

A-Z of Racing

A is for Apprentice

A young flat jockey who can claim a weight allowance of up to 10lbs depending on his/ her age and the number of winners ridden.

A is for Aidan O'Brien

Champion Flat Trainer in Ireland for the past 21 years and currently holds the World Record for most number of Group 1 winners trained in a season – 23.

B is for Black type

A horse has black type if it wins or has been placed in a Listed race. A horse's breeding value increases if it gets black type.

B is for Blinkers

A piece of equipment that goes over the horse's head to restrict its vision and help it concentrate in a race. Some horses lose focus and start looking around them. This device ensures tunnel vision.

B is for Breather

When a jockey eases a horse down for a short distance during a race to allow it to fill its lungs for a final effort.

C is for Clerk of The Course

The official who makes sure the course is safe and fit for racing on the day. Determines the official going.

C is for Colt

A male horse aged four or younger.

D is for Drift

When a horse's price gets bigger due to a lack of support, it is said to be drifting or on the drift.

E is for Each-Way

To back a horse each-way means to back the horse to win and be placed. Thus, a €2 beat each way represents two bets and will cost €4. If the horse wins you collect both the win and place dividends.

F is for Filly

A female horse aged four or younger.

F is for Furlong

There are eight furlongs in a mile. One furlong equals 220 yards or 200 metres.

G is for Gelding

A male horse that has been neutered. Most male horses that compete in national hunt racing are gelded. Most male horses in flat racing are not, as they are bound for careers in the breeding barn.

G is for Going

Refers to whether the ground is hard or soft. Different horses react to different ground. If you're looking at a horse's movement, a high-knee action would indicate a liking for soft ground, while a horse with a lower, gliding action would generally prefer it good or better. A horse's preference is a key factor to consider when having a bet.

G is for Green

A term used to describe a horse that is very inexperienced and will learn from its first run.

H is for Hand

The unit by which horses are measured. One hand is equal to four inches. The hand increases in measurements of a quarter i.e. 16.1, is 16 hands and one quarter which is 65", which is 5'5". The average race horse height is 15.3, which is 63".

H is for Handicap

A race in which the weights are calculated by an official assessor called a handicapper. A handicapper's dream would be for every horse to cross the finishing line level, as the job is to give the horse with the best form the top weight and rate everything else in accordance with that to give them an equal chance. Good form leads to an increase in weight (a penalty) and therefore, it is more difficult for a horse that has won a handicap to back that up as it must do so with a bigger handicap.

I is for Istabraq

Was trained by Aidan O'Brien and won the Champion Hurdle 3 times, he was owned by J P McManus and ridden by Charlie Swan who rode him on all 29 of his races over hurdles.

J is for Judge

The official who decides the winner and placed horses in a race and also the winning distance.

K is for Kodiak

Is a leading stallion who stands at Tally Ho Stud in Co Westmeath. Kodiak has gone from a workmanlike stallion to world class in the space of ten years. His stock have earned over €11 million since 2012 and have a particular precocity – they are early bird two year old runners that trainers love.

L is for Length

The measurement of a margin of victory. A length refers to the approximate length of a horse, which is around eight feet. A half-length is the lowest length measurement, with the smaller margins being a neck, head, short-head and nose. Anything more than 20 lengths is referred to as 'a distance'.

L is for Listed

A race below Group or Grade status but above a handicap or conditions race.

M is for Maiden

A horse that has not won a race.

M is for Mare

A female horse age five or more.

N is for Noseband

A strap attached onto the bridle around the horse's nose to help keep its mouth closed. A sheepskin cover is often attached to help keep a horse focused straight ahead.

N is for Nursery

A handicap for two-year old horses.

O is for Off the Bridle/Off The Bit

A horse that is not travelling well and is being pushed along by a jockey to keep up with the pace is said to be off the bridle or off the bit. Not a good sign before the business end of a race.

P is for Photo Finish

When a verdict is too close for a judge to call. A photo is taken automatically as the horses pass the winning post and in such an instance, is referred to, to determine the result.

Q is for Quarantine

Horses can travel all over the World to race. Quarantine isolates foreign horses coming to the country to race to ensure that they are cleared by a veterinarian from any diseases before racing in the country and coming into contact with other animals.

R is for Reins

What the jockey uses to control and steer the horse during a race. The reins are the link between the jockey's hands and the horse's mouth as they are connected to the bit. Usually made of leather or nylon and are covered in a non-slip rubber.

S is for Sire

A horse's father.

S is for Spread a plate

When a horse loses a shoe it is said that it has spread a plate

T is for Tack

The generic name given to various pieces of equipment that are used on a horse.

T is for Tongue Strap

A piece of cloth or elastic tied on the horse's tongue to keep it in place during a race. Generally used on a horse with breathing difficulties, to prevent the tongue interfering with the soft palate.

U is for Urban Sea

Urban Sea is widely considered one of the best broodmares of all time, not only was she a fantastic race mare winning the Arc De Triomphe, she has also produced 11 foals, 9 of which were Black Type winners, 2 being Champion racehorses - Galileo and Sea the Stars, Galileo has turned in a Champion Sire while Sea the Stars has sired Derby winner Harzand, Irish Oaks winner Seas of Class, Ascot Gold Cup winner Stradivarius and English Oaks winner Taghrooda.

V is for Valet

A person employed by the jockeys to assist them in their preparations for each race. The valet ensures that all the equipment needed is clean and ready for the next race.

W is for Weigh In/Weigh Out

When a jockey is weighed to make sure that a horse is carrying the required burden. A jockey is weighed out before a race and weighs in afterwards.

W is for Winner All Right

This is the official confirmation that the stewards are happy that the winner has broken no rules.

X is for Xaar

Was a champion 2 year old racehorse trained by for the majority of his career by French Champion trainer Andre Fabre when owned by Khalid Abdullah. Xaar was then purchased by H H Sheikh Mohammed to run for Godolphin after which he ran second in the Coral Eclipse beaten a neck by Compton Admiral.

Y is for Yearling

A horse that has been born on any date in the previous year.

Z is for Zoffany

Zoffany stands at Coolmore Stud, he is by Dansili and was a Group 1 winner as a 2 year old, he is also the only horse to get within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length of the great Frankel! Zoffany is now an established sire and most recently sired Group 1 Gran Premio del Jockey Club winner Ventura Storm.