

WHERE THE TOP JUMP JOCKEYS MAKE MOST IMPACT....  
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# WHERE THE TOP JUMP JOCKEYS MAKE MOST IMPACT....



**a Special Research Report....**

**by Nick Pullen....**

**(For the 24/25 National Hunt Season)**

## Where the top jump jockeys make most impact....

**Harry Cobden....**

**.... Sean Bowen....**

**.... and Harry Skelton....**

Last season....

... over the jumps....

... these jockeys were the top three riders in Britain for my money....

... producing an aggregate of 402 winners between them....

The table below illustrates their individual performance figures across the 23/24 jumps season....

Jockey	W	R	SR%
<b>Harry Cobden</b>	164	736	22.3
<b>Sean Bowen</b>	157	721	21.8
<b>Harry Skelton</b>	81	423	19.1

On the eve of the new jumps season....

... one thing is for certain....

These guys will get plenty of good rides....

... because they are the best pilots in the business right now....

... and – just like last season – they will be riding plenty of winners over the winter and into the spring....

For racing fans – particularly those racing fans who like a wager – these guys and their respective rides are fertile soil in which to dig for winning bets....

... but there's an awful lot of soil to dig through to find the gold nuggets....

Between them these three riders took 1880 rides last term....

... and you can bet your bottom dollar they'll be riding the same number – if not more – this time around....

You can't bet all of them....

... and – believe me – you wouldn't want to....

Of our three top riders only Sean Bowen posted a level stakes betting profit (with bets placed to win at SP) across all his rides....

... and even then – as the table below illustrates – the profit only amounted to 32.6 points from 721 bets in total....

... which translates to a lot of work and a lot of turnover of betting capital for what represents a miniscule percentage return on investment....

In other words, the exercise would have been a complete and utter waste of time and effort....

Meantime, betting on all the rides of Harry Cobden and Harry Skelton produced a combined loss of 146.4 points....

Jockey	P&L
Harry Cobden	-97.8
Sean Bowen	32.6
Harry Skelton	-48.6

These three riders will ride plenty of winners this season....

The challenge for punters is to pick the wheat from the chaff....

... and to land on as many winners as possible for each rider – whilst avoiding as many of the losers as possible....

Easier said than done, of course....

... but certainly not impossible....

Especially as I've done most – if not all – of the work for you....

I've spent the last week or so crunching numbers and data going all the way back to 2009....

... with the sole objective of identifying specific sweet spots in the riding records of each our top three jockeys....

I wanted to know which tracks each jockey rides best – as measured by Impact Value....

In other words – I set myself the assignment of figuring out which tracks produced more winners for each jockey than pure chance dictates should be the case....

... using each jockeys entire record (going back to the start of the 2009 season) as a baseline performance measurement that might be called ‘par’....

Here’s what I discovered....

## Harry Cobden – most impact closest to home and furthest away....



If my life depended on finding winning horses ridden by Harry Cobden....

... there’s one track I’d be totally focused on....

... **Wincanton** – a local track for a lad born, bred, and still very much situated in Somerset....

My figures (correct as of 8th October 2024) tell me that since March 2015 Harry Cobden has had 4118 rides on British racecourses....

... producing 998 winners at a strike-rate of 21.5%....

That's a top-drawer figure that puts Harry Cobden right up there with the best – past and present....

He's had plenty of big race success....

... winning 125 Grade & Listed races to date....

... and more than £16 million in prize money....

Last season he was crowned Champion Jockey for the first – and surely not the last – time....

You don't get too many big Grade races at Wincanton....

... nor is the prize money what you find at the big tracks like Cheltenham, Aintree, Newbury & Ascot....

... but Wincanton is where I'd be most aggressive in targeting winners ridden by Harry Cobden....

His record at the track reads 108 winners from 350 rides at a stellar strike rate of almost 31%....

... and his Impact Value at the track weighs in at **1.45**....

... which tells you that he rides winners at Wincanton 45% more frequently than pure chances says he should....

You'd have made a 20-point betting profit (betting win only at SP) backing all his rides at Wincanton since 2015....

... but it's his rides in **non-handicap hurdles** at the track that are really worth your focus....

His record in that specific divisions of races since the start of 2015 reads 53 winners from 109 rides at 48.6%....

... level stakes betting profits run to 17.8 points (a 16.3% return on investment)....

... and the longest losing spell across the entire range of those non-handicap hurdle rides amounts to just five runners – which underlines just how dominant he is in that division at the track....

Narrow the focus further still....

... focusing solely on non-handicap hurdles Cobden has taken at the track for his principal employer Paul Nicholls....

... and the record reads 47 winners from 89 runners at 52.8%....

... with level stakes betting profits running to 15 points (a 16.9% return on investment)....

You probably won't get super-rich any time soon backing Cobden at Wincanton....

... but you will find winners – which you can back solo, in multiples, in placepots, and all the rest of it....

Winners are what this game is all about....

... the current Champion jockey will ride plenty of them....

.... and – on all past evidence – Wincanton is a great place to target them over the coming months....

