



The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

(<http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/>)

Articles in NEWSLETTER, Vol.22, No.1 (April, 2012)

(Prepared by Ryuichi Suzuki)

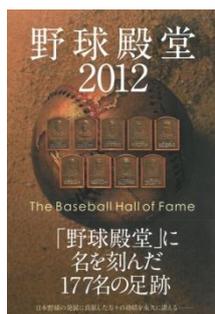
p.1 *Baseball Hall of Fame 2012* published

Shinichi Hirose, President

For the first time in three years, the new edition of *Baseball Hall of Fame* has come out with its color and design of the cover changed from those of the 2009 edition. The nine Hall of Famers from 2010 to 2012 now find their proper places in the new book: Osamu Higashio, Shinichi Eto, Masayuki Furuta (2010); Hiromitsu Ochiai, Mutsuo Minagawa (2011); Manabu Kitabeppu, Tsunemi Tsuda, Kiro Osafune, and Osamu Ohmoto (2012). The membership of the BHF now totals 177. Great emphasis has been put to make the contents up-to-date and more readable and informative than before, e.g., managerial record for 2009 of the 1989 Hall of Famer Nomura, the changes of the selection rules and the column on the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

A notable change is the addition of a chronological history of baseball, spanning baseball on both sides of the Pacific, which will help the reader have a glimpse of the whole history of Japanese and American baseball. This chronology and the bios of the 177 Hall of Famers will also make the reader understand how those Hall of Famers have had a close connection with every epoch-making events in baseball history. It can safely be said that *Baseball Hall of Fame 2012* is a biographical history of baseball in Japan.

Contents of *Baseball Hall of Fame 2012*



Baseball Hall of Fame
Hall of Famers, 1959 ~ 2012
Plaques
Rules of Election and their changes
Monuments to the war dead
Chronological history of baseball
Columns

p.2 A Topics from Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

(February through April, 2012)

- 1) March 10 IBAF President Riccardo Fraccari (right in photo) visited with IBAF Vice President Tawa (center in photo) and was greeted by BHF President Hirose (left in photo). He attended the charity game played at Tokyo Dome which was meant as a fundraiser for the victims of the East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11, 2011.



- 2) March 30 & 31 Master Isokazu Kubota, Mizuno Technics, demonstrated his bat making two times each day and talked on his technical skill. It was his third demonstration to celebrate the opening of annual baseball season.



- 3) March 1 to June 17 “Glorious History of the SoftBank Hawks”

An exhibition at the Oh Sadaharu Museum inside the Fukuoka Yahoo! Japan



Dome to trace their history back to the Daiei and Nankai Hawks.

BHFM has submitted 14 artifacts, e.g., uniforms worn by Tadashi Sugiura, Hiromitsu Kadota, and Nobuhiko Matsunaka, a bat used by Kadota, a glove worn by Kenichi Wakatabe, and spikes worn by Makoto Sasaki.

- 4) April 6 to July 22 “Tigers Warriors in 1992” and “Sayonara.or Walkoff games in the Heisei Era”
Concurrent two exhibitions at the Museum of Hanshin Koshien Stadium.



The 1992 season was memorable for the current manager Yutaka Wada, for as team captain he led the Tigers almost to a victory in that year.

Exhibits from BHFM are 18 artifacts and items including a Uniform worn by Wada, gloves used by Toshiro Yufune and Koji Noda, bats used by Wada, Tsuyoshi Shinjo, and Tsutomu Kameyama, and a set of 1992 Calbee baseball cards.

B. Sustaining members for 2012 Invited



Since its inauguration in 1959 as a museum specializing in baseball, the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum has been dedicated to its functions of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting materials on baseball and its related sports. We now have about 30,000 artifacts and photographs, and some 50,000 books and magazines, and we have more than 150,000 visitors per year to the baseball museum and the baseball library. We have honored baseball greats by inducting them into the Hall of Fame through annual selections by the Players Selection Committee and the Special Selection Committee.

