

# Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2015 - 2nd Edition -



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The Japan Racing Association

## *Horse Racing in Japan Continues to Make Gains*

(contributed by Kenichi Nomoto, Nikkei)

The Japanese horse racing business, including both the JRA and the NAR (National Association of Racing for local public racing), are looking at further improvements in 2015. The JRA, which achieved a 3.7% increase in annual sales in 2014, marked 3.3% growth as of just the first week of October. The JRA's third consecutive jump in sales is forecast to exceed 2.5 trillion yen for the first time in six years. Meanwhile, the NAR, which is run by municipal racing authorities, marked a substantial year-to-year increase of 11.3% between January and August. It is expected to exceed 400 billion yen for the first time in 12 years in the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2016.

The Japanese economy continues to face a rocky road towards recovery, owing to weak domestic consumption, lackluster exports hurt by China's slowdown, and a sub-zero GDP between April and June. The horse racing industry, however, appears to be largely unaffected by these trends as it maintains its steady growth. The JRA marked significant year-to-year sales growth of nearly 5% between the end of March and the summer season. NAR sales have benefitted from betting through the JRA's IPAT internet channels since October 2012.

The wave of prosperity has also boosted thoroughbred sales. The two-day Select Sale auction held by the Japan Racing Horse Association in July achieved a record aggregate of ¥13.17 billion (excluding tax), similar to other sales that have improved since last year. While more owners are now buying at yearling sales rather than purchasing bloodstock directly from breeding farms, the upward trend in racing has no doubt given them good reason to be more involved.

In conjunction with Japan's amended Horse Racing Act promulgated this past spring, betting tickets for principal overseas races designated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will be sold in Japan. The ban was lifted as of April, but new software and other preparations are

required to accommodate the service, which is expected to start later next year. The Horse Racing Act was amended in response to increased interest in overseas racing due to the growing numbers of Japanese thoroughbreds running abroad in recent years. While some principal races in Japan will miss the presence of some of the country's best runners, the new amendment meets the strong requests of the media and racing fans who wish to wager on horses through tickets sold for selected main races abroad. The selected races must have had Japanese runners in the past and be designated at the beginning of the year for review a few months prior to being held. Final selection depends on the race's likelihood of attracting Japanese runners and then, if selected, an official permit issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The feature G1 races during Dubai's World Cup Carnival and Hong Kong's International Race Day as well as the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe are likely to be among the first international races to have betting tickets sold in Japan. However, except for Hong Kong, they will be held late at night Japan time, so sales will be available only online for the time being. While many countries abroad offer simulcast horse race betting, Japan has a long history of tickets being handled directly by the race organizers. Dropping the ban for overseas-racing ticket sales might be a big step towards another possible breakthrough.

Ironically, one of the most popular G1 races abroad, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, will be without a Japanese runner for the first time in six years. Duramente (JPN, C3, by King Kamehameha), winner of the first two Triple Crown Classic races—the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) and the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m)—was diagnosed with fractures in both forelegs after his second G1 victory and ruled out of racing for the rest of the year. *Harp Star* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*) was also sidelined with an injury following her heavy defeat in the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m) in March. *Kizuna* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*), hoping to avenge his fourth-place finish in 2013, came back from a fracture in early 2014 but then suffered a bowed tendon just before the fall season in September and was forced to retire from racing altogether.

It has become an annual event among the Japanese racing public to eagerly wait for the year's Arc challenger to be announced, and then to watch with high expectations as the challenges play out against the world's top class runners. This year, while much of the excitement was lost in Japan, attention still focused on the attempt by Treve (FR, M5, by Motivator) to accomplish an unprecedented hat trick in the Arc. Ticket sales for overseas races heavily rely on the quality of the Japanese entrant(s), so the question now is who will challenge the next French middle-distance G1, which will be held at Chantilly while its regular racecourse at Longchamp is renovated.

The JRA's move to open its doors to foreign jockeys in Japan began in 1994, which has prompted many jockeys from overseas to ride under three-month short-term licenses. Mirco Demuro and Christophe Lemaire were the first to ride year-round under a revised JRA rule that allows foreign

jockey to apply for an exam to receive an official JRA jockey license. Both jockeys began their new careers in March this year. While both are past their mid-thirties, Demuro has been riding in Japan since 1999, when he was just 20 years old. He now has 438 career wins, including 38 graded titles—12 at the G1 level—as of the first week of October (JRA races only). This year, since debuting in March, he has marked 84 wins, including two Triple Crown titles aboard Duramente. Lemaire, who came to Japan three years later than Demuro in December 2002, has 321 wins. He was instrumental in putting a stop to legendary *Deep Impact*'s winning streak at seven when he rode *Heart's Cry* to victory in the 2005 Arima Kinen, and he has five G1 titles among 23 graded-race victories. His 2015 debut as an official JRA jockey was delayed until April due to a suspension, but he has amassed 76 wins in his first six months.

