



## The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

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

### Articles in **NEWSLETTER, Vol.24, No.4**

(The English version prepared by Ryuichi Suzuki)

February 10, 2015

p.1 2015 Hall of Famers Elected

Shinichi Hirose, President

The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum announced its Hall of Famers for 2015 at the press conference held at the Baseball Hall of Fame from 2 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2015. The Players Division of the Players Selection Committee elected Atsuya Furuta, a brainy catcher who played a leading role in the heyday of the Yakult Swallows. He was the first to reach 2,000 career hits as a player who joined pro baseball after playing for university and corporate baseball. He led his team to five pennants in the Central League and four championships in the Japan Series.. The Expert Division of the PSC failed to elect any successful candidates. On the other hand, the Special Selection Committee elected the late Kazuo Hayashi, who exerted himself to set up the Japan Little League, and the late Ryohei Murayama, founder and the first president of the Asahi Shimbun, who inaugurated the National Middle (now High) School Baseball Championship which will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The press conference began with the announcement of the names of the 2015 Hall of Famers by Katsuhiko Kumazaki, chairman of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, followed by the report of the selection procedures of the Players Selection Committee by its representative director, Gotaro Nagase, and by the report of the Special Selection Committee by its chairman, Tetsuo Ikeda. The presentation of the induction notification to each of the 2015 inductees were followed by their acceptance speeches. Furuta said with a smile, "I have never expected to be elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame. I am grateful to many people who have supported me, first of all to my parents, and to my former managers, Nomura and Wakamatsu." Seiichi Hayashi, eldest son of the late Kazuo Hayashi said with feeling, "My father worked hard to promote little league baseball, firmly believing that it would increase friendship with children of all the world through baseball, and tried to encourage as many children as possible to share its joy. I'll report to him at his grave that he was given the highest honor in baseball." Shinya Iida, chairman of the Asahi Shimbun and received the notification on behalf of the Murayama family, said, "I consider that I received this honor on behalf of all the people who love high school baseball." Joyous messages were also read aloud: one was from Michiko Murayama, granddaughter of Ryohei Murayama and the head of the Asahi Shimbun, and the other from Takayasu Okujima, president of the Japan High School Baseball Federation.

Each of the guest speakers told an interesting episode about his respective inductee. Hideo Nomo, 2014 Hall of Famer who turned pro in the same year (1989), recollected meeting him for the first time at the training camp for participants (who would capture the silver medal) on the eve of the Seoul Olympics (1988) (for its details, see page 2) and requested him to pass down his wonderful catching skills to younger catchers as they seem unable to catch up with growing speedballers. Yoshinobu Suzuki, vice-president of the Japan Baseball Association and director of the Japan Olympic Committee, spoke for Hayashi. "His ardor for little baseball is worth the unanimous vote in the Special Selection Committee. We would like to follow his footsteps in spreading baseball." Masayuki

Naito, secretary general of the JBA, said in appreciation for the great feat done by Murayama, “He established the foundation for the prosperity of high school baseball. I hope baseball will continue to be the top sport in Japan for fifty or one hundred years hereafter.”

The press conference ended with taking commemorative photographs of the new inductees and the guest speakers. The BHFMM was closed for the safety’s sake, and the press conference was held in attendance of only the media and the sustaining members of the BHFMM. This format will continue next year on.

After the press conference, an informal party was held at the Tokyo Dome Hotel, attended by Furuta and some thirty people concerned. This two-hour get-together, which had started last year, provided the attendants with quite a good break for a relaxed talk.



Photo

(From left in the front row)

Atsuya Furuta, Katsuhiko Kumazaki, Seiichi Hayashi and  
Shinya Iida

(From left in back row)

Hideo Nomo, Yoshinobu Suzuki, and Masayuki Naito..

## p.2 2015 Hall of Famers elected by the Players Selection Committee

Gotaro Nagase

Representative Director of the PSC

The Players Division of the 55th Players Selection Committee selected the bespectacled catcher Atsuya Furuta, who led the Yakult Swallows with his brainy guidance and scratch batting to five pennants in the Central League and four championships in the Japan Series.

The 23 eligible candidates were selected by the Screening Committee of the PSC from pro players who have ceased to be active for at least five years prior to selection and have been retired for less than 21 years. In the election in the Players Division, 334 out of 348 voting members with an experience of reporting baseball for 15 years or more selected the names of 7 candidates at most on a ballot, and Atsuya Furuta was the only successful candidate with the most ballots of 255 (76.8 % of the 332 total valid ballots).



