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# United Kingdom Racecourses

The United Kingdom has the most diverse racetracks you will ever find the world. We have straight, right-handed, and left-handed tracks, on turf and artificial surfaces.

This however can cause a few problems when it comes to betting. In the US, all tracks are left-handed, and have sectional timing. This is not possible on UK tracks, as the rails can often be moved to protect certain parts of the track. So you may have a 5 furlong race officially, but in reality it may be 5 furlongs one day, and then the next the move the rails so it is 5 furlongs and 20 yards. This makes sectional timing pretty useless.

Having a wide variety of tracks though does have its advantages. The racing does not become repetitive and you also get what we call 'horses for courses'. This is when a horse will win again and again at a certain track, but never runs well at other tracks. This generally happens at our most weird tracks such as Chester, a left-handed track where 85% of the race is on a bend, and Brighton, with a number of bends as well as up and down, and a camber.

The UK also holds three types of horse racing:

- All Weather (AW): This is basically what the Americans would refer to as dirt racing. Generally in the UK this was for low grade horses during the off-season, but with the opening of Kempton, we now get much higher class racing, and are now often used as a stepping stone for International dirt racing.
- Turf: Turf racing is generally accepted as flat racing on grass. The main season is March to September, but it is not run on turf throughout the winter due to the ground conditions, although with climate change we see more and more soft ground during the main season.
- National Hunt: This is when the horse jump fences or hurdles (smaller fences). The main season for this is Autumn/Winter, although as long as the ground is fine it does happen all year round now.

With over 50 racetracks, not many of them are actually the same. York is similar to Newbury and Haydock, with large sweeping turns and a long run-in. Brighton is more like Epsom with strange bends and a camber.

Then we have the unique tracks, Chester mentioned earlier, Newmarket, the largest racing heath in the world with races over 1.5 miles run on a straight track, not only that, Newmarket actually has two racetracks on the heath. Probably the best well known track around the world for uniqueness is the Aintree Grand National with its specialised fences, and watched by over 100 million every year.

Below are listed some of my favourite tracks:

Ascot  
Beverley  
Cartmel  
Cheltenham  
Doncaster  
Exeter  
Folkestone  
Haydock Park  
Hexham  
Kempton Park  
Market Rasen  
Musselburgh  
Nottingham  
Redcar  
Salisbury  
Stratford  
Thirsk

Uttoxeter  
Wolverhampton  
York

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