

# Exclusive Topics for Horse Racing in Japan – Spring Edition –

March 2021

The Japan Racing Association

The JRA's 2021 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.

## *Overseas Challenges Continue amid COVID-19*

While the number of overseas challenges from Japan was greatly reduced during 2020 owing to the outbreak of COVID-19, the few that went ahead with their overseas endeavors demonstrated Japanese-quality racing, including **Danon Smash (JPN, H6, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who followed in the footsteps of his sire by capturing the Hong Kong Sprint (G1, 1,200m), and Normcore (JPN, M6, by Harbinger; retired), who took home the Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m). Although the current season will no doubt see restrictions, Japan's racing circle is hopeful of making challenges abroad.



Danon Smash  
in the 2020 Hong Kong Sprint



Normcore  
in the 2020 Hong Kong Cup



Pink Kamehameha  
in the 2021 Saudi Derby

The Saudi Cup (dirt, 1,800m), the world's richest race, held its second running behind closed doors at King Abdulaziz Racetrack on February 20. 2020 Best Dirt Horse **Chuwa Wizard (JPN, H6, by King Kamehameha)** had eyes on the title but failed to perform on the rain-affected track, finishing a disappointing ninth. On the same day, **Pink Kamehameha (JPN, C3, by Leontes)**, who ran on dirt for the first time in the Saudi Derby (dirt, 1,600m), worked the damp track to his favor by responding sharply from 300 meters out in third position to draw away to a 3/4-length victory. This gave Japan back-to-back victories in the Saudi Derby following last year's winning performance by Full Flat (USA, C4, by Speightstown), who was trained by Hideyuki Mori, like **Pink Kamehameha**.



Copano Kicking  
in the 2021 Riyadh Dirt Sprint

Two of three Japanese starters in the Riyadh Dirt Sprint (dirt, 1,200m) accomplished a one-two finish when four-time graded winner **Copano Kicking (USA, G6, by Spring At Last)** kicked into gear from well behind to narrowly win by a 1/4-length margin over runner-up **Matera Sky (USA, H7, by Speightstown)**, who was also second in the 2019 Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1, dirt, 1,200m). 2020 Capella Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,200m) victor **Justin (JPN, H5, by Orfevre)** finished sixth in the 13-horse lineup.

**Chuwa Wizard, Pink Kamehameha, Copano Kicking, Matera Sky** and **Justin** have all been transferred to their next destination, Meydan Racecourse in Dubai, where **Chuwa Wizard** will start in the Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m), **Pink Kamehameha** in the UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m) and the latter three in the Dubai Golden Shaheen, all on March 27.

Those traveling from Saudi Arabia for the Dubai World Cup day meeting will be joined by seven other runners from Japan. Aiming for the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m) title will be 2020 JRA Special Award winner **Chrono Genesis (JPN, M5, by Bago)**, who claimed both Grand Prix races—the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) and the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m)—only a year after Lys Gracieux (JPN, by Heart's Cry) accomplished the same feat in 2019. The Bago mare may target the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) like her father depending on the outcome of her race in Dubai. **Loves Only You (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the 2019 Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m), will also start in the Dubai Sheema Classic after bouncing back from defeat in the Arima Kinen (10th) to win the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) on February 14. Both **Chrono Genesis** and **Loves Only You** hope to become the first Japanese winner of the Dubai Sheema Classic since Gentildonna (JPN, by Deep Impact) in 2014.

Meanwhile, this year's Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m), where Japan has scored four wins since 2014, will include **Vin de Garde (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**. The son of Deep Impact won his first grade-race title last year in the Fuji Stakes (G2, 1,600m) and then marked a close sixth just 0.5 second behind the winner, in the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m).



Chrono Genesis  
in the 2020 Arima Kinen



Loves Only You  
in the 2021 Kyoto Kinen



Vin de Garde  
in the 2020 Fuji Stakes

**Red le Zele (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who registered his first graded win in the Negishi Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,400m) and then finished fourth in the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m), will join **Copano Kicking, Matera Sky** and **Justin** as the fourth Japanese starter in the Dubai Golden Shaheen.

