

Victory is worth €200m

■ Damien SPELLMAN

VICTORY in Sunday's Championship final could be worth at least €200 million to either Huddersfield or Nottingham Forest.

Analysis carried out by Deloitte's sports business group suggests revenues for the victors could rise to over €350m over the next five seasons if they manage to retain their Premier League status at the first attempt, which only five of the last 10 winners have achieved.

Tim Bridge, a director in the sports business group, said:

"Wembley this weekend is host to the match with the most lucrative prize in world football.

"The winner of Sunday's



AGAINST: Rick Parry Championship play-off final will walk off the pitch having secured additional future revenues of at least €200million.

"However, whilst a narrow majority of clubs promoted to the Premier League over the past decade survived their first season, half of the play-off final winners have not.

"This Sunday's game holds the key to re-entering the top-flight of English football, but the harder battle is to come: staying in it."

Parachute

Deloitte's assessment is based on the estimated increase in commercial and matchday revenues for the play-off final winners over three seasons of around €105m, largely due to income from the Premier League broadcast deal, and the total parachute payments – English Football League chairman Parry has argued for their abolition – to which they would be entitled should they be relegated immediately, another €95m.

Head of Sport **BRIAN FLANAGAN** has supported Nottingham Forest for over 40 years. It's a journey full of bumps and blowouts but this Sunday they stand on the brink of returning to the Premier League for the first time since 1999.



SO CLOSE TO THE PREMIER LEAGUE: Brennan Johnson and Forest are looking to secure the club's return to the top-flight this weekend

I WAS lucky enough to sit next to Paddy Mulligan a few years ago at the Soccer Writers' awards dinner in the Conrad Hotel.

We chatted about his great career at Chelsea, West Brom and with Ireland but he was a bit surprised when I blamed him for inflicting so much pain in my life.

My love affair – or indeed affliction – with Nottingham Forest began after a trip to Dalymount Park for my sixth birthday to see the then-back-to-back European champions take on an Ireland XI in Mulligan's Testimonial match.

Or at least I think it did. It was more likely before then but that's the moment I remember.

It was August 1980 and Forest were box office. Over 20,000 were there to see them.

John Robertson, Peter Shilton, Viv Anderson, Gary Birtles and John McGovern dazzled in a 3-2 win and any doubts about which club I should support were put to bed.

A certain charismatic manager, also named Brian, probably helped too.

Little did I know that it would be pretty much a life of misery and disappointments from there.

A journey that began with Forest as champions of Europe took me to the sort of traumatic Saturday afternoon experiences I could never have imagined.

Accident

I nearly dodged the bullet. A few years later my granny, knowing I followed some 'obscure' team, bought me an Everton school bag by accident.

It was 1980s Ireland and there was no such thing as buying a replacement so I spent a year going to school with my 'Super Toffees' bag over my shoulder.

But I stuck with Forest, the only fan in a school of 800, and as Liverpool and Man United stayed Top of the Pops, my team was slipping down the charts.

Where my friends had posters of Cindy Crawford and Madonna, I had Stuart Pearce and Nigel Clough on my bedroom walls.

We became a bit of a Fulham of the 1990s, up and down three times before a last visit to the Premier League came in the 1998/99 season.

A dreadful season where we lost 8-1 to Man United and when Ron Atkinson made hilarious headlines for sitting in the wrong dugout for his first game at the City Ground.

I made my first pilgrimage to the banks of the Trent that season. A 1-0 defeat to Wimbledon where two home fans

were thrown out for brawling over Pierre van Hooijdonk, who had just returned from striking.

It's now 8,410 days since Forest last played in the Premier League.

In those 23 years in the wilderness we endured the unwanted tag of being the only club ever to be crowned European champions and subsequently fall to the third division of their domestic league.

The fact that 2005 relegation to League One happened on the day I got engaged in New York was more proof that a Forest implosion can interrupt even the happiest of occasions.

