



THOROUGHBRED

Racing & Sales

KEENELAND



W N E S





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2026

THOROUGHBRED RACING & SALES

KEENELAND



1

Welcome to Keeneland

Since opening 90 years ago in 1936, Keeneland has been a special place ~ one that celebrates the Thoroughbred racehorse and honors the traditions of racing while making efforts to improve the sport.

Located in the heart of Central Kentucky's famous Bluegrass region, Keeneland plays an important role in the Thoroughbred industry. It is the only race track in the U.S. that conducts both Thoroughbred racing and sales.

As the world's largest Thoroughbred auction house, Keeneland is the premier market for racehorses and breeding stock. Buyers from nearly every U.S. state and 50 countries attend the five annual horse sales held here.

Race meets, held every April and October, offer some of the richest prize

money in North America and showcase many of the world's top stables, trainers and riders.

A National Historic Landmark, Keeneland has beautifully landscaped grounds that are open to the public every day. Visitors can watch the horses train most mornings. After morning works, we invite you to stop for breakfast at the Track Kitchen, browse The Keeneland Shop or find out more about racing's history at Keeneland Library.



Breeders' Cup Returns to Keeneland

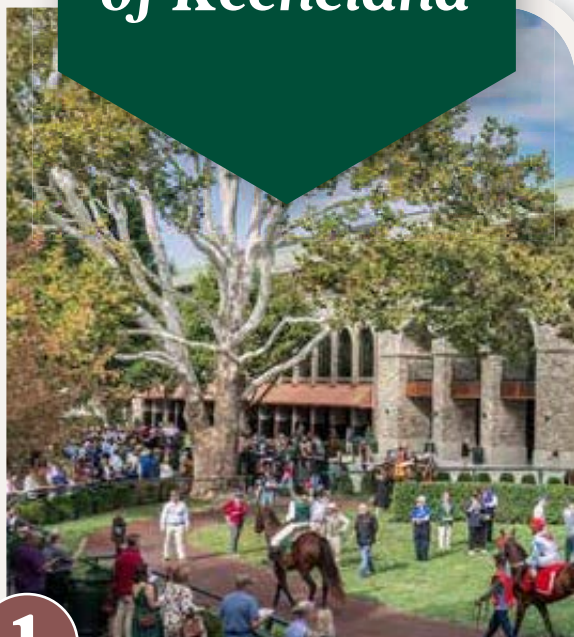
On Oct. 30-31, Keeneland will host the prestigious Breeders' Cup World Championships for the fourth time. Considered the season-ending champions for the best Thoroughbreds in the world, the event features 14 races worth more than \$34 million in purses and awards.

For more, see page 13.





Icons of Keeneland



1

Sycamore Tree

Keeneland's iconic sycamore tree was planted around the time Keeneland opened in 1936. Located near the entrance to the Paddock, the tree is more than 70 feet tall. During each Fall Meet, a race called the Sycamore (G3) is named in honor of the tall, stately tree.



2

Gate Post

You might think the KA in the laurel wreath stands for Keeneland Association, but it actually stands for the Kentucky Association, a Lexington race track that existed prior to Keeneland from 1826 to 1933.

The Kentucky Association's closing prompted a group of prominent horsemen to create a "model race track dedicated solely to the perpetuation and improvement of the sport." In 1936, this race track named Keeneland, opened.

When the Kentucky Association dispersed its assets, Keeneland co-founder Hal Price Headley acquired the gate post.



3

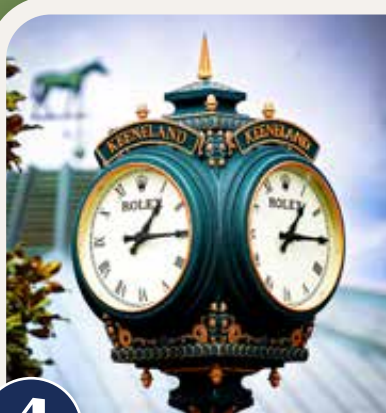
Keeneland Hedges

As far back as the 1940s, Keeneland's infield featured a single set of hedges trimmed to spell the word KEENELAND.

While replacing the hedges in 1979, Keeneland added a second set of these signature hedges to the right of the tote board. The hedges are Japanese yews.

Keeneland's maintenance team trims these hedges twice a year without a guide, simply following the contour of the hedge. The team monitors them regularly throughout the year to keep the plants healthy.

Keeneland Grounds Map



4

Rolex Clock

Four lamp post clocks are located throughout the grounds as part of the Keeneland-Rolex partnership: near the Paddock, across from the Sales Pavilion entrance, near the Clubhouse entrance and on the North Terrace.

The clocks near the Paddock and Sales Pavilion feature a clock on all four sides, while the others are two-sided clocks.

Do you know the clocks automatically adjust themselves during a time change?



5

Jockey Garden

A popular photo op between the Grandstand and the Paddock, the Jockey Garden features 11 statues dedicated to each of Keeneland's coveted Grade 1 races.

In the past, the statues were located throughout the Keeneland grounds but were placed together in a single location called the Jockey Garden in 2006.

The corresponding winning owner's silks are painted after each prestigious race is run. The jockey statue holds a sign indicating the name of the race, winning horse and owner.



6

Weather Vane

Manufactured by Kenneth Lynch and Sons Inc., the weather vane sits atop the Keeneland Sales Pavilion.

The iconic weather vane is a model of the famed racehorse Nashua.

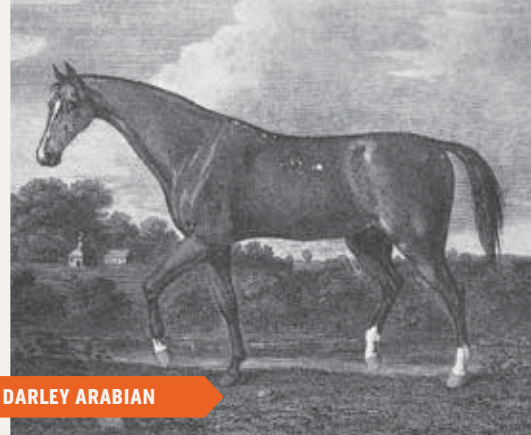
Five feet long and made of sheet copper, the weather vane has been a Keeneland fixture since the summer of 1971.