He was famous as a strong-armed catcher for Ritsumeikan University. But his bespectledness proved a major snag in the 1987 draft and he had to choose a corporate team Toyota Motors Co. In the exhibition tournament of the 1988 Soule Olympics, he was the batterymate of Hideo Nomo, 2014 Hall of Famer, and played an active role in winning the silver medal. In the draft of 1989, he was nominated as second choice by the Yakult Swallows which was newly skipped by Katsuya Nomura, 1989 Hall of Famer. In 1990, he played in 106 games and won the golden glove award, the first as a rookie catcher. In his second year (1991) he discovered the secrets of good

batting and became the batting champion with the .340 BA, the first as a catcher in the Central League. In 1997, he won the coveted Shoriki Award. In 2005, he attained the 2,000th hit, the second as catcher following Nomura and the first as a pro player who has played for both university and corporate baseball. He was the leading catcher in the Central League, being selected into the Best Nine 9 times, and winning the golden glove award 10 times. In the turmoil of reorganization of pro baseball in 2004, which arose from the merger of the Kintetsu Buffaloes and Orix BlueWave, he exerted himself as president of the Trade Union Japan Players Association to maintain the 12-club, 2-league system. In his last two years (2006-7), he was a playing manager. His lifetime record in 18 years are 2,008 G, 2,097 H, 217 HR, 1,009 RBI, and .294 BA.

In his acceptance speech at the BHF on January 23, he said, "I never thought of being elected to such an honorable place as this. I owe my thanks to many people so I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep thanks." Next to his parents, he cited Yoshinobu Suzuki, manager of Team Japan at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the guest speaker for Kazuo Hayashi on the very day. When Furuta decided to turn pro, it was the day when a bespectacled catcher was acknowledgedly disqualified as a catcher in pro baseball. He consulted Suzuki, who slapped him on the back. "Wearing glasses or not has nothing to do with it. You are fully qualified as a pro catcher. Throw a lot of your weight around in pro baseball." Furuta went on to say, "I was severely instructed by manager Katsuya Nomura who had been the topnotch catcher in pro baseball. Without his tutoring, I could not have been elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame." He stood up to the mentor's hard tutoring only through his bitter memory which he recollects with shame and chagrin. In his senior year, a press conference was scheduled to be held for the prospective pro catcher, only no team nominated him in the draft. It was then that he defiantly made up his mind to triumph over deep-rooted prejudice.

Hideo Nomo showed off how Furuta looked like when they met as teammates of Team Japan in 1988."I was surprised at his excellent defense. Why is that he is not a pro yet?" Another surprise came, however, when he became the batting champion in pro baseball. Why? He was alien to safety hits. He always relied on drag bunts in his amateur days!" (a burst of laughter)

It was really a pity that in the players division, Masaki Saito and Tatsunori Hara failed to be elected by a small margin of 3 and 6 votes respectively. Saito is still eligible in the players division, but Hara is obliged to be a candidate in the expert division when he is eligible.

The Expert Division of the PSC failed to select any successful candidate for two successive years. The voting members consist of living Hall of Famers, baseball reporters with 30 years or more of baseball reporting, and directors of the PSC. Voters select five candidates at most on a ballot. The valid ballots out of 119 voting members were 108, and no eligible candidates received 81 ballots or more (75% or more of the valid ballots.), with Kihachi Enomoto receiving 66 ballots.

The importance of selecting candidates has been brought home again to the people concerned. As the candidates are players and coaches with a splendid track record, it might be natural that ballots were split, but it may be high time for the directors to consider narrowing down the candidates. The method of election is the same as before. Fourteen (14) electors consisting of active and retired pro baseball officials, active amateur baseball officials, and learned persons versed in baseball make a vote. Any candidate receiving votes on seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the ballots cast are elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Tsuneo Ikeda, chairman of the Special Selection Committee

The principle that hall of Famers are to be selected to meet the needs of the times is noticeably reflected in the selection of the successful candidates by the SSP. In conjunction with the revision of election rules in the Players Selection Committee in 2013, those in the Special Selection Committee were revised in the same year to meet the changes of times and have been applied since 2014.

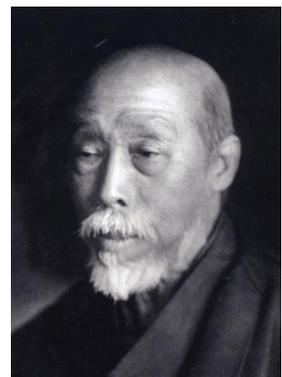
In the new rules, candidates are (1) amateur players who have been retired for five years or more, amateur coaches and managers who have been retired 6 months or more, (2) umpires in pro and/or amateur baseball who have been retired 6 months or more, (3) those persons who contributed, or have contributed to the development of pro and/or amateur baseball in Japan in terms of organization and management, and (4) those persons who contributed, or have contributed to the promotion of baseball in Japan in wider perspective. The method of election is the same as before. Fourteen (14) electors consisting of active and retired pro baseball officials, active amateur baseball officials, and learned persons versed in baseball make a vote. Any candidate receiving votes on seventy-five percent (75%) of the ballots cast is elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

The SSP met at 2 p.m. on January 20 at Tokyo Dome Hotel with the attendance of 12 members and one letter of proxy. From among 10 candidates, the late Kazuo Hayashi (1923-2009) receiving the unanimous votes of 13, and the late Ryohei Murayama (1850-1933) receiving 12 votes were elected to the Hall of Fame.



In 1964, Kazuo Hayashi, director of Hayashi Construction & Co., set up the Chofu Little League. In 1967, he led the pick of the West Tokyo League to victory in the first All Japan championship. In the same year, the WTL participated in Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania and won the coveted championship. In 1976, as president of the Chofu Little League, he led the pick of the League, with Daisuke Araki (later Waseda University and the Yakult Swallows) as its ace pitcher, to win the championship again in the LLWS, which helped greatly to popularize the existence of little league across the country and widen the base of baseball population in Japan. Later he organized the Chofu Little Senior, an intermediary between little league baseball and high school baseball. In 2000, he arranged the merger of Japan Little League Baseball Association with Japan Little Senior Baseball Association, and worked for the foundation of the All-Japan Little League Baseball Association, thus succeeded in forming an integrated baseball organization from elementary school through high school baseball.

Ryohei Murayama, founder of the Asahi Shimbun, inaugurated, as its president, the National Middle (now high) School Baseball Championship in 1915, and held its epoch-making first tournament at Toyonaka Ground in Osaka with 10 participant teams in the summer. The start of the miniature tournament proved a great incentive to the wide spread of middle school baseball throughout the country and led to the later National Invitational Middle (now High) School Baseball Championship held in every spring. The two tournaments have become national events, which brought about an increasing popularity of the present-day high school baseball. It is widely admitted that



high school baseball helped spread the circle of baseball and improvement of playing skills.

Incidentally this year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NMSBC (due to the last war, the actual enactment is the 97<sup>th</sup>). It is high time Japanese baseball with high school as its core took the leadership in world baseball.

p. 4 NPB rookies for 2015 visit the BHF&M as part of their training session

On Tuesday, January 13, a squad of NPB rookies and umpires (104 and 4 respectively) visited the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum as part of their in-service training session. They were divided into two groups (CL rookies & umpires, and PL rookies) and spent about 50 minutes each in paying homage to the monument to pro baseball players who were killed in the last war, visiting exhibition rooms and the Baseball Hall of Fame, with taking special interest in the exhibits of artifacts related to their respective team.





p.5 Inductees Remembered (46)

A Memory of my fond brother

Shozo Etoh

Younger brother of Shinichi Etoh, 2010 Hall of Famer



Shinichi Etoh as a pro baseball player has generally been associated with a warlord in the Warring States period (15-16 cc), his epithets being big-hearted, brave warrior, or man of fire, but to his family members he was gentle and considerate. While my father was in the front during the last war, he sometimes helped my mother by sharing the work of carrying me on the back, and took Kenji (my second elder brother) by the hand, strolling around our place of refuge. When my father was demobilized in 1946, our family of six lived in my mother's native place: Yamaga city in Kumamoto Prefecture.

Under the influence of our father who had played for Yawata Iron-Manufacturing in pre-war days, Shinichi began to play baseball. In Yamaga middle school days he was well-known in town and when his team participated in the prefectural tournament, his name was closely associated with Yamaga MS. In the summer when he was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, he moved to Seibu MS due to our father's transfer and was slated to be admitted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> term. But by a strange twist of fate, he visited its baseball club in the beginning of August. Reinforced with his entry, the previously winless Seibu MS won the two tournaments held in August. The feat became the talk of the small town, and I remember vividly how proud I was as a younger brother of the hero when I moved to Matsubashi elementary school.

After playing for Kumamoto Commercial HS and Nippon Iron-Manufacturing, he joined the Chunichi Dragons and from his first season he made a spectacular showing as their big gun. In 1964 and 1965, he successively won the batting champion after electrifying the baseball fans across the country by making a neck-to-neck competition with Sadaharu Oh. Reportedly he hit safely after going on a bar-crawl on the previous night, but actually he was a very nervous person and unable to go to bed before getting intoxicated. I was a student at Keio University and every time he came up to Tokyo, I called on his hotel and asked him for pocket money on the pretext of buying reference books. I was caught out in a lie and was severely scolded when he got suspicious of my words and found out school expenses in general from his beat writer. It is a fond memory now.