A Sunday morning stroll



ICONS: Forest boss Steve Cooper; (above) Paddy Mulligan



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FOLLOWING THE TRICKY TREES NEVER BEEN EASY

in Central Park interrupted by news of a QPR win over Forest (via WAP), condemning us to a new low. During those three years in League One they suffered a 4-0 home defeat to Scunthorpe, live on Sky. Went out of the League Cup to Macclesfield, the LDV Vans Trophy to Woking and the FA Cup to Chester City.

Shocking

Even being in the FIRST ROUND draw for the FA Cup is shocking enough in its own right. Promotion back to the Championship came in 2008 but

more pain was endured with two agonising play-off semi-final defeats in 2010 and 2011 to Blackpool and Swansea.

The sale of the club to Kuwaiti businessman Fawaz Al-Hasawi resulted in a bizarre and chaotic period that saw fan protests, unpaid wages, media blackouts and numerous sackings of managers, including Sean O'Driscoll on St Stephen's Day after a 4-1 win over Leeds.

Fawaz eventually bailed out – controversially 'borrowing' a 1959 FA Cup replica and taking a £4.2m pay-off with him – selling the club to Evangelos Marinakis in 2017 for

a reputed sum of £100m. The Greeks, and in Sabri Lamouchi we had the messable meltdown of the 2020 season. Forest throw away – losing 4-1 which would have been

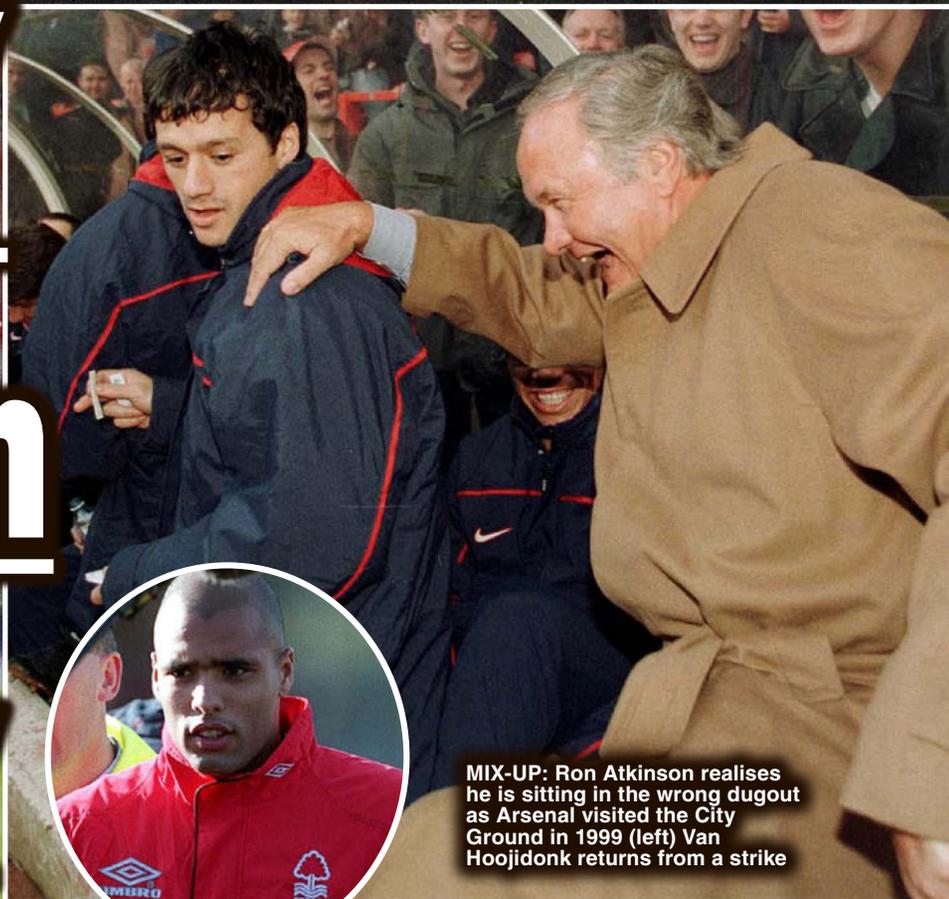
Horror

I'm often asked the best point as a Forest fan. League One was belly and I'll be apart for a number of years. I remember the night against Scunthorpe. It was during the rock bottom. I remember sto

FANATIC 2021/22



Love affair Forest even ruined my engagement



MIX-UP: Ron Atkinson realises he is sitting in the wrong dugout as Arsenal visited the City Ground in 1999 (left) Van Hooijdonk returns from a strike



LEGEND: Ibrahimovic Zlatan targets recovery

■ Jon WEST

AC MILAN striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic has revealed the full extent of his knee injury after undergoing surgery which could threaten his career.