The Thoroughbred

A Thoroughbred is a specific breed of horse whose ancestry traces back more than 300 years to England. All horses racing at Keeneland are Thoroughbreds.

In the 1600s, wealthy Englishmen liked to compete to see who had the fastest horses. Horses from around the world (particularly from the Middle East) were brought to England and bred in hopes of producing even faster horses. Three Arab stallions, all imported to England, became the forefathers of all of today's racehorses: Byerley Turk, Godolphin Arabian and Darley Arabian. The Jockey Club in Lexington, Kentucky, keeps careful track of every Thoroughbred born in America and can trace each horse back to one or more of the three original Arab stallions.

Thoroughbreds were first imported to the American Colonies in the 1700s. Bulle Rock was the first Thoroughbred to arrive and was imported by Samuel Gist of Virginia in 1730. Originally many of these horses were bred in the coastal states of Maryland, Virginia, New York and South Carolina. After the Revolutionary War, Thoroughbred breeding operations started moving west, particularly to Tennessee and Kentucky. Since the early 20th century, Thoroughbred breeding has been centered in Kentucky. Thoroughbreds in the United States have historically



DARLEY ARABIAN



ECLIPSE THOROUGHbred

Photos Courtesy of Godolphin.

been used not only for racing but also to improve other breeds. Standardbreds, American Quarter Horses, American Saddlebreds and Morgans all have foundation members with Thoroughbred blood.



Thoroughbred Racing in America

Horse racing in the United States dates back to 1665 and first took place in what is now known as Long Island, New York. In the early days, racing was conducted in a similar fashion to English racing, with horses running clockwise on turf (grass).

In 1778, a Stanford, Kentucky, man named William Whitley changed the face of American horse racing forever when he ordered his race track to be laid out in the opposite direction and insisted

that the track be made of clay instead of the British-preferred turf. This move was made due to rising tensions with the British associated with the American Revolution and was seen as an act of defiance and a statement of freedom from their customs.

To this day, American racing is considered unique due to its counterclockwise racing direction and prevalence of dirt tracks.





Racing History in Lexington

Horse racing has had a home in Lexington since the town was founded. Quarter-mile sections of early roads, including a course on Main Cross (now South Broadway), were used as tracks for two-horse races.

By October 1789, longer three-mile races were run on the town's first oval course, the Lexington Course. Also known as Race Field, the track was laid out on pastureland just east of Georgetown Road and north of Main Street. In 1826, members of the Lexington Jockey Club formed the Kentucky Association – the first Turf organization in the country.

The Kentucky Association boasted a new race track, stables and grandstand by 1828. The oval track at the east end of Lexington was the second mile-long dirt track constructed in North America.

From its first race meet in October 1828, the Kentucky Association hosted regular race meets in the spring and fall for most of its 100-year history. By the early 1870s, the Kentucky Association had grown its facility located north of Winchester Road between 5th and 7th Streets to 65 acres, and the race track enjoyed prosperity through the late 1800s. After the Kentucky Association celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1926, the economic downturn of the Great Depression drove the track to close permanently. The Kentucky Association hosted its last race meet in the spring of 1933.

Bluegrass business leaders and horse owners, breeders and trainers rallied to restore Thoroughbred racing to Lexington while the Kentucky Association track business declined. A committee formed in 1934 to choose a location for a new racing plant settled on John Oliver "Jack" Keene's property on Versailles Road. Keene had nearly completed construction on a state-of-the art private racing facility five miles west of Lexington's city center. The newly formed Keeneland Association acquired the property, completed facilities construction and opened October 15, 1936.

Replicas of the two gate posts that once marked the Kentucky Association entrance now stand at Keeneland's gates. Five of Keeneland's premier stakes races – the Ben Ali, the Phoenix, the Ashland, the Blue Grass and the Breeders' Futurity – originated at the Kentucky Association track. The Phoenix Stakes, started in 1831, remains the country's oldest stakes race.



KEENELAND 1949



KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION BETTING WINDOWS



KEENELAND 1938



KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION



KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION ADMISSION TICKET 1928

Photos from Keeneland Library.

Thoroughbred Training & Care

It takes a lot to get a Thoroughbred ready for the races, including an entire team of people to make sure a racehorse is prepared for a race. If you own a racehorse, you need to be prepared to employ a variety of people to ensure the health and happiness of your horse.



1 How are racehorses trained?

Racehorses are usually exercised on the race track each morning and will train similar to human runners. Some days they take leisurely jogs around the track, while on others they will put in a fast run, or work. Distances will vary by each horse and are often based on the races for which they are prepping. After exercising, horses return to their barns where they are bathed and walked. Much like coaches, trainers are responsible for determining each horse's training schedule.

2 How many years does a racehorse compete?

Thoroughbreds can begin racing as young as 2 years old and some are still racing when they are as old as 12, the upper limit at most tracks. Horses generally continue racing as long as they are healthy and competitive.

3 What does a racehorse do after a race?

Horses return to their barns and are bathed, walked and allowed to sip water until they are cooled out. The process takes about 45 minutes. Then they are led back inside freshly cleaned stalls.

4 What happens to Thoroughbreds that no longer race?

Thoroughbreds with impressive bloodlines or race records are used for breeding. Many retired racehorses go on to do other activities like horse shows, trail riding, equine therapy or are companions to other horses. They can have a second career where they learn new things and enjoy a different kind of work.

Many charitable organizations are dedicated to caring for retired Thoroughbreds. Old Friends, The Secretariat Center and the Kentucky Equine Adoption Center are a few of the aftercare facilities in Central Kentucky that you can visit.

5 How do you acquire a racehorse?

Thoroughbreds can be purchased at public auctions—including those at Keeneland. Older Thoroughbreds that are racing can be bought privately or through claiming races in which all horses in the race are for sale to registered buyers. And, of course, you can buy a broodmare and breed your own racehorse.