Sustaining members are expected to endorse and support the above projects by paying the membership fees.

Privilege of Sustaining Member

Sustaining members are entitled to receive the following:

- 1) Quarterly Newsletter
- 2) Complimentary ticket (i.e., member's card) valid throughout the year. This ticket is also valid for the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y.
- 3) 5 courtesy tickets for non-members (Individual membership)
20 courtesy tickets for non-members (Corporation membership)
- 4) Occasional News Release
- 5) 10% reduction to the items on sale at the baseball museum
- 6) *The Baseball Hall of Fame 2012* (For new members only. Junior members excepted)
- 7) Original pinned badge (For new members only)

There are three kinds of sustaining members. The yearly membership is valid from April to March.

- 1) Individual membership (Membership fee is 10,000 yen)
Overseas membership fee is 100 dollars)
- 2) Corporation membership (Membership fee is 100,000 yen)
Overseas membership is 1,000 dollars)
- 3) Junior Membership (Primary and junior high school students.
Membership fee is ¥2,000)

*The membership fee for new individual sustaining members varies according to the month when they join.

From April to September: 10,000 yen
October to December: 5,000 yen
January to March 2,000 yen

Applicants are requested to fill in the application form available in the Baseball Museum. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the Management at 03-3811-3600.

Half a century with my husband

Mrs. Mitsuko Aota

Widow of the late Noboru Aota, 2009 Hall of Famer



My husband was born on November 22, 1924, as the youngest of eight children of a blacksmith in Miki, Hyogo Prefecture. The bright and brisk boy was always rushing around in the hills and fields and used to win on the sports day by a great margin. At a children's sumo bout in the precincts of a nearby shrine, he would often throw down a bigger opponent one after another. He was a flash of hope for a large family who must have find it hard to make a living in the recession of 1920's. At 14, he lost his mother, and at 17 did his father. So he had to live with his elder sister to attend middle school in Takigawa, where he had a hard training with Takehiko Bessho (1979 Hall of Famer), a strong-armed pitcher two years senior to him. When the Koshien Tournament was suspended due to the war, he quit school and joined the Tokyo Giants. Two years later, he volunteered to be enlisted to the Air Force and underwent hard training. He was ready to die for the country and waited for an order of mission. When it came at last, the war ended abruptly just before the day he was ordered to make a sortie. The complex feelings he had in those days were clearly written in a book published in 1998, "A Life of a Bucking Bronco; A Posthumous Autobiography."

Pro baseball nowadays is being played in well-equipped facilities and players are playing mostly in domed stadiums with beautiful grass. The conditions soon after the war were just the opposite. Traveling had to done in coaches pulled by a steam locomotive and in trucks bumping along a rough road. Sweaty and suntanned players played under the glaring sun in a dusty ground, but star players tried their best to hit home runs. How they were impressive and encouraging to the hungry fans in those days! He did not bring home whatever trouble he had in baseball. After he tasted a delicious meal on his travels, he went to buy the foodstuff and prepared the meal all for himself. It gave him a great joy to hear his family admire his masterpieces. He was not satisfied with his family and invited his brothers, sisters, friends, and relatives, and further, friends of my children to his pleasant dinner. Because he lost his parents early and experienced a lonely life in the army where he was prepared to die at any moment, a happy family circle and friendship with acquaintances were more important to him than anything else.

In 1984, when my sixth daughter was doing in show business, my husband was invited through her to appear in a TV programs like "a parent-child cooking" and "traveling," though I myself refrained, on principle, from accompanying him. Little by little, his austere impression changed and I did not know why, but to the great joy of his children, he was elected the Best Father in 1987 on top of his many awards in baseball world.