The 40-year-old went under the knife in France this week to repair damage and instability caused by a previous anterior cruciate ligament injury and is expected to be out for up to eight months.

Ibrahimovic, who is out of contract in the summer, says he "made something impossible to something possible" by playing through the pain barrier and helping Milan to the Serie A title this season.

He told the world about his challenges in a dramatic Instagram post: "For the past six months I played without an ACL in my left knee."

Knee

"Swollen knee for six months. I was only able to train with the team 10 times in the last six months."

"Took more than 20 injections in six months. Emptied the knee once a week for six months."

"Painkillers every day for six months. Barely slept for six months because of the pain."

"Never suffered so much on and off the pitch."

"I made something impossible to something possible."

"In my mind I had only one objective, to make my team-mates and coach champions of Italy because I made them a promise. Today I have a new ACL and another trophy."

The former Manchester United striker scored eight goals for AC Milan this season as they won the Scudetto for the first time in 11 years.



TOUGH TIMES: Forest players after relegation to League One in 2005



C'SHIP PLAY-OFF FINAL HUDDERSFIELD V N FOREST

SUNDAY, 4.30PM
WEMBLEY, LIVE SKY SPORTS

GLORIES: Forest will be determined to add to their illustrious history at Wembley on Sunday

of just £1.
came bearing gifts
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in the final game of
against Stoke saw
away a play-off place
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door and walking for miles — peering enviously at people in their front rooms watching Liverpool win their first title in 30 years on the same night.

Sabri was sacked soon after but things took another turn for the worse with the arrival of Chris Hughton.

Texts from 'knowledgeable' friends promised promotion but Hughton was an unmitigated disaster and the football his team played was some of the worst and most tedious I've seen.

And so to September last year and the arrival of Steve Cooper.

Forest sat on the bottom of the table with one point from their first seven games and a return to our old pals in League One was looking very likely.

But Cooper changed everything, winning 23 of his 39 games in charge and transforming Forest into a formidable outfit and making the 2021/22 season the most enjoyable for fans in decades.

Brilliant

He's a brilliant coach and under his tenure players like Brennan Johnson (who Hughton loaned to Lincoln City), Djed Spence and Joe Worrall have soared in value.

There was even a rollicking FA Cup run that saw us beat Leicester and Arsenal before giving Liverpool the fright of their lives in the quarter-final — the first time Forest were in the last eight of any competition since the 1996 UEFA Cup.

Cooper comfortably finished in fourth and a 2-1 win at Bramall

Lane over Sheffield United put one foot in the new Wembley — a stadium where Forest have never played — with our last visit the 1992 Rumbelows Cup Final at the old version.

But last Tuesday night's second leg turned into the sort of chaotic tie Forest normally lose.

They somehow scrambled into a penalty shoot-out though and the heroics of goalkeeper Brice Samba took us to Wembley, where Huddersfield Town now await.

The Forest fans went mad in celebrating but these are people starved of success and battered from disappointment after disappointment.

The Premier League and its riches are 90 minutes away but win or lose what Cooper's done with Forest has been nothing short of a miracle.

I can't go to the game, due to a bizarre twist of fate that sees my wife actually in Huddersfield on a trip to see her Kerry-born uncle, who's been a priest there for 50 years and a huge fan of the Terriers.

Remembered

Last Tuesday night I got a congratulatory text from an old school pal. I haven't seen him since we walked out of the school gates for the last time in 1992 but he remembered me as being the Forest fan.

