FROM: Media & Publicity Department, THE JAPAN RACING ASSOCIATION (JRA)

DATE: December 1, 2024

## SUBJECT: RESULT OF THE 25TH CHAMPIONS CUP (G1)







Formerly run under the name Japan Cup Dirt until 2013, the Champions Cup takes place at Chukyo Racecourse which is situated in Chubu region between Tokyo and Osaka. The Japan Cup Dirt, which began as the dirt version of the Japan Cup in 2000 at Tokyo Racecourse held over the 2,100-meter left-handed course until 2007, was temporarily shifted to Nakayama Racecourse over the 1,800-meter right-handed course in 2002, then held at Hanshin Racecourse, also a right-handed track and over 1,800 meters, between 2008 and 2013. Eighteen of the past 24 winners of the Champions Cup, which is one of JRA's two dirt G1 races along with the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m), have won the season's JRA Award for Best Dirt Horse.

Lord Sterling (USA, by Black Tie Affair), who finished third in the inaugural year, was one of the first foreign contenders, while Fleetstreet Dancer (USA, by Smart Strike) became the first foreign winner in 2003. In the past, 29 runners from not only North America but also from France, Germany, Great Britain and Hong Kong have participated in the race including 2018 Stephen Foster Handicap (G1, dirt, 1,800m) winner Pavel (USA, by Creative Cause) from the U.S. who finished 15th in 2018.

This year's Champions Cup field included last year's champion Lemon Pop, who came off back-to-back victories in the Mile Championship Nambu Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,600m, Oct.14) in his bid to become the first horse to defend the Champions Cup title since Transcend in 2010 and 2011; and Peptide Nile, winner of this year's February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m) and Mile Championship Nambu Hai runner-up, who aimed to become the fifth horse in history to win both JRA G1 dirt events in the same year.

The field also included Gaia Force, this year's February Stakes runner-up who commenced his autumn campaign with this race after finishing fourth in the Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m, Jun.2); Crown Pride who successfully defended his Korea Cup (G3, dirt, 1,800m, Sep.8) title; Hagino Alegrias, winner of the 2023-24 Sirius Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,900m, Sep.28); Sunrise Zipangu, who finished third in the Japan Dirt Classic (Listed, dirt, 2,000m) and went on to claim the Miyako Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,800m, Nov.3); Wilson Tesoro, last year's runner-up who came off a victory in the JBC Classic (Listed, dirt, 2,000m, Nov.4); and NAR's Oi Racecourse-based Mick Fire, winner of the 2023 Japan Dirt Derby (Listed, dirt, 2,000m).

#### THE 25TH CHAMPIONS CUP (G1) - Japan Autumn International -

3-year-olds & up, 1,800 meters (about 9 furlongs), dirt, left-handed

Sunday, December 1, 2024 Post Time: 15:30 Chukyo Racecourse 11th Race

Total prize money: ¥ 259,200,000 (about US\$ 1,839,000 <US\$1=¥141>)

3-y-o: 56 kg (about 123-124 lbs), 4-y-o & up: 58 kg (about 128 lbs)

2 kg allowance for Fillies & Mares, 2kg allowance for Southern Hemisphere-bred born in 2021 Course Record: 1:47.6 Race Record: 1:48.5 [Chrysoberyl (JPN, by Gold Allure), 2019]

Safety factor: 16 runners Going: Standard Weather: Fine



FP	ВК	PP	Horse Jockey	S&A Color Wgt	Odds (Fav)	Margin (L3F)	Sire Dam (Dam's Sire)	Owner Breeder Trainer
1	1	2	Lemon Pop (USA) Ryusei Sakai	H6 ch. 58.0	2.2 (1)	1:50.1 (36.9)	Lemon Drop Kid Unreachable (Giant's Causeway)	Godolphin Mr. & Mrs. Oliver S. Tait Hiroyasu Tanaka
2	4	8	Wilson Tesoro (JPN) Yuga Kawada	H5 b. 58.0	5.5 (2)	Nose (36.2)	Kitasan Black Chesutoke Rose (Uncle Mo)	Ryotokuji Kenji Holdings Co., Ltd. Ryoken Farm Hitoshi Kotegawa
3	3	6	Dura Erede (JPN) Ryan Moore	C4 d.b. 58.0	42.6 (9)	1-1/2 (36.4)	Duramente Marchesa (Orfevre)	Three H Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Racing Manabu Ikezoe
4	2	3	Hagino Alegrias (JPN) Mirai Iwata	H7 b. 58.0	15.3 (6)	3/4 (36.7)	Kizuna Tanino Charis (Generous)	Yoshie Hinokuma Okada Stud Hirofumi Shii