In 1966, I joined the Yomiuri Giants as the third choice in the newly-adopted draft. On May 3, I appeared in the 4<sup>th</sup> game against the Chunichi Dragons as one of the starting members for the first time. As a matter of course, Shinichi was batting fourth and first baseman for the Dragons. In my first time at bat, I hit safely to center and reached first base. The two-shot of the two brothers standing side by side is the most memorable one, and I look at

it every day even now. In 1969, I moved to the Dragons with the mutual joy of playing in the same team.

Little did I think we would part with each other in a year. My move to the Dragons was at the instigation of Shigeru Mizuhara, 1977 Hall of Famer and my senior at Keio University, who took over the reins of the Dragons in the same year. Shinichi duly paid respect to the new manager, but, though I do not know why, he started off on the wrong foot with him after the All-Star series. It was the most difficult time not only for us two brothers but for our parents. Later he moved to the Lotte Orions and in 1971, he became the first batting champion who garnered the title in the both leagues, a feat kept unbroken for 40 years until 2011 when it was repeated by Seichi Uchikawa (the SoftBank Hawks). In the summer of 2003, he was hospitalized for cerebral infarction and after five years of fighting against his illness, he died on February 28, 2008 at the age of 70.

In 2010, he received the highest honor as a baseball player to be elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame. I felt the more deeply moved when I thought of the fact that in his lifetime he always said he would never be enshrined in the coveted Hall of Fame. At the induction ceremony held in the Yahoo Dome in the summer, I received the replica of his plaque on his behalf from Sadaharu Oh, his former arch-rival in batting. Tears welled in my eyes irresistibly when I tried to enter into his feelings. To conclude, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the Players Selection Committee for their kind consideration.

p.6 Visitors to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

November, 2014 through January, 2015



November 13 Ryosuke Kikuchi, infielder, Hiroshima Toyo Carp, and Tomomi Takahashi, pitcher, Saitama Seibu Lions. They were members of Samurai Japan who participated in the 2014 SUZUKI Japan-U.S. Baseball Series.

November 16 Jeremy Guthrie, the Kansas City Royals, and Norihiro Akaboshi, ambassador for Samurai Japan. Guthrie donated to Shinichi Hirose, president of the BHFMM, the hat he wore in the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the 2014 SUZUKI Japan-U.S. Baseball Series on November 15. His hat is now on display at the Major League Corner.



November 21 Keiji Suzuki, 2002 Hall of Famer



November 22 Eight rookies of the Yomiuri Giants



November 25 Managers of 12 NPB Junior Clubs. The press conference for the 12 NPB Juniors Tournament: ENEOS Cup 2014 was held followed by the draw for the preliminary league.



November 26 Mineko Kohsaka, former women's pro baseball player, and Kyoko Iwasaki, Japan Women's Baseball Organization. Ms.Kohsaka played for Osaka Diamonds which was inaugurated in 1950. Her glove and mitt are on display at Women's Baseball Corner.

December 3 Shinichi Murata and Daisuke Motoki.  
They played for the Yomiuri Giants.



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December 5 Minoru Nakamura and Hijiri Nishimoto. They pitched for the Yomiuri Giants.





December 18 Shohei Ohtani, Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters. He cast his vote for his choice in the Japan Poster Contest 2014.

January 2

Six pitchers from Samurai Japan newly appear in the virtual batting screen. They are:



- Takahiro Norimoto (Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles)
- Kazuhisa Makita (Saitama Seibu Lions)
- Takahiro Matsuba (Orix Buffaloes)
- Shintaro Fujinami (Hanshin Tigers)
- Shoichi Ino (Yokohama DeNa Baystars)
- Minoru Iwata (Hanshin Tigers)

On Sale A) Authentic standardized ball for use in the 2014 NPB with a serial number attached.



¥2,600 including tax  
 Packing and shipping charge: ¥250 for 1, ¥400 for 2 & 3, and free for more than 3 balls.

B) Quo Cards denoting Shigeo Nagashima, 1988 Hall of Famer, and Sadaharu Oh, 1994 Hall of Famer.



¥1,000 each. (¥500 par value)

C) Telephone card showing the legendary poster for the 1934 Japan-U.S Baseball Series



¥1,000. Valid for telephone calls worth ¥500.

