The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum
(http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/)

Articles in NEWSLETTER, Vol.25, No.3 (October, 2015)
(Prepared by Ryuichi Suzuki)

p.1 Induction ceremony for 2015 Hall of Famers, Part 2

Shinichi Hirose, President

The induction ceremony for the late Ryohei Murayama, founder and first president of the Asahi Shimbun, who inaugurated the National Middle (now High) School Baseball Championship in 1915, was held at Koshien Stadium, mecca of high school baseball, following this year’s opening ceremony on Thursday, August 6. On behalf of Ms. Michiko Murayama, his granddaughter and owner of the Asahi Shimbun, who was obliged to be absent due to her advanced age, Shinya Iida, president of the Asahi Shimbun, attended the ceremony.

The opening ceremony featured the march of 10 teams which had participated in the first tournament a century ago. They appeared in their old uniforms, whose sight excited all the players on the field and spectators in the stands. When the field was clear and ready, the induction ceremony started on the red carpet-spread ground in front of the backstop. Murayama’s great achievement was introduced by the public address system and the pictures on the big screen. Then the replica of his plaque was presented to Iida by Katsuhiko Kumazaki, chairman of the BHFM, followed by a bouquet presentation from Takayasu Okushima, president of the National High School Baseball Association. Iida made an acceptance speech.

Caption: Shinya Iida

It is our great honor and pleasure that Ryohei Murayama was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame at the 100th anniversary of his great work, that is, the inauguration of the National High School Baseball Championship as part of education. We owe it to the concerted efforts of all people concerned with high school baseball that the annual championship has enjoyed popularity as a special attraction of summer.

The ceremony ended successfully by a photo-taking in a standing ovation from the spectators.

Caption: (from left) Katsuhiko Kumazaki, Shinya Iida and Takayasu Okushima.
1) Independent Study on Baseball

From Friday, July 17 to Sunday, August 31, an annual event, “Independent study on baseball” was held at the Baseball Library, the Event Hall and the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery. A total of 341 and junior high school students did their independent study at the Baseball Library in collaboration with the staff. A subtotal of 79 1st to 3rd graders (5, 22 and 52 respectively), accounting for 23.2 percent of the whole participants, shows clearly the increase of lower grader participants.

The diagram below shows their subjects of study according to their grade.

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<th>Implements</th>
<th>Breaking</th>
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2) Mini-mini Experiment Corner

Held two times every day (14:00, 15:00), for about 30 minutes each, at the BHF gallery, July 31 through August 31, excepting days of other events.

The subjects at 14:00: (1) “Secrets of breaking balls”
(A fundamental theorem of Bernoulli was explained using a balloon and a cardboard.)
(2) “Secrets of gloves”
(Comparison of gloves used in three different days: 1900s, 1930s and 2010s)
(3) “Secrets of uniforms” (The sample is a Samurai Japan uniform worn by Ryosuke Kikuchi. Primary and junior high school students tried it on.)

- 2 -
The subjects at 15:00 : (1) “Secrets of regular baseballs”
(Rules on baseballs and process of producing baseballs are explained, using baseballs in their production phases)
(2) “Secrets of bats” (Rules on bats are explained; The young participants measure and weigh a bat used by Yanagita Yuuki (SoftBank Hawks) and Tomoya Mori(Seibu Lions).

p.3  Summer Events in Review (2-2)

3) “Let’s score a baseball game”  13:00~14:30, Thursday, July 30

The lecturer was Shigeo Ishii, former chief scorer of the Central League. To the 40 participants, half of them being primary students, scoring a game was quite new. After giving an explanation on the details of Waseda format of scoring, Ishii demonstrated a simultaneous scoring on viewing a game on the screen. The young participants on the floor also wrote in their own scorebooks, comparing it with the model on the board. Hopefully it was an unforgettable experience for them.

4) Summer Umpire School  13:00~15:00  Mondays, August 3 and 10

The lecturers were Osamu Ino, former umpire-in-chief and now member of Baseball Rules Committee, Masato Tomoyose, incumbent umpire-in-chief, Natsuo Yamazaki and Takeshi Hirabayashi, both umpire instructors. They explained the history of umpires, their implement used in a game, and demonstrated how to call a game in action. It proved to be a revealing experience for not only young but adult baseball fans who have no opportunity to get in touch with umpires.
5) Glove Making Class for Parent-Child Pairs  13:30~16:00 Monday, August 17

14 pairs of parent and child chosen from 80 pairs of applicants on the website participated in a child-oriented combined work of making their one and only glove in the world. They toiled, under guidance of four craftsmen from Mizuno Corporation, about two hours in the last process, that is, piercing threads into the glove. The session ended by taking a snapshot of the participants with their completed glove.

