

THE ROAD AHEAD

NEWSLETTER

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FROM ARROGATE TO INNOVATION



THE LEGACY OF THE PEGASUS WORLD CUP

The Pegasus World Cup returns to Gulfstream Park on January 24, 2026, with a \$3 million purse and a new milestone: for the first time, the main event is part of the Breeders' Cup Challenge Series. **That means the winner will not only claim racing glory in South Florida but also secure an automatic, fully paid berth in the \$7 million Breeders' Cup Classic later that same year.**

Since its debut in 2017, the Pegasus has been a stage for champions and innovation. The inaugural running, won by Arrogate in a record 1:46.83 for the mile and an eighth, set the tone for a race designed to be bold. The purse climbed to \$16 million in 2018, briefly making it the richest race in the world, before settling into its current format: a high-stakes invitational with no entry fees and a focus on equine health. In 2020, the Pegasus became the first major North American event to ban race-day medications, including Lasix, aligning with international standards and ushering in what organizers called a "new era" for the sport.

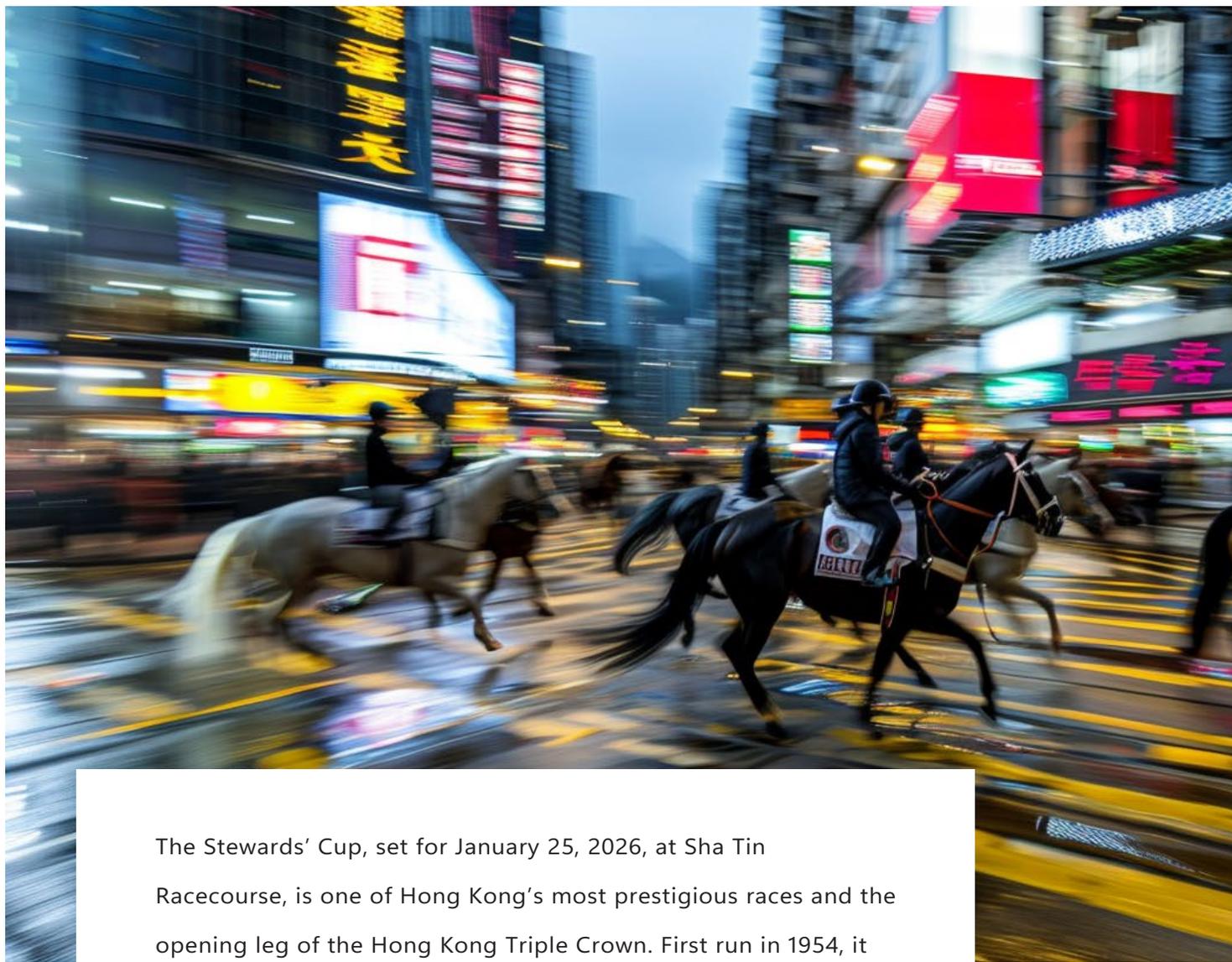
Legends have left their mark here. Bob Baffert holds the record with three wins, while jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. has captured two. Horses like Gun Runner and Knicks Go used Pegasus victories to cement Horse of the Year honors, while Mucho Gusto made history in 2020 as the only horse to earn his first Grade 1 win in this race.

