

# IFHA QUARTERLY

*The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities  
newsletter in partnership with the Japan Racing Association*



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## IFHA, ICHSWJ conferences scheduled

The 57th International Conference of Horseracing Authorities, organised by the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA), will be held in Paris, France, on the 2nd of October 2023. The first International Conference of Horseracing Authorities was organised and hosted by the Société d'Encouragement in Paris, France, on 9 October, 1967. Since 1994, the annual conference has been organised by the IFHA. Further details on the conference will be released in the coming months.

Additionally, the International Conference for the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Jockeys (ICHSWJ) is returning later this year, following a hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is slated for 28 September and will occur alongside the IFHA meetings in Paris.

# Darragh O’Loughlin reflects on his first year in racing

by Amanda Duckworth

Last June, Darragh O’Loughlin, a pharmacist by trade, was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB). One year into his new career, O’Loughlin is working to improve racing both locally and internationally. A highlight of this new chapter has been being named chair of the International Conference for the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Jockeys (ICHSWJ).

“My first year has been busy, challenging, and enjoyable,” said O’Loughlin. “As a newcomer to racing, I’m on a steep learning curve, but I’ve been privileged to have been able to meet and engage with so many expert practitioners who are passionate about what they do and have generously shared their expertise with a racing rookie.

“It is only since starting this job that I have come to understand the multi-layered complexity of racing and to appreciate the strenuous efforts made by everyone across all roles, whether up front or behind the scenes, to ensure racing operates professionally, fairly and with integrity.”

While O’Loughlin does not come from a racing background, he has extensive experience in terms of both medication and regulation. He served as the Secretary General of the Irish Pharmacy Union from 2013 until April 2022, spent two years as a board member of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), and spent six years as a council member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI).

“I’ve been a pharmacist for almost 30 years and had a very interesting and varied career in that



Darragh O’Loughlin is the CEO of the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board

profession,” said O’Loughlin. “However, I’d reached a point in my life where I wanted a change and to apply my skills and experience in another industry. So, when I heard about this position, I did my research, felt it was a good organisation in a fascinating industry, and decided to give it a go.

“From an economic and employment perspective, the pharmacy sector in Ireland is on a similar scale to horse racing, and, like horse racing, pharmacies are closely regulated, interact closely with local communities, and depend on favorable public perception and supportive government policy,” he continued. “My background includes extensive regulatory experience—on both sides of the table—as well as multi-stakeholder engagement and political/government relations, which are all very relevant to the work of the IHRB.”

The mission of the IHRB is to ensure that the reputation of Irish horse racing and confidence in the sport is protected by robust and transparent regulatory practices,

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## Darragh O'Loughlin cont.

and implemented with integrity, by a professional and progressive team.

“The IHRB was only established in 2018 and has not had an easy first few years, having endured more than its fair share of controversy,” said O'Loughlin. “My immediate priority is to put the IHRB on a firmer footing and to enhance people's faith in the organisation, both inside and outside racing, in order to structure and position us as a best-in-class regulator for the sport to safeguard the reputation of Irish racing long into the future.”

Not surprisingly, part of O'Loughlin's first year on the job has been focused on expanding his knowledge of horse racing. Appreciating the sport on both local and international levels has been a key part of his continuing education.