Where he got my number I don't know but I'm hoping for more texts on Sunday evening when Forest will hopefully end their Premier League exile. But defeat probably won't hurt too much.

You simply get used to it as a Forest fan.

SUNNY SIDE UP: Cork man Conor Murphy at his training base in Louisville where he trains up to 20 horses



CONOR'S GAMBLE STILL PAYING OFF

CONOR Murphy might be a resident of Kentucky for the last ten years, but that thick west Cork accent has very much remained.

One word is clearly heard though, over and over again.

That word is 'lucky'.

Hardly surprising for a man who, a decade ago, landed the biggest bet in Cheltenham Festival history while working as a head lad for Nicky Henderson.

His by now legendary £50 accumulator on five of Henderson's Festival runners turned him into an instant millionaire — when he scooped bookmaker Bet365's maximum £1m payout.

Ten years on the 38-year-old Murphy is now a trainer

Ten years ago, Corkman Conor Murphy hit the headlines as the stable lad who won £1m in a bet at Cheltenham. **BRIAN FLANAGAN** hears how he's now a trainer based in Kentucky.

based in the American city of Louisville — running a yard of 15-20 horses — having turned his big bet into a stable career.

His premises are named Riverside Stables — a nod to 2012 Ryanair Chase winner Riverside Theatre — the final leg of Murphy's, and indeed Henderson's, unforgettable five-timer.

"When I was doing the visa to come over I had to quickly come up with a business name so he seemed the right one to

pick," remarks Murphy, a native of Ballineen, 20 minutes west of Bandon.

"I'm kind of lucky in that I'd planned to come over here and start training even before I won that bet at Cheltenham. I'd always wanted to train and the money from winning the bet has given me the opportunity.

"My wife Julia is American and was in Nicky Henderson's with me too. Part of the reason I came here was because she wanted to move back. We've

four-year-old twins now and we're definitely settled here for the time being."

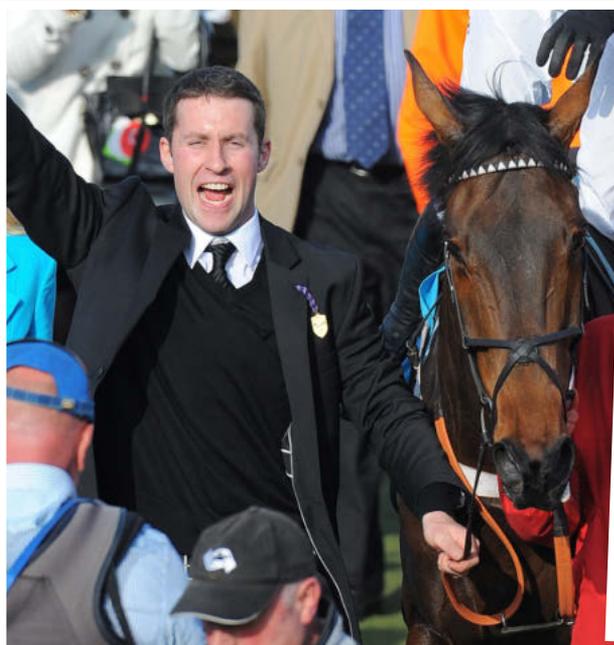
Murphy's bet was struck four months before the 2012 Festival.

The odds on Sprinter Sacre, Simonsig, Bob's Worth, Finian's Rainbow and Riverside Theatre all winning were a massive 64,000-1.

He should have won over £3m but bookmakers' maximum payout is capped at £1m.

"When you make a bet like that you don't expect any return," he says. "The fact that they all got there gave me a fighting chance. Then they all ran the race of their lives."

Murphy's lucky streak kept going after his arrival Stateside when just months into the job he bought a four-year-old named Dimension from James Fanshawe and Cheveley Park.



STABLE JOB: Conor cleans his barn in Kentucky and (left) leading in Finian's Rainbow in 2012 after his Champion Chase win at Cheltenham

He took him to the Breeder's Cup in 2014 and helped him make a name for himself in Kentucky, the centre of American racing.

