



**QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL 2018  
RACENEWS RACECOURSE SERVICE  
FIRST DAY, TUESDAY, JULY 31**

**CLERK OF THE COURSE ED ARKELL**

Ed Arkell, Goodwood's Clerk of the Course, is officiating at his first Qatar Goodwood Festival after taking over from Seamus Buckley, who retired at the end of last season.

He has had to cope with a very dry spell for nearly two months, from the beginning of June until Friday evening, without hardly any rain. This led to lots of watering and the groundstaff team have worked around the clock to keep the track in optimum condition.

The welcome rain finally came on Friday evening and overnight into Saturday, with five millimetres falling, and then there was the deluge on Sunday which delivered another 18.3 millimetres. There was 1.1 millimetres early on Monday and rather more than expected overnight, 4.8 millimetres.

Arkell reported this morning: "The rain this morning stopped by 5am - we thought we might get a bit more but it did not materialise which was great. We had been expecting a shower overnight, possibly 1 or 2 millimetres, but we got almost five. It is now warm and breezy.

"All the good to firm bits on the round course have gone and it is Good, with the last three and a half furlongs of the straight course being a bit easier.

"We stopped watering on Saturday when it was nailed on that we would get heavy rain on Sunday. We have been so run around by forecasts that say rain is going to fall and it doesn't come!

"We are starting off on ideal ground conditions in view of the forecast temperatures - up to very high 20s Celsius and even 30s on Saturday. If we have to water again, it will be at the very end of the week and we hope that we would not have to. Watering during a meeting is not ideal, but equally we don't want to see absolutely rattling ground by Saturday.

"It is amazing what a difference a bit of rain makes. The course has picked up considerably from yesterday to today. We cut the course yesterday and it could almost do with another cut today.

"We will give across the course GoingStick readings for the Unibet Stewards' Cup draw on Thursday, when the dolled out rail, by about five yards, on the far side of the straight comes down to provide fresh ground on the inner. Both sides of the course are probably quicker between the six-furlong start and the four-furlong pole because we are not watering more than necessary.

"The top and bottom bends are dolled out by a similar amount and both will be removed ahead of racing on Friday.

"I always like Qatar Lillie Langtry Stakes (14 furlongs, Thursday) as a race and it has been lifted to G2 status this year. The L'Ormarins Queens Plate Oak Tree Stakes (G3, 7f, Friday) is a fascinating race, with plenty of overseas entries, while the Qatar Sussex Stakes, the Qatar Nassau Stakes and the Qatar Goodwood Cup are wonderful."