



The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

Articles in NEWSLETTER, Vol.26, No.4 (Feb, 2017)

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

(The English version prepared by Mariko Inagaki)

p.1 2017 Hall of Famers Elected

Shinichi Hirose, President

The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum announced its Hall of Famers for 2017 at the press conference held at the Baseball Hall of Fame from 2 p.m. on Monday, January 16, 2017. The media and pre-registered sustaining members of the museum were exclusively invited to the closed press conference.

The Players Division of the Players Selection Committee elected Tsutomu Itoh, manager of Chiba Lotte Marines, who played a leading role in the heyday of the Seibu Lions. The Expert Division elected Senichi Hoshino, a manager with strong and decisive leadership, and Masaji Hiramatsu, who amassed 201 wins with the Taiyo Whales armed with his famous ‘Kamitori Shuuto’ (a razor breaking ball).

The Special Selection Committee elected the late Hiroshi Goshi, a noted amateur baseball umpire, who was instrumental in developing future umpires, and Mirei Suzuki, who played a leading role in the Official Baseball Playing Rules Committee in Japan.

The press conference began with the announcement of the names of the 2017 Hall of Famers by Katsuhiko Kumazaki, chairman of the museum, followed by the report of the selection procedures of the Players Selection Committee by its representative director, Gotaro Nagase, and that of the Special Selection Committee by its chairman, Tetsuo Ikeda. The presentation of the induction notification to each of the 2017 inductees was followed by their acceptance speeches.

Itoh said, ‘I have never expected my name to be associated with the Baseball Hall of Fame. I have put lots of effort into baseball over the decades and I am really pleased all of my efforts were finally well rewarded.’ Hoshino commented, ‘I feel deeply blessed that I was able to devote myself to work on baseball for such a long time. I thank baseball with all of my heart.’ Hiramatsu pinched himself on the cheek to realize it was not all a dream, saying ‘I can feel a pain, but still feel like it is a dream within a dream to me. It is the greatest honor to me.’ Nobuyuki Goshi spoke of his deceased father. ‘I am sure that my father is thankful and honored for being inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame in heaven.’ Ken Kitsutani, director of alumni association of the Tokyo University Baseball Club spoke for Mirei Suzuki, ‘I am grateful to many people who have supported Suzuki’s induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame. I am sure that Suzuki would glad to hear this news.’ Later on, January 19, Takehiko Suzuki, the second son of Mirei Suzuki visited the museum to receive an induction notification.

Each of the guest speakers told an interesting episode about his respective inductee. A former Lotte Marines pitcher, Choji Murata (2005 HOF), who would play against Itoh for eight years in the Pacific League, said ‘Itoh is a talented catcher with ability to judge, analyse and of great resolution. I would have a rivalry with him but to be honest, it wanted to have him behind the plate catching me.’ Shigeru Sugishita (1985 HOF) who also played for the Meiji University and would wear the Dragon’s ace number 20 prior to Hoshino, recalled, ‘Hoshino built a genuine fighting spirit under rigorous discipline of Kichiro Shimaoka, a fiery manager of the Meiji University. Then he joined the Dragons and he had been fired up to defeat the Yomtiuri Giants, only. He did not pay any attention to other teams.’ Kiyoshi Doi, a director of the alumni association of the Meiji University Baseball Club, and who would play for Okayama Higashi High School and the Taiyo Whales, as Hiramatsu did, said with appreciation ‘Hiramatsu joined the Whales very late in my baseball career and the then-manager appointed me to sit behind the plate exclusively when Hiramatsu pitches. Otherwise, my career would have been shorter by 2 years. His Shuuto was remarkable, it was really fast and sharp.’ Akira Inoue talked about his experience of having a mixed feeling about Hiroshi Goshi’s controversial call for one particular pitch in the legendary game in the 1969 Summer National High School Baseball Tournament final. Inoue was an ace pitcher for Matsuyama Commercial High School and pitched for the final against Misawa High School. The game ended in a tie and rematched on the following day, and during which Goshi stood behind the plate. Koji Aso, who played for the Tokyo University Baseball Club and was also a member of the Baseball Playing Rules Committee, as Mirei Suzuki did, recalled, ‘He was an extraordinary man. He himself was a rulebook.’

The press conference ended with taking commemorative photographs of the new inductees and the guest speakers. After the press conference, an informal party was held at the Tokyo Dome Hotel, attended by new inductees, guest speakers, their families and some people concerned. It provided quite a good break for the deepening engagement between them.



Photo:
 (From left in back row)
 Choji Murata, Shigeru Sugishita, Kiyoshi Doi,
 Yoko Goshi, Hideyuki Goshi, Akira Inoue, and
 Koji Aso.