5	2	4 B	Peptide Nile (JPN) Yusuke Fujioka	H6 b. 58.0	6.8 (3)	Nose (37.1)	King Kamehameha Queen Olive (Manhattan Cafe)	Kazuhiko Numakawa Kineusu Bokujo Hidenori Take
6	6	12	Sunrise Zipangu (JPN) Yutaka Take	C3 b. 56.0	7.4 (4)	1/2 (37.1)	Kizuna Saimaa (Zoffany)	Life House Co., Ltd. Oiwake Farm Hidetaka Otonashi
7	5	10	Ater Astraea (JPN) Yuji Hishida	M5 br. 56.0	82.9 (12)	Neck (36.3)	Reach the Crown Stars in Heaven (Workforce)	Field Racing Oiwake Farm Shinsuke Hashiguchi
8	3	5	Peisha Es (JPN) Kazuo Yokoyama	H5 ch. 58.0	72.7 (11)	1 (37.1)	Espoir City Lisa Psyche (Wild Rush)	Naoto Kitajo Shinichi Takamura Kazuo Konishi
9	8	15 B	Gloria Mundi (JPN) Hiroshi Kitamura	H6 b. 58.0	258.0 (16)	3 (37.6)	King Kamehameha Bettolle (Blu Air Force)	Kazumi Yoshida Northern Racing Ryuji Okubo
10	6	11	Mitono O (JPN) Kohei Matsuyama	C4 ch. 58.0	167.5 (15)	1 (38.1)	Logotype Seductively (Thunder Gulch)	Royal Park Hiroshi Chikushi Koji Maki
11	1	1	Crown Pride (JPN) Takeshi Yokoyama	H5 d.b. 58.0	16.6 (7)	3-1/2 (38.4)	Reach the Crown Emmy's Pride (King Kamehameha)	Teruya Yoshida Shadai Farm Koichi Shintani
12	4	7 B	Seraphic Call (JPN) Cristian Demuro	C4 ch. 58.0	18.3 (8)	2 (38.7)	Henny Hughes Chant de l'Ange (Manhattan Cafe)	Carrot Farm Co., Ltd. Northern Farm Ryo Terashima
13	7	13	Mick Fire (JPN) Christophe Lemaire	C4 b. 58.0	60.5 (10)	Neck (37.9)	Sinister Minister Mariage (Brian's Time)	KH Racing Kazuyoshi Yamagami Kazuo Watanabe
14	5	9	T O Drefong (JPN) Kosei Miura	H5 ch. 58.0	107.7 (14)	2-1/2 (38.8)	Drefong Eminent City (Brian's Time)	Tomoya Ozasa Wing Farm Tomoyuki Umeda
15	8	16	Gaia Force (JPN) Yoshihito Nagaoka	H5 g. 58.0	13.7 (5)	5 (40.0)	Kitasan Black Natale (Kurofune)	KR Japan Oiwake Farm Haruki Sugiyama
16	7	14 B	Suleyman (JPN) Arata Saito	H6 ch. 58.0	107.1 (13)	1/2 (40.1)	King Kamehameha Donna Blini (Bertolini)	Sunday Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Racing Manabu Ikezoe

FP: Final Position / BK: Bracket Number / PP: Post Position / B: Blinker / S&A: Sex & Age / Wgt: Weight (kg) / L3F: Time of Last 3 Furlongs (600m) Color: b.=bay / bl.=black / br.=brown / ch.=chestnut / d.b.=dark bay / d.ch.=dark chestnut / g.=gray / w.=white NOTE: Figures quoted under Odds are shown in form of decimal odds (single unit is ¥100), and Fav indicates the order of favorities.

Turnover for the Race alone: ¥ 17,538,810,200 Turnover for the Day: ¥ 24,484,232,100 Attendance: 27,425

### Pay-off (for ¥100)

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Win	No.2	¥ 220	Bracket Quinella	1-4	¥ 520	Quinella	2-8	¥ 840		
	No.2	¥ 140		2-8	¥ 390	Exacta	2-8	¥ 1,190		
Place	No.8	¥ 180	Quinella Place	2-6	¥ 1,520	Trio	2-6-8	¥ 7,410		
	No.6	¥ 560		6-8	¥ 2,200	Trifecta	2-8-6	¥ 18,050		

Winner= 18 starts: 13 wins & 3 seconds / Added & stakes money: ¥ 123,444,000 / Career earnings: ¥ 760,200,000