Considering the outstanding performances by Demuro and Lemaire in previous years, it is no wonder that both riders are on the leader board this year. In 2016, when they will start the new season from January, if they maintain their winning ways they could be looking at numbers of around 150 annual wins, and possibly even dominating the competitions for total and G1 wins.

### **Japan Cup Prospects Prepare for Tenno Sho (Autumn)**

With the season's Triple Crown having concluded with the Kikuka Sho in mid-October, the autumn's middle-distance G1 series now begins with the Tenno Sho (Autumn) on November 1.

The Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,800m), the main prep towards the Tenno Sho and held at the same course at Tokyo, attracted a strong field that included 13 grade-race winners. The race was won wire-to-wire by **A Shin Hikari (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, who claimed his second grade-race title following the Epsom Cup (G3, 1,800m) in June. The *Deep Impact* colt will aim for international success in the Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m) after the Tenno Sho (Autumn). **Decipher (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, who was also attempting a consecutive grade-race victory after the Sapporo Kinen (G2, 2,000m) in August, finished 1-1/4 lengths behind in second. In third was **Isla Bonita (JPN, C4, by Fuji Kiseki)**, the 2014 Japanese 2000 Guineas winner and third-place finisher in last year's Tenno Sho (Autumn).



A Shin Hikari  
in the 2015 Mainichi Okan



Decipher  
in the 2015 Sapporo Kinen



Isla Bonita  
in the 2014 Satsuki Sho

Fifth-place finisher **Tosen Stardom** (JPN, C4, by **Deep Impact**) had been runner-up in the Ranvet Stakes (G1, 2,000m) in Australia in spring. Seventh-place finisher **Staphanos** (JPN, C4, by **Deep Impact**) was making his first start back in Japan after a long break, prior to which he was runner-up in the Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) in April. Last year's Tenno Sho (Autumn) victor **Spielberg** (JPN, H6, by **Deep Impact**) hopes to bounce back from his 10th-place finish.



Tosen Stardom  
in the 2015 Ranvet Stakes



Staphanos  
in the 2014 Fuji Stakes



Spielberg  
in the 2014 Tenno Sho (Autumn)



Lovely Day  
in the 2015 Kyoto Daishoten

The Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m), a prep race held at Kyoto Racecourse, was won by **Lovely Day** (JPN, H5, by **King Kamehameha**), who became a G1 victor in June by winning the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m). Maintaining good form coming into his fall campaign, the son of *King Kamehameha* made his bid from mid-pack and turned in a strong finish, covering the last three furlongs in 32.3 seconds, for his fifth grade-race victory. 2014 Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) runner-up

**Sounds of Earth** (JPN, C4, by **Neo Universe**), hoping to add to his earnings and qualify for the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m), finished second. **Curren Mirotic** (JPN, G7, by **Heart's Cry**), third-place finisher in the Tenno Sho (Spring), was 1/2-length behind in third. **One and Only** (JPN, C4, by **Heart's Cry**) failed to deliver his usual turn of speed, coming in sixth.



Sounds of Earth (right)  
in the 2014 Kikuka Sho



Curren Mirotic  
in the 2013 Kinko Sho



One and Only  
in the 2014 Tokyo Yushun

2014 Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) champion **Shonan Pandora** (JPN, F4, by **Deep Impact**) excelled against male opponents in the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) on September 27. **Toho Jackal** (JPN, C4, by **Special Week**), who won last year's Kikuka Sho, had his entire fall racing schedule canceled

due to health issues. Talented but unpredictable **Gold Ship (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)** hopes to bounce back from a heavy defeat in the Takarazuka Kinen and head directly to the Japan Cup.



Shonan Pandora  
in the 2014 Shuka Sho



Toho Jackal  
in the 2014 Kikuka Sho



Gold Ship  
in the 2015 Tenno Sho (Spring)

### **Rising Three-Year-Old Fillies Face Stern Test in Queen Elizabeth II Cup**

The Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 15 will include **Lachesis (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, last year's winner, and **Nuovo Record (JPN, F4, by Heart's Cry)**, last year's runner-up and winner of the 2014 Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m). The former is coming off a fourth-place finish in the Kyoto Daishoten, and the latter finished second in the All Comers in late September. Last year's third-place finisher, Dia de la Madre (JPN, M5, by King Kamehameha), sustained a fetlock injury in her left foreleg and was retired this month.



Lachesis  
in the 2014 Queen Elizabeth II Cup



Nuovo Record  
in the 2014 Yushun Himba



Dia de la Madre  
in the 2014 Fuchu Himba Stakes

One of the key trials towards this race, the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m), was held on October 17 at Tokyo Racecourse and won by 11th favorite **Nobori Diana (JPN, M5, by French Deputy)**, who made an impressive late charge from behind to land her first grade-race victory. 2013 Shuka Sho runner-up and race favorite **Smart Layer (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)** closed strongly but came up 1-1/4 lengths short. Others from this field who are predicted to start in the coming G1 include ninth-place **Keiai Elegant (JPN, M6, by King Kamehameha)**, who was runner-up in the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) in May, 12th-place **Chateau Blanche (JPN, M5, by King Halo)**, winner of the Mermaid Stakes (G3, 2,000m) in June, and 14th-place **Meisho Mambo (JPN, M5, by Suzuka Mambo)**, winner of the 2013 Queen Elizabeth II Cup.