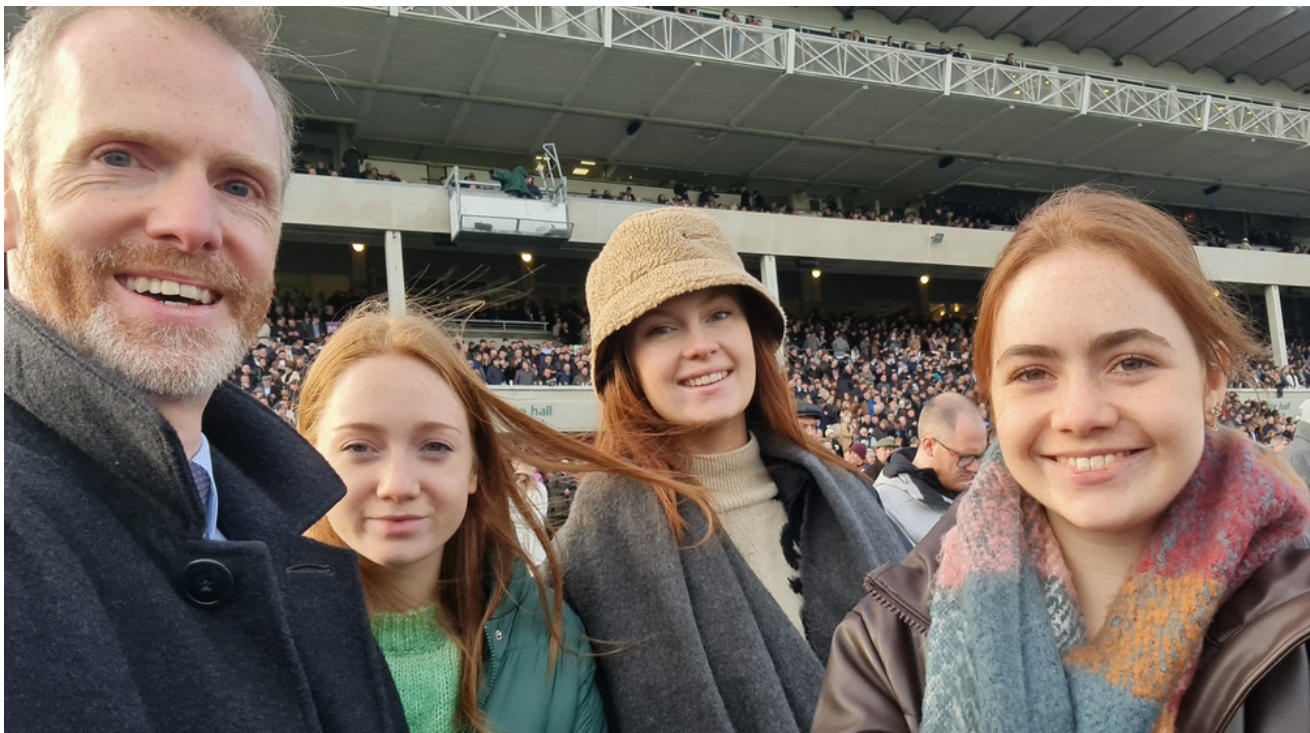
“I was only ever an occasional attendee at the

races, usually in my native Galway where the annual racing festival is intricately linked with the social life of the city,” said O'Loughlin. “I always enjoyed it as an opportunity to meet people I might not otherwise encounter and enjoy a day out where everyone is an expert, but nobody knows what's going to happen next. Since starting, I've been lucky to have attended marquee events like the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe and the Belmont Stakes, fabulous festivals such as Cheltenham and Punchestown, and smaller regional meetings around Ireland. Each is unique in its own way.”

Although O'Loughlin's experience with horse racing was fairly casual before last year, it was still part of his childhood. One such day at the races featured a winning wager, which led to a core memory.

“As a regulator, I can't have favorites now, but the most exciting day of racing I ever

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O'Loughlin with his daughters Eimear, Orfhlaith, and Aoife at the 2022 Leopardstown Christmas Festival



## Darragh O’Loughlin cont.

experienced was a point to point meeting my father sponsored at Lingstown in Tomhaggard (Google it!) nearly 40 years ago,” said O’Loughlin. “I won £5 on a £1 bet – untold riches for a 12-year-old in recessionary times. That was probably the last time I won money on a horse, so I gave up betting years ago.”

After becoming the CEO of the IHRB, O’Loughlin was also asked to join the Executive Council of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA). His past experiences have made him very aware of the importance of healthy international relations.

“This was one of the more surprising appointments that came with my new position,” said O’Loughlin. “I participated at a senior level in international organisations in my previous position, and I recognise the great benefit that



O’Loughlin while in London for the Longines World Racing Awards ceremony this January

comes from having an international perspective on things as well as a local focus. I truly value the learning and insight that I glean from interacting with international racing colleagues and the cordial relationships between our organisations and people.

“Racing is an international sport with top flight horses and trainers competing at a global level, so it is essential that we have effective collaboration and cooperation in the regulation of the sport and the maintenance of integrity and welfare standards.”

Additionally, O’Loughlin has been appointed chair of the ICHSWJ. Following a hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference is returning 28 September in Paris, France, to occur in conjunction with the 57th International Conference of Horseracing Authorities.

“The ICHSWJ steering group is obviously very pleased to have the opportunity to rekindle the conference, which had suffered because of the pandemic, and looks forward to hosting it alongside the IFHA meetings in Paris,” said O’Loughlin. “The steering group has ambitions to rebuild the conference into an essential meeting for racing medics and administrators with an interest in the subject.

“Members have given a lot of thought to the topics that will be covered and the format in which the information will be presented. Key themes this year will include concussion in sport, spinal injuries, and mental health and well-being of riders. We want to have a real impact on improving jockey health, safety and welfare and to develop best practices/standards and model rules to aid harmonization where it is appropriate or possible to do so.”



# JAPAN AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL 2023

TOTAL PRIZEMONEY  
€ 14 Million



## Japan Cup (G1)

26th Nov 2023 Tokyo 2,400m Turf 3yo & Up  
Total Value : JPY 1,085,000,000 / EUR 7,750,000  
NOMINATION : FREE OF CHARGE  
Close : 3rd Oct 2023

## Queen Elizabeth II Cup (G1)

12th Nov 2023 Kyoto 2,200m Turf 3yo & up Fillies & Mares  
Total Value : JPY 281,800,000 / EUR 2,013,000  
NOMINATION : FREE OF CHARGE Close : 19th Sep 2023

## Mile Championship (G1)

19th Nov 2023 Kyoto 1,600m Turf 3yo & up  
Total Value : JPY 388,800,000 / EUR 2,777,000  
NOMINATION : FREE OF CHARGE Close : 19th Sep 2023

## Champions Cup (G1)

3rd Dec 2023 Chukyo 1,800m Dirt 3yo & up  
Total Value : JPY 259,200,000 / EUR 1,851,000  
NOMINATION : FREE OF CHARGE Close : 3rd Oct 2023

Exchange rate : EUR1.00=JPY140 (As of May 2023)



Japan Racing Association  
<https://japanracing.jp/>



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## Tetsuya Kimura discusses Equinox, Japan's place on the international stage

Tetsuya Kimura has been in the spotlight this year as the trainer of Equinox, the highest rated racehorse in the world. He worked for a number of others before going out on his own in 2011, and his first Grade 1 score came in 2018. Being in the headlines is not new for Kimura, who also trains Geoglyph, the horse who defeated Equinox in the G1 2022 Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas). Kimura received a JRA Award for Best Trainer in both 2018 (Winning Average and Training Technique) and 2022 (Training Technique). Recently, he was kind enough to answer questions about Equinox and his place on the international stage.



Tetsuya Kimura is the trainer of Equinox

**Q: Equinox is currently the highest rated horse in the world. What does it mean to you for him to receive global recognition?**

A: It almost doesn't feel real that the horse I train is being evaluated on a global standard when we are working at one of the JRA training centers, but I am very honoured. In fact, since winning in Dubai, we have received many interviews and interest from the international media. His

performance and results in Dubai have given him a top rating and led to our current situation. It is a good surprise for us.

