

Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2017 - 1st Edition -



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The Japan Racing Association

Welcome back to our annual series of newsletters leading up to the 2017 Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m). The fall racing season is heading towards the Japan Autumn International Series, which will be held over four weekends between November 12 and December 3, consisting of four prestigious G1 races: the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m), the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m), the Japan Cup and the Champions Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m). Total prize money for the four G1 events will amount to around ¥1.28 billion (about US\$11.1m), with additional bonuses for winners of designated overseas G1 events who run in the Japan Cup. Bonuses will also be provided for winners of designated overseas G1 events who finish within the top three in the QEII, Mile Championship and Champions Cup.

Kitasan Black Aims for Consecutive Japan Cup Victory

Kitasan Black (JPN, H5, by Black Tide) put in a brilliant performance under Yutaka Take in the Japan Cup last year, taking command from the start and did not give his rivals a chance to challenge as he continued strongly to the wire, leaving runner-up **Sounds of Earth (JPN, H6, by Neo Universe)** 2-1/2 lengths behind. All 14 Japanese horses that ran in the race last year are still in training as of the end of August and are considered ready to stake their claim to the Japan Cup title again this year. The following are updates on last year's top finishers, up-and-coming three-year-olds and prominent older horses.

Kitasan Black, after his Japan Cup victory, was sent to post-race favorite in the Arima Kinen (Grand Prix) (G1, 2,500m). He assumed command almost to the wire, but in the last strides, he was pinned by **Satono Diamond (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, a promising three-year-old coming off a victory in the Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m). Nonetheless, Kitanasan Black was named the 2016 Horse of the Year. His plan for the 2017 season at that point was said to include three G1 starts – the up-graded Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m), the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) and



the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) during the spring. Then, depending on these results, he would possibly take aim at the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) in France.

The five-year-old validated his remarkable 2016 season in his first start, the Osaka Hai, where he chased the leader in second, and then made an early move towards the final corner to win comfortably. The following Tenno Sho (Spring) was run in much the same manner, and the *Black Tide* (JPN, by Sunday Silence) horse won the 3,200-meter race in 3:12.5, eclipsing the record set by *Deep Impact* (JPN, by Sunday Silence) by 0.9 seconds. With five career G1 titles to his name, expectations were high for Kitanasan Black's final start of the spring, the Takarazuka Kinen, but he failed to show his usual tenacity when entering the straight. Unable to sustain his bid, he faded to an uncharacteristic ninth – his first major defeat since a 14th in the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m). This led his connections to reconsider his intended Arc challenge in the fall and announce that he would target the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) on October 29, the Japan Cup on November 26 and the Arima Kinen on December 24 instead.



Kitasan Black
in the 2016 Japan Cup



Kitasan Black
in the 2017 Osaka Hai



Kitasan Black
in the 2017 Tenno Sho (Spring)

Last year's runner-up in the Japan Cup, Sounds of Earth kicked off his six-year-old season this year in the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m), but struggled over rough goings and finished sixth in a field of seven. He was in good form in his comeback start in Japan in the Sapporo Kinen (G2, 2,000m) on August 20, where he handled the tight turns to finish a respectable fourth, less than 2-1/2 lengths from the leader. His fall campaign is expected to begin with the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m) on October 9 prior to his main targets, the Japan Cup and the Arima Kinen.



Sounds of Earth (right)
in the 2015 Arima Kinen



Cheval Grand
in the 2016 Copa Republica Argentina

Cheval Grand (JPN, H5, by Heart's Cry) concluded his 2016 campaign finishing sixth in the Arima Kinen after a third-place finish in the Japan Cup. Focusing on long-distance races this spring, he was runner-up in both the G2 Hanshin Daishoten (3,000m) and the Tenno Sho (Spring), finishing in front of multiple-G1 winner **Satono Diamond** in the latter. But experimenting with taking the early lead did not work out well

and the son of *Heart's Cry* (JPN, by *Sunday Silence*) disappointed to eighth in the following Takarazuka Kinen. His plan for the fall is expected to follow the same route as *Sounds of Earth*.

