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SUBJECT: RESULT OF THE 38TH JAPAN CUP (G1)



The Japan Cup, in its 38th year, continues to attract some of the top turf horses from around the world—67 runners from North America, 144 from Europe, 26 from Oceania and five from Asia—while a number of runners have made this race their starting point towards further international success in following years.

Cheval Grand captured his first G1 victory in last year's Japan Cup, beating Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) winner Rey de Oro (JPN, C4, by King Kameameha) and defending champion *Kitasan Black* (JPN, by *Black Tide*), who were second and third, respectively. This year, **Cheval Grand** returned with hopes of defending his title and claim his second G1 win while Rey de Oro headed for the Arima Kinen instead after registering a third in the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) in February, a fourth in the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m) and back-to-back wins in the autumn All Comers (G2, 2,200m) and the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m; Oct.28). *Kitasan Black* concluded his racing career with his Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m; Dec.23) triumph last season.

This year's Japan Cup welcomed two foreign contenders from Europe. **Capri**, from Ireland claimed the Irish Derby (G1, 2,400m) and the St. Leger (G1, 2,900m) last year and came off a fourth in the Champions Stakes (G1, 1,990m; Oct.20). **Thundering Blue** from Great Britain and an uprising runner who claimed the York Stakes (G2, 2,050m) in July and the Stockholm Cup International (G3, 2,400m) in September, came off a runner-up effort in the Canadian International (G1, 2,400m; Oct.13).

Six out of 12 of the Japanese contenders taking on the foreign raiders were Grade 1 winners; **Almond Eye**, this year's filly triple crown champion who became the fifth since *Gentildonna* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*) in 2012 to make the sweep is coming off her Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m; Oct.14) victory.

Two-time G1 winner and 2016 Best Three-Year-Old Colt **Satono Diamond** and **Cheval Grand** were first and fourth in their previous start in the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m; Oct.8).

Last year's Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) winner **Kiseki** and race favorite and winner of the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) **Suave Richard** finished third and 10th, respectively, in the Tenno Sho (Autumn).

2016 Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m) and 2017 Takarazuka Kinen victor **Satono Crown** came off a 12th in his bid to defend his Takarazuka Kinen title in June.

Others included 2016 Japan Cup runner-up **Sounds of Earth** who came off a ninth in the Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,800m; Oct.7) while **Win Tenderness**, winner of the Meguro Kinen (G2, 2,500m), **Ganko**, victor of the Nikkei Sho (G2, 2,500m) and **Noble Mars**, third in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m), came into the race after finishing fourth, sixth and ninth, respectively, in the Copa Republica Argentina (G2, 2,500m; Nov.4). 2017 St. Lite Kinen (G2, 2,200m) champion **Mikki Swallow** and NAR (National Association of Racing; local public racing) Hokkaido-based **Happy Grin** were also among the line-up.

THE 38TH JAPAN CUP (G1) in association with Longines – Japan Autumn International –

3-year-old & up, 2,400 meters (about 12 furlongs), turf, left-handed

Sunday, November 25, 2018 Tokyo Racecourse 11th Race Post Time: 15:40

Total prize money: ¥ 648,000,000 (about US\$ 5,890,909 <US\$1=¥110>)

3-y-o: 55 kg (about 121 lbs), 4-y-o & up: 57 kg (about 126 lbs)

2 kg allowance for Fillies & Mares, 2 kg allowance for Southern Hemisphere-bred born in 2015

Safety factor: 18 runners



FP	BK	PP	Horse	Sex Age	Wgt (kg)	Sire Dam	Jockey Trainer	Owner Breeder	Margin (L3F)	Odds (Fav)
1	1	1	Almond Eye (JPN)	F3	53.0	Lord Kanaloa Fusaichi Pandora	C. Lemaire S. Kunieda	Silk Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Racing	2:20.6 (34.1)	1.4 (1)
2	5	8	Kiseki (JPN)	C4	57.0	Rulership Blitz Finale	Y. Kawada K. Nakatake	Tatsue Ishikawa Shimokobe Farm	1-3/4 (34.7)	9.2 (4)
3	7	11	Suave Richard (JPN)	C4	57.0	Heart's Cry Pirramimma	M. Demuro Y. Shono	NICKS Co., Ltd. Northern Racing	3-1/2 (34.7)	6.5 (2)

