

Exclusive Topics for Horse Racing in Japan

— Spring Edition —

March 2025

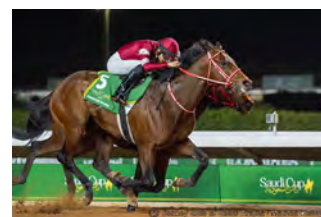
The Japan Racing Association

JRA's 2025 racing season will start in earnest in March with Classic trials for three-year-olds at the same time that established horses begin preparing for the spring G1 events. Although no Japanese horse competing overseas in 2024 brought home a G1 title, 56 Japanese-trained horses were listed among the 2024 LONGINES World's Best Racehorse Rankings, the highest number of any country. As part of our ongoing efforts to support coverage of JRA events, in this special Spring edition of our international newsletter we are pleased to update readers on last year's stars and this season's key runners.

Four Wins by Japanese Runners in Riyadh

Since the inception of the Saudi Cup meeting in 2020, where several Japanese runners have already enjoyed success, an increasing number have made the Middle East an important early-season destination. Many have already run in meetings in both Saudi Arabia and Dubai during their overseas trips this year. For example, counting the undercard races also held on the big day in Saudi Arabia, 18 Japanese entrants ran at King Abdulaziz Racetrack on February 22.

In the Saudi Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m), **Forever Young (JPN, C4, by Real Steel)**, winner of the Saudi Derby (G3, dirt, 1,600m) and third-place finisher in both the Kentucky Derby (G1, dirt, 2,000m) and the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1, dirt, 2,000m) last year, out-dueled multiple G1 winner and 2024 Yasuda Kinen victor Romantic Warrior to become the second Japanese-trained horse to win this US\$ 20 million event. **Ushba Tesoro (JPN, H8, by Orfevre)**, winner of the 2023 Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m), and **Wilson Tesoro (JPN, H6, by Kitasan Black)**, two-time runner-up in the Champions Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m), followed respectively in third and fourth, while **Ramjet (JPN, C4, by Majestic Warrior)**, winner of the Tokyo Derby (Listed, dirt, 2,000m), was sixth.



Forever Young,
winner of 2025 Saudi Cup

In the Saudi Derby, **Shin Forever (USA, C3, by Complexity)** set the pace and maintained the lead up to the last 100 meters, but then succumbed to winner Golden Vekoma to finish in second by 1-3/4 lengths. 2024 Artemis Stakes (G3, 1,600m) runner-up **Mistress (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)** and 2024 Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) winner **Myriad Love (JPN, F3, by New Year's Day)** finished fourth and seventh respectively.

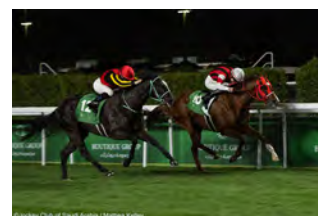
Remake (JPN, H6, by **Lani**) failed to defend his title in the Riyadh Dirt Sprint (G2, dirt, 1,200m), finishing seventh. **Gabby's Sister** (JPN, F4, by **Apollo Kingdom**), winner of the 2024 Capella Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,200m), was third; **Jasper Krone** (USA, H6, by **Frosted**), two-time graded turf sprint victor, was ninth; **Chikappa** (JPN, C4, by **Real Steel**), winner of two graded sprint titles on dirt, was tenth; and **Igniter** (JPN, H7, by **Espoir City**), two-time NAR Horse of the Year, was 11th.



Shin Emperor,
winner of 2025 Neom Turf Cup

Last year's Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) runner-up **Shin Emperor** (FR, C4, by **Siyouni**) scored a wire-to-wire victory in the Neom Turf Cup (G2, 2,100m), previously won by Authority in 2022, holding off late challenges to win by 1-3/4 lengths. **Killer Ability** (JPN, H6, by **Deep Impact**), winner of the Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m) in 2021 and second in last year's Neom Turf Cup, disappointed to tenth.

