

Exclusive Topics for JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2024 - 1st Edition -



September 2024
The Japan Racing Association

Welcome back to our annual series of newsletters leading up to the 2024 Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) on November 24. The fall racing season is heading toward the Japan Autumn International Series, which will be held over four weekends between November 10 and December 1 and will comprise four prestigious G1 races: the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m), the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m), the Japan Cup, and the Champions Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m). Total prize money for the four G1 events will amount to ¥2.01 billion (US\$14.3 million), with additional bonuses for winners of designated overseas G1 events who also finish within the top three in any of the four races. Winners of designated overseas races who finish outside the top three places in the Japan Cup and other invitational runners are also guaranteed incentives of US\$200,000 and US\$100,000 respectively.

Featured Runners in Tenno Sho (Autumn), Japan Cup and Arima Kinen

The 2023 Japan Cup was a historic event for Japanese racing as the first matchup between the four-year-old Equinox (JPN, by Kitasan Black), who had won five consecutive G1 races, including most recently the 2,000-meter Tenno Sho (Autumn) in a record 1:55.2, and **Liberty Island** (JPN, F4, by Duramente), the year's three-year-old Triple Crown filly. In the race, Equinox surpassed all expectations by pulling away from the leaders to win by an overwhelming four lengths over runner-up **Liberty Island**.



Equinox,
winner of 2023 Japan Cup

Following his impressive Japan Cup victory, Equinox's standing in the World's Best Racehorse Rankings was revised from 134 to 135, securing him the top spot for the entire 2023 season, beginning with his victory in the Dubai Sheema Classic in March. He also became only the second Japanese runner to reach the top ranking. At the same time, the Japan Cup led the list of the World's Top 100 G1 Races for the first time, based on the average ratings of the race's top four finishers. Given the



lofty heights reached by Equinox, his connections announced his retirement from racing four days after the Japan Cup.

Other 2023 Japan Cup runners now retired include fifth-place finisher Titleholder (JPN, by Duramente), seventh-place Vela Azul (JPN, by Eishin Flash) and twelfth-place Panthalassa (JPN, by Lord Kanaloa).

Stars on Earth, who finished third in the Japan Cup, and **Do Deuce**, who finished fourth, were joined by Titleholder in the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m) four weeks later. Winner **Do Deuce** raced behind early but caught Titleholder, who had led most of the way, as well as **Stars on Earth** (JPN, M5, by **Duramente**), who had also tracked the leader, to eventually beat **Stars on Earth** by half a length for his third G1 victory and first since the 2022 Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m). Equinox's final rating was further boosted by the race as win, place and show were taken by three of the top five from the prestigious Japan Cup.

Liberty Island, **Stars on Earth** and **Do Deuce** are still in training, but despite their stellar performances in 2023, their 2024 seasons have not been as successful. **Do Deuce** (JPN, H5, by **Heart's Cry**) entered the 2024 Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m) after a last-minute scratch in 2023, but struggled to find space from the inside and finished fifth behind fellow Japanese runners, **Namur** and **Danon Beluga**, who crossed the wire in second and third respectively. His comeback start in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) on a soft track in heavy rain resulted in a sixth-place finish. His fall campaign will commence with the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) on October 27 and then probably the Japan Cup on November 24 and the Arima Kinen on December 22.



Do Deuce,
winner of 2023 Arima Kinen



Liberty Island,
winner of 2023 Shuka Sho



Stars on Earth,
winner of 2022 Yushun Himba

Liberty Island and **Stars on Earth** both flew to Dubai for the 2,410-meter Dubai Sheema Classic (G1). **Liberty Island**, the favorite based on tickets sold in Japan, was unable to find her speed at the stretch and finished third. **Stars on Earth**, who was forced to change riders, disappointed to eighth. **Liberty Island** will make her fall debut in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) but plans for **Stars on Earth** are still undetermined.

Danon Beluga (JPN, H5, by **Heart's Cry**), who was sixth in the 2023 Japan Cup, took a long break after finishing third in the Dubai Turf in March. He is expected to come back in the 2,000-meter



Tenno Sho (Autumn) but may avoid stepping up in distance to run in the Japan Cup. **Deep Bond (JPN, H7, by Kizuna)**, despite finishing tenth in last year's Japan Cup, remains one of Japan's top runners despite having reached age seven. Although heavily defeated to 15th in the year-end Arima Kinen, he bounced back from seventh in the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) to score an impressive third in the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) after placing second for the past three consecutive years. He is slated to kick off his fall campaign with the Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m) on October 6 and then head to the Japan Cup and the Arima Kinen.

