

# TRIUMPH HURDLE



The statistics as presented below are thoroughly researched and valid. They are, however, presented to augment and complement the analysis given in the other parts of the guide and we would hope they would be used in that way.

## JCB TRIUMPH HURDLE

### 10 Year Trends 1999-2009 (2001 abandoned)

The figures for all the various statistics are in date order, earliest first from left to right.

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Hurdle debut record reads:

4 4 7 1 3 1 8 1 1 1

Last time out record reads:

1 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 2 1

100% of all winners in the first two last time out.

Total career starts prior to hurdle debut reads (FLAT/NHF):

0 7 14 7 10 8 8 16 8 3

100% of all winners ran less then fifteen times prior to hurdle debut.

Total career starts over hurdles reads (correlates in line to the above):

5 6 5 4 3 3 3 6 2 2

100% of all winners ran less then seven times over hurdles.

Strike rate over hurdles reads (correlates in line to the above):

50% 50% 40% 50% 33% 100% 66% 83% 50% 100%

Rounded up to the nearest percent.

Average % = 62.2%

Grade 1 wins prior to Triumph Hurdle:

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Graded wins over hurdles prior to Triumph Hurdle:

1 1 0 0 0 1 0 2 0 0

Days since ran record reads:

19 18 32 34 27 20 41 48 40 55

100% of winners ran within fifty five days.

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Irish record reads:

2 3 1 3 3 6 8 5 3 3

Fate of the favourite reads:

1 1 P 3 10 3 1 10 2 2

SP of the favourite (correlates in line to the above):

11-4 7-1 7-1 11-2 5-1 7-2 7-2 7-2 EV 4-1

Betting position of the Winner (asterisk denotes joint position in the market):

1 1 7\* 11\* 12 4 1 2 2 3

SP of the winner (correlates in line to the above):

11-4 7-1 16-1 20-1 20-1 9-1 7-2 11-2 5-1 11-2

BHB rating (where provided):

- - - 123 - - - 144 - 139 150

Profile analysis:

Based on past statistics the following horses best fit the profile.

**Advisor**

**Alaivan**

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## POSTFILES

### PRESTBURY

- 14<sup>th</sup> NOV 2009

A competitive enough renewal of this event saw the multiple winner **Barizan** head the market at odds of **5/4**. He appeared to hold every chance of continuing his winning sequence as he took up the running at the fourth last flight. It was not to be, as **Pistolet Bleu** joined him on the home turn and was driven out to go clear up the **Cheltenham** hill eventually finishing nine lengths clear of the tired looking **Barizan**, who was racing on soft ground for the first time. In succeeding here, **Pistolet Bleu** also managed to reverse the form with his **Chepstow** conqueror **Olofi**, who was beaten a further four and a half lengths into third place. What this form amounts to is impossible to gauge at this early stage of the season, however, the fact that it was run at **Cheltenham** offers some relevance to **Pistolet Bleu's** chances in the Triumph Hurdle. Furthermore, the Roy and the Stewart family were clearly impressed enough to buy the horse and transfer it to the Paul Nicholls yard to be trained.

### INFORTHENIGHT.IE

- 26<sup>th</sup> DEC 2009

There was a messy start to this race with nobody wanting to make the running; this unenviable responsibility fell by default to the odds on favourite **Alaivan**, who was extremely keen over the first few hurdles expending vital energy in the process. **Carlito Brigante** was equally keen over the first obstacle but Davy Russell managed to tuck him in soon afterwards. It was clear turning in that Gordon Elliot's horse was the one to beat as he was going well just in behind the favourite. He was asked for extra effort before the last flight and strode eleven lengths clear of the tiring **Alaivan** who slowed down so much he would have been passed by the staying on **Leblon** in another 100 yards; the fact that he had previously beaten that rival by an easy 15 lengths on the same terms in his last run suggests that the favourite probably ran below par in this.

**Cross Appeal**, **Action Master** and **Mosstown** add substance to this form as they were left a long way behind here, having previously finished first, second and third in a Grade Three hurdle race at **Fairyhouse**. On balance this form could well be as good as we have seen so far; nonetheless, there is a long way to go before March and plenty of time for the picture to change quite dramatically.

