLIRT

Note that the Windsor Castle trio discussed above – Gabaldon, Cheval de Guerre, and Honorary American – are all cross-entered to the Norfolk, the five-furlong affair that serves as a “Win and You’re In” for the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint. But as of this writing, reports indicate that they’ll opt for the Windsor Castle, and Saturday Flirt is expected to fly the flag in the Norfolk.

Bred, owned, and trained by Ward, Saturday Flirt is a daughter of Mendelssohn and Dragic, a multiple stakes-placed half-sister to champion Echo Zulu. Dragic, whose other half-siblings include Grade 1 winner Echo Town and Grade 3 scorer J Boys Echo, showed surface versatility in her brief career. A debut winner on the Keeneland dirt, she was third versus males in a pair of turf stakes, the Kentucky Downs Juvenile and Futurity S. Saturday Flirt will take on the boys herself in the Norfolk. She justified 1.06-1 favoritism in her unveiling on the Keeneland turf, despite a slow start. Saturday Flirt rallied from well off the pace to win cozily by 1 1/4 lengths, covering 5 1/2 furlongs in 1:03.35. Runner-up Bois Blanc let the form down, though, when sixth next time in the Royal Palm Juvenile Fillies. Interestingly, Ward intends to stick with the off-the-pace strategy, rather than employing his typical forward style. Plans call for Saturday Flirt to remove the blinkers for the Norfolk and save energy for the finish.

Stablemate Burning Pine was cross-entered to the Norfolk, but given the comments about her wanting to go further, her target is on Friday. Friday’s Albany (G3) – Burning Pine

Ward has yet to win a six-furlong race here with his juveniles, and Burning Pine doesn’t appear the type to rewrite that stat. By Nyquist (sire of Crimson Advocate), the \$80,000 Keeneland September yearling purchase initially wasn’t on the radar as a Royal Ascot possible. But the Hat Creek Racing runner came to hand a lot quicker than thought. She easily won her April 26 Keeneland debut going 4 1/2 furlongs on dirt, strolling by 3 1/2 lengths in :52.17, as the odds-on favorite.

Burning Pine’s ensuing works were unexceptional until her June 8 bullet on the turf, which gave Ward some hope that she’s warming to the surface. She ought to handle it, on pedigree. Out of the More Than Ready mare Orabella, she’s a half-sister to stakes-winning turf miler Louder Than Bombs and to current Transylvania (G3) winner Neat. Aside from the perennial questions of how juvenile formlines compare, Burning Pine has the profile of a filly who could improve with time. She’s exceeded expectations just to make the squad, and it’s questionable how she’ll cope with rivals arguably nearer their peak.