Horses not in the 2023 Japan Cup lineup but who may run this year include **Durezza (JPN, C4, by Duramente)**, the 2023 Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) champion. In his latest overseas endeavor, the International Stakes (G1, 2,050m) at York Racecourse in the United Kingdom on August 21, the colt advanced to third at one point but failed to find another gear and finished fifth. He is expected to aim for the Japan Cup after a break.

Blow the Horn (JPN, H5, by Epiphaneia), who was runner-up in the Tenno Sho (Spring) and then broke into the top ranks with his first G1 triumph in the Takarazuka Kinen, is scheduled to make his fall comeback in the Kyoto Daishoten and then aim for the Arima Kinen, and possibly the Japan Cup.

Justin Palace (JPN, H5, by Deep Impact) will kick off his fall campaign in the Tenno Sho (Autumn), where he finished second last year when Equinox won in record time. The 2023 Tenno Sho (Spring) winner finished fourth in his first overseas challenge, the Dubai Sheema Classic earlier this year, and then struggled to 10th on a heavy surface in his comeback start, the Takarazuka Kinen. After the Tenno Sho (Autumn), he will likely pass the Japan Cup for the Arima Kinen, where he was fourth last year.



Durezza,
winner of 2023 Kikuka Sho



Blow the Horn,
winner of 2024 Takarazuka Kinen



Justin Palace,
winner of 2023 Tenno Sho (Spring)



Bellagio Opera,
winner of 2024 Osaka Hai

Other possible runners in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) and/or the Japan Cup include **Bellagio Opera (JPN, C4, by Lord Kanaloa)**, this year's Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) victor; **Lebensstil (JPN, C4, by Real Steel)**, winner of the All Comers (G2, 2,200m) on September 22; **Rousham Park (JPN, H5, by Harbinger)**, the Osaka Hai runner-up who will commence his autumn season with the Mainichi Okan (G2, 1,600m) on October 6; **Sol Oriens (JPN, C4, by Kitanan Black)**,



winner of last year's Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) and runner-up in the Takarazuka Kinen in June; **T O Royal (JPN, H6, by Leontes)**, the Tenno Sho (Spring) winner who was forced to withdraw from his intended start in the Kyoto Daishoten due to a minor leg problem and head to the Japan Cup; and **Tastiera (JPN, C4, by Satono Crown)**, the 2023 Tokyo Yushun champion.



Sol Oriens,
winner of 2023 Satsuki Sho



T O Royal,
winner of 2024 Tenno Sho (Spring)



Tastiera,
winner of 2023 Tokyo Yushun

Among the notable three-year-olds, Tokyo Yushun third-place finisher and French-bred **Shin Emperor (C3, by Siyouni)** is drawing much attention ahead of his Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) challenge on October 6. A full brother to 2020 Arc winner Sottsass, **Shin Emperor** won his first two career starts, including the Kyoto Nisai Stakes (G3, 2,000m), but has finished second, fifth and third in his three G1 starts. When purchasing the colt, his connections made it clear that they were targeting the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. When the opportunity arose, **Shin Emperor** flew to Europe in late August and ran in the Irish Champion Stakes (G1, 2,000m) on September 14 where he raced around fourth position early but met traffic 200 meters out and, while showing good finishing speed belatedly, finished third.

Meanwhile, **Danon Decile (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)**, after claiming the Tokyo Yushun as ninth favorite in May, is going directly to the Kikuka Sho, the third leg of the Triple Crown. With little time to recover from the long-distance G1, the colt will likely skip the Japan Cup in favor of the Arima Kinen. **Justin Milano (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)**, who won his first three career starts, including the Satsuki Sho, and was second by two lengths to **Danon Decile** when he stepped up in distance in the Derby, is expected to aim for the 2,000-meter Tenno Sho (Autumn) instead of the Kikuka Sho.