In the 1351 Turf Sprint (G2, 1,351m), the 2023 Best Two-Year-Old Filly **Ascoli Piceno** (JPN, F3, by **Daiwa Major**) emulated Songline (2022) and Bathrat Leon (2023) to claim victory. In second, four-time graded winner **Win Marvel** (JPN, H6, by **I'll Have Another**) was not only the pacesetter but just missed by a head, whereas the 2024 Victoria Mile (G1, 1,600m) champion **Ten Happy Rose** (JPN, M7, by **Epiphaneia**) crossed the wire in seventh.



Ascoli Piceno (left),
winner of 2025 1351 Turf Sprint



Byzantine Dream, winner of
2025 Red Sea Turf Handicap

Byzantine Dream (JPN, C4, by **Epiphaneia**), the 2024 Kisaragi Sho (G3, 1,800m) victor, registered his second graded title in the Red Sea Turf Handicap (G2, 3,000m), becoming the next Japanese horse to win the race after Stay Foolish in 2022 and Silver Sonic in 2023. The son of Epiphaneia will head to the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) on May 4, which will also include **Satono Glanz** (JPN, H5, by **Satono Diamond**), a two-time grade-race winner who ran in the H.H The Amir Trophy (G3, 2,300m) in Qatar on February 16 to finish third.

Eight Japanese runners have been transferred from Saudi Arabia to Meydan Racecourse in Dubai, including **Shin Forever** for the UAE Derby (G2, dirt, 1,900m); **Jasper Krone** and **Remake** for the Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1, dirt, 1,200m); **Shin Emperor** for the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1, 2,410m); and **Forever Young**, **Ushba Tesoro**, **Wilson Tesoro** and **Ramjet** for the Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m), all races on April 5.

Another 17 Japanese runners will join those from Saudi Arabia for the Dubai World Cup meeting. Joining **Shin Emperor** in the Dubai Sheema Classic will be three proven G1 winners, including **Durezza** (JPN, H5, by **Duramente**), who capped off a five-race winning streak as a three-year-old

by claiming the Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m), but has been winless since. Last year he finished fifth in the International Stakes (G1, 2,050m), his first overseas challenge, but was impressive in his last start, the 2024 Japan Cup, where he accelerated from mid-pack to take the lead in the backstretch, and despite being caught by winner Do Deuce, held on to share second place with the fast-closing **Shin Emperor**.



Durezza,
winner of 2023 Kikuka Sho



Cervinia,
winner of 2024 Yushun Himba

The second G1 winner to run in the Dubai Sheema Classic is **Cervinia (JPN, F4, by Harbinger)**, who won last year's Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) and the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) before finishing fourth in the Japan Cup, her first challenge against a mixed field of older foes, finishing 2-1/2 lengths behind **Durezza** and **Shin Emperor**. The 2024 Best Three-Year-Old Filly commenced the 2025 season with the Kyoto Kinen (G2, 2,200m) but failed at the stretch and disappointed to ninth.

A G1 winner slated to run in the Dubai Sheema Classic is **Danon Decile (JPN, C4, by Epiphaneia)**, who topped the three-year-olds by winning the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) and scored a well-fought third in the year-end Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m) to earn him JRA's 2024 Best Three-Year-Old Colt title. The colt kicked off his four-year-old season in the American Jockey Club Cup (G2, 2,200m), where he sat wide around seventh before launching the fastest late drive to overtake some tenacious frontrunners for a 3/4-length victory.



Danon Decile,
winner of 2024 Tokyo Yushun



Liberty Island,
winner of 2023 Shuka Sho

Four Japanese runners nominated for the Dubai Turf include **Liberty Island (JPN, M5, by Duramente)**, who became JRA's seventh winner of the Triple Crown for fillies in 2023 and then proved her strength in that year's Japan Cup against a mixed field of G1 runners, finishing second by four lengths to Equinox. The 2023 Best Three-Year-Old Filly commenced her 2024 season with the Dubai Sheema Classic, finishing a three-length third, and then was heavily beaten in the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) but bounced back in the 2024 Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m) to score a 1-1/2-length second behind Romantic Warrior. After the Dubai Turf, the Duramente mare may fly to Hong Kong for the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m) on April 27.

