

Race History

In 1975 the British monarch Queen Elizabeth II arrived in Hong Kong for a state visit. To mark the event, on 5 May, the Hong Kong Jockey Club staged the inaugural running of the Queen Elizabeth II Cup, with a prize fund of HK\$50,000. Her Majesty was in attendance at Happy Valley and presented the winning trophy to Mr. and Mrs. Barma, whose horse Nazakat had prevailed in the 1575m sand track handicap under Malaysian rider A. K. Cheam for trainer Cheung Hok-man.

The race continued as a handicap for 17 years, its distance switching between 1400m, a mile, 1800m, and once at 2000m in April 1986. The race, which moved to Sha Tin in 1979, was in fact staged twice in 1986, first in April and then in October when the Queen was once again in attendance, that time to see Forever Gold win a 1600m renewal.

In April 1992 the contest was raised to HKG2 level and River Verdon won that mile edition. Three years later the race was opened up to international competition, as a local G1 contest. The UAE trainer Hilal Ibrahim sent Red Bishop to carry off the then 2200m race under Mick Kinane. That win presaged the following year's victory of Overbury for the newly-formed Godolphin as trainer Saeed bin Suroor and jockey Frankie Dettori teamed up to clinch an early international conquest for Sheikh Mohammed's operation. In 1997 the QEII Cup's distance of 2000m was firmly established and a young Douglas Whyte partnered South Africa's London News to success. The first Hong Kong victory of the international era came one year later when Oriental Express triumphed.

The race attained international G2 status in 1999 before it became Hong Kong's fourth international G1 race in 2001, the year in which the German raider Silvano took the winner's share of the HK\$10 million purse under Andreas Suborics. That purse money leapt to HK\$14 million in 2002 when the race was included in the now defunct World Racing Championships series.

Hong Kong runners have won seven of the past 10 editions of the QEII Cup. Five of those home winners have claimed that same season's Horse of the Year title (2011 Ambitious Dragon; 2013 Military Attack; 2014 Designs On Rome; 2016 Werther & 2020 Exultant). The three QEII Cup overseas winners of the past decade all hail from Japan, namely Rulership (2012), Neorealism (2017) and Win Bright (2019).

Insurance brand FWD is the title sponsor of the QEII Cup and has been since 2019. The race's total prize money increased to HK\$25 million in 2020, making it the joint second-richest race on the Hong Kong racing calendar.

Record Dividends

Bet Type	Dividend (HK\$)	Year	Horse (s)	Odds
Win	\$588.00	2004	River Dancer	58
Place	\$154.00	2002	Indigenous (3rd)	99
Quinella	\$3,208.50	2008	Archipenko (1st)	14
			Balius (2nd)	84
Quinella Place	\$903.50	2004	River Dancer (1st)	58
			Scott's View (3rd)	10
Tierce	\$67,040.00	1993	Muhim (1st)	37
			Victory And Glory (2nd)	13
			Happy Guy (3rd)	16
Trio	\$6,925.00	2004	River Dancer (1st)	58
			Elegant Fashion (2nd)	4.9
			Scott's View (3rd)	10
First 4	\$6,659.00	2008	Archipenko (1st)	14
			Balius (2nd)	84
			Viva Pataca (3rd)	2.1F
			Packing Winner (4th)	83
Quartet	\$149,682.00	2016	Werther (1st)	5.5
			Military Attack (2nd)	71
			Blazing Speed (3rd)	25
			Lovely Day (4th)	2.9F