Last year's Japan Cup fourth-place finisher, **Gold Actor** (JPN, H6, by **Screen Hero**), proceeded to run in the Arima Kinen in his bid to defend his 2015 title, but while making a bold early move to take the lead at the stretch, he was unable to fend off Satono Diamond and Kitasan Black in the final strides and was defeated to third. He was below form early this season, finishing fifth and seventh in the Nikkei Sho (G2, 2,500m) and the Tenno Sho (Spring), respectively, but bounced back in the Takarazuka Kinen where he accelerated sharply along the inside over the rough turf to close in on the winner **Satono Crown** (JPN, H5, by **Marju**) for second. However, he pulled up exhausted from his effort and was unable to recover in time for his intended fall kick-off start, the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) on September 24, so will head directly towards the Japan Cup, then possibly the Arima Kinen.



Gold Actor in the 2015 Arima Kinen



Rainbow Line (second from front)
in the 2016 Arlington Cup

Rainbow Line (JPN, C4, by **Stay Gold**), who came off a runner-up effort in the Kikuka Sho last year and finished sixth in his first G1 attempt against his seniors in the Japan Cup, has been unable to make a breakthrough in his grade-race challenges this spring, finishing fourth, 12th and fifth in the Nikkei Sho, Tenno Sho (Spring) and the Takarazuka Kinen, respectively. He will continue to seek success in the competitive middle-distance category and plans to begin his fall campaign in the Kyoto

Daishoten.

Satono Diamond, who did not start in the Japan Cup but won his second G1 title in the Arima Kinen last year, is currently preparing towards becoming the first Japanese horse to win the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. He won his first start of the spring impressively in the Hanshin Daishoten over Cheval Grand for his fourth consecutive victory, but failed to beat Kitasan Black in the Tenno Sho (Spring), finishing in third a neck short of runner-up Cheval Grand. Departing for France in August, the *Deep Impact* colt was unable to show his winning ways in the Prix Foy (G2, 2,400m) on September 10 and finished fourth, leaving some concerns as to whether he can handle the possibly heavy track in the Arc. Returning to Japan after his overseas challenge in October, his start in the Japan Cup seems unlikely.



Satono Diamond
in the 2016 Arima Kinen



Rey de Oro in the 2017 Tokyo Yushun

Among the season's three-year-olds who may aim for the Japan Cup this year is **Rey de Oro (JPN, C3, by King Kamehameha)**, winner of the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) in May. The *King Kamehameha (JPN, by Kingmambo)* colt, who gave trainer Kazuo Fujisawa – currently top among JRA's active trainers in career wins – his first Derby title, won three out of three starts including the Hopeful Stakes (G2, 2,000m) as a two-year-old. He

had to go directly to his first G1 attempt in the first leg of the Triple Crown, the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) due to a delay in conditioning towards his three-year-old campaign and finished fifth. Sent to post second favorite for the Tokyo Yushun, he ascended to second at the backstretch after racing in the rear early and then refused to give way once taking the front at the top of the stretch to win his first G1 title by 3/4 length. He returned to training in the end of August and made his fall comeback in the Kobe Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,400m) on September 24, where he demonstrated his dominance and won easily from racing in fourth position.

High-quality Lineup to Battle for 2017 Tenno Sho (Autumn)

While many of the aforementioned runners will be passing up the first of the middle-distance G1s of the fall season, the Tenno Sho (Autumn) will feature a powerful field of quality runners again this year. Those running in the Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,800m) on October 8 prior to the 2,000-meter G1 will include **Makahiki (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, last year's Tokyo Yushun victor who had just two starts in the spring, finishing third and fourth in the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) and the Osaka Hai, respectively. Thereafter he was given an early break to prepare for the big season in the fall. **Satono Aladdin (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)** captured his much-awaited G1 victory in the Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) on June 4. He will be stepping up in distance for the Tenno Sho (Autumn) after only racing between 1,400 and 1,600 meters last year, but his liking to the track at Tokyo Racecourse could work to his advantage. **Real Steel (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, a winner of the 2016 Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m) and runner-up in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) last year, had to withdraw from this year's Dubai Turf due to a nose bleed but will be making his comeback this fall in the Mainichi Okan.