6) Bat Making Demonstration  11:00~12:00, 13:30~14:30, 15:00~16:00
Tuesday, August 18; Wednesday, August 19

The 12th consecutive event since 2004. Craftsman Takahiro Watanabe from Mizuno Technics explained the materials of a bat and demonstrated bat making. Three primary students were privileged to experience paper filing. Watanabe answered amiably to various questions from the floor.

In June, we had a donation of some articles from a friend (living in the U.S.) of the bereaved family of the late Daisuke Miyake, 1969 Hall of Famer. The articles were comprised of his passport dated 1920, 77 pieces of photos including those depicting his Keio days, that of Casey Stengel (who visited Japan in 1922 in the Japan-U.S. competition), those depicting Japan pro baseball after WWII, and five pieces depicting the Tokyo Giants’ first American tour in 1935. One of the last is the photo in question taken on March 19 in Sacramento, California, with the state capitol in the background. It shows the 20 members of the Tokyo Giants (including Manager Daisuke Miyake, Senior manager Tadao Ichioka, and Captain Nobuaki Nidegawa)
with the members of the local Japan Society.

The tour spanned 128 days starting on March 2 and covered some 20,000 km over not only the U.S. but Mexico and Canada. They played 109 games, during which they played with Sacrament Senators (PCL) on March 16, 17, and 20. The caption in the photo reads: Dai Nippon Tokyo Base Ball Club Team at Capital Park, Mar. 19.1935 oyama photo. The members of the team wear a nameplate on their chest. In the photo of Eiji Sawamura, only its dummy ball is visible, but incidentally we have his nameplate in our collection. This photo is all the more valuable because it is quite new to us, though seemingly the same photo appears on the Yomiuri Shimbun at that time (NB: date unidentified).

We are in search of photos related to the present and future Hall of Famers, so we would like to take this occasion to ask a favor of the prospective donors to contact us on this matter.

b) Library News Taiiku Shuho published during WWII

Taku Chinone, librarian

Acknowledgedly Taiiku Shuho (Athletics Weekly) is a renamed edition of tabloid Base Ball News published in Osaka in prewar days. One of the donated publications last year was Taiiku Shuho published during WWII. It is a bound edition of 15 issues from No.533 (pub. 1.1.1944) to No.549 (pub. 1.1.1945), which shows that it was kept published during WWII. The oldest issue we have at our baseball library is, as mentioned in our Newsletter, Vol.23, No.3 (2013) , the extra one published after WWII on December 1, 1945.

On opening the pages, we first come across baseball in No. 537 (pub. March 21). On its cover are a banner, “Spring Lineup of Japan Baseball ~ Restart after a year of assiduous devotion” and a large photo of Masaru Kageura (Hanshin Tigers, 1965 Hall of Famer). The No.549 is devoted to sumo, but exceptionally one page reports baseball news with a title, “Statement of Japan Baseball Patriotic Society: Pennant Race Suspended.” Clearly it refers to the statement issued on November 13, 1944. This article will prove materials of historic importance in that the details of the statement have hitherto been unknown.

p.5 Inductees Remembered (49) In Memory of Ryohei Murayama, my grandfather

Michiko Murayama, granddaughter of Ryohei Muraya, 2015 Hall of Famer
Foreword and afterword by Takeshi Hida, secretary to Michiko Murayama

Foreword

Ms. Michiko Murayama, owner of Asahi Shimbun, was looking forward to attending the ceremony held at Koshien Stadium on August 6 in honor of the induction of the late Ryohei Murayama to the Baseball Hall of Fame, but to our great regret she was obliged to be absent due to her advanced age. On her behalf, Shinya Iida, president of Asahi Shimbun, attended the ceremony. (See page 1)
I am to retell what she dictated to me.

I am sincerely glad that my dear grandfather has been inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame. I call him ojii-sama (grandpa). Thanks to an old photo, I know quite well how he looked at the opening ceremony of the first National Middle School Baseball Championship at Toyonaka Stadium in 1915. As president of the host organization, he threw out the ceremonial first pitch with a Panama hat on and in Japanese kimono—haori, hakama, tabi and zori. One hundred years have passed since he decided to hold a new revolutionary tournament! I am 95 years old on August 16. I am overwhelmed to think that his tournament started five years before I was born.