### BLACKJACK

- 27<sup>th</sup> DEC 2009

After being absent from the track for seven weeks since his unfortunate defeat at **Market Rasen** in early November, connections of **Mille Chief** will presumably be delighted with his workmanlike comeback win over **Westlin' Winds** at **Kempton**. He travelled well and jumped fluently enough as he was held up in midfield; encouraged to take closer order on the long time leader on the turn for home, he moved up to challenge at the second last flight, at which point, the outcome looked far from certain. He was pushed into the lead from the last hurdle and was driven out to draw two and a quarter lengths clear of **Westlin' Winds** on the run in. It is always difficult to quantify juvenile form at this point in the season, although the fact that the first and second drew 32 lengths clear of the rest plus **Westlin' Winds** previous two wide margin wins add some substance to the form.

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## BETFAIR FINESSE

- 30<sup>th</sup> JAN 2010

The Finesse Hurdle has produced a winner and two seconds of the Triumph Hurdle in the last three seasons and could boast a leading contender from the Paul Nicholls yard lining up this time around. **Pistolet Noir** held a clear form advantage over the four of his six rivals that had previously run and started the race as the **4/7** favourite. With the two mile and a furlong trip appearing to be the minimum requirement for Paul Nicholls charge, Ruby Walsh decided to take up the running from the off. **Pistolet Noir** drifted around in front and never looked particularly keen or happy. The writing was on the wall well before the final flight as the **100/1** shot **Baccalaureate** trained by Nigel Twiston Davies was going well and being confidently ridden by Paddy Brennan; sure enough he took it up from the last and quickly put daylight between himself and the one paced favourite. To his credit, **Pistolet Noir** did close the deficit somewhat approaching the line as the winner tired close home, but the final outcome was never in doubt. Paul Nicholls won the Triumph Hurdle with Celestial Halo two years ago and if he is going to repeat the exercise in 2010 it does not appear likely, at this stage, that he will do so with **Pistolet Noir**.

## SCOTTISH TRIUMPH

- 7<sup>th</sup> FEB 2010

**Carlito Brigante** put the finishing touches to his **Cheltenham** preparations with another impressive win in the Scottish Triumph Hurdle at **Musselburgh**. He was held up on the outside off the fast pace set by the Brian Ellison runner **Ultimate** who was trading at 3/1 second favourite in the betting market. Keith Mercer kicked **Ultimate** several lengths clear off the final bend and for a few brief moments appeared as if he could have stolen the race. It was not to be as the favourite joined him at the second last and after jumping the last two hurdles particularly well **Carlito Brigante** was driven out to finish six lengths in front at the line. He now heads to **Cheltenham** in good form and boasting credentials comparable with any of his rivals. **Ultimate** had previously failed to last home on soft ground at **Cheltenham** and it might be best to keep him fresh for the Grade Two Novice Hurdle at **Aintree**, whilst **Baccalaureate** ran no sort of a race and this may well have come too soon for him after his exertions at **Cheltenham** last week.

## WINNING FAIR

- 20<sup>th</sup> FEB 2010

**Alaivan** returned to winning ways with a really impressive looking victory in this Grade Two contest run over two miles on soft ground at **Fairyhouse**. In his previous race behind **Carlito Brigante** at **Leopardstown**, he raced far too freely and ended up having to make the running; his jockey had no such problems here as he was able to tuck him in and get him settled early on. He travelled very well and moved through to challenge at the second last flight before drawing clear in effortless fashion from the last. This is certainly a case of it not being about what he beat rather the way that he did it, as the second horse home, the unconsidered 25/1 shot **Loch Long** had previously finished well down the field in each of his two maiden hurdle races. **Alaivan** has now won two hurdle races on testing ground in a hack canter, though whether or not he will be able to reproduce the level of these performances in a fast run race contested on a sounder surface is open to debate.

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## THE GUIDE

### CARLITO BRIGANTE

**Carlito Brigante** has won a Grade Two Novice Hurdle at **Leopardstown** as well as two novice hurdle races at **Musselburgh** in his latest three contests. The form of his **Leopardstown** win has some substance to it as the runner up was beaten eleven lengths by **Carlito Brigante** after having previously run out a facile winner at **Gowran Park**. In addition, three horses that finished further down the field had run first, second and third in a Grade Three event at **Fairyhouse** one month earlier. He won off a very slow pace at **Leopardstown** but looked equally suited to the fast pace set by **Ultimate** in his latest start at **Musselburgh**. All things considered, he holds solid claims for the Triumph providing the going is not too soft and he now heads for **Cheltenham** in the best of form and boasting credentials comparable with any of his rivals in what, after all, looks a wide open race.