Immediately after the war, I got married with him at 16 without knowing anything about baseball, nor about himself. Since then fifty years have passed and he has been dead for fifteen years. I really feel that one of my daughters who died as young as at 11 and my husband who died at 72 are now living in my mind and protecting me. I am blessed with my children, grandchildren, and even grand grandchildren. One of my grandchildren is enjoying playing little league baseball. It is a great joy and relief for me to know that, with his induction to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2009, he will surely continue to be known not only to his family but to those baseball fans who are not contemporary with him. I was also pleased that Kiyoshi Nakahata, who has become manager of the Yokohama DeNA BayStars and formerly played for the Yomiuri Giants, paid his homage, though being busy,

to my husband's grave.

In closing, I would like to thank many people who invariably believe in and love my husband and wish for further development of baseball in Japan.

p.4 Rara Avis (78) Changes of rules of bats and the longest regular bat

Takahiro Sekiguchi,, co-curator

2010 official rules of MLB have stipulated that the bat shall be not more than 2.61 inches in diameter at the thickest part. This is the first change of the rule of the bat in diameter in 115 years in that the bat diameter was 2 3/4 inches according to the rule in 1895. In Japan the new rule has been adopted since the 2012 season after a period of adjustment. How comes it that the diameter has



been changed while the length unchanged since 1869?

First let's trace the changes of rules of bats according to *Total Baseball*, 3rd edition.

1858 The bat must be round and must not exceed two and half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made of wood and may be of any length to suit the striker.

1868 The bat shall not exceed forty inches in length.

1869 The bat shall not exceed forty-two inches in length.

1874 The bat must be made wholly of wood.

1885 The bat must be round except that a portion of the surface on one side may be flat.

1893 The bat must be round.

1895 The bat cannot exceed 2 3/4 inches in diameter.

Nowadays the most popular bats among professional baseball players are made of maple. Maple bats were first introduced to MLB around 1998, and their use was triggered when Barry Bonds hit 73 home runs with his maple bat. 65 percent of Louisville Sluggers sent to major leaguers were maple (ESPN, August 2008). Maple is a very dense timber with a greater surface hardness and less prone to flake than ash. Maple bats, however, tend to break more easily. Low-density models, essentially the lighter bats (whether they are ash or maple), tend to shatter more often, putting pitchers, infielders, base coaches, umpires and fans in harm's way. Recently players are apt to use them seeking for bat speed, so that presumably as one of the measures for safety, the rule has been changed.

Master Isokazu Kubota's talk at last year's bat making demonstration has given me another clue to the change to a small-barrel bat. When two bats with the same weight (and length) are compared, the smaller-barrel bat is higher in density so that it is safer than the other.

The photo shows the longest regulation bat (42 inches in length and 2.61 inches in diameter) lined with an ordinary bat modeled on Ichiro's (85 cm). Even the longest we have at our Baseball Museum is a 92.5 cm-long, so-called the "laundry pole" bat used by Fumio Fujimura (1974 Hall of Famer). The longest regulation bat was especially made (preparing lumber much longer than usual) by Master Kubota of Mizuno Technics and donated to our Baseball Museum. It is now on display at the Bat Corner of our Event Hall.

75% Hurdle to Eligibility

Fumio Kobayashi

Sustaining member, former president of BHF

From 2003 until 2008, I was on loan to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum from Tokyo Dome as its president. It was somewhat bewildering to be transferred from a typical service business to a cultural institution. One of the important missions of the BHF, which was opened to the public in 1959, is to honor those baseball greats who have made outstanding contributions to the development of baseball in Japan with their induction to the Baseball Hall of Fame through election by the Special and Players Selection Committees.

The SSC consists of 14 active and retired pro baseball officials, active amateur baseball officials, and learned persons versed in baseball, while the PSC (before the Expert Division was added) consisted of about 300 active and retired baseball writers and reporters with 15 years or more of their career. The inevitable contact with them and people concerned made me feel that I was in a strange, improper world. But it was a great relief and excitement for me to meet Futoshi Nakanishi and Kazuhisa Inao as electors in the SSC, for in my primary school days, I was an ardent fan of the Nishitetsu Lions, particularly the Phenom Nakanishi and the Iron-Arm Inao.

