



**JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**26th running of the Japan Cup**  
**November 23, 2006 (Thursday)**

**Questions asked on behalf of the Press:**

**Mr. Raita Nakano (Radio Nikkei)**

**Ouija Board (GB, 5m, bay)**

**Trainer: Edward Dunlop**

**Jockey: Lanfranco Dettori**

**Q:** At what timing did you decide for her to run in this year's Japan Cup for the second time?

**T:** When Lord Derby decided he was going to retire Ouija Board, it seemed a great idea to try and run better than we did last year. So having won in Hong Kong (last year) we thought we'd come here and then go to Hong Kong. The first main target for this season was Dubai which didn't quite work out well—obviously, Heart's Cry won the race quite impressively. The rest of the season has been taking one race after the other, but I always wanted to run her again in the Breeders' Cup, and to have a horse run in three Breeders' Cup from Europe, I believe—the experts there tell me—that she's the first European horse to do that and as you've seen, she's won very impressively.

**Q:** Having to run eight races in five different countries—is there any concern that she might be tired in anyway?

**T:** Jason Tate who rides her every day apart from today, said she felt better than she had before winning the Breeders' Cup. This is a very strange horse, you know, she's run all year and every time we run her, we say "Oh we'll give her a

holiday”, but she defies us all and that really is down to the way she’s looked after by my team—and without them we wouldn’t be here—and also to her fantastic temperament and attitude, aided of course by Mr. Dettori on my left.

Q: How about the spacing between the Breeders’ Cup and this coming race? With one week less in between compared to last year?

T: This time she didn’t go back to England like last time when she went home and then came out. This time she stayed in the States and flew here. Naturally, when they fly that far, they lose a fair amount of weight, but this morning we weighed her and she’s on her perfect racing weight which she’s maintained all year. And hopefully this will continue—she seems to be thriving. And with the change of the temperature, of course she’s a little woollier on her neck than she has been but Frankie said that she was fresh, squealing and bucking afterwards so she seems to be very well within herself.

Q: So you’re quite confident in her having a very good race this year.

T: Yeah I hope so, but there are two very very good colts. Internationally they are arguably the best turf colts in the world—she is the best filly/mare in the world. We get two kilos off but it’ll be an enormous start for her but hopefully she’ll run with great credit.

Q: What were you looking for in her workout today and are you satisfied by how she’s turned out?

T: She hasn’t seen another horse for two weeks, so she tends to at this stage look a little lazier which in a big picture though is probably the best for her. Frankie was happy with the way she moved and she likes the ground which I’m delighted to see has got much faster. Everything’s fine and I hope all systems go.

Q: How would she compare to last year?

T: In official ratings she’s rated higher than she’s ever been in her life so obviously she’s improved—she’s won more group ones this year. We were very happy with her last year. I believe—though this may prove me wrong—that this year will be a very different type of race. Lesser runners. I have my doubts that this will go as fast. So that will suit us—the one thing this mare can do—she quickens off any pace.

Q: Looking back on last year's race?

T: We've seen when she won the Prince of Wales; she's very good at quickening past and then tends to idle a little bit when she hits the front. Irish Champion—the same. Jamie went past Dylan Thomas but then he battled back. This time ideally but obviously depending on how the race maps out for Frankie, we will not be hitting the front so early. It's a long way up that straight and a stiff mile-and-a-half so we will hold on to her and hope for the best.

Q: What kind of impression do you have on Deep Impact and Heart's Cry?

T: Deep Impact; I've watched him before he came-- every race he wins he looks like an unbelievable horse. He's a true champion, he ran very well in the Arc. The difference this time is that he's been to Europe and come back home—whether he's the same horse. Same with Heart's Cry—he's obviously come home from England. The race in Dubai—personally for me it was a messy race—very slow and a great ride in the front by Monsieur Lemaire, he very much stole the race—a worthy winner on the day. We watched him in the King George, so we'll see.

Q: How did she feel on the track this morning?

J: Good. She was fine and I was very pleased with her.

Q: Do you have high hopes of winning this year's Japan Cup and marking your fourth victory in this race as a jockey?

J: Yes. She's a tremendous filly and I'm excited to ride her. She's given me some fabulous moments in my career, so I'm really excited.

Q: We might be having some rain. How would it affect Ouija Board?

J: From what I know from my experience, if you have one fine day the turf is perfectly fine. So if we have one day without rain on Saturday, Sunday should be spot on.

Q: Having won three Japan Cup titles—what's the secret?

J: They ask me all the time and the answer is always the same—you need a good horse.

Q: You always seem to win by a close margin in these wins.

J: That's not my choice—I'd like to win by five lengths. But I've been very lucky, the photo's gone my way. Well it's been hard fought battles and very nerve racking but—luck was on my side.