6 How much does owning a racehorse cost?

Racehorses come in a wide range of prices, some even costing millions of dollars. Some owners will choose to split the cost among a group or syndicate. This allows each person to own a percentage of the horse and pay for a percentage of the upkeep. Aside from the cost to buy the horse, owners also pay for training, feed, equipment and vet bills.



7 What does a racehorse eat?

A horse needs to eat a total of 2.5% of its body weight every day. A horse fit for racing will usually weigh around 1,000 lbs. and need to eat 25 lbs. of food a day. The health of a racehorse is dependent on correct feeding. Overfeeding, as well as underfeeding, can lead to illness, just as it can in humans.

The amount of food a horse is fed also depends on the amount of exercise it is doing. A racehorse will eat a diet with more protein than a riding lesson pony, and will need a diet with twice as much protein and carbohydrates as fiber. Oats and barley are good sources of protein and carbohydrates, while grass, hay and bran are good sources of fiber.



Learn More

Scan to watch how feed is made at a local Lexington feed operation.

A RACEHORSE'S FAVORITE Snacks

- Sugar Cubes
- Granola
- Carrots
- Alfalfa
- Barley
- Oats

- Peppermints
- Sweet Feed
- Molasses
- Apples
- Hay



Thoroughbred Racing



More than 90 years ago, Keeneland's founders set the course for what has become one of Thoroughbred racing's richest traditions.

Their vision was to create two festival-like race meets held each year in the heart of Thoroughbred country. Those dreams are realized today with Keeneland running three-week race meets in April and October.



Race Day Timeline



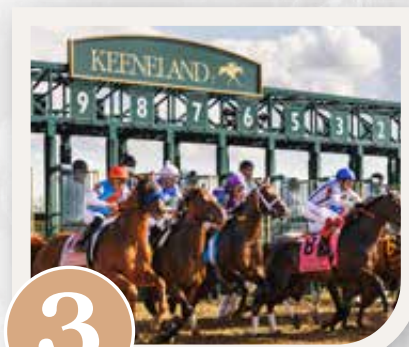
Barns & Morning Workout

Owners and trainers house their horses in barns on the race track grounds. Horses race in the afternoon, but they train early every morning. Exercise riders gallop the horses over the track to keep them in top racing form.



Paddock

Before each race, horses are walked from the barn area to the Paddock to be saddled. After the horses are saddled the jockeys mount them. The horses are then led onto the track for the post parade and finally into the starting gate.



Starting Gate

To begin a race, all Thoroughbreds must be loaded into the starting gate, one at a time, generally in the post position order they drew at entry time. The start of the race happens with each individual stall gate opening simultaneously. You usually hear the track announcer say "*And they're off,*" signaling that the race has begun.





4



Take a Ride

on a Thoroughbred racehorse!

Race

The change in position during a horse race begins to happen as Thoroughbreds enter the first turn of the race. There are usually two to three turns during longer races. At the first turn, you will notice the Thoroughbreds begin to establish themselves in any number of positions relative to each other. Examples of racing positions include:

- >> **In the lead** - at the front of the pack
- >> **On the rail** - running to the left of the other horses, along the rail that goes around the inside of the oval track
- >> **On the outside** - running to the right side of the other horses, or closer to the rail that goes around the outside of the track nearest the grandstand
- >> **Boxed in** - either in between horses on both sides and blocked by a horse in front, or in between the inside rail, another horse to the right and a horse in front, or any combination by which a horse is blocked from passing or proceeding to the front of the pack
- >> **Nose to nose** - running side-by-side
- >> **Bringing up the rear** - the last horse in the pack



5

After the Race

After crossing the finish line horses begin their cool down process by gradually reducing their speed in what is called "galloping out." Once this is complete the winner will head to the winner's circle to receive the trophy and take a photo. Once they return to the barn, horses are hand-walked by stable staff, given a bath and some treats and tucked in for some well-deserved rest.



Racing Gear



What does a jockey wear?

➡ A jockey's uniform is made up of the following:

1 Goggles

Goggles are the most frequently replaced item of tack due to heavy use because they offer protection from the track surface as it is kicked back in a jockey's face.

A jockey might stack as many as six different pairs of goggles on his or her helmet before a race on a rainy day. As one pair gets too blurred for good vision, he or she will quickly yank the used pair down around his or her neck to continue to have clear vision—at least until that next pair of goggles needs to be removed.

2 Helmets

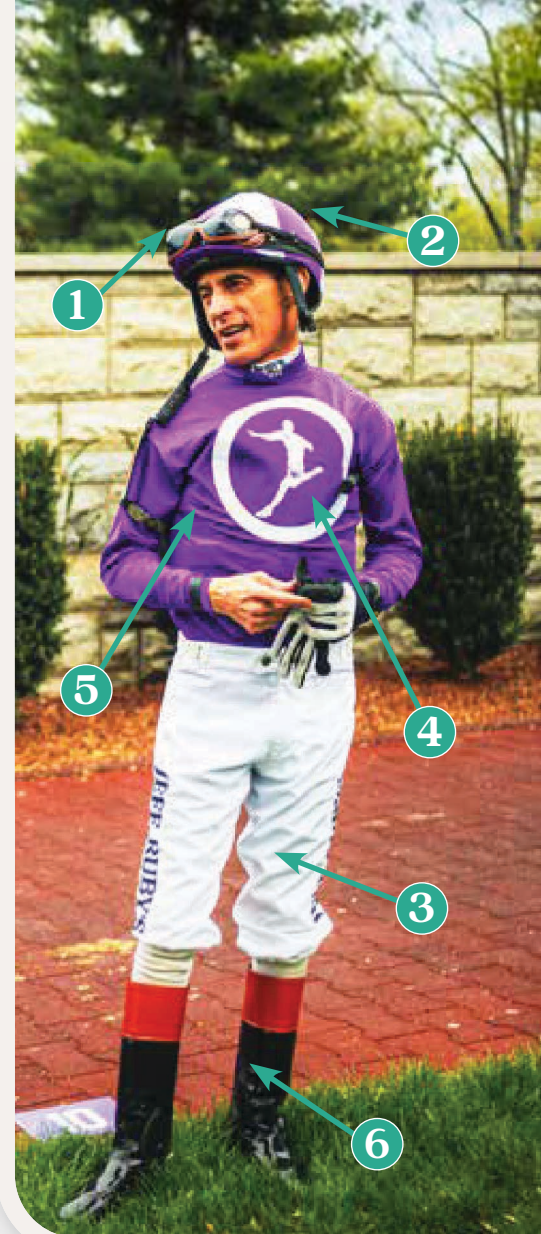
Racing regulations in Kentucky mandate the use of British helmets, which are made of fiberglass or carbon-fiber because they meet certain safety standards for resisting impact and penetration.