(From left in the front row)
 Tsutomu Itoh, Senichi Hoshino, Masaji Hiramatsu,
 Chairman Katsuhiko Kumazaki, Nobuyuki Goshi,
 and Ken Kitsutani.



Photo:
 Takahiko Suzuki
 (January 19)

Gotaro Nagase, Representative Director of the PSC

The 57th Players Selection Committee elected Tsutomu Itoh into the Players Division, who, as a regular catcher, played a leading role in the golden age of the Seibu Lions and contributed to the Lions' 14 league pennants and eight Japan Series titles. The Expert Division elected Senichi Hoshino, who managed the Chunichi Dragons, the Hanshin Tigers and the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles and lead the Eagles to its first Japan Series title, and Masaji Hiramatsu who accumulated 201 wins with his renown 'Kamitori Shuuto' (a razor breaking ball).

The 16 eligible candidates were selected by the screening committee of the Players Selection Committee 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 345 voting members with an experience of reporting baseball for 15 years or more selected the names of seven candidates at most on a ballot, and Itoh received 265 ballots (79.6% of total valid ballots). He has been inducted in his ninth year on the ballot and became the fourth catcher that played in over 1,500 games to be elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame after Katsuya Nomura (1989 HOF), Masaaki Mori (2005 HOF) and Atsuya Furuta (2015 HOF). He is a current manager of the Chiba Lotte Marines, becoming the sixth to be inducted as an active manager after Tetsuharu Kawakami (1965 HOF), Kazuto Tsuruoka (1965 HOF), Hiromitsu Ochiai (2011 HOF), Koji Akiyama (2014 HOF) and Kimiyasu Kudo (2016 HOF).



(Photo: BBM)

'I am honored to receive the prestigious Baseball Hall of Fame. I even feel like it is more than I deserve. I am extremely grateful as I think I could get one small step closer to my great leaders, Tetsuharu Kawakami, Tatsuro Hirooka (1992 HOF), Masaaki Mori and Wally Yonamine (1994 HOF) who all guided me.' Itoh named some of his great mentors, including Kawakami who was his elder graduate from the Kumamoto Technical High School and who wrote an autograph letter to Itoh upon his appointment as a Lions' manager in 2004. Itoh wished that his achievement would become even a little comfort or encouragement to those living in Kumamoto prefecture, which was hit by a massive earthquake in April 2016.

In the Experts Division, 113 of the 120 electors consisting of living Hall of Famers, baseball reporters with 30 years or more of baseball reporting, and directors of the Players Selection Committee selected the names of five candidates at most on a ballot out of 14 eligible candidates prepared by the screening committee. Senichi Hoshino received 88 ballots, 78.6% of the total of valid ballots, and Masaji Hiramatsu received 84 ballots, 75.0% of the total of valid ballots. This is the first time in which more than one candidates became a Baseball Hall of Famer in the same year since the Players Selection Committee was divided into the Players Division and Expert Division in 2008.



(Photo: BBM)

Hoshino commented calmly and humbly, ‘I found myself in an unlikely setting of the Baseball Hall of Fame today. Isn’t it some kind of mistake?’ Hoshino was a solid ace pitcher for the Chunichi Dragons with 146 wins (121 losses and 34 saves). As a manager, he accumulated 1,181 wins (1,043 losses and 53 ties) and is currently ranked in the top 10 managers in wins in NPB. He managed three teams to the league pennant (i.e., twice with the Dragons, once with the Tigers, and once with the Eagles), and finally achieved the Japan Series title with the Eagles in 2013.

Throughout his baseball career, he had been determined to fight to defeat the Giants.

He took 35 wins from the Giants. Shigeru Sugishita recalled, ‘When the Dragons won the league pennant in 1974, he told me that he was already filled with a great sense of achievement after defeating the Giants, and that the Japan Series was just an additional work for him. Even becoming a manager, he seems to have only been motivated to fight to win the league title by defeating the Giants. Perhaps that’s why, this man of the strong and decisive leadership seemed to have shown quite a soft attitude during the Japan Series?’ Interestingly, this can be explained by the fact that the opponent of both Hoshino’s first league pennant and Japan Series title was the Giants.

Hoshino, who was about to celebrate 70 years of age, commented, ‘I feel deeply blessed that I was able to devote myself to work on baseball for such long years. I thank baseball with all of my heart. I am really glad to have continued to play baseball.’

Talking about the fighting spirit to the Giants, Hiramatsu, who is from Okayama and shares a hometown with Hoshino, was also driven by an urge to defeat the Giants. He notched 51 of his 201 wins against the Giants. He was particularly fired up to blow Shigeo Nagashima away. He brought Nagashima under his control by pitching on the inside corner, limiting him to a .193 batting average.



