

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE 42ND HOPEFUL STAKES (G1)

Established in 1984 under the name of Radio Tampa Hai Sansai Himba Stakes as a G3 race for two-year-old fillies run over 1,600 meters at Hanshin Racecourse, the race held in December has undergone various changes in its status over the years. The distance was extended to 2,000 meters while the runners were limited to colts and geldings in 1991, opened its doors once again to fillies and mares in 2000 and acquired international status in 2010. In 2014, the race was given the Hopeful Stakes name, upgraded to G2, excluded geldings and shifted to a new venue, the Nakayama Racecourse where the first leg of the three-year-old Triple Crown, the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1), is held over the same distance. In 2017, the race made its final elevation in grade and has become JRA's 24th G1 flat race.

Even before becoming a G1 race, the Hopeful Stakes was highly regarded as the championship event for two-year-old middle-distance prospects aiming for the three-year-old classics and chosen as the main target in place of the traditional two-year-old G1 championships, the Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes and the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies run over 1,600 meters. As a result, the 2,000-meter race attracted many talented runners and subsequent G1 title holders such as 2010 Satsuki Sho and 2011 Dubai World Cup (AW, 2,000m) winner Victoire Pisa (JPN, by Neo Universe), 2013 Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, 3,000m) and 2014 Japan Cup (2,400m) victor Epiphaneia (JPN, by Symboli Kris S), 2017 Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, 2,400m) champion Rey de Oro (JPN, by King Kamehameha), 2019 Satsuki Sho winner Saturnalia (JPN, by Lord Kanaloa), 2020 Triple Crown victor Contrail (JPN, by Deep Impact), 2024 Arima Kinen (2,500m) and 2025 Queen Elizabeth II Cup (2,200m) champion Regaleira (JPN, by Suave Richard) and 2025 Tokyo Yushun winner Croix du Nord (JPN, by Kitanasan Black).

Coming into this year's edition directly from their second career win were **Shonan Gulf** (Sapporo Nisai Stakes [G3, 1,800m, Sep.6]), **Anduril** (Ivy Stakes [Listed, 1,800m, Oct.18]), **Badrinath** (Hagi Stakes [Listed, 1,800m, Oct.26]), **Noche Cerrada** (Kigiku Sho [1 Win Class, 2,000m; Nov.16]) and **Justin Vista** (Kyoto Nisai Stakes [G3, 2,000m; Nov.29]). The field also included **Ask Edinburgh** and **Winners Nine**, respective winners of the Cosmos Sho (Open Class, 1,800m) in August and the Fuyo Stakes (Open Class, 2,000m) in September and **Gene King**, runner-up in the Sapporo Nisai Stakes.

THE 42ND HOPEFUL STAKES (G1)

2-year-olds, Colts & Fillies, 2,000 meters (about 10 furlongs), turf, right-handed

Saturday, December 27, 2025 Nakayama Racecourse 11th Race Post time: 15:45

Total prize money: ¥ 152,900,000 (about US\$ 974,000 <US\$1=¥157>)

2-y-o: 56kg (about 123-124 lbs), 1 kg allowance for Fillies, 3 kg allowance for Southern Hemisphere-bred born in 2023

Course Record: 1:58.2

Race Record: 2:00.2 [Regaleira (JPN, by Suave Richard), 2023]

Safety factor: 18 runners

Going: Good to Firm

Weather: Cloudy



FP	BK	PP	Horse Jockey	S&A Color Wgt	Odds (Fav)	Margin (L3F)	Sire Dam (Dam's Sire)	Owner Breeder Trainer
1	2	4	Lovcen (JPN) Kohei Matsuyama	C2 d.b. 56.0	19.8 (7)	2:01.0 (34.5)	World Premiere Songwriting (Giant's Causeway)	Forest Racing Northern Farm Haruki Sugiyama
2	6	11	Forte Angelo (JPN) Tom Marquand	C2 b. 56.0	6.4 (4)	3/4 (34.9)	Fierement Lady Angela (Dark Angel)	Silk Racing Co., Ltd. Shunsuke Yoshida Yuki Uehara
3	8	15	Ask Edinburgh (JPN) Yasunari Iwata	C2 br. 56.0	32.9 (9)	1/2 (34.9)	Leontes Honey Trip (Manhattan Cafe)	Toshihiro Hirosaki Toshihiro Hirosaki Yuichi Fukunaga
4	1	2	Aurum Ares (JPN) Yuji Hishida	C2 ch. 56.0	16.0 (6)	1 (34.5)	Harbinger Stars in Heaven (Workforce)	Field Racing Oiwake Farm Shinsuke Hashiguchi
5	3	6	Badrinath (JPN) Ryusei Sakai	C2 br. 56.0	6.4 (5)	Nose (35.2)	Contrail Mohini (Galileo)	Sunday Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Farm Mikio Matsunaga