3 Pants

There are regular white pants, mud pants and lined winter racing pants for cold weather. Jockeys can have 10 or 12 pairs in their bags. Jockeys will change pants after every race on a muddy day; routine changes during bad weather are standard. A change of pants isn't absolutely necessary between races, but jockeys often will change them to maintain a good appearance in the paddock.

4 Safety Vests

Underneath the silks, which the owner of the horse provides, a jockey must wear a safety vest much like that worn by National Football League quarterbacks. The vest wraps the jockey in rows of rubber pads to provide protection without impeding movement. Exercise riders also must wear safety vests.



5 Silks

Silks (or colors) are the jackets and helmet covers worn by a jockey during a race to distinguish the owner of a horse. The origin of modern jockey silks comes from England. Through the years, jockey silks have contributed to the colorful pageantry of horse racing. Today, owners take great pride in using unique combinations of colors and patterns to personalize their silks. Jockeys aren't responsible for providing silks; horse owners buy them to accompany their horses from track to track.

6 Boots

Boots made of a synthetic patent leather called Clarino complete the jockey's uniform and can be bought off the shelf or be custom-made.

FUN

Fact

Each jockey also has a valet who stores and cares for saddles, girths, boots and personal items during a race meet. The valet ensures the correct silks are in the jockey's locker, carries the saddle and equipment to the paddock and helps the trainer saddle the horse. After the race, the valet meets the rider and carries the saddle and equipment back to the jockey's room.



Horse Tack

Top 5 Jockeys with the Most Wins at Keeneland

PAT DAY
918 wins

DON BRUMFIELD
716 wins

ROBBY ALBARADO
526 wins

JULIEN LEPAROUXSSSS
518 wins

SHANE SELLERS
412 wins
**still active*

1 Saddle

Saddles, made of Clarino, are the heaviest single item of tack but they weigh far less than what you might think. The lightest saddle weighs three-fourths of a pound, and the average saddle weighs a pound to 1 1/4 pounds.

2 Saddle Towel

The saddle towel is an iconic symbol of North American Thoroughbred Racing. Each number has its own specific color of saddle towel which allows the horse to be spotted clearly. The number reflects which slot in the starting gate the horse will be in which is determined by a drawing.

3 Girth

The girth is a strap that goes around the horses' belly to secure the saddle on its back.

4 Bridle & Reins

The bridle is worn so that the jockey can control the horse's speed and direction. The reins are what the jockey holds in his or her hands to help steer, slow down or speed up. Like a steering wheel!

5 Blinkers

Blinkers are worn to ensure that the horse is focused on what's ahead of it rather than what might be going on behind.

6 Leg Wraps

Leg wraps help to add support to the horse's legs. Some horses wear 4 leg wraps, some wear 2, and some may not wear any. It is up to the owner, vets, and trainers to decide if the horse should or shouldn't wear them.



Each horse must carry a specific weight in a race depending on the conditions of the race. That weight will include the jockey, of course, but also some of the tack. A helmet, the goggles and a riding crop are not included in the weight, nor is the safety vest. The horse's saddle and girth do count in the specific weight a horse must carry, but the horse's blinkers, bridle and numbered saddle towel do not.

Weight must be added to the saddle pads if the jockey and tack don't add up to the required weight. This can be achieved, in part, with saddle selection. A lighter jockey who weighs 110 pounds or less might use a large saddle that weighs up to seven pounds or more.

At Keeneland, weighted saddle pads are called Best Pad. Developed by Lexington veterinarian Dr. Philip Shrimpton, they are an alternative to placing lead weights in a carrying pouch under the saddle to increase the weight to the required amount.

It's not just the jockey that has a special uniform. The horses also wear special racing gear called tack.



FERRIN PETERSON

Learn More!

Learn how female jockey Ferrin Peterson gets ready on a race day



Sara K. Andrew Photo



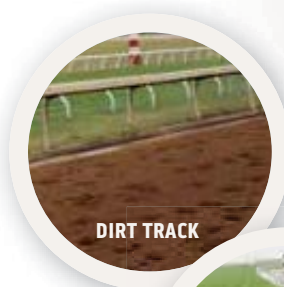
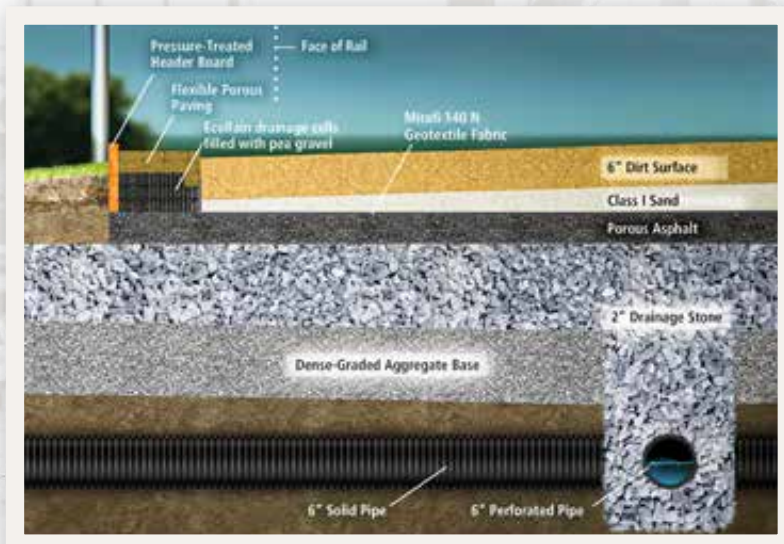
The Importance of the Surface



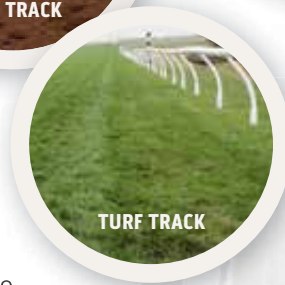
Race tracks that Thoroughbreds compete on across the U.S. are more than dirt ovals. They are sophisticated multi-layered systems that require experts to install and maintain.