"He was a real star for us. He won six times, four Group races and a couple of Listed races. He was a brilliant horse. When you have them you know you're lucky but it's only since he's been retired that we really appreciate how good he was.

"I'll always say I was lucky enough in racing. Working in Seven Barrows, I mean the horses we had were phenomenal really.

"And luckily when I started on my own over here, to get a horse like that in my first year was brilliant. You kind of think it would be nice to get a good horse straight away but I didn't expect it to happen so fast.

"I had two good horses the next year too but we weren't long finding out that's not how it works all the time. We've had a lot of good days over here but I suppose the last two years have been a bit lean for us.

"Things are going all right. We've been at it for nearly ten years and it's been decent enough.

"We've always been kind of small in numbers but the only thing that's been helping us is that we've always kind of had a flagship horse," adds Murphy, who bought his house in the States with his Cheltenham winnings.

"We're kind of missing that now at the moment but we'll just keep ticking away and hoping we'll get another decent one.



SETTLED: Conor with wife Julia and twins Jack and Sophie

"You're always looking for more horses and more winners but we just have to make do with what we have at the moment."

But back to that bet and this week ten years ago. The week that changed his life.

"It was obviously a life-changing experience, but the more time goes on, the less believable it gets. I'd had a few decent wins before but nothing close to that."

"I worked six years for Nicky and we never had as good a team as that year," adds Murphy, who originally won a scholarship to work at Henderson's stables in

Lambourn, eventually working his way up to be appointed head lad in 2008.

Murphy was at Cheltenham on the second day when Simonsig (Neptune), Bobs Worth (RSA) and Finian's Rainbow, a horse he looked after himself, won the Champion Chase.

Sprinter Sacre's opening-day Arkle win had meant he'd landed four out of four leaving the track that Wednesday, with Riverside Theatre to come in the Ryanair the following day.

"It took me a while to calm down after Finian's won the Champion Chase. But I remember being upstairs after with a few friends to watch the Fred Winter.

"Then Jerry McGrath, who would be one of my best friends, ended up winning the race on Une Artiste. It was his first Cheltenham Festival winner so

we went down to the winner's enclosure to congratulate him.

"That Wednesday night we did a fair amount of celebrating. It went long into the early hours and we'd to be in the yard by 5.30am so there wasn't much sleep.

"I was worse for wear watching the race at home on the sofa.

"All I remember is thinking that it wasn't going to happen, it wasn't meant to be. But, in fairness to the horse, he kept finding and finding and it was just an unbelievable win.

"I jumped up off the sofa and the hangover was gone in the blink of an eye."

Murphy suddenly became the most wanted man in Cheltenham. He was the story of the week and every journalist in the Cotswolds was chasing him.

"I just didn't expect there to be a big deal about it. I suppose I'd only told a few people and was thinking that no-one would know.

"Then all of a sudden we are back at work two hours later, and there is Sky Sports and all of these messages on my phone. I was getting bombarded with calls from reporters. I didn't know what to do.

"Nicky Henderson told me to go up to the house for dinner and a few drinks and we'll figure it out then. He told me to talk to people and it would all blow over."

A decade on, Murphy's first winner of the season came when a horse named Sliabh Aughty won at Cincinnati's Turfway Park in February.

"I JUMPED UP OFF THE SOFA AND THE HANGOVER WAS GONE IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE"

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

DAY OF DAYS: Barry Geraghty drives Riverside Theatre (left) to win the 2012 Ryanair Chase (below) Conor at home in Kentucky

“I'D RATHER WATCH A HANDICAP HURDLE SOMEWHERE AT HOME THAN AT A GROUP 1 RACE OVER HERE”



FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

“That name could come out anyway over here,” he laughs.

“They do a lot of night racing here. It’s not even an evening meeting. There’s a lot of opinions about that but they’re making their money from the betting.

“The winter here is all about survival to be honest. Once the spring weather comes you’ve Keeneland in April and then obviously the Kentucky Derby in Churchill Downs.

“We’re very lucky in Kentucky, there’s high-quality racing and very good money to be won.”

HE still struggles with the language of American racing though and they still struggle with his west Cork brogue.