### SATURDAY'S HARDWICKE (G2) – MISSED THE CUT

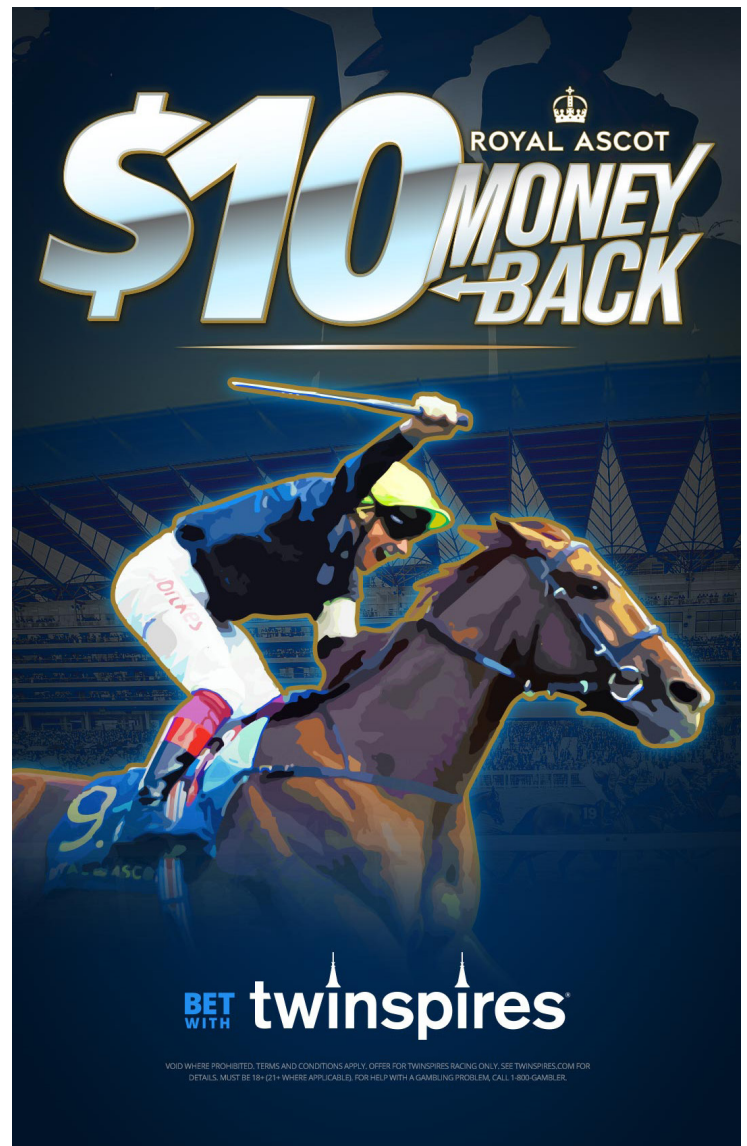
It would be an understatement to say that plenty of water has gone under the bridge since Missed the Cut dominated the Golden Gates H. during the 2022 Royal meeting. Then a progressive handicapper, he ranked as the 5-2 favorite in that 1 1/4-mile handicap for three-year-olds, and he rolled by 4 1/4 lengths.

Missed the Cut didn’t build on that effort as hoped in Group company on turf. He did nail Algiers in course-record time in the Churchill S. over Lingfield’s Polytrack, perhaps implanting the idea that the son of Quality Road could be worth trying on dirt.

Hence Missed the Cut moved from Newmarket-based Boughey to Sadler at Santa Anita in the spring of 2023. He eventually added to his resume on dirt, but at a lower level in the Tokyo City Cup (G3), and he was unplaced in his attempts in the San Diego H. (G2) and Breeders’ Cup Classic (G1). Missed the Cut has been much more consistent since reverting to turf, albeit on a Southern California circuit that lacks the depth of its heyday. His recent second in the Elkhorn (G2) at Keeneland, to Godolphin’s Silver Knott, is arguably of greater relevance.

The Hardwicke figures to be his toughest turf test since he was a well-beaten fourth as the favorite in the 2023 Neom Turf Cup (G3) on Saudi Cup Day. Another question is the distance. Missed the Cut was a 1 1/4-mile performer in his British days. Even though he handles 1 1/2 miles on flat tracks stateside, that’s no guarantee he’d stay as effectively around Ascot.

Still, with his course form, it’s better for him to go for international glory than ply his trade in less memorable contests at home.



# 2024 ROYAL ASCOT FAVORITES

by Kellie Reilly

Royal Ascot attracts star power of both the equine and human variety throughout its five-day meeting. Yet even strong favorites can get upstaged.

Here are five high-profile market leaders at Royal Ascot, one for each day of racing. It's not surprising that four are trained by Aidan O'Brien, who holds the record for 85 career wins at the festival. The other one represents a rival global empire, Godolphin.

## TUESDAY – NOTABLE SPEECH IN THE ST JAMES'S PALACE (G1)

After deploying a superb turn of foot to upset the 2000 Guineas (G1) at odds of 16-1, Notable Speech is no longer a dark horse for Godolphin trainer Charlie Appleby. The homebred son of Dubawi rose through the ranks on the all-weather this season, making him a speculative question mark on the class hike, and switch to turf, at Newmarket. Notable Speech shredded every doubt that day, extending his unbeaten record in a race whose form has since stood up very well.

One possible concern was rain in the initial forecast. Softish going could alter the equation, whether by blunting his late kick or by elevating an opponent. But the latest reports indicate more favorable weather.