Keeneland's 1 1/16-mile track features the finest materials available and uses advanced technology to produce a race track that is as safe as possible for horses and their riders.

The first layer of Keeneland's track is a drainage system covered by porous asphalt, which is covered by a thin layer of fabric, a layer of fine sand and six inches of dirt surface that was blended in Kentucky. A state-of-the-art drainage system was installed under the inside and outer rails to help water quickly drain away from the track. The track superintendent is responsible for maintaining the condition of the track and uses a satellite to help maintain the grade (slope) of the track. He also monitors details such as the track's soil density and moisture content to keep it in prime condition.



DIRT TRACK



TURF TRACK

Keeneland has 3 Tracks

MAIN TRACK (Dirt)

1 1/16 miles

TURF COURSE (Grass)

7 1/2 furlongs

TRAINING TRACK (All Weather)

5 furlongs

8 Furlongs

is equal to

1 mile



Safety

The safety of the horse and rider is Keeneland's top priority.

The track is an industry leader in safety and integrity initiatives by investing in state-of-the-art technology to ensure safe racing surfaces, supporting equine health and welfare research and funding and funding Thoroughbred aftercare programs.



Breeders' Cup



The Breeders' Cup is considered the World Championship of Thoroughbred racing. It is an annual event of two days of racing where the best horses from around the world compete in races worth \$34 million in purses and awards. On October 30 - 31, Keeneland will host the Breeders' Cup for the fourth time, following 2015, 2020 and 2022.

By the numbers | 2022

18



The number of countries represented by Breeders' Cup ticket purchases

\$30.5 million

The amount of money brought in at the track through wagering, concessions, parking, merchandise and more

\$33.6 million

in spending by attendees on hotels, retailers, food and drink, transportation and off-track entertainment

\$17.5 million

The amount spent on Keeneland upgrades, which included

\$10 million

in track improvements

\$7.5 million

in labor and material costs

\$900,000

The amount secured in state and local tax revenues

\$122.9 million

The new single-day wagering record for the championship Saturday racing program

TRIPLE CROWN WINNER

American Pharoah

made history by winning the first "grand slam" during the Breeders' Cup at Keeneland in 2015



5

Thoroughbred Sales

Keeneland is the world's most important market for Thoroughbred racehorses, selling more than 6,000 horses during the five sales held here each year.

- September Yearling Sale
- Championship Sale
- November Breeding Stock Sale
- November Horses of Racing Age Sale
- January Horses of All Ages Sale
- April Selected Horses of Racing Age Sale

In addition to the U.S., buyers from Europe, Australia, Asia, Central and South America and the Middle East purchase horses at Keeneland to take home to race in their own countries. Today, Keeneland sales graduates also win races in such exotic locations as India, Dubai, South Korea, Hong Kong, Peru, Argentina and Turkey.

Keeneland holds the record for the most expensive Thoroughbred yearling ever sold at auction – **\$13.1 million** paid in 1985 by a group of English horsemen for a horse named Seattle Dancer.

**Keeneland
has sold**

24

Kentucky Derby winners

28

Preakness winners

24

Belmont winners

534

Stakes races won in 2025 by horses from Keeneland Sales

145

Total number of Breeders' Cup wins by horses from Keeneland Sales

By the numbers

SEPTEMBER YEARLING SALE FACTS AND FIGURES

\$531,739,400

Gross sales in 2025
(a global record for a single Thoroughbred auction)

56

Seven-figure yearlings sold in 2025 (a sale record)

Authentic ➡

Authentic, winner of the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) in 2020, sold at Keeneland for \$350,000.



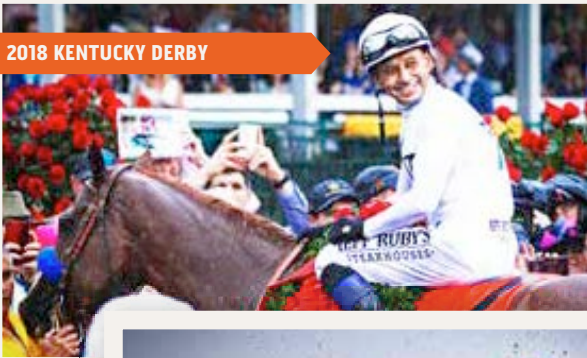


Sales Industry Careers

Triple Crown

The "Triple Crown" is a prestigious designation given to a three-year-old Thoroughbred who wins the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes in the same year. Only 13 horses in history have accomplished this, most recently **Justify** in 2018, who sold for **\$500,000** at Keeneland's 2016 September Yearling Sale.

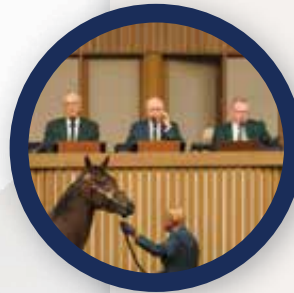
2018 KENTUCKY DERBY



2018 PREAKNESS



2018 BELMONT



1

AUCTIONEER

Controls the bidding procedures when horses are being sold



2

BID SPOTTER

Assists the auctioneer by pointing out buyers who are bidding on a horse



3

BLOODSTOCK AGENT

Serves as an adviser to a potential buyer and will sometimes bid on horses for clients



4

CONSIGNOR

Used by the seller to prepare horses for the sales ring and shows them to prospective buyers

Learn More

Watch a horse sell for \$1.2 million at Keeneland!



FUN
Fact

Horsemen from nearly every state and some **50 different countries** across **6 continents** attend Keeneland sales.



Careers

➡ **Kentucky is the Horse Jobs Capital of the World.**

Kentucky's equine industry brings together people from all over the world and all walks of life. Middle Eastern sheikhs mingle at the sales with cowboys from Texas; Hollywood celebrities race horses alongside small, family-run stables; a New York trainer of 250 horses competes against a trainer from Arkansas with only two horses.

