

IFHA QUARTERLY

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



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IFHA Chair elected President of the IHSC

Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges was unanimously elected President of the International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) at the organisation's General Assembly on 22 April 2022.

As the third President of the IHSC, Engelbrecht-Bresges succeeds FEI President Ingmar De Vos, who held the position from 2019 to 2022, and IFHA Chairman Emeritus Louis Romanet, who led the IHSC from 2017 to 2019. Engelbrecht-Bresges, who previously served as IHSC Vice President, will hold the office of President for a two-year term.

"I am very pleased to pass the Presidential baton to Winfried, and I know that the IHSC will benefit greatly from his capable leadership," De Vos said.

Lawson leads the way in Canada

by Amanda Duckworth

Thanks to his father's successful Thoroughbred racing and breeding outfit, Jim Lawson grew up loving Woodbine Racecourse, but he never imagined he would end up as the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian operation.

It is a position he took on an interim basis in 2015, but Lawson's love of racing and dedication to improving the sport on an international scale led him to stay on as CEO and also become an advocate for the importance of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA).

"I have just always loved horse racing," said Lawson. "I have been going to the races since I was 8-years-old. My dad was a small yet successful breeder and owner. As far as being involved in the business, I was honoured when I was asked to be on Woodbine Entertainment's Board of Directors in 2007, but I went on the board never contemplating that I would get involved in management or operations. I did become Chair in 2012, and I did that for three years. Then the board asked me to step in on an interim basis seven years ago as CEO, and I am still doing it."

"Originally I thought I would do it for a year while we found a new CEO, but I ended up staying. We have so much going on at Woodbine. We have so many initiatives, in terms of technology and real estate development, and we have a really great management team. I just feel loyal to them. I want to stay and work with them and see this through for awhile."

Given his background, the fact Lawson has taken on a sports-focused job is not a surprise. He grew up playing hockey in Ontario, and he received a scholarship to Brown University in



In 2015, Jim Lawson became the CEO of Woodbine in Canada

the United States. He was then drafted by the National Hockey League's Montreal Canadiens and played for two years before injury led to a new path.

"When I got hurt, I went on to law school and really stayed close to sports," he said. "I was a lawyer for 17 years, and I never dreamt I would be involved in the racetrack and horse racing business this way, but I agreed to join the board largely to help with the 700 acres that Woodbine sits on. Around the same time, given my involvement with sports, and the fact my dad had played in the Canadian Football League, I was asked to become an independent chair of the CFL, which I did for seven years. Whether it was football or hockey or horse racing, I am such a huge believer in teamwork and the principles that you learn in sports, with everyone playing their part and doing their role, whatever form it is."

Last year, Lawson's efforts were recognized when he was inducted into the Burlington Sports Hall of Fame as an athlete and builder due to his immense contributions to hockey, football, and horse racing.

His deep belief in working together for the

Lawson and Canada cont.

greater good also plays a key role in his involvement with the IFHA, where he serves on the Executive Council and as Finance Chair.

"I always hope to be a consensus builder," he said. "Take Canada's role in the IFHA. I think we bring things to the table. We are a small player relative to the United States, Hong Kong, Japan, and other countries, but everyone does things differently, and I think we can all learn from each other. That's such a big part of collaboration and teamwork. I am excited about serving in the IFHA because I really do think the importance of horse racing is going to depend on international marketing, acceptance, and wagering pools."



Lawson with the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, at the 2019 Queen's Plate

"The world, as we all know, is getting much more competitive, and that is especially true in North America with sports betting. We need to find a way to raise our game internationally to support horse racing. My interest is trying to ensure that we are all working together. If we do that, it's going to help the sport across the world. We can't just be strong in pockets."

Lawson's confidence in teamwork is one of the things that helped keep Canadian racing together while weathering the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. Woodbine had abbreviated race meets in both 2020 and 2021, but this April, it launched its first full season since 2019 with 133 scheduled racing dates.

"It feels great to be back," Lawson said. "The past few years, we really had uncertainty in Canada, unlike some of the U.S. tracks, about if or when we were going to have a season, which made planning very hard. It's hard to set a stakes schedule where one stakes depends on another if you don't know when you are going to start. This year we could plan, we knew we were going to get started on time, and we have a great program."