Nobori Diana  
in the 2015 Fuchu Himba Stakes



Smart Layer  
in the 2014 Hanshin Himba Stakes



Sweet Salsa  
in the 2015 Fukushima Himba Stakes



Keiai Elegant  
in the 2015 Kyoto Himba Stakes



Chateau Blanche  
in the 2015 Mermaid Stakes



Meisho Mambo  
in the 2013 Queen Elizabeth II Cup



Mikki Queen  
in the 2015 Shuka Sho

Meanwhile, three-year-old fillies who performed successfully in their Triple Crown (for fillies) starts will be facing tougher competition. **Mikki Queen (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, who had claimed the Yushun Himba prior to her victory in the Shuka Sho on October 18—the latter giving sire *Deep Impact* his 100th grade-race victory—may aim for the Japan Cup next. **Queens Ring (JPN, F3, by Manhattan Cafe)**, who timed the fastest over the last three furlongs to miss by a neck to the winner, will race

against older mares for the first time in the next Queen Elizabeth II Cup. **Touching Speech (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)** had won the Shuka Sho trial, the Rose Stakes (G2, 1,800m), and then was sent to post second choice for the last leg of the Fillies' Triple Crown, but was unable to make up enough ground over the short stretch from racing far back and finished sixth. Yushun Himba runner-up **Rouge Buck (JPN, F3, by Manhattan Cafe)** ran a fever before her intended start in the Sapporo Kinen in August, so she will make her first start in six months in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup.



Queens Ring  
in the 2015 Fillies' Revue



Touching Speech  
in the 2015 Rose Stakes



Rouge Buck  
in the 2015 Kisaragi Sho



### Close Contest for Mile Championship

**Danon Shark (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the 2014 Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m), kicked off his fall season with a fourth-place finish, two-lengths behind the winner, in the Mainichi Okan. Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) runner-up **Vincennes (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)** and **Clarente (JPN, H6, by Dance in the Dark)**, who was third, finished ninth and eighth, respectively.



Danon Shark (left)  
in the 2014 Mile Championship



Vincennes  
in the 2015 Tokyo Shimbun Hai



Clarente in the  
2014 Keisei Hai Autumn Handicap

In the Fuji Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on October 24, the 2014 Best Two-Year-Old Colt, **Danon Platina (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, made a remarkable comeback after a disappointing spring in which he had finished 11th in the Satsuki Sho. His connections had passed up the derby to concentrate on reestablishing his form, which paid off in his first start in six months. Runner-up **Satono Aladdin (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)** was coming off a runner-up effort in the Epsom Cup (G3, 1,800m) in June. The 2013 Satsuki Sho winner, **Logotype (JPN, H5, by Lohengrin)**, stayed close throughout the 1,600-meter trip and held on for third. The 2012 NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) victor and multiple grade-race winner, **Curren Black Hill (JPN, H6, by Daiwa Major)**, led up to the 400-meter pole, but tired soon after and finished eighth. Two winners of the NHK Mile Cup, **Clarity Sky (JPN, C3, by Kurofune)** in 2015 and **Meiner Ho O (JPN, H5, Suzuka Phoenix)** in 2013, were out of contention in 15th and 14th, respectively.



Danon Platina in the  
2014 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes



Logotype  
in the 2013 Satsuki Sho



Curren Black Hill  
in the 2012 NHK Mile Cup



Clarity Sky  
in the 2015 NHK Mile Cup

Other possible runners will include **Red Arion (JPN, H5, by Agnes Tachyon)** and **Smart Orion (JPN, H5, by Grass Wonder)**, each of whom won a title in this year's Summer Mile Series, and

**Mikki Isle (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, who was fourth in the Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) on October 4.



Red Arion  
in the 2015 Sekiya Kinen



Smart Orion  
in the 2015 Chukyo Kinen



Mikki Isle  
in the 2014 NHK Mile Cup

Those who will prepare for the G1 Mile Championship by running in the Swan Stakes (G2, 1,400m) on October 31 at Kyoto Racecourse include **Fiero (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, the 2014 Mile Championship runner-up, and **Albiano (USA, F3, by Harlan's Holiday)**, winner of the Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) in March and runner-up against male counterparts in the NHK Mile Cup. **Maurice (JPN, C4, by Screen Hero)**, who capped off a perfect spring score of four wins with his first G1 title in the Yasuda Kinen, will head directly to the Mile Championship.



Fiero (right)  
in the 2014 Mile Championship



Albiano  
in the 2015 Flower Cup



Maurice (right)  
in the 2015 Yasuda Kinen