The second Dubai Turf nominee is **Brede Weg (JPN, M5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who landed her first G1 victory in the 2023 Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) and then was entered in last year's Dubai Turf but had to cancel due to a problem in her right hind leg. The bay won her comeback start in the Fuchu Himba Stakes (G2, 1,800m) in October, then ran two



Brede Weg, winner of
2023 Queen Elizabeth II Cup

races at a mile—the Mile Championship (G1) in November and the Tokyo Shimbun Hai (G3) in February—finishing fourth in both. The Dubai Turf’s extra 200 meters might allow her to display her trademark late kick.



Soul Rush, winner of
2024 Mile Championship

The third Japanese nominee for the Dubai Turf is **Soul Rush (JPN, H7, by Rulership)**, who last year claimed his long-awaited G1 title in the Mile Championship after seven challenges at the highest level, becoming the 2024 Best Miler after a consistent season in which he was 2-2-1 from five starts at a mile. Finishing fourth and second in his past two Hong Kong Mile (G1, 1,600m) challenges, he prepped for his third overseas campaign in the Nakayama Kinen (G2, 1,800m) on March 2, where he closed on the leaders from ninth to finish 1-1/4 lengths back in third with a top weight of 59kg.

The fourth Japanese nominee for the Dubai Turf is **Meisho Tabaru (JPN, C4, by Gold Ship)** who has four wins between 1,800 and 2,200 meters, including two graded titles—the 2024 Mainichi Hai (G3, 1,800m) and the Kobe Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,200m), both of which he won wire-to-wire over good and yielding goings, respectively. While he was unable to sustain his bid in his last two starts on good to firm tracks, he has outstanding stamina and sustaining speed to threaten strong opponents in the Dubai Turf, especially on testing ground.

Two other Japanese contenders will join **Jasper Krone** and **Remake** in the Dubai Golden Shaheen. One is **American Stage (USA, C3, by Into Mischief)**, who registered three consecutive victories at 1,200 meters between November and December and then flew to UAE for the Mahab Al Shimaal (G3, dirt, 1,200m) on March 1, where he fought well to second in his first challenge against older foes. The other, **Kurojishi Joe (JPN, H6, by Furioso)**, has scored five wins at 1,200 meters on dirt and was a neck second behind **Gabby’s Sister** in the 2024 Capella Stakes.

Japanese runners scheduled to start in the Godolphin Mile (G2, dirt, 1,600m) include **Kazu Petrin (JPN, H5, by Rulership)**, runner-up in the 2024 Musashino Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,600m), and **Peptide Nile (JPN, H7, by King Kamehameha)**, winner of the 2023 February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m) and fourth this year.

Peptide Nile, winner of 2024 February Stakes



The Al Quoz Sprint (G1, 1,200m) field will include three Japanese runners—**Danon McKinley (JPN, C4, by Maurice)**, a two-time grade-race victor at 1,400 meters, **Puro Magic (JPN, F4, by Asia Express)** whose four wins were all at 1,200 meters including two G3 events, and **Win Carnelian (JPN, H8, by Screen Hero)**, last year’s Takamatsunomiya Kinen fourth-place finisher.

Three Japanese contenders will join **Shin Forever** in the UAE Derby—**Don in the Mood (JPN, C3, by**

Asia Express), **Admire Daytona (JPN, C3, by Drefong)** and **Dragon (JPN, C3, by Mind Your Biscuits)**, third, fourth and fifth respectively in the Hyacinth Stakes (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) on February 23.