Makahiki (right)
in the 2016 Tokyo Yushun



Satono Aladdin
in the 2017 Yasuda Kinen



Real Steel
in the 2016 Dubai Turf

In addition to Derby winner **Rey de Oro**, Kazuo Fujisawa has another star three-year-old filly, **Soul Stirring (JPN, by Frankel)** under training. One of the first crops produced by the thoroughbred racing great *Frankel (GB, by Galileo)*, **Soul Stirring** concluded her two-year-old season with a perfect three-for-three record, including the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m), to claim the 2016 JRA Best Two-Year-Old Filly title. Coming off a win in her three-year-old debut, she was sent to post an overwhelming favorite for the Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m), but struggled to handle the soft going and was defeated to third.

However, she bounced back in the following Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) where she chased the pace up front and won easily as she overtook the leader and drew away for her first classic title, which also was the first for her sire. Her autumn campaign will head towards the Tenno Sho (Autumn) instead of the traditional third leg of the three-year-old fillies' triple, the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m). She will be facing a mixed field of proven older G1 winners in the race, which was last won by a three-year-old in 2002 and never by a three-year-old filly. Prior to her big day, her chances of making a new record in JRA history first will be put to the test in the Mainichi Okan.



Soul Stirring
in the 2017 Yushun Himba



Satono Crown
in the 2017 Takarazuka Kinen

Two overseas G1 winners trained by Noriyuki Hori hope to emulate last year's Tenno Sho (Autumn) winner *Maurice (JPN, by Screen Hero)*, also saddled by Hori. 2016 Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m) victor **Satono Crown** won his first G1 on home ground this year in the Takarazuka Kinen, which automatically qualified him to run in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1, 2,400m) on November 4 in the U.S. However, his connections decided to pass up the invitation and aim towards the Tenno (Autumn), the

Japan Cup and the Arima Kinen.

Meanwhile, **Neorealism (JPN, H6, by Neo Universe)**, who won the Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) on April 30, was due to make his comeback start in the Sapporo Kinen (G2, 2,000m) on August 20. However, a problem in his hoof forced him to withdraw from the race, and now the son of *Neo Universe (JPN, by Sunday Silence)* will have to face tough competition in his first time out this fall.



Neorealism
in the 2017 Queen Elizabeth II Cup

Sakura Empereur (JPN, H6, by King Kamehameha) also is hoping for success in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) after landing his first grade-race title in the Sapporo Kinen. Third-place finisher of the

race, **Yamakatsu Ace (JPN, H6, by King Kamehameha)**, winner of four grade-race titles at 2,000 meters, and **Staphanos (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, who finished second and third in the last two Tenno Sho (Autumn) starts, are also planning to run in the 2,000-meter G1.



Sakura Empereur
in the 2017 Sapporo Kinen



Yamakatsu Ace
in the 2017 Kinko Sho



Staphanos
in the 2014 Fuji Stakes

Close Competition Continues in Dirt Category



Sound True
in the 2016 Champions Cup

Sound True (JPN, G7, by French Deputy), who came roaring back from way behind to a convincing victory in the 2016 Champions Cup to help be named JRA's Best Dirt Horse of that season, capped off the season with a third in the Tokyo Daishoten (G1, dirt, 2,000m) and has not scored a win this year, finishing second, eighth, fourth and second in the Kawasaki Kinen (dirt, 2,100m), February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m), Teio Sho (dirt, 2,000m), and Nippon TV Hai (dirt, 1,800m), respectively.

Awardee (USA, H7, by Jungle Pocket), who finished second as race favorite in the Champions Cup last year, followed with another runner-up effort in the Tokyo Daishoten while beating Sound True in the process. His overseas challenge in the Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m) resulted in fifth place early this year and he was still short of his best in his comeback start in the Teio Sho, finishing third. He will attempt to defend his 2016 title in the coming JBC Classic (dirt, 2,000m) on November 3 prior to the Champions Cup.



Awardee in the 2016 Antares Stakes



Champions Cup third-place finisher **Asukano Roman (JPN, H6, by Agnes Digital)** turned in an impressive performance in the race despite being sent to post 10th choice. However, he has not been able to maintain his form this year, managing just two fifth-place finishes out of five starts.