The Pegasus World Cup is more than a single contest.

The day also features the \$1 million Pegasus World Cup Turf Invitational, where the winner takes home a Baccarat crystal trophy, and the \$500,000 Pegasus World Cup Filly & Mare Turf, showcasing elite female talent. Together, these races have replaced historic fixtures like the Donn Handicap and Gulfstream Park Turf Handicap, reshaping the winter racing calendar.

Beyond the track, the Pegasus has become a cultural event. Attendees arrive in elegant attire, fascinators and hats adding to the spectacle, while the towering bronze statue of Pegasus defeating a dragon stands as a symbol of the race's ambition. Conceived by Frank Stronach as a "Super Bowl" for racing, the Pegasus World Cup has grown into a showcase of champions, innovation, and style, an event that bridges the Breeders' Cup and breeding season while giving fans one more chance to see greatness on the track.

THE STEWARDS' CUP



The Stewards' Cup, set for January 25, 2026, at Sha Tin Racecourse, is one of Hong Kong's most prestigious races and the opening leg of the Hong Kong Triple Crown. First run in 1954, it has grown from a domestic contest into an international Group 1 event, attracting champions and rivals from across the globe.



Run over 1,600 meters on turf; the race carries a purse of HK\$12 million (about US\$1.5 million) and is open to horses aged three and older. Its history is filled with memorable performances: Golden Sixty, a modern superstar, claimed victories in 2021 and 2023; Waikuku twice denied him in thrilling duels; Beauty Generation dazzled fans in 2019; and Voyage Bubble's back-to-back wins in 2024 and 2025 confirmed his place among Hong Kong's elite.

For fans, Sha Tin offers an atmosphere that blends sport with culture. Gentlemen's Raceday brings fashion, dining, and entertainment alongside the racing, while the packed grandstands and electric energy make the occasion unforgettable.

What makes the Stewards' Cup special is its mix of tradition, rivalry, and spectacle. It is a race where legends are made, where the season begins with drama and excitement, and where Hong Kong racing showcases its unique identity on a world-class stage.

SHAPING HISTORY

THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY



The Road to the Kentucky Derby is the journey that shapes the field for America's most celebrated horse race.

Introduced in 2013, the points-based system replaced the older method of graded stakes earnings, ensuring that only the most consistent and competitive 2- and 3-year-olds earn their place. Horses collect points in designated prep races across the United States, Japan, and Europe, with the top 20 scorers securing a berth at Churchill Downs and up to four "also eligibles" waiting in reserve. Since 2017, the Japan Road has guaranteed one spot, reflecting the Derby's growing international reach.

The series begins each September with races like the Iroquois Stakes and builds through winter and spring with major preps such as the Florida Derby, Blue Grass Stakes, and Santa Anita Derby.

The addition of the Virginia Derby at Colonial Downs further expanded the schedule, offering valuable points on a 50-25-15-10-5 scale. This structure ensures that horses prove themselves against top rivals, creating a competitive and global pathway to Louisville.

The Derby itself is more than a race; it is a week-long festival that transforms Louisville into a stage of tradition and celebration. Fans flock to the Kentucky Oaks for fillies, themed parties, and parades, while mint juleps, extravagant hats, and the singing of My Old Kentucky Home add to the pageantry.

With crowds often exceeding 150,000, it remains the most attended race in North America, earning its title as **"The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports."**

Over the years, the Road has produced legends. Secretariat in 1973, Seattle Slew in 1977, and Affirmed in 1978 all went on to win the Triple Crown. More recently, American Pharoah in 2015 and Justify in 2018 captured the imagination of fans worldwide by achieving the same rare feat.

