

HORSE RACING IN JAPAN 2026

Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) at Tokyo Racecourse



© Japan Racing Association

Preface	1
Japanese Horse Racing	2
JRA Racing	3
Races	3
Betting	7
JRA Racecourses	9
JRA Training Centers	13
Other JRA-related Facilities	16
NAR Racing	17
Races	17
Betting	19
NAR Racing Education Center	19
Racecourses	20
Horse Racing-Related Activities	21
Breeding	21
Promotion of Equestrian Culture, livestock industry	23
Participation in International Racing Conference	24
References	25
A Brief History of Horse Racing in Japan	25
Japan Association for International Racing Stud Book (JAIRS)	28
Directory	29

Preface

Modern horse racing in Japan had its beginnings in racing events that were organized by foreign residents of Yokohama in 1862. In 1861, when Japan was about to move from the feudal system into the Meiji Restoration, foreign residents living in Yokohama, predominantly British, introduced the first Western-style horse racing by establishing the Yokohama Race Club to Japan. Western style horse racing was held in foreign enclaves, and hence, unfortunately, very little is known or recorded about initial era in Japan's modern horse racing history.

At about the same time that the name of the Japanese central city was changed from Edo to Tokyo, Western-style horse racing began to be found in the major metropolitan cities across the country. In 1906, the government embarked on a policy which tacitly allowed to bet. This led to the introduction of modern horse racing featuring sales of betting tickets in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and other metropolitan cities, from which most racing operations benefited.

However, this profitable system was short lived; two years later, the government prohibited betting and instituted a system of paying direct subsidies for prize money and other horse racing expenses.

During this subsequent period of government-subsidized horse racing, prominent legislators, businessmen, as well as breeders, began active efforts to introduce a horse racing law. Eventually the government began to take proactive position to promote horse racing in order to expand breeding in Japan and to improve quality of the Japanese horses. In 1923, horse racing legislation, so greatly desired by the horse racing industry, was enacted and led to the formation of 11 racing clubs. Horse racing accompanied by the legal sale of betting tickets was thus established. Shortly thereafter, the Imperial Racing Society was established as a horse racing authority of 11 racing clubs, and was responsible for the rules of racing, which served as a model for the rules of the individual racing clubs. The Imperial Racing Society defined the registration of racing colors, the education of trainers, and the licensing of jockeys, among other horse racing functions. The Horse racing Law underwent a major revision in 1936, which saw the formation of the Japan Racing Society which legally merged the 11 racing clubs and the Imperial Racing Society in their entirety, including their facilities and horse racing functions.

This reform brought favorable account on horse racing in Japan, constituting the Japanese Derby as well as other classic races, along with a complete change and improvement in racing itself. There were also dramatic increases in the turnover as well as attendance, marking the birth of modern horse racing in Japan as it exists today. In 1941, Saint Lite became the first Triple Crown winner in Japan.

However, during the latter part of World War II, the racecourses were forced to suspend operations and the most historic of the modern racecourses, Yokohama, was commanded by the government for military use.

The termination of hostilities saw an immediate resumption of horse racing, when in 1946, Tokyo and Kyoto began holding race meetings. Also, 1947 brought a new type of betting "quinella" for the first time in Japan. In 1948, a new Horse racing Law was introduced, whereby the Japan Racing Society was abolished and under the new law, the government (the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) took total control of horse racing. Although this "government horse racing" continued much the same as before, the turnover did not increase throughout this extremely difficult period. In 1954, the Horse racing Law was amended again, to enact the Japan Racing Association Law. This established the Japan Racing Association, or as it is now known as JRA, which took over the entire horse racing functions and operations of government horse racing. These laws not only provided for "national racing" in Japan, but also for the legalization and operation of "regional public racing" as a separate system to that of national racing.

Japanese Horse Racing

Horse racing in Japan is characterized by fair racing which is held with integrity in a systematic, orderly manner as prescribed by the Horse racing Law of Japan. All authorized racing in Japan, by law, must be conducted by the Japan Racing Association (JRA) (a public enterprise established by the national government) and local government entities.

Furthermore, the law does not permit wagering to be conducted by anyone other than racing authorities and racing authorities must offer all wagers under a pari-mutuel formula.

Japan has to rank among countries around the world as one in which thoroughbred horse racing is the most popular. Totally, Japan held 1,588 race meetings in 2025, with 16,882 flat and jump races. The betting turnover is number one worldwide, with total flat and jump purses that rank first in the world. Globally, Japan also breeds the fourth highest number of Thoroughbreds.

JRA Racing (operated by the Japan Racing Association)

JRA was established in 1954 by the enactment of the Japan Racing Association Law to take over horse racing that had been operated by the national government. JRA operates under the oversight of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The main office of JRA which is located in Tokyo, acts as the nerve center for the nationwide network of 10 racecourses, the 38 off-course betting facilities called “WINS” and other JRA related entities, and engages in activities concerning the direct or indirect development and operation of national horse racing.

JRA is required to provide 10% of its gross betting turnover to the national treasury, as well as 50% of any surplus profits remaining at the end of the fiscal year. In fiscal 2025, JRA paid approximately ¥384 billion into the National Treasury, use of which is specified by law: three-quarters must be designated for improvement of livestock breeding and the remaining one-quarter for public or social welfare. JRA also contributes to horse breeding, as well as the propagation and promotion of other types of livestock programs. JRA also provides for the promotion of equestrian culture, thereby returning benefits to society as a whole.

JRA operates 10 racecourses with eight of these holding both flat and jump racing. The remaining two racecourses only hold flat racing. In 2025, there were 3,455 races, which generated a betting turnover of approximately ¥3.5 trillion.

National Association of Racing (NAR; operated by Local Governments)

Designated autonomous local municipalities and designated prefectural governments have held Racing by Local Governments since 1948. NAR is the centralized organization and registry for Racing by Local Governments. This racing, like that of JRA, is under the oversight of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and operates among other purposes to contribute to the finances of local governments.

The NAR was established in 1962 to standardize the registration of local racing’s racehorse owners and racehorses as well as to establish a licensing authority for local racing trainers and jockeys nationwide. Racing by local governments consists of 14 local governments located throughout the country, which serve as organizers of the races held within their jurisdiction. These 14 local governments are comprised of two prefectural governments, two municipal, and 10 joint-organizations. NAR is the authority that oversees this racing.

The 14 organizers of racing by local governments held 15,083 races during 2025 at 15 tracks with a turnover of approximately ¥1.1 trillion. These figures include one racecourse (Obihiro) which specializes in only draft horse racing.



2025 Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix) (winner: Museum Mile)

JRA Racing

Races

JRA holds thoroughbred flat races and jump races in Japan, with about half of the racing schedule for flat races is held on turf and half on dirt courses.

Racing Calendar

JRA is allowed to hold 36 meetings annually. A race meeting is a maximum of 12 days, with racing held 288 days a year. As a general rule, race meetings must have a maximum of 12 races a day.

JRA racing days are in principle limited to weekends, on both Saturday and Sunday, with several exceptions for national holidays. Special provisions exist for JRA to hold racing during the weekdays in emergency circumstances.

2025 JRA Races	3,455
Flat races	3,335(1,649 turf/1,678 dirt)
Jump races	120



Types of Races

JRA racing is divided into two categories: flat and jump racing. The conditions are set up to ensure that horses of similar levels compete against each other. Horses are assigned in the categories according to the prize money value of the races. There are also handicap races, in which relative differences in the abilities of runners are leveled by increasing or decreasing the weights to be carried of horses. In some cases, competing horses are limited by sex, but in all cases the amount of prize money earned is the standard, and

levels of ability are always determined according to that measure.

The highest level of these races is the open races, among which high-value races are considered graded races. In order to promote the broad recognition of the role and importance of grading the races and provide a benchmark for the breeding industry, graded race structure was implemented in 1984. In 2007, Japan was promoted to Part I country of the International Cataloging Standards, and ever since, the number of Japanese graded races gaining international recognition increased by the year, and in 2010, all Japanese graded races were recognized as international graded races and became open to foreign-trained horses. JRA also introduced a grading system to jump races in 1999, and there are now 10 graded Jump Races: J-GI (2 races), J-GII (3 races) and J-GIII (5 races).

Number of JRA Races by Class in 2025

Classes	No. of races (share %)
Graded	130 (3.9)
Open	139 (4.1)
3-win	216 (6.4)
2-win	464 (14.1)
1-win	909 (28.0)
Newcomer	304 (9.1)
Maiden	1,173 (34.4)

Prize Money

The purse for JRA races are awarded to the first five finishers. Depending on the races, there are other incentive monies paid to the runners finishing from sixth to tenth place, and stakes money, registration fees borne by horse owners, which is distributed among the top three finishers where applicable.

The largest first-place purse is ¥500 million each for the Japan Cup and Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix), and the smallest is the ¥5.8 million for events held for winless three-year-olds and two-year-olds. The total prize money provided by JRA in 2025 was ¥101 billion.

Trainer, Jockey, Groom Incomes

Trainers chiefly derive their income from owner-paid contract fees and 10% of the prize money. Jockey income consists of riding fees, 5% of the prize money, contract training fees and salaries if they are directly employed by trainers. Grooms are paid a salary by trainers and about 5% of the prize money.



Licenses and Registration

Trainer Licenses

One must pass the JRA license examination to obtain a trainer's license in JRA racing. A trainer's license is valid for one year and license renewal examinations are held annually. One must be 28 years of age or older to be eligible to take the test. Examination categories include racing regulations, hippology, tests on academic subjects, along with tests of equestrian skills, among other topics. Trainer's examinations are generally taken after experience has been gained as a jockey or stable hand. Trainers are required to be knowledgeable about the training and supervision of racehorses. They must also possess a variety of expertise pertaining to the education of young stable hands, jockeys, stable operations and so forth.

Jockey Licenses

Only licensed jockeys may ride horses entered in races in Japan and one must pass the JRA license examination to obtain a jockey's license to become a professional. A jockey's license is valid for one year, and license renewal examinations are held annually. One must be 16 years old or older to be eligible to take the test. Examination categories include racing regulations, hippology and other academic subjects along with a test of practical skills of the jockey's techniques. In 2015, the two world-class riders, Italian Mirco Demuro and Frenchman Christophe Lemaire were granted full-term jockey licenses by JRA. There is also a short-term license, limited to three months, issued to superior foreign jockeys to ride in Japan. JRA and NAR operate jockey training schools to train jockeys, and the majority of currently active jockeys have attended those schools. (Please refer to Page 19 for details on the JRA Horse Racing School)



Mirco Demuro



Christophe Lemaire

Horse Owner Registration

As a general rule, a person aspiring to become a racehorse owner in Japan, must first be a resident of Japan (in the case of non-Japanese, a resident alien), not have a criminal record for imprisonable offenses.

Applicants must also demonstrate sufficient assets and income to possess a racehorse. Individuals, corporations and private groups (syndicates) may own racehorses, and the number enrolled in membership corporations has been increasing recently. Also, trainers, trainer's assistants, jockeys, stable hands and others who have direct contact with racing operations and racehorses may not become horse owners.

JRA began accepting applications for owner registration for foreign persons who are non-Japanese residents in 2009. Further, details on this process are available at https://japanracing.jp/en/horsemen/jra_rules/rules_racing.html#c2

Ensuring Integrity

1. Horses entering races

Horses must be stabled either at a training center or at the racecourse stables 10 to 15 days before a race to ensure integrity in horse racing and proper quarantine measures.

