

Exclusive Topics for Horse Racing in Japan

- Spring Edition -

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The Japan Racing Association

The JRA's 2018 horse racing season will start in earnest with the three-year-old classic trials in March, while established horses begin to prepare towards the spring G1 events. In this special Spring edition of our international newsletter, we are pleased to bring you up to date on the progress of last year's stars and this season's key runners, part of our ongoing effort to support your reporting of JRA events.

High Expectations for Further Success Overseas

The Dubai World Cup meeting has become a major destination for Japanese runners aspiring to take on the challenge of racing overseas. After 10 Japanese horses took part last year, **Vivlos**, winner of last year's Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m), will be one of 14 who attempt to score further successes in Dubai this year.

Following the retirement of *Kitasan Black* (JPN, by *Black Tide*), middle to long-distance runners this year will center on 2017 Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) victor **Rey de Oro** (JPN, C4, by **King Kamehameha**, who already proved competitive against top older runners when besting *Kitasan Black* for second place in last year's Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m). However, in his 2018 kick-off start in the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) on February 11, the four-year-old failed to produce his late charge in the straight, finishing third. The 2017 Best Three-Year-Old Colt needs to show improvement in his next start, an overseas challenge in the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m).



Rey de Oro in the 2017 Tokyo Yushun



Mozu Katchan
in the 2017 Queen Elizabeth II Cup

Mozu Katchan (JPN, F4, by **Harbinger**) is another talented four-year-old aiming for the Dubai Sheema Classic title. The *Harbinger* (GB, by *Dansili*) filly came close but fell short of winning last year's three-year-old fillies' triple by finishing second and third in the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) and the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m), respectively. Thereafter, however, she proceeded to claim a G1 title against older fillies and mares in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m). Although the 2017 Best

Three-Year-Old Filly title went to **Soul Stirring**, this year as a four-year-old filly **Mozu Katchan** began with a close fourth against male rivals after giving up the lead in the closing stages in the Kyoto Kinen.

Satono Crown (JPN, H6, by Marju), winner of the 2016 Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m) and the 2017 Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m), attracted high expectations in the latter half of his five-year-old campaign with a great effort to finish a neck second to *Kitasan Black* in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m). However, the son of *Marju* (IRE, by *Last Tycoon*) failed to contend in both the Japan Cup and the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m), turning in double-digit finishes in both races.



Satono Crown
in the 2017 Takarazuka Kinen



Vivlos in the 2017 Dubai Turf

Five Japanese runners will be contesting the Dubai Turf this year, including **Real Steel (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)** and **Vivlos (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, who won the title in 2016 and 2017, respectively. **Vivlos (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, who won impressively despite being a lightly regarded starter in the Dubai Turf, took a six-month rest and then finished second in her comeback start, the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m). She then stepped up in distance and was sent to post race favorite in the

Queen Elizabeth II Cup, but was defeated to fifth. The 2017 Best Older Filly or Mare kicked off her 2018 season on February 25 in the Nakayama Kinen (G2, 1,800m), the same as last year, but was unable to show her sharp turn of speed from behind and finished eighth. Her trainer is optimistic, however, that she will improve on this run and regain her true form in Dubai.

Meanwhile, **Real Steel (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, who was unable to defend his Dubai Turf title last year due to a nose bleed that led to his withdrawal only days before the race, bounced back to claim a victory in the Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,800m) in the fall and continued with an impressive fourth-place finish over a considerably challenging track in the Tenno Sho (Autumn). He was given the rest of the season off to recover and focus on preparing for the 2018 Dubai Turf, run at his favorite distance of 1,800 meters and over a left-handed track.



Real Steel in the 2016 Dubai Turf

Deirdre (JPN, F4, by Harbinger), after finishing sixth and fourth in last year's Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m) and the Yushun Himba, respectively, won three in a row last fall, including the last leg of the three-year-old fillies' triple, the Shuka Sho. However, in her kick-off start this season, the Kyoto Kinen, she finished a dull sixth with little to show from racing behind. **Crocasmia (JPN, M5, by Stay Gold)**, also bidding for the Dubai Turf title this year, was impressive after her first grade-race victory in the Fuchu Himba Stakes in October last year and validated the win with a neck second in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup as a lightly regarded ninth favorite. However, she was unable to sustain her lead in her seasonal debut, fading to eighth in the Kyoto Kinen.