Shin Emperor,
winner of 2023 Kyoto Nisai Stakes



Justin Milano,
winner of 2024 Satsuki Sho



Danon Decile,
winner of 2024 Tokyo Yushun

Regaleira (JPN, F3, by Suave Richard), after beating male two-year-olds in last year's Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m), proved competitive against top three-year-old colts when finishing sixth and fifth in the Satsuki Sho and the Tokyo Yushun, respectively. The daughter of Suave Richard made



her fall comeback against fillies in the Rose Stakes (G2, 2,000m) on September 15 in which she trailed behind a field of 15 then launched the fastest late speed but had too much ground to make up, finishing fifth. Instead of taking on three-year-old fillies in the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) on October 13, she is expected to challenge top senior fillies in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 10.

Stellenbosch (JPN, F3, by Epiphaneia), winner of the Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m) and runner-up in the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m), and **Cervinia (JPN, F3, by Harbinger)**, who beat **Stellenbosch** in the Yushun Himba, will go directly to the Shuka Sho. Both may consider the Japan Cup, where three-year-old fillies have done well in recent years.



Regaleira,
winner of 2023 Hopeful Stakes



Stellenbosch,
winner of 2024 Oka Sho



Cervinia,
winner of 2024 Yushun Himba

Sprint, Older Fillies & Mares, Mile, Dirt, and Steeplechasing

The opening G1 event of the 2024 JRA fall season, the Sprinters Stakes (1,200m) on September 29, will welcome foreign contenders for the first time in six years, namely **Mugen (AUS, G6, by Deep Field)** and **Victor the Winner (AUS, G6, by Toronado)**, both from Hong Kong.



Mama Cocha,
winner of 2023 Sprinters Stakes

The Stakes' defending champion **Mama Cocha (JPN, M5, by Kurofune)** commenced her autumn campaign with the Centaur Stakes (G2, 1,200m) on September 8, in which she finished second behind Oceans Stakes (G3, 1,200m) winner **Toshin Macau (JPN, M5, by Big Arthur)**. **Moza Meimei (JPN, F4, by Real Impact)**, winner of the Ibis Summer Dash (G3, 1,000m), followed in third while Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) champion **Ten Happy Rose (JPN, M6, by Epiphaneia)** was seventh and Kitakyushu Kinen (G3, 1,200m) victor **Puro Magic (JPN, F3, by Asia Express)** was 13th.

Namura Clair (JPN, M5, by Mikki Isle), who marked two seconds and a third in her four starts in JRA sprint G1 races, prepped in the Keeneland Cup (G3, 1,200m) on August 25 but met traffic on the stretch rails to finish fifth. The race was won by **Satono Reve (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who claimed his second graded title following the Hakodate Sprint Stakes (G3, 1,200m). In second was A

Shin Spotter (JPN, H5, by A Shin Hikari) and Golden Eagle (1,500m) victor **Obamburumai (JPN, C4, by Discreet Cat)** was third.

The Sprinters Stakes will also include 2022 NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) victor **Danon Scorpion (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, this year's Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) champion **Mad Cool (IRE, H5, by Dark Angel)**, and four-time graded winner **Win Marvel (JPN, H5, by I'll Have Another)**.



Ten Happy Rose,
winner of 2024 Victoria Mile



Danon Scorpion,
winner of 2022 NHK Mile Cup



Mad Cool (right),
winner of 2024 Takamatsunomiya Kinen

This year's Queen Elizabeth II Cup for three-year-old-and-up fillies and mares will be held at Kyoto Racecourse on November 10. Last year's champion **Brede Weg (JPN, F4, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who scored her first G1 victory, has not raced since then. She was scheduled to kick off the current season with an inaugural overseas endeavor in the Dubai Turf, but a problem in her right hind leg forced her to cancel, and she also had to withdraw from the Niigata Kinen (G3, 2,000m) on September 1 due to sore muscles. She is scheduled to make her return in the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on October 14.



Brede Weg,
winner of 2023 Queen Elizabeth II Cup

Last year's Queen Elizabeth II Cup runner-up **Rouge Eveil (JPN, M5, Just a Way)** registered a respectable third as 11th choice in the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) in March against male opponents, and then finished eighth in the Takarazuka Kinen in June. She will commence her autumn campaign in the Fuchu Himba Stakes, which will include other Queen Elizabeth II Cup candidates such as **Conch Shell (JPN, F4, by Kizuna)**, **Moryana (JPN, F4, by Epiphaneia)** and **Ravel (JPN, F4, by Kitanan Black)**, respective winners of the 2024 Nakayama Himba Stakes (G3, 1,800m), the 2023 Shion Stakes (G2, 2,000m) and the 2022 Artemis Stakes (G3, 1,600m). Others include **Harper (JPN, F4, by Heart's Cry)** and **Lilac (JPN, M5, by Orfevre)**, respective runners-up in the 2023 Yushun Himba and the 2022 Queen Elizabeth II Cup.