Geoglyph,
winner of 2022 Satsuki Sho

On the same day as the Dubai World Cup meeting, **Geoglyph (JPN, H6, by Drefong)** is scheduled to run in the Doncaster Mile (G1, 1,600m) at Randwick Racecourse in Australia. Winless since taking the 2022 Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m), he registered a 2-1/2-length fifth in the Breeders' Cup Mile (G1, 1,600m) last autumn and is coming off an 11th in the Tokyo Shimbun Hai, where he carried a top weight of 59kg.

Also heading to Australia is **Rousham Park (JPN, H6, by Harbinger)**, who will run in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes (G1, 2,000m) on April 12. The two-time graded winner scored runner-up efforts at G1 level last year in the Osaka Hai (2,000m) and the Breeders' Cup Turf (2,400m), and capped off the season with a seventh in the Arima Kinen. Also, **Cils Blancs (JPN, H7, by Tosen Jordan)** will join **Geoglyph** and **Rousham Park** in a bid for the Sydney Cup (G1, 3,200m) title. The seven-year-old was runner-up in the Stayers Stakes (G2, 3,600m) in December and 12th in the Diamond Stakes (G3, 3,400m) in February.

Prognosis (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact) will possibly run in Hong Kong, where he scored runner-up efforts in the 2023 and 2024 Queen Elizabeth II Cup and a fifth in the 2023 Hong Kong Cup (G1, 2,000m), all won by Romantic Warrior. The son of Deep Impact also registered a second in Australia in the 2024 Cox Plate (G1, 2,040m) in October, followed by an 11th in the Arima Kinen, and kicked off this season as defending champion in the Kinko Sho (G2, 2,000m) on March 16 in which he sat second from the rear after a slow break and failed to threaten the top finishers, finishing in sixth.

Gaia Force (JPN, H6, by Kitasan Black) aims to make his first overseas challenge in Hong Kong in the Champions Mile (G1, 1,600m) at Sha Tin on the same day as the Queen Elizabeth II Cup. While claiming the St. Lite Kinen (G2, 2,200m) as a three-year-old, the son of Kitasan Black appears best suited to mile distances, having finished fourth in the 2023 and 2024 Yasuda Kinen and second in the 2024 February Stakes.

2024 Best Sprinter **Lugal (JPN, H5, by Duramente)** and the aforementioned **Danon McKinley** have also accepted their invitations to the Chairman's Sprint Prize (G1, 1,200m), to be held at the same venue and on the same day as the Queen Elizabeth II Cup and the Champions Mile.

Horses nominated to run in the U.S. Triple Crown were announced in February. While the final selections among 69 registered JRA-based horses (24 more than last year) have yet to be determined, the list includes **Shin Forever**, **Dragon** and **Mistress**, both mentioned above, **Natural Rise (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)** and **Luxor Cafe (USA, C3, by American Pharoah)**, respective winners of the Cattleja Stakes (Open Class, dirt, 1,600m) in November and the Hyacinth Stakes.

Spring G1 Campaign for Four-Year-Olds and Up in Japan

JRA has announced that it will raise the prize money of three G1 events at middle and long distances for older runners from this year—the Osaka Hai (2,000m), the Tenno Sho (Spring) (3,200m) and the Takarazuka Kinen (2,200m). The total purse for each race will be 651 million yen (US\$ 4.1 million), of which the winner will receive 300 million yen (US\$ 1.9 million), the same as the Tokyo Yushun and the Tenno Sho (Autumn) and following only the Japan Cup and the Arima Kinen. Meanwhile, the Takarazuka Kinen, which was held on the fourth or fifth weekend of June, will be shifted to a week after the Yasuda Kinen (June 15) to avoid Japan's rainy season and hot weather.

With Horse of the Year Do Deuce retired and some of Japan's top horses heading to the Middle East, Australia and Hong Kong, many G1 winners will be looking for success in Japan's spring G1 campaign.

The Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) on March 30, the first of the annual flat turf G1 events, will feature three G1 winners: last year's Sprinters Stakes (G1, 1,200m) victor and Best Sprinter **Lugal**, defending champion **Mad Cool (IRE, H6, by Dark Angel)** and 2023 Sprinters Stakes winner **Mama Cocha (JPN, M6, by Kurofune)**, who also registered a graded win in the Ocean Stakes (G3, 1,200m) on March 1, where the six-year-old broke sharply to press the pace in third, advanced to second entering the stretch and then overtook the frontrunner in the final strides for a 1/2-length victory.

This year's Takamatsunomiya Kinen will also include two-time grade-race winner **Satono Reve (JPN, H6, by Lord Kanaloa)** and last year's Sprinters Stakes runner-up **Toshin Macau (JPN, H6, by Big Arthur)**, who were third and ninth respectively in the Hong Kong Sprint (G1, 1,200m, Dec.8); **Namura Clair (JPN, M6, by Mikki Isle)**, who is coming off her fifth graded title in the Hanshin Cup (G2, 1,400m, Dec.21) and will aim for a much-awaited G1 title in her ninth challenge at this level; and winners **Big Caesar (JPN, H5, by Big Arthur)** in the Keihan Hai (G3, 1,200m, Nov. 24), **A Shin Fencer (JPN, M5, by Fine Needle)** in the Silk Road Stakes (G3, 1,200m, Feb. 2) and **Kangchenjunga (JPN, H5, by Big Arthur)** in the Hankyu Hai (G3, 1,400m, Feb. 22).



Lugal,
winner of 2024 Sprinters Stakes



Mad Cool, winner of
2024 Takamatsunomiya Kinen



Mama Cocha,
winner of 2023 Sprinters Stakes



Namura Clair,
winner of 2024 Hanshin Cup

Bellagio Opera (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa) will attempt to defend his title in the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) on April 6. After winning last year's edition, the son of Lord Kanaloa continued to produce consistent results, finishing third in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) and fourth in the year-end Arima Kinen, the latter being his most recent start. **Stellenbosch (JPN, F4, by Epiphaneia)**, winner

of last year's Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m), also was consistent, finishing second in the Yushun Himba, third in the Shuka Sho and concluding her sophomore season with a third in the Hong Kong Vase (G1, 2,400m) in December. **Sol Oriens (JPN, H5, by Kitasan Black)**, though winless since his Satsuki Sho victory in 2023, was second in last year's Takarazuka Kinen and kicked off the current season with a 0.4-second fifth in the Kyoto Kinen.

This year's Osaka Hai could welcome **Sixpence (JPN, C4, by Kizuna)**, a three-time G2 winner over 1,800 meters, including this year's Nakayama Kinen; **Al Naseem (JPN, H6, by Maurice)**, who scored his second graded title in the Nakayama Kimpai (G3, 2,000m) in January and finished 12th in the following Nakayama Kinen; three runners from the Kinko Sho—runner-up **Ho O Biscuits (JPN, H5, by Mind Your Biscuits)**, who was third in last year's Tenno Sho (Autumn), fourth-place **Desiert (JPN, H6, by Drefong)**, who won the Chunichi Shimbun Hai (G3, 2,000m) in December, and ninth-place **Ravel (JPN, M5, by Kitasan Black)**, victor of the Challenge Cup (G3, 2,000m) in November; **Lord del Rey (JPN, H5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who registered his first grade-race title in the Nikkei Shinshun Hai (G2, 2,200m) on January 19; and **Yoho Lake (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact)**, who is coming off his third grade-race title in the Kyoto Kinen.