The horse industry showcases Kentucky to visitors from around the world. Often these people return to buy farms and do business in Kentucky, further helping the state's economy.

Because Kentucky is the Horse Capital of the World, the greatest concentration of horse-related

expertise is found in the state. The world's best horsemen—from veterinarians to farm managers to racing officials to blacksmiths and beyond—all live and work here.

But you don't have to be a highly skilled specialist to enjoy working in the horse industry, which offers a wide array of job opportunities—with expertise gained from on-the-job training. You don't even have to work directly with horses. Many people employed in the horse industry never touch a horse. But their support in providing goods and services to the industry is vital to the success of race tracks, horse farms, horse organizations, veterinary clinics, etc.

Industry Careers

Communications/
Marketing

Farm/Facility
Administration

Farm/Facility
Construction/
Maintenance

Equine Transportation

Event Management

Farrier/Blacksmith

Feed/Hay

Fencing

Finance

Graphic Design

Handler/Groom

Information Technology

Owner

Photography

Rider

Security

Sponsorship

Tack/Equipment

Trainer

Veterinarians/Equine
Medical Professionals



Learn More

Discover more about equine careers
with Amplify Horse Racing



Learn More

Watch a short video about
Thoroughbred careers from KET

1



HANDLER/GROOM

A handler or groom is responsible for almost all hands-on aspects of a horse's care. Grooms will bathe and brush horses, prepare them for riding, and feed, water and walk their charges.

2



FARRIER (BLACKSMITH)

Horses' hooves grow like fingernails and need to be trimmed every few weeks. A farrier will trim hooves and apply new shoes as needed.

3



EXERCISE RIDER

A Thoroughbred is usually ridden on the race track each morning. Jockeys typically only ride their mounts in a race, so an exercise rider will be employed to work the horse on a day-to-day basis. Exercise riders receive direction from the trainer and provide them with feedback.

4



TRAINER

A trainer serves as the manager or head coach of the stable and is responsible for the career and training of each horse. Trainers decide the exercise program for each animal and work closely with the owner to choose races that fit the horse.

5



VETERINARIAN

A veterinarian is a horse's primary medical caretaker and handles routine care as well as the care of sick or injured horses.

6



OWNER

An owner makes sure the horse has everything it needs to be healthy and happy to perform its best, and makes important decisions like choosing a trainer and jockey.

7



BROADCAST

The Broadcast team brings the excitement of racing to fans at the track and around the world. They work behind the scenes to produce live race coverage, operate cameras, and coordinate replays so fans never miss the action.

8



COMMUNICATIONS

Members of the communications team help tell the story of the Thoroughbred industry. They create content, work with the media, and share news and information to help fans stay connected and up to date on races, sales, and special events.

9



TRACK MAINTENANCE

The Track Maintenance team prepares and cares for the racing surface to help provide a safe and consistent track for horses and riders. They monitor track conditions, groom the surface, and use specialized equipment to keep it in top condition.

Keeneland's Economic Impact

According to an economic impact study conducted by the University of Louisville's Departments of Equine Administration and Economics and released in the fall of 2024, Keeneland's racing operations, annual Thoroughbred auctions, supporting business lines and investment in new construction generates an estimated **\$1.6 billion** for Fayette and surrounding counties.

The study also noted that around **64%** of racing patrons come from outside Kentucky, while around **67%** of those attending and participating in the annual horse auctions come from outside the state. Of those attending the auctions from out of state, approximately **24%** come from outside the U.S.

This highlights Keeneland's role as a global hub for the Thoroughbred industry.

Keeneland events contribute to local tourism, with auction attendees spending **\$336 million** at local businesses and race meet patrons contributing an additional **\$190 million** annually. Keeneland generates nearly **\$40 million** in local, state and federal income taxes annually.

Horse Industry in Kentucky

\$6.5 billion

Annual cumulative economic activity (*direct, indirect, induced*) generated by equine industry

238,027

Number of horses of all breeds in the state

60,494

Number of jobs generated by the equine industry in the state

77

Number of horse-related attractions in the state



Learn More

from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association



Thoroughbred Racing in Kentucky

➤ Kentucky Derby & Churchill Downs

The Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs has been run every year since 1875 and has an economic impact of more than **\$400 million** annually. More than **150,000** people from around the world attend the event.

Prize Money

Owners of horses that finish in the top positions in a race earn money. In 2025, nearly **\$239 million** was awarded to Thoroughbreds racing at Kentucky's five tracks.

Keeneland has one of the richest prize (or purse) structures in North America, with two races (Toyota Blue Grass in April and Coolmore Turf Mile in October) each worth \$1.25 million. In 2025, gross purses over 32 days were a record **\$42.7 million** for a daily average of **\$1.3 million**. High purses are possible because Keeneland reinvests profits from its sales into racing.

Kentucky is North America's leading producer of Thoroughbreds

16,462

Number of Thoroughbred mares
bred in the state in 2025
(64% of entire mare population)

198

Number of active Thoroughbred
stallions in the state in 2025
(20% of entire stallion population)

