



TV personality and dressage rider Gemma Owen to take part in 2026 Markel Magnolia Cup

- TV personality and dressage rider Gemma Owen announced as competitor for the charity race.
- Markel Magnolia Cup takes place on Ladies' Day at the Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar.
- Tickets and hospitality packages for the five-day festival are on sale now at goodwood.com.

Goodwood Racecourse is delighted to announce that Gemma Owen will be participating in the 2026 Markel Magnolia Cup, which will take place on Thursday 30 July during Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar.

The talented international dressage rider and TV presenter is already in training for the charity race and is enjoying the challenge that comes with switching equestrian disciplines. Gemma is working with trainer Hugo Palmer and jockey Franny Norton, riding out at Manor House Stables.

Since its inception in 2011, the Markel Magnolia Cup has raised more than £3.5 million for charities supporting women and children, thanks to the remarkable efforts of the many inspiring and influential women who have taken part. This year it will raise vital funds for Education Above All Foundation.

All the Markel Magnolia Cup jockeys undertake months of intensive training and complete fitness tests and riding assessments at the British Racing School in preparation to race down Goodwood Racecourse's home straight in front of thousands.

Following in her father, Michael Owen's footsteps, Gemma will be swapping sporting disciplines to delve into the adrenaline-filled world of racing. The former Liverpool and England striker retired from professional football in 2013, turning his attention to horseracing, having built a state-of-the-art racing facility in Cheshire several years prior. Today, Manor House Stables house and train more than 100 racehorses.

As she prepares for the Markel Magnolia Cup, Gemma is continuing to compete on the dressage circuit with her mount King Ron P, alongside her presenting work.

Gemma Owen said: "I'm really looking forward to taking part in the Markel Magnolia Cup this year. Believe it or not, I had never sat on a racehorse until a couple of months ago and the

training so far has been humbling to say the least. Spending more time at Manor House Stables, seeing how a racing yard runs like clockwork and getting out onto the gallops, has been an incredible experience.”

“It is an even bigger challenge than I initially expected but I’m excited to take part in such a prestigious fundraising event which raises so much money for charities supporting women and children.”

The full line-up for the Markel Magnolia Cup will be announced on Thursday 23 April.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

Tickets

Tickets, dining, and hospitality for the 2026 Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar are now available to purchase. Visit [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com) to find out more.

Contact

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About Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar

The Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar is one of the undisputed highlights of the British flat racing season. The world-famous five-day festival is a sporting and social occasion like no other, unrivalled style, superb racing, and hospitality experiences to savour mean it’s not to be missed. The 2026 Qatar Goodwood Festival takes place from Tuesday 28 July to Saturday 1 August. The week is headed by three Group 1 races, including the £500,000 Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup (2m), the £1million Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes (1m), and the £600,000 Qatar Nassau Stakes (1m2f).

About the Markel Magnolia Cup

On Thursday 30 July at the Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar, 12 amateur jockeys will compete in the Markel Magnolia Cup after months of intensive training. The charity race brings together women from business, sport, fashion and media, all taking on the challenge to highlight resilience and redefine perceptions of women in sport. Previous riders include Olympians, CEOs, journalists and presenters such as Edie Campbell, Sara Cox, Rosie Tapner

and Vogue Williams. Markel International underwriter Sophie Forsyth was crowned the winner in 2025.

The event has been a force for change in racing, most notably through Khadijah Mellah's groundbreaking victory in 2019, becoming the first female Muslim in the UK to win a competitive horserace. Her success inspired the Riding A Dream Academy, supporting young people from diverse backgrounds, including jump jockey Aamilah Aswat.

About Markel

We are Markel, a leading global specialty insurer with a truly people-first approach. As the insurance operations within Markel Group Inc. (NYSE: MKL), we operate the Markel Specialty, Markel International, and Markel Global Reinsurance divisions, as well as State National, our portfolio protection and program services operations, and Nephila, our insurance-linked securities operations. Our broad array of capabilities and expertise allow us to create intelligent solutions for the most complex risk management needs. However, it is our people - and the deep, valued relationships they develop with colleagues, brokers and clients - that differentiates us worldwide.

About Education Above All Foundation

Education Above All Foundation is a global education non-profit established in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. EAA Foundation contributes to human, social and economic development for millions of children and youth by providing access to quality education and employment opportunities. With a particular focus on those affected by poverty, conflict and disaster, it champions the needs of the hardest-to-reach and empowers them to become active members of their communities.

To date, the Foundation has supported initiatives in 77 countries, reaching 14.7 million out-of-school children and providing over 11,000 higher education scholarships and opportunities. Its impact also extends to 3.3 million youth through employment and economic empowerment programmes, while supporting 4.5 million refugees and displaced people.