Bellagio Opera,
winner of 2024 Osaka Hai



Stellenbosch,
winner of 2024 Oka Sho



Sol Oriens,
winner of 2023 Satsuki Sho



Lord del Rey, winner of
2025 Nikkei Shinshun Hai

While this year's Tenno Sho (Spring) will miss defending champion T O Royal (JPN, H7, by Leontes) due to a leg problem, **Justin Palace (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, winner of the 2023 edition, will be back to reclaim his title in this G1 event for stayers after his prep in the Osaka Hai. Though winless since his victory in the Tenno Sho (Spring), the six-year-old brown has shown competence, finishing within fifth in all but one of eight starts at G1 level. **Urban Chic (JPN, C4, by Suave Richard)**, who won both the St. Lite Kinen and the Kikuka Sho and then concluded his three-year-old season with a sixth in the Arima Kinen, will begin this season with the Nikkei Sho (G2, 2,500m) on March 29. **Blow the Horn (JPN, H6, by Epiphaneia)**, last year's Tenno Sho (Spring) runner-up and Takarazuka Kinen victor, commenced the season with the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) on March 23, where he settled in mid-division and closed on the leaders in the stretch but crossed the wire in third, 7-1/2 lengths behind the winner.

Also targeting the Tenno Sho (Spring) on May 4 are the Hanshin Daishoten victor **Sunrise Earth (JPN, C4, by Rey de Oro)**; three-time graded winner **Pradaria (JPN, H6, by Deep Impact)**, who was sixth in the Kyoto Kinen; **Redentor (JPN, C4, by Rulership)**, 2024 Kikuka Sho runner-up who won the Diamond Stakes; last year's Melbourne Cup (G1, 3,200m) runner-up **Warp Speed (JPN,**

H6, by Drefong) and two-time graded winner **Struve (JPN, G6, by King Kamehameha)**, who together were fourth and fifth respectively in the Diamond Stakes; and **Chevalier Rose (JPN, H7, by Deep Impact)**, winner of last year's Kyoto Daishoten (G2, 2,400m) and Stayers Stakes (G2, 3,600m), who will start this season in the Nikkei Sho.



Justin Palace, winner of 2023 Tenno Sho (Spring)



Urban Chic, winner of 2024 Kikuka Sho



Blow the Horn, winner of 2024 Takarazuka Kinen



Redentor, winner of 2025 Diamond Stakes

Last year's Victoria Mile for four-year-old and up females was won by **Ten Happy Rose**, who commenced the 2025 season in the Middle East, as mentioned above, and retired thereafter. Last year's Shuka Sho runner-up **Bond Girl (JPN, F4, by Daiwa Major)**, who recorded her fifth runner-up effort in the Tokyo Shimbun Hai and is targeting the Victoria Mile on May 18, is scheduled to run in the Hanshin Himba Stakes (G2, 1,600m)



Ten Happy Rose, winner of 2024 Victoria Mile

on April 12, which will also include **Argine (JPN, M5, by Lord Kanaloa)**, winner of the 2024 Turquoise Stakes (G3, 1,600m), and **Doe Eyes (JPN, M5, by Rulership)**, who was fourth in last year's Victoria Mile.

Other notable candidates for the Victoria Mile include **Shirankedo (JPN, M5, by Declaration of War)** and **Wide Latour (JPN, F4, by California Chrome)**, who respectively won the Nakayama Himba Stakes (G3, 1,800m) on March 8 and the Aichi Hai (G3, 1,400m) on March 23, and the aforementioned **Ascoli Piceno**.



Jantar Mantar, winner of 2024 NHK Mile Cup

With the retirement of two Mile Championship victors Serifos (2022) and Namur (2023), this year's Yasuda Kinen on June 8 could include G1 winners such as last year's Mile Championship winner **Soul Rush** and **Jantar Mantar (JPN, C4, by Palace Malice)**, who was named the 2023 Best Two-Year-Old Colt by going undefeated in all three starts as a two-year-old, including the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1, 1,600m), and then added another G1 title in the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) last year. As a four-year-old colt, however, he faded to 13th at the stretch in the Hong Kong Mile. He will likely make his comeback start in the Milers Cup (G2, 1,600m) on April 27, which will also include last year's Fuji Stakes (G2, 1,600m) winner **Jun Blossom (JPN, H6, by World Ace)**.