# Lemon Pop Caps off His Stellar Racing Career by Defending His Champions Cup Title

Race favorite **Lemon Pop** won out a close race in this year's Champions Cup to become the first horse to defend the title since Transcend in 2010 and 2011, when the race was held under the name, the Japan Cup Dirt. The 2023 Best Dirt Horse, boasting three JRA-G1 wins including last year's February Stakes (dirt, 1,600m) and three NAR titles in the 2023-2024 Mile Championship Nambu Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) and the 2024 Sakitama Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,400m), will retire from racing after this race and stand as stallion at Darley Japan Stallion Complex next year. Trainer Hiroyasu Tanaka claimed his third JRA-G1 victory following last year's Champions Cup with this horse, while jockey Ryusei Sakai won his sixth after this year's Takamatsunomiya Kinen with Mad Cool.

**Lemon Pop** broke smoothly from the inner gate and assumed command after rallying for the lead with **Mitono O**. The six-year-old son of Lemon Drop Kid continued to set the pace, pulled away persistently after entering the lane, and although challenged with an incredible late charge by **Wilson Tesoro** before the wire, managed to defend his title with a photo-finish victory.

"It was his last race and I'm glad that he was able to end his career with the best result. I wanted to ride him as smoothly as possible without any loss and was ready for any challenge. I thought we had won but wasn't quite sure because Wilson Tesoro came from behind with great speed, so I'm glad we were able to win. Lemon Pop is a strong horse—he has won six out of six G1-class races in Japan—there's no other horse like him, and I'm proud to have been on his back," commented Ryusei Sakai.

Last year's runner-up and second pick **Wilson Tesoro** traveled around eighth, dropped position rounding the last corners, switched to the outside at the early stretch to accelerate powerfully with the fastest late drive and nearly caught the winner but was a nose short at the wire to finish second again this year.

Ninth choice **Dura Erede** saved ground inside **Wilson Tesoro** in mid-division, showed tenacious effort on the rails while clocking the third fastest speed over the last 600 meters and while failing to threaten the top two finishers, secured third place as he did last year, finishing 1-1/2 lengths behind the runner-up.

## Other Horses:

4th: (3) **Hagino Alegrias**—ran around 7th, passed one by one at stretch while no match for top 3 finishers

5th: (4) Peptide Nile—chased leaders in 3rd, showed tenacity, failed to hold off late chargers in last 100m

6th: (12) Sunrise Zipangu—raced wide around 11th, advanced to enter lane in 4th, needed more

7th: (10) Ater Astraea—trailed in rear, showed 2nd fastest late speed but was too late

8th: (5) **Peisha Es**—sat around 5th, lacked needed kick in last 200m

9th: (15) Gloria Mundi—settled wide around 5th from wide draw, checked 300m out, even paced

10th: (11) **Mitono O**—rallied for lead and stalked winner in 2nd, faded after 200m pole

11th: (1) Crown Pride—tracked leaders around 3rd on rails, weakened in last 300m

12th: (7) Seraphic Call—made headway in backstretch from 13th position, failed to sustain bid

13th: (13) Mick Fire—broke poorly, positioned near rear, unable to reach contention

14th: (9) **T O Drefong**—raced wide around 9th, outrun after 3rd corner

15th: (16) Gaia Force—raced around 13th early, advanced at backstretch, showed little at stretch

16th: (14) Suleyman—traveled wide around 8th, dropped back after 3rd corner

Fractional time (sec./furlong): 12.6 - 11.0 - 12.4 - 12.2 - 12.6 - 12.4 - 12.2 - 12.0 - 12.7

Last 4 furlongs: 49.3 Last 3 furlongs: 36.9

Positions at each corner: 1st corner  $(\underline{2},*11)-(1,4)(5,15)(3,14)(9,12)(8,7)(6,16)-13-10$ 

2nd corner (\* $\underline{2}$ ,11)(1,4)-(3,5,15)(8,9,14)(6,12)(7,16)-13-10 3rd corner  $\underline{2}$ (11,4)(1,12)(5,15,14,7,16)(3,8)(6,9)10,13 4th corner  $\underline{2}$ (11,4)(1,12)(5,15)(3,7)(6,8,16)(14,9)(13,10)

NOTE 1: <u>Underlined bold number</u> indicates the winning horse.

**NOTE 2**: Horse numbers are indicated in the order of their positions at each corner, with the first position listed first. Two or more horses inside the same parentheses indicate that they were positioned side by side. Hyphens between the horse numbers indicate that there is distance between the former and the latter. The asterisk indicates a slight lead.