Asukano Roman in the 2016 Tokai Stakes

Meanwhile, **Kafuji Take (JPN, H5, by Precise End)**, who impressed as 11th favorite finishing fourth in the Champions Cup last year, has validated the performance with his first grade-race victory in the Negishi Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,400m) this year, as well as a third in the G1 February Stakes and a fifth overseas in the Godolphin Mile (G2, dirt, 1,600m). His program in the fall season will begin with the Mile Championship Nambu Hai (dirt, 1,600m) on October 9 and then the Musashino Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,600m) on November 11 before another shot at the Champions Cup.

Apollo Kentucky (USA, H5, by Langfuhr) claimed his first G1 title in the Tokyo Daishoten coming off a fifth-place finish in the Champions Cup. His overseas endeavor was unsuccessful as he was heavily beaten to ninth in the Dubai World Cup, but the son of *Langfuhr* (CAN, by *Danzig*) recovered his form in his comeback start, finishing fifth in the Teio Sho and winning the Nippon TV Hai on September 27.



Asukano Roman
in the 2016 Tokai Stakes



Kafuji Take
in the 2017 Negishi Stakes



Apollo Kentucky (left)
in the 2016 Miyako Stakes

Gold Dream (JPN, C4, by Gold Allure), despite being second choice disappointed to 12th in the Champions Cup last year, but bounced back in his 2017 debut to capture his first G1 title in the February Stakes. However, his following starts at 2,000 meters in the Dubai World Cup and the Teio Sho did not end as expected, as he finished 14th and seventh, respectively.



Gold Dream
in the 2017 February Stakes

Copano Rickey (JPN, H7, by Gold Allure), who was 13th in his third Champions Cup attempt in 2016, won his second consecutive Kashiwa Kinen (dirt, 1,600m) to demonstrate his continuing strength since being named the 2015 Best Dirt Horse. Both Gold Dream and Copano Rickey are scheduled to return for the fall campaign in the Mile Championship Nambu Hai.

Newcomers looking like potential threats in their Champions Cup debuts include **K T Brave (JPN, C4, by Admire Max)**, who turned in a tremendous late charge to win the Teio Sho after having to race way behind following a poor break. After finishing third in the Nippon TV Hai, attention is centered on whether his next move will be the Champions Cup or not. Among the three-year-old group, UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m) runner-up **Epicharis (JPN, C3, by Gold Allure)** generated

high expectations this year, but a hoof problem forced him to be scratched from the Belmont Stakes (G1, dirt, 2,400m). Although he did make a comeback start in the Leopard Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,800m), where he finished third after escaping a wall of horses at the stretch, his hoof continues to remain an issue and his fall schedule is undetermined.



Copano Rickey
in the 2015 February Stakes



K T Brave in the 2016
Three-Year-Olds (Allowance)



Epicharis (right)
in the 2017 UAE Derby

Queen Elizabeth II Cup Could Feature Clash between Four G1-caliber Entries

The distaff Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 12 will feature last year's champion, **Queens Ring (JPN, M5, by Manhattan Cafe)**, who has not found her form this year, finishing sixth in the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) in May and even worse (15th) in her only other start prior to that. She will be following the same fall schedule as last year, beginning with the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on October 14 prior to the G1 event. She will face **Vivlos (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, the 2016 Shuka Sho winner who landed her second G1 victory in the Dubai Turf in March this year, and **Admire Lead (JPN, F4, by Stay Gold)**, winner of the Victoria Mile in the spring.



Queens Ring
in the 2016 Queen Elizabeth II Cup



Vivlos
in the 2017 Dubai Turf



Admire Lead
in the 2017 Victoria Mile



Mikki Queen in the 2015 Yushun Himba

2015 Best Three-Year-Old Filly **Mikki Queen (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, who proved herself among the best by finishing third in the Takarazuka Kinen against top-caliber males, suffered a tendon injury during the summer. Nevertheless, her trainer is hopeful of her recovering in time for the Queen Elizabeth II Cup, where she finished third last year.

Other notable runners include 2015 Yushun Himba runner-up **Rouge Buck (JPN, M5, by Manhattan Cafe)**, who claimed her fourth grade-race title in the All Comers (G2, 2,200m). While her four graded victories were won against male opponents, the *Manhattan Cafe* (JPN, by *Sunday Silence*) mare has been unsuccessful in major distaff events and is determined to claim a G1 title in the coming race. **Maximum de Paris (JPN, M5, by King Kamehameha)**, who has victories in two graded distaff races at 2,000 meters, and 2016 Hong Kong Vase fifth-place finisher **Smart Layer (JPN, M7, by Deep Impact)**, who remained consistent this spring, will make their fall debuts in the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m) on October 9. The field will also include three-year-old fillies coming off the last of their triple crown starts, the Shuka Sho on October 15.