## WEDNESDAY – AUGUSTE RODIN IN THE PRINCE OF WALES'S (G1)

Despite back-to-back losses, Auguste Rodin is currently favored to give O'Brien a record-tying fifth win in this feature. The Ballydoyle celebrity has looked brilliant on his day, perhaps most memorably in the 2023 Derby (G1) at Epsom and the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1). But Auguste Rodin has become dependent on conditions, needing a quicker surface to produce his best. While the ground was blamed for his being eased in his only prior Ascot appearance last year, and for his latest reverse at the Curragh, he was never competitive in the March 30 Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) either.

Royal Ascot was always the goal, however, and O'Brien is likely to produce Auguste Rodin in top form – if the colt is happy with the going, and life in general.

## THURSDAY – KYPRIOS IN THE GOLD CUP (G1)

Kyprios has been backed into odds-on favoritism to regain the Gold Cup crown he won in 2022. The O'Brien trainee didn't lose his title on the track. Rather, he had to abdicate because of a problematic injury that at one stage appeared possibly life-threatening, or at least career-imperiling. Kyprios did exceedingly well just to make it back to the races last fall.

The son Galileo regained the winning habit in both of his preps this year, the same stepping stones he used two years ago. His proven stamina over the 2 1/2-mile distance is also an asset – if Kyprios still has his former strength. The odds reflect the degree of confidence in his camp. O'Brien has won eight Gold Cups, but his only multiple winner so far is the great four-timer Yeats.

## FRIDAY – OPERA SINGER IN THE CORONATION (G1)

The market is also rallying around Opera Singer, who must move forward from her comeback loss in the Irish 1000 Guineas (G1). The daughter of Justify was a spectacular winner of the Prix Marcel Boussac (G1) in her juvenile finale, but a setback earlier this spring affected her whole timetable. Ruled out of the 1000 Guineas (G1) at Newmarket, Opera Singer was just able to resume in the Irish equivalent at the Curragh. When she managed to hold on for third, O'Brien was overjoyed that she could even hit the board despite suboptimal fitness.

The question is whether Opera Singer is back to her peak already. At two, she improved over the course of the season, and ultimately stamped herself as the European divisional champion.

## SATURDAY – CONTINUOUS IN THE HARDWICKE (G2)

Last year's St Leger (G1) hero Continuous is a hot favorite in his seasonal reappearance for O'Brien. Although his marquee win came in that longest classic, he's not a dour stayer. Continuous was a clear second in the King Edward VII (G2) here before bolting up in the Great Voltigeur (G2) over the same 1 1/2-mile trip. Following the Leger, he reverted to this distance for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1) and finished a creditable fifth. The son of Japanese star Heart's Cry was slated for the Japan Cup (G1), until "stiffness" called off his voyage.

In his comments on attheraces.com, O'Brien sounded bullish about his readiness for Ascot without a prep run. Normally, you'd expect Continuous to benefit from a tightener; all four of O'Brien's past Hardwicke winners were race-fit. Yet his trainer believes that a couple of racecourse gallops suffice, and his sire's progeny are known to improve with maturity.





# 2024 ROYAL ASCOT STORYLINES

by Kellie Reilly



The most anticipated event of the British summer season returns this week, as Royal Ascot stages its action-packed five-day meeting Tuesday through Saturday. From two-year-olds and sprinters to mile specialists, middle-distance aficionados, and stamina-laden stayers, the gala presents opportunities for every division.

The world-class racing will have reverberations throughout the rest of the season, both at home and abroad. From a U.S. perspective, the Breeders' Cup implications are especially valuable.

Four Royal Ascot races are part of the Breeders' Cup Challenge program, beginning right off the bat with Tuesday's opener, the Queen Anne (G1), a "Win and You're In" for the Mile (G1). A little more than an hour later, the King Charles III (G1) offers a free berth in the Turf Sprint (G1). Wednesday's Prince of Wales's (G1) carries the same perk for the Turf (G1), and Thursday's Norfolk (G2) winner earns a spot in the Juvenile Turf Sprint (G1).

