

Guide & Check list for organising your race night

1. **Decide on a venue:** Considerations of ease of access, size and cost with questions such as do they have a late licence and catering facilities if you intend to heat up buffet items. Always remember to check the bar prices and atmosphere of the venue.
2. **Decide on a date:** Race nights work best on a Friday or Saturday night. The date should be around pay day and away from any local events or important dates.
3. **Decide on a start and finish time:** We have found the best time to aim for is an 8pm start (8.30 at the latest), *we will need access to the hall one and a half hours before the start time*. Race nights are not like bands that can start without a crowd, for a race night to start you must have the majority of your crowd in the hall. As for the finish time, it depends on what time we actually get started, the size of your crowd and how long they take to bet, how long your break takes and a hundred other factors. So there is no way to work out an exact finish time! On average the race night part of an evening ends around 11pm.
4. **Are you having a DJ?** Entertainments tonight do professional and entertaining race nights but we're not DJs although we do play background music for the duration of the race night. A well run and professional disco is always a great addition to any event. If you have a late licence or would like a quick race night followed by a good disco we recommend booking Ronnie the DJ on 07773 079 914.
5. **Choose how many races you will run:** We offer up to nine races, eight plus an auction race but we always recommend six (5 + auction) or seven (6 + auction) races. We have found over the years that this prevents your guests getting bored and allows for flexibility with other parts of your evening such as the break and the raffle etc.
6. **Don't forget to book your race night!** You can check the availability and fill out the booking form on our website www.racenights.org.uk
7. **Think about running your own bar (if possible):** Who is going to apply for a licence, who is actually going to serve behind the bar, can you get glasses and can you get drink on sale or return are all important questions. Running your own bar is a big undertaking but can be a very profitable exercise.
8. **Organise/book your buffet:** If you have people who are willing to contribute buffet items then a buffet can be supplied relatively cheaply. More and more Indian takeaway shops are now able to supply bulk hot items for a buffet at reasonable prices if you book in advance. You may wish to consider this as an alternative or to supplement your own buffet. Quite often venues are able to cater for buffets too.

9. **Think about a running order:** Your presenter will, of course, run your race night for you but to ensure you are both on the same page here is the standard running order for a race night:
1st Half – 1st set of races selling your bingo tickets during the race before the break, remembering to heat any hot buffet items up before the break.
Break: Have the buffet and finish the break with the stand-up bingo
2nd Half – Sell your raffle tickets and finish with the auction race
Raffle & roll money at the bottle
Finish with the Disco
Using your raffle and/or buffet to create a break between the race night and the disco will allow us to set up and take down the equipment.
10. **Entry tickets & publicise:** Publicity is an important aspect of a successful race night. If no-one knows your race night is on they can't turn up! Selling tickets can be an important source of profit but be aware people often buy tickets to an event to give a donation with no intentions of turning up. We have found that printmytickets.co.uk produce an excellent standard of tickets cheaply.
11. **Sell your horses:** Each of the races has 8 horses, an important part of the event is to give each of the horses a name and owner name. The owner of the winning horse wins a prize, so you need to organise a prize for each race. It is possible to sell each of the races more than once and have a prize for each winning owner in each race. This is a popular option for organisations such as football teams where each member of the team can take a race programme and sell as many complete races as they can. This will maximise the profit from your event by selling to as wide a group of people as possible instead of relying solely on the people who are good enough to attend your race night.
12. **Sell your forecast cards:** Forecast cards and instructions are available to download from the customer area of the website. These **must** be sold before the night and make a good alternative to selling the races more than once and can be sold by members of your group to their friends and family, and as a cash prize is given there is no need to buy extra prizes.
13. **Get some raffle tickets & prizes:** Most people will expect a raffle at an event such as a race night but be aware that a very big raffle will interrupt the flow of your night and will bore your guests. Avoid tables full of bric-a-brac that will waste time and effort. **Don't forget to buy raffle tickets.** We can play an optional game of stand-up bingo during the break, we will supply the bingo tickets but remember to get a prize for this, a bottle of spirits work well.
14. **Seek help!** Some of the jobs that will need done on the night are: 2 Sellers to sell stand-up bingo tickets and raffle tickets, 3 tote sellers to sell the bets to the guests, they will be shown how to do this by your presenter, 2 door staff to welcome your guests and take money or tickets as they arrive, 2 Buffet Staff to organise and set up the buffet. 1 Auction helper to assist the presenter by getting the names and money from the auction winners.
15. **Consider other fund raising ideas:** There is the stand-up bingo as previously mentioned. If you have some really good high priced prizes it's always best to have a **high priced raffle** (£5 or £10 per ticket) to give them away. You can always start selling these before the night sticking to the principle that you can make more money if you involve a wider group of people. **Roll the pound at the bottle** is always a favourite, run this at the very end of your race night to mop up the spare change left in the pockets of your guests. Remember you need a good sized bottle of spirits as a prize and you can use the change from the betting as a float.
16. **Send in your horse & owner names:** Email your horse and owner names to racenightsuk@aol.com 3 days before your event at the very latest and download the 'on the night' checklist from the customer area of the website.