



Qatar Goodwood Cup upgraded to Group 1

Goodwood Racecourse is thrilled to announce that the Qatar Goodwood Cup has been granted Group 1 status by the European Pattern Committee, following their meeting on Monday 23 January. Subsequently, the Qatar Goodwood Cup has also been moved forward to Tuesday 1 August and the Qatar Nassau Stakes will now take place on Thursday 3 August.

Consistently the second best race of its type (behind Ascot's Gold Cup) on official ratings, the Qatar Goodwood Cup is now the only Group 1 race of two miles in the UK.

Previously a Group 2, the upgrade to the Qatar Goodwood Cup is the result of a BHA review of the staying programme and follows a strong application from Goodwood's management. As part of their long-term financial investment, Qatar has committed to match fund further increases in prize money and the Group 1 Qatar Goodwood Cup will now be run for a total prize fund of at least £500,000 (from £310,000 in 2016). In 2017 Goodwood will be investing an additional £300,000 in prize money across all of its fixtures with a particular emphasis placed at the lower level races ensuring fantastic and rewarding opportunities for owners at all levels of the sport.

The European Pattern Committee, with consent from the BHA, also agreed to Goodwood's proposal for changes to the order of races within the Qatar Goodwood Festival. The best ground will be guaranteed for the Qatar Goodwood Cup on the Tuesday and it will also raise the profile of racing on a day that has typically had the lowest attendance of the week.

Likewise, moving the Qatar Nassau Stakes forward to Thursday will ensure the best possible ground for this Group 1 race and creates a focus on fillies' races, as it will be supported on the same day by the Group 3 Lillie Langtry Stakes. The racing will therefore serve to compliment the ambience of Ladies' Day.

The changes will also allow the Qatar Steward's Cup to take centre stage on the Saturday.

Alex Eade, General Manager of Goodwood Racecourse, said; "Elevating the Qatar Goodwood Cup to Group 1 status is something that we have been very keen to happen for a number of years and we are very grateful to the BHA and the European Pattern Committee for supporting and approving our proposal. Alongside the other changes made to the pattern, we hope that our race will now cement its position as part of a high-profile programme for stayers across Europe and provide yet another tantalising clash of the generations on the beautiful summer turf of the Sussex Downs.

"There will be some other changes to the programme of races during the Qatar Goodwood Festival, which have also been approved by the BHA and the EPC and will bring a better balance to the week. These changes create a specific focus for each individual day, all part of our ambitious plan to deliver the best raceweek experience in the world. The changes will include switching the Group 1 Qatar Goodwood Cup to the opening day of the Festival on the Tuesday, positioning the Group 1 Qatar Nassau as the principal race on the Thursday and moving the Group 3 Gordon Stakes to the Saturday.

"This will help us to grow attendances where we have capacity, which is not just beneficial to Goodwood, but also supports racing's objective of building its audience and profile. With our long term partnership with Qatar we are also able to significantly increase the prize money on offer this season and it is an important point that this new money will not just sit at the top end but trickle down to the grassroots of our race programme. The two ends of the sport do not exist in isolation and an ecosystem needs a balanced approach to ensure all parts of it remain healthy, supporting the whole."

Summary of changes:

- The Qatar Goodwood Cup is now a Group 1 race
- Group 1 Qatar Goodwood Cup has been moved to the opening day of the Festival on Tuesday 1 August
- Group 1 Qatar Nassau Stakes moved to Thursday 3 August
- Group 3 Gordon Stakes moved to Saturday 5 August

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