**Bonus angle: Look to the far North....**

Ayr is Scotland's principal jumps track and the Cobden's Impact Value there (0.91) is nothing to shout about....

But at lesser Scottish tracks – **Musselburgh, Kelso & Perth** – the combined record reads 23 winners from 54 runners....

.... which translates to an Impact Value of **1.98** – which means he rides winners at those tracks 98% more often than chance says he should....

Cobden doesn't head up that way very often – but when he does the winners are likely to flow....

[ATC – angles and pointers that win £££s....](#)

**Sean Bowen – the next cab off the rank scores heavy instunning scenery....**



Where future Champion Jockey titles are concerned Sean Bowen is probably the next cab off the rank....

He's a long way behind Harry Cobden in terms of Grade and Listed races – his haul consists of just 36 to date....

... but he has amassed prize money North of £10 million....

... and last season he gave Cobden a proper run for his money in the Jockey Championship....

... finishing second with 157 winners – just seven behind Cobden's winning total....

And let's not forget that Bowen doesn't have the same level of firepower that Cobden – principal jockey for Paul Nicholls – has at his disposal....

That said he did get rides and plenty of winners last term courtesy of Olly Murphy....

... a serious up-and-coming trainer....

... and a good candidate to improve his yard and find more winners – big and small – going forward....

... developments that Bowen is likely to be a beneficiary of....

He'd been second in the Championship table the season before last too – albeit losing out by a much bigger margin to Brian Hughes....

... following finishes of eighth and fifth in the two seasons previous to that....

Steady improvement has been the name of Bowen's game in recent seasons....

... he came as near as he ever has done to Champion status last year....

... and this driven 27-year-old is never going to settle for being second best....

You can rest assured he will redouble his efforts this time around – and that means he's going to be riding winners aplenty....

Hold a gun to my head and ask me where to go in search of a fertile source of Bowen winners and I will point you in one direction....

... **Perth** (a stunningly scenic track)....

... and here's why....

Sean Bowen's baseline performance figures....

... meaning all his rides in Britain going back to the start of 2014 (accurate as of 8th October 2024)....

... read 915 winners from 5099 rides at 17.9%....

Not quite at the level of Cobden....

... but – like I say – he's improving and from the start of 2021 his winners to rides weigh in at 19.2%....

That figure will improve. He will rides more winners. And Perth is a great place to target Bowen....

... his record there reads 68 winners from 230 rides at 29.6%...

... which translates to an Impact Value of **1.65**...

... meaning he rides winners at the track 65% more frequently than chance dictates he should...

Just how well he does for punters at the Scottish track is evidenced by a level stakes profit (with bets to win at SP) of 31.48 points had you'd backed all his rides at the track since 2014....

He's a particular force in **handicap chase** races run at the track....

... in which his records reads 26 wins from 83 rides at 31.3%....

... which translates to an Impact Value of **1.75** against his all-rides baseline record....

... meaning he rides winners in those races 75% more frequently than chance says he should....

If you'd backed all those handicap chase rides (to win at SP) you'd be sitting on a betting profit of 29.23 points (a 35.2% return on investment)....

Not bad – winners and profits – and certainly an aspect of Sean Bowen's wider record that's worth being aware of for the season ahead....

### **Bonus angle: The Sean & Gordon combo....**

The big successful Irish jumps yards – running out of target races to plunder in their own country – have taken to targeting smaller handicaps in Britain in recent years....

Gordon Elliott is among their number and he's made plenty of use of Sean Bowen when launching such raids from his base in Ireland...

In combination the Sean Bowen & Gordon Elliott record reads 35 winners from 98 runners at 35.7%....

.... which translates to an Impact Value of 1.99....

Betting profit – to win betting at SP – weighs in at 39 points....

Qualifiers are well worth looking out for this season....

**[ATC = analysis you won't find in the mainstream racing media....](#)**

## **Take an interest in Harry Skelton when he heads to this Yorkshire track....**



At the time of writing – and it's very early in the cycle – Harry Skelton sits second in the Jockeys Championship table on 53 winners....

.... just three behind Sean Bowen....

.... but having had considerably fewer rides – 207 compared to 334....

... which means his strike rate of 26% is quite a bit better than Bowen's current 17%....

Who is the best rider?

Is it the one who rides the biggest volume of winners no matter how many rides it takes to achieve the total....

... or is it the jockey who rides a bigger proportion of winners from fewer rides....

It's a debate for another day but – whichever way you look at it – Skelton is a big dog in the weighing room. No doubt....

He won the Jockeys Championship back in the 20/21 season – producing 152 winners from 682 rides at a strike rate of 22%....

When you think that Brian Hughes won the Championship in the following two seasons (21/22 & 22/23) having taken 956 and 875 rides to generate winners sufficient to enable him to come out on top....

... it gives you a fresh appreciation of just how much Skelton squeezed from those 652 rides to fend off much busier opposition....

Skelton finished third and fourth in the Championship in the seasons when Hughes was top man. Last year he finished 6th....

But take note – his relative descent down the standings should be in no way taken as a sign that Skelton's powers have diminished....

Far from it. The lower placings are down to Skelton having fewer rides – 508, 450 and 423 – across the subsequent seasons....