This year's Queen Elizabeth II Cup field may also include **Shinryokuka (JPN, F4, by Satono Diamond)**, who is coming off her first grade-race title in the Niigata Kinen, and **Saliera (JPN, M5, by Deep Impact)**, who finished 12th in the All Comers, as well as three-year-old fillies who run in the Shuka Sho, the last leg of the fillies' Triple Tiara.



The Mile Championship on November 17 will feature defending champion **Namur (JPN, M5, by Harbinger)**, who followed last year's race with consistent performances overseas, including third in the Hong Kong Mile (G1, 1,600m) and second in the Dubai Turf. Back home, however, she was beaten to eighth in the Victoria Mile, but fought well in the following Yasuda Kinen in June to finish second to Romantic Warrior (IRE), Hong Kong's Horse of the Year. Like last year she might run in the same prep race, the Fuji Stakes (G2, 1,600m) on October 19, against a field that may include **Al Naseem (JPN, H5, by Maurice)**, **Red Mon Reve (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)** and **Serifos (JPN, H5, by Daiwa Major)**, respective winners of the Chukyo Kinen (G3, 1,800m) in July, the 2023 Keio Hai Spring Cup (G2, 1,400m) and the 2022 Mile Championship. Another possible is last year's runner-up, **Soul Rush (JPN, H6, by Rulership)**, who was third in this year's Yasuda Kinen, and **Jantar Mantar (JPN, C3, by Palace Malice)**, the 2023 Best Two-Year-Old Colt and winner of another G1 title in the NHK Mile Cup in May.



Namur,
winner of 2023 Mile Championship



Serifos,
winner of 2022 Mile Championship



Jantar Mantar,
winner of 2024 NHK Mile Cup



Ascoli Piceno,
winner of 2023 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies

Ascoli Piceno (JPN, F3, by Daiwa Major), who won the 2023 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m) to become the year's Best Two-Year-Old Filly, has been consistent this season. In addition to runner-up efforts in both the Oka Sho and the NHK Mile Cup, she won the Keisei Hai Autumn Handicap (G3, 1,600m) on September 8, running against older foes for the first time. **Ascoli Piceno** is entered in the AUD 10 million Golden Eagle at Rosehill Gardens on November 2 along with 2023 Keio Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,400m) victor **Corazon Beat (JPN, F3, by Suave Richard)**.

This year's Mile Championship field will also include **Elton Barows (JPN, C4, by Deep Brillante)**, who was fourth in last year's race and is scheduled to kick off his autumn season with the Mainichi Okan; **Gaia Force (JPN, H5, by Kitanan Black)**, fourth in the Yasuda Kinen; and **Tudo de Bom (JPN, H5, by Isla Bonita)**, who scored his first graded title in the Sekiya Kinen (G3, 1,600m) in August.

JRA's autumn dirt G1 event, the Champions Cup, will be held at Chukyo Racecourse on December 1. Last year, **Lemon Pop (USA, H6, by Lemon Drop Kid)** dominated both this race and the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m) to become only the fourth horse in history to win both JRA G1 dirt events



in the same year, earning him the title of Best Dirt Horse. Although heavily beaten to 12th in his second overseas challenge, the Saudi Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m) in February, he bounced back in Japan to win the Sakitama Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,400m) at NAR's Urawa Racecourse in June. He will attempt to defend his title in the Mile Championship Nambu Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) at NAR's Morioka Racecourse on October 14 and then will likely head to the JBC Sprint (Listed, dirt, 1,400m) at NAR's Saga Racecourse on November 3 and/or the Champions Cup.