4	6	9	Cheval Grand (JPN)	H6	57.0	Heart's Cry Halwa Sweet	C. Demuro Y. Tomomichi	Kazuhiro Sasaki Northern Racing	Neck (34.5)	12.9 (5)
5	4	5	Mikki Swallow (JPN)	C4	57.0	Tosen Homareboshi Madre Bonita	N. Yokoyama T. Kikuzawa	Mizuki Noda Northern Farm	2 (33.9)	62.6 (8)
6	3	3	Satono Diamond (JPN)	H5	57.0	Deep Impact Malpensa	J. Moreira Y. Ikee	Satomi Horse Company Co., Ltd. Northern Racing	Neck (34.7)	7.1 (3)
7	2	2	Happy Grin (JPN)	C3	55.0	Lohengrin Lady C'est la Vie	T. Hattori J. Tanaka	Yuichi Aida Shadai Farm	1-3/4 (34.9)	341.2 (14)
8	8	14	Win Tenderness (JPN)	H5	57.0	Company Moere Merci	H. Uchida H. Sugiyama	Win Co., Ltd. Asahi Bokujo	Neck (35.3)	89.3 (10)
9	3	4	Satono Crown (JPN)	H6	57.0	Marju Jioconda	W. Buick N. Hori	Satomi Horse Company Co., Ltd. Northern Racing	2 (35.1)	87.4 (9)
10	4	6	Thundering Blue* (USA)	G5	57.0	Exchange Rate Relampago Azul	F. Berry D. Menuisier	Clive Andrew Washbourn Dr. Tom Castoldi	5 (35.0)	52.0 (7)
11	7	12	Capri* (IRE)	C4	57.0	Galileo Dialafara	R. Moore A. O'Brien	Derrick Smith, Mrs. John Magnier&Michael Tabor Lynch Bages Ltd & Camas Park Stud	1-3/4 (36.0)	31.8 (6)
12	6	10	Ganko (JPN)	H5	57.0	Nakayama Festa Sing up Rock	M. Ebina S. Matsumoto	Mitsuo Sugisawa Takeshi Maetani	3-1/2 (37.4)	218.7 (11)
13	8	13	Noble Mars (JPN)	H5	57.0	Jungle Pocket I and You	R. Takakura H. Miyamoto	Nobuhiko Yoshiki Tagami Farm	3 (38.2)	241.9 (12)
14	5	7	Sounds of Earth (JPN)	H7	57.0	Neo Universe First Violin	H. Tanabe K. Fujioka	Teruya Yoshida Shadai Farm	2-1/2 (38.0)	246.5 (13)

FP=Final Position / **BK**=Bracket Number / **PP**=Post Position / **Wgt**=Weight / **L3F**=Time of Last 3 Furlongs (600m)

NOTE 1: *Foreign contenders

NOTE 2: Figures quoted under **Odds** are Win Odds, which show the amount of money you get back per single unit (100yen), and **Fav** indicates the order of favorites.

WINNING TIME: 2:20.6 (course record)

GOING: Firm

WEATHER: Fine

TURNOVER FOR THE RACE ALONE:

¥ 20,475,491,300

TURNOVER FOR THE DAY:

¥ 28,881,918,800

ATTENDANCE: 98,988

PAY-OFF (for ¥100)

WIN	No.1	¥140	BRACKET QUINELLA	1-5	¥600	QUINELLA	1-8	¥590
PLACE	No.1	¥110	QUINELLA PLACE	1-8	¥230	EXACTA	1-8	¥700
	No.8	¥160		1-11	¥240	TRIO	1-8-11	¥960
	No.11	¥150		8-11	¥470	TRIFECTA	1-8-11	¥2,690

1. Almond Eye (JPN), bay, filly, 3-year-old

Lord Kanaloa / Fusaichi Pandora (Sunday Silence)

Owner: Silk Racing Co., Ltd. Breeder: Northern Racing

Trainer: Sakae Kunieda Jockey: Christophe Lemaire

7 Starts, 6 Wins

Added money: ¥ 303,024,000 Career earnings: ¥ 720,223,000

2. Kiseki (JPN), dark bay or brown, colt, 4-year-old

Rulership / Blitz Finale (Deep Impact)

Owner: Tatsue Ishikawa Breeder: Shimokobe Farm

Trainer: Kazuya Nakatake Jockey: Yuga Kawada

3. Suave Richard (JPN), chestnut, colt, 4-year-old

Heart's Cry / Pirramimma (Unbridled's Song)

Owner: NICKS Co., Ltd. Breeder: Northern Racing

Trainer: Yasushi Shono

Jockey: Mirco Demuro

Triple-Crowned Filly Almond Eye Romps to Victory in Record Time in Japan Cup

This year's triple crown winner and heavily favored **Almond Eye** became the second three-year-old filly after *Gentildonna* in 2012 to dominate the Japan cup. The remarkable starlet prevailed in front of the nearly 100,000 crowd under jockey Christophe Lemaire by a record-breaking 2:20.6, 1.5 seconds faster than the previous record set by *Alkaased* in 2005. After marking a second in her debut start, the *Lord Kanaloa* filly has been undefeated since, landing six consecutive victories including the fillies' Triple Crown—Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1), Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1) and the Shuka Sho (G1). This is the first Japan Cup triumph and 15th JRA-G1 victory for trainer Sakae Kunieda while jockey Christophe Lemaire celebrates his second Japan Cup win—his first was with *Vodka* in 2009. Lemaire now owns 22 JRA-G1 trophies and renewed his own record of eight G1 titles won in the same year.

The highly targeted heavy favorite **Almond Eye** broke from the inner-most stall, hugged the rails a few lengths from the frontrunner in second, steadily climbed the stretch hill and swooped past **Kiseki** at the furlong pole, pulling away easily to a 1-3/4-length victory.

