

Exclusive Topics for Horse Racing in Japan

– Summer Edition –

July 2026

The Japan Racing Association

In the first half of the 2026 season, Japanese-trained contenders turned in some outstanding performances overseas. In February, **Forever Young (JPN, H5, by Real Steel)** claimed his second straight victory in the Saudi Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m) but then finished second in the Dubai World Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m) to the American runner Magnitude. One of his connections' plans was for him to race on turf for the first time in the Irish Champion Stakes (G1, 2,000m) at Leopardstown on September 12 and then in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1, 2,400m) at ParisLongchamp on October 4. However, his connections later decided to send the son of Real Steel to the United States after his summer break to prepare for the Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1, dirt, 2,000m) at Belmont Park on September 18. He will then attempt to defend his title in the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1, dirt, 2,000m) at Keeneland on October 31.



Forever Young, winner of 2026 Saudi Cup

Upon returning to Japan, **Forever Young** will likely race just once more this year: in the Champions Cup (G1, dirt, 1,800m) at Chukyo on December 6, the Arima Kinen (G1, 2,500m) at Nakayama on December 27 or the Tokyo Daishoten (G1, dirt, 2,000m), which he won in 2024, at NAR's Oi on December 29. His connections revealed their goal to run him on turf at some point, a desire also shared by racing fans who hope to see the talented horse race against JRA's best in the All-Star "Grand Prix" Arima Kinen. After **Forever Young** finishes running in his third Breeders' Cup, their decision will draw great attention.

Three-year-old **Finger (JPN, C3, by Gun Runner)** will challenge America's older dirt specialists in the Pacific Classic (G1, dirt, 2,000m) at Del Mar on August 22. After finishing second three times last year, the Gun Runner colt broke his maiden this January and went on to achieve a 3-1-0 record in four NAR starts. Among these, he dominated the first two races of the dirt triple crown—the Haneda Hai (Listed, dirt, 1,800m) and the Tokyo Derby (Listed, dirt, 2,000m). Whether he remains in the U.S. for the Breeders' Cup Classic depends on how he handles the Pacific Classic and his condition thereafter.



T O Elvis, winner of 2025 Capella Stakes

T O Elvis (USA, C4, by Volatile) will target the Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1, dirt, 1,200m). After his fourth consecutive win in the Capella Stakes (G3, dirt, 1,200m) last December, the son of Volatile was eligible to run in the Dubai Golden Shaheen but the offer was declined and instead he ran in the Churchill Downs Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,400m) in May, where he earned a 3-1/4-length victory with a powerful stretch run.

Meanwhile, **Stinger Glass (JPN, H5, by Kizuna)** will challenge the Melbourne Cup (G1, 3,200m) on November 3. The son of Kizuna claimed his first graded title in the Diamond Stakes (G3, 3,400m) this February but was withdrawn from the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) due to a drop in form and then finished 13th in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) in June. He will head directly to the Melbourne Cup in which Japan's Warp Speed finished a close second in 2024.



Stinger Glass,
winner of 2026 Diamond Stakes



Admire Terra,
winner of 2026 Hanshin Daishoten

In mid-May, seven Japanese-trained horses, including the aforementioned **Forever Young**, were nominated for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. **Admire Terra (JPN, H5, by Rey de Oro)** registered his second graded title in the Hanshin Daishoten (G2, 3,000m) in March and then was a close third in the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1, 3,200m) in May. After resting, he will come back in the Sapporo Kinen (G2, 2,000m) on August 16 then fly to France for the Arc. Scoring 1-0-2 out of three starts over 3,000 meters and

1-0-1 out of two starts under rainy weather, the connections hope that his stamina and ability to handle soft ground could give him an edge at ParisLongchamp.

Alohi Alii (JPN, C4, by Duramente) raced in France last year and won the Prix Guillaume d'Ornano (G2, 2,000m) wire-to-wire, but then was heavily defeated to 16th in the Arc. The Duramente colt commenced the current season with a seventh in the Neom Turf Cup (G1, 2,100m) in Saudi Arabia in February, but his intended comeback start in Japan in the Goryokaku Stakes (3 Wins Class, 1,800m) on July 11 was canceled due to a minor leg problem.

Byzantine Dream (JPN, H5, by Epiphaneia) was another group-race winner in France last year. After finishing second in last year's Tenno Sho (Spring), he flew to France for the Prix Foy (G2, 2,400m), where he recorded the fastest late speed to win by half a length from sixth position. He then marked a fifth in the Arc—the best among three Japanese runners—but has performed poorly since, including finishing last in the Amir Trophy (G2, 2,400m) in Qatar in February and 15th in the Takarazuka Kinen (G1, 2,200m) in June.



Byzantine Dream,
winner of 2024 Kisaragi Sho

Juryoku Pierrot (JPN, F3, by Orfevre) extended her winning streak to three in the Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks, G1, 2,400m) in May. The victory gave her regular rider Seina Imamura her inaugural G1 title and made her the first JRA female jockey to win at the highest level. Although entered in the



Juryoku Pierrot,
winner of 2026 Yushun Himba

Arc prior to her Oaks victory, **Juryoku Pierrot** will instead head for the last jewel of the fillies' Triple Crown, the Shuka Sho (G1, 2,000m) on October 18. She's then scheduled to run in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,200m) on November 15, followed by the Arima Kinen if her form allows. Her sire, Orfevre, was known for his runner-up efforts in the Arc in 2012 and 2013, so the Arc will remain on her agenda next year.

