



Khadijah Mellah set for amateur debut at Goodwood Racecourse, the scene of her groundbreaking 2019 victory

- Khadijah Mellah to ride in her first race as an amateur jockey at Goodwood Racecourse on Friday 22 August – The Gay Kindersley Memorial Amateur Riders Handicap at 5.15pm.
- Mellah was the first hijab-wearing jockey to race in Britain, winning the 2019 Markel Magnolia Cup.
- August Bank Holiday presented by Virgin Bet takes place from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 August.
- Children go free this weekend, tickets available at [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com).

Khadijah Mellah is set to ride in her debut race as an amateur jockey on Friday 22 August at Goodwood Racecourse, back where it all began as the first hijab-wearing jockey to win a competitive race in Britain.

In 2019, the then 18-year-old Mellah became a new hero for women in sport, when she won the Markel Magnolia Cup, aboard the Charlie Fellowes trained Haverland in spectacular style, just months after sitting on a horse for the first time.

Mellah has been booked by trainer Eve Johnson Houghton to ride in the Gay Kindersley Memorial Amateur Riders Handicap at 5:15pm, aboard Uncle Dick.

Mellah rides out for Johnson Houghton and has worked hard to earn her first ride as an amateur jockey after a year of preparation. She will ride at the West Sussex track on day one of the August Bank Holiday fixture presented by Virgin Bet.

Starting out at Ebony Riding School in London, the 24-year-old from Peckham has plied her trade since winning the renowned female charity race, completing a degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Brighton, committing to a three-year racing apprenticeship and becoming a licenced amateur jockey.

On riding in her first ride under rules, Mellah said: “When I got the call, I completely lost my mind. This is just such a beautiful way to emerge again on the racing scene. Being back at Goodwood Racecourse just after seeing one of my students ride in the Markel Magnolia Cup, I’m so grateful.”

“It’s a privilege to be in this position and I’ve given everything to make sure I can try and get the best outcome. Eve’s (Johnson Houghton) been so brilliant and supportive, she has been so

approachable and straightforward and understanding. If I'm going to ride anyone's horse, especially for my first ride, I'm so glad it's Eve.

“This is why we need to encourage and nurture women's development in horseracing. Visibility and seeing it to believe it is so important, but also having a relatable person to go to for advice makes a massive difference.”

James Crespi, Racecourse Director at Goodwood Racecourse, said: “Khadijah Mellah captured global attention in 2019 when she stormed to victory in the Markel Magnolia Cup—just months after first sitting on a horse. At only 18, her win was nothing short of spectacular. We're delighted to welcome her back to Goodwood this Friday, as she returns to the scene of her triumph for her debut as an amateur jockey.”

Following Mellah's historic win, the Riding A Dream Academy was set up by the British Racing School, ITV Racing broadcaster Oli Bell and Mellah herself.

The Academy's aim is to help young people from diverse communities and disadvantaged backgrounds get involved in the sport. Since its inception, two Riding A Dream Academy graduates, Aamilah Aswat and Sienna Anderson, have ridden in the Markel Magnolia Cup.

Anderson rode in this year's charity race, finishing in second place behind Markel International's Sophie Forsyth. The 18-year-old was in the first cohort of students to graduate from the Khadijah Mellah Scholarship in 2022 before completing the Foundation Course at the British Racing School. The teenager, originally from London, now works full-time for Charlie Fellowes Racing in Newmarket – who also provided her with a horse, Al Mudhaffar, for the Markel Magnolia Cup.

On Sienna and the Riding A Dream Academy, Mellah added: “She already looks so much better than I ever was. It just shows the quality of the programme we deliver and how much talent and ambition there is within the next generation.

“Diversity can bring so much excitement into this sport. There are going to be some kids who want this so badly, just as I do, and really bring out the best in racing. Sienna rode a brilliant race and pushed a great finish, and that just shows, and it is a taster of what's to come.

“It's important for me as a role model to keep pushing to different heights and lead by example and show the kids I'm teaching that even though it's hard, you can try and do more. I want to try and win under rules.”

Tickets are available for August Bank Holiday racing, the perfect summer holiday outing with the family, with under-18s going free. Book tickets and hospitality at [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com).

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Notes to Editors:

August Bank Holiday presented by Virgin Bet takes place from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 August.

Tickets are priced from just £18 and under-18s go free.

Tickets

Tickets, dining, and hospitality on sale on the website. Visit [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com) or call 01243 755055 to find out more.

Contact

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For all other press enquiries please contact: Media@goodwood.com

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About the Markel Magnolia Cup

On Thursday 31 July, 12 dedicated amateur jockeys will ride in the Markel Magnolia Cup following months of intensive training. In 2019, the race captured the eyes of the world when Khadijah Mellah galloped to glory up Goodwood's home straight. Mellah was 18 years old when she won in spectacular style just months after sitting on a horse for the first time. Previous jockeys have included doctors, Olympians, CEOs, journalists, students, models, and presenters, among them Edie Campbell, Sara Cox, Rosie Tapner, and Vogue Williams. This year's winner was Markel International underwriter, Sophie Forsyth.

Fundraising takes place through race and horse sponsorship, as well as at the Regency Ball, a stunning themed evening held at Goodwood House after the Markel Magnolia Cup. In 2025, the charity race is raising money for The King's Trust international's Project Lehar.

About Goodwood Racecourse

Introduced to the Goodwood Estate in 1802 by the 3rd Duke of Richmond, the Goodwood Racecourse has long been steeped in horseracing heritage. From Lord George Bentinck's winning horse in the 1836 St Leger, which was transported in secret from Goodwood to Doncaster, to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's horse Love Affair taking its final win, the racecourse has been home to some significant moments in horseracing history.

Situated on the South Downs and hosting 19 race days from May through October, thousands of racegoers flock to one of the world's most beautiful racecourses each year to enjoy a season of top-class racing and entertainment. With a varied calendar of fixtures, race day highlights include Three Friday Nights, the May Festival, the Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar - more affectionately known as Glorious Goodwood - and the Season Finale, to name a few.

About the Riding A Dream Academy

At the Riding A Dream Academy we're passionate about supporting young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, disadvantaged communities and urban equestrian centres get involved in

British horseracing. Inspired by the achievements of Khadijah Mellah, who became the first British Muslim woman to ride in and win a British horse race, we want to help other young riders aged 13-16 achieve their dreams. Funded by the Racing Foundation, the Academy runs four programmes:

The Khadijah Mellah Scholarship which is a year-long programme for talented riders.

Riding A Dream Residential Weeks which are a fun riding-based introduction to the sport.

Taster Days at the British Racing School for school children with no experience of riding or horse racing.

More information can be found on Instagram: @ridingadreamacademy or via the website www.ridingadreamacademy.com.