Here are my top 10 Royal Ascot storylines:

## 1. BREEDERS' CUP CHAMPIONS CLASH AFTER INSPIRAL'S SWITCHEROO

Reigning Turf hero Auguste Rodin and Filly & Mare Turf (G1) star Inspiral are not only lining up at Royal Ascot, but now set to square off against each other, in the Prince of Wales's.

Inspiral was long expected to take another crack at the Queen Anne over the straight mile, where she was just denied last year. But after proving her 1 1/4-mile aptitude with a devastating rally at Santa Anita in November, connections were open to stepping up in trip back home. The John and Thady Gosden mare gave further reason to change her target once she was a distant, ring-rusty fourth behind stablemate Audience in the one-mile Lockinge (G1) last month.

Factor in the major defection of antepost Prince of Wales's favorite Passenger, and the circumstances have aligned for an Inspiral switch-up.

## 2. SHOWDOWN OF MILE CLASSIC WINNERS

Tuesday's St James's Palace (G1) will decide the leading miler among the three-year-old colts, and the showdown of classic winners figures to produce the brightest fireworks on day one. Unbeaten 2000 Guineas (G1) winner Notable Speech is all the rage to confirm the form over Rosallion, the Newmarket runner-up who went on to take the Irish equivalent. But there's also French intrigue courtesy of Darlington and Metropolitan, who surprised in the Poule d'Essai des Poulains (French 2000 Guineas) (G1). Not to be forgotten is the Aidan O'Brien-trained Henry Longfellow, a juvenile standout who never saw much daylight in the Poulains.

The companion mile affair for sophomore fillies, Friday's Coronation (G1), serves up a rematch of the top three from Newmarket's 1000 Guineas (G1) – Elmalka, Porta Fortuna, and Ramatuelle – plus Rouhiya, the upsetter in the French equivalent. But the favorite is O'Brien's Opera Singer, third in the Irish 1000 Guineas (G1) when just returning from a setback.

## 3. FRENCH INVASION WORTHY OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon's ambition of invading Great Britain never came off, but the emperor might have been pleased by the French forces amassing on Ascot. Field marshals Andre Fabre, Jerome Reynier, Christopher Head, Francis-Henri Graffard, and Patrice Cottier are firing some real shots over the week, as are French-based Italian expats Maurizio Guarnieri and Mario Baratti.

Reynier could strike the first blow with Facteur Cheval in the Queen Anne. Cottier's star, Horizon Dore, is arguably the top French hope in the Prince of Wales's. Fabre's First Look is a prime player in Thursday's Hampton Court (G3), while Graffard's best-backed contender is Calandagan in Friday's King Edward VII (G2). Head's leading light is the aforementioned Ramatuelle. Note that Guarnieri's duo of Big Rock (Queen Anne) and Blue Rose Cen (Prince of Wales's) were both bombshell transfers from Head, who had developed them into top-notchers, and it remains to be seen if they'll hit the same heights for a different yard.

## 4. WATHNAN RACING OUT IN FORCE

The Emir of Qatar's Wathnan Racing has spared no expense in acquiring recruits specifically to maximize their Royal Ascot representation. Between splurging for juveniles at the recent breeze-up sales, and opening the checkbook to snap up proven performers, the emerging powerhouse will have loads of chances every day. Among their prominent contenders are Gregory in Thursday's Gold Cup (G1) and the aforementioned First Look elsewhere on the same card; Haatem, slated for Saturday's Jersey (G3); Rogue Lightning in the King Charles III; Space Legend in the King Edward VII; and Shartash in Saturday's closing-day highlight, the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee (G1); not to mention the array of smart two-year-olds being filtered into various spots.

## 5. OPEN-LOOKING SPRINT DIVISION

The sprint scene lacks clarity, to put it charitably, and the establishment has been little more than a revolving door of "whose turn is it" winners. In the circumstances, it's understandable why



bettors are flocking to three-year-old Big Evs in the King Charles III, in hopes that he'll topple his elders and take charge of the five-furlong division. Yet the reigning Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint king isn't a standout on form, and it wouldn't be a shock to see another of the usual suspects step forward.

