



Royal Ascot breaks new ground with real-time weather data

10th June 2020

Ascot is to become the first racecourse in the UK to publish live weather data via an innovative new App developed by Cambridgeshire-based Technology company, TurfTrax.

For the first time information including rainfall, wind speed and direction, soil moisture, and daily evapotranspiration (moisture loss) will be available to view in real-time alongside GoingStick readings, going maps, rails positions and irrigation in the build-up to and during Royal Ascot.

Chris Stickels, Clerk of the Course at Ascot Racecourse said, “We are delighted to be able to roll-out this ground-breaking new service for Royal Ascot 2020.

“With racing taking place behind closed doors there will be fewer people this year with access to the track and, therefore, the distribution of up to the minute information takes on even greater significance. Trainers, Owners and everyone watching from home will have the opportunity to monitor track conditions remotely in real time using the new racing hub on the Ascot Racecourse website.”

Much of the live data is gathered from WeatherTrax, the latest generation of TurfTrax’ on-course weather stations, and is processed using bespoke software which integrates GoingStick readings, the TurfTrax course mapping system and weather information in a single user friendly display.

TurfTrax Managing Director Mike Maher said, “We developed the App to provide racecourses with a resource that can display complex and detailed ground and weather information in an easy-to access format, and we are delighted that Ascot has chosen such a prestige occasion for its launch.

“In conjunction with Chris and the team at Ascot we have been working on this project for some time. For example, we have compiled three years’ worth of soil moisture data and

compared this to GoingStick readings, weather data and other raceday information to verify the accuracy and relevance of this new measurement, but this is the first time it will be made available to Horsemen and the wider public on demand”, added Maher.

For Royal Ascot, GoingStick and soil moisture data is collected independently by TurfTrax. The first assessment takes place seven days before Royal Ascot begins, then readings are taken four days, 48hrs and 24hrs prior to the meeting and on every race day morning. 108 grid locations are measured using an electromechanical GoingStick, 72 on the straight course (split for stand/centre and far side) and a further 36 locations on the round course. Three ‘penetration’ and three ‘shear’ measurements, representative of forces exerted by the horse’s hoof when it is on contact with the ground, are taken at each location. Additionally, a volumetric soil moisture content reading is carried out at 24 positions on the straight and 36 on the round course, meaning that over 700 scientifically generated measurements contribute to the Going Report produced by TurfTrax.

2¾ miles walking is required to cover the whole of the straight and round courses and the process takes approximately 90 minutes. The detailed data is uploaded to a database and analysed each day by Ascot and TurfTrax alongside 15 years’ of live and historic weather and going data to assist with for example irrigation planning (if required) for the Royal meeting.

Live meteorological data is streamed from WeatherTrax equipment located near to the 4furlong marker on the stand side of the straight mile at Ascot racecourse. The data is logged every minute 24hrs/day and typically refreshes every five minutes on the App. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this data, but values presented can differ from forecast predictions and automatically or manually recorded weather data at nearby locations. Recorded weather data can be dependent on a number of factors including; type of sensors used, methodology, height/positioning of sensing equipment and specific timing of updates.

All information can be found here: <https://www.ascot.co.uk/royal-ascot-2020-racing>

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