Looking back the history of the PSC which started with 120 electors. I cannot help feeling once again how difficult it is to be inducted to the BHF. Though the membership of the PSC increased to about 300, the eligibility has been unchanged at 75 % of all the ballots vote d in. 77 players have succeeded in gaining the required votes in all of the 52 elections since 1960, but only Victor Starffin (1960) and Sadaharu Oh (1994) were selected in the first year of their eligibility, followed by five who were selected in the second year of theirs: Kichiro Shimaoka (1991), Tatsuro Hirooka (1992), Kazuhisa Inao (1993), Kazuhiro Yamauchi (2002), and Tsutomu Wakamatsu (2009). Even Shigeo Nagashima, “Mr. Giants,” took three years to be elected in 1988. Tetsuhara Kawakami,” God of Batting,” was also selected in his third year of election in 1965, but was revived by the second voting which is no longer existent.

The percentage obtained by successful candidates against the total poll.

		Year	Valid total poll	His poll	Percentage
1.	Victor Starffin	1960	111	108	97.3
2.	Osamu Mihara	1983	208	200	96.2
3.	Kazuhisa Inao	1993	212	201	94.8
4.	Tsutomu Wakamatsu	2009	304	288	94.7
5.	Sadaharu Oh	1994	221	206	93.2
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77.	Katsuo Osugi	1997	228	171	75.0

Starffin's percentage (97.3) is marvelous, and so is Wakamatsu's 94.7, for he had to obtain votes from as many as 304 poll. All the people concerned must have soothed their breast when Katsuo Osugi barely succeeded obtaining votes of just 75%. It can only be described dramatic that Motoji Fujita (1996) failed to be elected in 1995 by the margin of a single vote. More dramatic was the case of Hiromitsu Ochiai (2011), for he failed successively in 2009 and 2010 by the margin of a single vote. It was quite natural that recounting was done on the spot several times. It is quite difficult to obtain necessary votes of 75% or more, so it is quite amazing to see some candidates obtaining 90% or more of votes. On the other hand, there have been no Hall of Famers yet who got all the valid total poll, which will show the high standard of selection the electors have had. Whenever the New Year comes round, I find myself looking for candidates who will cross the 75% hurdle or who will poll the unprecedented 100% votes.

p.6 Library Note

Undokai Magazine and Nippon Undo Kyokai (Athletic Association)

Taku Chinone, co-librarian



Undokai (Athletic World) was first published in 1920 by Undokai Co. (Bentencho, Ushigome-ku, Tokyo). Its editor and publisher was Chujun Tobita (1960 HF) and its size was 18 cm by 12 cm, changing to 21 cm by 15 cm in 1922. The mission statement says, "Sport should be given more importance than usually the case with it.The object of this magazine is to prepare for its age and guide it to a correct end by asking sports experts to write interesting articles and criticism for the readers." As is stated, the magazine covers various sports: baseball, athletics, tennis, boating, and so on.

The April issue of 1921 saw a prospectus for founding Nihon Undou Kyokai, the first professional baseball Club in Japan, which declares, "It was founded to become a vanguard and compass of sports world in Japan." It was located in Shibaura and had a playground (20,000 square meters), a tennis court, a clubhouse with bathroom and recreation room. It was a place to enjoy sport and promote mutual friendship. With this issue, the address of the magazine changed to Minamihamamachi, Shiba-ku, where NUK was located. The details are unknown, but it may safely be surmised that the magazine and NUK were closely related, in that not only before-mentioned Tobita but such contributors as Kiyoshi Oshikawa (1959 HF), Shin Hashido (1959 HF), Atsushi Kohno (1960 HF) and Takeji Nakano (1972 HF) were investors and employees of NUK when it was founded.



When the Great Kanto Earthquake hit Tokyo on September 1, 1923, the playground was turned to a yard for goods for the victims. The March issue of 1924 saw a dissolution notice of NUK. With the April issue, the address of the magazine moved to Shimo-miyabicho, Ushigome-ku and the magazine continued until the July issue of 1931. There are no ifs in history, but what have become of the magazine and NUK if the GKE had not occurred?