The story is the same among the six-furlong crowd in the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee, only with no sophomore to offer a fresh-faced alternative. The three-year-old specialists at that trip are in Friday's Commonwealth Cup (G1), which has an open feel at the moment too. If last year's all-conquering Vandeeek doesn't bounce back, you can make cases for several to jump up.

## 6. ASFOORA THE LONE AUSSIE

In the past, fans could seek refuge in a sprint champion from further afield, often Australia. But the lone shipper from Down Under this year, Asfoora, doesn't bring that sort of profile into the King Charles III.

Indeed, the lack of interest overall from Australia, Hong Kong, and Japan has generated much discussion. Royal Ascot's prestige is second to none, but more lucrative prizes, in their own backyard, are difficult to pass up, especially when firm-ground lovers are at the mercy of the British weather. And flat-track types might not handle the terrain as effectively.

That's not to downplay the merit of Asfoora, a multiple Group 2 winner who's twice placed in Group 1s at home. But her conqueror Imperatriz, a 10-time Group 1 winner, would have brought Antipodean flair.

## 7. ROYAL PALM TO WAVE AGAIN?

Last year, Crimson Advocate yielded instant dividends for Gulfstream Park's Royal Palm initiative, using her free ticket from the Juvenile Fillies to win the Queen Mary (G2). Her successor in the fillies' race, Bullet, opted not to make the trip. But the colt Gabaldon, who flashed high speed to prevail in the Royal Palm Juvenile, is using his pass to Royal Ascot. Trainer Jose D'Angelo cross-entered him to Wednesday's Windsor Castle S. as well as Thursday's Norfolk, with reports indicating that he'll run on Wednesday.

As you'd expect, Wesley Ward fields most of the American team, with four juveniles hoping to end his losing skid at the meeting. Crimson

Advocate is back for the King Charles III, but as an expat who just arrived at the Gosdens' yard. The only grizzled veteran of the U.S. squad is John Sadler's Missed the Cut, a winner here in his former British days, who tries Saturday's Hardwicke (G2).

## 8. O'BRIEN/MOORE LOOK FOR MORE TITLES

O'Brien focuses on Royal Ascot as the premier objective for his Coolmore patrons, and the master of Ballydoyle has hit the target as champion trainer 12 times. Not only did he defend his title last year, but O'Brien made history by increasing his Royal Ascot win total to 85, surpassing the former record of 82 held by Sir Michael Stoute. His phalanx for 2024 promises to add to that stat. The most meaningful of all might be the outstanding stayer Kyprios, back from the brink to pursue another Gold Cup.

Coolmore's go-to rider, Ryan Moore, also ranked as the meet's top jockey for the 10th time last year. Entering the 2024 stand with a career total of 79 wins, Moore is on the verge of overtaking Frankie Dettori's mark of 81 among active riders.

## 9. DETTORI SOAKING UP THE SCENE

Speaking of Dettori, the legendary reinsman will reportedly be on the premises, but not in the saddle. He doesn't have to endure another round of "Frankie's last Royal Ascot" fanfare, which is just as well since he had a brilliant time of it a year ago. It's best to leave those memories – four winners highlighted by Courage Mon Ami in the Gold Cup – as the best send-off.

Dettori's famous decision to postpone retirement and continue riding stateside has been a boon for U.S. fans, and hopefully for him as well. After he gets to enjoy the Royal meeting with no pressure, he'll be back at Saratoga soon enough.

## 10. WEATHER WATCH

Every year, the weather is a developing story in itself, and the forecast has delivered a plot twist already. A rainy start was expected, but the outlook is now dramatically brighter for the first couple of days. According to the Sunday update from Ascot, Thursday could be showery.

For the latest weather forecast, ground descriptions, and more details, check out the dedicated "going" page at [ascot.com](https://ascot.com).



# 2024 ROYAL ASCOT LONGSHOTS

by Kellie Reilly

Final declarations for Royal Ascot will be available 48 hours in advance of each race day. At this stage, the fields are coming together enough to try to find possible sleepers.

