

Exclusive Topics for Horse Racing in Japan – Spring Edition –

March 2020
The Japan Racing Association

The JRA's 2020 horse racing season will start in earnest with the three-year-old classic trials in March, as established horses begin to prepare towards the spring G1 events. In this special Spring edition of our international newsletter, we are pleased to update you on the progress of last year's stars and this season's key runners, part of our ongoing effort to support your reporting of JRA events.

Japan's Ambitions for Further Overseas Successes Disrupted by COVID-19

Japan's overseas challengers, after a disappointing 2018 season in which none returned with a title from their respective G1 challenges, bounced back last year to land eight G1 titles in four countries among seven runners. The confidence gained by these victories no doubt boosted motivations for more Japanese horses to seek success overseas this season. With the outbreak of the coronavirus, however, many countries including Japan have been required to implement strict travel measures to help control further spread of the virus, so the connections of the intended challengers had no choice but to cancel their overseas plans.

In the inaugural Saudi Cup (dirt, 1,800m), held on February 29 as the world's richest race, two JRA Award Best Dirt Horse winners—**Gold Dream (JPN, H7, by Gold Allure; 2017)** and **Chrysoberyl (JPN, C4, by Gold Allure; 2019)**—missed their breaks and finished more than five lengths behind the winner.

Runners from Japan, however, performed impressively in three other supporting races of the seven-race undercard held that day at King Abdulaziz Racetrack. Last year's Nassau Stakes (G1, 1,980m) winner **Deirdre (JPN, M6, by Harbinger)** turned in a strong performance in the Mohamed Yousuf Naghi Motors Cup (2,100m) but was overtaken by the winner in the last 100 meters and finished second. **Full Flat (USA, C3, by Speightstown)** improved on his fifth-place finish in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1, dirt, 1,700m) as a two-year-old and became the first Japanese runner to claim a title in Saudi Arabia with a victory in the Samba Saudi Derby Cup (dirt, 1,600m). He was positioned handily behind the pace in second before gaining command as he turned for home and then drew away easily to win by 2-1/4 lengths. **Matera Sky (USA, H6, by Speightstown)**, last year's Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1, dirt, 1,200m) runner-up, looked very much like the winner of the Saudia Cup (dirt, 1,200m), setting a rapid pace and accelerating impressively after the last turn to widen the gap to almost six lengths with 200 meters to go, but he was pinned by the fast-closing winner in the last strides and missed by a head.



Deirdre (right) in the 2020 Mohamed Yousuf Naghi Motors Cup



Full Flat in the 2020 Samba Saudi Derby Cup



Matera Sky (right) in the 2020 Saudia Cup

Deirdre returns to her current base in Newmarket, England, where she has been training since last summer, and will continue to race in Europe towards her main target, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) on October 4. The remaining four flew directly from Saudi Arabia to the United Arab Emirates and were joined by 16 others from Japan, but now all 20 will return to Japan following the Dubai Racing Club's announcement that the Dubai World Cup has been called off. The intended starters in the Dubai World Cup meeting on March 28 were as follows:

Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m):

- **Gold Dream**
- **Chrysoberyl**
- **Chuwa Wizard (JPN, H5, by King Kamehameha)**, the 2019 JBC Classic (dirt, 2,000m) victor who kicked off this season with a win in the Kawasaki Kinen (dirt, 2,100m) on January 29
- **Master Fencer (JPN, C4, by Just a Way)**, who ran impressively in two U.S. Triple Crown starts—the Kentucky Derby (G1, dirt, 2,000m) and the Belmont Stakes (G1, dirt, 2,400m), finishing sixth and fifth, respectively. The Just a Way colt is coming off a victory in February.



Gold Dream in the 2020 Saudi Cup



Chrysoberyl in the 2020 Saudi Cup



Chuwa Wizard (right) in the 2019 JBC Classic



Master Fencer in the 2019 Kentucky Derby

Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m):

- **Glory Vase (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, who landed his first G1 victory in the 2019 Hong Kong Vase (2,400m)
- **Loves Only You (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) victor

- **Curren Bouquetd'or (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, who registered three runner-up G1 efforts, including last year's Japan Cup (2,400m), and is coming off another runner-up effort in the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) on February 16



Glory Vase
in the 2019 Hong Kong Vase



Loves Only You
in the 2019 Yushun Himba



Curren Bouquetd'or (left)
in the 2019 Shuka Sho

Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m):