2. Jockeys

After their mounts have been declared on the day before the race, jockeys are obliged to remain in the jockeys' quarters or jockey's room until they mount their assigned horses. These facilities are at racecourses, or training centers, and are equipped so that jockeys can prepare themselves mentally and physically to demonstrate their utmost abilities during races.



Jockey's quarters

3. Limitations on offering/purchasing bets

Only authorized racing authorities are permitted to offer bets under Japanese law, so when anyone other than a racing authority offers bets, not only the seller, but also any person who has purchased wagers from the illegal sellers will be severely punished. Moreover, anyone who offers bets via the Internet from an overseas location, as well as anyone who purchases bets from such a concern, is similarly subject to severe punishment.

4. Stewards' offices

Stewards' offices have been set up at both training centers there are several stewards on duty there around the clock. The stewards are in constant communication with stable personnel and patrol the training centers' premises as needed in an effort to ensure the safety of horses and personnel.

International Relations

Japan's horse racing industry has for many years imported superior thoroughbreds from overseas for racing and breeding purposes as part of its efforts to improve horses bred in Japan and to enhance their racing stamina. JRA established the Japan Cup, an international invitational race in 1981. This race, pitting champion horses from four continents against each other, has gained acceptance as an event to determine the world's turf champion. Japan's horse racing industry has rapidly absorbed the expertise of advanced horse racing nations through the Japan Cup and has managed to join their ranks. The race is highly rated around the world and the International Cataloguing Standard Committee conferred a Part 1 race rating on the Japan Cup in 1992.

JRA graded races that have systematically been opening up to foreign-trained horses since 1993 have steadily obtained Part 1 ratings. The International Cataloguing Standard Committee elevated Japan to a Part 1 nation status in 2007 as a result of Japan opening more than half of its graded races to foreign-trained horses. All JRA flat graded races have been opened to foreign-trained horses since 2010. (Please refer to Page 44 "Main Achievements of Japan Trained Horses Abroad (GI Races)")

The introduction of the world's leading jockeys has also raised the level of JRA racing. The World Super Jockeys Series was inaugurated in 1987 in an attempt to improve the riding skills of Japanese jockeys and to promote international friendship. It has been renamed as the World All-Star Jockeys and altered in schedule and venue (Sapporo Racecourse, Hokkaido) in 2015.

Also, each year, JRA holds trophy exchange races with various racing authorities from foreign countries to deepen international relations and goodwill.



2025 Japan Cup (winner: Calandagan)

2026 JRA Graded 1 Races (Flat races)

Date	Race	Course	Distance (m)	Age/Sex
Feb. 22	February Stakes	Tokyo	1,600 / Dirt	4yo & up
Mar. 29	Takamatsunomiya Kinen	Chukyo	1,200 / Turf	4yo & up
Apr. 5	Osaka Hai	Hanshin	2,000 / Turf	4yo & up
Apr. 12	Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas) (1st leg of fillies' triple crown)	Hanshin	1,600 / Turf	3yo Fillies
Apr. 19	Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas) (1st leg of triple crown)	Nakayama	2,000 / Turf	3yo No Geldings
May. 3	Tenno Sho (Spring)	Kyoto	3,200 / Turf	4yo & up
May. 10	NHK Mile Cup	Tokyo	1,600 / Turf	3yo No Geldings
May. 17	Victoria Mile	Tokyo	1,600 / Turf	4yo & up Fillies & Mares
May. 24	Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks) (2nd leg of fillies' triple crown)	Tokyo	2,400 / Turf	3yo Fillies
May. 31	Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) (2nd leg of triple crown)	Tokyo	2,400 / Turf	3yo No Geldings
Jun. 7	Yasuda Kinen	Tokyo	1,600 / Turf	3yo & up
Jun. 14	Takarazuka Kinen	Hanshin	2,200 / Turf	3yo & up
Sep. 27	Sprinters Stakes	Nakayama	1,200 / Turf	3yo & up
Oct. 18	Shuka Sho (Final leg of fillies' triple crown)	Kyoto	2,000 / Turf	3yo Fillies
Oct. 25	Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger) (Final leg of triple crown)	Kyoto	3,000 / Turf	3yo No Geldings
Nov. 1	Tenno Sho (Autumn)	Tokyo	2,000 / Turf	3yo & up
Nov. 15	Queen Elizabeth II Cup	Kyoto	2,200 / Turf	3yo & up Fillies & Mares
Nov. 22	Mile Championship	Kyoto	1,600 / Turf	3yo & up
Nov. 29	Japan Cup (International Invitational)	Tokyo	2,400 / Turf	3yo & up
Dec. 6	Champions Cup	Chukyo	1,800 / Dirt	3yo & up
Dec. 13	Hanshin Juvenile Fillies	Hanshin	1,600 / Turf	2yo Fillies
Dec. 20	Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes	Hanshin	1,600 / Turf	2yo No Geldings
Dec. 26	Hopeful Stakes	Nakayama	2,000 / Turf	2yo No Geldings
Dec. 27	Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix)	Nakayama	2,500 / Turf	3yo & up

2025 JRA International Jump Races

Date	Race	Course	Distance (m)	Age/Sex
Mar. 21	Pegasus Jump Stakes	Nakayama	3,350 / Turf	4yo & up
Apr. 18	Nakayama Grand Jump (J-GI)	Nakayama	4,260 / Turf	4yo & up
Dec. 26	Nakayama Daishogai (J-GI)	Nakayama	4,100 / Turf	3yo & up

Betting

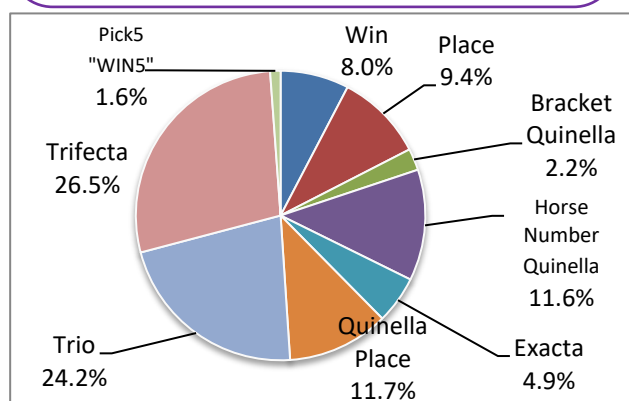
Pari-mutuel betting is the sole form of wagering for horse racing in Japan under the Horse racing Law. JRA and local racing authorities are the only organizations authorized by law to legally conduct betting operations on horse racing. As such, there are no legal private bookmakers or betting companies.

However, in accordance with the amended horse racing law (in force from January 1, 2005), which permits subcontracting of business matters related to the running of horse races, JRA is permitted to contract out the offering of bets and the issuance of payouts or refunds to prefectural/municipal governments or private corporations and the prefectural/municipal governments can consign them to other prefectural/municipal governments, JRA, or private corporations.

Types of Bets

As of 2025, JRA offers nine types of bets: win, place, bracket number quinella, horse number quinella, quinella place (“wide”), exacta, trio, trifecta and Pick5 “WIN5.” As shown in the pie graph, trifecta makes up around 26.5% of total turnover. Of these, bracket number quinella is unique to Japan. In the case of bracket number quinella, horses entered in a race are first coupled into a total of eight brackets (of one horse or more in each bracket). Customers select two brackets in a quinella-style bet and if one horse from each of those brackets comes in first or second (regardless of order of finish), the bet is a winner. And in April 2011, JRA began offering the new Pick5 “WIN5” wagers, which involve predicting the winners of five designated races each Sunday. The maximum payout is ¥600 million.

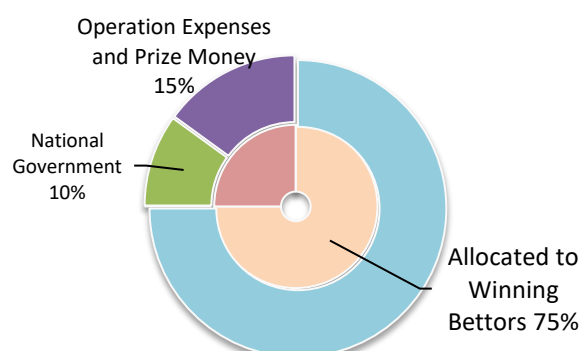
2025 JRA Betting Turnover
(total turnover ¥3,485,312,610,100)



Deduction Rate

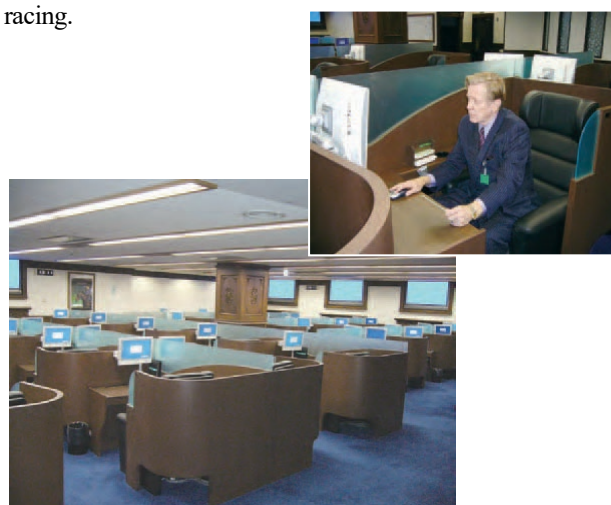
JRA deducts about 25% of the total betting turnover (deduction rates are between 20 % and 30% depending on the bet type), and the remaining 75% is allocated proportionally among winning bettors, depending on the amounts of their bets. Of this 25%, 10% is disbursed to the national government in a payment to the national treasury, and the remaining 15% is allocated to, among other things, operating expenses and prize money. If there are any surplus profits remaining at the end of the fiscal year, 50 % of which is also disbursed to the national government.

JRA House Take Percentages



Off-Course Betting Facilities

JRA has 37 “WINS” off-course betting facilities nationwide and the 10 JRA racecourses which is not hosting races also function as off-course betting facilities. Several of these have membership regulations, with restrictions on the number of people permitted in, offering a luxurious, salon-style environment in which to enjoy horse racing.



Excel floor
(fixed capacity system with entry in order of arrival that day and admission charged)



Telephone & Internet Betting

JRA began offering telephone wagers in 1974. Individual members who have signed a contract have payments of wager amounts and transfers of payouts handled automatically via designated bank accounts. There are four forms of memberships: A-PAT (dedicated bank account for ARS, PAT and IPAT systems), Soku-PAT (Internet bank for IPAT system), JRA Direct (Credit Card for IPAT system; PC only) and ARS (dedicated bank account for ARS system). As of December 2025, the total membership of above was approx. 7.2 million.

ARS (Audio Response System)

Bettors must use touch-tone styled telephones to place their bet.

PAT (Personal Access Terminal)

This home-use system is designed for use with personal computers, TV game devices, or other related devices that can be directly connected to JRA's PAT system. As well as a method for betting, this system offers information of interest to bettors, such as race entrants, odds and payouts.

IPAT (Internet Betting)

This system began operations in March 2002 and enables PAT subscribers to place bets easily over the Internet via cell phones, smart phone or personal computers.

Telephone & Internet betting made up 81.1% of JRA's total turnover, while WINS (including tracks not hosting races) made up 10.1%, accounting for a vast majority of the handle.