(Photo: BBM)

As an ace pitcher for Okayama Higashi Commercial High School, Hiramatsu won the 1965 Spring National Invitational High School Baseball Tournament. In the previous year, however, he played against Kurashiki Commercial High School in the regional elimination for the Summer National High School Baseball Tournament where senior Hoshino also attended. Hiramatsu allowed several runs as the second pitcher of the game, letting Kurashiki Commercial High School out-hit 11-2.

‘Hoshino was full of vigor. His Shuuto was on another level for a high school boy. If we were in the same year, our team could not have made to the main tournament in the following year. I think we are closely connected in some way, otherwise, we would not have been inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame in the same year.’

Hoshino maintained, ‘I will continue to contribute to bring the baseball world together.’ Hiramatsu, who is also celebrating 70 years of age in September continued, ‘I wish that the terrestrial television broadcasters will return to broadcast baseball games again.’ Their enthusiasm to defeat the Giants is now turned to the passion towards the development of the Japanese baseball world.

p.3 2017 Hall of Famers elected by the Special Selection Committee

Tsuneo Ikeda, Chairman of the Special Selection Committee

The 56th Special Selection Committee elected the late Hiroshi Goshi and the late Mirei Suzuki. Both received 12 ballots, well over 75% of the total valid ballots.

Hiroshi Goshi was born in Hokkaido on January 19, 1932 and died on December 12, 2006. In his school days at Meiji High School, Goshi became involved in the world of the umpiring with the encouragement of Kichiro Shimaoka (1991 HOF), the then-manager of the Meiji High School Baseball Club. Afterwards, as prior experience in playing baseball was required to become a Tokyo Big6 League umpire, he went on to the Meiji University Baseball Club to gain knowledge and skills in umpiring.

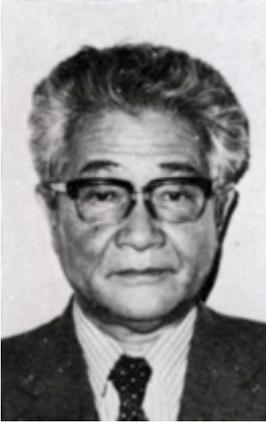
Upon graduation from Meiji University in 1954, he joined the NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation during which time he also advanced an umpiring career in the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League. He also started umpiring for high school tournaments in 1964, and since then up to 1983, he served as a crew member for a total of 16 Spring National Invitational High School Baseball Tournament finals and 15 Summer National High School Baseball Tournament finals. He is well remembered as a home plate umpire for the 1969 Summer National Baseball Tournament final in which Matsuyama Commercial High School and Misawa High School ended in a tie and rematched on the following day.



(Photo: BBM)

With his long-term experience of umpiring the high school, university levels and the industrial leagues, he was named the winner of the 1999 Asahi Sports Award for his contribution and commitment to the amateur baseball world. He also served as a member of the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League Baseball Rules Committee and worked in an advisory capacity for the Umpiring Technical Committee. He was highly regarded for his contribution to the development of Japanese amateur baseball.

Mirei Suzuki was born in Hyogo Prefecture on September 3, 1921 and died on October 11, 1991. He was a second baseman for Tokyo Teikoku University (current University of Tokyo). Upon graduation, he joined the Mainichi Newspapers. In 1946, he became an umpire for the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League and then an official scorer for the league from 1968. In 1955, he was appointed the member of the Compiling and Editing Committee for the Official Baseball Rules after being briefly appointed as a member of the Tokyo Big6 Baseball Rules Committee in 1954. Following the cooperative consultation between the representatives of the Japanese professional and amateur baseball organisations in December 1955, in which both agreed to establish standardized baseball rules for the leagues, Suzuki became highly involved in writing and compiling the *Official Baseball Rules 1956*, the first unified rules and regulations for the Japanese baseball world. Since then, each time changes and updates were made to the baseball rules in the United States, Suzuki would translate, modify and apply any changes to the Japanese version of the *Official Baseball Rules*. It became Suzuki's life work to establish the prototype of the Japanese baseball rules and adopt and adapt them to the changing times.



In addition, as a journalist at the Mainichi Newspapers, he wielded the pen. He authored several rule books such as *Answers to Complicated Questions about Baseball*, *A Concise Guide to the Official Baseball Rules* and *Baseball Rules – One Thousand and One Nights*. He also worked on promoting the joy of American baseball by translating English books relating to the Major League Baseball stars, such as *Damn Yankee: The Billy Martin Story*.

While acting as a member of the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League umpire as well as a Tokyo Big6 Baseball League official scorer, Suzuki witnessed some notable moments of Shigeo Nagashima of Rikkyo University and watched his entire career in the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League from debut until his record-breaking eight home runs. His writing skills were such that he turned these experiences and memories into newspaper articles with colorful description.