**Q: Equinox dominated the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1). What went into the decision to go to Dubai, and were you expecting that kind of performance?**

A: Last December, Equinox won the Arima Kinen (G1) in Japan. Considering the horse's future, we wanted to increase his value even more as a stallion. Historically, Japanese horses have performed quite well in Dubai. With such an aptitude for the track, the Dubai Sheema Classic in late March seemed very attractive.

It is not that I was not confident, but we were managing and preparing by hand every single day, with various concerns. It is hard for everything to go exactly according to plan. When it came to the overseas expedition, there were many things to worry about, including transportation and environmental changes. However, those in Dubai seemed to be a good fit for him.

I think it was also good that he could travel with Geoglyph from our stable. They were next to each other all the time and did not have to be alone. Also, the facilities in Dubai were excellent, and they provided an environment that made the horses feel as little stress as possible. I am very grateful for the support of Dubai Racing Club and Emirates Racing Authority.

**Q: Equinox had to go widest of all to win the Takarazuka Kinen (G1). Were there nervous moments for you during his run?**

A: For the Takarazuka Kinen, my biggest concern was his physical condition, and

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## Tetsuya Kimura cont.

whether he remained tired after the overseas expedition to Dubai. However, he was the top choice in the fan votes for the Takarazuka Kinen, and we had no choice but to run in the race. As for his condition, we felt we could just make it in time. It was also the rainy season in Japan, and I was concerned about whether the track conditions would be too soft on the day of the race.

**Q: How has Equinox come out of the Takarazuka Kinen?**

A: As you can see from the footage of the jockey's cam in the Takarazuka Kinen, the kickback was very hard. He stayed at Ritto Training Center for a week before returning to Miho. We confirmed that there was nothing wrong with him, and we decided to send him to the farm for a while for a little break. We hope that he will spend the summer there and come back refreshed.

**Q: For the Takarazuka Kinen, Equinox was transported to Ritto three weeks before the race. Why did you send him so early?**

A: I personally feel it is a bit difficult for horses at the Miho training center (located in eastern Japan) to show their best performance in races in west. For me, it is much more difficult to have them run at Hanshin Racecourse than in Tokyo. I feel this might be due to the long transportation time, which is 10 hours by van.

It is difficult to train a horse with consideration of the long transportation, especially when we expect a lot of attention from the racing media and fans. Especially this time, I didn't want to have an excuse for such a matter. I felt strongly that I had to respond to the expectations of the people around me to the fullest extent.



Equinox is currently the highest rated racehorse in the world

**Q: Equinox and jockey Christophe Lemaire seem to have an excellent partnership. How was the decision made to put them together?**

A: Since the retirement of legendary trainer Mr. Kazuo Fujisawa last year, I think there has actually been an increase in opportunities for Christophe to ride our horses. As a stable, we try to schedule races according to his schedule as much as possible. However, during the summer season Christophe usually rides in Hokkaido, and with Equinox's debut in Niigata, it was fortunate that the timing coincided with his riding there. And after Equinox's debut, his performance allowed Christophe himself to match him.

**Q: International interest is very high in Equinox. Can you share what races are under consideration for the rest of 2023 and why?**

A: As for the autumn schedule, our main target is the Japan Cup (G1) on November 26. It is a top

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## Tetsuya Kimura cont.

international race that he did not run in last year, and the owner has their own intentions. He was able to show such a good performance overseas in Dubai, obtaining a high rating and appealing to the world. After coming this far, his next career as a stallion is also important to consider.

### **Q: When did you realize that Equinox was an exceptionally gifted racehorse?**

A: The quality of his footwork was amazing when I first saw his run slowly up the hill after he arrived at Miho. At that time, I remember telling my staff and close media that a horse with this kind of flawless footwork could go on and reach the graded stakes or even Grade 1 level. The footwork of horses that come into our stable every year is what I draw from, and it's one of my evaluation indicators.