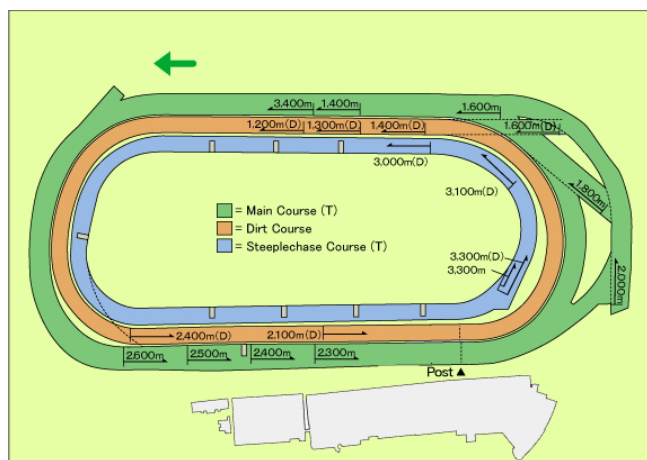


JRA & NAR Integrated Betting System

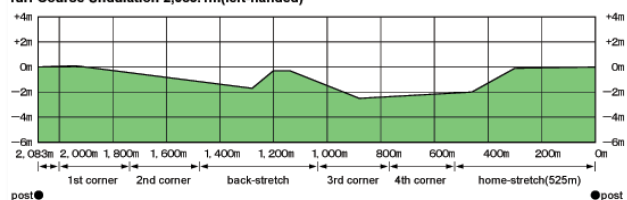
In October 2012, JRA and NAR developed a new integrated totalizator system, which connects the two betting centers. This makes it possible to bet on the NAR races through a membership of JRA's internet betting system and NAR racing fans can buy JRA bets at designated NAR racecourse.

JRA Racecourses

Tokyo, Nakayama, Kyoto and Hanshin are known as the “big four” of the 10 JRA racecourses, and, along with Chukyo, all GI races are held at these five courses. Three racecourses - Tokyo, Niigata and Chukyo - have counterclockwise courses and the other tracks are right-handed.



Turf Course Undulation 2,083.1m(left-handed)



TOKYO RACECOURSE

Offering a view of Mt. Fuji to the southwest, this is JRA's largest racecourse. It is host to the February Stakes (GI), NHK Mile Cup (GI), Victoria Mile (GI), Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks) (GI), Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) (GI), Yasuda Kinen (GI), Tenno Sho (Autumn) (GI) and Japan Cup (GI). Thrilling races take place down a 530-meterlong homestretch. The refurbishment of the grandstand was completed in the spring of 2007. This facility can now seat more than 120,000.

Main course (turf)

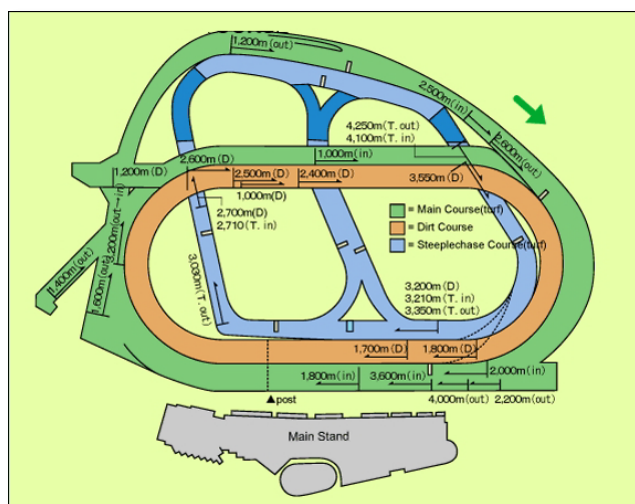
	Length	Width
A Course	2,083.1 m	31-41 m
B Course	2,101.9 m	28-38 m
C Course	2,120.8 m	25-35 m
D Course	2,139.6 m	22-32 m

Dirt course

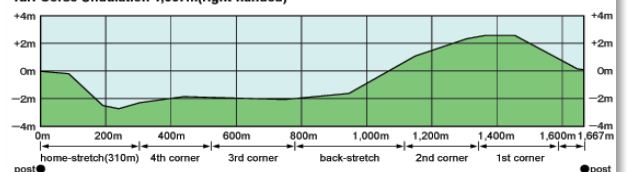
Length	Width
1,899.0 m	25 m

Jump course (turf)

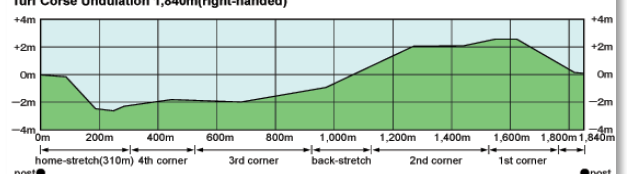
Length	Width
1,674.7 m	25 m



Turf Course Undulation 1,667m(right-handed)



Turf Course Undulation 1,840m(right-handed)



NAKAYAMA RACECOURSE

This racecourse holds the Nakayama Grand Jump (J-GI), Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas) (GI), Sprinters Stakes (GI), Nakayama Daishogai (J-GI), Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix) (GI) and Hopeful Stakes (GI). The rising slope along the final 200 meters of the homestretch adds to the interest of races. The steeplechase course has three inclining steeps unique to Nakayama.

Main course (turf) Oval track:

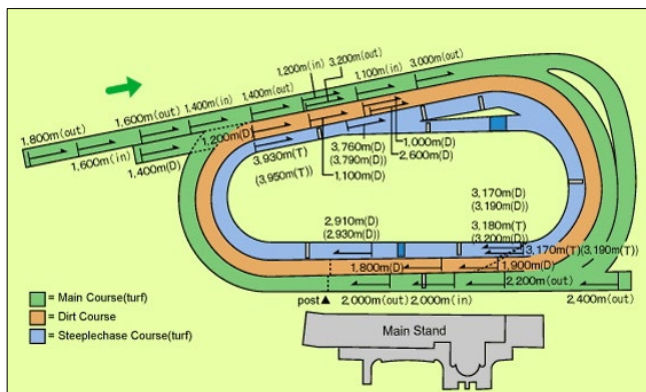
	Length	Width
Inner oval	A 1,667.1 m	20-32 m
	B 1,686.0 m	17-29m
	C 1,704.8 m	14-26 m
Outer oval	A 1,839.7 m	24-32 m
	B 1,858.5m	21-29m
	C 1,877.3 m	18-26 m

Dirt course (Oval)

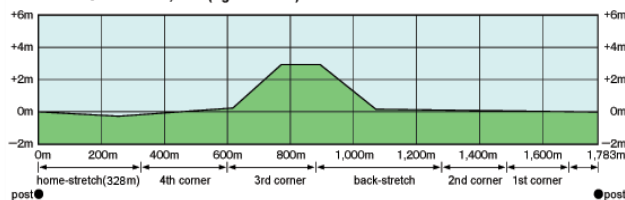
Length	Width
1,493.0 m	20-25 m

Jump course (turf)

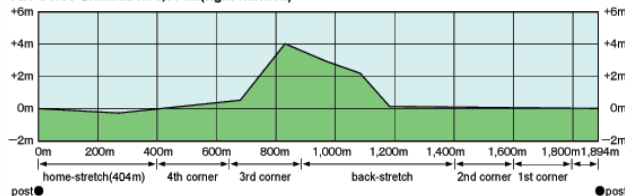
	Length	Width
O-line	1,456.4 m	20-30 m
X-line	447.5 m and 424.3 m	20-30 m



Turf Course Undulation 1,783m(right-handed)



Turf Course Undulation 1,894m(right-handed)



KYOTO RACECOURSE

Built in 1924, Kyoto Racecourse is the premier racecourse in Western Japan. It holds the same number of race meetings as other major racecourses, with five meetings a year. Major races are the Tenno Sho (Spring) (G1), Shuka Sho (G1), Kikuka Sho (Japanese St. Leger) (G1), Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1) and Mile Championship (G1). It reopened in 2023 after renovation work, which was part of a commemorative project for the 2025 100th anniversary of Kyoto Racecourse. The entire facility has been renovated or newly constructed, including the grandstand, track surface and stable area.

Main course (turf)

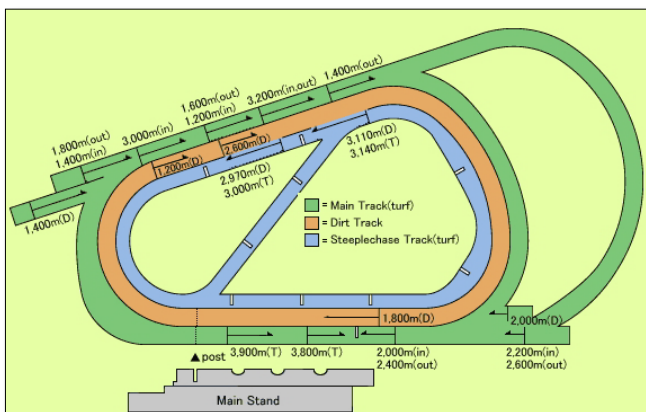
	Length		Width
	Inner oval	Outer oval	
A Course	1,782.8 m	1,894.3 m	27–38 m
B Course	1,802.2 m	1,913.6 m	24–35 m
C Course	1,821.1 m	1,932.4 m	21–32 m
D Course	1,839.9 m	1,951.3 m	18–29 m

Dirt course

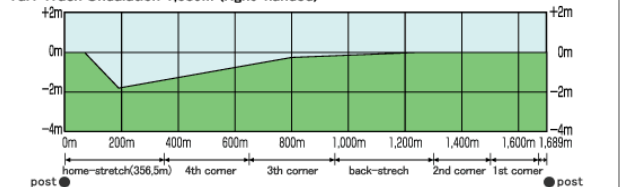
	Length	Width
Oval	1,607.6 m	25 m

Jump course (turf)

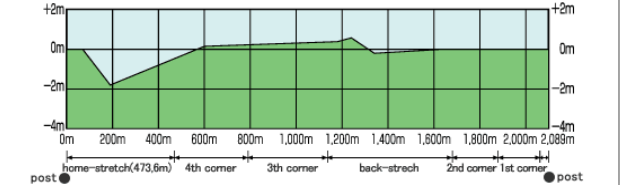
	Length	Width
Normal	1,413.8 m	23 m
Grand	1,399.8 m	20 m



Turf Track Undulation 1,689m (right-handed)



Turf Track Undulation 2,089m (right-handed)



HANSHIN RACECOURSE

First built on its present location in 1948, Hanshin Racecourse joins Kyoto Racecourse as the second of the two feature racecourses in Western Japan. Hanshin has the same number of race meetings as Kyoto and the two racecourses alternate race meeting. Its uniquely long corners, as well as a steep rise just before the finish line, are the major characteristics of this racecourse. Major races are Osaka Hai (G1), Oka Sho (Japanese 1000 Guineas) (G1), Takarazuka Kinen (G1), Hanshin Juvenile Fillies (G1) and Asahi Hai Futurity Stakes (G1). The refurbishment of the grandstand was completed in 2025 after a year and a half of work.

Turf course (inner oval)

Course	Length	Width	Homestretch length	Undulation
A	1,689.0 m	24–28 m	356.5 m	1.9m
B	1,713.2 m	20–25 m	359.1 m	1.9m

Turf course (outer oval)

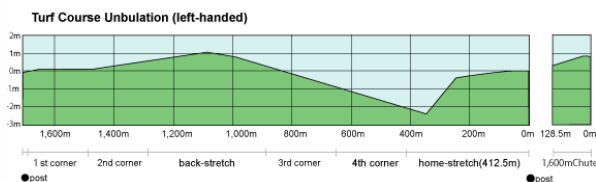
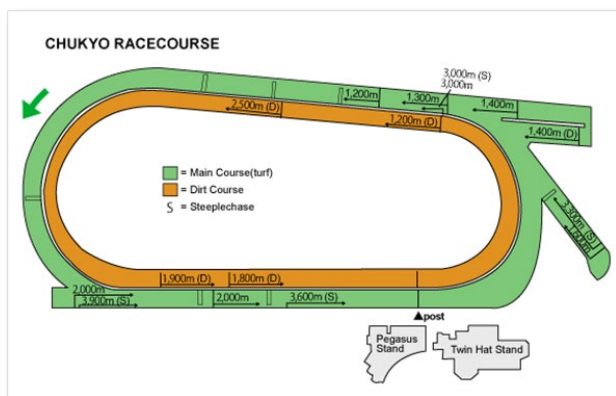
Course	Length	Width	Homestretch length	Undulation
A	2,089.0 m	24–29 m	473.6 m	2.4 m
B	2,113.2 m	20–25 m	476.3 m	2.4 m

Dirt course

Length	Width	Homestretch length	Undulation
1,517.6 m	22–25 m	352.7 m	1.6 m

Steeplechase track (Turf)

O-line Length	Width	Homestretch length	Undulation
1,366.7 m	20.5 m	403.7 m	1.3 m



CHUKYO RACECOURSE

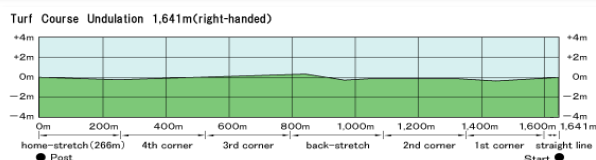
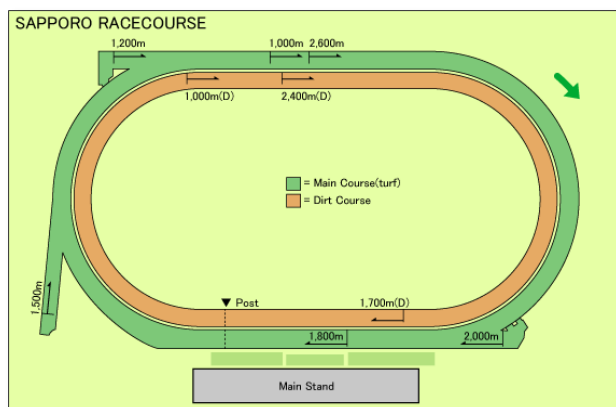
Chukyo Racecourse outside of Nagoya reopened in March 2012, after nearly two years of renovation work. The turf course has been lengthened by over 100 meters and now measures 1,705.9 meters around with a 412.5-meter homestretch. The dirt course, now measures 1,530 meters with a 410.7-meter final homestretch, making it the longest dirt stretch in Western Japan. The 1,200-meter Takamatsunomiya Kinen (G1) is held on the turf and the 1,800-meter Champions Cup (G1) is held on the dirt.

Main course (turf)

	Length	Width
A Course	1,705.9 m	28–30 m
B Course	1,724.8 m	25–27 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,530 m	25 m



SAPPORO RACECOURSE

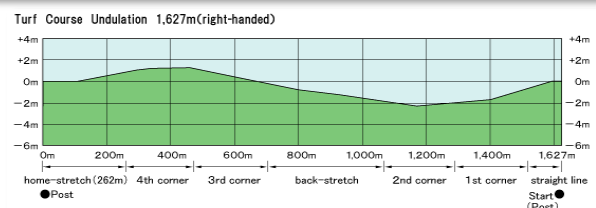
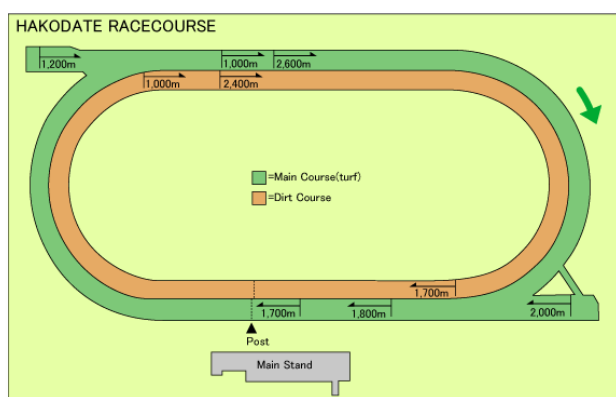
This racecourse, located in Sapporo City, the largest city on the northern island of Hokkaido, has two race meetings each year. The major races are the Sapporo Kinen (G2), Queen Stakes (G3), Elm Stakes (G3), Keeneland Cup (G3) and Sapporo Nisai Stakes (G3). The refurbishment of the grandstand was completed in July 2014.

Main course (turf)

	Length	Width
A Course	1,640.9 m	25–27 m
B Course	1,650.4m	23.5–25.5m
C Course	1,659.8 m	22–24 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,487.0 m	20 m



HAKODATE RACECOURSE

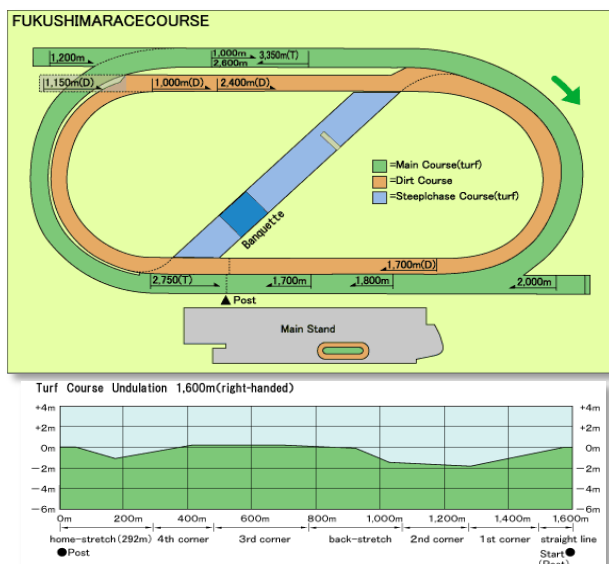
Situated in Hakodate City in Hokkaido, this racecourse has one race meeting each year. Major races are the Hakodate Sprint Stakes (G3), Hakodate Kinen (G3) and Hakodate Nisai Stakes (G3). The refurbishment of the grandstand was completed in June 2010.

Main course (turf)

	Length	Width
A Course	1,626.6 m	29 m
B Course	1,651.8 m	25 m
C Course	1,675.8 m	21–22 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,475.8 m	20 m



FUKUSHIMA RACECOURSE

Located in Fukushima City in northern Honshu, this racecourse holds three race meetings annually. Major races are the Fukushima Himba Stakes (G3), Radio Nikkei Sho (G3), Tanabata Sho (G3), and Fukushima Kinen (G3).

Main course (turf)

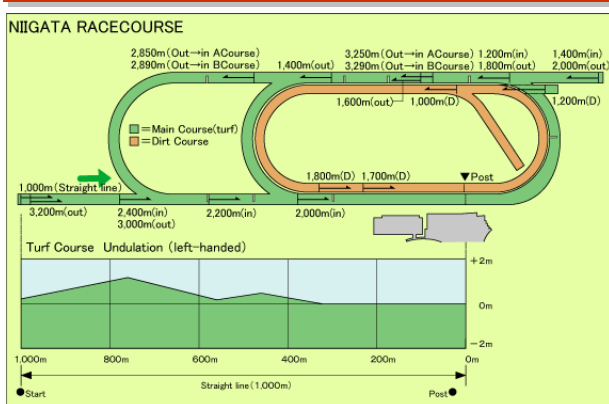
	Length	Width
A Course	1,600.0 m	25–27 m
B Course	1,614.1 m	22.5–25 m
C Course	1,628.1 m	20–23 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,444.6 m	20–25 m

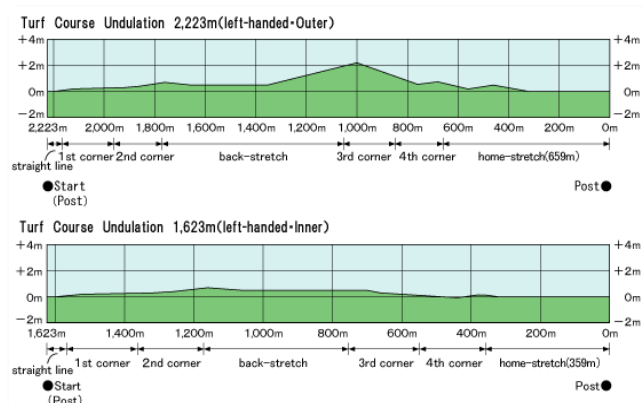
Jump course (turf)

	Length	Width
S-line	490.9 m	17.6–20 m



NIIGATA RACECOURSE

This racecourse is located in Niigata City alongside of the Sea of Japan. Niigata Racecourse was completely renovated in 2001. Major races are the Sekiya Kinen (G3), Niigata Kinen (G3), Niigata Daishoten (G3), Niigata Nisai Stakes (G3), the Leopard Stakes (G3) and Ibis Summer Dash (G3), the only JRA graded race held over the 1,000-meter straight.



Main course (turf)

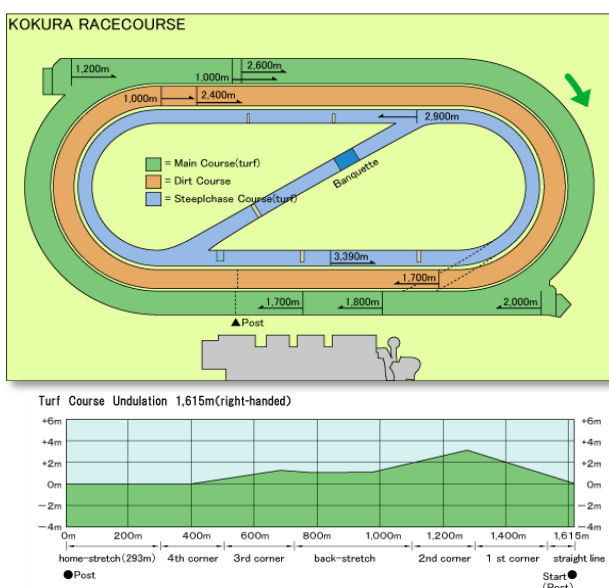
	Length	Width
	Inner oval	Outer oval
A Course	1,623.0 m	2,223.0 m
B Course	1,648.1 m	2,248.1 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,472.5 m	20 m

Straightaway course

Length
1,000.0 m



KOKURA RACECOURSE

Located in the foremost industrial city of Kitakyushu on the island of Kyushu, Kokura Racecourse holds two race meetings a year. Its major races are the Kitakyushu Kinen (G3), Kokura Kinen (G3), Kokura Himba Stakes (G3), Kokura Daishoten (G3) and Kokura Summer Jump (J-G3).

Main course (turf)

	Length	Width
A Course	1,615.1 m	30 m
B Course	1,633.9 m	27 m
C Course	1,652.8 m	24 m

Dirt course

Length	Width
1,445.4 m	24 m

Jump course (turf)

	Length	Width
O-line	1,309.0 m	16–20 m
S-line	415.7 m	

JRA Training Centers

JRA Training Centers

Two training centers have been established by JRA to provide horses with the conditioning they need to put on the best of races. They are in Miho, Ibaraki Prefecture, in eastern Japan and Ritto, Shiga Prefecture, in western Japan. These expansive 50- to 60-hectare sites are equipped with stables, clinics for the racehorses, lodging facilities, medical clinics and various other facilities for the benefit of the over 2,000 racehorses stabled there and the people who take care of them. The facilities operate 24 hours a day so that the racing runs smoothly; the fairness of races is ensured; the horses' safety, health and hygiene are maintained; and information is provided to fans. Horses to be entered in races

must be trained at the training centers for a set period (10 days for horses with racing experience and 15 days or more for those that have not raced) before races are run.

In addition to oval tracks configured to conform to actual race situations, there are sharp uphill training tracks, turf, dirt, woodchip, new poly track to suit any training objective. Thorough track supervision to ensure the safety of horses in training includes leveling out the dirt course, sprinkling antifreeze agents on tracks in winter and water in summer.

New training facilities are steadily being built to keep pace with diversification in training methods.



RITTO TRAINING CENTER

Total Area: 1,531,746 m²

Stable Accommodations: 2,224

Courses:

A Course: (Steeplechase) 1,450 m × 20 m (turf)

B Course: 1,600 m × 20 m (dirt)

C-W Course: 1,800 m × 20 m (woodchip)

D Course: 1,950 m × 14 m (turf)

D-P Course: 2,038 m × 14 m (new polytrack)

E Course: 2,200 m × 30 m (dirt)

Uphill Course: 1,085 m × 7 m (woodchip)

difference in elevation: 32 m

Woodchip riding trail: 2,300 m × 4~14 m (woodchip)

Swimming pool: 50 × 3-meter circle, 3 meters deep

Other: 2 straight line pools

Equine Clinic



MIHO TRAINING CENTER

Total Area: 2,240,000 m²

Stable Accommodations: 2,196

Woodland bridle path:

1,000 m × 15 m turf

1,744 m × 3.5~7 m bark

North Track

North Track was closed in October 2023, and the construction of 40 new stables and a new Racehorse Hospital were completed in 2025.

South Track

A Course (steeplechase): 1,370 m × 25 m

Inside dirt, Outside turf

B Course: 1,600 m × 20 m (woodchip)

C Course: 1,800 m

Inside 8-10m turf, Outside 15m polytrack

D Course: 2,000 m × 20m (dirt)

E Course: 2,150 m × 8-20m (dirt)

Uphill Course: 1,200 m × 12 m (woodchip)

Difference in elevation: 33 m

Swimming Pool: 44 × 3-meter circle, 3 meters deep

Other: 2 straight line pools & Water treadmill

Equine Clinic

Starting Gate Training

Horses must pass a starting gate test to be able to enter a race. At the training centers, an important part of training is rehearsing entering the gate and preparing for the start.

Uphill Course

On this woodchip track, workout times are electronically measured at 200-meter intervals, using IC tags attached to each horse. These times are then released to the public.



Indoor Heated Pool

Training is conducted year-round in this circular pool, with pool and air temperatures maintained at around 25 degrees Celsius throughout the year.

Woodland Riding Trail

A nature trail that weaves through the woods was created to visually and aurally relax the horses. There are streams for horses to walk in, waterfalls, and artificial misting devices along the riding path.



Racehorse Hospital

A comprehensive medical facility for racehorses is operated by approximately 40 JRA veterinarians. They are primarily engaged in racehorse health management, diagnosis and treatment of sick horses, prevention of communicable diseases, checkups for horses scheduled to

race, consulting services related to training and stabling, and educational efforts related to health and hygiene ideas.

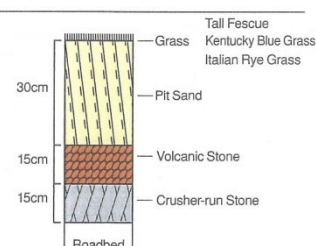


Training Stands

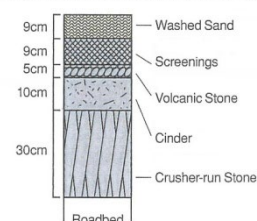
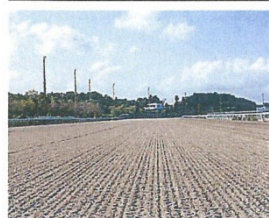
Trainers and others involved with horses can observe the condition of the horses during workouts on the track from here. Final workouts, training held three to four days before a race, and recording of training times are done, and members of the media gather information for stories from here.

Training Courses Profile

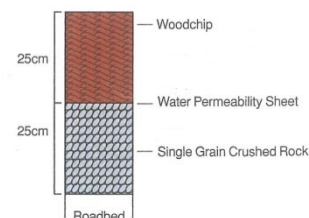
Turf Course



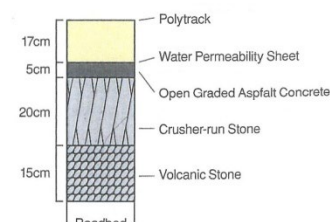
Dirt Course



Woodchip Course and Slope Course



Polytrack Course



Other JRA-related Facilities

JRA Horse Racing School

The JRA Horse racing School was established in Shiroy City, Chiba Prefecture in 1982, with the aim of cultivating jockeys and stable staff with the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to the change of the times. Anyone who wants to acquire a jockey's license and ride in JRA races must attend the JRA Horse racing School. The current curriculum features a three-year course for jockeys, in which the students go through the practical work in the stables, step-by-step drills in equestrian riding and practical training in preparation for racing. The school also has a six-month course for stable employees. The 263,000-square meter site has a 1,400-meter dirt track and is also home to the international quarantine stables used for quarantining horses entering Japan.

Prospective students are required to pass an entrance examination for enrollment in either course. Students who wish to enroll in the jockey course must meet the following requirements:

- a) Age: Must be at least 15 and under 20 years old as of April 1 of the year of admission, and must have graduated from junior high school or an equivalent educational institution.
- b) Weight: Must be 49.0kg (or lower, depending on age) when entering school.
- c) Eyesight: Over 0.8 for both eyes together and at least 0.5 in each eye (only soft contact lenses are permitted for vision correction)
- d) Must have color visibility, hearing ability, and must be in good health.
- e) Prospective students must not have any imprisonment records, or have been fined by violating Horse Racing Act or other gambling-related laws. Also, he/she must not have any record of suspension or termination of involvement with horse racing by law.

After completion of the course, the prospective jockeys may take the jockey's license examination and the stable employees are eligible, with JRA approval, to be employed by trainers licensed by JRA.



JRA Equestrian Park

JRA Equestrian Park in Setagaya, Tokyo, was opened in 1940 to promote equestrian events and for the training of prospective jockeys. It hosted some of the equestrian events during Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games and 2020 Olympic & Paralympic Games.

The park occupies an area of 185,000 square meters, including stables, an equestrian competition field, and office buildings. The park currently undertakes a variety of promotional activities to encourage familiarity with horses and foster interest in equestrian activities and culture. Along with events that afford opportunities for direct contact with horses, such as Hippophile Day, horse shows, Horse Familiarity Day, the park hosts an equestrian competition as part of its efforts to promote equestrian culture by providing its venues for events that promote equestrian culture.



JRA Equine Research Institute

The Equine Research Institute (ERI) was founded in 1959 with the goal of maintaining racehorse resources, preventing

racehorse injuries to ensure smooth operation of horse racing and conducting research into developing strong horses. Its research is not limited to active racehorses, as it has conducted successful research on breeding and training, which has been widely applied at training centers and private training farms, as well as in breeding regions. The Epizootic Research Center was established as a research laboratory for equine infectious diseases in June 1970. This unit is the only laboratory conducting research needed for the prevention and control of equine infectious diseases in Japan.

The ERI has one branch in Joban, Fukushima. The primary function of the Joban Branch is to provide rehabilitation facility which includes balneotherapy and physiotherapy. Various forms of medical research are also conducted at the branch.

JRA Yearling Training Yards

JRA owns two yearling training yards – Hidaka Training and Research Center in Hokkaido and Miyazaki Yearling Training Farm in Kyushu Island - and conducts basic training on about 80 yearlings purchased at various sales until the spring of their 2-years-old season. The information and training data obtained during this period, as well as improved methods, are passed on broadly to breeders and training farms, and used to improve Japan's racing industry. After the research in the basic training period, the horses are sold in the training sales such as the JRA Breeze Up Sale, and then follow-up research is conducted on how they perform as racehorses.

Laboratory of Racing Chemistry

This laboratory is responsible for all DNA testing of racehorses in Japan. The laboratory and its research facilities were established in 1965 as Japan's only testing institute for horses, as well as the only one which provides dedicated research within that field. The laboratory is primarily concerned with drug testing for racehorses, indispensable for ensuring fair races. It also provides DNA analysis to maintain accurate pedigrees. This research institute was chartered as an experimental laboratory eligible for ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation in 2004.



Museums

The JRA Racing Museum opened at Tokyo Racecourse in 1991. The museum's main theme is horse racing, tracing the sport's development to the present day through exhibits on famous horses of the past. Exhibit materials cover racing not just in Japan, but also that of other countries.

The Equine Museum of Japan was built on the site of the former Yokohama Racecourse, the birthplace of modern horse racing in Japan, in Negishi, Yokohama, and was opened in 1977. This museum's functions are the collection, preservation and study of a broad range of materials on the relationship between people and horses.



Gate J

In order to promote broader understanding of the intricacies of horse racing culture by providing a wide range of information related to horses in casual fashion, JRA opened the "Gate J." in a popular business district in Tokyo. The facility features videos of horses and horse racing from Japan and around the world on large screens and in film libraries, as well as gift shops and areas where visitors can pick up information about JRA. This facility acts as a pilot shop to provide information about horse racing.



NAR Racing

The biggest difference between racing conducted by the JRA and Racing by Local Governments is that JRA returns a percentage of its revenue to the national treasury, whereas Racing by Local Governments contributes to the finances of the individual local government. Also, the majority of race meetings by local governments is conducted on weekdays during the day. The National Association for Racing (NAR) oversees the 14 racing organizers throughout the country.

Races

All races held by NAR are flat races on dirt surface, with the exception of Ban-ei (Draft Horse Racing) at Obihiro Racecourse and turf races held at Morioka Racecourse – the only racecourse in local government racing with a turf surface.

In 2025 there were a total of 1,300 racing days with 15,083 races held by local governments at the 15 racecourses. A total of 153,478 horses ran, with an average of 10.2 runners per race, in 2025.

Jump racing and harness racing, which had been run in the past, are currently not conducted due to declining numbers of available horses and jockeys.

★ holds night racing



Ban-ei (Draft Horse Racing)

Ban-ei racing is a unique kind of racing that is held only in Hokkaido by local government racing. It consists of draft horses weighing from 800 to 1,200 kg competing by pulling a sled with a jockey and a prescribed heavy load over a 200-meter dirt track that has two humps along the course.



History

The origin of draft horse racing dates back to Hokkaido's pioneer days, when contests of strength between horses used to transport lumber were held for celebrations and festivals. Dosanko (Hokkaido breeds) and other plow horse breeds native to Japan were used at the time. Belgian, Breton and Percheron lineage horses were then used after their subsequent introduction from Europe. Today, cross breeds between these three varieties, called "half breeds," or with native breeds are predominate, while purebreds are on the decline. The organized racing system was inaugurated by the racing authorities in 1946 and has continued to the present.



©NAR

Racing Calendar

Race meetings can last up to six days for racing conducted by government-designated prefectures and municipalities.

NAR racing is conducted mainly on weekdays. There are differences in the schedules of racecourses in the metropolitan areas of Kanto, Tokai, Kansai and Hokkaido, and those of racecourses in other regions. Racecourses in major urban areas and Hokkaido hold their races on weekdays in order to avoid competition with JRA. On the other hand, in regions that are largely unaffected by JRA meetings, racing is primarily held on Saturdays and Sundays, when it is easier to attract local fans.

JBC races and other racing series

Based on the model of the BC (Breeders' Cup) in America and created from an initiative by breeders, the first JBC (Japan Breeding Farms' Cup) races were held at Oi Racecourse in 2001. It consists of four races – the JBC Classic, Sprint, Ladies' Classic and Nisai Yushun for 2-year-old. As total prize money, the Classic offers ¥170 million, the highest amount in racing by local governments, while the Sprint offers ¥136 million, the Ladies' Classic ¥102 million, and Nisai Yushun ¥59.5 million, an unprecedented sum for racing by local governments.

In the past, regional (NAR) three-year-old "Derby" races across Japan were promoted collectively under the "Derby Series" campaign to boost their recognition. However, following a major restructuring of Japan's dirt racing calendar, this promotional series concluded in 2023. Today, the Haneda Hai, the Tokyo Derby, and the Japan Dirt Classic—all held at Oi Racecourse—have been established as the new "3-year-old Dirt Triple Crown," featuring significantly increased prize money and open participation for both JRA and NAR horses.

NAR also conducts a series of races for fillies and mares, named "Grandame-Japan." The most outstanding fillies/mares are selected from each age group, and they compete over a period of time, vying for the top spot in their respective groups. The other series of races in the local circuit are the "Mirai Yushun", established in 2008 to feature two-year-old races, and the "3YO Sprint Series" which started in 2024, leading up to the Hyogo Championship.

Prize Money (purse)

Similar to JRA racing, prize money is generally allocated to the owners of the first five finishers in NAR racing. However, there is a huge disparity between the purses offered by different organizers. The largest first-place purse is ¥100 million for the JBC Classic, Kawasaki Kinen, Tokyo Derby, and Tokyo Daishoten. The total prize money in Racing by Local Governments in 2025 was ¥34.4 billion. The system for distributing prize money to trainers, jockeys and grooms are similar to that of JRA racing.

International Relations

NAR first held its international invitation race in 1978, and ever since, it has been active in inviting jockeys from overseas to take part in their racing. The international invitation races known as the "Ladies Cup" was held for four consecutive years in the 1980's, with female jockeys from Europe, the USA, Canada and Japan competing with one another. During the five-year period from 1989 to 1993, NAR conducted the "International Queen Jockey Series," in which Japanese female jockeys rode together with female jockeys invited from the USA, Canada, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand, as part of an international friendly among female jockeys. From 1982 to 1997, Niigata Racecourse was the host to the "Japan-Korea Challenge Cup" races, in which jockeys from the two nations were invited to race in each other's racecourse.

In 1995, Oi Racecourse formed a friendly relationship with Santa Anita Park in the USA, inviting jockeys from the California circuit to ride in Japan. The friendly jockey series lasted for several years. In 2013, Tokyo City Keiba (Oi Racecourse) and the Korean Racing Authority initiated the first-ever "Japan-Korea international invitational race," inviting each organization's horses to run in Oi Racecourse and Seoul Racecourse, respectively. The two-race series was first held at Seoul Racecourse with three Japanese runners. Since then, this international exchange races had been held once a year at each racetrack from 2013 to 2016.

In recent years, foreign jockeys issued short-term licenses by NAR or JRA have been increasing and they have opportunities to ride in the exchange races between JRA and NAR racing including the graded dirt races and other races held at local government racecourses all over Japan.

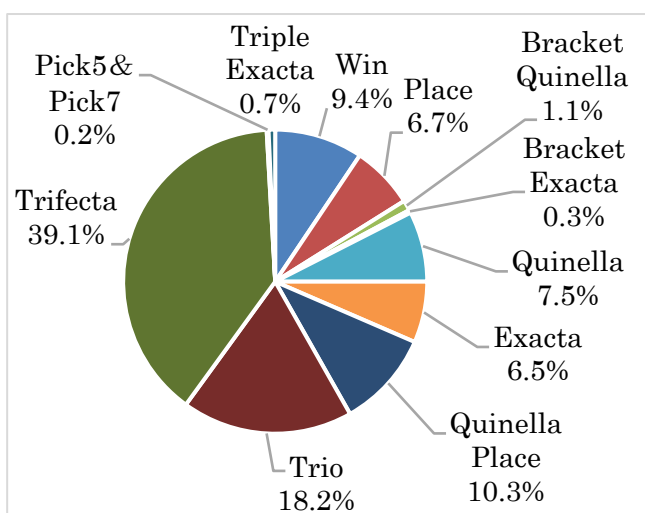
In addition, NAR has started simulcasting its year-end Tokyo Daishoten (G1) to overseas in 2016. The race is available for separate-pool wagering in Australia and New Zealand.

Betting

Type of Bets

There are nine standard types of betting available for racing by local governments: Win, Place, Bracket number Quinella, Bracket number Exacta, Horse number Quinella, Quinella Place ("Wide"), Exacta, Trio and Trifecta. As of 2025, three other types of exotic betting, Pick 5, Pick 7 and Triple Exacta are available on the Internet.

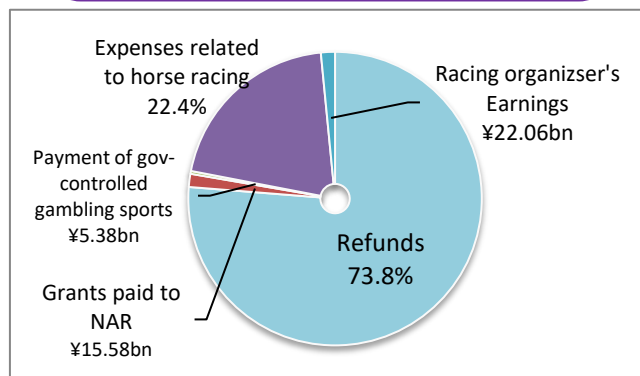
2025 Betting Turnover by Racing by Local Governments (total turnover ¥1,147,471,857,210)



Deduction Rate

About the use of proceeds from betting by local governments, the deduction rate is set by each type of bet. In the case of 2025, 22.4% is received by each organizer for operating expenses and prize money. 2.0% is shares of the local government, and 1.4% is disbursed to NAR. The remaining 0.5% is invested to the Japan Finance Corporation for Municipal Enterprises (JFCME), which is a Government sponsored corporation that provides low-interest financing to local governments.

NAR House Take Percentages in 2024



Off-Course Betting Facilities

As of 2025, wagers can be placed at 87 off-course betting facilities (including 15 tracks not hosting races).

Telephone and Internet Betting

Racing by local governments began offering telephone wagering in 1984. Telephone betting systems offered to fans vary according to local racing authority but are divided into two types: ARS and Internet betting (cell phones, smart phone or personal computers).

Similar to JRA's figures, local government racing also relies heavily on off-track sales. In 2001, the ratio of on-track/off-track sales was 50:50, but now, the ratio drastically changed to 2:98. Sales at racecourses are decreasing year by year, but off-track sales are conversely in an increasing trend.

NAR Racing Education Center

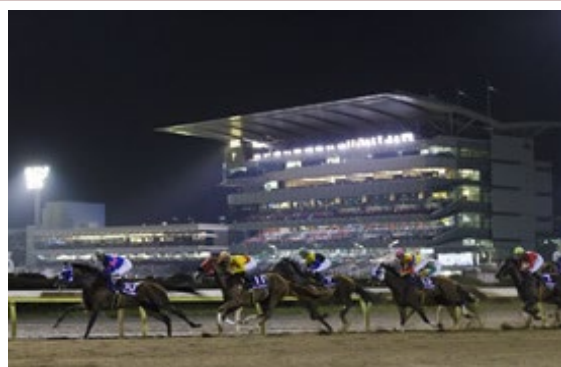
Most of the active NAR licensed jockeys have completed the jockey course at the NAR Racing Education Center in Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture. Each year, the Center accepts some 10 students who have passed the examinations, ranging from 15-year-old junior high school graduates to 20-years-old adults. The training period lasts two years and includes a five-month practical training period under the guidance of a trainer with whom the candidate will become affiliated with upon graduation. Upon completion of the two-year course at the facility, jockeys make their debut after passing the jockey license examination.

The 30,000-square meter Center includes a 1,100-meter dirt track with four riding paddocks in the infield, an uphill training track, stable area with a capacity of 160 horses, veterinary clinic, farriery, etc. In 2010, the international quarantine stables were newly built for horses entering and leaving Japan.

Racecourses

The lengths of racecourses of local governments range from 1,000 to 1,600 meters, track width from 16 to 25 meters, and homestretches from the fourth turn to the finish line range from 190 to 380 meters. The maximum number of runners range from 10 to 16 horses. The NAR racecourses are comparatively smaller than that of JRA racecourses and bends are comparatively sharper.

All NAR racecourses have only dirt tracks, with the exception of Morioka Racecourse which also has a turf track.



Night Racing at Oi Racecourse

OBIHIRO

Ban-ei course	Length	Width
	200 m	21 m

MONBETSU

Dirt course	Right-handed
Length	1,376m (inner)/1,600m (outer)
Homestretch	218m(inner)/330m(outer)
Width	25m

MORIOKA

Left-handed	Length	Width	Homestretch
Dirt course	1,600m	25m	300m
Turf course	1,400m	25m	300m

MIZUSAWA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,200m	20m	230 m

URAWA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Left-handed	1,200m	16.5 m–24m	220 m

FUNABASHI

Dirt course	Length
Left-handed	1,250m(inner)/1,400m(outer)
Homestretch	308m
Width	20m(inner)/25m(outer)

OI

Dirt course	Length
Right-handed	1,400m(inner)/1,600m(outer)
Homestretch	286m(inner)/386m(outer)
Width	25m

KAWASAKI

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Left-handed	1,200m	25 m	400 m

KANAZAWA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,200m	20 m	236m

KASAMATSU

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,100m	20 m	238m

NAGOYA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,180m	30m	240 m

SONODA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,051m	20–24m	213 m

HIMEJI

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,200m	20–25m	230 m

KOCHI

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,100m	22–27m	200 m

SAGA

Dirt course	Length	Width	Homestretch
Right-handed	1,100m	19.2–24m	250 m

Horse Racing-Related Activities

When Western-style horse racing was first introduced in the 1860s, most racehorses were domestic breeds, with some imports from Shanghai and other parts of China. During the 1870s, a few thoroughbreds were imported from the United States for the first time for use as breeding stock. The breeding industry in Japan began in earnest in 1907 when, with the assistance of the Mitsubishi Conglomerate, a thoroughbred stallion and 20 broodmares were imported from the United Kingdom to stand at Koiwai Farm. With the subsequent authorization of horse racing and the regulation of racing programs and other racing related affairs, horse racing in Japan started to take off, and the number of domestically bred racehorses increased as the thoroughbred breeding industry developed. Although the breeding industry suffered a near fatal blow during the closing days of World War II, horse racing along with society started on the long road to recovery after the war. As racing activities surpassed their pre-war prosperity, the number of foals bred increased to over 10,000, an unequaled number in the history of horse racing in Japan.