The Road to the Kentucky Derby blends history, competition, and culture, offering fans a season-long narrative that builds toward the first Saturday in May. It is both a proving ground for champions and a celebration of racing's global appeal.

During the past 25 years, certain prep races have consistently shaped the Derby field. The Florida Derby leads the way with seven winners, most recently in 2023.

The Santa Anita Derby and Arkansas Derby follow with five each, including Arkansas' latest in 2024, Mystic Dan.

Other races have also produced notable champions: the Jeff Ruby Stakes and Risen Star Stakes with two winners apiece, while the Wood Memorial and Blue Grass Stakes each contributed historic victors, though not since 2003 and 2007. The Sunland Derby added one in 2009 with Mine that Bird, and the Fountain of Youth Stakes delivered a breakthrough in 2025 with Sovereignty

Together, these contests form the backbone of the Derby trail, testing young Thoroughbreds against elite rivals. Each prep win is more than a milestone; it is a step toward immortality at Churchill Downs.

Date	Race	Racetrack	Qualifying Points
2/14/2026	Risen Star	Fair Grounds	50-25-15-10-5
2/14/2026	Saudi Derby	King Abdulaziz Racecourse	30-15-9-6-3
2/21/2026	Hyacinth	Tokyo Racecourse	30-15-9-6-3
2/28/2026	Fountain of Youth	Gulfstream	50-25-15-10-5
2/28/2026	Gotham Stakes	Aqueduct	50-25-15-10-5
2/28/2026	San Felipe Stakes	Santa Anita	50-25-15-10-5
3/1/2026	The Rebel Stakes	Oaklawn Park	50-25-15-10-5
3/7/2026	Tampa Bay Derby	Tampa Bay Downs	50-25-15-10-5
3/14/2026	Virginia Derby	Colonial Downs	50-25-15-10-5
3/21/2026	Jeff Ruby Stakes	Turfway Park	100-50-25-15-10
3/21/2026	Louisiana Derby	Fair Grounds	100-50-25-15-10
3/28/2026	Arkansas Derby	Oaklawn Park	100-50-25-15-10
3/28/2026	Florida Derby	Gulfstream	100-50-25-15-10
3/28/2026	Fukuryu Stakes	Nakayama Racecourse	40-20-12-8-4
3/28/2026	UAE Derby	Meydan Racecourse	100-50-25-15-10
4/4/2026	Blue Grass	Keeneland	100-50-25-15-10
4/4/2026	Santa Anita Derby	Santa Anita	100-50-25-15-10
4/4/2026	Wood Memorial	Aqueduct	100-50-25-15-10



RIYADH'S CROWN JEWEL

THE SAUDI CUP 2026

The Saudi Cup will take place on February 14, 2026, at the King Abdulaziz Racecourse in Riyadh, standing as the richest horse race in the world with a staggering \$20 million purse.



The winner alone earns \$10 million, while prize money extends down to the tenth-place finisher, making it a global magnet for elite horses and trainers.

Since its debut in 2020, the Saudi Cup has quickly risen to prominence. The first edition was marked by controversy when Maximum Security's victory was overshadowed by a medication violation involving his trainer. Yet the race's prestige grew rapidly, earning Group 1 status by 2022, a remarkable achievement for such a young event. That same year, Emblem Road made history as the first locally trained horse to capture the title, a proud milestone for Saudi racing.

Strategically placed on the calendar, the Saudi Cup sits between the Pegasus World Cup in the United States and the Dubai World Cup, creating a lucrative winter circuit for international competitors.

The festival also features the International Jockeys Challenge, where male and female riders compete in equal numbers, highlighting the sport's inclusivity on a global stage.

The event reflects Saudi traditions, with no public gambling or alcohol, and its grandeur is symbolized by the trophy itself, crafted by Garrard, over a meter tall, gilded in 24-carat gold, and requiring six months to complete. In just a few years, the Saudi Cup has become more than a race; it is a showcase of world-class competition, cultural pride, and sporting excellence.

SEASON OPENER OF CHAMPIONS

THE FEBRUARY STAKES AT TOKYO RACECOURSE

The February Stakes, set for February 22, 2026, at Tokyo Racecourse, is Japan's premier dirt race. First run in 1984 as the February Handicap, it has steadily risen in stature, becoming a full international Grade 1 in 2007 and opening its gates to horses from around the world.

