

A Brief History of Horse Racing in Japan

- 1862** Foreign residents of Yokohama hold the first Western-style horse races in Japan
- 1882** First Western-style races are held by Japanese organizers.
- 1888** Horse race betting tickets are sold for the first time.
- 1895** 14 horses are imported from Australia.
- 1905** Implicit government approval is given for horse racing and betting to encourage horse breeding.
- 1906** The Tokyo Racing Society Inc. holds the first modern race meeting at Ikegami Racecourse. Corruption flourishes as a result of the unchecked proliferation of similar organizations and racecourses.
- 1908** The sale of betting tickets for horse races is prohibited by the enactment of a new penal code that institutes sweeping bans on various forms of gambling. However, in a move to ensure the viability of horse racing and to improve breeding stocks, the government introduces a series of subsidies for racing.
- 1910** Local horse and cattle breeding associations (later stockbreeders' associations) gain permission to conduct regional racing under a revamped regulatory system. Betting, however, remains prohibited.
- 1923** The Horse Racing Law is enacted, giving rise to the establishment of 11 horse racing clubs that are permitted to organize races and sell betting tickets. Regional racing, however, does not come under the jurisdiction of the Horse Racing Law.
- 1927** Regional racing regulations are enacted, under which stock breeders' associations and national federations are permitted to hold horse races, sell admission tickets with a bonus betting ticket and award prizes, rather than cash, to the winning ticket holders.
- 1932** The first Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) is held.
- 1936** The Japan Racing Society, a semi-governmental public enterprise, is established under amendments to the Horse Racing Law. Racing begins to flourish under government supervision.
- 1939** The Law to Conserve Military Equine Resources is enacted. Racing of military parade horses is permitted, as is the sale of winning horse tickets, the equivalent of pari-mutuel tickets.
- 1941** St. Lite is the first Triple Crown winner.
- 1943** Horse racing is suspended due to intensifying hostilities in World War II.
- 1945** World War II ends.
- 1946** Horseracing in Tokyo and Kyoto is re-started. The regional Horse Racing Law is enacted. The organization of races is restricted to the Federation of Horse Associations and its national body, the Japan Equine Society, which is disbanded soon afterwards.
- 1948** The Japan Racing Society is dissolved, and a new Horse Racing Law is enacted. The government takes over the assets of the former Japan Racing Society and administers horse racing under a national structure. However, Local government bodies, such as prefectures and designated municipalities, are permitted to organize local racing.
- 1954** JRA is organized to operate National Racing by the enactment of the Japan Racing Association Law.
- 1956** The first Arima Kinen (Arima Memorial) Grand Prix is held.
- 1958** Hakuchikara races in the U.S.A., becoming the first Japanese horse to compete abroad.
- 1959** Hakuchikara wins the Washington Birthday Handicap Stakes.
- 1960** The first Asian Racing Conference is held in Tokyo.
- 1962** The NAR is established to implement a nationally coordinated framework for registration and licensing for Racing by Local Governments.
- 1971** Import restrictions on racehorses are eased.
- 1973** The first JRA representative attends the International Conference of Racing Authorities in Paris.
- 1974** JRA joins the International Agreement on Breeding and Racing.
- 1976** Telephone betting is introduced.
- 1979** Japan becomes Asia's representative member on the first International Stud Book Committee.
- 1981** The first Japan Cup is held.
- 1987** The World Super Jockeys Series is launched.
- 1988** The JRA awards are established.
- 1990** The NAR Grand Prix awards are established.
- 1992** The first Young Jockeys World Championship is held. JRA opens its first overseas representative office in London.

1993 The Japan Association for International Horse Racing is established. JRA representative offices open in New York and Paris.

1994 Lisa Cropp of New Zealand becomes the first overseas jockey to receive a short-term riding license in Japan.

1995 The first Asian Stud Book Conference, organized by India and Japan, is held in Hyderabad, India; Japan is selected as the permanent secretariat country.

1996 JRA's first female jockeys: Maki Tamura, Yukiko Makihara and Junko Hosoe, begin their riding careers.

1997 The number of JRA Personal Access Terminal (PAT) subscribers surpasses 500,000. A joint JRA/local graded dirt race system is introduced.