Rouge Buck
in the 2017 All Comers



Maximum de Paris
in the 2017 Aichi Hai



Smart Layer
in the 2016 Hanshin Himba Stakes

Mile Championship Centered Around Isla Bonita

With 2016 Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m) victor *Mikki Isle* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*) retired and **Satono Aladdin**, winner of the Yasuda Kinen in June, still not decided on his destination following his Tenno Sho (Autumn) challenge, two former Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas) winners are favorites for this year's title.

Logotype (JPN, H7, by Lohengrin), the 2013 Satsuki Sho victor, won the Yasuda Kinen in 2016 and was runner-up in the race this year. While excelling in the spring mile G1 at Tokyo Racecourse, the son of *Lohengrin* (JPN, by *Singspiel*) has been unable to show the same performance at Kyoto, disappointing to seventh and ninth in the 2014 and 2015 Mile Championship, respectively.



Logotype in the 2016 Yasuda Kinen



Isla Bonita in the 2014 Satsuki Sho

In contrast, **Isla Bonita (JPN, H6, by Fuji Kiseki)**, although unsuccessful as a race favorite in the Yasuda Kinen this year, finishing eighth, was a Satsuki Sho winner in 2014 and has finished third and second in the past two Mile Championship races, so he has a good chance for his second career G1 title in the fall mile G1. The two horses will meet in the Fuji Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on October 21, where they will be joined by this year's

Satsuki Sho runner-up, **Persian Knight (JPN, C3, by Harbinger)**.

The champion title of the 2017 Summer Mile Series, which is contested over three G3 mile events, ended in a tie between **Win Gagnant (JPN, H5, by Stay Gold)**, who won the Chukyo Kinen on July 23 and was runner-up in the Sekiya Kinen on August 13, and **Grand Silk (JPN, H5, by Stay Gold)**, who finished behind Win Gagnant for second in the Chukyo Kinen and then proceeded to claim the Keisei Hai Autumn Handicap on September 10. The Mile Championship will be contested between these and others who could step down in distance from the Tenno Sho (Autumn), as well as some who could step up in distance after the Sprinters Stakes.



Persian Knight
in the 2017 Arlington Cup



Win Gagnant
in the 2017 Chukyo Kinen



Grand Silk in the 2017
Keisei Hai Autumn Handicap

Four G1 Sprinters Face Talented Hong Kong Sprinter

The first G1 event of JRA's fall racing calendar is the Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) on October 1. The 2017 edition of the race will center on four G1 winners being challenged by **Blizzard (AUS, G6, by Starcraft)**, who will debut in Japan aiming to become the third Hong Kong runner to win the Sprinter Stakes title, following *Silent Witness (AUS, by El Moxie)* in 2005 and *Ultra Fantasy (AUS, by Encosta de Lago)* in 2010. The late-developing gelding is trained by Poon-fai Yiu, who is well recognized in Japan for his victory with *Ultra Fantasy*. Blizzard scored third-place finishes as a four-year-old in both the Hong Kong Classic Mile (1,600m) and Hong Kong Classic Cup (1,800m) before landing his first grade-race victory in the Challenge Cup in January. While consistent in his following three group-race starts, including a fourth in the G1 Queen's Silver Jubilee Cup (1,400m), the long season caught up with him in the last start of his five-year-old campaign, the Chairman's Sprint Prize, where he remained near the rear throughout. After a four-month break, the six-year-old gelding returned to form under Zach Purton, despite carrying top weights he remained close for an impressive second in the HKSAR Chief Executive's Cup.

