

# Japanese Horse Racing

Horse racing 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 government 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 thoroughbred horse racing is the most popular. Totally, Japan held 1,435 race meetings in 2013, with 16,122 flat and jump races. The betting turnover is number one worldwide, with total flat and jump purses that rank first in the world. Globally, Japan also breeds the fifth 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.

The main office of JRA which is located in Tokyo, acts as the nerve center for the nationwide network of 10 racecourses, the 45 off-course betting facilities called “WINS” and other JRA related entities, and engages in activities concerning the direct or indirect development and operation of national horse racing.

JRA is required to provide 10% of its gross betting turnover to the national treasury, as well as 50% of any surplus profits remaining at the end of the fiscal year. In fiscal 2013, JRA paid approximately 2.51 billion US dollars into the National Treasury, use of which is specified by law: three-quarters must be designated for improvement of livestock breeding and the remaining one-quarter for public or social welfare. 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 10 racecourses with eight of these holding both flat and jump racing. The remaining two racecourses only hold flat racing. In 2013, there were 3,454 races, which generated a betting turnover of ¥2.404 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. Racing by local governments consists of 15 local governments located throughout the country, which serve as organizers of the races held within their jurisdiction. These 15 local governments are comprised of two prefectural governments, three municipal, and 10 joint-organizations. NAR is the authority that oversees this racing.

The 15 organizers of racing by local governments held 14,353 races during 2013 at 16 tracks with a turnover of approximately ¥353 billion. They operated 15 flat tracks, which included two (Sapporo and Chukyo) on loan from JRA and one racecourse (Obihiro) which specializes in only draft horse races.



2013 Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix)