



The Philosophy for **JRA TRACK**

The JRA places priority on keeping tracks in excellent condition throughout the year with meticulous care. We have to take into account variable situations such as the weather and the year-round racing schedule. In our view, 'nice ground' is one which ensures safety for horses and jockeys and fairness in the race, as well as allowing runners to perform to their best. We believe a nice track needs the following elements:

NICE GROUND

- ▶ Ensuring safety for horses and jockeys
- ▶ Keeping fairness
- ▶ Enables horses to show all he/she has in the race

Cushioning

to mitigate physical impact on horses

Our Mission SAFE and EASY to RUN

Keep the ground nice throughout the year

Flatness

to keep the surface even and prevent hooves landing incorrectly

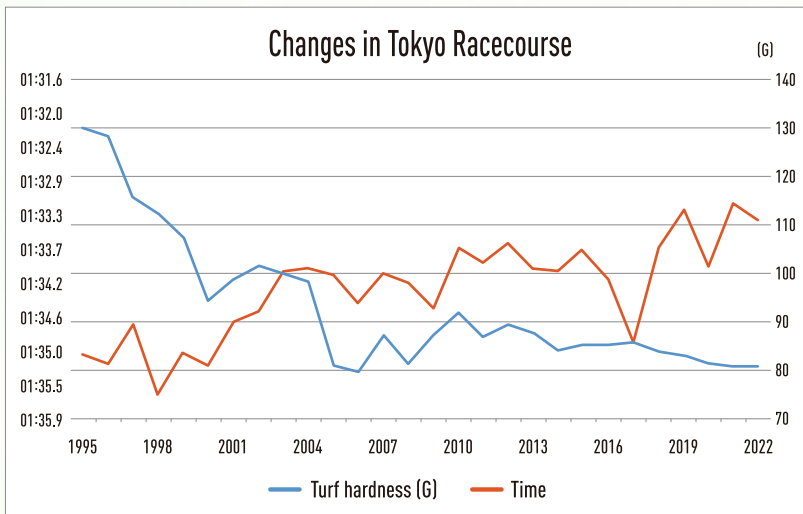
Uniformity

to maintain all areas of the track in the same condition as much as possible

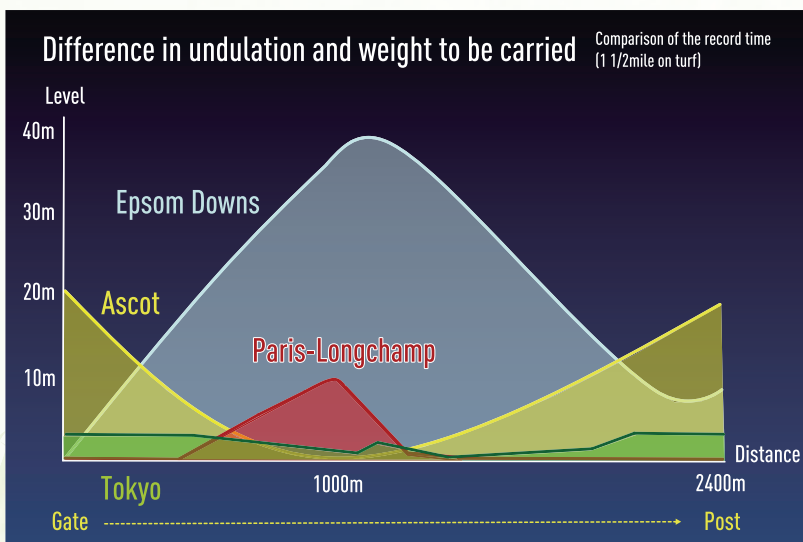
Safe & Easy

Japanese tracks don't boast about their speed. As a result of continued excellent state management, we are proud to have achieved speed, safety, fairness, and ease of riding.

It is said that race times in Japan are much faster compared to European racing. However, we would say fast times are created by a combination of factors, including the pace in races, the development of runners' potential and improvement in training techniques rather than track hardness.



This shows that times at Tokyo Racecourse have been improving while turf hardness has been reduced gradually. Therefore, we believe the fast times there cannot be due solely to the hardness of the turf track.

