

Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2020 - 3rd Edition -



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The Japan Racing Association

The first half of JRA's 2020 fall season was filled with history-making accomplishments by **Daring Tact (JPN, F3, by Epiphaneia)**, who became the first undefeated winner of the fillies' Triple Crown by claiming the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) on October 18; **Contrail (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, who became the first undefeated Triple Crown winner—since his sire 15 years ago—and third overall by taking the Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) on October 25; and **Almond Eye (JPN, M5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who won the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) on November 1 to score an unprecedented eight G1 victories on turf (including one title overseas). The stream of record-breaking events against the backdrop of extraordinary difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with racecourses only just now beginning to accept limited numbers of spectators, adds special meaning to the 2020 season.

The fact that all three history-makers will be challenging the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) on November 29 will itself be an historic event. The connections of **Daring Tact** and **Contrail** both announced their Japan Cup intentions as of early November, setting the stage for triple crown winners of both genders to face off in this international G1 event. The last such matchup came in 2012, when 2011 Triple Crown winner Orfevre (JPN, by Stay Gold) and 2012 fillies' triple champion Gentildonna (JPN, by Deep Impact) waged a fierce duel in which the latter edged the former by a nose. However, this year will mark the first-ever match between three-year-old winners who also are both undefeated and looking to extend their winning streaks against top turf runners. Adding further excitement to the race, connections of 2018 Japan Cup victor **Almond Eye** announced the mare's retirement as of the end of the season with the Japan Cup scheduled as her final race on November 12.

Daring Tact has had only five career starts since her fall debut last year, but following her debut win she scored an overwhelming victory in the Elfin Stakes (Listed, 1,600m), producing an impressive

time over the mile to establish herself as a potential champion filly. In her G1 debut, the Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m), the Epiphaneia filly overcame a slow track due to heavy rain that day and demonstrated a powerful turn of speed for her first classic title. In the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m), she encountered a number of disadvantages and struggled to find a clear path entering the stretch, but then rocketed into gear and closed rapidly in the final 300 meters to grab her second jewel. In the Shuka Sho following a summer break, the brown filly advanced gradually from well off the pace and finally pulled away to a convincing third G1 victory. **Daring Tact**, who was purchased for a modest ¥12 million in a yearling sale, was sired by Epiphaneia (JPN, Symboli Kris S), a Japan Cup winner in 2014. Also, her grand-dam Daring Heart (JPN, by Sunday Silence) was third in the 2005 Oka Sho.



Daring Tact in the 2020 Oka Sho



Daring Tact in the 2020 Yushun Himba



Daring Tact in the 2020 Shuka Sho

Contrail gained recognition as a three-year-old classic hopeful last year. A G1 winner in his third career start in the year-end Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m), the 2019 Best Two-Year-Old Colt kicked off his three-year-old campaign in the first leg of the Triple Crown, the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m). After making up much ground on the outside from a rearward position, he out-duelled his biggest rival, Salios (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry), to win by a 1/2 length. He immediately validated the win in the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m), he once again bested runner-up Salios, but this time by three lengths. Coming off an easy win in his fall debut, the Kobe Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,400m), the Deep Impact colt was pressured by Aristoteles (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia) throughout the 3,000-meter trip but managed to hold off the rival by a neck at the wire for a well-deserved third title in the Kikuka Sho. **Contrail** was sired by legendary Deep Impact and his grand-dam Folklore (USA, by Tiznow) won the 2005 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies.



Contrail in the 2020 Satsuki Sho



Contrail in the 2020 Tokyo Yushun



Contrail in the 2020 Kikuka Sho

Almond Eye, following her victory in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), was invited to run in the Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m) on December 13 but the invitation was declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her success in the Japan Cup will depend on how well she can recover after her last start. A mare known to give her all and then burn out after each race, **Almond Eye** turned in a terrific performance this spring for an overwhelming victory the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m). Typically, in the Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) three weeks later, the Lord Kanaloa (JPN, by King Kamehameha) mare was out-finished to second by 2-1/2 lengths. While a slow break may have contributed to her loss, the short interval between the Victoria Mile and the Yasuda Kinen without any time off seems like a more plausible as reason. This time, the five-year-old mare was turned out to pasture after the Tenno Sho (Autumn) to give her an extra week of rest before the Japan Cup. Her trainer, Sakae Kunieda, kept a close watch on her condition before making his final decision to run her in the Japan Cup, where she will attempt not only to extend her G1 winning record but also to break the JRA record for career earnings held by Kitan Black (JPN, by Black Tide).