1998 Japanese horses win Grade I (GI) races in France; Seeking the Pearl claims the Prix Maurice de Gheest, and Taiki Shuttle triumphs in the Prix Jacques le Marois.

1999 El Condor Pasa wins the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud (GI) and takes second place in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (GI) in France. Agnes World wins the Prix de l'Abbaye de Longchamp (GI).

2000 Agnes World continues his winning record, becoming the first Japan-trained horse to win a UK GI race, the Darley July Cup. T. M. Opera O maintained an undefeated record during the year with five GI wins. He also won all of his GI middle-distance events for older horses, rewriting the record book for largest total winnings.

2001 Two foreign-bred horses run in the Japanese Derby (GI) for the first time. Stay Gold wins the Sheema Classic (GII) crown held at Nad Al Sheba racecourse in Dubai.
Stay Gold, Eishin Preston and Agnes

Digital have respective GI victories in the Hong Kong Vase, Hong Kong Mile and Hong Kong Cup.

2002 April Eishin Preston wins Hong Kong's GI Audemars Piguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup.

August Sire Sunday Silence (16) dies of debilitation leading to heart failure at Shadai Stallion Station.

December Jockey Yutaka Take sets a new JRA record with eight wins in one day.

New Zealand jockey Rochelle Lockett wins the Nakayama Daishogai, the first JRA graded race victory in Japan by a woman.

2003 Teamed with Zenno Rob Roy, French jockey Olivier Peslier attained his third consecutive win in JRA GI races (the Tenno Sho, Japan Cup and Arima Kinen). He became the first foreign jockey to win three GI races in a row.

Still in Love achieved the filly's triple crown with three wins in the Oka Sho, Japanese Oaks and Shuka Sho. This was the first Triple Crown in 17 years. She was the second horse to accomplish this in Japanese horseracing history.

2004 All twenty members of the Asian Racing Federation have signed the Good Neighbour Policy to battle against illegal Internet betting on horse racing. On a worldwide scale, the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities' General Assembly unanimously approved the addition of the Wagering Article (Article 28) into the International Agreement of Breeding and Racing and changed the name of the agreement to the International Agreement of Breeding, Racing and Wagering.

JRA conducted various fan-appreciation events throughout the year and as one of those events, the Japan Cup and Japan Cup Dirt were held on the same day. This was in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of JRA,

2005 Her Excellency, Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland visits Nakayama Racecourse and presents the Irish President's Trophy. (March 19)

Cesario captures the fourth American Oaks (July 3) and becomes the first horse to win the American and Japanese Oaks. (May 22)

Tokyo Racecourse has the highest payoff ever, ¥18,469,120 for a trifecta. (October 22)

Their Imperial Highnesses, The Emperor and Empress visit Tokyo Racecourse. (October 30)

Deep Impact becomes the sixth horse in history to win Japan's Triple Crown (Satsuki Sho on April 17, Japan Derby on May 29 and Kikuka Sho on October 23).

Hat Trick wins the 2005 Hong Kong Mile, a GI 1,600-meter turf event. (December 11)

2006 Heart's Cry wins the Dubai Sheema Classic (GI). (March 25)

Utopia wins the GII Godolphin Mile. (March 25)

Cosmo Bulk wins the GI Singapore Airlines International Cup. (May 14)

Tokyo Racecourse installs the world's largest HDTV monitor (11.2 × 66.4 meters). (October 7)

Japan-trained Delta Blues and Pop Rock finish one-two in the GI Melbourne Cup. (November 7)

The International Cataloguing Standard Committee promotes Japan to a Part 1 nation in 2007.

2007 Admire Moon wins the GI Dubai Duty Free. (March 31)

Japan-trained Shadow Gate and Cosmo Bulk finish one-two in the GI Singapore Airlines International Cup. (May 20)

2008 The 32nd Asian Racing Conference (ARC) was held in Tokyo Japan from November 9 to 14.

2009 Dr. Koji Sato, JRA Presidential Counselor for Foreign Affairs, became the Chairman of the Asian Racing Federation (ARF).