

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Calandagan crowned « World's best racehorse »

Holder of the world record over the classic 2 400 metres distance

France at the pinnacle of world horse racing

For the first time since 2019, the best horse in the world is French!

LONGINES WORLD'S
BEST RACEHORSE AWARDLONGINES WORLD'S
BEST HORSE RACE AWARD

On Tuesday, 20 January in London, Calandagan was officially named the world's best racehorse during the 2026 Longines World's Best Racehorse Awards ceremony that recognises the highest rated horse in the world. The award is the equivalent of the "Ballon d'Or", the annual football award that honours the player deemed to have performed the best over the previous season.

This crowning achievement, awarded by the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities, is a rare and prestigious honour. It caps an outstanding 2025 season and writes Calandagan's name into the history books of international horse racing.



The dream team that stands behind this «Made In Chantilly» champion, a standard-bearer of French excellence!



Calandagan showcases the strength of France's thoroughbred racing industry, a sector present in every French department, employing 40,000 people, generating €2.3 billion in annual economic impact and promoting French expertise worldwide.

Calandagan is supported by a highly skilled team. In the race, he is partnered by French jockey Mickaël Barzalona, one of the leading riders in the world! He runs in the historic silks of **The Aga Kahn Studs, leading owner in France by number of victories**, and also the breeder of this legendary champion.

He is trained by **Francis Henri-Graffard, France's leading trainer**, who established a new record for Group 1 victories in 2025, the highest level of competition in horse racing. He is also the trainer of Daryz, another champion of the 2025 season, who won the 2025 Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in the colours of The Aga Khan Studs.

Since joining Francis-Henri Graffard's yard, Calandagan has trained every morning at Chantilly, Europe's largest training centre, which spans 1,500 hectares and is famous for its wide forest-lined avenues. Some 2,600 horses are trained here by 100 trainers from 20 different nationalities.

A true academy of champions, **the France Galop managed Chantilly training centre is recognised worldwide as a premier training facility for racehorses.**

Winner of the Japan Cup and holder of the world record over the classic 2,400 distance !

To reach the top of the global rankings, Calandagan produced a series of exceptional performances against some of the world's best racehorses. In France, he lifted the 2025 Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud, an important race that leads to the major events at the end of the season.

Abroad, he triumphed in England, the United Arab Emirates, and, last November, in Japan, where he achieved the **remarkable feat of winning the Japan Cup**, one of the world's most prestigious races, which had not been won by a French horse in 38 years!

In addition, Calandagan entered the history books with two major records:

- He recorded the fast time in the Japan Cup (2'20"3),
- He set a new world record over the internationally renowned classic 2,400 metres distance on turf.

And the story continues in 2026

Calandagan's story is far from over. His team has already announced that he will continue his career in **2026**, with the aim to build on his extraordinary achievements.

More than just a racehorse, Calandagan has become a symbol of French horseracing, a champion showcasing the skill, dedication and passion of the French racing industry worldwide.

Guillaume de Saint-Seine, President de France Galop, said : « *Calandagan demonstrates the quality, strength and ability of the French racing industry to produce champions who make history. Being named the world's best racehorse is a source of immense pride for everyone involved and a powerful statement of the ambition we carry for the future of French racing. Through his success, the entire French horseracing industry has established itself at the highest level on the international stage, thanks to the talent, dedication and commitment of all those who drive it forward. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to his owner and breeder, The Aga Khan Studs, for the unwavering support of Her Highness Princess Zahra Aga Khan, to his trainer Francis-Henri Graffard and his teams, who work tirelessly every day in Chantilly with this exceptional champion, as well as to his jockey Mickaël Barzalona.* »

Video:

To see Calandagan during the highlights of his season, click [HERE](#).

More about France Galop



France Galop is an association with a public service mission. It organises and regulates horse racing in France with the aim of improving the racehorse breed of both, flat horses and jump horses, by promoting the breeding industry, ownership and training of racehorses. It operates under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Budget and Interior.

Its main mission is to: organise French racing's fixture list, ensure the smooth running of racing, lead the fight against doping, help to ensure the welfare of racehorses, run the operations of the five most important racecourses (Auteuil, Chantilly, Deauville, ParisLongchamp and Saint-Cloud) and organise major events at these venues, such as the Prix de Diane Longines, the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris and the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, as well as the "Horses in the City" event at Place de la Concorde.