**France Go de Ina (USA, C3, by Will Take Charge)**, who scored consecutive wins on dirt at 1,800 meters before pulling out of the Saudi Derby due to fever, will join **Pink Kamehameha** in the UAE Derby, along with **Takeru Pegasus (JPN, C3, by Dunkirk)**, who was fourth in the Hyacinth Stakes (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) on February 21. **Takeru Pegasus's** stablemate **Dieu du Vin (JPN, C4, by Declaration of War)** will head for the Godolphin Mile (G2, dirt, 1,600m).



Red le Zele in the 2021 Negishi Stakes



Dieu du Vin in the 2020 Seiryu Stakes



Daring Tact in the 2020 Shuka Sho

**Daring Tact (JPN, F4, by Epiphaneia)**, who made history last season by becoming the sixth filly to claim the fillies' Triple Crown and the first in JRA history to do it undefeated, came off a long break after a third in the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) to kick off her four-year-old campaign in the Kinko Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 14, where she was second by a neck after a good bid from sixth on a yielding track in a field of ten. The 2020 Best Three-Year-Old Filly is scheduled to fly to Hong Kong for the Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) on April 25.



Kiseki in the 2017 Kikuka Sho

**Kiseki (JPN, H7, by Rulership)**, the 2017 Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) winner, finished 1-1/2 lengths back in fifth in the Kinko Sho following his transfer to Yasuyuki Tujino stable by Katsuhiko Sumii, who retired to take over his family business in February. The Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) on April 4 is a possible next target, but his connections also have eyes on the Queen Elizabeth II Cup in Hong Kong, where his sire claimed the title in

2012. **Kiseki's** last trip to Hong Kong was in 2017 when he finished ninth in the Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m).

Six Japanese runners are nominated to run in the Triple Crown series in the USA. The Hyacinth Stakes, the third of four races designated as qualifying races in the "Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby" series, was held on February 21 and won by **La Perouse (JPN, C3, by Pelusa)**. At this point, the Pelusa colt stands atop the series with the most points, prior to the last of the four-race series—the Fukuryu Stakes (dirt, 1,800m) on March 27.

Seven Japanese horses are nominated for five races in Australia's "The Championships" at Randwick Racecourse scheduled for April 3 and 10. Possibilities for Japanese horses to make the trip, however, are low.



## ***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 again from mid-January, but in mid-March doors reopened at racecourses other than those in the Tokyo area. From April 3, all venues finally will welcome racegoers once again although admission will be limited. Meanwhile, an earthquake in February forced Fukushima's scheduled April meeting to be relocated to Niigata Racecourse. Also, two female JRA jockeys—Naho Furukawa and Manami Nagashima—made their much-awaited debuts in March, joining Nanako Fujita as the only female jockeys to debut in the past five years.

Following the exciting outcome of last year's Japan Cup, a showdown of three Triple Crown champions that highlighted the autumn racing scene, the dominating victor Almond Eye (JPN, M6, by Lord Kanaloa) wrapped up an extraordinary racing career with a record nine G1 victories, a feat that successors will struggle to exceed. While 2020 Triple Crown filly **Daring Tact**, who was third in the Japan Cup, will broaden her horizons with an inaugural overseas campaign in Hong Kong, runner-up **Contrail** (JPN, C4, by **Deep Impact**) is entered to run in the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) on April 4. As the third colt in JRA history, including his sire, to land the Triple Crown undefeated, the son of Deep Impact proved his worth in the Japan Cup by finishing second 1-1/4 lengths behind superstar Almond Eye. Moreover, his performance came despite little time for preparation after his last start. According to his trainer Yoshito Yahagi, the colt is best suited to 2,000 meters and thus will be under the spotlight in his four-year-old kick-off start in the Osaka Hai at Hanshin.



Contrail in the 2020 Kikuka Sho



Gran Alegria  
in the 2020 Mile Championship

2020 Best Sprinter or Miler **Gran Alegria** (JPN, M5, by **Deep Impact**), who has raced at 1,600 meters or shorter in all ten career-starts, including four are grade-one wins, will also commence the season in the Osaka Hai, her first 2,000-meter race challenge. Thereafter, her schedule will largely depend on her level of affinity for the added distance. Should the five-year-old go on to claim the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) in the end of October, the win would give trainer Kazuo Fujisawa, who is retiring next

February, a record-tying seventh Tenno Sho (Autumn) title.

