

Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2021 2nd Edition



October 2021
The Japan Racing Association

Through strict observance of COVID-19 protocols, JRA has gratefully managed to continue holding horse races for much of 2021. The year didn't start out to look that way, however, when JRA was obliged to turn away spectators for a race meeting at Nakayama Racecourse from January 9, the day after states of emergency were declared in Tokyo and three other prefectures due to a third wave of infections hitting Japan from the end of 2020. Thereafter, a plan to accept limited spectators in the Kanto area until early April was cancelled and all attendance at races was cancelled again from April 25 to May 9 when another state of emergency was announced. Thereafter, however, JRA was permitted to accept limited attendance, except for the summer meeting at Fukushima after the grandstand was damaged during an earthquake in February.

The postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games finally opened on July 23, followed by the Paralympic Games on August 24, amid divided public opinion on the advisability of staging a major international event during an ongoing global pandemic. JRA played a major role in helping to ensure the success of the equestrian event, not only by providing use of Equestrian Park (Baji Koen) in Setagaya-ku, Tokyo as the main venue, but also by providing its own veterinary specialists and horse transportation vans to ensure safe, smooth operations.

Due to concerns about Tokyo's hot and humid summer weather, the Olympic Games organizers shifted the marathon on August 7 and 8 to Sapporo on the northern (cooler) island of Hokkaido. In response, JRA races in Sapporo, which normally begin in July, had to be broken into two separate periods—three weeks from the second week of June and four weeks from the third week of August.

While attendance has been restricted to a maximum of 5,000 at each venue, JRA has seen an expansion of online wagering after introducing a new system during the seven-month period of racing



without spectators. As a result, total sales have recovered strongly since the initial setback brought on by the pandemic. As of October 3, day 218 in the 288-day annual schedule, sales totaled ¥2.27 trillion, a 5.1% increase over the same period last year. For perspective, sales slumped sharply after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and then recovered slowly in the ensuing nine years. The best two increases were 4.4% in 2012, mainly due to a resumption of the regular schedule, and 3.7% in 2014. The last time the 5% mark was exceeded was back in 1996. In fact, 2021 could be the first year to reach ¥3 trillion, a feat not accomplished since 2003.

Although going abroad to race was virtually halted for Japanese horses early last year, overseas endeavors have gradually resumed since last fall. Normcore (JPN, by Harbinger) and **Danon Smash (JPN, H6, by Lord Kanaloa)** won the Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m) and the Hong Kong Sprint (G1, 1,200m), respectively, last December. This year, overseas challenges kicked off in March for four Japanese runners, all of whom finished second in their respective races on Dubai World Cup Day, including **Chrono Genesis (JPN, M5, by Bago)** in the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m). In Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) in April, Japanese runners in a seven-horse field dominated the top four finishes, led by winner **Loves Only You (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**. In the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m), **Chrono Genesis** and **Deep Bond (JPN, C4, by Kizuna)** both struggled with the soft turf and were unable to meet the high expectations, finishing seventh and last, respectively, in a 14-horse field. JRA wagers on the French G1 race, however, approached ¥ 5.39 billion, highest ever since JRA began selling overseas-race tickets in 2016.

(contributed by Kenichi Nomoto, Nikkei)

The Sprinter Stakes (1,200m), JRA's first fall G1 event, was won by **Pixie Knight (JPN, C3, by Maurice)**, who became the first three-year-old since Aston Machan in 2007 to claim the fall sprint title. The Maurice colt will head for the Hong Kong Sprint together with **Danon Smash**, who will attempt a second consecutive win in Hong Kong despite having finished sixth in the Sprinters Stakes due to a lack of finishing speed.



Pixie Knight in the 2021 Sprinters Stakes



Schnell Meister
in the 2021 Mainichi Okan

In the Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,800m) at Tokyo Racecourse on October 10, NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) winner **Schnell Meister (GER, C3, by Kingman)** won by a head at the wire to Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) champion **Danon Kingly (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**. Both horses are expected to start in the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m) on November 21. Meanwhile, Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m) runner-up **Vin de Garde (JPN, H5, by Deep**



Impact) finished eighth in the Mainichi Okan and is now slated to fly to the US for the Breeders' Cup Mile (G1, 1,600m) on November 6.

The Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m), held on the same day as the Mainichi Okan, was won by ninth-favorite and 2016 Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) champion **Makahiki (JPN, H8, by Deep Impact)**, who picked up his first victory in five years. Race-favorite and last year's Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) runner-up **Aristoteles (JPN, C4, by Epiphaneia)** missed by a nose in second to deny him a second grade-race title after the American Jockey Club Cup (G2, 2,200m) in January. Both **Makahiki** and **Aristoteles** will start in the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) on November 28.