Run over 1,600 meters on Tokyo's left-handed dirt track; the race is open to horses aged four and older, with a purse of more than ¥259 million (about \$1.8 million USD). The winner alone takes home ¥120 million, making it one of the richest dirt contests in Japan.





Its history is marked by standout champions. Transcend and Copano Rickey each claimed back-to-back victories, cementing their reputation as dirt specialists. Lemon Pop's commanding win in 2023 showed the race's ability to spotlight new stars, while Robaria Amon remains remembered as the inaugural winner in 1984.

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The February Stakes is more than a race; it is the season opener for Japan's Grade 1 calendar. Fans flock to Tokyo Racecourse to enjoy modern facilities, lively crowds, and a family-friendly atmosphere complete with food stalls and fan zones. The event's energy reflects its role as a launchpad for champions, many of whom go on to represent Japan on the international stage, including the Dubai World Cup.

What makes the February Stakes special is its blend of tradition and global prestige. It stands out in a country dominated by turf racing, offering a rare showcase for dirt specialists while symbolizing the start of another thrilling year in Japanese horse racing.

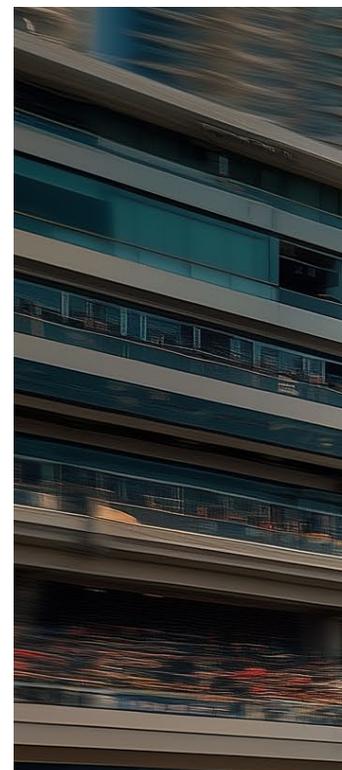
THE HONG KONG GOLD CUP

CENTERPIECE OF THE TRIPLE CROWN

The Hong Kong Gold Cup, set for March 1, 2026, at Sha Tin Racecourse, is one of the most prestigious races in Asian horse racing and the centerpiece of Hong Kong's middle-distance calendar.