I do not remember that he told me about baseball when I was a child, but he came to my primary school to cheer for me on a running race. He often told me about his art collections in his cherished warehouse. On the whole, he was well aware of the importance of sports to children. I used to watch a baseball game from behind the backstop at Koshien Stadium, being worried about a hissing ball speeding at me. When my father Nagataka was the president, I listened to his opening speech within the stadium. Even now, I make it a rule to watch the opening ceremony on TV and enjoy the march of the players and the president’s opening speech. Indeed, the annual tournament is quite indispensable to me. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the people concerned.

Afterword

Ryohei Murayama was the founder of Asahi Shimbun and a splendid entrepreneur who developed it to one of the leading newspapers in the Meiji and Taisho eras. In The life of Ryohei Murayama, published 20 years posthumously in 1953, twenty pages are allotted to the description of how the tournament in Koshien Stadium came about. It begins thus: ”Among many cultural projects for which Asahi Shimbun drew wide praise from the first part of the Taisho era are guidance and promotion of many sports, but the first and the most successful one was the inauguration of the National Middle School Baseball Championship.”

According to the book, what triggered the project was the visit of the executives of Mino Electric Railways Company, predecessor of the present Hankyu ERC, to Asahi Shimbun one day in early July, 1915. In order to utilize a big ground at Toyonaka as part of reginal development plan along the line, they proposed to build “an annual baseball tournament catering mainly to students.” Nyozekan Hasegawa, the city news editor, approved of it wholeheartedly at once, and consulted the management. “President Murayama, who listened to Hasegawa’s explanation without a word, answered immediately. ‘That’s enough. As a proverb goes, what is worth doing is worth doing promptly. You’d better prepare for it at once…… The unprecedented project was decided in one day when they reached a simple agreement that installations should be borne by the Mino ERC, and all the rest by Asahi Shimbun……and the appellation itself was decided on the same day.’” It is really surprising that in a little more than a month, the NMSBC was held after regional preliminaries.

When Ryohei Murayama passed away at the age of 84 on November 24, 1933, our owner Michiko was 12 years old. It is impressive indeed that whenever she talks about her dear grandpa, she always looks supremely blissful.
July 21  Kazuo Fukushima, 2013 Hall of Famer

To view the exhibitions; “High School Baseball and the Baseball Hall of Fame” and “Inter-City Baseball Championship”

July 22  Futoshi Nakanishi, 1999 Hall of Famer (left), and Yoshinobu Uemura, who played for Daimai Orions

July 28

Norio Nobata, executive director of Japan Baseball Association, donated Parson’s Trophy from the Inter-City Baseball Championship

August 2  Doala, mascot of Chunichi Dragons

August 3  Tomoaki Kanemoto, who played for Hanshin Tigers

August 7  Hiroshima Uniform “Peace 86” was put on display. (Hiroshima Toyo Carp held “Peace Night Game” on August 6 in memory of the 70th anniversary of the atomic bomb.)
August 7

Kenjiro Nomura, former manager of Hiroshima Toyo Carp

August 15

Uniform and bat worn and used by Kazuo Matsui when he knocked the 2,000th career hit in Japan (in a game against SoftBank Hawks on July 28)

August 18

Soroku Yagisawa, chief director of Japan Baseball Promotion Association. He led Sakushin High School to consecutive victory in the spring and summer of 1967. His championship medal was on display at “High School Baseball and the Baseball Hall of Fame” Exhibition.

p.7   a)   Welcome Guests (2-2)

August 20

Randy Johnson, 2015 Hall of Famer, and Louis Gonzales; Arizona Diamondbacks (MLB)

August 29

Motonobu Tanishige, playing manager of Chunichi Dragons, with his uniform and catcher’s mitt from his 3,018th game, a new Japan record.
September 2  Lotte Day, one of 12 NPB Days, was celebrated.

September 7  Shigeo Nagashima, 1988 Hall of Famer

September 21 Osamu Higashio, 2010 Hall of Famer, with his grandson Ritaro

b)  Baseball Lucky Charm, original goods of the BHFM, were presented to:

   Team Japan U-12   July 21
   Team Japan U-18   August 26
   Team Japan        September 12  (they participated in the BAF’s 27th Asian Championship)
   Team Japan U-15   October 4

   100 limited and autographed photostands with a serial number, with 2L-sized, autographed photo of Atsuya Furuta, 2015 Hall of Famer.
   ¥21,000 tax inclusive.