Meanwhile, the Japanese lineup will include last year's champion, **Red Falx (JPN, H6, by Swept Overboard)**, who has continued to prove competitive at this level, finishing third in both the Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) in March and the Yasuda Kinen in June, putting him in good shape to defend his title this year. **Seiun Kosei (JPN, C4, by Admire Moon)**, winner of the Takamatsunomiya Kinen this spring, will be coming off a short



Red Falx in the 2016 Sprinters Stakes

break following his fourth-place finish in the Hakodate Sprint Stakes (G3, 1,200m) on June 18. The 2015 Oka Sho victor **Let's Go Donki (JPN, M5, by King Kamehameha)**, who was runner-up to Seiun Kosei in the Takamatsunomiya Kinen, plummeted to 11th in her following start in the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) in May. She hopes to bounce back to form after a long summer break. 2016 Takamatsunomiya Kinen champion **Big Arthur (JPN, H6, by Sakura Bakushin O)** sustained a muscle contusion in his upper right foreleg prior to his intended Takamatsunomiya Kinen start in March and has been sidelined from racing since. His September comeback in the Centaur Stakes (G2, 1,200m) was postponed due to a hoof injury, so the Sprinters Stakes will be his first start in over nine months.



Let's Go Donki
in the 2015 Oka Sho



Seiun Kosei
in the 2017 Takamatsunomiya Kinen



Big Arthur
in the 2016 Takamatsunomiya Kinen

Other contenders include the Summer Sprint Series champion **Rhein Meteor (JPN, H7, by Meisho Bowler)**, who scored a victory in the Ibis Summer Dash (G3, 1,000m) on July 30 and a runner-up effort in the following Centaur Stakes. **Diana Halo (JPN, F4, by King Halo)** will be coming off her victory in the Kitakyushu Kinen (G3, 1,200m) on August 20 and **Fine Needle (JPN, C4, by Admire Moon)** won the Centaur Stakes.



Rhein Meteor
in the 2017 Ibis Summer Dash



Diana Halo
in the 2017 Kitakyushu Kinen



Fine Needle
in the 2017 Centaur Stakes

Oju Chosan Poised to Make History in JRA Steeplechasing



Oju Chosan
in the 2017 Nakayama Grand Jump

2016 Best Steeplechase Horse **Oju Chosan (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)** succeeded in defending his Nakayama Grand Jump (J-G1, 4,250m) title this spring. He became only the second horse after Australia's *Karasi (IRE, by Kahyasi)* – who won three Nakayama Grand Jump titles between 2005 and 2007 – to win three J-G1 titles in a row since JRA implemented a grading system for obstacle races in 1999. The son of *Stay Gold (JPN, by Sunday Silence)* was discovered to have sustained a chip fracture in his

right pastern after reaching his sixth-race winning streak, but will be coming back for the Tokyo High-Jump (J-G2, 3,110m) on October 15 prior to his bid to renew JRA's steeplechase record with a fourth consecutive J-G1 victory in the Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) on December 23.

Three-Year-Olds Prepared for Final Triple Crown

The Shuka Sho will be held on October 15, followed by the Kikuka Sho a week later. The Oaks and Japanese Derby winners will not start in their respective final Triple Crown races, but those who will run in their last three-year-old G1 event have completed their preparations. The Rose Stakes (G2, 1,800m), the main prep race which has a record of producing seven Shuka Sho winners in the recent decade, was held at Hanshin on September



Rabbit Run in the 2017 Rose Stakes

17. **Rabbit Run (USA, F3, by Tapit)** captured her first grade-race title in her inaugural try at this level, winning by a comfortable 1-1/4 lengths over runner up **Kawakita Enka (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**. Oka Sho runner-up **Lys Gracieux (JPN, F3, by Heart's Cry)** was third, while Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) winner **Fan Dii Na (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)** crossed the wire in sixth. Yushun Himba runner-up **Mozu Katchan (JPN, F3, by Harbinger)** followed in seventh, and Oka Sho winner **Reine Minoru (JPN, F3, by Daiwa Major)** and Oka Sho fourth-place **Karakurenai (JPN, F3, by Lohengrin)** were defeated to ninth and 14th, respectively. Yushun Himba third-place finisher **Admire Miyabi (JPN, F3, by Heart's Cry)** sustained a tendon injury to her left foreleg prior to the Rose Stakes, forcing her connections to announce her retirement.