Meisho Tabaru (JPN, H5, by Gold Ship) became only the third horse to mark consecutive victories in the Takarazuka Kinen, following Gold Ship in 2013–2014 and Chrono Genesis in 2020–2021. The son of Gold Ship won wire-to-wire in all three of his graded victories in 2024 and 2025. In this year's Takarazuka Kinen, however, the five-year-old raced from second position, but thanks to a sudden downpour just before the race he was able to demonstrate his capabilities on softer tracks and surged to victory.



Meisho Tabaru,
winner of 2026 Takarazuka Kinen

After tracking the pace in second, **Meisho Tabaru** took command at the 200-meter pole and held off the race favorite **Croix du Nord** to score a neck victory. After a fifth in the Dubai Turf (G1, 1,800m) last year, **Meisho Tabaru** has improved his temperament and appears ready for his second overseas appearance, the Arc, where his sire was 14th in 2014.



Shin Emperor,
winner of 2025 Neom Turf Cup

Shin Emperor (FR, H5, by Siyouni), a full brother to the 2020 Arc victor Sottsass, was 11th in the Arc as a three-year-old and then, upon his return to Japan, was second in the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m). His return to the Arc last year was canceled due to bronchiolitis, a type of lower respiratory tract inflammation, and a mild case of exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage. In his kickoff start this season, the Neom Turf Cup, the French-bred horse failed to defend his title, finishing fourth. He then performed

poorly in his next two starts, finishing seventh in the Tenno Sho (Spring) and 11th in the Takarazuka Kinen. Along with the Arc, the son of Siyouni is entered in the Irish Champion Stakes, in which he was third in 2024 and sixth in 2025.

In addition to the aforementioned entries, other Japanese horses will be running in European G1 events this summer. These include **Satono Reve (JPN, H7, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who was third in the July Cup (G1, 1,200m) at Great Britain's Newmarket on July 11. Earlier, he flew to Hong Kong for the Chairman's Sprint Prize (G1, 1,200m) in April and then to Great Britain for the Queen Elizabeth



Satono Reve, winner of 2026 Takamatsunomiya Kinen

II Jubilee Stakes (G1, 1,200m) in June. He finished second in both races, as he did last year. Before departing Japan, he successfully defended his Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1, 1,200m) title in March. He set a new race record of 1:06.3, beating the previous record by 0.4 seconds, and became the second horse to win the race in consecutive years, after Kinshasa no Kiseki in 2010 and 2011. He will stay in Europe to race in Deauville in the Prix Maurice de Gheest (G1, 1,300m) on August 9 or in York, either in the Nunthorpe Stakes (G1, 1,000m) on August 21 or the City of York Stakes (G1, 1,400) on August 22.



Masquerade Ball,
winner of 2025 Tenno Sho (Autumn)

Masquerade Ball (JPN, C4, by Duramente), last year's Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) victor and Japan Cup runner-up, was withdrawn from his first overseas challenge in the Dubai Sheema Classic. Instead, he was scheduled to run in the Osaka Hai (G1, 2,000m) in April. However, due to lameness in his left hind leg, his 2026 debut was postponed, so he ran in Hong Kong's Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1, 2,000m), where he finished second, one length behind winner Romantic Warrior. The Duramente colt will

continue his overseas endeavor on July 25 in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes (G1, 2,390m), a race in which six Japanese horses have run, including Heart's Cry in third place in 2006.

Masquerade Ball will be joined by **Wurttemberg (JPN, H6, by Kitanasan Black)**, who nearly upset **Croix du Nord** as the 12th pick in the Tenno Sho (Spring), finishing second by a nose.

Sixpence (JPN, H5, by Kizuna) was a highly anticipated colt—undefeated in his first three starts and a winner of three G2 titles through the beginning of his four-year-old season. However, he was no better than seventh in five subsequent outings at the JRA G1 level. But under the legendary Yutaka Take as the eighth pick in the Yasuda Kinen (G1, 1,600m) in June, the son of Kizuna took advantage of an inside draw to secure a forward position in second and caught the tenacious leader 50 meters out to score a neck victory. After his first G1 victory, his connections decided to follow through with a scheduled entry in the Prix Jacques Le Marois (G1, 1,600m), the prestigious mile event at Deauville in France on August 16. Upon returning to Japan, he will target the Mile Championship (G1, 1,600m) on November 22.