   1) Change in the staff    As of September 30, Fujiko Sakai and Mariko Inagaki retired.

   2) On sale

   News from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum
3) 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 a group of 20 or more)
           ¥400  Senior citizens aged 65 or over

Closed: (1) December 28 (or 29) through January 1
       (2) 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.

NB In other words, from November, 2015 to January, 2016, the museum will be closed
     on the following days.
     November 2, 9, 16 and 30; December 7, 14, 21 and 28 ~ 31; January 1, 17 and 25

Editor’s Note: Regrettably “So many to see, so much to enjoy” is suspended in this issue due to the shortage of space.

p.8 Essays (61) Wheelchair Softball
          Shigeyuki Matsumori, Daily Sports
          Member of Players Selection Committee

In covering various sports in preparing for the coming 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, I came to
know that wheelchair softball existed. It has not been included as an event in Paralympics yet. Though it has a
history of 40 years in the U.S., it has not spread globally yet, and Japan Wheelchair Softball Association was
set up as recently as in 2013. What is interesting here is that the history of wheelchair softball in Japan started
by two baseball players. The one is Masami Ohnishi, associate professor at Hokusho University in Hokkaido.
As manager of Hokkai HS, a prestigious high school in high school baseball, he led his team to enter spring
and summer tournament at Koshien Stadium 6 times, and in the summer of 1994, his team reached the
quarterfinals. The other is Daisuke Tobishima, who played under him at Hokkai HS, but had a traffic accident
a few months after graduation in 1999 and became wheelchair-bound ever since.

They met again in 2008. Ohnishi contacted Tobishima, knowing he had found his way to wheelchair
basketball in his rehab days and was nominated as a member of Team Japan. In his junior high school days,
Tobishima pitched against Toshiya Sugiuchi who would play for the Yomiuri Giants, but did not play an active
part in high school days. When he was a junior, Ohnishi quit his job as manager. With such a background, it
was natural for Ohnishi to call on Tobishima to play baseball together, to which the latter responded on the
spot. After a long interval, they played catch. With their dream of playing baseball again, Ohnishi tried to
come up with a new “wheelchair baseball.” With help from his rubber-ball playing students, he made many
attempts to design a diamond suitable to players on wheelchair. How far should first base should be? How
should a pitcher do? He cherished a few years of trial and error in creating a new style of baseball.
Their dream of playing wheelchair baseball came to be known to many people. Wataru Horie, who had played as a pro wheelchair basketballer in Spain and Germany, informed them of the existence of organized wheelchair softball in the U.S. He belonged to a subordinate organization of the Boston Red Sox (MLB) and won the MVP in the 2008 All-American Championship. All of the MLB team had a wheelchair softball team in which players wear the same cap and uniform with the big leaguers. In 2012, Ohnishi organized Team Japan wheelchair softball team and participated in the All-American Championship with a purpose of inspecting wheelchair softball in the U.S. After obtaining full knowledge of the established rules, he shifted to wheelchair softball with organized events in view.

They began to find many supporters of their dream. Kenji Yamada, two years senior to Tobishima at Hokkai HS baseball club, worked for an advertising agency, and joined him to set up Japan Wheelchair Softball Association on being asked to design a poster for him. Now he is secretary general of the Association. On the heels of its inauguration, Saitama Seibu Lions and Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters became special supporters. Seibu Lions held the Seibu Lions Cup in September this year. After the fashion of MLB, the members of the Saitama A.S. Lions wear the same cap and uniform provided by the Seibu Lions. Yoji Seki, executive managing director of the SL, says emphatically, “Support to baseball-like sport can lead to the promotion of baseball itself. We would like to do what we can to enter wheelchair softball as one of the open events in the coming Tokyo Paralympics in 2020, and further as a regular event in the future.”

A dream started with playing catch by two baseball players has gained support from Japan pro baseball and hopefully its surges will run higher little by little. In Japan, non-handicapped people and women can also play wheelchair softball, but the player population is still small. The JWSA has only six teams representing Hokkaido, Miyagi, Saitama, Tokyo, Kanagawa and Kitakyushu. How I wish more favorable winds blew for this trend!