



## **THE PERTEMPS HURDLE QUALIFIERS**

**RUN OCTOBER 25TH – DECEMBER 28TH**

***CHELTENHAM***

***NEWBURY***

***AINTREE***

***KEMPTON***

***PUNCHESTOWN***

***MARKET RASEN***

***SANDOWN***

***CARLISLE***

***WINCANTON***

***LEOPARDSTOWN***

## POSITION & QUALIFIER OF PERTEMPS WINNER SINCE 2012

2025 Position finished in qualifier: **2/13 Haydock**  
2024 Position finished in qualifier: **4/12 Chepstow**  
2023 Position finished in qualifier: **3/27 Leopardstown**  
2022 Position finished in qualifier: **3/7 Warwick**  
2021 Position finished in qualifier: **4/25 Leopardstown**  
2020 Position finished in qualifier: **4/14 Warwick 9/25 Leopardstown**  
2019 Position finished in qualifier: **6/23 Leopardstown**  
2018 Position finished in qualifier: **3/13 Punchestown**  
2017 Position finished in qualifier: **5/21 Leopardstown 4/20 Punchestown**  
2016 Position finished in qualifier: **4/21 Leopardstown**  
2015 Position finished in qualifier: **4/8 Kempton**  
2014 Position finished in qualifier: **1/12 Exeter**  
2013 Position finished in qualifier: **2/18 Warwick**  
2012 Position finished in qualifier: **4/19 - Haydock**

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### **Cheltenham (October 25) – 17 ran (Good)**

- 1 – Ma Shantou
- 2 – Electric Mason
- 3 – Supremely West
- 4 – Long Draw

Winner Ma Shantou won nicely here off 129 but was well beaten next time off 9lb higher as the 4/1F. The Trainer could offer no excuse for the poor run he but bounced back on his next start, back at Cheltenham, back on Good ground and with Harry Cobden re-united. He's now rated 144 and guaranteed a start should they choose. Player if getting the same conditions and jockey in March. Runner up here is interesting as he went on to win the Haydock race that Ma Shantou was bitterly disappointing in and is now rated 139 but it's worth noting he was well beaten in the Martin Pipe last March. The 3rd home Supremely West has been well beaten 3 times since now and has dropped from 137 to 135. He's probably handicapped to his limits but coming from the Skelton yard it would be dangerous to ignore his chances. 4th home Long Draw is another to have been beaten a couple of times since but is a dual CD winner on Good/Good-Soft and has also been dropped 2lb in the ratings since October.

### **Newbury (November 6) – 11 ran (Good to Soft)**

- 1 – Haiti Couleurs
- 2 – Bill Baxter
- 3 – Lihyan
- 4 – Act Of Authority

Haiti Couleurs kept on strongest here to win under top weight but has since won the Welsh National and much more likely to run in a chase race at the Festival or be kept for the National itself. Of the other 3 qualifiers the second is better known as chaser although does have a 9lb lower rating over hurdles than fences. He ran a dreadful race last time out over fences at Market Rasen and is suffering over the larger obstacles after winning a Listed Handicap Chase at Punchestown last May. The 3rd Lihyan looks quite interesting after a 3rd at Market Rasen and a close second over Course and distance of the Pertemps Final on his last run when not getting the clearest of runs after jumping the last. Fourth home Act Of Authority has been staying on nicely over shorter trips on his last two starts and has dropped a couple of lbs in the ratings since this run. He was 2nd in the Martin Pipe last season behind a very well handicapped mare and is definitely worth keeping an eye on for the Final, especially if he drops a few more lbs in the handicap.

### **Aintree (November 8) – 7 ran (Good/Soft)**

- 1 – Impose Toi
- 2 – Chasing Fire
- 3 – The Lord Maid
- 4 – Kyntara

The winner won well to become another qualifier winner to go in under top weight but has won twice since in top Graded company so won't be running in the Final at Cheltenham now his sights have been set higher. Both the 2nd, a good run at the weights and is still fairly well treated, and the 3rd, decent mare who stayed on nicely here and goes well off a break, haven't run since. The 4th was beaten 3L when 5th in a similar race back at Cheltenham next time out but then Pulled Up in a class 3 handicap hurdle at Haydock. He ran second in the Final in 2024 off this very same mark and hasn't had his ideal ground (soft/heavy) since running 4th in a handicap chase last January.