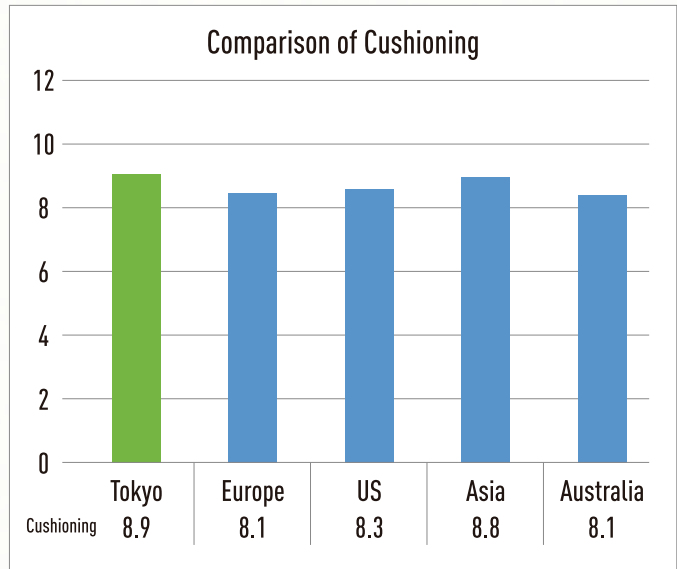
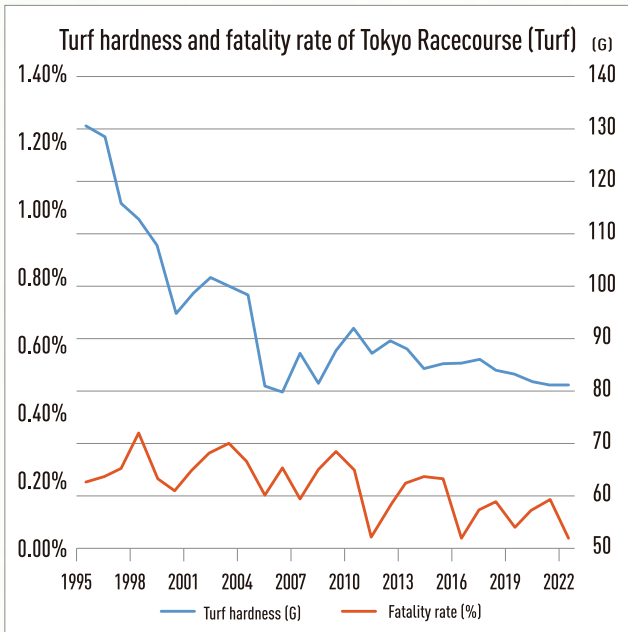


Compared to European tracks, there is much less undulation in Japanese racecourses including Tokyo. It can make a big difference in running time. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the difference in weight carried between European and Japanese racing. In general, the weight for older horses in Japanese racing is 57kg (9st) or 58kg (9st21b) and an allowance is provided based on ages and sex. Almond Eye broke the record time in the Japan Cup in 2018 when she was a three-year-old filly and the weight she was required to carry was 53kg (8st5lb).

Racecourse	Time	Winner (year)	Weight	Gap Level
Epsom Downs	2:31.3	Workforce(2010)	9st 0lb	40.0m
Ascot	2:24.6	Novellist(2013)	9st 7lb	22.0m
Paris-Longchamp	2:24.5	Danedream(2011)	8st 8lb	10.0m
Tokyo	2:20.6	Almond Eye(2018)	8st 5lb	2.7m

Cushioning

We believe cushioning on the track can play an important role to mitigate the physical impact on horses.



*Europe / US : Average of 3 racecourses Asia : Average of 2 racecourses
Australia : Average of 4 racecourses

The chart above shows the scale of turf hardness at Tokyo Racecourse since 1995. Placing high-priority on maintenance and an emphasis on cushioning lowered the hardness of the track compared to the 1990s. Hardness has been assessed as stable since 2005.