### ALAIVAN

**Alaivan** is rated 110 on the flat and has a career record of four wins and two seconds from seven starts. The only time he has finished out of the first two was on his racecourse debut in a flat race run on a quick surface, which is also the only time he has competed in a race that was not run in testing conditions. He has now won two out of three over hurdles and has won both races on heavy ground in particularly easy fashion. He was well beaten by **Carlito Brigante** in his one defeat over hurdles, though the fact that he pulled hard on that occasion and was a reluctant leader had something to do with his demise. **Alaivan** is yet to be tested in a big field, fast pace hurdle race and, unlike one or two of his main market rivals, is unproven on the quicker surface he is likely to face in the Triumph Hurdle; nevertheless, in a wide open contest he rates as one of the stronger contenders.

### WESTLIN' WINDS

**Westlin' Winds** has won two out of three over hurdles and met his only defeat when going down in a close finish to the current Triumph Hurdle favourite **Mille Chief**. He was conceding seven pounds to the Alan King favourite and, but for a mistake at the last, he would have finished much closer than the two and a quarter lengths he was beaten by. He has made the running in each of his last two races and a repeat of those tactics in a Triumph Hurdle with plenty of runners will do his chances no harm at all and may be to his advantage. He has decent form on ground ranging from soft to good to soft and won his first two races by ten lengths and nine lengths respectively; furthermore, when he was beaten by the highly regarded **Mille Chief** he finished 32 lengths clear of the third horse. It is possible that he is a little flattered by that form as **Mille Chief** was returning from a set back and was said to need the run; nonetheless, in this game, we are always better believing what we see rather than what we hear and from what we have seen thus far, **Westlin' Winds** is a viable contender in an open looking Triumph Hurdle and is probably overpriced at his current odds of **20/1**.

### SECANT STAR

**Secant Star** was well clear of the field when he fell at the last flight in a maiden race at **Leopardstown** on his hurdling debut. He redeemed himself somewhat with a convincing success on heavy ground in another minor race at **Gowran Park**. The second horse home that day, **Capellanus**, was beaten seven lengths off level weights and returned to the same track to

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win a similar race in hard fought fashion. Although **Secant Star** has to be given some sort of a chance in a difficult race to call, the fact that he is now trading at about **7/1** for the Triumph Hurdle on the strength of an easy victory in a minor race is more to do with the name of his trainer and possible jockey rather than the content of his form.

## ADVISOR

**Advisor** has a 100% record after winning his two starts to date at **Newbury** and **Ascot** respectively. His two victories have been gained in rather less flamboyant style than one or two of his market rivals, as he has been asked a question in both contests; nonetheless, he has also found enough when asked and the experience he will have gained from getting competitive twice can only be positive when faced with a race like the Triumph Hurdle. The runner up at **Ascot**, **Barwell Bridge**, followed up by being beaten in similar fashion in an average novice hurdle at **Doncaster**, whilst the third horse, **Prince Pippin**, was nine lengths behind **Advisor**, which is the closest he has finished in any of his latest four runs; furthermore, the horses that finished second and third behind him on his debut at **Newbury** have both been beaten more comprehensively in their subsequent run. So the actual form of his two races has not worked out particularly well, but he has travelled and jumped well on both occasions and responded to pressure each time. He has not done anything to suggest that he is a superstar from the Paul Nicholls yard, but he may not have to be to go close in this race and with two solid performances behind him, he has every chance of finishing in the prize money.

**Please bear in mind that many of the horse profiles were prepared well in advance of the conclusions. I decided not to edit them as they represent my thinking at the time of writing.**

## CONCLUSIONS

This race is particularly difficult to solve and it would be no surprise to see something romp home at a very big price. The three favourites all hold strong claims but are far too short to get excited about. Of the horses trading at double figures **Westlin' Winds** appears quite interesting, whilst **Advisor** also has claims. **Me Voici** is a doubtful runner at this stage but if the ground was testing and he did take part he would certainly have to come into calculations.