"I think the biggest change is that the Queen's Plate, which is our version of the Kentucky Derby, was historically run at the end of June. Because of the pandemic, we had to move it back to August because we didn't get an early start the last two years. What we found was that in August, more horses were prepared to go 1 ¼ miles than they were in June. We had large field sizes, and we had more horses participating in our Triple Crown. We decided to keep that change, and it is now the third week in August instead of the last weekend in June."

Lawson is still an active owner and breeder, which has also helped the Woodbine racing community embrace him as the CEO. Ideally, he likes to own between 15-20 horses, including his broodmares and racing prospects. Lawson's father, Mel, was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2010, and when he passed away a year later, his son decided to stay in the breeding and racing game. Lawson kept the name of his father's breeding operation, Jim Dandy Stable, and he races under the name Spruce Stable.

"I just decided at that time that I would keep it going," Lawson said. "I just always loved it, and I wanted to stay involved. I am on the Woodbine backstretch largely because of my own horses, but I am back there. I think it is so important, and I know every jurisdiction doesn't do it that way, but I think it is meaningful to the horse people that I am back

Lawson and Canada cont.

there. They know that as an owner, I not only understand the game, but I am feeling their pain because we all know how hard it is. I have a real intricate understanding of the horse racing business from their perspective."

Lawson has done an admirable job building on the reputation his father started. Most recently, his homebred Mrs. Barbara was named Canada's 2021 champion 2-year-old filly during the Sovereign Awards, and this year, he has high hopes that one of his colts, Stronger Together, will line up for the Queen's Plate. The 3-year-old's name is no accident.

"I named Stronger Together largely after the industry coming together during the pandemic," said Lawson. "We have had to work very closely with our horse racing community, saying 'We are trying, so help us.' There has been a lot of patience and understanding from the trainers and the owners. We were in a very desperate spot the past several years, but I said many times that I thought we would come out of this pandemic stronger, and I think that is proving true. We really have, and it's largely attributable to the fact that there is a greater understanding of what we are doing, why we are doing things, and what our goals are. It brought us together in a way that we probably hadn't been together before."

With such a mentality, it should come as no surprise that Lawson is determined to elevate Woodbine on the international racing stage, and he also wants to raise horse racing's stature within the sports world as a whole.

"I am a strong believer in the quality of the Canadian product," he said. "We probably have the best turf course in North America. From a Woodbine perspective, we want to continue to promote the international flavor to our turf racing, especially our Grade 1s. We have a hand in glove relationship with the U.S. Jockey Club and U.S. tracks. We have a fantastic relationship



©Anne Eberhardt Keogh
Lawson serves on the IFHA Executive Council and as Finance Chair

in particular with the New York Racing Association and Keeneland. We want to continue to foster those relationships and then internationally in places like Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, South Africa, and Europe."

On a more global scale, Lawson hopes horse racing jurisdictions around the world will embrace technology and a cooperative spirit to help improve the industry for everyone across the board.

"We have to find a way—through technology, through working together, and through doing all the right things for the sport internationally—for horse racing to compete in a very competitive sports and entertainment world," Lawson said. "We have to make sure we are in the game, and that is my interest. Therefore, an organization like the IFHA has to come together and figure out ways to optimize things from a commercial standpoint and from a rules, safety, and welfare standpoint.

"I know the word gets used a lot, but I have a real passion for the industry at a grass roots level, and I want to see it sustain itself and thrive for decades. I think the avenue which is going to enhance that greatly is international. You need a global organization like the IFHA to make that happen. I want to ensure that Canada plays its part, and that I work together internationally to make sure on behalf of the horse racing industry that we are doing this right."

Trainer Chris Waller discusses Nature Strip's Royal Ascot bid and Winx's impact

Trainer Chris Waller is no stranger to having one of the best horses in the world in his care. Although she never left Australia, Winx, who was crowned the co-2018 Longines World's Best Racehorse, was internationally beloved. This June, Waller is traveling to England with his top sprinter Nature Strip, who currently leads the 2022 rankings and is set to compete in the King's Stand Stakes (G1) during Royal Ascot. The chestnut gelding is regularly ridden by James McDonald, who is leading the 2022 Longines World's Best Jockey competition.