Breaking from stall eight, four-year-old **Kiseki** was rushed to the front before the initial turn, set the pace and extended his lead up to three lengths in the backstretch, kicked into gear in the homestretch but proved no match for the winner while driving home well holding off **Suave Richard** by 3-1/2 lengths for second.

Second favorite **Suave Richard** was quickly steered to the rails from a wide stall, was a bit keen in the backstretch traveling in fifth behind **Almond Eye**, chased the leaders in the straight and gradually ran out of steam but withstood the hard-charging **Cheval Grand** to secure third by a neck.

A bit fractious in the paddock, seventh favorite **Thundering Blue** broke from stall six, was unhurried as usual in the far rear of the field, entered the stretch last, made a tenacious effort but was unable to reach contention and passed his tiring rivals to finish 10th.

"I thought the ground was too quick and he was a bit too tense before the race in the paddock. He did show his brilliance in the final stages, but it was a good experience and he will now be given a good rest and we'll see how he does next season," commented trainer David Menuisier after the race.

"The horse lost his concentration because of the loud crowd. He stretched well in the end but the horses in front were just too fast," said jockey Francis Berry.

Sent off sixth favorite, the Aidan O'Brien-trained **Capri** was off slow, cruised third from the rear, showed a moderate turn of foot in early stretch but failed to reach contention behind the rapid pace and was 11th.

"The ground was quick and the pace too fast. The winner finishing at 2:20.6 was too good," commented jockey Ryan Moore.

[Other Horses]

4th: (9) **Cheval Grand**—raced in 8th, showed effort, advanced to 4th at 200m pole, finished a neck behind 3rd

5th: (5) **Mikki Swallow**—sat 2nd from rear, angled out, showed belated charge, fastest over last 3 furlongs

6th: (3) **Satono Diamond**—settled in 9th, ran gamely until 200m marker, even paced thereafter

7th: (2) **Happy Grin**—saved ground in 7th, switched to outside at early stretch, lacked needed kick

8th: (14) **Win Tenderness**—sat in 6th, ran willingly along rails until 300m out, weakened

9th: (4) **Satono Crown**—hugged rails in 11th, circled wide, passed tired rivals

12th: (10) **Ganko**—ran outside winner, gradually fell back
13th: (13) **Noble Mars**—chased leader in 2nd, faded after final corner
14th: (7) **Sounds of Earth**—traveled wide in 10th, no factor

Fractional time (sec./furlong): 12.9 - 10.8 - 12.2 - 12.3 - 11.7 - 11.8 - 11.7 - 11.4 - 11.4 - 11.0 - 11.4 - 12.0
Last 4 furlongs: 45.8 Last 3 furlongs: 34.4

Positions at each corner: 1st corner 8-13(**1**,10)(11,14)-(2,9)(3,7)4,12,5,6
 2nd corner 8-(**1**,13)10,11,14(2,9)(3,7)(4,12)5,6
 3rd corner 8-(**1**,13)(11,10)(14,9)(2,3,7)4-12-5-6
 4th corner 8-(**1**,13)(11,10)(14,9)(3,7)2,4,12,5-6

Note1: **Underlined bold number** indicates the winning horse.

Note2: Horse numbers are indicated in the order of their positions at each corner, with the first position listed first. Two or more horses inside the same parentheses indicate that they were positioned side by side. Hyphens between the horse numbers indicate that there is distance between the former and the latter. The asterisk indicates a slight lead.

[Post Race Interview of Winning Connections]

Trainer: Sakae Kunieda

“I had every confidence in her potential and she was in great form coming into the race—she traveled smoothly to Tokyo yesterday and settled in nicely—and although she broke a little in air at the break, she was still able to secure a good position up front and into a nice flow. When I saw that the clock indicated 59.9 seconds at the 1,000-meter mark, I was already pretty sure that she could pull it off and win the race. The Japan Cup itself being recognized as an international event and having won this race gives her various options to choose from including an overseas challenge that will most certainly be expected of her, although details will have to be discussed with the owners.”

Jockey: Christophe Lemaire

“I am happy to have won the Japan Cup which is a big international race watched everywhere around the world, but personally I feel relieved to have won (with the race favorite) because I knew she had the potential to win but you never know what might happen in the 2,400 meters. Today I was a little bit anxious, but I think we saw the best Almond Eye in the race and it was a great show. I don’t really like the inside number one draw because it is very hard to make a plan and can depend on how you break—I didn’t want to put too much pressure on her out of the gate—it can also be pretty tricky because if you get locked inside a slow pace it can be a mess in the end and it is also difficult to stay back and move wide to the outside. (As a result) she broke well, and I saw that Kiseki was taking the lead which was good because Kiseki is a good horse and a leader with a good pace, so I had the best leader for Almond Eye and was happy with how the race went. By the first corner Almond Eye was already her usual self and well into the bridle and I really enjoyed being in the position of being on her back and by the backstretch, I nearly thought the race was over and ours. This is a very special filly as I keep telling the press in Japan that she is “Perfect” –her ability, temperament, she can adapt and race from any position, so if she has a chance to race overseas, I think she can race as well as she did today if not at least be competitive against the world’s best.”

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