- **Almond Eye (JPN, M5, by Lord Kanaloe)**, 2018 Horse of the Year and defending champion
- **Win Bright (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)**, JRA's 2019 Best Older Colt or Horse and a two-time G1 winner in Hong Kong
- **Persian Knight (JPN, H6, by Harbinger)**, winner of the 2017 Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m)
- **Admire Mars (JPN, C4, by Daiwa Major)**, who has a career record of six wins out of seven starts at a mile, including the Hong Kong Mile, among three G1 victories



Almond Eye
in the 2019 Tenno Sho (Autumn)



Win Bright
in the 2019 Hong Kong Cup



Persian Knight
in the 2017 Mile Championship



Admire Mars
in the 2019 Hong Kong Mile

Golden Shaheen (G1, dirt, 1,200m):

- **Matera Sky**
- **Gold Queen (JPN, M5, by Sinister Minister)**, runner-up in last year's 2019 JBC Ladies' Classic (dirt, 1,400m)

Al Quoz Sprint (G1, 1,200m):

- **Mr Melody (USA, H5, by Scat Daddy)**, winner of the 2019 Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m)
- **Right on Cue (JPN, H5, by Shamardal)**, the 2019 Keihan Hai (G3, 1,200m) victor



Gold Queen
in the 2018 Aoi Stakes



Mr Melody
in the 2019 Takamatsunomiya Kinen



Right on Cue
in the 2019 Keihan Hai

UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m):

- **Full Flat**
- **Derma Onyx (JPN, C3, by On Fire)**, with two wins out of three starts on dirt
- **Serein (USA, F3, by Uncle Mo)**, coming off third in the UAE Oaks (G3, dirt, 1,900m)

Godolphin Mile (G2, dirt, 1,600m):

- **Derma Louvre (JPN, C4, by Pyro)**, third-place finisher in the Kawasaki Kinen
- **Mogiana Flavor (JPN, H5, by Battle Plan)**, based at NAR's Oi Racecourse

Australia's annual two-day "The Championships" event will be held at Randwick Racecourse on April 4 and 11. Last year, Japan's Kluger (JPN, H8, by King Kamehameha) came off a fourth-place finish in the Doncaster Mile (G1, 1,600m) to turn in an impressive runner-up effort to Australia's legendary mare, Winx (AUS, by Street Cry), in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes (G1, 2,000m) only a week later. **Mozu Ascot (USA, H6, by Frankel)**, winner of the 2018 Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) and this year's February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m), and **My Style (JPN, H6, by Heart's Cry)** were planned to start in the Doncaster Mile in Australia but the trip to was called off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Mozu Ascot** will either stay in Japan for the Takamatsunomiya Kinen on March 29 or change his destination to Hong Kong for the Champions Mile (G1, 1,600m). **My Style** will run in the Lord Derby Challenge Trophy (G3, 1,600m) on April 4 or the Milers Cup (G2, 1,600m) on April 26. Meanwhile, 2017 Best Two-Year-Old Colt **Danon Premium (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)** will run in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes, aiming to claim his second career G1 title after runner-up efforts last fall in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) and Mile Championship.



Mozu Ascot
in the 2020 February Stakes



My Style
in the 2019 Hakodate Kinen



Danon Premium
in the 2017 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

Spring G1 Campaign for Four-Year-Olds and Up in Japan

In response to the coronavirus outbreak, JRA decided to hold its horse races without spectators from February 29. As other racecourses are closed, racing fans can only bet by phone or via online.

With a number of G1 winners retiring at the end of last year, including 2019 Horse of the Year Lys Gracieux (JPN, by Heart's Cry), Cheval Grand (JPN, by Heart's Cry), Al Ain (JPN, by Deep Impact), Rey de Oro (JPN, by King Kamehameha) and Suave Richard (JPN, by Heart's Cry), this year's middle-long-distance spring G1 campaign for four-year-olds & up will likely be led by the top finishers of last year's Japan Cup and Arima Kinen.



Lys Gracieux
in the 2019 Arima Kinen

Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) winners **Wagnerian (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)** in 2018 and **Makahiki (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact)** in 2016, who finished the 2019 Japan Cup in third and fourth, respectively, will both kick off their 2020 campaigns with the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) on April 5. **Saturnalia (JPN, C4, by Lord Kanaloa)**, 2019 Arima Kinen runner-up and Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) winner, commenced his four-year-old season with a comfortable two-length victory in the Kinko Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 15. His connections announced that the colt will skip the Osaka Hai for the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) on June 28.