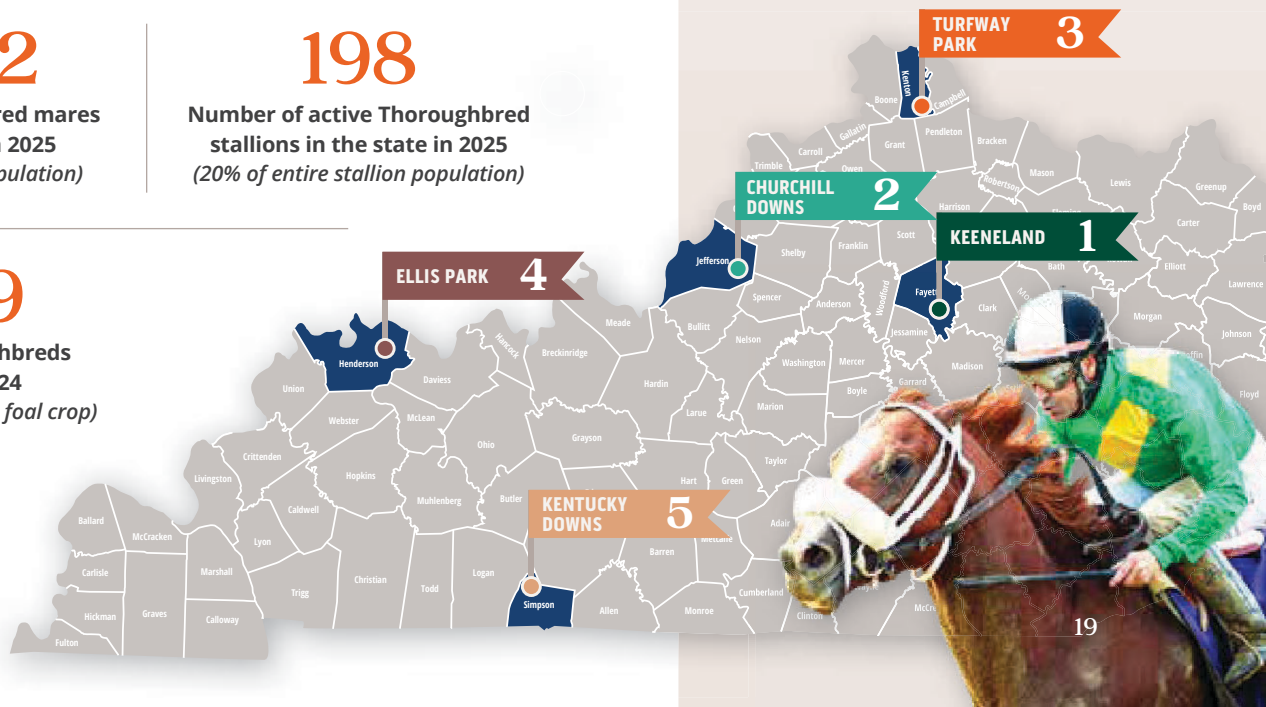
8,009

Number of Thoroughbreds
born here in 2024
(45% of estimated entire foal crop)



Kentucky is Home to 5 Thoroughbred Race Tracks

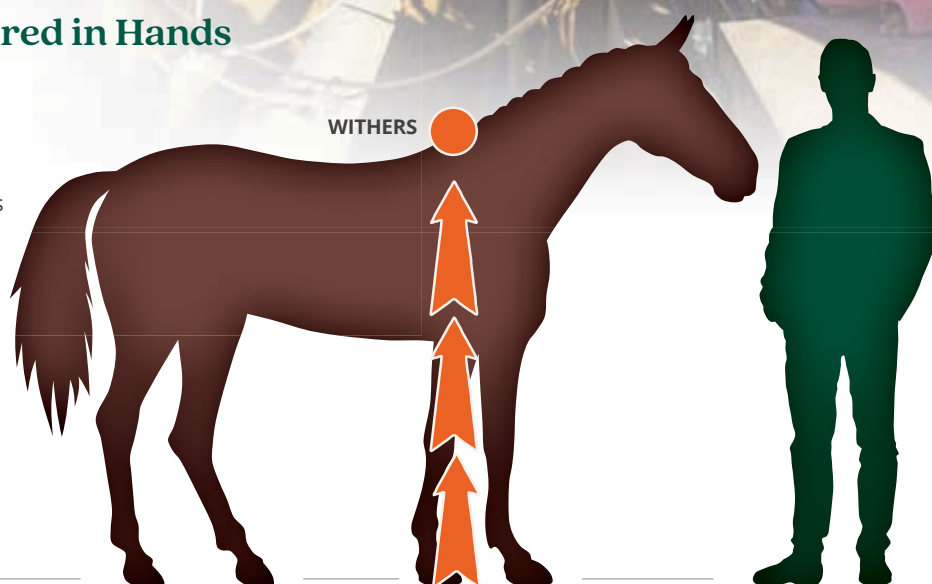
- 1 KEENELAND**
Fayette County, Lexington
- 2 CHURCHILL DOWNS**
Jefferson County, Louisville
- 3 TURFWAY PARK**
Kenton County, Florence
- 4 ELLIS PARK**
Henderson County, Henderson
- 5 KENTUCKY DOWNS**
Simpson County, Franklin



Racehorse Fun *Facts*

➡ Horses are Measured in Hands

A horse is measured in hands. A hand equals four inches, which is supposed to be the width of a man's hand. Horses are measured from the ground to the withers, which is the highest point of their shoulder. If a horse is more than the exact number of hands high, the extra inches are given after a full point. For example, 14 hands 2 inches is written as 14.2 HH (hands high). The average racehorse is 16.0 HH.



**1 Hand =
4 Inches**

16 Hands High
(64 inches)
Average height of a Thoroughbred

6 Feet Tall
(72 inches)
Average height of a man

Giant Hearts

A racehorse's heart can weigh up to 10-12 pounds, which is much larger than a human heart, giving them the stamina to run long distances at high speeds!

The horse
has the
largest eye
of any land
mammal

Horses
cannot breathe
through their
mouths. This is why
they have such
**big
nostrils**

The fastest
recorded
Thoroughbred
was clocked at
43.97
miles per
hour





⇒ Common Coat Colors



NYQUIST | Bay

BAY

Bay is the most common color. Bay horses have brown bodies with black manes, tails, and lower legs. Nyquist, winner of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Keeneland in 2015 is a bay.



JUSTIFY | Chestnut

CHESTNUT

Chestnut horses have a rich reddish-brown or copper coat, with manes and tails that match their body color. Triple Crown winner Justify is a chestnut.



TAPIT | Gray

GRAY

Gray horses are born with a dark coat that gradually turns lighter, eventually becoming snowy white as they get older. Tapit, the only stallion to sire four Belmont Stakes winners since Lexington in the 1800s, is gray.



ZENYATTA | Black

BLACK

Solid black horses have entirely dark coats with no brown. Zenyatta, often called black, is a very dark bay, famed in American racing. She was 2010 Horse of the Year and Breeders' Cup Classic winner.