Neorealism (JPN, H7, by Neo Universe), a half-brother to 2015 George Ryder Stakes (G1, 1,500m) winner *Real Impact* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*), won the 2017 Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) but failed to perform to his best over testing ground in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), finishing 13th. Nevertheless, he recovered well to finish third in his following start, the Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m) in December, and will now make his 2018 debut in Dubai.



Deirdre
in the 2017 Shuka Sho



Crocsmia
in the 2017 Fuchu Himba Stakes



Neorealism
in the 2017 Queen Elizabeth II Cup

The main event of the weekend, the Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m), will include **Awardee (USA, H8, by Jungle Pocket)** who finished fifth while besting the three Japanese horses that ran in the race's 2017 edition. He remained consistent throughout 2017, finishing within fifth place in three starts at the highest level, but was unable to ever pose a serious threat. He kicked off his eight-year-old campaign with a third in the Kawasaki Kinen (dirt, 2,100m) but in the February Stakes (G1, dirt 1,600m) he encountered traffic mid-field and finished ninth.

Meanwhile, the 2017 Best Dirt Horse **Gold Dream (JPN, H5, by Gold Allure)**, who just missed by a neck in defending his February Stakes title, was invited to run in the Dubai World Cup but will head for the Kashiwa Kinen (dirt, 1,600m) on May 2. The 2018 February Stakes victor, **Nonkono Yume (JPN, G6, by Twining)**, was also registered as a Dubai World Cup entrant but will stay in Japan.



Awardee
in the 2016 Antares Stakes



Gold Dream
in the 2017 Champions Cup



Nonkono Yume
in the 2018 February Stakes

Matera Sky (USA, C4, by Speightstown) is coming off consecutive dirt wins at 1,200 meters as he heads into his G1 debut in the Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1, dirt, 1,200m). **Dios Corrida (JPN, C4, by Kane Hekili)**, although 11th in the same race last season as a three-year-old, was hoped to do much better in his second Dubai challenge following his first grade-race victory in the Capella Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,200m) last December. However, an unfortunate chip fracture in his right intermediate carpal bone forced his withdrawal. The UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m), where Japanese three-year-

olds took a win in 2016 and a runner-up in 2017, will be challenged this year by **Ruggero (JPN, C3, by Kinshasa no Kiseki)**. As a two-year-old, the *Kinshasa no Kiseki* (AUS, by *Fuji Kiseki*) colt scored a win, a third and an eighth in three starts on turf and then won his dirt debut, the Cattleysa Sho (dirt, 1,600m) in November. He was third in his 2018 kick off start, the Hyacinth Stakes (dirt, 1,600m) on February 18. Godolphin Mile (G2, dirt, 1,600m) entries include **Taiki Ferveur (JPN, C3, by Furioso)**, who out-finished **Ruggero** for second place in the Hyacinth Stakes, **Adirato (JPN, C4, by Rulership)**, who was 12th in the UAE Derby last year, and **Akito Crescent (JPN, H6, by War Emblem)**, who has six career dirt victories at 1,400m.

On February 17, **Fame Game (JPN, G8, by Heart's Cry)**, who landed his third Diamond Stakes (G3, 3,400m) title, in addition to 2014 and 2015, was a possible starter for the Dubai Gold Cup (G2, 3,200m) but was withdrawn due to health reasons. The aim is to resume racing on May 27 in the Meguro Kinen (G2, 2,500m), where he will run as the defending champion.

Other possible overseas challengers this spring included **Sumahama (JPN, C3, by Neo Universe)**, who marked his third consecutive win on February 18 in the Hyacinth Stakes and earned a berth to run in the Kentucky Derby (G1, dirt, 2,000m) on May 5. His connections have decided, however, not to run him in the U.S. Triple.

