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SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE 48TH TAKAMATSUNOMIYA KINEN (G1)



The Takamatsunomiya Kinen, one of two G1 championship events for sprinters held by the JRA together with the Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) in autumn, was formerly named Takamatsunomiya Cup in honor of Prince Takamatsunomiya who presented the trophy to the winner in 1971. The race was shortened from 2,000 meters to 1,200 meters and granted a Japanese Grade 1 status in 1996, then renamed Takamatsunomiya Kinen in 1998. The first of flat turf G1 events held annually, the race was temporarily shifted to Hanshin Racecourse in 2011 and was contested over the newly renovated track back at Chukyo in the following year with added challenges of an uphill and a longer homestretch exceeding 400 meters.

The Takamatsunomiya Kinen was designated an international race in 2001 and welcomed its first two foreign participants—*Disturbingthepeace* (13th) and *Echo Eddie* (17th)—from the U.S. in 2003 and was part of the Global Sprint Challenge, the international championship series for sprinters between 2011 and 2017. This year, **Blizzard** from Hong Kong, who finished fifth in the Sprinters Stakes last autumn, came back for the Takamatsunomiya Kinen in his bid to become the second foreign winner of this race after *Aerovelocit* (NZ, by *Pins*) in 2015

Defending champion **Seiun Kosei** came off a second in the Silk Road Stakes (G3, 1,200m; Jan.28) won by **Fine Needle**. 2017 Best Sprinter or Miler **Red Falx** finished third in his kick-off start of this season, the Hankyu Hai (G3, 1,400m; Feb.25)—**Diana Halo** won her second grade-race title in the race. **King Heart** came off a victory in the Ocean Stakes (G3, 1,200m; Mar.3) in which 2017 Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m) winner **Reine Minoru** and 2014 Best Sprinter or Miler **Snow Dragon** finished sixth and 11th, respectively. Other key runners included the Hanshin Cup (G2, 1,400m; Dec.23) runner-up **Dance Director** and 2017 Takamatsunomiya Kinen runner-up **Let's Go Donki** who came off a fifth in the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m; Feb.18).

Big Arthur (JPN, by *Sakura Bakushin O*) set the race record of 1:06.7 in 2016.

THE 48TH TAKAMATSUNOMIYA KINEN (G1)

4-year-old & up, 1,200 meters (about 6 furlongs), turf, left-handed

Sunday, March 25, 2018 Chukyo Racecourse 11th Race Post time: 15:40

Total prize money: ¥ 238,600,000 (about US\$ 2,170,000 <US\$1=¥110>)

4-y-o & up: 57kg (about 126 lbs),

2kg allowance for Fillies & Mares, 1kg allowance for Southern Hemisphere-bred born in 2014

Safety factor: 18 runners

FP	BK	PP	Horse	Sex Age	Wgt (kg)	Sire Dam	Jockey Trainer	Owner Breeder	Margin (L3F)	Odds (Fav)
1	5	9	Fine Needle (JPN)	H5	57.0	Admire Moon Needlecraft	Y. Kawada Y. Takahashi	Godolphin Darley Japan K. K	1:08.5 (34.5)	5.5 (2)
2	4	8	Let's Go Donki (JPN)	M6	55.0	King Kamehameha Marutoku	Y. Iwata T. Umeda	Hirosaki Toshihiro HD Co., Ltd. Shimizu Bokujo	Nose (34.6)	6.3 (3)
3	4	7	Nac Venus (JPN)	M5	55.0	Daiwa Major Ready to Please	K. Miura H. Sugiura	Kinya Komatsu Shadai Farm	1/2 (34.7)	41.2 (10)
4	6	11	Dance Director (JPN)	H8	57.0	Aldebaran Mother Leaf	Y. Take K. Sasada	Suzuko Ota Fujiwara Breeding Stud	1/2 (34.3)	8.1 (4)
5	2	3 B	Blizzard* (AUS)	G7	57.0	Starcraft Stormy Choice	K. Teetan P. Yiu	Infinitude Syndicate G S A Bloodstock Pty Ltd	Neck (34.9)	13.4 (6)
6	1	1	Seiun Kosei (JPN)	H5	57.0	Admire Moon Observant	D. Matsuda H. Uehara	Shigeyuki Nishiyama Sakurai Bokujo	Neck (35.5)	12.8 (5)
7	7	13	Reine Minoru (JPN)	F4	55.0	Daiwa Major Daiwa Angel	R. Wada M. Honda	Minoru Yoshioka Fujiwara Farm	Neck (34.6)	19.3 (7)
8	3	6	Red Falx (JPN)	H7	57.0	Swept Overboard Vermouth	M. Demuro T. Ozeki	TokyoHorseRacing Co., Ltd Shadai Farm	1/2 (33.7)	2.3 (1)
9	2	4	Snow Dragon (JPN)	H10	57.0	Admire Cozzene Meine Caprice	T. Ono N. Takagi	Makio Okada Meiwa Iwami Bokujo	3/4 (34.3)	130.0 (15)
10	8	17	King Heart (JPN)	H5	57.0	Orewa Matteruze Love Heart	H. Kitamura S. Hoshino	Yoichi Masuda Yoichi Masuda	Neck (34.3)	46.5 (12)