On display

Uniform worn by Yukiko Ueno, who pitched for Team Japan in the softball tournament in the 17<sup>th</sup> Asian Games. Team Japan won 4 consecutive victories in the Asian Games. Her uniform was donated to the BHF<sup>M</sup> by the Japan Softball Association. In order to show that Japan has been endeavoring to have baseball and softball reinstated to the Olympic Games as a unified one sports event, the Samurai Japan logo “JAPAN” and its diamond stripes have been decided to be printed on the uniforms to be worn by the members of Softball Team Japan.



#### 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)

(Visitors are requested to enter at least 30 minutes prior to the closing time.)

Admission: ¥600 (\*¥500) Adults

¥400 High school and university students

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

(\* Per person in groups 20 or more)

¥400 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 February to April, the museum will be closed on:

February 2, 9, 16 and 23; March 2, 9, 16 and 23; April 6, 13, 20 and 27..

P. 8 Essay (58) Thoughts from Living in Fukuoka for a long time

Izumi Nakajima, Sports Nippon Shimbun

Director of the Players Selection Committee

Reporting baseball in Fukuoka for a long time as its resident, I keenly feel the presence of the Nishitetsu Lions has been felt less and less. It is not surprising to find young ball fans who think that SoftBank Hawks is the first pro team in Fukuoka, who would utter, “Baseball used to be played at Heiwadai? Unbelievable!” The site of old Heiwadai Stadium is now a vacant lot, where an excavation has been done to search the ancient state guest-house, “Koro Kan,” whose relics were discovered in the basement of the former bleachers. Standing there, newcomers will find it difficult to imagine the wild enthusiasm of the spectators, but there was a legendary rowdy team enfranchised there who marked an era. Soon after they won three consecutive victories in the Japan Series over the Yomiuri Giants, they weakened over a rigged game scandal until they remained in the cellar three successive years (1972-4) and were obliged to be sold due to dwindled spectators and worsened club management. They changed to Taiheiyo Club, followed by Crown Lighters and in 1978 moved their franchise to Tokorozawa as Seibu Lions. 43 years have passed since their transfer, and 57 years since the three consecutive victories.

It is natural that the Young Lions have got on in years. From among their steadfast lineup beginning with Takakura, CF, and ending with Inao, P., Hiroshi Oshita (1980 HOF), Seiji Sekiguchi, Akinobu Kono, Akira Ohgi (2004 HOF), Hiromi Wada and Kazuhisa Inao (1993 HOF) have passed away. Still active are Teruyuki Takakura (80), Yasumitsu Toyoda (79, 2006 HOF) and Futoshi Nakanishi (81, 1999 HOF). I sympathize with Toyoda's grief, "Baseball cannot be played with three players!" The 8th year-end party of NL Old Boys held in Fukuoka City in last December was attended by only 14 oldsters living in Kyushu. The membership was thinned by the death of two old timers last year, Etsuro Tsukamoto (90), Takao Hagi (79). Absentees were the big duo, Toyoda and Nakanishi living in Tokyo. Other attendants were Kanichi Kanegae, former mayor of Shimabara who ran the Inn "Kokoya" where the Lions put up at spring camping in Shimabara, Kyoko Hasegawa (third daughter of Inao), Mrs Sekiguchi, Mrs. Eibun Kawamura, and Lions fans. Takakura, vice-president of the NLOB, appealed to them earnestly, "It is lonesome indeed that the Old Boys become fewer year by year, but please remember them for ever."

Even under these circumstances, Takakura has endeavored to hand down the Lions spirit to posterity. He has instructed the Fukuoka South Little Senior for 26 years since 1988, as manager, president and general manager in succession. He was conferred a distinguished service medal for sports activity by Fukuoka Prefecture government and that for lifelong sports activity by the Ministry of Education. Noribumi Kido, 75, said, "I am proud that I have been connected with baseball ever since I graduated from high school." After retiring, the third baseman became a coach and later a scout for the Lions. Since 1992, he has been returning his obligation to baseball world by coaching a corporate team in Fukuoka, Oki Data Computer Education School. One of his disciples is pitcher Ryuji Ichioka, who joined the Yomiuri Giants in 2011 as the third draft choice and broke through last year with the Hiroshima Toyo Carp.

The members of the NLOB will inevitably become fewer and never increase with the extinction of the NL, but the memories and records of the Nishitetsu Lions must not be allowed to fade away. The legendary team has turned out six Hall of Famers including manager Osamu Mihara (1983) and has achieved great exploits almost equal to the Yomiuri Giants who boast nine consecutive victories in the Japan Series. The work of Takakura and Kido to inherit the heritage of the Nishitetsu Lions to posterity is certainly worthy of admiration.