Other Key Middle & Long Distance Runners in 2018



Cheval Grand
in the 2017 Japan Cup

While four of JRA's six G1 events of the middle-long distance discipline in 2017 were dominated by *Kitasan Black*, the Takarazuka Kinen and the Japan Cup were claimed by **Satono Crown** and **Cheval Grand (JPN, H6, by Heart's Cry)**, respectively. **Cheval Grand**, a late developer who became a G1 winner a year later than his half-sister **Vivlos**, has demonstrated great stamina at 2,400 meters and beyond, where he is 6-3-4 out of 14 starts. While initially registered to run in the Dubai Sheema

Classic, his connections have decided to target the son of *Heart's Cry* (JPN, by *Sunday Silence*) towards the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) on April 29, seeing that he has finished third and second in his past two challenges. First, however, he will make a prep start in the much shorter Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) on April 1.

Last year, **Satono Diamond (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, the 2016 Best Three-Year-Old Colt, won the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) and finished third in the Tenno Sho (Spring), but then was winless in his fall campaign in France. Aiming for a third G1 title in either the Osaka Hai or the Takarazuka Kinen on June 24, the son of *Deep Impact* kicked off his five-year-old season in the Kinko Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 11 and finished third, back 1-1/2 lengths. The winner was **Suave Richard (JPN, C4, by Heart's Cry)**, a Tokyo Yushun runner-up in 2017 who is also heading for the

Osaka Hai. **Makahiki (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, another standout five-year-old and the 2016 derby winner, sustained a fracture in his left proximal sesamoid bone following a fourth-place finish in the Japan Cup last fall and will not be back in time for the Osaka Hai.



Satono Diamond
in the 2016 Arima Kinen



Suave Richard
in the 2018 Kinko Sho



Makahiki
in the 2016 Tokyo Yushun

The emerging **Al Ain (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the 2017 Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) and fifth and seventh in the Tokyo Yushun and the the Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m), respectively, kicked off his four-year-old campaign with a runner-up effort in the Kyoto Kinen. He is now conditioning well towards his next start, the Osaka Hai.



Al Ain in the 2017 Satsuki Sho



Persian Knight
in the 2017 Mile Championship

The race will also feature another promising colt, **Persian Knight (JPN, C4, by Harbinger)**, who became the first three-year-old in 17 years to claim the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m) last year, stepped up in distance in his kick-off start this year, the Nakayama Kinen, and finished fifth after making up ground from a wide turn. After the Osaka Hai, he will aim for another G1 at a mile in the Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) on June 3.

There will be three other key contenders in the coming Osaka Hai. **Danburite (JPN, C4, by Rulership)** was third, sixth and fifth in the three-year-old triple last year and is coming off a January victory in the American Jockey Club Cup (G2, 2,200m). **Win Bright (JPN, C4, by Stay Gold)** won the Nakayama Kinen and **Gold Actor (JPN, H7, by Screen Hero)** was victorious in the 2015 Arima Kinen.



Danburite in the
2018 American Jockey Club Cup



Win Bright
in the 2018 Nakayama Kinen



Gold Actor
in the 2015 Arima Kinen

Kiseki (JPN, C4, by Rulership), who handled a considerably testing ground to win the 2017 Kikuka Sho, was unable to fully recover for the Hong Kong Vase and finished ninth. He is targeted towards the Tenno Sho (Spring), prior to which he will kick off his four-year-old season in the Nikkei Sho (G2, 2,500m) on March 24.



Kiseki in the 2017 Kikuka Sho

Kikuka Sho runner-up **Clincher (JPN, C4, by Deep Sky)** landed his first grade-race victory in the Kyoto Kinen by traveling up front in fourth position and besting a field that included four fellow four-year-olds who were already proven G1 winners. In the Hanshin Daishoten on March 18, however, he was too keen early when racing up the straight the first time around and was unable to save enough gas for the critical stages, but still managed to stay well for third. The winner was **Rainbow Line (JPN, H5, by Stay Gold)**, who landed his first win and second career grade-race title since his first victory in the 2016 Arlington Cup (G3, 1,600m). Late-developing **Perform a Promise (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)** won his first grade-race title in the Nikkei Shinshun Hai (G2, 2,400m) on January 14 and will point toward the Tenno Sho (Spring) after the Nikkei Sho.