Since 1995, however, the industry has been in a gradual decline. In 2012, the number of thoroughbred foals fell to below 7,000, and in its slight recovery trend the number in 2025 was 8,233.

Bloodstock Sales in Japan are conducted by the Japan Bloodhorse Breeders' Association (JBBA) in cooperation with various local breeders' associations, and by the Japan Racing Horse Association (JRHA) who conducts the famous public auction, "JRHA Select Sale."



Although the number of thoroughbreds has decreased, the breeding standards - as well as their expectations for the foals - have been getting higher every year.

The establishment of the Japan Cup in 1981 resulted in the breeding industry setting a goal for producing faster and

stronger horses that could hold their own worldwide. One of the goals of the Japan Cup was to bring forth steady improvement of the domestic-bred horses through the introduction of superior stallions and broodmares from overseas. This program has borne fruit to a point where the winners of G1 races in some of the world's leading racing nations have been produced in Japan. As a result, Japanese-bred horses are increasingly drawing attention on the global racing stage.

Breeding

Breeding Regions and Number of Farms

Breeding regions are located from the island of Hokkaido up north to the island of Kyushu in the south. Traditional breeding areas include Tokachi, Hidaka and Iburi in Hokkaido and Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Tochigi, Chiba, Miyazaki and Kagoshima prefectures throughout the rest of Japan.

As of 2025, there were 746 farms with thoroughbred broodmares stabled. The Hidaka area of Hokkaido is home to the most at 631. If the Tokachi and Iburi areas are included, Hokkaido's total comes to 677, which accounts for 90.7% of the nationwide total.

Breeding is expanding in Hokkaido, which has a cool, dry climate and plenty of space, while the industry has been shrinking in areas near tracks and in warm, humid Kyushu. The emphasis in these areas has turned to training.

Stallions

During 2025, there were 269 thoroughbred stallions covered mares in Japan. 71 of these were foreign-bred and 198 Japanese-bred. Approximately 91% of these stallions are standing in the main Hokkaido breeding region.

The great racehorse and stallion Sunday Silence (USA), who died in August 2002, was Japan's leading sire for 13 consecutive years from 1995 to 2007. His influence as a stallion has been passed on to his foals, and Deep Impact (JPN) by Sunday Silence was the leading sire in Japan each year from 2012 to 2022. Of domestic stallions, those sired by Deep Impact is the largest number with 37 stallions and

covered 1,640 mares in 2025. When including stallions with a Sunday Silence bloodline in the second-generation and third-generation pedigree, this number increases to 91 (and 4,418 mares) which accounts for 34 % of all mares covered in 2025.

The other prominent sire line is Kingmambo (USA) and 14 of those sired by King Kamehameha (JPN) by Kingmambo covered 817 mares in 2025. This increases to 34 (and 1,815 mares) including stallions with a Kingmambo bloodline in the second-generation and third generation pedigree.

The top six sires, in terms of the number of mares covered, in 2025 were Palace Malice (USA) with 237, Lemon Pop (USA) 214, Equinox (JPN) 206, Nadal (USA) 206, Justin Milano (JPN) 202, and Do Deuce (JPN) 202.

In 2019, Japanese breeding industry was struck by the double tragedy to lose its two champion stallions, Deep Impact and King Kamehameha. Though their influence will surely be around for some time, much attention is paid to who will be the next stallions to lead the industry.

Broodmares

If we look at the number of broodmares in Japan, the

figures reached a peak of about 15,534 in 1993. These figures fell to the high 12,000 and moved sideways until 2003. From there, it gradually decreased to a low of 10,249 in 2016, before turning upward to reach 12,046 in 2025.

Foals

Japan bred fewer than 1,000 thoroughbreds a year through the 1940s and 50s. However, as the economy grew rapidly and horse racing developed, the number rose steadily to reach 10,188 foals during 1992.

An annual level in the upper 8,000s for foal crop had been maintained since 1997, but a declining trend began in 2003 and, 7,969 thoroughbred foals were registered in 2025. This is approximately the same number of foals as that of the late 1970s. This is a result of shifting from quantity to quality, as well as the steep decline in the demand for thoroughbreds caused by the closure of a number of Racing by Local Governments racecourses.



Kitasan Black ©M.Ueda



Epiphaneia ©M.Ueda



Kizuna ©M.Ueda



Equinox ©M.Ueda

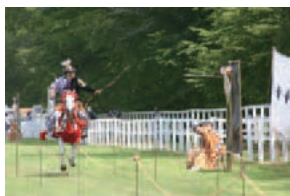
Promotion of Equestrian Culture, livestock industry

Japan has many festivals that feature horses. Horse racing organizations carefully preserve these forms of culture related to horses and undertake assistance in various forms to ensure that this heritage continues. A few examples follow below.

Yabusame Shinto Ceremony (Japanese Archery on Horseback)

This Shinto ceremony is very gallant with a tradition of over 800 years. Wearing samurai hunting uniforms of the Kamakura era, archers mount horses and, galloping swiftly on horseback, release arrows from their bows to hit three targets in a row. When this is achieved, they receive loud applause from the many attending fans.

Yabusame is well known in foreign countries, as many foreign tourists can be seen among the audience. This Shinto ceremony is held twice a year on the spring equinox and autumn equinox to appease the spirits of their ancestors.



Soma Nomaoui (Soma Wild-Horse Roundup)

Dating back over a millennium, the Soma wild horse roundup originated as a form of military training in which horses were used as a new military force. They were released in a pasture and were rounded-up by soldiers. The horses were then presented at a shrine as part of the festival rites. Succeeding generations of Soma clan leaders continued this rite dating from 1323 to the Meiji Restoration.

Held every July, the Soma Nomaoui festival was designated an important national intangible folk culture treasure in 1978.



Dakyu (Horseback Lacrosse)

Begun by the Mizuno lords of the ancient Yamagata fief, this richly traditional horseback lacrosse is part of the Horetsu Shrine's annual festival events in Yamagata Prefecture.

Groups of five or six riders are divided into red and white teams and try to put balls called "agedama," which are marked with the Chinese character for ten, into the goal. This is a two-team, horseback contest in which the red team attempts to



scoop up red balls using nets mounted on poles and put them through the goal's round opening while the white team does the same with white balls. A bell is rung to announce goals made by the white team. Inversely, a drum is beat when goals are made by the red team. The Imperial Household Agency, Yamagata Prefecture's Horetsu Shrine, and Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture, still carry on this tradition today.

Horohiki (Synchronized Equestrian Pennant Display)

It is said that Heian-era warriors used pennants on the battlefield as protection against arrows. The Imperial Household Agency's equestrian division carries on this traditional cultural event.

Horohiki is performed by two riders mounted on Yamato era saddles, each with a 10-meter-long pennant secured to his/her back.

The horses' gait quickens from a walk to a trot and then to a gallop. Their legs move in unison (i.e., the same legs moving at the same time). The two riders release the long pennants a little, until they are fully deployed. A green and white pennant symbolizes the spring season, while a red and white pennant symbolizes the fall.



Thoroughbred life after retirement

In 1973, the Japan Bloodhorse Breeders' Association (JBBA) established a welfare program that enables champion horses to live out the final years of their lives in ease after completing stud/broodmare service following the completion of an active career. The Bloodhorse Training Center also started a subsidy program from 1996 to place famous retired horses at privately owned farms for public viewing and Japan Association for International Racing and Stud Book (JAIRS) took over the duty from 2013.

Participation in International Racing Conference

Asian Racing Federation

Japan's advocacy led to the inauguration of the Asian Racing Conference (ARC), whose objectives are the promotion of horse racing, goodwill and mutual understanding among Asian nations based on exchanges among members. Later, the name was changed to the Asian Racing Federation (ARF) with ARC designating the conferences only.

The first conference took place in Japan in May 1960, and the 8th, the 18th and the 32nd conferences were also held in Tokyo in 1969, 1985 and 2008 respectively.

There are now 16 full member countries, four associate member countries and eight affiliate member countries belonging to the primary racing association in Asia.

In 2014, Mr. Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, Hong Kong Jockey Club CEO was elected as the Chairman, with Japan and United Arab Emirates as the co-vice chairman. Hong Kong is also concurrently undertaking the responsibilities of secretariat.

The Executive Council consists of nominees from Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, India and New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. The Executive Council meets approximately four times a year.

The 41st ARC was held in February 2026 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the 42nd ARC is scheduled to be held in March 2028 in Auckland, New Zealand.



Asian & Oceanian Stud Book Committee (AOSBC)

In 1993, Japan proposed to India the establishment of the Asian Stud Book Conference (ASBC), the current Asian & Oceanian Stud Book Committee (AOSBC). The first conference was then held jointly by Japan and India on the

day preceding the 1995 Asian Racing Conference (ARC), which was held in India. And it was agreed that India and Japan will co-chair the subsequent conferences and Japan assumes the responsibilities of the secretariat.

Only the Indian and Japanese stud books were internationally approved by the International Stud Book Committee (ISBC) from among the participating countries at the time of the first meeting in 1995. Today, there are 19 Asian and Oceanian countries with stud books that have been approved by ISBC.

The 18th AOSBC was held in February 2026 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the 19th AOSBC is scheduled to be held in March 2028 in Auckland, New Zealand.



International Federation of Horse racing Authorities (IFHA)

Japan has attended meetings of the International Federation of Horse racing Authorities' global racing conference annually since 1973. This international conference is held once a year in Paris in conjunction with the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. Japan has since been named to the executive council of the federation's leadership committee, as a member representing Asia. As the standard of horse racing in Japan has risen, the country's responsibilities in the worldwide racing society have become heavier.

A Brief History of Horse Racing in Japan

1862 Foreign residents of Yokohama hold the first Western-style horse races in Japan.

1882 First Western-style races are held by Japanese organizers.

1888 Horse race betting tickets are sold for the first time.

1895 14 horses are imported from Australia.

1905 Implicit government approval is given for horse racing and betting to encourage horse breeding.

1906 The Tokyo Racing Society Inc. holds the first modern race meeting at Ikegami Racecourse. Corruption flourishes as a result of the unchecked proliferation of similar organizations and racecourses.

1908 The sale of betting tickets for horse races is prohibited by the enactment of a new penal code that institutes sweeping bans on various forms of gambling. However, in a move to ensure the viability of horse racing and to improve breeding stocks, the government introduces a series of subsidies for racing.

1910 Local horse and cattle breeding associations (later stockbreeders' associations) gain permission to conduct regional racing under a revamped regulatory system. Betting, however, remains prohibited.

1923 The Horse Racing Law is enacted, giving rise to the establishment of 11 horse racing clubs that are permitted to organize races and sell betting tickets. Regional racing, however, does not come under the jurisdiction of the Horse Racing Law.

1927 Regional racing regulations are enacted, under which stockbreeders' associations and national federations are permitted to hold horse races, sell admission tickets with a bonus betting ticket and award prizes, rather than cash, to the winning ticket holders.

1932 The first Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby) is held.

1936 The Japan Racing Society, a semi-governmental public enterprise, is established under amendments to the Horse Racing Law. Racing begins to flourish under government supervision.

1939 The Law to Conserve Military Equine Resources is enacted. Racing of military parade horses is permitted, as is the sale of winning horse tickets, the equivalent of pari-mutuel tickets.