Other possible contenders for this year's Yasuda Kinen are the aforementioned **Win Marvel** and **Geoglyph; Water Licht (JPN, C4, by Drefong)**, winner of the Tokyo Shimbun Hai; and selected runners from the Dubai Turf, the Osaka Hai and the Victoria Mile.

The highlight of this spring's steeplechase calendar undoubtedly will be the Nakayama Grand Jump (J-G1, 4,260m) on April 19. With 2024 Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) winner and Best Steeplechase Horse Nishino Daisy retiring at the end of last season, this year's edition will feature **Irogotoshi (JPN, H8, by Vincennes)**, who was diagnosed with a tendon injury after defending his title in last year's Nakayama Grand Jump, but has already resumed training to aim for his third consecutive title this year.



Irogotoshi, winner of
2024 Nakayama Grand Jump



Meiner Grand, winner of
2023 Nakayama Daishogai

Meiner Grand (JPN, H7, by Gold Ship), the 2023 Nakayama Daishogai champion and Best Steeplechase Horse, who attempted to defend his title in last year's Nakayama Daishogai but failed to finish when he unseated his rider at the last jump, also will kick off his seven-year-old season with the Nakayama Grand Jump. The Hanshin Spring Jump (J-G2, 3,900m) on March 15, the main prep towards the spring J-G1 event, was won by **Veil Nebula (JPN, G7, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who concluded the previous season with a fifth in the Nakayama Daishogai. Other runners in last year's Nakayama Daishogai—fourth-place **June Velocity (JPN, H7, by Lord Kanaloa)**, third-place **Neviim (JPN, H7, by Kizuna)** and runner-up **Ecoro Duel (JPN, H6, by Kitasan Black)**—were second, third and fourth respectively in the Hanshin Spring Jump. **Impress (JPN, H6, by Kizuna)**, who won the Pegasus Jump Stakes (Open Class, 3,350m) on March 22, will also be among the Nakayama Grand Jump field.

Three-Year-Old Classic Hopefuls

This year's three-year-old classics will commence with the Oka Sho for fillies on April 13, followed by the Satsuki Sho for colts and fillies on April 20.

Arma Veloce (JPN, F3, by Harbinger), last year's Best Two-Year-Old Filly after winning the two-year-old fillies' championship—the 2024 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m)—will head straight to the Oka Sho along with **Brown Ratchet (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**, winner of the 2024 Artemis Stakes (G3, 1,600m) but a disappointing 16th in the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies.



Arma Veloce, winner of
2024 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies

The first leg of the fillies' Triple Crown will also feature runners who performed well in the three trial races. **Kurino Mei (JPN, F3, by Orfevre)**, **Water Gerbera (JPN, F3, by Rey de Oro)** and Hanshin Juvenile Fillies runner-up **Vip Daisy (JPN, F3, by Satono Diamond)** were the top three finishers (in that order) in the Tulip Sho (G2, 1,600m) on March 2; **Shonan Xanadu (JPN, F3, by Kizuna)**, **Cerbiatto (JPN, F3, by Lord Kanaloa)** and **Bonne Soiree (JPN, F3, by Rey de Oro)** were the top three finishers (in that order) in the Fillies' Revue (G2, 1,400m) on March 8; and **Twilight City (JPN, F3, by Epiphaneia)** and **Primzahl (JPN, F3, by Isla Bonita)** were first and second respectively in

the Anemone Stakes (Listed, 1,600m) on March 15.

Other notable runners likely to appear in the Oka Sho are **Erika Express (JPN, F3, by Epiphaneia)**, and **Voulezvous (JPN, F3, by Satono Crown)**, respective winners of the Fairy Stakes (G3, 1,600m) on January 12 and the Elfin Stakes (Listed, 1,600m) on February 10, and **Embroidery (JPN, F3, by Admire Mars)** and **Ma Puce (JPN, F3, by Mind Your Biscuits)**, who finished first and second respectively in the Queen Cup (G3, 1,600m) on February 15.



