

Races

JRA holds thoroughbred flat races and jump races in Japan, while NAR holds thoroughbred flat races and Ban-ei races for draft horses, such as Percherons and Bretons. About half of the JRA racing schedule for flat races is held on turf and half on dirt courses, while nearly all flat races in Local Government Racing are run on dirt courses, except for Morioka Racecourse.

2010 Races in Japan (Total)	19,509 (JRA:3,454 NAR: 16,055)	
Thoroughbred flat races (JRA/NAR)	17,697	90.7%
Thoroughbred jump races (JRA only)	134	0.7%
Ban-ei races (NAR only)	1,812	9.3%



NAR

Race meetings can last up to six days for racing conducted by government-designated prefectures and municipalities. A total of 1,466 meetings were held in 2010 in NAR races.

THE RACING CALENDAR

JRA

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. In 2010, 3,454 races were held.

Number of Races by Race Type in 2010

Total	3,454
Thoroughbred flat	3,320
Thoroughbred jump	134

Number of Flat Races on Dirt and Turf in 2010

Dirt	1,648
Turf	1,672

Number of Races by Distance on Turf in 2010

Total flat races on turf	1,672 races	
1,000–1,200 m	396 races	23.7%
1,400–1,600 m	453 races	27.1%
1,700–2,200 m	699 races	41.8%
2,300 m and over	124 races	7.4%



PURSES

JRA

Prize money allocated by JRA for each race is paid to the owners of the first five finishers. In stakes races, JRA prize money is augmented by distribution of the stakes money that goes to the owners of the top three horses only. The largest first-place purse is the ¥250 million for the Japan Cup, and the smallest is the ¥5 million for events held for winless three-year-olds or two-year old new comers.

NAR

Similar to JRA racing, prize money is generally allocated to the owners of the first five finishers in local races. However, there is a huge disparity between the purses offered by different organizers, with a 20-fold gap between the highest and lowest average race purses. The highest purses are paid in thoroughbred races.

TRAINER, JOCKEY AND 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.

The system of trainer, jockey and groom income is, in principle, broadly the same for both JRA and racing by local governments.

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.



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