**Salios** (JPN, C4, by **Heart's Cry**), the 2019 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m) winner, was initially registered to run in Dubai or Australia, but his connections decided to keep him home and instead target the son of Heart's Cry towards the middle-distanced Osaka Hai. The colt will strive to turn the tables after finishing second two times against rival **Contrail**—the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) and the Tokyo Yushun



Salios  
in the 2019 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

(Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m)—and fifth to **Gran Alegria** in the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m).

Other Osaka Hai possibles include **Lei Papale (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, an undefeated filly in all five career starts and last December's Challenge Cup (G3, 2,000m) victor; **Gibeon (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Kinko Sho; and 2018 Tokyo Yushun winner **Wagnerian (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**.



Lei Papale  
in the 2020 Challenge Cup



Gibeon  
in the 2021 Kinko Sho



Wagnerian  
in the 2018 Tokyo Yushun



Deep Bond  
in the 2021 Hanshin Daishoten

The Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) on May 2 will crown a new champion stayer after back-to-back victor Fierement (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact) was sent to stud. One of the challengers will be **Aristoteles (JPN, C4, by Epiphaneia)**, who was a neck-second to **Contrail** in last season's Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) and then notched his first graded victory in the American Jockey Club Cup (G2, 2,200m) in January.

**Deep Bond (JPN, C4, by Kizuna)**, the 2020 G2 Kyoto Shimbun Hai (2,200m) victor, also earned his ticket to the spring G1 event by landing a five-length victory in the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) on March 21. In second was three-time grade-race winner **You Can Smile (JPN, H6, by King Kamehameha)**, while **Aristoteles** faded to seventh.



Aristoteles  
in the 2021 American Jockey Club Cup



You Can Smile  
in the 2020 Hanshin Daishoten



Glory Vase  
in the 2019 Hong Kong Vase

Tenno Sho (Spring) candidates will also include 2019 Tenno Sho (Spring) runner-up and Hong Kong Vase champion **Glory Vase (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)** who finished 0.1 second from the winner in an encouraging fourth in the Kinko Sho on March 14. It was his first 2,000-meter race since the summer of his three-year-old season.



Another Tenno Sho (Spring) hopeful is 2019 Kikuka Sho champion **World Premiere (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, who was sidelined for nearly a year before finishing sixth in last year's Japan Cup and then concluding his season with a good fifth in the yearend Arima Kinen. Before aiming for his second G1 title, the five-year-old will kick off the season prepping in the Nikkei Sho (G2, 2,500m) on March 27.

**Authority (JPN, C4, by Orfevre)**, a two-time G2 winner and Diamond Stakes (G3, 3,400m) runner-up, also will target the prestigious G1 test, but **Grandiose (JPN, H6, by Rulership)**, who scored his first graded victory in the Diamond Stakes this past February, closing tenaciously with the fastest stretch speed to steal a win at the wire, will skip the Tenno Sho (Spring) and instead aim for the Meguro Kinen (G2, 2,500m) on May 30. The son of Rulership had suffered a tendon injury in his left foreleg after a disappointing defeat (13th) in the 2018 Kikuka Sho, but made a promising comeback last season following a 20-month layoff.



World Premiere  
in the 2019 Kikuka Sho



Grandiose  
in the 2021 Diamond Stakes



Authority  
in the 2020 Copa Republica Argentina

This year's Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) on May 16, open to fillies/mares four-year-old and up, will feature a number of strong runners. The list includes last year's runner-up **Sound Chiara (JPN, M6, by Deep Impact)**, who is scheduled to commence the season in the Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) on March 28. Two others with the same schedule are two Best Two-Year-Old Filly winners, **Danon Fantasy (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact, 2018)** and **Resistencia (JPN, F4, by Daiwa Major, 2019)**. **Resistencia** is coming off a course-record win in the Hankyu Hai (G3, 1,400m) on February 28. **Danon Fantasy** finished fifth.