Lemon Pop,
winner of 2023 Champions Cup

Ushba Tesoro (JPN, H7, by Orfevre) and **Derma Sotogake (JPN, C4, by Mind Your Biscuits)**, who finished second and fifth, respectively, in the Nippon TV Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,800m) at NAR's Funabashi Racecourse on September 25, will fly to the U.S. for the Breeders' Cup Classic. **Crown Pride (JPN, H5, by Reach the Crown)** and **Wilson Tesoro (JPN, H5, by Kitanasan Black)**, respective runners-up in the Champions Cup in 2022 and 2023, both ran in the Korea Cup (G3, dirt, 1,800m) in Seoul on September 8, where the former grabbed the title with the latter behind in second by five lengths. They will head to the JBC Classic (Listed, dirt, 2,000m) at NAR's Saga on November 4 or the Champions Cup.

Other older horses who are likely to aim for the Champions Cup include last year's third-place finisher **Dura Erede (JPN, C4, by Duramente)**, who will commence his autumn season with the Miyako Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,800m) on November 3 or the JBC Classic; **King's Sword (JPN, H5, by Sinister Minister)**, who won the Teio Sho (Listed, dirt, 2,000m) in June and is slated to run in the JBC Classic to defend his title; **Peisha Es (JPN, H5, by Espoir City)**, winner of three graded races, including the Elm Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,700m) in August, who is scheduled to run in the Musashino Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,600m) on November 9; **Peptide Nile (JPN, H6, by King Kamehameha)**, this year's February Stakes Champion, who will face **Lemon Pop** in the Mile Championship Nambu Hai; and **Yamanin Ours (JPN, C4, by Just a Way)**, who remains undefeated in five career starts, including his first graded title in the Procyon Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,700m) in July.



Ushba Tesoro,
winner of 2023 Dubai World Cup



Dura Erede,
winner of 2022 Hopeful Stakes



Peptide Nile,
winner of 2024 February Stakes

JRA and four other organizations including the National Association of Racing (NAR) jointly established a series of three annual "Dirt Triple Crown" races for three-year-old colts beginning this



year. The first two legs were won by JRA-based horses—**Amante Bianco (JPN, C3, by Henny Hughes)** claimed the Haneda Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,800m) in April and **Ramjet (JPN, C3, by Majestic Warrior)** notched the Tokyo Derby (Listed, dirt, 2,000m) in June. The last leg, the Japan Dirt Classic (Listed, dirt, 2,000m), will be held at NAR’s Oi Racecourse on October 2.

The Japan Dirt Classic field will include **Forever Young (JPN, C3, by Real Steel)**, winner of this year’s Saudi Derby (G3, dirt, 1,600m) and UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m), who also registered a respectable third in the Kentucky Derby (G1, dirt, 2,000m); **Mikki Fight (JPN, C3, by Drefong)**, winner of the Leopard Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,800m) in August; **Sunrise Zipangu (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)**, who won the Kozukata Sho (Listed, dirt, 2,000m) at Morioka on September 3; Tokyo Derby runner-up **Satono Epic (JPN, C3, by Kitasan Black)**; and **Ramjet**. Following the Japan Dirt Classic, **Forever Young** is scheduled to run in the Breeders’ Cup Classic in the U.S. and certain other aforementioned three-year-olds will challenge older horses in races such as the JBC Classic and the Champions Cup.



Meiner Grand,
winner of 2023 Nakayama Daishogai

The Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) on December 21, the second of this year’s two J-G1 steeplechase events, will determine the season’s best jumper. Last year’s champion and Best Steeplechase Horse, **Meiner Grand (JPN, H6, by Gold Ship)**, scored his third graded title in the Hanshin Spring Jump (J-G2, 3,900m) in March but failed to add the other J-G1 title in the Nakayama Grand Jump (4,250m) in April. In his fall campaign he may challenge the Tokyo High-Jump (J-G2, 3,110m) on October 13.

This year’s Nakayama Daishogai will likely see participants such as **June Velocity (JPN, H6, by Lord Kanaloa)**, winner of the Tokyo Jump Stakes (J-G3, 3,110m) in June, **Hokko Mevius (JPN, G8, by Daiwa Major)**, winner of the Niigata Jump Stakes (J-G3, 3,250m) in July, **Roscoff (JPN, H6, by Orfevre)**, winner of the Kokura Summer Jump (J-G3, 3,300m) in August, and **Saperavi (JPN, H7, by Rose Kingdom)**, winner of the Hanshin Jump Stakes (J-G3, 3,330m) in September. **Irogotoshi (JPN, H7, by Vincennes)**, back-to-back victor in the Nakayama Grand Jump, was diagnosed with a tendon injury in his left foreleg, which will sideline him from racing for at least nine months.