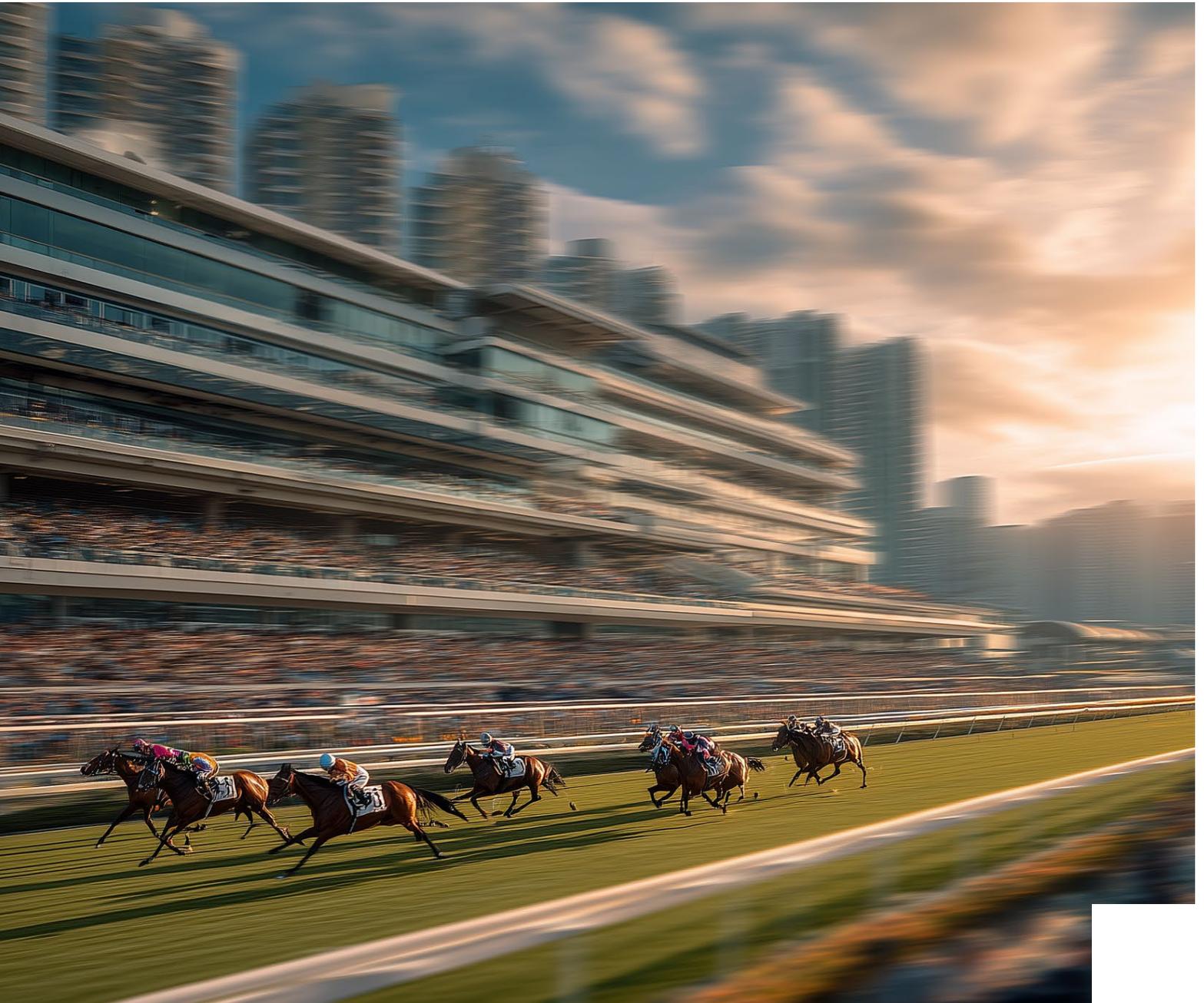
First run in 1979, with Observatory taking the inaugural victory under Pat Eddery, the race has grown into a global showcase. Since 1992, it has been contested over 2,000 meters, making it the second leg of the Hong Kong Triple Crown, between the Stewards' Cup and the Champions & Chater Cup.

With a purse of HK\$12 million (about US\$1.5 million), the Gold Cup attracts elite horses aged three and older. Its roll of honor includes legends such as River Verdon, who won three consecutive editions in the 1990s and remains the only horse to complete Hong Kong's Triple Crown. More recent champions include Golden Sixty, adored by fans for his brilliance, Romantic Warrior's thrilling 2024 duel with Voyage Bubble, and Voyage Bubble's commanding win in 2025. Russian Emperor's upset victory in 2022 showed the race's unpredictability, adding to its drama.



The Gold Cup is more than a contest of speed and stamina; it is a cultural highlight. Sha Tin Racecourse provides a world-class stage, with packed grandstands, fashion, fine dining, and entertainment creating a festival atmosphere. The Hong Kong Jockey Club has invested in enhancing the fan experience, from digital hubs to interactive entertainment, ensuring the event appeals to both seasoned racegoers and new audiences.

What makes the Hong Kong Gold Cup truly special is its blend of history, prestige, and international appeal. As the pivotal leg of the Triple Crown, it often decides whether a horse can chase racing immortality. For fans, it is not just a race but a celebration of Hong Kong's sporting identity, where champions are crowned and legends are made.



THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

BRITAIN'S PINNACLE OF JUMP RACING

The Cheltenham Festival, will be held from March 10 to 13, is the pinnacle of jump racing and one of Britain's greatest sporting traditions. Its roots stretch back to 1860, when the first National Hunt meeting took place at Cheltenham. Over the years, it has grown into a four-day celebration of racing, culture, and spectacle, second only to the Grand National in prestige and prize money.

Legends have been made here. Golden Miller remains the only horse to win both the Gold Cup and the Grand National in the same season.

Arkle's three consecutive Gold Cups in the 1960s turned him into an icon, while Best Mate repeated the feat in the early 2000s.

Quevega's six straight victories in the Mares' Hurdle set a record unmatched in Festival history. Ruby Walsh thrilled fans with seven wins in a single year, and Willie Mullins has become the festival's most successful trainer with more than 110 winners.

