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Wigmore Hall, the only-three-year-old in the race, landed a dramatic victory in the John Smith's Cup at York.

The Michael Bell-trained gelding, a well-backed 5-1 chance, held the persistent challenge of Kings Gambit by a short head under 3lb claimer Martin Lane. The two came close together in the final strides and the winner had to survive a stewards' inquiry. Demolition was third past the post, with Hillview Boy fourth.

A delighted Lane said: "It's my biggest win by a long way, it means a lot and for it to be for Mr Bell is great. The only problem with him is that he doesn't like small fields, but in a big field like this he's a different horse. He's smashing and he really tried for me."

The rider went on: "I found out I'd got the ride on Monday and just to get the call was a great day, nearly as good as today.

"If it had been a nose it (the stewards' inquiry) might have gone the other way as mine lost his action 75 yards from the line and gave Jamie (Spencer) a bump but luckily we got home by a short head."

Lucy Lawson, racing manager for winning owner Mark Hawtin, said: "He needs to get a strong pace and we thought about this race straight after Ascot, but we were a bit worried we might not get in and he only managed it by two. He's actually entered here in the Group One (Juddmonte International) but we will have to see about that."

Tom Tate, trainer of Kings Gambit, rued his luck, saying: "This was nearly the biggest day of my career, but that's the way it goes I suppose. He's run a cracking race and Jamie was certain he'd get it in the stewards' room. He's obviously a Group Two or Group Three horse and he loves this track."

In a small footnote to the big race, Lane was handed a one-day (July 25) ban for careless riding aboard Wigmore Hall.

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