6	8	16	Olufsen (JPN) Mirai Iwata	C2 b. 56.0	29.9 (8)	1-1/2 (34.5)	Kizuna Stars Aligned (Sea The Stars)	Naohiro Sakaguchi Kasamatsu Bokujo Makoto Saito
7	6	12	Anduril (JPN) Yuga Kawada	C2 br. 56.0	3.5 (1)	Nose (35.5)	Saturnalia Andraste (Orfevre)	Shadai Race Horse Co., Ltd. Shadai Corporation Inc. Mitsumasa Nakauchida
8	2	3	Justin Vista (JPN) Yuichi Kitamura	C2 d.b. 56.0	4.6 (2)	1/2 (34.6)	Saturnalia Pebble Garden (Deep Impact)	Masahiro Miki Taihei Stud Farm Co. Ltd Tatsuya Yoshioka
9	4	7	T O Al Ain (JPN) Takeshi Yokoyama	C2 b. 56.0	87.8 (13)	3/4 (36.0)	Al Ain Sea Dragon (Siyouni)	Tomoya Ozasa Shadai Farm Yutaka Okumura
10	1	1	Noche Cerrada (JPN) Alexis Pouchin	C2 g. 56.0	37.9 (10)	Head (35.3)	Drefong Noche Blanca (Deep Impact)	Sunday Racing Co., Ltd. Northern Racing Yoshiaki Sugiyama
11	4	8	Matenro Zero (JPN) Norihiro Yokoyama	C2 b. 56.0	151.9 (15)	Neck (34.9)	Lion Lion Taisei Avancer (Harbinger)	Chiyono Terada Murata Bokujo Mikio Matsunaga
12	7	14	Gene King (JPN) Arata Saito	C2 d.b. 56.0	55.0 (11)	1 (36.1)	Contrail Secondary Market (Into Mischief)	Yuji Yamaguchi Sakai Bokujo Makoto Saito
13	5	10	Winners Nine (JPN) Atsuya Nishimura	C2 b. 56.0	62.0 (12)	1-1/4 (35.3)	Epiphaneia Divinity (Real Impact)	M's Racing Takahashi Farm Minoru Oguri
14	7	13	Shonan Gulf (JPN) Kenichi Ikezoe	C2 b. 56.0	5.6 (3)	1/2 (35.6)	Harbinger Mi Carino (Heart's Cry)	Tetsuhide Kunimoto Shunsuke Yoshida Naosuke Sugai
15	3	5 B	Nowhere Man (JPN) Takuya Kowata	C2 b. 56.0	279.1 (16)	2-1/2 (35.7)	Silver State Satono Asuka (Giant's Causeway)	Hiroyuki Anzai Yamada Stud Farm Hideaki Asari
16	5	9	Meisho Hachiko (JPN) Kosei Miura	C2 d.b. 56.0	133.0 (14)	1/2 (36.4)	Roger Barows Amorevole (Agnes Digital)	Yoshitaka Matsumoto Saitotakeshi Bokujo Mitsunori Makiura

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 favorites.