### **Kempton (November 10) – 7 ran (Good)**

- 1 – Idy Wood
- 2 – Eyed
- 3 – Below The Radar
- 4 – Saint Anapolino

A dreadful qualifier that was run over 2m5f on a Monday with a top-weight rated just 129. It went to Idy Wood who won well off a mark of 127 but flopped next time out off his new mark of 133. Dropped 1lb and now rated 132 he doesn't look capable of troubling the judge come Finals Day. From their current ratings the 2nd and 3rd have a massive task on their hands simply making the line up for the final. The topweight finished 4th but has since been sent chasing (3-4-3 in small fields) and despite dropping 6lb in the ratings offers no appeal for the final.

### **Punchestown (November 23) – 9 ran (Soft to Heavy)**

- 1 – Staffordshire Knot
- 2 – Millstream Lady
- 3 – Custom Taylor
- 4 – Sarah Beara

Yet another topweight winner, Staffordshire Knot, who won this well off 140 then won again in a conditions Hurdle where he was well treated and did all that was required of him to land the odds. Still rated just 7lb higher than when winning the qualifier he's improved his form massively this season and starting to return to the kind of form that saw him run 2nd as a Novice Hurdle to Brighterdaysahead in an Aintree Grade 1. 9th in the Coral Cup last season he's done well for his 5lb claimer this term and is definitely one for the shortlist. The runner up is another to appeal from this race as she was a subsequent eye catching 6th of 18 in the Leopardstown qualifier after Christmas. Her current mark of 130 should see her sneak in off a low weight. The lightly raced 3rd has yet to run again but is another interesting runner having won a big field Listed Novice Handicap at Fairyhouse last April before returning in October to run away with a Gowran Handicap Hurdle, easing down at the finish. She might have found the ground a little too testing here and better ground may help her cause in March. The 4th ran a similar race next time out but is too lowly rated to realistically have a chance of making the cut.

### **Market Rasen (November 26) – 8 ran (Good to Soft)**

- 1 – C'Est Different
- 2 – Tranquil Sea
- 3 – Lihyan
- 4 – Lavida Adiva

Winner C'Est Different won this off bottomweight and a 109 rating. He got a 12lb bump to 121 for winning next time out, which completed a 4 timer, but he stills needs to step up to win the final and will probably need to win again to even get a run. The Dan Skelton runner up was well beaten in an earlier qualifier behind Haiti Couleurs and has been beaten twice since. His 123 rating probably needs improving to make the cut but he's not in the best of form presently. The 3rd horse was also 3rd in the Newbury Qualifier at the start of the month and has run well since in defeat at Cheltenham when runner up in a hot contest behind Titan Discovery. He went up 3lb for that to 128 which might sneak him in. 4th home Lavida Adiva won a mares race at Doncaster on her next start where she gave 4lb to the runner up and had the 145 rated Kateira 7 lengths back in third off level weights. Up just 1lb for that run, to currently sit on 131, she hasn't been seen since and the trainer is probably keeping her back to preserve a very attractive handicap mark. Coming from a stable that has won this race in the past she's definitely worth keeping an eye on.

### **Sandown Park (December 6) – 7 ran (Soft)**

- 1 – Kikijo
- 2 – Turndlightsdownlow
- 3 – Ikarak
- 4 – Supremely West

The winner Kikijo backed up a win at Cheltenham from November and after a second 7lb rise is now rated 135. Lightly raced, he has won 3 of his 6 hurdles starts and looks to be still improving and will get a run. On his run in a handicap hurdle at Aintree at October he has quite a bit to find to reverse placing with Lihyan. The runner up has a lot to do to get a run whilst 3rd home Ikarak is another possible from the Olly Murphy yard. He won next time out in a class 3 but has a record in class 2 handicap company of 2-6-5-3 and another 6lb rise in the ratings doesn't help his cause too much. The 4th home had finished 3rd in the Qualifier at Cheltenham in October but was disappointing at Aintree on Boxing Day over 2m4f. He got a 2lb drop in the ratings for that run and is another interesting contender as he now sits 2lb lower than that Cheltenham run and comes from a stable who like to target the Festival handicaps.

