

# Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2015 - 3rd Edition -



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The Japan Racing Association

Following the retirement of many of the JRA's top middle-long distance turf runners from last year, including *Epiphaneia* (JPN, by *Symboli Kris S*), *Just a Way* (JPN, by *Heart's Cry*), *Gentildonna* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*) and *Harp Star* (JPN, by *Deep Impact*), **Lovely Day** (JPN, H5, by **King Kamehameha**) has emerged as the new star of this category.



Lovely Day  
in the 2015 Tenno Sho (Autumn)

Still an unknown at this point last year with no grade-race title to his name, the son of *King Kamehameha* landed his first grade-race victory in his 2015 debut, the Nakayama Kimpai (G3, 2,000m), which he accomplished against a rather dull field albeit in record time. He validated the win with another victory in his following race, the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m). He then extended his distances in his next two starts, the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) and the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m), but was unsuccessful, finishing sixth and eighth, respectively.

Back to his best distance in the Naruo Kinen (G3, 2,000m) in June, which he won by a comfortable two-length margin, the dark bay was sent to post sixth choice in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m). Racing close to the pace early, **Lovely Day** made a bold mid-stretch move to take command, held off a strong challenge from the outside by *Denim* and *Ruby* (JPN, M5, by *Deep Impact*), also owned by Kaneko Makoto Holdings Co., Ltd., and prevailed for a neck victory to grab his first G1 title.

After a short break during the summer, **Lovely Day** continued his winning ways in the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m), carrying a top weight of 58kg, which led to his pick as race favorite in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m). Demonstrating his staying power after taking the lead at the straight, he managed to book his second G1 victory and fourth consecutive grade-race win.

Considering the six grade-race wins in just eight starts this year, trainer Yasutoshi Ikee marvels at his star horse for being able to achieve so much in such a hectic racing schedule, but he notes that the late-developing horse “has become stronger in build and tougher.” Whereas Japanese horses are generally said to be fragile, **Lovely Day** will attempt to show otherwise in the upcoming Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m).

Among the rest of the top-five finishers of this year’s Tenno Sho (Autumn), Tomokazu Takano-trained **Shonan Pandora (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)** is the only other Japan Cup entry. The 2014 Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) winner turned in a third-place effort in this year’s Takarazuka Kinen in June and then dominated a mixed field of 15 runners in the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) in September. Racing wide throughout in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), she exerted a fine turn of speed from behind to close within 0.2 second of the leader, finishing fourth. She should be a threat if she puts her good closing speed to use in the Japan Cup, her first step-up in distance to 2,400 meters.



Shonan Pandora  
in the 2014 Shuka Sho

Among other Tenno Sho (Autumn) runners headed towards the Japan Cup is eight-year-old **Pelusa (JPN, H8, by Zenno Rob Roy)**, who ended a prolonged slump by scoring his first win in five years this summer in an open-class start, despite being sent to post 15th choice. He then backed up the win by finishing a solid seventh in the Tenno Sho. Spielberg (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact), who last year won the Tenno Sho (Autumn) and placed third in the Japan Cup, was retired after finishing 10th in this year’s Tenno Sho (Autumn). **Admire Deus (JPN, C4, by Admire Don)** scored two G2 wins in the first half of this season, but in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) started from a wide stall and ultimately had too much ground to make up, finishing 11th, despite marking the fastest finish.



Pelusa  
in the 2010 Aoba Sho



Spielberg  
in the 2014 Tenno Sho (Autumn)



Admire Deus  
in the 2015 Nikkei Sho

**Last Impact (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)** and **Derby Fizz (JPN, H5, by Jungle Pocket)**, who finished 12th and 15th respectively in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), are hoping to bounce back to form in the Japan Cup. **One and Only (JPN, C4, by Heart’s Cry)** turned in his worst performance yet in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), finishing 16th, but as last year’s Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) winner he hopes to improve in the Japan Cup.



Last Impact  
in the 2014 Kinko Sho



Derby Fizz  
in the 2015 Hakodate Kinen



One and Only  
in the 2014 Tokyo Yushun



Mikki Queen  
in the 2015 Shuka Sho

A three-year-old female, who will make her first Japan Cup challenge, is **Mikki Queen (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) in May and the Shuka Sho in October. The talented filly passed up the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) for the bigger challenge in the Japan Cup. She was unable to run in the Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m), but she displayed a spectacular charge to claim the Oaks. She also did not disappoint as the post favorite

when she won the Shuka Sho, her second start of the fall season. She has finished within the top two in all seven career starts, earning four wins and three seconds. With a weight advantage of 53 kilos, hopes are high for her to follow in the footsteps of *Gentildonna*, who became the first three-year-old filly to claim the Japan Cup title in 2012.

Meanwhile, the three-year-old colt group is running out of talent as two-time classic winner Duramente (JPN, C3, by King Kamehameha) is out of action with a fracture and Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) victor Kitanas Black (JPN, C3, by Black Tide) will pass up the Japan Cup to run in the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m). Real Steel (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact) has been the most consistent runner in this group, finishing second in both the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) and the Kikuka Sho, as well as fourth in the Tokyo Yushun, but trainer Yoshito Yahagi has announced that he will take off the rest of the season. Kikuka Sho third-place finisher Lia Fail (JPN, C3, by Zenno Rob Roy) is aiming at the Arima Kinen.



Kitanas Black  
in the 2015 Kikuka Sho



Real Steel  
in the 2015 Kyodo News Service Hai



Lia Fail  
in the 2015 Kobe Shimbun Hai



**Gold Ship (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)** has not run since his disappointing Takarazuka Kinen, but he will be one of the main attractions in the Japan Cup because his connections have announced that their six-time G1 winner will retire at the end of this season. The focus is on whether he can bounce back from his last start in June, when the even-money favorite reared inside the starting stall, missed his break and was unable to recover, finishing 15th. He kicked off his spring campaign well, claiming both the Hanshin Daishoten and the Tenno Sho (Spring), although in the latter he misbehaved and refused to load at the barrier, delaying the start. He returned to training after the summer break and passed his gate test, as instructed by JRA authorities, so he is currently being conditioned to give his best performance before retirement. His past performances at Tokyo Racecourse include a win in a G3 event when he was a three-year-old, but his other results there are not so encouraging, including being heavily defeated to 15th in his last Japan Cup start in 2013.



Gold Ship  
in the 2015 Tenno Sho (Spring)

Other possible starters worth noting are **Sounds of Earth (JPN, C4, by Neo Universe)**, who was runner-up to **Lovely Day** in the Kyoto Daishoten and placed second also in the Kikuka Sho as a three-year-old. **Hit the Target (JPN, H7, by King Kamehameha)**, who was not in time to prepare for the Tenno Sho (Autumn) this fall, is expected to make his third Japan Cup challenge. **Gold Actor (JPN, C4, by Screen Hero)**, who had just won his first grade-race victory in the Copa Republica Argentina (G2, 2,500m) at Tokyo on November 8 was another possibility in the Japan Cup. The four-year-old, who finished third in the Kikuka Sho in October last year, was given a long break to strengthen his hindquarters and then resumed racing in July this year. Carrying top weights, he won his comeback start easily by two lengths and then the October Stakes. His sire, *Screen Hero (JPN, by Grass Wonder)*, also landed his first grade-race title in the 2008 edition of the same race before winning the Japan Cup in his following start. However, his connections appear to be interested in running him in the Arima Kinen instead.



Sounds of Earth (right)  
in the 2014 Kikuka Sho



Hit the Target  
in the 2015 Meguro Kinen



Gold Actor  
in the 2015 Copa Republica