11	6	12	Nero (JPN)	H7	57.0	Johannesburg Nishino Takarazuka	F. Minarik H. Mori	Shigeyuki Nishiyama Nishiyama Stud	1-1/2 (35.7)	40.8 (9)
12	8	16	Shining Lei (JPN)	H6	57.0	Deep Impact Shells Lei	Y. Kitamura T. Takano	U. Carrot Farm Northern Racing	Neck (34.9)	32.6 (8)
13	3	5	Nobo Baccara (JPN)	H6	57.0	Admire Aura Nobo Kiss	M. Muto S. Temma	LS. M Co., Ltd. LS. M Co., Ltd.	1/2 (34.1)	356.7 (17)
14	1	2 B	Rieno Tesoro (USA)	F4	55.0	Speightstown Akilina	H. Yoshida R. Takei	Ryotokuji Kenji Holdings Co., Ltd. Oak Bluff Stables LLC	Nose (35.8)	114.7 (13)
15	8	18	Rhein Spirit (JPN)	H7	57.0	Swept Overboard Ribbon Stripe	K. Mori M. Matsunaga	Shigemasa Osawa Fujiwara Breeding Stud	Nose (34.5)	264.4 (16)
16	7	14	Rhein Meteor (JPN)	H8	57.0	Meisho Bowler Aramasa Fairy	Y. Nishida T. Mizuno	Shigemasa Osawa Araki Farm	1-1/2 (34.9)	449.3 (18)
17	7	15	Jeune Ecole (JPN)	F4	55.0	Kurofune Luminous Point	Y. Fukunaga T. Yasuda	Sunday Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Farm	1-1/4 (35.7)	120.3 (14)
18	5	10	Diana Halo (JPN)	M5	55.0	King Halo Yamakatsu Seiren	K. Matsuyama H. Oneda	Komahide Onishi Farm	Nose (36.5)	45.5 (11)

FP=Final Position / BK=Bracket Number / PP=Post Position / B=Blinker / Wgt=Weight / L3F=Time of Last 3 Furlongs (600m)

NOTE 1: *Foreign Contender

NOTE 2: Figures quoted under Odds are Win Odds, which show the amount of money you get back per single unit (100yen), and Fav indicates the order of favorites.

WINNING TIME: 1:08.5

GOING: Firm

WEATHER: Fine

TURNOVER FOR THE RACE ALONE: ¥ 12,571,725,500

TURNOVER FOR THE DAY: ¥ 18,741,545,900

ATTENDANCE: 30,110

PAY-OFF (for ¥100)

WIN	No.9	¥550	BRACKET QUINELLA	4-5	¥1,300	QUINELLA	8-9	¥1,690
PLACE	No.9	¥240	QUINELLA PLACE	8-9	¥700	EXACTA	9-8	¥3,170
	No.8	¥220		7-9	¥2,290	TRIO	7-8-9	¥15,910
	No.7	¥750		7-8	¥2,760	TRIFECTA	9-8-7	¥60,450

1. Fine Needle (JPN), bay, horse, 5-year-old

Admire Moon / Needlecraft (Mark of Esteem)

Owner: Godolphin

Breeder: Darley Japan K. K

Trainer: Yoshitada Takahashi

Jockey: Yuga Kawada

24 Starts, 8 Wins

Added money: ¥ 113,780,000

Career earnings: ¥ 304,852,000

Principal race performances:

'17 Centaur Stakes (G2, 1,200m) 1st

'18 Silk Road Stakes (G3, 1,200m) 1st

2. Let's Go Donki (JPN), chestnut, mare, 6-year-old

King Kamehameha / Marutoku (Marvelous Sunday)

Owner: Hirosaki Toshihiro HD Co., Ltd. Breeder: Shimizu Bokujo

Trainer: Tomoyuki Umeda

Jockey: Yasunari Iwata

3. Nac Venus (JPN), dark bay or brown, mare, 5-year-old

Daiwa Major / Ready to Please (More Than Ready)

Owner: Kinya Komatsu

Breeder: Shadai Farm

Trainer: Hiroaki Sugiura

Jockey: Kosei Miura

Second Favorite Fine Needle Captures First G1 Title in Takamatsunomiya Kinen

Second pick **Fine Needle** captured his first G1 title in this year's Takamatsunomiya Kinen. It was the first JRA-G1 title for both owner Godolphin and trainer Yoshitada Takahashi who opened his yard in 2011. Jockey Yuga Kawada claimed his 11th JRA-G1 title following his win in the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes with Danon Premium last year. Marking his first grade-race victory in the Centaur Stakes last September, the son of *Admire Moon*

finished 12th in the following Sprinters Stakes and took a four-month break before claiming his second grade-race win in the Silk Road Stakes prior to the spring G1.

Five-year-old **Fine Needle** made a good break from stall nine and eased back to mid-division, around seventh from the front. Turning wide around the corners, the son of *Admire Moon* made bid from the outside and steadily made headway through the long uphill homestretch, passing his rivals one by one and finally pinning **Let's Go Donki** at the wire for a nose victory.

