

The 2011/12 Jumps Season - How The Top-Rated Cherry Picks Selections Fared In The Big Races

After reading reading Timeform's preview of the 2012/13 Jumps Season, we decided to investigate how the top-rated **Cherry Picks** selections fared in 19 of the biggest races of the 2011/12 Jumps Season (as identified by Timeform). As you can see below, **9** of them won (**47%**) and **13** placed (**68%**). The returns are based on Betfair starting prices and take into account 5% commission. How will our top-rated selections fare in the key races of the 2012/13 Jumps Season...?

Race	Date	Time	Racecourse	Distance	Top-Rated Selection	Rating	Betfair SP	No. Runners	Result	Win Returns	Place Returns
Paddy Power Gold Cup Chase	12-Nov-11	14:35	Cheltenham	2m4½f	Mon Parrain	560	6.36	20	L	-1.00	-1.00
<i>Timeform's View: Looked an exciting prospect in 2 outings in Britain last season but was in nothing like the same form on his return, weak in the market on the day and barely ever looking at ease (jumped none too fluently), losing his position completely by the tenth before running past beaten horses late on; he's sufficiently unexposed to bounce back from this reverse.</i>											
Betfair Chase	19-Nov-11	15:05	Haydock	3m	Long Run	895	2.21	6	P	-1.00	0.63
<i>Timeform's View: This defeat isn't really a concern given his primary target is the King George and, unlike Kauto Star, he wasn't at concert pitch for this reappearance, still the one to beat at Kempton all things considered, but, unusually for a chaser of his calibre, Long Run's tendency to make mistakes does mean there's always a degree of risk attached in backing him, especially at short prices; this was a more than satisfactory reappearance on the figures, good enough in fact to win an average Betfair chase, but his jumping wasn't totally convincing even before mistakes at the eleventh and thirteenth, under pressure not long after the latter but responding until lack of peak fitness appeared to tell before the last; he is a chaser of the highest order and will no doubt add to his haul of Grade 1 wins.</i>											
Hennessy Gold Cup Chase	26-Nov-11	15:10	Newbury	3m2½f	Neptune Collonges	473	55.00	18	L	-1.00	-1.00
<i>Timeform's View: Isn't as good or reliable as he once was, his best effort last term hardly the most solid form, and he never threatened to get involved on this return.</i>											
William Hill King George VI Chase	26-Dec-11	15:10	Kempton	3m	Long Run	771	2.08	7	P	-1.00	0.26
<i>Timeform's View: Confirmed the positive impression created at Haydock and lost nothing in defeat against one of the outstanding chasers, beaten fair and square but still with every chance of gaining a second win in the Gold Cup, his form and that of the winner head and shoulders above that of any of their likely rivals at the moment, tactics plus less fluent (but not poor) jumping making a difference to this outcome, closing strongly come the end after Kauto Star had essentially sealed the race when pressing on after the twelfth, the longer trip at Cheltenham more in his favour than the winner's; he didn't run between the King George and Gold Cup last season, though the former was 3 weeks later and he wasn't on the back of 2 defeats, so it might be he'll take in the renamed Betfair Denman Chase at Newbury prior to a potentially superiority deciding clash between the pair.</i>											
Lexus Chase	28-Dec-11	14:35	Leopardstown	3m	Rubi Light	567	3.60	9	P	-1.00	0.53
<i>Timeform's View: Opened up more options in staying this longer trip but it'll surely be only on Irish soil that he picks up any further races at this level, the Hennessy here the obvious one for him, racing close to a steady pace before going on at the tenth, but he never looked like getting away and was overwhelmed by the winner on the run to the last.</i>											
Racing Post Arkle Challenge Trophy Chase	13-Mar-12	14:05	Cheltenham	2m	Sprinter Sacre	617	1.82	6	W	0.78	0.34
<i>Timeform's View: Had scared away most of the opposition with the ease of his earlier wins over fences and routed those that did turn up with a performance that marks him out as an outstanding prospect, the best winner of this race since Azertyuiop and with the potential to go as far as that great 2m chaser did, already a short-priced favourite for the 2013 Champion Chase; he wasn't extended, cruising behind the leaders until left in front at the tenth, soon going clear and, though closed on in the straight, quickening impressively when asked after the last and sauntering clear, having plenty more to give at the line.</i>											
Stan James Champion Hurdle Challenge Trophy	13-Mar-12	15:20	Cheltenham	2m½f	Zarkandar	544	12.00	10	L	-1.00	-1.00
<i>Timeform's View: Didn't take the eye beforehand and was on his toes, lost his unbeaten record over hurdles, facing by far his stiffest task, emerging with credit for his finishing effort after being tapped for foot down the hill; he requires a step up in trip at this level, and ought to be more at ease in the Aintree Hurdles over 2½m next month.</i>											