### **Carlisle (December 14) – 6 ran (Soft)**

- 1 – Nab Wood
- 2 – Letos
- 3 – Roaring Conquest
- 4 – Rocheval

Only 6 runners lined up leaving only 5th and 6th home not qualifying. We can probably add the 4th to that list as his current rating leaves him some way short of the required level. The winner Nab Wood won well by 3L after running 6th at Haydock behind Electric Mason giving that form yet another boost. He flopped in his next start with the trainer blaming the tight track at Windsor as the cause of that poor run. The 2nd was outclassed subsequently in a Grade 1 Novice at Naas but his previous handicap win at that track got a big form boost at Leopardstown over Christmas where he also had Staffordshire Knot back in 3rd. Olly Murphy had yet another qualifier for the final back in 3rd. He's lightly raced and was 3rd in a Grade 2 at Haydock last February and his previous Windsor handicap win has worked out nicely. He could be a dark one for the final.

### **Wincanton (December 26) – 9 ran (Good to Soft)**

- 1 – Absolutely Doyen
- 2 – Ike Sport
- 3 – El Capitane
- 4 – Classic King

The Paul Nicholls trained winner made it 4 from 4 for the season on his handicap debut with an eased down win under 7lb conditional Freddie Keighley. That brings him up to a mark of 132 after another raise of 9lb for this win. The runner up Ike Sport hasn't won for a while but is showing signs of a revival in form after this 2nd and then a 6th of 15 in the Lanzarote Hurdle last time out. He's back up to 129 which leaves him on the borderline to getting a run in the Final. Some improvement is needed from the 121 rated 3rd home. The 4th would get a run off his mark but he hasn't really found as much improvement for the step up to 3 miles as you'd have liked. He ran well over 2m4f on his seasonal debut and was in good form over that sort of trip at the start of last year but he's been found wanting at the business end of the race over this longer trip.

### **Leopardstown (December 28) – 18 ran (Yielding)**

- 1 – Duke Silver
- 2 – Yeah Man
- 3 – Small Town Hero
- 4 – Intent Approach

This is usually a great pointer to the Final in March but this year we saw the first four home come from the bottom of the weights and none of the first 4 home had ratings that would currently make the cut. The winner did get raised to 127 though and might get a few more lbs from the English h'capper which would help sneak him in at the bottom. The most eye catching run here came from the 5th (maybe his Irish trainer and Jockey didn't get the memo telling them it's only the first 4 home that qualify now). Jordans came from a long way back to run on into 5th but will need to qualify top 4 in one of the few remaining races left. He has a hurdles rating 17lb less than his chase mark and needs keeping an eye on in any future qualifier.

## **GARY'S ANTE-POST THOUGHTS**

The form of ELECTRIC MASON in his Haydock win looks rock solid and at 16/1 looks to have a very good each way claim at present.

Another worthy of note is the, Cheltenham Handicap Specialist, Dan Skelton trained SUPREME WEST who is 14/1 in some books but as short as 10/1 with some. He looks like a plot horse with places in a couple of qualifiers being followed by a poor run over an inadequate trip that saw him drop 2lbs in the ratings to 135 (his lowest mark since winning by 6 lengths in a Haydock handicap in December 2024).

For a longer priced selection, KYNTARA at 40/1 looks huge but there are some doubts about his chance/participation as he needs it very soft and may possibly go for a chase race instead. It might be worth hanging on until nearer the Festival.

I prefer the form of the Irish Punchestown Qualifier over the Leopardstown one with the eye catcher looking like MILLSTREAM LADY who is well worth a 50/1 EW saver at this stage.

Other outsiders currently on my shortlist are Letos (33/1), Roaring Conquest (33/1) and Lavidia Avida (50/1)