Over four days, 28 races unfold, including the Champion Hurdle, Queen Mother Champion Chase, Stayers' Hurdle, Ryanair Chase, and the showpiece Gold Cup. With prize money exceeding £4.5 million, it is the richest jump racing festival in the world. The atmosphere is electric, beginning with the famous "Cheltenham Roar" as the crowd erupts at the start of the opening race.

The Festival is as much about the experience as the racing. Champion Day sets the tone, Ladies Day brings glamour and style, St Patrick's Thursday celebrates Irish passion, and Gold Cup Day delivers the ultimate climax. Fans arrive in tweed and hats; Guinness flows freely, and the sound of bagpipes fills the air. Tickets and accommodation sell out months in advance, proof of its enduring appeal.

Cheltenham is a unique blend of sporting excellence, tradition, and atmosphere. It is a place where history is written, rivalries are celebrated, and fans from around the world come together to witness the very best of jump racing.





MEYDAN'S CROWN JEWEL

THE DUBAI WORLD CUP 2026

The Dubai World Cup will be run on March 28, 2026, at the spectacular Meydan Racecourse, the jewel of Dubai racing. Created in 1996 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the race was envisioned as a true world championship, bringing together the finest Thoroughbreds from every corner of the globe.

Over its three decades, the Dubai World Cup has become one of the sport's most prestigious events. Originally staged at Nad Al Sheba before moving to Meydan in 2010, the race covers 2,000 meters on dirt and now carries a purse of \$12 million, making it one of the richest single races in the world. The entire Dubai World Cup Night, with nine races, offers more than \$30 million in purses, underscoring its global stature.

The roll of honor is filled with legends. Cigar won the inaugural running in 1996, extending his famous streak. Dubai Millennium set a blistering track record in 2000, while Curlin and Arrogate delivered unforgettable performances in 2008 and 2017. Thunder Snow etched his name in history as the only two-time winner, while California Chrome added Dubai glory to his Kentucky Derby and Preakness triumphs. Godolphin Racing, the home team, dominates the record books with nine victories, guided by trainer Saeed bin Suroor and star jockeys like Frankie Dettori and Jerry Bailey.



Beyond racing, the Dubai World Cup is a cultural spectacle. Meydan's grandstand welcomes over 60,000 fans, offering luxury hospitality, fashion, fine dining, and a dazzling post-race concert. The event's international reach is unmatched; one year saw winners from six different countries across the card. Even its history carries unique touches, such as the plaque honoring Cigar at Belmont Park in the United States.

Though the race was briefly halted in 2020 due to the pandemic, its legacy endures. Today, the Dubai World Cup stands as the grand finale of the winter racing season, a celebration of speed, style, and global competition that continues to define the very best of the sport



A FESTIVAL OF COURAGE AND CULTURE

THE GRAND NATIONAL STORY

The Grand National, staged at Aintree from April 9 to 11, is the most iconic jump race in the world. First run in 1839, it has become a symbol of endurance and drama, challenging horses and riders over 4 miles and 514 yards with 30 formidable fences. Only the World Wars and the 2020 pandemic have ever halted its running, a testament to its place in sporting history.

Legends have defined the race. Red Rum remains the most celebrated, winning three times and finishing second twice. Tiger Roll reignited memories of Red Rum with back-to-back victories in 2018 and 2019. Earlier heroes like Manifesto, who ran eight times in the late 19th century, and Aldaniti, whose 1981 triumph marked jockey Bob Champion's recovery from cancer, embody the race's spirit of resilience. Mr. Frisk's record time of 8 minutes 47.8 seconds still stands as proof of the speed and stamina required.

The fences themselves, Becher's Brook, The Chair, Canal Turn, are legendary obstacles, making the Grand National a true test of courage. Run as a handicap steeplechase; it levels the field by assigning different weights to each horse, adding to the unpredictability. With a purse of £1 million and £500,000 to the winner, the stakes are as high as the challenge.

The festival is more than racing; it is a celebration. Over three days, more than 150,000 fans gather every year. Opening Day sets the pace; Ladies Day brings glamour and style, and Grand National Day delivers the climax. Bold fashion, lively entertainment, and the roar of the crowd create an atmosphere unmatched in sport. For many, it is the only race they bet on all year, adding to its cultural reach.

The Grand National is a blend of history, unpredictability, and mass appeal. It is a race where legends are born, where triumph and heartbreak unfold in equal measure, and where millions around the world share in the drama. More than a sporting event, it is a tradition woven into British life and celebrated across the globe.