### **Q: What attributes do you think make Equinox so talented?**

A: Equinox is the type of horse who switches on and off very well and does not waste his energy on unnecessary things. He is very quiet in his stall, and his manners are very beautiful, but when it comes time to race, he is very aggressive and bursts with energy. I think he is blessed physically, but in addition to that, he also possesses a calmness of mind. I have the impression that he has directly inherited the best parts of his sire, Kitanasan Black.

We also managed his older brother, Weiss Meteor, who was the winner of a Grade 3. They are both out of the mare Chateau Blanche. However, the sire of Weiss Meteor was King Kamehameha, and a different type from Equinox. Now there is his sister, who is now 2-years-old, and her sire is Kizuna, who is also a different type. I feel that Chateau Blanche is a very good broodmare, who brings out the best in the stallions she visits.

### **Q: Do Equinox and Geoglyph share any similarities?**

A: Equinox and Geoglyph are completely different types. Geoglyph is the type that always has a good appetite, is energetic and lively in stable, takes leadership, and goes to training.

On the other hand, Equinox is quiet, and he cannot eat all the feed we give him. Early on in his career, he also had a weak constitution and back pain, until around the Satsuki Sho and Japanese Derby last year. I really wanted to train him harder, but if we did that, he would not handle it well.

### **Q: What would you like the international racing community to know most about Equinox?**

A: Although I have not directly felt it myself, I think that the international reputation of Japanese horses has been on a global level over a long period of time. The experience that Japanese horsemen have accumulated over decades of challenging races overseas is finally bearing fruit. I have heard various experiences from my seniors, and I think that the accumulation of these experiences has led us to where we are today. In that sense, I feel that Equinox did not just appear out of nowhere.



Equinox earned his rating of 129 in the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1)



# In pictures: the 30th anniversary celebration of the JRA New York office



Jim Gagliano, president and COO of the US Jockey Club, received a portrait of Secretariat's Belmont, made of Nishijin textile, from Masayuki Goto, president and CEO of the JRA



Drew Fleming, president and CEO of Breeders' Cup, presented Mr. Goto with special commemorative saddle cloths honouring Japan's victories at the Breeders' Cup World Championships



This June, the Japan Racing Association celebrated the 30th anniversary of its New York office





# LONGINES



The Longines  
Master Collection

# LONGINES

# WORLD RANKINGS

With a rating of 129, Japan's Equinox holds the top position in the latest edition of the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings for 2023. He began his season with a powerful victory the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) before returning to Japan to win the Takarazuka Kinen (G1).

Sitting second in the rankings is Mostahdaf, who dominated the Prince Of Wales's Stakes (G1) during Royal Ascot to earn a rating of 128. He previously had finished fourth behind Equinox in Dubai. The next edition of the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings will be published on Thursday, the 10th of August.

**LONGINES**  
**World's Best Racehorse Rankings**  
**Leading Horses**

for 3yos and upwards which raced between  
1st January 2023 - 9th July 2023

Rank	Horse	Rating	Trained
1	Equinox (JPN)	129	JPN
2	Mostahdaf (IRE)	128	GB
3	Golden Sixty (AUS)	125	HK
3	Lucky Sweynesse (NZ)	125	HK
3	Paddington (GB)	125	IRE
6	Titleholder (JPN)	124	JPN

**LONGINES**  
**World's Best Jockey**  
**Leading Jockeys**  
**\*\*\* as of 15th July 2023**

Jockey	Total Points
Ryan L. Moore	90
Zac Purton	86
James McDonald	76
Christophe Patrice Lemaire	68
Lanfranco Dettori	66

In July, Ryan Moore took a narrow lead over Zac Purton in the 2023 Longines World's Best Jockey competition. He currently has 90 points to Purton's 86 points.

Moore's qualifying victories so far include the Longines Hong Kong Sprint (Wellington), Tattersalls Gold Cup (Luxembourg), Betfred Derby (Auguste Rodin), St James's Palace Stakes (Paddington), and Coral-Eclipse (Paddington).

A three-time winner of the award, Moore took the Longines World's Best Jockey title in 2014, 2016, and 2021.