

Japanese Horse Racing

Modern horseracing in Japan had its beginnings in racing events that were organized by foreign residents of Yokohama in 1862.

Horseracing in Japan is characterized by fair racing which is held with integrity in a systematic, orderly manner as prescribed by the Horse Racing Law of Japan. All authorized racing in Japan, by law, must be conducted by the Japan Racing Association (JRA) (a public enterprise established by the national government) and local governments entities.

Furthermore, the law does not permit wagering to be conducted by anyone other than racing authorities and racing authorities must offer all wagers under a pari-mutuel formula.

Japan has to rank among countries around the world as one in which horse racing is the most popular. Totally, Japan held 1,621 race meetings in 2008, with 17,744 flat and jump races. The betting turnover is number one worldwide, with total flat and jump purses that rank second in the world. Globally, Japan also breeds the fourth highest number of Thoroughbreds.

JRA Racing (operated by the Japan Racing Association)

JRA was established in 1954 by the enactment of the Japan Racing Association Law to take over horse racing that had been operated by the national government. JRA operates under the oversight of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

JRA is required to provide 10% of its gross betting

turnover to the national treasury. JRA also contributes to horse breeding, as well as the propagation and promotion of other types of livestock programs. JRA also provides for the promotion of equestrian culture, thereby returning benefits to society as a whole.

JRA operates ten racecourses with eight of these holding both flat and jump racing. The remaining two racecourses only hold flat racing. There were 3,452 races held during 2008, which generated a betting turnover of ¥2.7502 trillion.

National Association of Racing (NAR; operated by Local Governments)

Designated autonomous local municipalities and designated prefectural governments have held Racing by Local Governments since 1948. NAR is the centralized organization and registry for Racing by Local Governments. This racing, like that of JRA, is under the oversight of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and operates among other purposes to contribute to the finances of local governments.

The NAR was established in 1962 to standardize the registration of local racing's racehorse owners and racehorses as well as to establish a licensing authority for local racing trainers and jockeys nationwide.

The 16 organizers of Racing by Local Governments held 16,033 races during 2008, at 19 tracks with a turnover of approximately ¥379 billion. They operated 19 flat tracks, which included two on loan from JRA. They also have one racecourse which specializes in only draft horse races. (Asahikawa racecourse ended racing in November 2008.)



2009 Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby)



1865 Yokohama, Japan