Resistencia  
in the 2019 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies



Sound Chiara  
in the 2020 Hanshin Himba Stakes



Danon Fantasy  
in the 2020 Hanshin Cup



Smile Kana  
in the 2020 Turquoise Stakes

Other key contenders in the Victoria Mile will be 2020 Turquoise Stakes (G3, 1,600m) victor **Smile Kana (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, who will first run the Lord Derby Challenge Trophy (G3, 1,600m) on April 3. She will be joined by 2020 Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) runner-up and 2021 Aichi Hai (G3, 2,000m) winner **Magic Castle (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)** and 2021 Kyoto Himba Stakes (G3, 1,400m) champion **Iberis (JPN, M5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, both of whom will prep in the Hanshin Himba Stakes (G2, 1,600m) on April 10. Odds are that **Rambling Alley (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the Nakayama Himba Stakes (G3, 1,800m) on March 13, will also run.



Magic Castle  
in the 2021 Aichi Hai



Iberis  
in the 2021 Kyoto Himba Stakes



Rambling Alley  
in the 2021 Nakayama Himba Stakes

**Indy Champ (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)**, the 2019 Best Sprinter or Miler, kicked off his six-year-old season marking a fourth in the Hankyu Hai and now will test his skills for the first time at 1,200 meters in the Takamatsunomiya Kinen in late March. The 2019 Yasuda Kinen winner will then aim for a second title in his third Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) on June 6, where he will face defending champion **Gran Alegria** and **Salios**.

The highlight of steeplechase racing this spring will undoubtedly be the Nakayama Grand Jump (J-G1, 4,250m) on April 17, where renowned **Oju Chosan (JPN, H10, by Stay Gold)**, the Best Steeplechase Horse between 2016 and 2018, will attempt to claim his sixth consecutive annual title. **Meisho Dassai (JPN, H8, by Suzuka Mambo)**, last year's Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) winner and Best Steeplechase Horse of 2020, kicked off this season in the Hanshin Spring Jump (J-G2, 3,900m), where he marked an overwhelming seven-length victory despite being assigned the heaviest impost by 2kg.



Indy Champ  
in the 2019 Mile Championship



Oju Chosan  
in the 2020 Nakayama Grand Jump



Meisho Dassai  
in the 2020 Nakayama Daishogai



### **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 11 and then the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) for males one week later.



Sodashi  
in the 2020 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies

The top two finishers of the 2020 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m), Best Two-Year-Old Filly **Sodashi (JPN, F3, by Kurofune)** and **Satono Reinas (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)** in that order, will head directly to the first leg of the fillies' Triple Crown. **Meikei Yell (JPN, F3, by Mikki Isle)**, who was fourth in the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies, claimed her third graded-victory in the Tulip Sho (G2, 1,600m) on March 6, the main trial race towards the Oka Sho, finishing in a dead heat with **Elizabeth Tower (GB, F3, by Kingman)**. **Stutti (JPN, F3, by Maurice)**, who was third, also earned a ticket to the Oka Sho.



Satono Reinas  
in the 2020 Saffron Sho



Meikei Yell (right) and Elizabeth Tower  
in the 2021 Tulip Sho



Stutti  
in the 2020 Two-Year-Olds (Newcomer)

The first leg of the fillies' Triple Crown will also feature runners who performed well in either of two additional trials on March 14: **Another Lyric (JPN, F3, by Leontes)** and **Ginestra (JPN, F3, by Lord Kanaloa)**, the top two finishers in the Anemone Stakes (Listed, 1,600m), and **Shigeru Pink Ruby (JPN, F3, by Maurice)**, **Yoka Yoka (JPN, F3, by Squirtle Squirt)** and **Minnie Isle (JPN, F3, by Mikki Isle)**, who were the top three in the Fillies' Revue (G2, 1,400m).



Shigeru Pink Ruby  
in the 2021 Fillies' Revue



Yoka Yoka  
in the 2020 Himawari Sho



Yoka Yoka  
in the 2020 Azami Sho

Other notable runners likely to appear in the Oka Sho are **Fine Rouge (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**, **Akaitorino Musume (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, whose dam Apapane (JPN, by King Kamehameha) won the fillies' Triple Crown in 2010, and **Ho O Ixelles (JPN, F3, by Rulership)**,



winner of the Fairy Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on January 11, the Queen Cup (G3, 1,600m) on February 13 and the Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) on March 20, respectively.