Rated at 124, Nature Strip is currently the co-highest rated horse in the world

Q: What led to the decision to send Nature Strip to Royal Ascot?

A: I guess it is a combination of a number of things. It's always good to be competing on a world stage. Every year we idolize the European racing, in particular Royal Ascot because it brings so many good horses together during a great week. So, from that aspect, we have the right horse to take. If he runs up to his best, he can be fighting at the finish with some of the best in the world.

Further to that, it is an experience for the owners of the horse, for myself, and for my team. Realistically, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be dealing with a horse like Nature Strip and secondly to have the opportunity to travel and hopefully run well. It's an experience we will never forget, and I think that's the beauty of sport.

There are so many highlights for fans and for those people right at the front of the line with ownership. With horse ownership, it's not just the people that actually own the horse. I think a lot of people feel like they own a horse, including my team as well as fans of Nature Strip, in terms of what they put into it and the satisfaction they get out of it.

Q: Nature Strip has been such a consistent top-level sprinter for years. What attributes of his do you think contribute to his sustained success?

A: Firstly, he's a phenomenal horse. He's a big, powerful boy, and he has a great will to win. Without that, you haven't got what it takes to win decent races. He has all of that. Further to that, I am very appreciative of my team. They allow me to be able to do exactly what I would like to do.

Nature Strip is a great example. He was a pretty fiery young boy when he first started his racing. He's been to a number of trainers, and each one has done a fantastic job to get the best out of him and make progress. I have been the lucky one toward the end where we have a mature horse. Even then, he's taken some harnessing. He has a great track rider that keeps him settled, and a great jockey in James McDonald, as well as the other jockeys who have ridden him recently, who have all done a fantastic job in working to make sure he is relaxed and conserving energy to be strong late.

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Chris Waller cont.

Q: Is Nature Strip fairly straightforward to train or does he have certain preferences?

A: He is actually quite straightforward to train now. He likes to race fresh. For a sprinter, I think that's a big help. In my opinion, it will be much easier bringing a sprinter to Europe rather than a stayer, where you have to give them prep runs and have to have them extremely fit. All we have to do with sprinters, in my opinion, is do the work, keep them fresh, and back off more than anything leading into a race, which is a lot different to the way we would train a staying, long distance horse. He's actually quite relaxed on the training tracks now, and he doesn't use nervous energy, so he should be a good travel. He will be a fun horse to take away.

Q: What will his routine be in England? Will there be any significant changes?

A: We will be keeping things very similar to what we do in Australia. Most of the work is done. We will probably be the first ones out on the track in the morning. He starts pretty early here in Australia. We will be keeping a very simple routine. We will use the same feed and the same routine before and after work. He's done quite a bit of training in a straight line up a hill, so that won't be too unusual for him. In Sydney, he's basically working on circular track, but when he does his pre-training, we always make sure we do it in a straight line. So, nothing too significant in the way of changes, really.

Q: Nature Strip finished 2021 as the co-highest rated sprinter in the world and is currently leading the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings for 2022. What does international recognition mean to you and your team?

A: It is showcasing what we do. From a personal perspective, myself being an Australian trainer who was born in New Zealand—and very similar

with his jockey, James McDonald, who lives in Sydney but like myself was born in New Zealand—we are very proud of our families and how we were raised. Our love for horses has been a big help toward our passion and toward our trade.

From the horse's perspective, traveling a horse is not easy, so you have to have them close to 100% to beat the best in the world. That's what we will be concentrating on because if Nature Strip is not at 100%, he won't beat the other horses, and he won't quite get the recognition he deserves. He's a great horse, and he's been doing it for a number of years now, which I think is a testament to the horse. Some horses might have one good year, or a good 18 months, but he's starting to put three, four good years together now and winning the biggest spring races in Australia consecutively, which is creating attention.

Q: Nature Strip isn't your first top rated horse. With a few years' distance, how do you feel now about your time and experience with Winx?