Wagnerian
in the 2018 Tokyo Yushun



Makahiki (right)
in the 2016 Tokyo Yushun



Saturnalia
in the 2019 Satsuki Sho



Danon Kingly
in the 2020 Nakayama Kinen

Other key contenders of the Osaka Hai will include 2019 Tokyo Yushun runner-up **Danon Kingly (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, who most recently won the Nakayama Kinen, and **Lucky Lilac (JPN, M5, by Orfevre)**, who won the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) and was second in the Nakayama Kinen. They will be joined by 2019 Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) victor **Chrono Genesis (JPN, F4, by Bago)**, who registered her third graded title in her

latest start, the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) on February 16, and **Blast Onepiece (JPN, H5, by Harbinger)**, winner of the 2018 Arima Kinen and this year's American Jockey Club Cup (G2, 2,200m).



Lucky Lilac (left)
in the 2019 Queen Elizabeth II Cup



Chrono Genesis
in the 2019 Shuka Sho



Blast Onepiece
in the 2018 Arima Kinen

Last year's Japan Cup fifth-place finisher **You Can Smile (JPN, H5, by King Kamehameha)** captured his third graded title with a comfortable 1-3/4-length victory in his five-year-old kick-off start, the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) on March 22, and will head to the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) on May 3. **World Premiere (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact), Fierement (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)** and **Kiseki (JPN, H6, by Rulership)**, who finished



Fierement
in the 2019 Tenno Sho (Spring)

third, fourth and fifth respectively in last year's Arima Kinen, were all Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) winners in their three-year-old seasons. **World Premiere** was scheduled to kick off his four-year-old season with the Osaka Hai and then head for the Tenno Sho (Spring) but was sidelined due to health reasons. **Fierement** will commence his 2020 season by attempting to defend his Tenno Sho (Spring) title. **Kiseki**, who finished a disappointing seventh after a poor break in his first start this season, the Hanshin Daishoten, will be another key runner in the Tenno Sho (Spring).



You Can Smile
in the 2020 Hanshin Daishoten



World Premiere
in the 2019 Kikuka Sho



Kiseki
in the 2017 Kikuka Sho



Tower of London
in the 2019 Sprinters Stakes

The first of the flat-turf G1 events of the year, the Takamatsunomiya Kinen at Chukyo Racecourse on March 29, will spotlight last year's Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) winner **Tower of London (JPN, H5, by Raven's Pass)**. The five-year-old kicked off the season with the Ocean Cup (G3, 1,200m) on March 7 by finishing third, 4-1/2 lengths behind winner **Danon Smash (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, while carrying a top weight of 58kg,

which was 2kg more than the rest of the field. After the Takamatsunomiya Kinen, he may fly to Great Britain either for the Royal Ascot or the July Cup (G1, 1,200m). The Takamatsunomiya Kinen will also feature **Tower of London's** stablemate and 2019 Best Three-Year-Old Filly, **Gran Alegria (JPN,**

F4, by Deep Impact), and last year's Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) winner Normcore (JPN, M5, by Harbinger).



Danon Smash
in the 2020 Ocean Cup



Gran Alegria
in the 2019 Oka Sho



Normcore
in the 2019 Victoria Mile

The steeplechase racing in spring will be highlighted by the Nakayama Grand Jump (J-G1, 4,250m) on April 18. **Oju Chosan (JPN, H9, by Stay Gold)**, Best Steeplechase Horse between 2016 and 2018, will aim for his fifth consecutive title this year after winning the Hanshin Spring Jump (J-G2, 3,900m) on March 14 to renew his own record by claiming his 12th consecutive graded steeplechase title. Last year's Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) winner and Best Steeplechase Horse **Shingun Michael (JPN, G6, by Shingun Opera)** also kicked off the season in the Hanshin Spring Jump and finished second, nine lengths behind **Oju Chosan**.



Oju Chosan
in the 2019 Nakayama Grand Jump

The Victoria Mile for four-year-old & up fillies/mares on May 17 will include **Lucky Lilac, Gran Alegria, Chrono Genesis** and **Normcore** as well as last year's runner-up **Primo Scene (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, Kyoto Himba Stakes (G3, 1,400m) victor **Sound Chiara (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)** and other female runners from the prep race, the Hanshin Himba Stakes (G2, 1,600m) on April 11.



Shingun Michael
in the 2019 Nakayama Daishogai



Primo Scene
in the 2020 Tokyo Shimbun Hai



Sound Chiara
in the 2020 Kyoto Himba Stakes

Three-Year-Old Classic Hopefuls

This year's three-year-old classics will commence with the filly's Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m) on April 12 and then the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m), the first contest for males, a week later.