Kurino Mei,
winner of 2025 Tulip Sho



Shonan Xanadu,
winner of 2025 Fillies' Revue



Erika Express,
winner of 2025 Fairy Stakes



Embroidery,
winner of 2025 Queen Cup

In the Satsuki Sho, **Croix du Nord (JPN, C3, by Kitasan Black)** is sure to be the center of attention after winning all three of his starts, including the Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,800m) and the Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m), emulating the flawless debut season of 2020 Triple Crown victor Contrail. **Croix du Nord**, the 2024 Best Two-Year-Old Colt, will launch his three-year-old campaign in the first leg of the Triple Crown.

Among those who earned Satsuki Sho berths in other trial races was the Hopeful Stakes third-place finisher **Faust Rasen (JPN, C3, by Mozu Ascot)**, along with **Vincentio (JPN, C3, by Real Steel)** and **Alohi Alii (JPN, C3, by Duramente)**, who together were the top finishers (in that order) in the Yayoi Sho Deep Impact Kinen (G2, 2,000m) on March 9. Others include **Piko Chan Black (JPN, C3, by Kitasan Black)**, **Fukuno Blue Lake (JPN, C3, by Win Bright)** and **King Squall (JPN, C3, by Duramente)**, the top three finishers (in that order) in the Spring Stakes (G2, 1,800m) on March 16, and the Hopeful Stakes runner-up **Giovanni (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)** as well as **Roland Barows (JPN, C3, by Henry Barows)**, who were first and second respectively in the Wakaba Stakes (Listed, 2,000m) on March 22.



Croix du Nord,
winner of 2024 Hopeful Stakes



Faust Rasen, winner of 2025
Yayoi Sho Deep Impact Kinen



Piko Chan Black,
winner of 2025 Spring Stakes



Eri King, winner of
2024 Kyoto Nisai Stakes

The Satsuki Sho field will likely include five winners: **Eri King (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)** in the Kyoto Nisai Stakes (G3, 2,000m) in November, **Nishino Agent (JPN, C3, by Isla Bonita)** in the Keisei Hai (G3, 2,000m) in January, **Satono Shining (JPN, C3, by Kizuna)** in the Kisaragi Sho (G3, 1,800m) in February, **Masquerade Ball (JPN, C3, by Duramente)** in the Kyodo News Hai (G3, 1,800m) in

February and **G T Adamant (JPN, C3, by Rulership)** in the Sumire Stakes (Listed, 2,200m) in March. **Museum Mile (JPN, C3, by Leontes)**, the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes runner-up who was fourth in the Deep Impact Kinen, will also head to the Satsuki Sho.



Nishino Agent,
winner of 2025 Keisei Hai



Satono Shining,
winner of 2025 Kisaragi Sho



Masquerade Ball,
winner of 2025 Kyodo News



Admire Zoom, winner of
2024 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes

Admire Zoom (JPN, C3, by Maurice), winner of the 2024 Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes, will focus on the mile distance instead of the Triple Crown classics and kick off the current season in the New Zealand Trophy (G2, 1,600m) on April 12, one of the trial races for the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) on May 11. Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes third-place finisher **Lance of Chaos (JPN, C3, by Silver State)**, who was third in his first start of the season in the Kisaragi Sho, will also step down in distance and aim for his first G1 title.

The NHK Mile Cup will also include runners from another trial, the newly named Churchill Downs Cup (G3, 1,600m)—formerly known as the Arlington Cup—on April 5, as well as Oka Sho and Satsuki Sho runners who prefer a mile rather than the 2,400m distance of either the Yushun Himba or Tokyo Yushun. **Yankee Barows (JPN, C3, by Epiphaneia)**, who won the Falcon Stakes (G3, 1,400m) on March 22, will also run in the NHK Mile Cup.