RULES FOR NAMING A

Racehorse

Letter Limit

Names can have a maximum of 18 characters, including letters, spaces, and punctuation (apostrophes are the only punctuation allowed).

No Numbers

You cannot use numerical digits, though numbers can be spelled out (e.g., "Win For Us" is okay).

Keep it Clean

Rude, vulgar, or offensive names are strictly banned.

No Famous Clones

You can't use the name of a Triple Crown winner or a recent champion, nor can you name a horse after a living person without their written permission.

Family Tree

Many owners create cool hybrid names using clues from the horse's mother and father (like naming a foal "Poker in the Buck" from parents "Buck" and "Poker").

Horses can
sleep
standing
up

Horses share
a universal
birthday no matter
what month they are
born in -
January 1



Life Cycle of a Thoroughbred

➞ *Kentucky is home to more than 200,000 horses with Thoroughbreds being more than 48,000 of them.*

Why are there so many Thoroughbreds here in Kentucky? Underneath the iconic bluegrass and Kentucky's rich soil is limestone. That limestone sends important nutrients, specifically calcium and phosphorus, into the grass that Kentucky's Thoroughbreds graze upon. Those nutrients help young Thoroughbreds grow big and strong, which makes Kentucky one of the best places in the world to raise horses. That's why Kentucky is known as the Horse Capital of the World. From foaling to the finish line, and into their second careers, the life of a Thoroughbred is an exciting journey to explore.



➞ Did You Know?

Did you know that you can experience each phase of the Thoroughbred lifecycle first hand? Visit **Horse Country** is an organization of horse farms, equine veterinary clinics and other equine attractions dedicated to connecting guests to the horses, land and people of Kentucky's equine industry. Book a horse farm tour today for an opportunity to get close up and personal with these incredible animals. Scan the QR code to learn more.



HORSE COUNTRY.
KENTUCKY



1

Foal

A foal is a young horse still with its dam (mother). Most Thoroughbred foals are born between January and May.



2

Weanling

Once a foal is several months old, they will stop nursing their mothers and start eating grass instead of milk. When this happens, the foals start to spend more time with horses their age and are weaned from their mothers.



3

Yearling

A yearling is a horse that is 1 year old. The yearling stage is when the Thoroughbreds will begin to look more like racehorses and will begin to hit growth spurts. During this time Thoroughbred yearlings will either be sold at public auction in the fall or they will go straight to a training facility to learn how to be a racehorse.



4

Training & Racing

Thoroughbreds usually start their racing careers at the age of 2 or 3 years old. They go through a training process that involves learning how to wear a saddle and accommodate a rider on their back. Their racing career typically spans 4-5 years, but some horses might continue racing.



5

Breeding

After horses retire from a racing career they will often become breeding stock, known as stallions or broodmares to create the next generation of racehorses.



6

Aftercare & Retirement

Many retired racehorses are retrained to have other careers and include specialties such as horse shows, trail riding and equine therapy. There are many charitable organizations dedicated to the training and care of retired Thoroughbreds, and several of them are here in Central Kentucky.

Glossary

A

Announcer—describes the race as it is occurring on the track.

Auctioneer—controls the bidding procedures when horses are being bought and sold.

B

Blacksmith (or Farrier)—the person who puts horseshoes on the horse and trims the hooves.

Broodmare—A female horse used for breeding.

C

Colt—a male horse age 4 and younger.

D

Dam—the female parent of a horse.

Derby—a stakes race for 3-year-old colts and fillies; the Kentucky Derby, for example.

F

Filly—a female horse age 4 and younger.

Foal—a horse in its first year of life.

G

Graded stakes race (G1, G2, G3)—if a race is graded that means it is highly competitive with some of the best horses running against each other. If it is marked G1, it is the highest rank of graded stakes (most competitive) where G3, while still competitive is slightly lower intensity.

Groom—the person who cares for a horse in a stable; or to clean and brush a horse.

M

Maiden—a horse that has never won a race.

Mare—a female horse the age of 5 and older.

O

Outrider—mounted attendants who act as the police officers of the race track, enforcing track rules and assisting horses and riders when needed.

Owner (or horse buyer)—a person who pays for the horse, has legal rights to the horse and hires people to take care of the horse.

P

Purse—the total money that can be won in a race.

S

Schooling—introducing young horses to the race track, starting gate, and paddock area; teaching them how to behave there; normally done during the morning workouts.

Silks—the jacket and helmet cover worn by a jockey in a race; they indicate who owns the horse.

Sire—the male parent of a horse.

Stakes—a category of race where the purse is partially made up of nomination and entry fees paid by the owners of the starting horses; the highest level of race.

Starting gate—the area from where horses start the race.

Stallion (or stud)—a male horse used for breeding.

T

Tack—The equipment needed to ride a horse.

Thoroughbred—a breed of horse developed in England in the 1700s.

Trainer—the person responsible for preparing the horse to run the best it can; he or she plans what the horse will do each day in the morning.

Triple Crown—a series of three races for 3-year-old Thoroughbreds; the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes.

W

Winner's Circle—where the winning horse and owner are presented with a trophy after a race.

Weanling—a horse that is not yet a year old.

Y

Yearling—a horse in its second calendar year.



Interested in Learning More?



Explore these resources and
discover a wide range of
exciting opportunities.

America's Best Racing

americasbestracing.net

Amplify Horse Racing

amplifyhorseracing.org

Ed Brown Society

edbrownsociety.org

Keeneland Library

keeneland.com/library

Kentucky Equine Educational Project

horseswork.com

Kentucky Horse Park

kyhorsepark.com

Kentucky Thoroughbred Association

kentuckybred.org

Visit Horse Country

visithorsecountry.com



Golden Tempo and jockey Jose Ortiz one morning at Keeneland.



Golden Tempo's KEENELAND HOME

Based at Keeneland with trainer **Cherie DeVaux**, **Golden Tempo** left his home twice this spring, the first time to win the **Kentucky Derby** at Churchill Downs in Louisville on May 2 and the second time to capture the **Belmont** in New York on June 6.





THOROUGHBRED

Racing & Sales

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KEENELAND