Clincher
in the 2018 Kyoto Kinen



Rainbow Line
in the 2018 Hanshin Daishoten



Perform a Promise
in the 2018 Nikkei Shinshun Hai

Key Runners in Sprint, Mile, Older Fillies/Mares, Dirt and Steeplechasing

The JRA's turf G1 begins with the Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) on March 25 at Chukyo Racecourse. Hong Kong's top sprinter **Blizzard (AUS, G7, by Starcraft)** will make his second visit to Japan following an impressive fifth-place finish in the 2017 Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) at Nakayama. The *Starcraft* (NZ, *Soviet Star*) gelding continued to be consistent after his return to Hong Kong, finishing third in the Hong Kong Sprint (G1, 1,200m) in December and a close fifth, two lengths from the winner, in the Centenary Sprint Cup (G1, 1,200m) this past January. By improving on his experience last year, there are hopes of him becoming the next Hong Kong runner to claim the Takamatsunomiya Kinen title since *Aerovelocity* (NZ, *by Pins*) in 2015.

The Japanese field that will take on the Hong Kong challenge in the spring sprint G1 will include **Red Falx (JPN, H7, by Swept Overboard)**. Third in the 2017 Takamatsunomiya Kinen, the son of *Swept Overboard* (USA, *by End Sweep*) became the third horse in JRA history to mark consecutive

wins in the 2016 and 2017 fall sprint G1, the Sprinter Stakes (G1, 1,200m), which contributed to his being named JRA's Best Sprinter or Miler in 2017. He finished third in his kick-off start in the Hankyu Hai (G3, 1,400m) on February 25, but his turn of speed at the stretch was impressive, if belated. Meanwhile, **Seiun Kosei (JPN, H5, by Admire Moon)**, the Takamatsunomiya Kinen defending champion, was unable to live up to expectations in his following four starts last year, finishing fourth at best, but shows signs of improvement this year with a runner-up effort in his first start of his 2018 season, the Silk Road Stakes (G3, 1,200m) on January 28. **Let's Go Donki (JPN, M6, by King Kamehameha)**, who was runner-up in both sprint G1 starts last year, ran on dirt in the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m) and finished fifth. It was her second time on dirt—the first being in the 2016 JBC Ladies' Classic (dirt, 1,600m) in which she was second.



Red Falx
in the 2017 Sprinters Stakes



Seiun Kosei
in the 2017 Takamatsunomiya Kinen



Let's Go Donki
in the 2015 Oka Sho



Reine Minoru
in the 2017 Oka Sho

Fine Needle (JPN, H5, by Admire Moon), **Diana Halo (JPN, M5, by King Halo)** and **King Heart (JPN, H5, by Orewa Matteruze)** are coming off their respective victories in the Silk Road Stakes, the Hankyu Hai and the March 3 Ocean Stakes (G3, 1,200m). **Dance Director (JPN, H8, by Aldebaran)**, runner-up in the Hanshin Cup (G2, 1,400m) last December, and **Reine Minoru (JPN, F4, by Daiwa Major)**, the 2017 Oka Sho victor, are also slated for the Takamatsunomiya Kinen.



Fine Needle
in the 2018 Silk Road Stakes



Diana Halo
in the 2018 Hankyu Hai



King Heart
in the 2018 Ocean Road



Dance Director
in the 2017 Silk Road Stakes

The mile category lost two of its top runners when the Yasuda Kinen champions of the past two years, *Logotype (JPN, by Lohengrin)* and *Satono Aladdin (JPN, by Deep Impact)*, both retired to stud as of the end of last season. The attention has shifted to **Persian Knight**, Yasuda Kinen third-place finisher **Red Falx** and **Air Spinel (JPN, H5, by King Kamehameha)**, a versatile runner over various distances who finished within fourth place in all three of his three-year-old classics and then has impressively stepped down to a mile since last year to register 2-2-1 out of six starts, including a nose

second in the Mile Championship. Although the son of *King Kamehameha* (JPN, by *Kingmambo*) sustained periostitis in his right foreleg radius to keep him out of the Nakayama Kinen, he is expected to recover in time for the Milers Cup (G2, 1,600m) on April 22.