The one year he went big in terms of rides – at least by his own standards – he won the Championship. The reason he hasn't figured again since is because he hasn't set out to win it....

His strike rate is a much better guide than the Championship standings as to where Skelton is at.....

Rates of 20%, 21% and 19% across the last three completed seasons tell us that he's still very much at the top end of the game....

I suspect he would like to win the Championship again. But the priority appears to be staying as fit and as fresh as possible so as to further the lofty ambitions and high-level aspirations he no doubt shares with brother – and principal ride provider – Dan Skelton....

The 'home team' operation' comes first, second, and third with Harry Skelton – evidenced by the fact that he's taken only 51 outside rides (on horses not trained by Dan Skelton) since the beginning of May 2021....

... a period during which he's taken 1520 rides for his brother....

But this is just background analysis that reveals the contextual framework within which Harry Skelton operates....

... the important question is this: where do we have the best chance of finding the winners?

And my answer to that question would be **Wetherby**....

Harry Skelton's baseline figures....

... meaning all his rides in Britain going back to the start of 2010 (accurate as of 8th October 2024)...

... read 1243 winners from 6236 rides at 19.9%...

That's a long-term performance record that measures up to Harry Cobden's better than most – if not all – in the weighing room...

... and it tells me that if Skelton were to take more rides than the two Harrys would be scrapping it out in a battle royale for the title of best current jump jockey in Britain...

It would be great if that battle were to play out...

... but – in the meantime – my advice is to keep yourself occupied by taking a keen interest in anything Skelton rides at Wetherby where his record reads 72 winners from 229 rides at 31.4%...

... figures that translate to an Impact Value of **1.57**...

... which means Skelton rides winners at the venue 57% more often than chance says he should...

The **non-handicap hurdlers** are the most potent horses to focus on...

... the record reads 35 winners from 84 rides at 41.7%...

... a stunning strike rate that translates to an Impact Value of **2.09** when measured against Skelton's career baseline performance...

You won't become super-rich backing qualifiers this season – but you will no doubt find winners to make of what you will...

There are seven cards to attack at the track between November 1st and the end of the year – so you won't be short of opportunities....

... and there's more than one way to skin a cat – qualifiers make for solid legs in Placepots, Quadpots, swinger bets and all the rest of it....

### **Bonus angle: It's not all about Harry....**

This one doesn't even concern Harry Skelton – it's about **Brian Hughes**....

... winner of the Jockeys Championship in the 21/22 and the 22/23 season....

He's seen ostensibly as a kingpin on the Northern jumps circuit – with a relatively poor record when he's asked to ride at some of the major tracks in the South: Cheltenham (7/160 @ 4.4%), Newbury (2/32 @ 6.3%), Sandown (1/42 @ 2.4%)....

But do look out for him when he makes the occasional foray to **Fakenham** in East Anglia – which is plenty South from what might be considered his standard stomping ground....

He has a record there that reads 16 wins from 72 runners at 22.2%....

... and when you measure that against his long-term baseline performance – it translates to an Impact Value of **1.39**....

It's not the biggest figure we've unearthed – but it does denote a situation in which Hughes rides winners 39% more frequently than chance says he should....

... and it's something worth being aware of....

**ATC = advice & information that locates winners....**

## **Smart money always beats dumb money over the long term....**

Betting the races is a game of opinions....

It's you against the market....

And how you make out as a racing punter will ultimately boil down to one thing – the quality of your opinions....

If your opinions suck, so will your long-term results....

If your opinions are more accurate than most – you'll do better than most. No doubt....

Your opinion is the commodity you take to market. An opinion is all any punter has – bar the money with which to back it....

And it stands to reason that the better-informed opinions will always have the edge in the markets....

.... the smartest money will always win out across the long term....

.... those who know that little bit more will always be at an advantage over those who know that little bit less....

To win at this game you will need to know more than the next punter – and the next punter after him....

Your money needs to be smarter than their money....

Your money needs to be smarter than their money....

And the smarter your money is – the more potent your opinions prove to be – the better the bottom-line outcome you will enjoy....

My *Against the Crowd* service is all about providing information and analysis that will help you construct informed opinions....

.... whether you're new to race-betting or a grizzled veteran whose been there, done it and seen it all....

My *Against the Crowd* column goes out at least four times a week – Tuesday to Friday....

.... delivering a potent and entertaining mix of....

.... value-oriented selections in big-field handicaps on the flat and over jumps – at the weekend and at all the major midweek Festivals....

.... a constant flow of well-handicapped horses to follow....

.... original post-race analysis focused on finding take-away observations that lead to profitable future bets....

.... and unique money-winning angles & pointers that you won't find reported in the mainstream racing media....

If you want to become a smarter punter – give my *Against the Crowd* service a whirl....

I promise you one thing – you will learn things that give you a clearcut knowledge edge over the punters you bet against in the market....

[Find out more about betting \*Against the Crowd\*...](#)

In the meantime, happy hunting over the jumps this winter....

I hope the information in this report helps you dig out a winner or two....

All the best,

*Nick*

Nick Pullen

***Against the Crowd***

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