Last but not the least, all the issues of *Undokai* are available at our Baseball Library.

p.7 A Current Exhibition, “Spikes Worn by Great Players”
 Through Sunday, June 3, 2012
 At Exhibition Hall of the BHF



This is the first exhibition focusing on a display of spikes in the long history of our Baseball Museum. Spikes are a basic implement to support and enhance the performance of baseball players. In the current exhibition, about 80 present and former professional players, Japanese and American including Victor Starffin and successive leaders in stolen bases headed by Yutaka Fukumoto, are represented by their cherished spikes.

Under the auspices of Asics, Co., three pairs of spikes (2001, 2003, and 2012) worn by Ichiro Suzuki are displayed as a special attraction. Other players whose spikes may be viewed include Tadashi Wakabayashi, Sachio Kiyugasa, Koji Akiyama, Norihiro Akahoshi, Daisuke Matsuzaka, Yu Darvish, Cecil Fielder and Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz.

It is hoped that visitors to the Museum will have a good view of the displays and appreciate the changes in material, design, and (mostly reduction of) weight of the spiked shoes.

(photo) Spikes worn by Ichiro Suzuki during the 2012 MLB opening series at Tokyo Dome

B News from the Baseball Museum

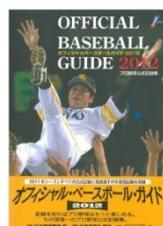
- 1) Changes in Officers
- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| New Director | Kojiro Shiraishi, Owner of the Yomiuri Giants |
| Councilor | Keiichiro Yotsufuji, Executive Managing Director of the Hanshin Tigers |
| Retiring Director | Tsunekaze Momoi |
| Councilor | Shoji Numasawa |

- 2) On Sale ① Baseball Hall of Fame 2012 Edited by BHF; Published by Baseball Magazine, Co.



A4, 225 pp., Published on March 15, 2012
 Please refer to page 1 for its contents.
 ¥2,500 (Tax included)
 Available by mail, ¥2,600 including mailing charges

- ② Official Baseball Guide 2012 Edited by NPB Published annually since 1963.



It contains all the record from 2011 regular season, All-Star Series, and the Japan Series
 ¥2,900 (Tax included)
 Available by mail, ¥3,000 including mailing charges

③ Green Wrist Band ¥500 (tax included)



A wrist band worn by all of NPB players to appeal to baseball fans to participate in a campaign to prevent the global warming. Part of sales will be donated to “Forest of Pro Baseball,” a forestation drive to lessen global carbon dioxide.

④ Commemorative ball autographed by Manabu Kitabeppu, 2012 Hall of Famer ¥25,000 (tax included)



50 balls are available only on the Internet. Please come and visit:
<http://shop.npb.or.jp/npbshop/goods/index/html>

It is an official NPB ball encased in a glass box (145mm x 130mm x 130mm)

on a wooden pedestral.

The supplements are a certificate published by the BHF, *Baseball Hall of Fame 2012*, and 6 admission tickets to the BHF.

4) Guide to the Baseball Museum

The entrance is located to the right of Gate 21 of Tokyo Dome.

Hours: 10:00—18:00 (March through September)

10:00—17:00 (October through February)

(Hours are liable to be shortened due to power shortage. Visitors are requested to enter at least 30 minutes prior to the closing time.)

Admission: ¥500 (¥300) Adults

¥200 (¥150) Elementary & Junior High School students

(* Per person in groups 20 or more)

¥300 Senior citizens aged 65 or more

Closed: Mondays except those 1) during the spring and summer vacations,

2) that fall on National Holidays,

3) when a pro baseball game is held at Tokyo Dome.

N.B. In other words, from May to July, the museum will be closed on:

May 7, 14 and 21; June 4, 18 and 25; July 9.

Take note. The BHF is open on July 10 through September 2.