A: Winx just took everything to the limit. She just was the ultimate racehorse. She was unbeaten in her last 33 races of her career, and that's not easy to do. We had to prepare for 33 races, we had to plan for 33 races, and technically we had to plan for recoveries. We had to plan so many things logically. It was just the ultimate assignment not to get it wrong because she was expected to win each and every time, as Nature Strip will be when he runs at Royal Ascot, but we can only do so much. Then, ultimately, it's left up to the horse, but you don't really see that when you are right in the heat of the challenge.

So, with Winx, there was a lot of pressure, but the minute she retired, it was such a huge emotional relief. It took us a probably 6-12 months to get over it and unwind. There was a lot of emotion built up inside. Looking back on it now though, it was such a great experience in

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Chris Waller cont.

the way she raised our profiles and in the recognition she got. It's enabled me to deal with these types of situations a lot better. During Winx's career, I often related the pressure to 'It's certainly not as bad as a soldier going to war, imagine what they go through, so training a really good horse might seem a big deal, but in the scheme of things, it's not.' It was just a great experience and helped us mature as people.

Q: Why do you think international competition is important for horse racing in general?

A: Racing is such a huge sport. It is a reunion of all nationalities, all ages of life, all religions. People come together and enjoy the competition. They enjoy the companionship with the horses, and they have the utmost respect for these amazing athletes.

From the other side of things, it is a great get together of people. People get to have a great day out. Some people will barely even know what horses are racing, but it's a great reason for people to come together and enjoy life. Especially post-Covid, we have all realized that life is short, and there are many challenges along the way.

We have to get out there and enjoy and respect great occasions.

Then with international competition, racing broadcasts are so well done these days. We do have the telly on at night watching the feature races in Europe or America. I guess occasionally, the Northern Hemisphere does it with the Southern Hemisphere racing as well. We read about the great horses, trainers, jockeys, and identities in the sport. It's great to be able to rub shoulders with them and compete against them.

Q: Following Royal Ascot, what are the tentative plans for Nature Strip?

A: He needs to come back to Australia. We want to try and defend his title in The Everest, which is a AU\$15 million race. Hopefully we can defend his title there. He has won three T J Smith Stakes (G1) in Sydney, which is in the autumn. I think it would be icing on the cake if he could win a fourth, but there is no pressure on the horse. It's one run at a time when they get to this stage of their career. We will assess him carefully, and we will continue to enjoy and respect this great horse.



Chris Waller (second from right) and Team Winx were celebrated during the 2018 Longines World's Best Racehorse Ceremony in London



2022 JAPAN GROUP 1 RACES

Date	Race	Racecourse	Distance	Purse	Nomination Close
26 Jun	Takarazuka Kinen	Hanshin Turf	2200m 11f	¥ 432,000,000 € 3,200,000	3 May
2 Oct	Sprinters Stakes	Nakayama Turf	1200m 6f	¥ 368,200,000 € 2,727,400	9 Aug
30 Oct	Tenno Sho (Autumn)	Tokyo Turf	2000m 10f	¥ 432,000,000 € 3,200,000	6 Sep
13 Nov	Queen Elizabeth II Cup	Hanshin Turf	2200m 11f	¥ 281,800,000 € 2,087,400	20 Sep
20 Nov	Mile Championship	Hanshin Turf	1600m 8f	¥ 388,800,000 € 2,880,000	20 Sep
27 Nov	Japan Cup	Tokyo Turf	2400m 12f	¥ 864,000,000 € 6,400,000	4 Oct
4 Dec	Champions Cup	Chukyo Dirt	1800m 9f	¥ 259,200,000 € 1,920,000	4 Oct

The currency exchange rates used above is 1€=135JPY. Approx. figures per exchange rates as at Apr.2022.
Nomination Fee: Free of Charge.



Tokyo's new international stable

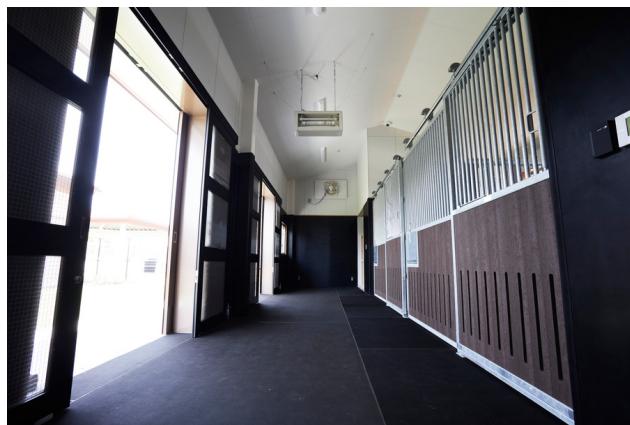
This autumn, a new international stable will open within the track area at Tokyo Racecourse in an effort to ease travel for foreign runners arriving in Japan to compete. For all races at the track, horses will be able to enter the stable immediately after landing at the airport and can remain there for the duration of their trip, which will make the quarantine process more streamlined.