Turnover for the Race alone: ¥ 10,655,024,100

Turnover for the Day: ¥ 23,590,909,700

Attendance: 44,039

Pay-off (for ¥100)

Win	No.4	¥ 1,980	Bracket Quinella	2-6	¥ 520	Quinella	4-11	¥ 8,310
Place	No.4	¥ 660	Quinella Place	4-11	¥ 2,380	Exacta	4-11	¥ 19,100
	No.11	¥ 250		4-15	¥ 6,380	Trio	4-11-15	¥ 55,140
	No.15	¥ 590		11-15	¥ 2,790	Trifecta	4-11-15	¥ 368,180

Winner= 2 starts: 2 wins / Added & stakes money: ¥ 71,162,000 / Career earnings: ¥ 78,662,000

Lovcen Wins G1 Hopeful Stakes in Second Career Start

Seventh favorite **Lovcen** won this year's Hopeful Stakes in his second start of the season. The dark bay colt won his debut start over 2,000 meters by three lengths at Kyoto on November 9 and has now become the first horse to claim the Hopeful Stakes coming off just one career start since the race was promoted to G1 status in 2017. This victory gave trainer Haruki Sugiyama his seventh JRA-G1 title and first success since the 2024 Sprinters Stakes triumph with Lugal. Jockey Kohei Matsuyama registered his eighth JRA-G1 victory following his win with Star Anise in the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies just two weeks earlier. The colt gave his sire World Premiere (JPN, by Deep Impact), the 2019 Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger) and 2021 Tenno Sho (Spring) winner who stands at stud since 2022, his first G1 victory.

Breaking from stall no. 4, **Lovcen** was unhurried, settling on the rails in mid-division while **T O Al Ain** set the pace and led the field into the lane. Buried on the rails, the son of World Premiere was shifted out

sharply at the 200-meter pole for clear sailing and displayed an incredible closing kick to overtake the front in the final strides for a 3/4-length victory.

“I was hoping that he would break well, run in good rhythm and have plenty left in the tank, which I’m happy that he did. He had shown a remarkable turn of foot in training so I knew he would have the strength to catch the leaders. Since his first win was over yielding ground, the colt has proven his versatility today so we have a lot to look forward to in his future starts,” commented Kohei Matsuyama.

Fourth pick **Forte Angelo** traveled in fourth to fifth, in close pursuit of the race favorite up to the final corner. Finding himself behind a wall of horses in the straight, the Fierement colt switched lanes to the outside and dug in furiously but was overtaken by the winner while beating **Ask Edinburgh** before the wire to secure second.

Breaking sharply from a wide stall, ninth choice **Ask Edinburgh** traveled behind **Forte Angelo** in fifth to sixth, made a strong bid into the straight and took command 100 meters out but was first caught by the fast-closing winner and then the runner-up right at the finish line for a 1-1/4-length third.

Race favorite **Anduril** broke well and, gradually from the outside, improved position to sit in third from the front in the backstretch. The Saturnalia colt remained a factor in the straight but ran out of steam in the last 100 meters and gave way to the fast-closing runners to finish seventh.

Other Horses:

4th: (2) **Aurum Ares**—saved ground mid-division, good effort

5th: (6) **Badrinath**—along rails behind leaders in 3rd, held on well at stretch

6th: (16) **Olufsen**—trailed in last, passed tired rivals from outside bid

8th: (3) **Justin Vista**—well off pace near last, made ground with good speed from wide turn belatedly

9th: (7) **T O Al Ain**—made pace, tired from early effort going uphill

10th: (1) **Noche Cerrada**—2-wide in mid-pack, belated effort

11th: (8) **Matenro Zero**—further back than mid-field, outrun early

12th: (14) **Gene King**—pressed pace in 2nd, faded in last 100m

13th: (10) **Winners Nine**—near rear, never a factor

14th: (13) **Shonan Gulf**—failed to reach contention

15th: (5) **Nowhere Man**—further back from mid-field along backstretch, last entering stretch

16th: (9) **Meisho Hachiko**—mid-pack, came up empty when needed

Fractional time (sec./furlong): 12.3 - 10.9 - 12.3 - 13.0 - 12.8 - 12.3 - 12.2 - 11.7 - 11.7 - 11.8
Last 4 furlongs: 47.4 Last 3 furlongs: 35.2

Positions at each corner:	1st corner	7,14,6,11,15(<u>4</u> ,1,12)(2,8,9)(3,13)(5,10)16
	2nd corner	7,14(6,12)11,15(<u>4</u> ,1)(2,8,9)13(5,3,10)16
	3rd corner	7(14,12)(6,11)15(<u>4</u> ,1,9)(2,13)(5,8,10,3,16)
	4th corner	7(14,12)(6,11,15)(<u>4</u> ,1,9)(2,13,16)(8,10,3)5

NOTE 1: Underlined bold number 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.