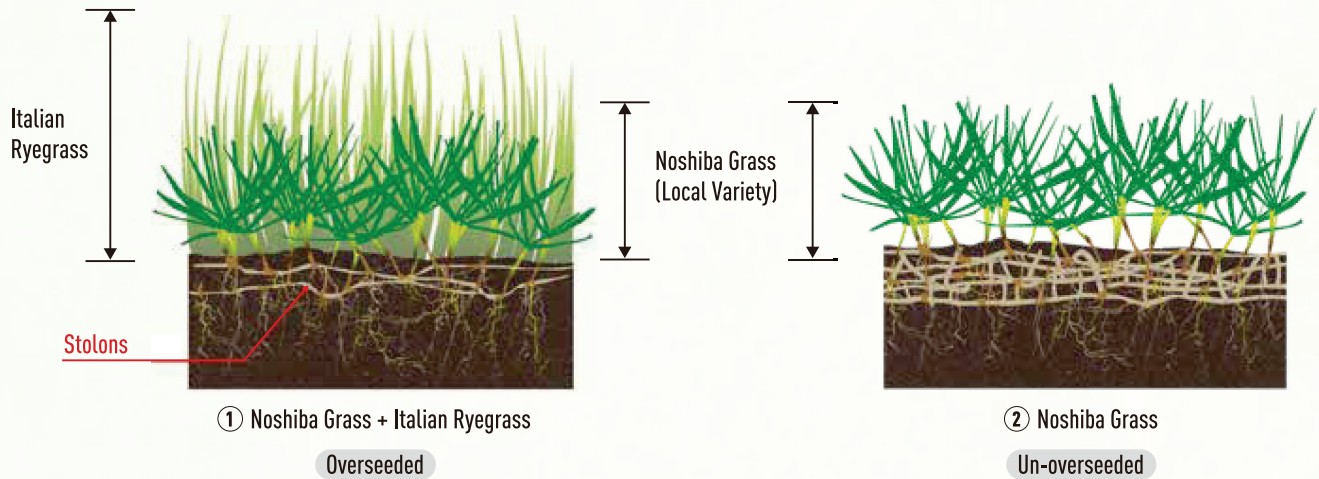
This special vehicle (left) has been developed by the JRA and has been in use since 1989. It can measure turf hardness over the whole of the track by dropping a horseshoe-shaped 6kg weight with an accelerometer every 10 meters.



In recent times, aeration of the turf track has been carried out by machines such as the Verti Drain and Shock Waves in order to add more cushioning to the turf.

Flatness

On top of that, we also try to keep the track surface without unevenness after the race at the same time.



The turf is mainly composed of Noshiba Grass (*Zoysia Japonica*), a local variety, with Italian Ryegrass overseeding, or ryegrass planted over Noshiba Grass in autumn and winter to add greenness. Compared to Italian Ryegrass, Noshiba Grass has thicker, tougher underground stems (stolons) which are more densely packed on the surface. This means the Noshiba Grass turf is less likely to be bumpy after racing takes place on it. Japan has plentiful rainfall and racing has to take place consistently throughout the year, including in winter. Noshiba Grass is the most suitable for maintaining cushioning, flatness and uniformity of the track in these conditions.

JRA tracks stays in uniform condition throughout the year by carrying out regular turf replacement.

In order to provide year-round quality racing surface, the JRA carries out turf replacement every year, primarily during the summer months.

Our dedicated grounds staff diligently inspect the entire turf field for damaged areas that require replacing. Tokyo Racecourse, for example, replaces approximately 35,000m², which accounts for one-third of the total track area.

The turf replacement process involves the complete removal of damaged turf, followed by meticulous leveling to eliminate any uneven surfaces. Mat-type turf is then carefully planted, leaving no gaps. After replacing, we maintain the best condition of the turf with meticulous care, such as fertilization and sprinkling water in preparation for the autumn races.

Through these measures we are able to provide a consistently uniform track surface throughout the year.



Uniformity

We try to maintain all areas in the same condition wherever possible to provide a fair and even track for the safety of horses and jockeys.



Track maintenance on racedays is performed by 150 staffs divided into more than ten groups. After each race, they check the turf and repair the turf stripped by hooves to provide a fair and even surface for the safety of horses and jockeys.

Those who are involved in track maintenance work with a high level of skill and, in addition to various tools, sometimes use their own hands to repair damage carefully.

Comparison of drainage in turf track

Tokyo Racecourse



- Upper A Sand
- Upper B Sand
- Lower Crushed Rocks (Filter Layer)

Typical European Racecourse



- Upper Fertile Soil
- Lower Natural Layer (Lime Layer)

To cope with Japanese frequent rainfall, the base of the turf track is composed of sandy soil for the upper layer and crushed rocks for the lower layer, both of which have high drainage properties. Therefore, after rainfall it is less likely to become too soft and the track can be kept relatively level.

OPINION

Ryan Moore

1) How would you describe the turf tracks in Japan to the connections in UK/Ireland ?

I think the ground is fast but safe. It has a nice cushion and grass covering. I feel little concussion from the ground. It is also quite level, even and comfortable. There is less undulation compared to other countries.

It has great drainage so the tracks never get really deep even if it rains.

The turf track at Tokyo Racecourse has improved since my first visit in 2004. Especially in the last three to four years, the cushioning and grass cover has been excellent. I feel less concussion while riding than before.



2) How different are the characteristics between turf tracks in Japan and ones in UK/Ireland ?

All the tracks in Japan are man-made and they have great drainage with multi-layers under the ground. British tracks are natural, some tracks have a drainage system but the ground is basically soil only.

Tracks in Japan have no undulation while British tracks are undulating.

3) Regarding turf tracks in Japan, do you feel that each racetrack has its own characteristics or are they all similar ?

