

Betfair Media Release

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Waiting Patiently headlines entries for thrilling £150,000 G1 Betfair Ascot Chase

Northern-trained superstar **Waiting Patiently** is among the excellent entries for the £150,000 G1 Betfair Ascot Chase, staged over two miles and five furlongs at Ascot on Saturday, February 16, details of which are revealed today.

Waiting Patiently, the 5/4 favourite with Betfair and trained by Ruth Jefferson in Malton, North Yorkshire, came of age in the 2018 G1 Betfair Ascot Chase, when he defeated defending champion Cue Card by just under three lengths to register his first success at the highest level.

After missing the rest of last season due to injury, Waiting Patiently has been seen out once this term in the G1 King George VI Chase at Kempton Park on Boxing Day.

In what was his first attempt over three miles, he did not have the chance to prove his stamina after being badly hampered and unseating regular rider Brian Hughes at the ninth fence.

That was the eight-year-old's first defeat over fences – he had won his previous six starts over the bigger obstacles.

10-time champion jump trainer Paul Nicholls has won the Betfair Ascot Chase three times, including with the great Kauto Star in 2008, and is going after a record-equalling fourth victory in the G1 race with G1 Melling Chase victor **Politologue** (5/2) and **Cyrname** (8/1), an impressive course and distance winner last time out.

Politologue defeated **Charbel** (Kim Bailey, 10/1) narrowly in the G2 Christy 1965 Chase over the course and distance at Ascot in November before finishing fourth in the G1 King George VI Chase, while Cyrname galloped his rivals into the ground when taking a valuable handicap chase at Ascot by 21 lengths on January 19 under Harry Cobden.

Somerset-based Nicholls said: "Cyrname came out of his win at Ascot in good form.

"He is a lovely horse who has improved enormously this season. He wasn't quite right in the autumn and has always been quite tricky to train.

"He can be very free, but for whatever reason, he has started to settle and we were able to take the hood off him at Ascot and train him completely differently with a normal routine.

"That has made a big difference to him and he is a big, progressive horse who has been improving mentally all the time. I was very impressed with that Ascot win.

"We have to go right-handed with Cyrname and he will now go for the Betfair Ascot Chase.

"Politologue was always going to go for the Betfair Ascot Chase and that remains the plan. He likes Ascot and is also a horse who does appreciate going right-handed.

"It will be very interesting to see how both of them get on and we are looking forward to it."

Champion jump trainer Nicky Henderson has also enjoyed three Betfair Ascot Chase successes, including back-to-back renewals with Riverside Theatre in 2011 and 2012. The Lambourn handler has two entries in 2019 – three-time Ascot winner **Top Notch** (4/1), who was fourth to Waiting Patiently last year and landed a Listed chase at Kempton Park on January 12, plus recent Cheltenham runner-up **Janika** (33/1).

Rejuvenated chaser **Aso** (Venetia Williams, 12/1) is on course for Betfair Ascot Chase after winning both of his starts in handicaps under Charlie Deutsch this season, when making most of the running, latterly defying top-weight in a G3 contest at Cheltenham on January 1.

The Irish-trained entry is Gigginstown House Stud-owned **Balko Des Flos** (Henry de Bromhead, 14/1), winner of the last season's G1 Ryanair Chase at the Cheltenham Festival, who has yet to hit top form in three starts this season.

One Irish-trained horse has landed the Betfair Ascot Chase, with Sound Man taking the spoils for Edward O'Grady back in 1996.

Two-time G1 scorer **Fox Norton** (Colin Tizzard, 10/1), who missed the whole of 2018 through injury, shaped with promise on his comeback when second behind Altior in the G1 Clarence House Chase over two miles and one furlong at Ascot on January 19.

Other notable entries include **Saint Calvados** (Harry Whittington, 20/1), who has high-class form over two miles, and **Hell's Kitchen** (Harry Fry, 33/1), the winner of a handicap chase over two miles and three furlongs from Janika at Ascot just before Christmas.

Le Rocher (Nick Williams, 100/1) and **Abolitionist** (Dr Richard Newland, 100/1) complete the 13 contenders.

Betfair spokesman Barry Orr commented today: "Having frustratingly unseated Brian Hughes in the King George, last year's winner, Waiting Patiently, has been installed favourite at 5/4, with Politologue, his nearest pursuer in the betting, at 5/2.

"Top Notch is one that has had this race as his target since winning in Kempton and the 4/1 about him is attracting some attention."

Betfair Ascot Chase – Betfair prices:

5/4 Waiting Patiently
5/2 Politologue
4/1 Top Notch
8/1 Cyrname
10/1 Charbel
10/1 Fox Norton
12/1 Aso
14 Balko Des Flos
20/1 Saint Calvados
33/1 Hell's Kitchen
33/1 Janika
100/1 Abolitionist
100/1 Le Rocher

Betfair Ascot Chase

Grade 1, £150,000 total prize fund. Two miles and five furlongs, Saturday, February 16, 2019. For five-year-olds and upwards which are allotted a rating of 130 or more by the BHA Head of Handicapping following a review of the horses entered and after taking into account of races run up to and including the day prior to confirmation. Horses which are not qualified for a rating in Great Britain, Ireland or France may also be entered. Such horses may be eligible providing the Handicapper is satisfied that the horse's recourse performances up to and including the day prior to confirmation would merit a minimum rating of 130. The decision of the BHA Head of Handicapping shall be final. Weights: 5-y-o 11st 5lb, 6-y-o and up 11st 7lb; mares allowed 7lb. Entries closed January 29, entries revealed January 30 (**13 entries**), five-day confirmations and £7,500 supplementary stage February 14, final declarations February 14.

Horse	Age	Owner	Trainer
ABOLITIONIST (IRE)	11	Mark Albon, John Provan & Chris Stedman	Dr Richard Newland
ASO (FR)	9	The Bellamy Partnership	Venetia Williams
BALKO DES FLOS (FR)	8	Gigginstown House Stud	Henry de Bromhead IRE
CHARBEL (IRE)	8	Julie and David Martin	Kim Bailey
CYRNAME (FR)	7	Mrs Johnny de la Hey	Paul Nicholls
FOX NORTON (FR)	9	Ann & Alan Potts Limited	Colin Tizzard
HELL'S KITCHEN (GB)	8	J P McManus	Harry Fry
JANIKA (FR)	6	Simon Munir & Isaac Souede	Nicky Henderson
LE ROCHER (FR)	9	John White & Anne Underhill	Nick Williams
POLITOLOGUE (FR)	8	John Hales	Paul Nicholls
SAINT CALVADOS (FR)	6	Kate & Andrew Brooks	Harry Whittington
TOP NOTCH (FR)	8	Simon Munir & Isaac Souede	Nicky Henderson
WAITING PATIENTLY (IRE)	8	Richard Collins	Ruth Jefferson

13 entries

1 Irish-trained

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