Q: Can you give us her exceptional points?

J: She's a true professional. She doesn't waste energy for no reason. She's got the ability to take everything into her strides on big occasions and she's got a tremendous turn of foot.

Q: Who would be your biggest rival in this race?

J: Obviously I respect the two good horses—this is my opinion but I don't think there is much between the two horses. So, whatever performance on the day, I'd be happy to follow any of the two.

Q: What do you think of Heart's Cry racing against him?

J: He's a fabulous horse—I had a good look at him in the Japan Cup. He's an improving horse, a good stayer, very strong.

Q: What about Deep Impact?

J: He's a Japanese superstar. I've been here for a few days and everybody speaks that he's the best horse Japan has ever had. I have the greatest respect for him and he should be a very hard horse to beat.

Q: What would be your ideal race development?

J: One thing's for sure she'll be coming from behind. The usual kind of straight forward race. And try not to make any mistakes and try to win.

**Freedonia (GB, 4f, bay)**

**Owner: Alan Cooper (rep: Niarchos Family)**

**Ass. Trainer: Claude Lenoir**

Q: How did Freedonia come to take part in this year's Japan Cup?

O: We had it in the back of our mind for her Autumn campaign, so we took Freedonia to New York for the Turf Classic and we were happy she came second—we felt that the pace of that race was particularly slow, so we hoped to have an invitation for the Japan Cup and we were delighted when we were

asked because we believe the distance and the pace will suit her very well. I know that when you look at her performances, she is not as well known as Ouija Board and many other runners, but Freedonia is a late maturing filly and Mr. Hammond has always liked her a lot.

Q: All her past races have been over 2000—mostly 2400 meters. So you had an early judgment that she was best at this distance?

O: We had established her distance from quite a while back. This year, she started out on modest condition races, and we stepped up to grade two in August, winning the Prix de Pomone. She probably could have finished closer in the Prix Vermeille with a clear run. Then our second run in a group one—she had a good race in New York—so the distance will suit her very well and I think the track will suit her very well also.

Q: The pace in Japan is customarily very fast. Do you think she will be up to the solid pace here?

O: Yes, that was our primary thought after the race in New York—that we needed a good pace for Freedonia—and John Hammond felt that we were all guaranteed to have that here at Tokyo than the Breeders' Cup at Churchill Downs, which we finally decided to bypass to come here fresh. We think a fast race will suit her and she has a very nice finishing acceleration, which we hope we can put to good use in the last 300 meters.

Q: How would you assess your rivals in the coming Japan Cup?

O: Well it's a very strong renewal of the Japan Cup. On the international ratings, Freedonia is lower than quite a lot of the top names; Ouija Board, Deep Impact, Heart's Cry, Meisho Samson....very good race. I was a bit surprised to read in the English press that Freedonia's chances were rated at 66:1 so I'm hoping she's much better than that.

Q: What kind of tactics do you have in facing this strong field?

O: With a good pace we can hope to have a good position in mid-division and then use her finishing speed to finish as close as we can to the winning post.

Q: How has her condition been since her arrival in Japan?

O: She lost some weight on the flight over and it took a little time to settle down at

the quarantine station, but I saw her for the first time this morning—I thought she looked very well. She also lost weight when she went to New York. International traveling has been new to her, but Claude (Lenoir; assistant trainer) is very happy with her and she has put her weight back on. This morning she was in good form. It was her first morning just getting to know the track. So at this stage we are very happy.

Q: Are you planning to gallop her before the race?

O: John Hammond arrives later today and he will see Freedomia tomorrow morning. He will obviously decide on what he'd like to do tomorrow or Saturday morning. I don't think she'll need much speed work—she's very fit—and she'll probably have some nice canters tomorrow and on Saturday rather than speed work.

Q: We heard that Thierry Gillet was injured. How has he recovered?

O: He's recovering very well thank you. He received a kick one morning in training nearly one month ago and had to have a small operation to put a screw in his left arm. He was given the green light to come here on Thursday so he rode to work on Monday and Tuesday and yesterday he rode a winner for Mr. Hammond and he's in good form, so his arm is not a worry.

Q: What is her condition like since coming to Japan?

AT: She needed a little time to settle down—ran a slight fever at Shiroy quarantine—but is OK now.

Q: Which race was her best performance?

AT: She was good in all her races but perhaps the Prix de Pomone was her best. In the Prix Vermeille, she didn't have the chance to run clear and her race in New York was much too slow for her, so with a longer stretch here and a fast pace, she should fare better this time.

Q: So do you think that she will be able to perform to her best in the Japan Cup?

AT: She's recovering well from her trip, and though her experience traveling is incomparable to Ouija Board, she has shown to adapt well with each travel and has really recovered well from her last race in New York.