Mile Championship third-place finisher **Sungrazer** (JPN, C4, by **Deep Impact**) and **Black Moon** (JPN, G6, by **Admire Moon**), who is coming off his first grade-race victory in the Kyoto Kimpai (G3, 1,600m) on January 6, are also scheduled to run in the Milers Cup. **Greater London** (JPN, H6, by **Deep Impact**), who finished fourth in the Yasuda Kinen last year, is headed towards the Lord Derby Challenge Trophy (G3, 1,600m) on March 31.



Air Spinel
in the 2017 Fuji Stakes



Sungrazer (left)
in the 2017 Swan Stakes



Black Moon
in the 2018 Kyoto Kimpai

Soul Stirring (JPN, F4, by **Frankel**) is inarguably the main attraction for the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m), the G1 event for older fillies and mares to be held on May 13. The much-hyped *Frankel* (GB, by *Galileo*) filly claimed the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) and proceeded to challenge top older males in the fall, although she was unable to launch a serious threat and finished sixth at best in three starts. In her four-year-old campaign she will race against her own gender, aiming for her third G1 title in the Victoria Mile and possibly a trip to the U.S. in the fall for the Breeders' Cup depending on how she fares this spring. Defending champion **Admire Lead** (JPN, M5, by **Stay Gold**) sustained an injury to her eye and had to pass up the fall G1. In a comeback early this season in the Tokyo Shimbun Hai (G3, 1,600m) on February 4, the *Stay Gold* (JPN, by *Sunday Silence*) mare disappointed to 12th and has yet to bounce back to form. **Lys Gracieux** (JPN, F4, by **Heart's Cry**), the winner of the Tokyo Shimbun Hai, was the runner-up in the Oka Sho as well as the Shuka Sho as a three-year-old. All three are expected to start in the Hanshin Himba Stakes (G2, 1,600m) on April 7 prior to the Victoria Mile.



Soul Stirring
in the 2017 Yushun Himba



Admire Lead
in the 2017 Victoria Mile



Lys Gracieux
in the 2018 Tokyo Shimbun Hai

Aerolithe (JPN, F4, by Kurofune), who bested a mixed field of three-year-olds for her first G1 victory in the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) last year, also won against older mares in her following start, the Queen Stakes (G3, 1,800m), but disappointed to seventh when sent to post race favorite in the Shuka Sho. The *Kurofune* (USA, by *French Deputy*) filly bounced back in her four-year-old debut with a neck second in the Nakayama Kinen and appears in good form towards her next destination, the Victoria Mile. Another Victoria Mile contender is **Miss Panthere (JPN, F4, by Daiwa Major)**, who landed consecutive grade-race titles, the Kyoto Himba Stakes (G3, 1,400m) on February 17 and the Turquoise Stakes (G3, 1,600m) last December. **Eterna Minoru (JPN, M5, by Empire Maker)**, who claimed the Aichi Hai (G3, 2,000m) title in January, had little to show and finished tenth in the Nakayama Himba Stakes (G3, 1,800m) on March 10. In the same race, **Kawakita Enka (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)** went wire-to-wire for her first graded victory.



Aerolithe
in the 2017 NHK Mile Cup



Miss Panthere
in the 2018 Kyoto Himba Stakes



Eterna Minoru
in the 2018 Aichi Hai



Kawakita Enka
in the 2018 Nakayama Himba Stakes



The Steeplechase category in 2016 and 2017 was dominated by Best Steeplechase Horse **Oju Chosan (JPN, H7, by Stay Gold)**, who marked an unprecedented fourth consecutive J-G1 victory and eighth successive jump graded win in claiming the year-end Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m).