RSA Chase	14-Mar-12	14:40	Cheltenham	3m½f	Bobs Worth	423	5.70	9	W	4.47	0.83
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Timeform's View: On his toes, was a completely different proposition, with his jumping together, soon getting into a good rhythm and always comfortable with the pace, disputing after 4 out and gradually getting the better of the runner-up in the straight, just the stouter stayer at the end, not surprising given his win in the Spa Hurdle in 2011; he's had just 44 starts over fences and only just finding his stride at this discipline, so must merit serious consideration as a Gold Cup prospect next season, with the longer trip likely to be all to his advantage, a return in the Hennessy perhaps the ideal starting point; he has an excellent attitude and looks very solid and straightforward, which will stand him in good stead.

sportingbet.com Queen Mother Champion Chase	14-Mar-12	15:20	Cheltenham	2m	Finians Rainbow	592	5.90	8	W	4.66	0.86
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Timeform's View: Might have his work cut out to retain this crown next season given how his stablemate Sprinter Sacre has burst on to the scene, but he's a good Champion Chase winner in his own right, getting the better of an on-song Sizing Europe, which takes some doing, and it was a fairly polished performance all-round; there was a change of tactics after his defeat in the Victor Chandler, kept prominent but not forcing the pace, and it possibly suited as he saw things out strongly after readily drawing clear with the runner-up from 4 out, jumping really fluently and finding extra to get on top after bypassing the last; he does have form up to 21f from his novice hurdle days and, with the yard also having Sprinter Sacre, there may be a temptation to try him over a longer trip again next season, but the feeling is that 2m will always prove ideal.

Weatherbys Champion Bumper	14-Mar-12	17:15	Cheltenham	2m½f	The New One	240	19.48	20	L	-1.00	-1.00
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Timeform's View: Ran well, suited by the step up to 2m and showing abundant stamina after getting trapped for foot 3f out, staying on well under pressure at the finish; he's bred for jumping and likely to make a useful novice hurdler in the autumn.

Jewson Novices Chase	15-Mar-12	13:30	Cheltenham	2m4f	Sir Des Champs	607	4.70	10	W	3.52	0.74
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Timeform's View: Maintained his unbeaten record and gained a second win at the Festival in the style of one that will go right to the top as a chaser, impressing with the way he travelled waited with in a well-run race and the turn of foot he showed to see off the resolute runner-up after the last, plenty left at the line, his jumping very solid too; while he's clearly fully effective at this trip, he will stay well and it is no surprise that he's being talked of as a prospective Gold Cup contender in 2013, sure to win more races before that comes around.

Ryanair Chase	15-Mar-12	14:40	Cheltenham	2m5f	Riverside Theatre	782	4.39	12	W	3.22	0.97
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Timeform's View: Gained a third successive Grade 1 victory, though he was all out to prevail and didn't run quite to his best, a couple of early mistakes making it tough for him, off the bridle a fair way from home but getting into contention with a good jump 4 out, his rider (outstanding) never letting up, ridden 2 out and getting to the front under strong pressure close home; he's had a tough race but should continue to be a major contender in the top races, with the King George, in which he was second last season, likely to be the main aim later in the year.