Editor's Note Memorable artifacts from the 2012 gloops MLB Opening Series at Tokyo Dome, headed by a ball hit for a safety by Ichiro in his first at bat on March 28, are on display in our Baseball Museum. It is to be hoped that you will have a good view of them at the Entrance Hall.

Ken Shimada, member of PSC
The Nikkei

The dimensions of Kleenex Stadium Miyagi are 101.5 meters to the left and right fences. Apart from one in Yokohama and another in Kitakyushu almost all of stadiums in Japan are much cleaner and larger than before and have the regular dimensions stipulated by the official rules of NPB. Even Tokyo Dome, which was reputed big and ultra-new at its opening in 1988, is now called a homer-friendly stadium because of its shallow depth at both from left to center and from right to center. This situation, which is poles apart from only less than 30 years ago, has been brought about by painstaking efforts of the late commissioner Takeso Shimoda (1979-85, d.1995).

He was aware that regulation dimensions were not observed at every stadium across the country. He started an actual survey of the dimensions at major stadiums in 1980, using sometimes a measuring device on wheelbarrow. The results were kept secret for a time because they would incur great expense for makeover of stadiums, but eventually they were published in the Blue Book (official guide of the Pacific League). It was revealed that a certain stadium (used in the Central League) had only 87 meters in distance to the poles at the fence. Moreover, at other stadiums, poles were found leaning, and pitcher's mound was not correct in height. In 1981, he sent a written request to major stadiums asking them to try to improve their facilities. Henceforth, every time a new stadium was built, they visited the commissioner's office and promised to conform to the rules. Accordingly, Jingu and Seibu Stadiums extended the dimensions to the regular distance. So I believe that I would meet with everyone's approval if I called him father of modern stadiums.

Shimoda assumed the position as commissioner after the scandalous Egawa incident, for which pro baseball somewhat had lost public trust in them. He had been the Ambassador to the U.S.A. and later became a Justice of the Supreme Court. He audaciously came up with improvement measures to rectify illegal state of affairs in pro baseball.

In 1980 live balls made a stir, for the Kintetsu Buffaloes established a season record for a club with 239 home runs. The resilience of balls used be measured by a primitive method of dropping them on marble from a height of 1.5 meters. Shimoda and NPB adopted a new method by asking Japan Vehicle Inspection Association to measure by electronic testers. On finding that Kintetsu's balls were too resilient, Shimoda requested the Buffaloes to refrain from using them. As was expected, the home run product dropped to 149 in 1981. It was as dramatic as in 2011 when the use of standardized balls reduced sharply the output of home runs. Compressed bats were also banned by Shimoda. The baseball rules forbid the use of impregnated bats which are meant to be more resilient. Bat makers protested that bats would be more breakable, but he had a subcommittee of the Executive Committee examine fully the bat problem and showed careful consideration to let the preventive measures be known widely by distributing instruction pamphlets.

The Next target of his innovation was the prevailing reliance on a table of random numbers when the batter exchanged their signals. Shimoda forbade its use because it unnecessarily lengthened game time DH was in use only in the Pacific League. At first DH was not adopted in the Japan Series, but on the

spirit of fair play that games must be played under the same and fair conditions, Shimoda decided over the CL opposition that DH was to be adopted every other year in the Japan Series. (NB DH has been adopted in the games at a PL franchise in the Japan Series since 1987.) His decision was appropriate, whether looking back from now, or judging from the status quo of the present MLB.

Shimoda expatiates on his achievements in his book, "Memoirs of Pro Baseball," published by Baseball Magazine, Co. By his initiative, all of the 12 constituent clubs began to share the expenses of the Commissioner's Office and at same time the task of each section was clearly defined. Thus he contributed greatly to the modernization of organized baseball in Japan.

What I have written here may be a matter of common knowledge to the readers of this Newsletter, but strangely enough, with all his contributions as commissioner to pro baseball, Shimoda has not been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. This is the very reason why I have dwelled on Takeso Shimoda.