“It can be confusing. I still use a lot of the same phrases from home. Calling the distance of a race ‘the trip’ is a big one. I ran a horse over a mile and a furlong at Keeneland once and I said to the jockey afterwards, ‘Did he get the trip okay?’ He’d no idea what I was talking about.

“The terminology is very different. But I suppose if I haven’t changed by now I might never change.”

Murphy dreams of returning home one to train one day — with National Hunt racing still very much his first love.

“Going back home is something I think about all the time. The time would have to be

right but it would be a dream to train at home definitely. I just have to take each day as it comes.

“I don’t love American racing like I do racing at home. But the opportunities and the money here are a lot better than home.

“There’s no option here really but to train on the flat but jump racing has always been my passion and still is. I’d rather watch a handicap hurdle somewhere at home than at a Group 1 race over here.

“But it’s all about making a living. This country and the money over here, it just seemed to make the most sense. I’d love to think it might happen one day if the time was right but we’ll keep things going here at the moment anyway.

“We’ve 15 in training at the moment. My numbers can change so much though. We don’t keep too many during the winter. We try to keep horses fresh for the summer.”

Murphy’s next big target is getting back to Cork.

Covid has denied him a chance to return home to see his family but a trip in July is booked.

“I haven’t been back in Cork in over three years. Christmas 2018 was the last time. We were thinking of coming the Christmas just gone but between the price of flights and Covid we decided not to come.

“We’re coming home in July for a couple of weeks so that’ll be nice. Three years is a long time. I



used to go home once a year.”

He’s still full of admiration for his old boss Henderson, who remains the trainer of the big British hopes at Cheltenham despite being now 71.

Matching his 2012 tally of six winners seems unlikely but with the brilliant Shishkin leading his team, he’s a good chance of upsetting the Irish in some of the bigger races.

“I know I might be a bit biased but I think he’s taken a lot of unfair criticism over the years. He’s always going to do right by the horse.

“Shishkin is unbelievable and is actually very similar to Altior

the way he finishes his races. He stays so well.

“Sprinter Sacre used to just kill horses. The speed he’d go off the race would often be over three or four fences from the finish.

“Altior and Shishkin seem to have a similar style in that they often give you the impression they might be beaten but they hit the line very strong.

“Nico De Boinville is another that takes unfair stick. Having worked with him I can tell you he’s as cool a guy as you could meet.”

Perhaps Conor might be tempted to have another bet?



LORD OF THE FLYERS!

BLUE Lord narrowly got the better of Coeur Sublime in a thrilling battle for the Barberstown Castle Novice Chase at Punchestown.

Having disappointed slightly in the Arkle at Cheltenham when only third behind Edwardstone, he gained compensation in the colours of Simon Munir and Isaac Souede.

The race said plenty

■ Brian FLANAGAN

for Willie Mullins' strength in the division when, despite the short-priced morning favourite Gentleman De Mee being a non-runner, he was still able to field Saint Sam, Haut En Couleurs and the eventual winner.

Chance

It was Saint Sam who took them along with Rachael Blackmore

keeping tabs on him on Coeur Sublime while Arkle runner-up Gabynako and Blue Lord watched on.

Saint Sam blew his chance with a mistake at the second-last and by then Gabynako was outpaced and although Paul Townend looked confident on Blue Lord, Blackmore kept her mount going and only went down by a head to the 2-1 favourite.

Mullins has now won seven of the eight Grade Ones at the meeting so far.

"I was concentrating more on the horse in front, Saint Sam, and how he was jumping. He was fiddling a few of the fences and I was wondering if there was enough pace in front for this horse and Haut En Couleurs as well," said Mullins.



BRIGHT BLUE: Paul Townend on board Blue Lord celebrates

POWERING

NEARING THE END: Robbie Power, onboard Magic Daze, celebrates winning the race



*'When I heard he was retiring I said, the f***er, he can't do that'*

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KLASSICAL DREAM DOES IT AGAIN

■ Brian FLANAGAN

KLASSICAL DREAM landed the Ladbrokes Champion Stayers Hurdle at Punchestown for the second successive year.