Ladbroke's World Hurdle	15-Mar-12	15:20	Cheltenham	3m	Big Bucks	779	1.87	11	W	0.83	0.22
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Timeform's View: The best staying hurdler there's ever been, not purely in terms of the raw performances he's capable of, but his record of straight wins is becoming nothing short of amazing as it stretches on, unbeaten in this sphere for over 3 years now, taking in a valuable handicap and 15 Grade 1s/2s along the way, and he just doesn't seem to have any chinks in his armour, ultimately tough and adaptable, and this day he saw off a whole new batch of rivals in the manner that we've come to expect, suggesting that he'll continue to be immensely hard to beat; kept just behind the leaders until going on himself after 3 out, he predictably didn't last as long on the bridle as a few of the others, though as Walsh shook him up he was always responding, quickening on the run between the last 2 even with the runner-up looming, and, despite drifting both ways when challenged, pulling out miore to assert, as indeed he always does; presumably next up will be the Aintree where he's been successful in each of the last 4 seasons, over fences on the first occasion.

Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup	16-Mar-12	15:20	Cheltenham	3m2½f	Long Run	859	2.86	14	P	-1.00	0.45
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Timeform's View: The pick of the paddock, just wasn't at his best for no obvious reason; waited with in touch and poised to challenge after 4 out, he made a mistake at the next which didn't help cause but his jumping wasn't the cause of his defeat, still every chance at the last, just one paced under pressure; he remains the most likely in this field to win a Gold Cup in the future and is young enough to return in top form next season.

BGC Partners Liverpool Hurdle	12-Apr-12	14:00	Aintree	3m½f	Big Bucks	1114	1.25	8	W	0.24	0.06
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Timeform's View: Made history, his winning streak of 17 the longest ever recorded in National Hunt racing, testament to his talent and toughness, whilst his stable deserves plenty of credit, too; in performance terms, this was a long way short of Big Bucks' best, left as he was with a simple opportunity, but he could hardly have done it any more easily, cruising to the front of approaching 3 out and stretching clear between the last 2 before heavily eased; he'll continue to be extremely hard to beat next season.

Betfred Bowl Chase	12-Apr-12	15:05	Aintree	3m1f	Riverside Theatre	668	4.90	11	L	-1.00	-1.00
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Timeform's View: Had a tough race in the Ryanair and was presumably feeling the effects of that, not jumping or travelling well from an early stage; he's still a candidate for top honours next season.

John Smith's Melling Chase	13-Apr-12	15:05	Aintree	2m4f	Finians Rainbow	615	2.82	8	W	1.73	0.47	
<i>Timeform's View: Has an outstanding record as a chaser, defeated only twice (in Grade 1s) and never out of the first 2, and this follow up to his Champion Chase win confirms everything that he achieved at Cheltenham, making just one mistake (at the tenth) and always cruising, drawing right away on the flat once nudged along; he faces the prospect of having to take on stable-companion Sprinter Sacre if dropped back to 2m next season, but he'll be no pushover himself, while there is also the option of longer trips, but 3m in the King George might stretch him.</i>												
John Smith's Maghull Novices Chase	14-Apr-12	14:15	Aintree	2m	Sprinter Sacre	692	1.15	4	W	0.14	0.07	
<i>Timeform's View: In a different league to his rivals, forcing his rider to send him on at the sixth, jumping boldly in front and still coasting when left with a bigger advantage 2 out, any amount in hand at the finish; he's a most exciting prospect for open company next season and it's no surprise that he's already a short-priced favourite for the Champion Chase.</i>												
John Smith's Aintree Hurdle	14-Apr-12	14:50	Aintree	2m4f	Rock On Ruby	666	3.85	5	L	-1.00	-1.00	
<i>Timeform's View: Fresh when winning the Champion Hurdle and must have taken plenty out of himself that day, weakening from the last here as if still feeling those exertions; this trip isn't a problem for him, despite his his rapid progress this season having come at 2m.</i>												
										Totals:	9.57	0.41

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