Almond Eye
in the 2020 Tenno Sho (Autumn)



Almond Eye
in the 2020 Victoria Mile



Almond Eye
in the 2018 Japan Cup

In this year's Japan Cup, **Saturnalia (JPN, C4, by Lord Kanaloa)** will threaten to end the winning streaks of his two famous three-year-old rivals and deny a ninth G1 title to **Almond Eye**. Winner of the Hopeful Stakes as a two-year-old and the Satsuki Sho last year, the Lord Kanaloa colt concluded the season with a runner-up effort in the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m) against his seniors. **World Premiere (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, another prominent four-year-old, won the 2019 Kikuka Sho and was third in the Arima Kinen. However, the son of Deep Impact struggled to regain his form thereafter, so the Japan Cup will be his comeback start.

Last year's Japan Cup runner-up **Curren Bouquetd'or (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)** will return for her second challenge. While yet to capture a graded title, she scored a win as a two-year-old and another at three in a listed race, and more recently has finished second in her last four starts, all graded, including the Shuka Sho, the Japan Cup and her previous start, the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) on September 27.



Saturnalia
in the 2019 Satsuki Sho

World Premiere
in the 2019 Kikuka Sho

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

Glory Vase (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact), who landed his first G1 title with an overwhelming 3-1/2-length margin in the Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m) at the end of last year, will also run in the Japan Cup after appearing to be in good form with a comfortable win in the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m) on October 11. **Kiseki (JPN, H6, by Rulership)**, who was second in the Kyoto Daishoten and then fifth in Tenno Sho (Autumn), his latest race, was second in the 2018 Japan Cup.

The Copa Republica Argentina (G2, 2,500m) on November 8 was won by **Authority (JPN, C3, by Orfevre)**. Racing forwardly in third position, he drew away with 400 meters left for a 1-1/2-length victory, thereby becoming the fifth three-year-old, following 2017 winner Suave Richard (JPN, by Heart's Cry), to win this G2 title. Suave Richard, incidentally, subsequently won the Japan Cup in 2019. The colt was diagnosed with a fracture to the long pastern bone on his left foreleg after his victory in the Aoba Sho (G2, 2,400m, May), but returning in the Copa Republica Argentina he immediately demonstrated his ability in this first challenge against older rivals. Authority will be aiming for the Arima Kinen, his next destination, on December 27. **You Can Smile (JPN, H5, by King Kamehameha)**, fifth-place finisher in last year's Japan Cup, carried a top weight (58kg) and finished fourth in the Copa Republica Argentina, where Meisho Tengen (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact), fifth in this year's Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m, June), disappointed to 17th.



Glory Vase
in the 2019 Hong Kong Vase



Kiseki
in the 2017 Kikuka Sho



You Can Smile
in the 2020 Hanshin Daishoten

Other Japan Cup entries include:

- **Crescendo Love (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)**, two-time G3 victor, and **Mikki Swallow (JPN, H6, by Tosen Homareboshi)**, also a multiple grade-race winner, who were fourth and fifth, respectively, in the All Comers.
- **Perform a Promise (JPN, H8, by Stay Gold)**, victor in the Naruo Kinen (G3, 2,000m) in June, who is coming off a sixth in the Kyoto Daishoten.



Crescendo Love
in the 2020 Tanabata Sho



Mikki Swallow
in the 2020 Nikkei Sho



Perform a Promise (left)
in the 2020 Naruo Kinen

- **Makahiki (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact)**, the 2016 Tokyo Yushun champion, who was sidelined after finishing 11th in the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) in April.
- **Loves Only You (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, last year's Yushun Himba champion, who came off a third in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 15.
- **Taurus Gemini (JPN, C4, by King's Best)**, who has registered 5-0-1 out of 22 starts at distances 2,000m and below and finished eighth in his previous start, the Fukushima Kinen (G3, 2,000m), on November 15.
- **Yoshio (JPN, H7, by Johannesburg)**, who will be making his first start on turf since racing just once, finishing eighth, in his two-year-old debut. He has a record of 6-4-11 out of 67 starts on dirt and is coming off a sixth-place finish in his previous start, the Mercury Cup (dirt, 2,000m) on July 21.



Makahiki
in the 2016 Tokyo Yushun



Loves Only You
in the 2019 Yushun Himba



Taurus Gemini
in the 2020 Tomoe Sho



Yoshio
in the 2020 January Stakes

From France, **Way To Paris (GB, H7, by Champs Elysees)** will challenge the Japanese turf runners after finishing second to subsequent Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) winner Sottsass (FR, C4, by Siyouni) in the Prix Ganay (G1, 2,100m) in June. After registering his first group-one title in the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud (G1, 2,400m), he was ninth in the Arc. To make the trip to Japan possible, the stable staff entered Japan in advance to complete the required two-week quarantine prior to the arrival of **Way To Paris**.