"Before, foreign horses first had to stay for seven days at Shiroi Quarantine Facility in Chiba Prefecture after arriving to Narita Airport and then be transported to Tokyo Racecourse for races like the Japan Cup and Yasuda Kinen," said Masahiro Usuda, the Director for Racing and International Affairs. "We understand this old protocol created some bottleneck for some horses traveling from abroad."

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The new stable can accommodate a maximum of 12 horses



The quarantine facilities at Tokyo Racecourse open later this year



The new international stable at Tokyo Racecourse was designed to make travel and quarantine easier for international competitors

International stable cont.

"Now, the new international stable will allow them to enter directly from the airport when racing at Tokyo Racecourse. We trust this new arrangement will make traveling to Japan easier, and we hope to invite top horses from all over the world for this year's Japan Cup in association with Longines (G1), which will offer approximately \$7 million in total prize money."

Another perk is that horses can begin training at the racetrack without interruption while still under quarantine protocols. The new international stable features six stables with dedicated paddocks and a training track around the facility's perimeter.



The Club House provides facilities for staff traveling to Japan

At capacity, the new area can hold 12 horses, including those who accompany runners. Also, veterinarian care and support will be available. The area is home to the Club House, where grooms and connections will be able to shower, eat, and take breaks. Depending on availability and a horse's progress through the quarantine process, there are three different training courses that can be used, including both dirt and turf options.

"The JRA is looking forward to welcoming participants from all over the world to Tokyo's international races, along with providing full support in the form of transportation, accommodation, and a bonus system for top class horses," said Usuda.



Care and support from veterinarians is available



A training track surrounds the new international stable at Tokyo Racecourse



LONGINES



The Longines
Master Collection

LONGINES



WORLD RANKINGS

Following his easy victory in the Furphy T J Smith Stakes (G1), Nature Strip raised his rating and has joined Life Is Good at the top of the current Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings for 2022. Both runners are rated at 124.

Life Is Good earned his rating by winning the Pegasus World Cup Invitational Stakes presented by 1/ST BET (G1) in January over 2021 Longines World's Best Racehorse Knicks Go.

The next edition of the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings will be published on Thursday 9th June.

LONGINES
World's Best Jockey
Leading Jockeys
*** as of 5 June 2022

Jockey	Total Points
James McDonald	82
Vincent Ho	34
Nash Rawiller	32
Hugh Bowman	30
William T. Buick	28

LONGINES
World's Best Racehorse Rankings
Leading Horses

for 3yos and upwards which raced between
1st January 2022 - 8th May 2022

Rank	Horse	Rating	Trained
1	Life Is Good (USA)	124	USA
1	Nature Strip (AUS)	124	AUS
3	Speaker's Corner (USA)	123	USA
4	Golden Sixty (AUS)	122	HK
5	Coroebus (IRE)	121	GB
5	Country Grammer (USA)	121	USA
5	Golden Pal (USA)	121	USA
5	Jackie's Warrior (USA)	121	USA
5	Titleholder (JPN)	121	JPN

About halfway through the year, James McDonald has taken a significant lead in the 2022 Longines World's Best Jockey competition.

McDonald, who finished third in last year's competition, currently has 82 points. His qualifying five victories thus far have come in the Black Caviar Lightning Stakes (Home Affairs), TAB Chipping Norton Stakes (Verry Elleegant), Sky Racing Active Rosehill Guineas (Anamoe), Furphy T J Smith Stakes (Nature Strip), and Schweppes All Aged Stakes (Cascadian).

Vincent Ho is second with 34 points, while Nash Rawiller is in third with 32 points.