Oju Chosan in the 2017 Nakayama Daishogai

When he passed up the Hanshin Spring Jump (J-G2, 3,900m) on March 10, the race was won by archrival and 2015 Best Steeplechase Horse **Up to Date (JPN, H8, by Kurofune)**, who scored an overwhelming eight-length victory. Previously, the son of *Kurofune* won both the Nakayama Daishogai and the Nakayama Grand Jump in 2015 and remained consistent in 2016 and 2017 with one win and within the money in all but one of nine starts. **Up to Date** is the biggest threat to prevent **Oju Chosan** from a third consecutive Nakayama Grand Jump win to tie the record with *Karasi* (2005-07).



Up to Date
in the 2018 Hanshin Spring Jump

Three-Year-Old Classic Hopefuls

Preparations toward the three-year-old Classics are under way. The Tulip Sho (1,600m) on March 3, which is the main prep towards the Oka Sho and upgraded to G2 status beginning this year, centered on the top finishers of the 2017 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m). That race's winner as well as the 2017 Best Two-Year-Old Filly, **Lucky Lilac (JPN, F3, by Orfevre)**, dominated with an overwhelming two-length victory and now, undefeated in all four career starts, is the strongest candidate for the first of the fillies' triple-crown titles. **Mau Lea (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, outdueled Hanshin Juvenile Fillies runner-up **Lily Noble (JPN, F3, by Rulership)** for second and thereby reversed her finish against the *Rulership (JPN, by King Kamehameha)* filly after being beaten to third in their last encounter in the two-year-old Hanshin Juvenile Fillies.



Lucky Lilac
in the 2017 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies



Lily Noble
in the 2017 Shiragiku Sho



Mau Lea
in the 2017 Akamatsu Sho

Tickets to the Oka Sho were earned by **Liberty Heights (JPN, F3, by King Kamehameha)**, **Encore Plus (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)** and **Dernier Or (JPN, F3, by Stay Gold)** when they finished first, second and third, respectively, in the Fillies' Revue (G2, 1,400m) on March 11 at Hanshin Racecourse. **Molto Allegro (USA, F3, by Speightstown)**, who had already earned a slot by winning the Kobai Stakes (1,400m) in January, finished tenth. **Harlem Line (JPN, F3, by Manhattan Cafe)** and **Red Regnant (JPN, F3, by Lord Kanaloa)** were also granted berth in the coming first leg of the fillies' triple as the top two finishers in the Anemone Stakes (1,600m), another Oka Sho trial held at Nakayama on the same day as the Fillies' Revue. The Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) on March 17 was won by **Cantabile (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, who took command early from a forward position and held off a strong-charging rival on her outside to prevail by a neck. **Rock This Town (JPN, F3, by Orfevre)**, already the grade-race winner of the 2017 Sapporo Nisai Stakes (G3, 1,800m), was unable to settle throughout the 1,800-meter trip and was heavily beaten to 13th.



Liberty Heights
in the 2018 Fillies' Revue



Cantabile
in the 2018 Flower Cup



Rock This Town
in the 2017 Sapporo Nisai Stakes

Other notable Oka Sho contenders include **Primo Scene (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Fairy Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on January 7, **Almond Eye (JPN, F3, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who won against male opponents in the Shinzan Kinen (G3, 1,600m) on January 8, and **Red Sakuya (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Elfin Stakes (1,600m) on February 3. **Tetradrachm (JPN, F3, by Rulership)**, who landed the Queen Cup (G3, 1,600m) on February 12, is taking time to recover from the effort and will also head for the NHK Mile Cup instead of the Oka Sho.



Primo Scene
in the 2018 Fairy Stakes



Almond Eye
in the 2018 Shinzan Kinen



Tetradrachm
in the 2018 Queen Cup

The 2017 Best Two-Year-Old Colt, **Danon Premium (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** lived up to expectations as race favorite in the Yayoi Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 4, the main prep race towards the first leg of the Triple Crown, the Satsuki Sho on April 15. Uncontested after taking the lead from chasing the pace in second, he scored a comfortable 1-1/2-length victory. He now heads for his Triple Crown challenge with four wins in four starts, including three grade-race titles since his debut last year. 2017 Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes (G3, 1,800m) winner **Wagnerian (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** experienced defeat after coming into the Yayoi Sho unbeaten in three career starts, but he secured a berth in the Satsuki Sho as the runner-up. **Gendarme (USA, C3, by Kitten's Joy)**, the 2017 Daily Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,600m) winner and Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m) runner-up, also qualified by finishing half a length behind **Wagnerian** in third.