Maltese Diosa
in the 2020 Tulip Sho

The top three finishers of the 2019 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m) maintained form by securing the top three positions in their season kick-off on March 7, the Tulip Sho (G2, 1,600m), the main trial race towards the Oka Sho. **Maltese Diosa (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)** nosed out **Cravache d'Or (JPN, F3, by Heart's Cry)** for the win, followed by **Resistencia (JPN, F3, by Daiwa Major)**, Best Two-Year-Old Filly of 2019, in third. In sixth was **Woman's Heart (JPN, F3, by Heart's Cry)**, who was also fourth in the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies last December 8, while seventh was taken by **Smile Kana (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Fairy Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on January 13 .



Cravache d'Or
in the 2019 Two-Year-Olds (Newcomer)



Resistencia
in the 2019 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies



Woman's Heart
in the 2019 Niigata Nisai Stakes

The first leg of the fillies' Triple Crown will also feature runners who performed well in either of two additional trials on March 15: **Intermission (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)** and **Fiori Chiari (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**, the top two finishers in the Anemone Stakes (L, 1,600m), and **Epos (JPN, F3, by Just a Way)**, **Yamakatsu Mermaid (JPN, F3, by Lord Kanaloa)** and **Nine to Five (JPN, F3, by Screen Hero)**, who were the top three in the Fillies' Revue (G2, 1,400m).



Smile Kana
in the 2020 Fairy Stakes



Epos
in the 2020 Fillies' Revue



Yamakatsu Mermaid
in the 2019 Rindo Sho

Other notable runners likely to appear in the Oka Sho are **Ria Amelia (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, who was sixth in the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies; **Sanctuaire (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, who claimed the Shinzan Kinen (G3, 1,600m) against male opponents in January; **Daring Tact (JPN, F3, by Epiphaneia)**, winner of the Elfin Stakes (L, 1,600m) in February; **Miyamazakura (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, the Queen Cup (G3, 1,600m) victor also in February; and **Ablaze (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**, who won the Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) on March 20.



Ria Amelia
in the 2019 Artemis Stakes



Sanctuaire (left)
in the 2020 Shinzan Kinen



Miyamazakura
in the 2020 Queen Cup



Ablaze
in the 2020 Flower Cup

Heading directly for the Satsuki Sho after claiming the Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m) at the end of the previous season is **Contrail (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, the 2019 Best Two-Year-Old Colt, and **Salios (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, winner of the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (1,600m), a major G1 event for two-year-olds. **My Rhapsody (C3, by Heart's Cry)**, who was just as prominent as **Contrail** and **Salios** in capping off his two-year-old campaign with three wins out of as many starts, including the Kyoto Nisai Stakes (G3, 2,000m), was beaten to fourth in the Kyodo News Hai (G3, 1,800m) on February 16.



Contrail
in the 2019 Hopeful Stakes



Salios
in the 2019 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes



My Rhapsody
in the 2019 Kyoto Nisai Stakes

The Hopeful Stakes third-place finisher **Wakea (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)** kicked off this season in the Yayoi Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 8, finishing second to **Satono Flag (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** to earn a ticket to the Satsuki Sho, as did third-place finisher **Authority (JPN, C3, by Orfevre)**. However, it was announced that **Wakea** and **Authority** will sit out the Satsuki Sho to aim for the Derby instead.



Wakea
in the 2019 Ivy Stakes



Satono Flag
in the 2020 Yayoi Sho



Authority
in the 2019 Fuyo Stakes

The Spring Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on March 22 was won by **Galore Creek (JPN, C3, by Kinshasa no Kiseki)**, ahead of the Hopeful Stakes runner-up **Weltreise (JPN, C3, by Dream Journey)** in second and **Succession (JPN, C3, by King Kamehameha)** in third.



Galore Creek
in the 2020 Spring Stakes



Weltreise
in the 2019 Hagi Stakes



Succession
in the 2020 Junior Cup

Along with the top three finishers in both the Yayoi Sho and the Spring Stakes, the first leg of the Triple Crown has also invited **Admire Virgo (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** and **Chimera Verite (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)** for finishing first and second, respectively, in another Satsuki Sho trial—the Wakaba Stakes (L, 2,000m) on March 21. This year's field will also include **Crystal Black (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)**, **Cortesia (JPN, C3, by Symboli Kris S)** and **Darlington Hall (GB, C3, by New Approach)**, respective winners of the Keisei Hai (G3, 2,000m) in January, the Kisaragi Sho (G3, 1,800m) in February and the Kyodo News Hai also in February.



Crystal Black
in the 2020 Keisei Hai



Cortesia
in the 2020 Kisaragi Sho



Darlington Hall
in the 2020 Kyodo News Hai