Makahiki in the 2021 Kyoto Daishoten

The Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) on October 31 will feature 2020 Triple Crown winner **Contrail (JPN, C4, by Deep Impact)**, whose connections have announced his retirement following final starts in the Tenno Sho and the Japan Cup. Other notable runners will include the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) victor **World Premiere (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact)**, 2020 Best Sprinter or Miler **Gran Alegria (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)** and the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) champion **Efforia (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)**.



Shadow Diva
in the 2021 Fuchu Himba Stakes

In the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m), the trial race held on October 16 towards the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 14, **Shadow Diva (JPN, M5, by Heart's Cry)** claimed her first career grade-race title. Race-favorite **Magic Castle (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, who was third in the Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m), and second-favorite **Des Ailes (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, who won the Hanshin Himba Stakes (G2, 1,600m), disappointed to 15th and 16th, respectively.

The last leg of the three-year-old fillies Triple, the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) on October 17, was won by **Akaitorino Musume (JPN, F3, by Deep Impact)**, following in the footsteps of her dam Apapane, who also won the title (and thereby became a triple crown filly) in 2010. The Deep Impact filly will next challenge her seniors in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup.



Akaitorino Musume
in the 2021 Shuka Sho

The Queen Elizabeth II Cup field will also include **Win Marilyn (JPN, F4, by Screen Hero)**, the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) victor **Lei Papale (JPN, F4, by Deep Impact)**, and the Victoria Mile runner-

up **Rambling Alley (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, who finished first, fourth and seventh, respectively, in the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) on September 26.



Songline in the 2021 Fuji Stakes

In one Mile Championship trial, the Fuji Stakes (G2, 1,600m) on October 23, the NHK Mile Cup runner-up **Songline (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)** marked her first graded victory while racing against not only older runners but also males. 2020 Best Two-Year-Old Colt **Danon the Kid (JPN, C3, by Just a Way)**, 2020 NHK Mile Cup winner **Lauda Sion (JPN, C4, by Real Impact)** and Sekiya Kinen (G3, 1,600m) victor **Lotus Land (USA, F4, by Point of Entry)**

were fourth, eighth and 10th, respectively.

The Swan Stakes (G2, 1,400m), another Mile Championship trial, will be held on October 30 but 2019 winner **Indy Champ (JPN, H6, by Stay Gold)**, **Salios (JPN, C4, by Heart's Cry)** and **Grenadier Guards (JPN, C3, by Frankel)**, respective winners of the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m) in 2019 and 2020, are already slated to start in the Championship.

Titleholder (JPN, C3, by Duramente), who pulled off a wire-to-wire victory by an impressive five lengths in this year's Kikuka Sho, might make a return appearance depending on his condition. Tokyo Yushun victor **Shahryar (JPN, C3, by Deep Impact)** passed up the Kikuka Sho to challenge his seniors in the Japan Cup.



Titleholder in the 2021 Kikuka Sho



Sunrise Hope
in the 2021 Sirius Stakes Hai

Major dirt events this fall began with the Sirius Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,900m) on October 2, which was won by **Sunrise Hope (JPN, C4, by Majestic Warrior)**. **Arctos (JPN, H6, by Admire Aura)** scored a repeat win in the Mile Championship Nambu Hai (dirt, 1,600m) on October 11. In fourth was 2019 February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m) champion, **Inti (JPN, H7, by Came Home)**, and fifth, sixth and seventh places were taken respectively by 2020 Kashiwa Kinen (dirt, 1,600m) victor **Wide Pharaoh (JPN, H5,**

by Henny Hughes), **Air Spinel (JPN, H8, by King Kamehameha)**, who was second by 3/4-length to **Cafe Pharoah (USA, C4, by American Pharoah)** in this year's February Stakes, and 2019 Mile Championship Nambu Hai victor **Sunrise Nova (JPN, H7, by Gold Allure)**.

Cafe Pharoah, who finished ninth in his last start, the Hakodate Kinen (G3, 2,000m) in July, will go straight to the Champions Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m) on December 5. Others likely to aim at the

Champions Cup include runners in the JBC Classic (dirt, 2,100m) on November 3, the Miyako Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,800m) on November 7 and the Musashino Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,600m) on November 13. The 2019 Champions Cup victor **Chrysoberyl (JPN, H5, by Gold Allure)** retired to stud after being diagnosed with stage four laryngeal hemiplegia following a sixth-place finish in the Nippon TV Hai on September 29.



Arctos in the
2020 Mile Championship Nambu Hai