THE FINAL CHAPTER OF HASTINGS PARK RACING

Opened in 1892, Hastings was a place where generations gathered families in the grandstands, jockeys chasing dreams, and fans cheering as champions thundered down the stretch. For decades, it stood as the heart of horse racing west of the Rockies. Now, with its closure, that heartbeat has fallen silent.

The decision came after the provincial government ended slot machine revenue support, a subsidy worth nearly \$9 million annually. Without this lifeline, and facing rising costs and declining attendance, Great Canadian Entertainment announced that racing could no longer continue. The casino and simulcast wagering will remain, but the oval track itself will not see another season.

The impact is far-reaching. Trainers, jockeys, grooms, and breeders must now uproot their lives, many moving to Alberta or the United States to continue their work. Fans lose a cherished tradition; one tied to Hastings Park and woven into Vancouver's history. The closure also marks the end of horse racing in British Columbia, following the shutdown of Fraser Downs earlier in 2025.



Attention now turns into the future of the site. With the Vancouver Whitecaps exploring options for a new stadium, Hastings Park has emerged as a potential redevelopment location. While transformation may bring new opportunities, for those who loved Hastings, the thought of change carries the weight of something irreplaceable being gone.

For 133 years, Hastings Racecourse was more than a venue; it was a community, a tradition, and a stage for triumph and heartbreak. Its closure is the end of an era, remembered with affection, nostalgia, and the quiet ache of losing a place that meant so much to so many.





LEVELING THE ODDS

NYRA'S CRACKDOWN ON CAW SYNDICATES

For years, large syndicates using advanced algorithms and real-time data have dominated pools, often placing huge wagers in the final seconds before post time. This practice caused odds to swing sharply, leaving everyday bettors frustrated and feeling disadvantaged. Beginning in late 2025, NYRA will throttle CAW activity across most pools during the final minute before races, including win, place, show, exacta, trifecta, and other exotic wagers. The goal is to stabilize odds, restore transparency, and rebuild trust with casual fans.



This move reflects a growing industry trend. In California, Del Mar introduced restrictions in mid-2025, blocking CAW play in the win pool within two minutes of post time. Santa Anita quickly followed, adopting the same rule to prevent late odds swings during loading. These measures show that major jurisdictions are aligning on the need to balance the liquidity CAW groups bring with the fairness that keeps fans engaged.

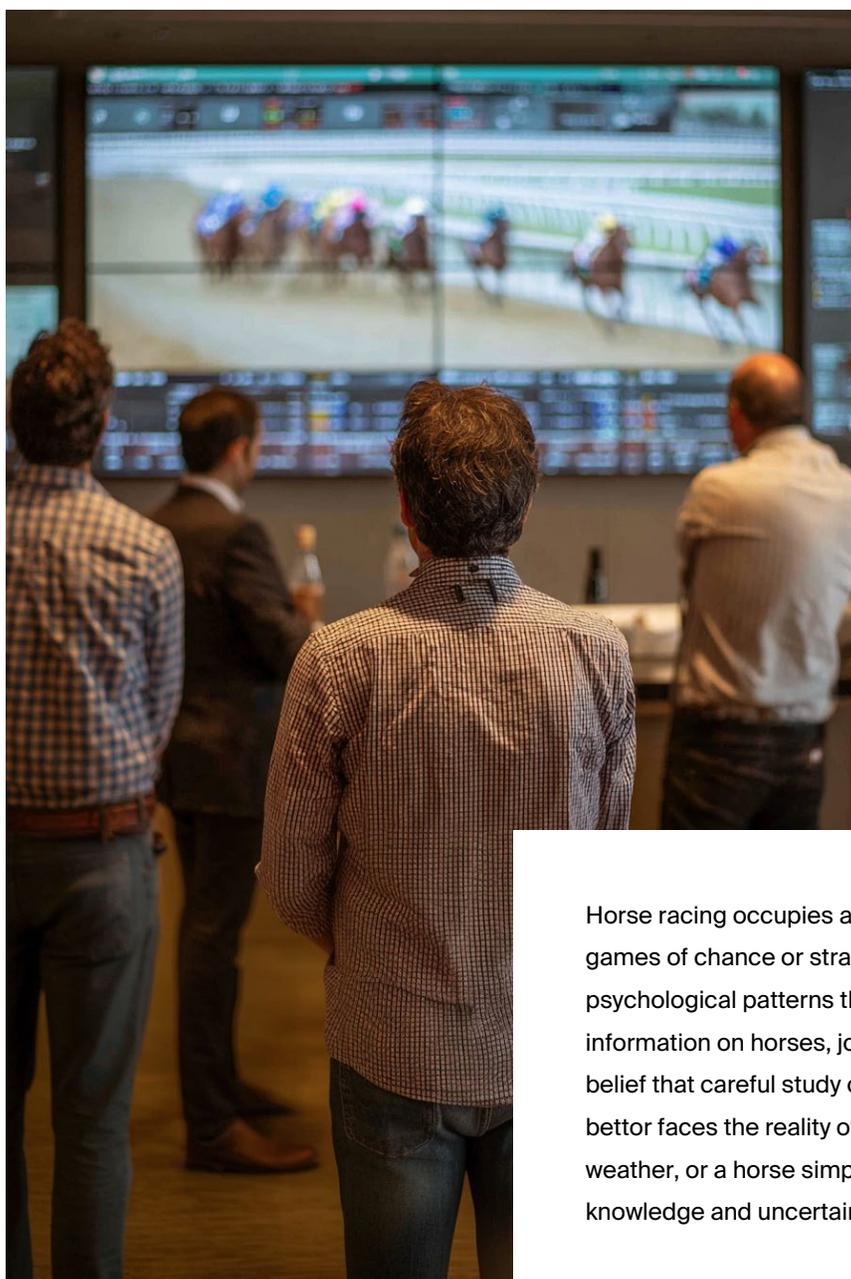
While CAW syndicates contribute heavily to betting pools, their influence has raised concerns about integrity.