Having returned from a lengthy lay off to win last year, he looked like being the dominant force in the division when beating Flooring Porter at Leopardstown over Christmas.

However, since then things had not gone to plan for Willie Mullins' eight-year-old as he was beaten in the Galmoy Hurdle and faded into fifth in the Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham having looked a danger going to the last.

With Flooring Porter not running, Sire Du Berlais — who beat Gavin Cromwell's dual Stayers' Hurdle hero at Aintree — was his main market rival in the Grade One feature and the two were always keeping an eye on each other.

The pace, though steady, was set by Gentlemansgame and Vanillier, and

Sire Du Berlais went between that pair just as they turned into the straight.

By now Paisley Park had become detached, only to run on again late, as is his wont, and Paul Townend looked confident on Klassical Dream (left).

Challenge

The 11-10 favourite hit the front going great guns but then Robbie Power, came with a rattling late challenge on Ashdale Bob. Klassical Dream held on by a length and a quarter.

"Paul got him lovely and settled and relaxed at the start. Having so few runners in the race was a big help as he was able to settle him on the outside and keep him relaxed," said Mullins.

"We'll go the same route next year. I don't think we're going over fences, it's easier to keep him sounder that way."



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STARBETS

IRISH DAILY
STAR

DOWN

FOR Robbie Power, it began and ended at Punchestown.

Some 21 years after riding his first racecourse winner at the Kildare track, the popular Meath-born rider yesterday announced he'll retire after riding Teahupoo in today's Paddy Power Champion Hurdle.

A career that began with Youneveroldme's 2001 success on only his third ever ride in public ended with him telling no-one about his impending life-changing decision apart from his wife, sister and agent.

Not even his great mentor and boss Jessica Harrington was told in advance.

She was among the first to embrace the 40-year-old following the decision which came moments after partnering Magic Daze to win yesterday's Pigs-back.com Handicap Chase.

Power, nicknamed Puppy by Paul Carberry in his early days, spent most of his career in Harrington's yard and enjoyed arguably his greatest moment in the saddle when riding Sizing John to win the 2017 Gold Cup at Cheltenham — one of 31 Grade One wins.

Worked

There was an Aintree Grand National too in 2007, on Silver Birch for a then-unknown Gordon Elliott, but it's with Harrington that Puppy forged a long association, even meeting his wife Hannah there when she worked as the lorry driver.

"I owe everything to Jessie in my career. She's given me everything. Without her I wouldn't have achieved a quarter of what I achieved," said an emotional Power, who is a son of the well-known former Irish showjumper Captain Con Power.



Brian
FLANAGAN
REPORTS
brian.flanagan@thestar.ie

"I've been very lucky riding for her for my whole life basically. I started off with the late great Paddy Mullins and learned so much there but then Jessie took me under her wing and I've ridden the majority of my big winners for her."

Calendar

A horse named Intelligent started that big race run in the 2003 Midlands Grand National and for two decades Power and Harrington picked off nearly every big prize in the National Hunt calendar — with Sizing John's epic Gold Cup win in 2017 the highlight.

"She's stuck by me. The highs and lows. She's been an unbelievable trainer and mentor to me and along with her and my family I've so much to thank them for."

Harrington even interrupted Power's briefing with the press to remind him he still had to ride in the Stayers' Hurdle later on the card and jokingly quipped: "Stop saying how nice I am. When I was told you were retiring I said 'the fker, he can't do that, he's got to ride Ashdale Bob'. You were about to get your final bollocking."**

Power's decision came due to incessant pain from a run of bad injuries.

Having returned from a lengthy absence with a back injury in January 2021 he was then out between October last year and January when he fractured his hip.

"It's injuries basically. I had my back operated on last summer and I fractured my hip when



WHAT A TEAM: Robbie Power and Jessica Harrington after Sizing John's Gold Cup win at Cheltenham back in 2017

Robbie calls it a Daze...

I came back in October. Look, I'm 40 years of age, I'm 41 next month and I'm not getting any younger. I had injections in my hip and they didn't really work so the last couple of months have been hard work," he said.