Fine Rouge  
in the 2021 Fairy Stakes



Akaitorino Musume  
in the 2021 Queen Cup



Akaitorino Musume  
in the 2021 Flower Cup

Meanwhile, 2020 Best Two-Year-Old Colt **Danon the Kid (JPN, C3, by Just a Way)** commenced his three-year-old season with a third in the Yayoi Sho Deep Impact Kinen (G2, 2,000m) on March 7, the main trial race towards the Satsuki Sho. The respective winner and runner-up, **Titleholder (JPN, C3, by Duramente)** and **Schnell Meister (GER, C3, by Kingman)**, also earned tickets to the Satsuki Sho. However, the connections of **Schnell Meister** announced that the colt will skip the 2,000-meter Satsuki Sho and head for the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) on May 9.



Danon the Kid  
in the 2020 Hopeful Stakes



Titleholder in the  
2021 Yayoi Sho Deep Impact Kinen



Schnell Meister  
in the 2020 Hiiragi Sho

Those who earned Satsuki Sho berths in other trial races included **Admire Hadar (JPN, C3, by Lord Kanaloa)** and **Chevalier Rose (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, who were first and second respectively in the Wakaba Stakes (Listed, 2,000m) on March 20, and **Victipharus (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, **Asamano Itazura (JPN, C3, by Victoire Pisa)** and **Boden (JPN, C3, by Harbinger)**, the top three finishers in that order in the Spring Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on March 21.



Chevalier Rose  
in the 2020 Hagi Stakes



Victipharus  
in the 2021 Spring Stakes



Boden  
in the 2021 Two-Year-Olds (Maiden)

Along with these trial-race starters, the first leg of the Triple Crown field is likely to include:

- **Wonderful Town (JPN, C3, by Rulership)**, winner of the Kyoto Nisai Stakes (G3, 2,000m) last

November

- **Red Belle Aube (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, third in the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m) last December after winning the Daily Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,600m) in November
- **Orthoclase (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)**, runner-up in the Hopeful Stakes



Wonderful Town  
in the 2020 Kyoto Nisai Stakes



Red Belle Aube (left)  
in the 2020 Daily Hai Nisai Stakes



Orthoclase  
in the 2020 Ivy Stakes

- **Gratias (JPN, C3, by Heart's Cry)**, **Resistencia's** half-brother, who won the Keisei Hai (G3, 2,000m) on January 17
- **Lagom (JPN, C3, by Orfevre)** and Hopeful Stakes third-place finisher **Yoho Lake (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, the top two finishers, in that order, in the Kisaragi Sho (G3, 2,000m) on February 7
- and **Deep Monster (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)**, victor of the Sumire Stakes (Listed, 2,200m) on February 28.



Gratias in the 2021 Keisei Hai



Lagom in the 2021 Kisaragi Sho



Yoho Lake in the 2020 Shigiku Sho

The Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes winner **Grenadier Guards (JPN, C3, by Frankel)** will focus on the mile category and head for the NHK Mile Cup instead of the Triple Crown classics. The son of Frankel commenced his 2021 season as race favorite in the Falcon Stakes (G3, 1,400m) on March 20, where he dueled strongly in the stretch but finished second by a head to **Rooks Nest (JPN, C3, by Maurice)**, who will also head for the NHK Mile Cup.



Grenadier Guards  
in the 2020 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes



The NHK Mile Cup will also include runners from two trial races—the New Zealand Trophy (G2, 1,600m) on April 10 and the Arlington Cup (G3, 1,600m) a week later—as well as Oka Sho and Satsuki Sho runners who prefer the mile distance instead of stepping up to the 2,400-meter Yushun Himba and Tokyo Yushun.

Rooks Nest in the 2021 Falcon Stakes



Dear journalists,

Videos of all JRA grade-race results can be viewed at JRA's official YouTube account (<https://www.youtube.com/user/jraofficial>). This includes G2 and G3 races (Japanese commentary only), which have become available starting this year in addition to G1 races (English commentary also available).

For video coverage of JRA grade-race results, we respectfully ask that you post a link to JRA's official account.

Thank you for your cooperation.