Here's a longshot to consider for every day of the meeting:

## TUESDAY'S QUEEN ANNE (G1) - DOLAYLI

If Maljoom is the price play on form from an Ascot past, Dolayli has the sneaky potential of an unexposed horse on the upgrade. The Aga Khan's homebred resurfaced this winter from a long absence, and he soon emerged as a budding star on the French all-weather. His absolute thrashing of a globetrotter the caliber of Junko made him one to follow. Trainer Francis-Henri Graffard has categorically stated that Dolayli is a future Group 1 winner; it's just a case of where he earns it.

Granted, the Queen Anne (G1) isn't necessarily the obvious spot for a horse who stays much further. Yet the prospect of a strong pace over a stiff mile track could suit him well. Note that Dolayli has run respectably in defeat in his past two on turf, including a better-than-appears fourth in the Prix d'Ispahan (G1).

## WEDNESDAY'S QUEEN MARY (G2) - KASSAYA

Normally I'd go for a longshot in the Duke of Cambridge (G2) on this day, but there's too much uncertainty about the cast to render an early judgment. While the 36 (!) juvenile fillies in the Queen Mary (G2) will also be whittled down, the definite runner who looms as the biggest overlay is Kassaya.

Juddmonte bought the Kingman filly for 1 million guineas as a foal, and her appeal is obvious as a half-sister to classic hero Chaldean, Group 2-winning juvenile Alkumait, and Group 1-placed sprinter Get Ahead. Kassaya lived up to her speedy pedigree, and big reputation, by beating the boys at Nottingham second time out for trainer Andrew Balding.

## THURSDAY'S GOLD CUP (G1) - SWEET WILLIAM

If head is ruling heart, and you're trying to beat past champion Kyprios at odds-on, Vauban was a very attractive price play. But a lot of others have had the same idea, and he's shorter in the market than he once was.

Gregory is the most obvious alternative, as his price illustrates, but there's another progressive stayer in the John and Thady Gosden yard - Sweet William. He too has pedigree power, as a Sea the Stars half-brother to Hurricane Lane. Although a bit of a character, Sweet William has never been out of the trifecta in 11 starts, and he comes off a breakthrough victory in the Henry II (G3).

On paper, he ranks below stablemates Gregory and Trawlerman, but there's a sense that we haven't seen the best from Sweet William yet.

## FRIDAY'S CORONATION (G1) - SEE THE FIRE

With one of my strongest fancies of the whole week, Bucano Fuerte, out of the Commonwealth Cup (G1), it's back to the drawing board for the Friday longshot. I have my eye on two possibilities in the



Coronation (G1). The market suggests that Skellet is likelier going versus the boys in Thursday's Hampton Court (G3), so that leaves See the Fire as the Coronation overlay.

As a daughter of the great Sea the Stars and Arabian Queen, who toppled Golden Horn in the 2015 Juddmonte International (G1), See the Fire always promised to be better with maturity. So I take it as a glaring hint that she was able to win on debut as a juvenile and place in the May Hill (G2) and Fillies' Mile (G1).

The Andrew Balding pupil resumed in the 1000 Guineas (G1), where she faded to 12th after chasing early. That wasn't the place to be on that occasion. Another forwardly-placed Guineas flop, Fallen Angel, rebounded in the Irish 1000 Guineas (G1), and See the Fire has a license to turn the page as well. A 15-2 chance at Newmarket, she's regarded highly enough to have entries versus older males in the Eclipse (G1) and Sussex (G1).

## SATURDAY'S QUEEN ELIZABETH II JUBILEE (G1) - MONTASSIB

Shartash, likely to be my top pick, no longer qualifies as a longshot, so we'll look to the massively overpriced Montassib to play the role. The William Haggas veteran isn't as exposed as his record implies, since he only recently shortened up to six furlongs. The drop in trip has been the making of him. If the forecast rain does arrive late in the week, and he gets his prerequisite of soft ground, the Exceed and Excel gelding has a license to outrun his inflated odds.

*Stay tuned for more analysis and selections throughout Royal Ascot!*



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