I feel a difference between Tokyo and Nakayama. Tokyo has a dry track and Nakayama is soft. Kyoto and Hanshin are similar, but the grass was tired at Hanshin this year due to the many races that were held. Chukyo is a looser and wetter track than the four tracks above.

4) How would you describe the dirt tracks in Japan to the connections in UK/Ireland ?

All JRA dirt tracks are similar and consistent. Dirt tracks in US and Japan are different, and the US is the complete opposite of Japan in that each racecourse has its own unique characteristics and clear track bias.

Japanese dirt tracks have deeper sand and slightly slower times. They are safe tracks. Kickbacks also differ from other countries. It's like a sand spray, and depending on the horse's personality, horses are often not too keen on being covered in sand and will go on.

Holly Doyle

1) How would you describe the turf tracks in Japan to the connections in the UK ?

The ground was quick obviously when I was there, but it was so safe and the grass covering was exceptional. The maintenance is very high quality and they take all the necessary steps to provide the best ground at every meeting, which is great. I also experienced the turf when it rained, some tracks become sloppy or loose but in Japan, the grass was so well embedded that I didn't get that feeling.

2) How different are the characteristics between turf tracks in Japan and ones in UK ?

In the UK, we've got a lot of undulating, twisty-turny tracks, like Goodwood and Epsom. I've noticed most of the turf tracks in Japan are relatively flat. You've got a little incline. I see that's the main difference. Japanese tracks are not so undulating, unlike British tracks that we have.

Masters of the world who know Japanese horse racing. The people who actually ran the riding grounds talk about its characteristics and its splendor.

Tom Marquand

1) How would you describe the turf tracks in Japan to the connections in the UK ?

The turf tracks in Japan are beautifully managed, with a lot of racing over each weekend we were always on perfect ground and fantastic grass condition.

2) How different are the characteristics between turf tracks in Japan and the ones in the UK ?

Every weekend we were presented with consistent and safe ground to race on, with accurate ground descriptions so everybody knew what they were racing on first thing in the morning.

In the UK we really struggle to get accurate ground descriptions ahead of racing depending on the different tracks which can lead to lots of late non-runners.

3) Regarding turf tracks in Japan, do you feel that Tokyo and Nakayama Racecourse has their own characteristics or are they similar ?

Both Tokyo and Nakayama have very different characteristics, and it's fantastic for horses based up at Miho to have two local tracks that are so different, with Tokyo being a big open galloping track demanding lots of stamina, and Nakayama being a bit tighter and playing to horses with a bit more speed.

4) How would you describe the dirt tracks in Japan to the connections in the UK ?

Obviously, we have limited chances to ride on the dirt when based in the UK, but Japanese dirt tracks are certainly among the best I have ridden on when being compared to my experiences riding on dirt in other countries.



3) Regarding turf tracks in Japan, do you feel that each racetrack has its own characteristics or are they all similar ?

I have only ridden at Tokyo Racecourse and Nakayama Racecourse, but I was struck by the differences in race strategy due to the different track layouts.

4) How would you describe the dirt tracks in Japan to the connections in the UK ?

When it rains, the track becomes heavy and slippery, but it is nice and forgiving for horses. The kickback is soft and the horse goes on without spooking, which requires a different riding style than on turf. On dirt, we have to push the horse all the time, but I think it's a fair track.



OPINION



Cristian Demuro

1) How would you describe the turf tracks in Japan to the connections in France ?

I still think the Japanese turf track is excellent. Tokyo Racecourse is a magnificent and very nice racecourse like Paris-Longchamp. Both the Hanshin and Tokyo Racecourse are well-drained, and I was reminded that they can run faster times than overseas tracks, and the fact that they are all very flat is a big difference from Europe.

2) How different are the characteristics between turf tracks in Japan and the ones in France ?

Many French horse racing connections would consider Japanese turf courses to be very hard tracks. I think Japanese turf tracks are certainly lighter and faster, but I don't think they are hard by any means.

There is a really big difference between Japanese and French tracks. French tracks are very deep and very often race on heavy condition, and it is common to have big undulations, for example, Paris-Longchamps has a big climb and descent to the finish line. On the other hand, Japanese tracks are very flat and cushioned and not hard, so it gives them that impression because the time is fast.

3) Regarding turf tracks in Japan, do you feel that each racecourse in Japan has its own characteristics or are they similar ?

Each racecourse was very well maintained and there are no big differences. I think they are all excellent.

4) How would you describe the dirt tracks in Japan to the connections in France ?

Japanese dirt tracks are good tracks for both horses and riders. There is no difference between inside and outside tracks, and it is very easy to run with a cushion.



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