Lys Gracieux
in the 2016 Artemis Stakes



Fan Dii Na
in the 2017 Flower Cup



Mozu Katchan
in the 2017 Flora Stakes



Reine Minoru
in the 2017 Oka Sho



Karakurenai
in the 2017 Fillies' Revue



Admire Miyabi
in the 2017 Queen Cup

Meanwhile, the Shion Stakes (G3, 2,000m) was claimed by Oaks fourth-place finisher **Deirdre (JPN, F3, by Harbinger)**, who landed her first grade-race title with the win. **Caribbean Gold (JPN, F3, by Stay Gold)** and **Port Vendres (JPN, F3, by Daiwa Major)**, who followed in second and third, respectively, also earned a ticket to run in the Shuka Sho together with Deirdre. The Shion Stakes has produced G1 winners such as 2015 Japan Cup victor **Shonan Pandora (JPN, by Deep Impact)** and 2017 Dubai Turf winner Vivlos, who finished second in 2014 and 2016, respectively.



Deirdre
in the 2017 Shion Stakes



Caribbean Gold in the 2017
Three-Year-Olds (Allowance)



Port Vendres
in the 2017 Kamomejima Tokubetsu

Also starting in the Shuka Sho is **Aerolithe (JPN, F3, by Kurofune)**, who comes off a victory in the Queen Stakes (G3, 1,800m) on July 30, which she won wire-to-wire against older fillies and mares while marking a time that tied the course record. The *Kurofune* (USA, by *French Deputy*) filly, after finishing fifth in the Oka Sho, was raced in the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m), which was considered a more suitable race distance-wise than the 2,400-meter Oaks. Faced against male opponents, the second favorite chased the pace upfront and won comfortably once taking command in the last furlong.



Aerolithe in the 2017 NHK Mile Cup

The two main prep for the Kikuka Sho, the Kobe Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,400m) and the St. Lite Kinen (G2, 2,200m), were held a week apart on September 24 and 18, respectively. The Kobe Shimbun Hai at Hanshin, which has produced eight Kikuka Sho winners in the past decade, featured a dominant performance by Rey de Oro. **Kiseki (JPN, C3, by Rulership)** and **Satono Arthur (JPN,**

C3, by Deep Impact) followed two lengths behind in second and third, respectively, both earning their tickets to run in the Kikuka Sho.



Rey de Oro
in the 2017 Kobe Shimabun Hai



Kiseki
in the 2017 Shinanogawa Tokubetsu



Satono Arthur
in the 2016 Cyclamen Sho

Satsuki Sho third-place finisher **Danburite (JPN, C3, by Rulership)** finished fourth, Tokyo Yushun fourth-place finisher **My Style (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)** was seventh and **Cadenas (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of two grade-race titles, was ninth.



Danburite in the 2016
Two-Year-Olds (Newcomer)



My Style
in the 2017 Kobushi Sho



Cadenas
in the 2017 Yayoi Sho



Al Ain in the 2017 Satsuki Sho

The St. Lite Kinen (G2, 2,200m), held at Nakayama, is only with one subsequent Kikuka Sho winner in the past decade – the one being 2016 Horse of the Year, Kitan Black. Satsuki Sho winner **Al Ain (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** made an early move and looked like a winner before being overtaken by **Mikki Swallow (JPN, C3, by Tosen Homareboshi)**, who closed strongly from the outside for a 3/4-length victory for his first grade-race title.

Satono Chronicle (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry) finished third to make the cut for the last leg of the three-year-old Triple Crown. **Clincher (JPN, C3, by Clincher)**, who already qualified with a fourth-place finish in the Satsuki Sho, finished ninth.



Mikki Swallow
in the 2017 Himesayuri Sho



Satono Chronicle
in the 2017 Shirayuri Stakes



Clincher
in the 2017 Sumire Stakes

Others who qualify for the Kikuka Sho and will head directly for the 3,000-meter G1 include **Bless Journey (JPN, C3, by Battle Plan)**, who scored two grade-race victories as a two-year-old, but then suffered a distal radius fracture in his right foreleg and passed up the majority of his three-year-old campaign, hoping to make the best of his 2017 debut in the last leg of the Triple Crown, and **Suave Richard (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, making his first start of the autumn season in the Kikuka Sho following a runner-up effort in the Toyo Yushun in May.

Admirable (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact), third in the Tokyo Yushun, had to pass up his entire fall season due to a leg problem.



Bless Journey in the 2016
Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes



Suave Richard in the 2017
Kyodo News Service Hai



Admirable
in the 2017 Aoba Sho