“The horse had shown significant improvement since the latter half of last season and he’s matured every time he comes back for training following his time out in the pasture. He came in to this race weighing 480kg—about 10kg more than I would have thought as ideal—but he was in great condition and his movement didn’t look heavy at all, so I guess that goes to show how much strength he’s put on. Earlier in his career, he would be affected by track conditions and which way the race was run and such—he only had one run going left at Chukyo a couple of years back but he was a different horse then—but he’s improved up to the point that he is able to perform to his best whatever the race conditions are and he still has room for improvement. It gave me a great sense of accomplishment to have been able to be the first to give the owner their first G1 title in Japan and I would like to credit my whole stable staff for their effort and teamwork. This victory opens a number of options for us and future plans will be discussed with the owners including possible overseas challenges to Hong Kong and/or England. In any case, my job as a trainer is to have **Fine Needle** conditioned and ready for any decided plan,” commented trainer Yoshitada Takahashi.

“I felt that the horse had really matured both physically and mentally and I had a good run with him in his last start (Silk Road Stakes). He validated that win and proved himself at the highest level this time. I was aware of where the track was deep especially between the third and last corners but he wasn’t affected by it much and stayed in good rhythm. I wasn’t really sure whether I had actually won as the margin was so close between us and the runner-up but my only concern was to ride the horse to his best to the end so the victory was just a result which came along with it and he deserved it,” commented Yuga Kawada.

Settling in midfield, third pick **Let's Go Donki** took an economic trip along the rails, overtook defending champion **Seiun Kosei** to take command 300 meters out and almost succeeded in revenging her runner-up finish last year but was pinned at the wire by **Fine Needle** while holding off the remaining field by half a length.

Tenth choice **Nac Venus**, traveled in mid-division between the eventual winner and runner-up, surged out inside **Fine Needle** at the stretch and showed persistent effort till the end for third.

Race favorite **Red Falx** settled second from last and, though exerting the fastest last three furlongs of the field, finished 0.4 seconds behind the winner in eighth.

Blizzard broke sharply, rushed to secure a good position two wide around fifth position and shifted slightly to the outside for a clear run but struggled to pick up speed along the straight while showing effort to finish fifth.

“The horse really tried but he had a little trouble balancing himself over the surface that was still considerably soft—that he’s never experienced before—and he couldn’t get a good grip of the ground. From where I saw at the top of the straight, there was quite a lot of kick back, but the jockey did the right thing—he found the right path in the middle of the track and the horse really tried hard. It was a good run and he finished fifth,” commented trainer Poon-Fai Yiu.

“The horse was very well going into the race. We had a dream position and he had a horse in front of him that was giving him a very smart lead. Into the straight, I moved him to a nicer part of the track with more grass, but still he

lost his action—not completely but it’s so deep here—I could feel, he couldn’t quicken up—he moved up so well and I knew he still had a lot in the tank but when I let him go, he kept spinning in the same spot. With a firmer track...he would have finished better, but he still had a good run,” commented jockey Karis Teetan.

Other Horses:

4th: (11) **Dance Director**—saved ground in mid-pack, advanced to 2nd at stretch then overtaken by winner and 3rd-place finisher in final strides

6th: (1) **Seiun Kosei**—set pace, led until 200m out, weakened in last 100m

7th: (13) **Reine Minoru**—traveled 3-wide in mid-group, rallied while unable to threaten the leaders

9th: (4) **Snow Dragon**—hugged rails in mid-division, showed brief response at stretch

10th: (17) **King Heart**—took wide trip towards rear, showed belated charge outside

11th: (12) **Nero**—chased leaders in 3rd, failed to sustain bid after 200m pole

12th: (16) **Shining Lei**—raced in mid-pack, passed tired rivals

13th: (5) **Nobo Baccara**—trailed in rear, improved position at stretch

14th: (2) **Rieno Tesoro**—stalked leaders in 4-5th, ran gamely until 100m out, outrun thereafter

15th: (18) **Rhein Spirit**—sat 3rd from rear, turned wide, unable to reach contention

16th: (14) **Rhein Meteor**—positioned back in mid-group, showed little at stretch

17th: (15) **Jeune Ecole**—tracked leader in mid-division, never fired at stretch

18th: (10) **Diana Halo**—pressed leader in 2nd, faded after 300m pole

Fractional time (sec./furlong): 12.0 - 10.3 - 11.0 - 11.4 - 11.5 - 12.3
Last 4 furlongs: 46.2 Last 3 furlongs: 35.2

Positions at each corner: 3rd corner (1,*10)12(2,3)(7,9)8(15,13)(11,16)(4,17)14,18,6-5
4th corner (*1,10)(2,12)3(8,7,9)(15,13)11,16,4(14,17)18,6,5

NOTE 1: Underlined bold number indicates the winning horse.

NOTE 2: Horse numbers are indicated in the order of their positions at each corner, with the first position listed first. Two or more horses inside the same parentheses indicate that they were positioned side by side. Hyphens between the horse numbers indicate that there is distance between the former and the latter. The asterisk indicates a slight lead.