Danon Premium
in the 2017 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes



Wagnerian in the 2017
Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes



Gendarme
in the 2017 Daily Hai Nisai Stakes

The Wakaba Stakes (2,000m), which qualifies the two top finishers for the coming Triple Crown race, was held on March 17. **Aithon (JPN, C3, by King's Best)**, who had come off a win in a 2,000-meter race at Kyoto in January, made use of his lasting speed to win wire-to-wire by a comfortable 1-1/4-length margin. **Double Sharp (JPN, C3, by Behkabad)** finished half a length in front of the third-place finisher for the remaining berth. **Time Flyer (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, winner of the 2017

Hopeful Stakes, was bumped immediately after the break, raced from behind and never really fired at the stretch but his connections are hopeful that the colt will improve in his second start of the season in the Satsuki Sho.

The Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m) runner-up **Stelvio (JPN, C3, by Lord Kanaloa)** out-dueled **Epoca d'Oro (JPN, C3, by Orfevre)** by a nose to claim the Spring Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on March 18. **Meiner Fanrong (JPN, C3, by Stay Gold)** finished 3-1/2 lengths behind the top two to also qualify for the Satsuki Sho.



Time Flyer
in the 2017 Hopeful Stakes



Stelvio
in the 2018 Spring Stakes



Generale Uno
in the 2018 Keisei Hai

Heading straight to the Satsuki Sho from victories earlier this season are **Generale Uno (JPN, C3, by Screen Hero)** and **Oken Moon (JPN, C3, by Oken Bruce Lee)**, who captured the Keisei Hai (G3, 2,000m) on January 14 and the Kyodo News Service Hai (G3, 1,800m) on February 11, respectively. 2017 Kyoto Nisai Stakes (G3, 2,000m) victor **Grail (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, who finished seventh in the Kyodo News Service Hai, will also head for the Satsuki Sho, as will **Kitano Commandeur (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Sumire Stakes (2,200m) on February 25. Potential Satsuki Sho runners could also come off starts in the Mainichi Hai (G3, 1,800m) on March 24. **Satono Favor (JPN, C3, by Zenno Rob Roy)**, winner of the Kisaragi Sho (G3, 1,800m) on February 4, was forced to take a six-month break due to a stress fracture in the right proximopalmar aspect of his third metacarpal bone.



Oken Moon
in the 2018 Kyodo News Service Hai



Grail
in the 2017 Kyoto Nisai Stakes



Satono Favor (left)
in the 2018 Kisaragi Sho

Taking distance in consideration, those looking at the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) on May 6 instead of the Satsuki Sho include **Tower of London (JPN, C3, by Raven's Pass)**. With three wins including the 2017 Keio Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,400m) and a second out of four starts, all at 1,500 meters or



Tower of London
in the 2017 Keio Hai Nisai Stakes

under, the *Raven's Pass* (USA, by *Elusive Quality*) colt finished third in his first test at a mile in the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes as a two-year-old. He will now attempt to capture a G1 title at this distance after kicking off his three-year-old campaign in the Arlington Cup (G3, 1,600m) on April 14. If he handles the extra distance successfully, an overseas endeavor to England for the St. James Palace Stakes (G1, 1,600m) on June 19 is a possibility.

The Falcon Stakes (G3, 1,400m) on March 17 was won by **Mr. Melody** (USA, C3, by **Scat Daddy**). Other possible NHK Mile Cup starters may also include runners from the Oka Sho and the Satsuki Sho Classics, the Mainichi Hai (G3, 1,800m) on March 24, the New Zealand Trophy (G2, 1,600m) on April 7 and the Arlington Cup.

Mr. Melody in the 2018 Falcon Stakes



The Aoi Stakes (1,200m) has been newly established as a graded-race opportunity for potential three-year-old sprinters at Kyoto Racecourse on May 26, the day before the derby, along with further chances of facing older sprinters in the annual Summer Sprint Series.