1941 St. Lite becomes the first Triple Crown winner.

1943 Horse racing is suspended due to intensifying hostilities in World War II.

1945 World War II ends.

1946 Horseracing in Tokyo and Kyoto is re-started. The regional Horse Racing Law is enacted. The organization of races is restricted to the Federation of Horse Associations and its national body, the Japan Equine Society, which is disbanded soon afterwards.

1948 The Japan Racing Society is dissolved, and a new Horse Racing Law is enacted. The government takes over the assets of the former Japan Racing Society and administers horse racing under a national structure. However, Local government bodies, such as prefectures and designated municipalities, are permitted to organize local racing.

1954 JRA is organized to operate National Racing by the enactment of the Japan Racing Association Law.

1958 Hakuchikara races in the U.S.A., becoming the first Japanese horse to compete abroad.

1959 Hakuchikara wins the Washington Birthday Handicap Stakes.

1960 The first Asian Racing Conference is held in Tokyo.

1962 The NAR is established to implement a nationally coordinated framework for registration and licensing for Racing by Local Governments.

1971 Import restrictions on racehorses are eased.

1973 The first JRA representative attends the International Conference of Racing Authorities in Paris.

1974 JRA joins the International Agreement on Breeding and Racing.

1976 Telephone betting is introduced.

1979 Japan becomes Asia's representative member on the first International Stud Book Committee.

1981 The first Japan Cup is held.

1987 The World Super Jockeys Series is launched.

1992 The first Young Jockeys World Championship is held. JRA opens its first overseas representative office in London.

1994 Lisa Cropp of New Zealand becomes the first overseas jockey to receive a short-term riding license in Japan.

1995 The first Asian Stud Book Conference, organized by India and Japan, is held in Hyderabad, India; Japan is selected as the permanent secretariat country.

1996 JRA's first female jockeys begin their riding careers.

References

1997 The number of JRA Personal Access Terminal (PAT) subscribers surpasses 500,000.
A joint JRA/local graded dirt race system is introduced.

1998 Japanese horses win G1 races in France; Seeking the Pearl claims the Prix Maurice de Gheest (G1), and Taiki Shuttle triumphs in the Prix Jacques le Marois (G1).

1999 El Condor Pasa wins the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud (G1) and Agnes World wins the Prix de l'Abbaye de Longchamp (G1).

2000 Agnes World becomes the first Japan-trained horse to win a UK G1 race, the Darley July Cup.
T. M. Opera O maintains an undefeated record during the year with five G1 wins.

2001 Two foreign-bred horses run in the Japanese Derby for the first time.
Stay Gold, Eishin Preston and Agnes Digital have respective G1 victories in the Hong Kong Vase, Hong Kong Mile and Hong Kong Cup.

2002 Eishin Preston wins HK's Audemars Piguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1).
Sire Sunday Silence (16) dies of debilitation leading to heart failure at Shadai Stallion Station.
New Zealand jockey Rochelle Lockett wins the Nakayama Daishogai, the first JRA graded race victory in Japan by a woman.

2003 Eishin Preston wins HK's QE II Cup for the second consecutive year.
Still in Love achieves the second Filly Triple Crown for the first time in 17 years.

2004 JRA introduces trifecta as a new type of betting ticket.

2005 Cesario captures American Oaks (G1) and becomes the first horse to win both the American and Japanese Oaks.
Deep Impact becomes the sixth colt in history to win the Triple Crown.
Their Imperial Highnesses, The Emperor and Empress visit Tokyo Racecourse.

2006 Heart's Cry wins Dubai Sheema Classic (G1).
Cosmo Bulk wins Singapore Airlines International Cup (G1), the first overseas win for a NAR registered racehorse.
Japan-trained Delta Blues and Pop Rock finish one-two in Melbourne Cup (G1).
The International Cataloguing Standards Committee promotes Japan to a Part 1 nation in 2007.

2007 Admire Moon wins Dubai Duty Free (G1).
Shadow Gate and Cosmo Bulk finish one-two in SAIC.

2008 The 32nd Asian Racing Conference is held in Tokyo.

2010 Apapane becomes the third filly in history to capture the Filly's Triple Crown.

2011 Victoire Pisa wins Dubai World Cup (G1).
Orfevre becomes the seventh colt in history to capture the Triple Crown.

2012 Gentildonna becomes the fourth filly in history to capture Filly Triple Crown.
Rulership wins HK's QEII Cup. Lord Kanaloa wins Hong Kong Sprint (G1).

2013 Lord Kanaloa wins HK Sprint for the second consecutive year.

2014 Just a Way and Gentildonna win Dubai Duty Free and Dubai Sheema Classic, respectively. Just a Way, which wins Duty Free by 6 1/4 lengths, becomes the first ever Japan-based horse to claim the sole No. 1 position in the Longine's World's Best Racehorse Rankings.
Hana's Goal wins All Aged Stakes (G1). Admire Rakti score a win in Caulfield Cup (G1).

2015 Two world-class riders, Italian Mirco Demuro and Frenchman Christophe Lemaire are granted full-term jockey licenses by JRA.
Real Impact wins the George Ryder Stakes (G1).
Maurice and A Shin Hikari capture HK Mile and Cup respectively.

2016 JRA commences its first simulcasting for overseas races.
Real Steel wins Dubai Turf (G1).
Japanese horses win top races in France; A Shin Hikari claims Prix d'Ispahan (G1), and Makahiki triumphs in Prix Niel (G2).
Maurice wins HK Champions Mile (G1) in April and HK Cup in December. Satono Crown also wins HK Vase.

2017 Vivlos wins the Dubai Turf.
Neorealism wins the HK's QEII Cup.
JRA Jockey Yutaka Take receives the 2017 Longines and IFHA International Award of Merit for the first time as a Japanese.

2018 Almond Eye becomes the fifth filly in history to capture Filly Triple Crown and wins Japan Cup in record time.
JRA Jockey Yutaka Take celebrates his 4,000th career win on JRA horse.
NAR Jockey Fumio Matoba breaks the NAR record for career wins when claiming 7,152nd victory.

2019 Christophe Lemaire becomes the JRA's leading jockey for the third consecutive year.
Seven Japanese horses triumph in eight G1 races abroad including Almond Eye's win in Dubai Turf (G1) and Deirdre's win in Nassau Stakes (G1).
Japan's two champion sires, Deep Impact (17) and King Kamehameha (18) die at Shadai Stallion Station and Japan Cup is named as the Deep Impact Memorial in honor of late champion.

2020 JRA & NAR race meetings are held without spectators, due to the influence of COVID-19.
Both colt and filly capture the respective Triple Crown

title in the same year for the first time in JRA history - Contrail becomes only the third undefeated Triple Crown winner, while Daring Tact becomes the first-ever undefeated Filly Triple Crown winner as well.

Almond Eye retires with a record-breaking ninth G1 win in the Japan Cup and her total earnings reaches over ¥1.9 billion, a record high in JRA history.

Danon Smash and Normcore wins the HK Sprint (G1) and HK Cup (G1), respectively.

2021 Japan-trained horses win in the Breeders' Cup meeting for the first time in history – Loves Only You wins Filly & Mare Turf (G1), while Marche Lorraine wins Distaff (G1), respectively. Loves Only You receives the Eclipse Award for Champion Female Turf Horse.

Glory Vase and Loves Only You wins HK Vase (G1) and HK Cup, respectively.

JRA's betting turnover reaches ¥3 trillion for the first time since 2003.

2022 Panthalassa wins Dubai Turf (G1) in a dead heat. Shahryar wins Dubai Sheema Classic. Win Marilyn wins HK Vase (G1).

Oju Chosan retires with nine J-G1 titles.

Yuga Kawada becomes the JRA's leading jockey for the first time.

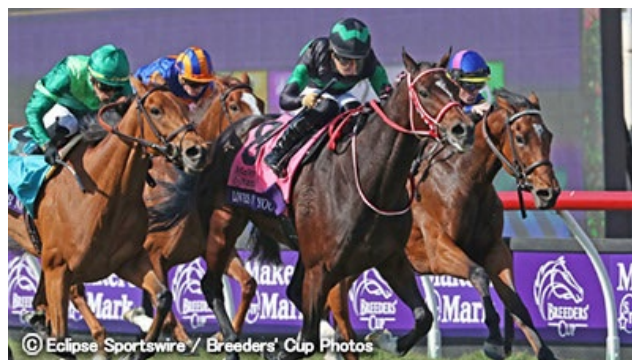
2023 Equinox extends his G1 winning streak from the previous year, triumphing in Dubai Sheema Classic, Takarazuka Kinen, Tenno Sho (Autumn) and Japan Cup to be honored with the 2023 Longines World's Best Racehorse. Japan Cup is named the World's Best Horse Race for 2023.

Panthalassa wins Saudi Cup (G1). Ushba Tesoro wins Dubai World Cup (G1) for the first time since switching to dirt surface.

2024 The 40th Asian Racing Conference is held in Sapporo.

2025 Forever Young becomes the first Japanese-trained horse to win the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1), and he is named Champion Older Dirt Male at the Eclipse Awards. Forever Young also wins the Saudi Cup (G1).

Soul Rush wins the Dubai Turf (G1), Danon Decile the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1), and Tastiera the HK's QEII Cup (G1), respectively.



Loves Only You



Marche Lorraine



Equinox



Forever Young

Japan Association for International Racing and Stud Book (JAIRS)

On December 1, 2010, the “Japan Association for International Horse racing (JAIR),” which promotes the globalization of Japanese racing and mutual understanding with race organizations in other countries, and the “Japan Race Horse Registry (JRHR),” a central body for the registration of Japanese racehorses, merged into a single body, the Japan Association for International Racing and Stud Book (JAIRS). JAIRS now handles activities as a channel for a broad range of fields connected with racing industries all over the world.

Mission:

- Collection and dissemination of horse racing-related information, both domestic and abroad.
- Exchange of information on techniques for the conduct of horse racing and the raising (training) of racehorse with persons connected with horse racing from abroad.
- Conduct and support of international events relating to horse racing and participation in international conferences.
- Registration of racehorses and the issuance of registration certificates.
- Registration for the stud book and other books/records relating to horse racing and breeding.

Website:

<http://japanracing.jp/> (most up-to-date news on Japanese racing, full coverage of all JRA races and local principal races, provided in English, Chinese, Korean, French)
<http://www.studbook.jp/> (Japanese Stud Book Database in English, Japanese)
<http://www.jairs.jp/> (Overseas horse racing information and domestic registration information in Japanese)

Activities:

1. Registration

JAIRS conducts “Foal Registration,” which is to verify pedigree and identity, and “Breeding Registration,” which is to ensure the breeding record of the horse to be used as breeding stock. JAIRS examines all horses applied for such registration and issues certificate when registration is completed.

2. Overseas Racing Bulletin

Periodical newsletter to provide Japanese racing connections/fans with information on overseas horse racing.

3. ARF Study Programs

Training programs for personnel from the Asian Racing Federation to introduce Japan’s horse racing system and provide opportunities to promote exchange of information and international goodwill among member countries. Courses are divided into regular and specialized study programs. Over 400 participants have attended this program to date.

4. Publication of Stud Book

JAIRS publishes all breeding records in Japan, as well as import and export of horses, on the internet as Japanese Stud Book Database.

5. Naming

Upon receipt of application, JAIRS examines proposed names according to international and domestic rules and determines the name of the horse.

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Please visit the following URL for other JRA institutions and related organizations:

https://japanracing.jp/en/about/jra_organization/