Sixpence, winner of 2026 Yasuda Kinen



Strauss, winner of 2023 Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes

Out of seven starts in the Prix Jacques Le Marois so far, Japanese-trained horses' top (1–0–1) performances include a victory by Taiki Shuttle in 1998 and, most recently, a fifth last year by **Go to First (JPN, H6, by Rulership)**, who is also entered this year. The other Japanese-trained runner is **Strauss (JPN, H5, by Maurice)**, who won both the Tokyo Sports Hai Nisai Stakes (G2, 1,800m) as

a two-year-old and the Abu Dhabi Gold Cup (Listed, 1,600m) in UAE this February, but was 12th in the Champions Mile (G1, 1,600m) in Hong Kong in April. The son of Maurice will also be entered in the Prix du Moulin de Longchamp (G1, 1,600m) on September 6.

Other spring G1 winners scheduled to return this summer or fall include:

- **Costa Nova (JPN, H6, by Lord Kanaloa)**, who became the third horse this year to claim consecutive victories in the February Stakes (G1, dirt, 1,600m), following Copano Rickey (2014–2015) and Cafe Pharoah (2021–2022). He sustained a fracture in his left foreleg after finishing fourth in the Kashiwa Kinen (Listed, dirt, 1,600m) in May, but he is expected to come back for his autumn campaign.
- **Croix du Nord (JPN, C4, by Kitasan Black)** scored back-to-back victories in the Osaka Hai and the Tenno Sho (Spring) and aimed for a triple in the Takarazuka Kinen but finished second after failing to catch winner **Meisho Tabaru**. The brown colt will stay in Japan during the autumn season and aim for two or maybe three big events: the Tenno Sho (Autumn) (G1, 2,000m) on November 1, the Japan Cup (G1, 2,400m) on November 29 and the Arima Kinen.
- **Star Anise (JPN, F3, by Drefong)**, winner of the 2025 Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1, 1,600m) and named JRA's Best Two-Year-Old Filly, claimed the Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas, G1, 1,600m), the first leg of the fillies' Triple Crown this April. However, she failed to handle the extra 800 meters in the Yushun Himba and finished a disappointing 12th.
- **Ecoro Duel (JPN, H7, by Kitasan Black)** defended his title in this year's Nakayama Grand Jump (J-G1, 4,260m) and became the fifth horse, including Hall of Famer Oju Chosan, to win the race in consecutive years. The son of Kitasan Black will resume racing in the Tokyo High-Jump (J-G2, 3,110m) on October 18 and will aim for his second straight Nakayama Daishogai (J-G1, 4,100m) title.



Costa Nova, winner of 2026 February Stakes



Croix du Nord,
winner of 2026 Tenno Sho (Spring)



Star Anise,
winner of 2026 Oka Sho



Ecoro Duel,
winner of 2026 Nakayama Grand Jump

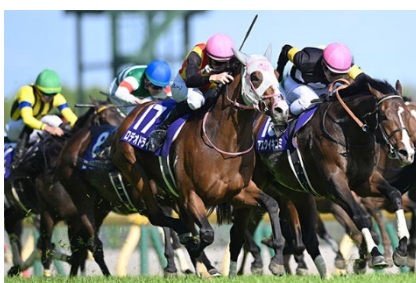
- **Lovcen (JPN, C3, by World Premiere)** finished third in the Kyodo News Hai (G3, 1,800m), his first start of the season. However, he validated his victory in last year's Hopeful Stakes (G1, 2,000m) by winning the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas, G1, 2,000m) in a track-record time. He then won the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby, G1, 2,400m) to become the 25th colt to notch both spring classics, following Contrail in 2020. He will now attempt to sweep the Triple Crown in the Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger, G1, 3,000m) on October 25 after his prep run in the Kobe

Shimbun Hai (G2, 2,400m) on September 21.

- **Rodeo Drive (JPN, C3, by Saturnalia)** won the NHK Mile Cup (G1, 1,600m) in May, crossing the wire in 1:31.5, just 0.1 seconds shy of the race record. Having scored three wins out of four starts at the one-mile distance, the son of Saturnalia will make his comeback against older foes in the Niigata Kinen (G3, 2,000m) on August 30, and will then likely be considered for the Tenno Sho (Autumn) or the Mile Championship.
- **Embroidery (JPN, F4, by Admire Mars)**, named the 2025 Best Three-Year-Old Filly after winning both the Oka Sho and the Shuka Sho, added another G1 title in the Victoria Mile (1,600m) in May. The daughter of Admire Mars was entered in the Prix Jacques Le Marois but will stay in Japan this summer due to insufficient preparation time. She will train for her autumn campaign, including an invitation to run in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf (G1, 1,900m) on October 31, earned by winning the Victoria Mile.



Lovcen,
winner of 2026 Tokyo Yushun



Rodeo Drive,
winner of 2026 NHK Mile Cup



Embroidery,
winner of 2026 Victoria Mile



Jantar Mantar,
winner of 2025 Mile Championship

In other news, Jantar Mantar (JPN, H5, by Palace Malice) was retired from racing mid-season. The four-time G1 winner and 2025 Best Miler was scheduled to go to the UAE for the Dubai Turf, but instead ran in the Champions Mile in Hong Kong and finished a disappointing 13th. His recovery did not progress as well as expected, so considering his recent race record and his high value as a stallion, his connections decided to retire the son of Palace Malice to stand at Shadai Stallion Station.