Limiting their last-second activity is seen as a way to protect the sport's long-term health, even if it means reduced handle in the short term. Fans have welcomed the change, seeing it as a chance to level the playing field and ensure their wagers reflect the odds they see when placing them.

In essence, NYRA's crackdown, joined by Del Mar and Santa Anita, marks a turning point. Horse racing is recalibrating the role of algorithms, prioritizing fairness and fan confidence so that the thrill of wagering belongs to everyone, not just those with the biggest data advantage.

FROM DATA TO DRAMA

WHY HORSE RACING CAPTIVATES FANS



Horse racing occupies a unique space in the world of betting. Unlike pure games of chance or strategy, it blends skill, data, and unpredictability, creating psychological patterns that keep bettors engaged. The availability of detailed information on horses, jockeys, trainers, and track conditions often fuels the belief that careful study can guarantee success. Yet even the most prepared bettor faces the reality of unforeseen events, a poor start, a sudden change in weather, or a horse simply not performing on the day. This tension between knowledge and uncertainty is what makes horse betting so compelling.

The speed of the sport intensifies the experience. Races last less than two minutes, delivering instant feedback and triggering rapid cycles of excitement. This fast pace creates a loop of adrenaline and dopamine, encouraging bettors to place wagers more frequently than in slower sports. Adding to the allure are exotic bets such as Exactas, Trifectas, and Superfectas. These wagers promise life-changing payouts from small stakes, drawing bettors into the chase for extraordinary wins despite the long odds. Patterns like recency bias also play a role, with bettors often overvaluing a horse that just won or increasing stakes during winning streaks, while losing runs can push them toward riskier bets in search of redemption.

Horse racing engagement today thrives through online platforms that extend the excitement beyond the track. The appeal lies not only in the race itself but in the stories behind it. The horse, the jockey, and the trainer, shared through digital content, interviews, and personal narratives that highlight dedication and resilience. Fans connect through behind-the-scenes videos, social media storytelling, and online communities where they can discuss form, share experiences, and celebrate wins together. These platforms keep audiences immersed in the sport, turning each race into part of a larger narrative that fans can follow and participate in, no matter where they are. The live atmosphere remains central to racing's charm. Tracks invest in creating full-day spectacles with fashion, food, and music, ensuring that even casual visitors feel part of something special. Online communities and forums extend this social experience, allowing fans worldwide to share insights, celebrate wins, and debate form.

Together, the psychology of betting and innovative engagement strategies explain why horse racing continues to captivate. It is a sport where tradition meets technology, where the thrill of the race intertwines with personal stories, and where fans, whether bettors or spectators, find themselves drawn into a world that is fast, unpredictable, and deeply human.



Thank you for reading; we have more to share and discover in this field.
Stay tuned, you do not want to miss it!



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