"The pain I've had for the last couple of months has just been borderline for me. I wanted to go out on some sort of a high and that's why I kept pushing to here.

"I'm on painkillers and I'm ok now but it's when I wake up in the morning. I have a programme of exercises I have to do and if I don't then I'm banjaxed for the rest of the day. I've been working hard now for the last couple of months and it's paid off."

Power was part of the class of the early 2000s in the Irish jumping scene along with the likes of Barry Geraghty, Paul Carberry and Ruby Walsh.

Just like those three great friends, he's walked away now and is looking forward to the next chapter, even though he's not sure what's coming next.

"Please God someone will give me a job somewhere. Hopefully I'll have something to do.

"I've enjoyed every minute of it and had a fantastic career."

Many of Harrington's big wins over the past number of years came under Power's steering and she later paid tribute to the Summerhill native.

"He rode his first winner ever for me on his mother's mare. He beat Ruby in a tight finish. He's always been a very good jockey, probably the best I've seen over chase fences. He'd an amazing eye.

Career

"Sizing John was probably the highlight of his career, winning three Gold Cups.

"He rode three winners at Cheltenham that year in 2017, Sizing John, Supasandea and Rock The World.

"Last year he had a nightmare with injuries. He also had a serious eye socket problem. He rode for me one day in Gowran, and he was missing every hurdle. He came in and said: "I can't ride any more. When I went down low and looked up, I couldn't see the hurdle."

"Then he was really worried. He felt he'd never ride again. He went to see an eye specialist who put goggles on him with prisms and he was ok."

CAN'T IGNORE TROMSO NOW

THOUGH the main play comes on the Tapeta at Newcastle. I'll start with a coupe who take the eye at Goodwood

Raasel was a win machine last year and started this year with a solid fifth in the Holyrood Handicap at Musselburgh.

He's high on any shortlist for this, along with **ATALANTA'S BOY** (2.40), who appeals most.

The question to ask with David Menuisier's seven-year-old is whether a drop back to 5f will inconvenience him, as he does his racing at the longer sprint trip but he ticks every other box.

His record here reads 11011010, improving to 11111 in fields of ten or fewer, and has been a winner on the last two occasions he's run after a 200+ day break.

Given his love of the track and his record fresh, today would be the best day to catch him, and the fact the excellent Menuisier goes for a 5f contest rather than an opportunity at the track over further is a positive.

He made almost all for his last win, showing speed, suggesting he will cope with the cut back in trip.

The form Chipstead showed to win the final of the Sky Sports Summer Sprint Series

RORY'S TOP TIPS

| GOODWOOD |
|-------------------------|
| 2.40 - ATALANTA'S BOY |
| 3.50 - TWILIGHT MADNESS |
| NEWMARKET |
| 3.00 - SHINE SO BRIGHT |
| NEWCASTLE |
| 7.55 - TROMSO |

RORY
DELARGY
STAR @IRISHSTARSPT

at Bath last September could hardly have worked out better, with a whole raft of those in behind winning since.

But Chipstead has 3½ lengths to find with Twilight Madness on their Newmarket running in July, and while both have gone up in the weights, Chipstead is 6lb worse off today.

That makes **TWILIGHT MADNESS** (3:50) look a solid bet to beat him again.

He was placed on his only subsequent turf start from a lb higher mark than today's.

Positive

He looks better suited to a straight sprint track, and the return to turf is a positive.

SHINE SO BRIGHT (3.0 Newmarket) threatened to disappoint last season, but has dropped in the weights as a result, and gets the benefit of a leading 7lb claimer here.

He won the Free Handicap here off 106 as a three-year-old, and if there is a time to be with him, it's on his reappearance off a tempting mark.

On the all-weather, I'm having another swing with the erstwhile disappointing **TROMSO** (7.55 Newcastle Nap).

He is the sort of horse that Ruth Carr does well with, and, he has a chance to make the running against lesser opposition here.

He is on a workable mark if Carr can turn him around mentally, and I can't ignore him at the prices.

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