Irogotoshi,
winner of 2024 Nakayama Grand Jump

Final Two Legs of Three-Year-Old Triple Crowns

In April’s Oka Sho, the first jewel of the fillies’ Triple Tiara, **Stellenbosch** took the spotlight by denying 2023 Best Two-Year-Old Filly **Ascoli Piceno** by 3/4 length. In the following Yushun Himba



in May, **Cervinia** bounced back from a disappointing 13th in the Oka Sho by closing strongly to secure the Oaks title by edging out runner-up **Stellenbosch** right before the wire. While **Ascoli Piceno** will focus on shorter distances against males and older foes in the autumn, **Stellenbosch** and **Cervinia** will face each other in the final leg of the fillies Triple Crown, the Shuka Sho on October 13, their kick-off starts for the fall season.



Christmas Parade, winner of 2024 Shion Stakes

Two trial races were held leading up to the Shuka Sho. **Christmas Parade (JPN, F3, by Kitasan Black)** dominated the Shion Stakes on September 7, holding off Flower Cup (G3, 1,800m) winner **Mi Anheho (JPN, F3, by Duramente)** by a neck in a record-breaking performance. **Bond Girl (JPN, F3, by Daiwa Major)**, who has three runner-up efforts at the graded level, followed in third.

In the other trial, the Rose Stakes (G2, 2,000m) on September 15, Queen Cup (G3, 1,600m) victor **Queen's Walk (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)** picked off her rivals in a strong stretch drive for a 1-1/2-length win. **Celesta (JPN, F3, by Harbinger)** finished second in her grade-race debut, while 11th pick **Sekitoba East (JPN, F3, by Declaration of War)** was a head behind in third. In fourth was Wasurenagusa Sho (Listed, 2,000m) winner **Tagano Elpida (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**.



Queen's Walk, winner of 2024 Rose Stakes

This year's Shuka Sho field will also include **Admire Belle (JPN, F3, by Suave Richard)**, winner of the Flora Stakes (G2, 2,000m) in April, and **Koganeno Sora (JPN, F3, by Gold Ship)**, the Sweetpea Stakes (Listed, 1,800m) victor in April, who won against older female rivals in the Queen Stakes (G3, 1,800m) on July 28.

Meanwhile, Tokyo Yushun champion **Danon Decile** will head directly to the last leg of the colts' Triple Crown, the Kikuka Sho on October 20. Satsuki Sho winner and Tokyo Yushun runner-up **Justin Milano**, considered best at distances below 2,400 meters, will instead challenge older rivals in the Tenno Sho (Autumn). Two-time G1 mile winner **Jantar Mantar** is focused on the mile distance and therefore will also not be participating in the Kikuka Sho.



Urban Chic, winner of 2024 St. Lite Kinen

In the first Kikuka Sho trial, the St. Lite Kinen (G2, 2,200m) on September 16, **Urban Chic (JPN, C3, by Suave Richard)** won by 1-3/4 lengths, improving greatly from an 11th-place defeat in the Tokyo Yushun. In second place was Satsuki Sho runner-up **Cosmo Kuranda (JPN, C3, by Al Ain)**, followed by Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m) runner-up **Ecoro Walz (JPN, C3, by Black Tide)** another 2-1/2 lengths behind in third.



In another trial, the Kobe Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,200m) on September 22, graded winner **Meisho Tabaru (JPN, C3, by Gold Ship)** performed admirably in a gate-to-wire victory, holding off Kyoto Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,200m) champion **June Take (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)** by a 1/2 length. In third was **Shonan la Punta (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)**, who bounced back from a dismal 15th in the Tokyo Yushun. Kisaragi Sho (G3, 1,800m) winner **Byzantine Dream (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)** finished sixth while Wakaba Stakes (Listed, 2,000m) winner **Mr G T (JPN, C3, by Duramente)** never contended, ending in 10th.



Meisho Tabaru,
winner of 2024 Kobe Shimbun Hai

This year's Kikuka Sho will also include **Redentor (JPN, C3, by Rulership)**, who marked his fourth career win in the Nihonkai Stakes (3 Wins Class, 2,200m) against older foes on August 17 and **Sunrise Earth (JPN, C3, by Rey de Oro)**, winner of the Sumire Stakes (Listed, 2,200m) in February.