He visited the United States to witness Don Larsen’s perfect game for the Yankees in game five of the 1956 World Series between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees. He also witnessed the Yankees’ 17 times World Championships. As such, Suzuki continued to interpret several memorable and record-breaking events in baseball history. He is certainly one of the greatest baseball journalists in Japan.

p.4 Inductees Remembered (54) A Memory of my father

Yoshiteru Kawakami (son of Tetsuharu Kawakami, 1965 HOF)

It has been three years since my father passed away. I still have dreams about my father. After his retirement from managing the Yomiuri Giants, he started visiting all over the country to teach baseball to kids.



‘You know, “Mito Komon”, it was my dream situation. Imagine, just put my bat and glove in the boot and travel on my own or whatever. Once I find sandlotters in open fields, get out the car and come closer to them. For kids, I am nobody but just an old man in a street. We start playing catch, then I show my swing very confidently, just like “Look! This is the right swing!” After a while, they find themselves began hitting much better. Then they began wondering whom they are playing with. I walk straight into my car, feeling their curious eyes on my back and drive away. Don’t you think this is quite interesting scenario?’

He had been so into ‘Mito Komon’ (a Japanese popular samurai TV drama). Contrary to his appearance, he had a lot of childlike playfulness in him. Although he ended up coaching children in a ‘baseball clinic’ organized by local cities and towns, in reality, his dream of teaching baseball for kids partially came true.

I often dream of my father wearing a jersey playing with and coaching kids. I wonder to myself in the dream, 'What's wrong with him? He must have passed away. Why he is so fresh? Oh, I see, he might have not been dead yet! Oh, thank goodness!' I suffer a great loss whenever I come to realize that it was a dream.

He would write a regular column in a weekly golf magazine until a few years before his passing. It lasted about seven years. He told me his personal anecdote and insight into the subjects, and it was my role to write it down. Even when he had a pacemaker implanted, and when he suffered cerebral infarction, he continued the series without any rest period.

I enjoyed writing his series, weaving some golf anecdote into baseball stories. It was sometimes about the essence of the game and/or techniques. He practiced golf for years or even decades, but it had not improved. What is different about golf? He talked about the baseball circumstances of the time, people he played with, and episodes during his time as manager; we have a load of cassettes of his talks. I now want to hear his views about where the strength of Hiroshima Toyo Carp lies, about Hiroki Kuroda's way of living, and about the talented two-way player Shohei Ohtani. Sadly, it will never be realized.

As he worked his way up with great difficulty from a poor household where he sometimes had trouble finding enough to eat, he had been quite nervous about money. He never allowed me and my sister anything of a luxury. He paid no attention to fashion and personal belongings. He showed no interest in luxury brands or luxury class imported cars. Instead, he had a great deal of curiosity about many things since he was younger. Once, he became intensely interested in cameras, and he would develop film in a dark room. When he became involved in chrysanthemums, roses or Japanese Bonsai, he could not stop sending them to an exhibition. Once he became absorbed in a kitchen garden or soba making, he would feed his family with cucumbers or soba for several days in a row.

He also did not have a strong desire to hold his baseball memorabilia and trophies, so he donated all his belongings, his bat, jerseys, and whatever to the Tetsuharu Kawakami Exhibition Room when it was opened.

However, while I was tidying up the house after his passing, I found several trophies, pennants and other baseball memorabilia from closets. I am sure that my mother once tucked them away at the back of the closet and had forgotten about it.

Thus, I decided to donate them to the Exhibition Room in his hometown and to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, as I believed this was the best way to follow his will. On this occasion, the museum held a special exhibition at their Hall of Fame Gallery, where his Hall of Fame plaque is displayed up on the wall. 'You've done pretty well this time.' I felt his inner voice from up above.

p.5 Topics from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum - Nov 2016 - Jan 2017:

Nov 15 - Jan 15, 2017 Special exhibition: ‘Tetsuharu Kawakami’
About 30 items related to Tetsuharu Kawakami (1965 HOF, 1920-2013) have been handed over to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum from his family and were on display in the museum’s ‘Stay Strong Kumamoto project Special Exhibition: Tetsuharu Kawakami’.



On Tuesday, November 15, at the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery, Yoshiteru Kawakami, son of Kawakami, Toshimitsu Suetsugu, a former Giants’ batter, originally from Hitoyoshi-city in Kumamoto (where Kawakami was born), and President Hirose cut the ribbon to open the exhibit.



The museum engaged in fund raising and a total of JPY 59,702 was raised. All the money has been transferred to the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Fund to be used to help those who were affected by the earthquake to rebuild their lives. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the people affected by this disaster along with our sincere wishes for the earliest restoration and recovery.



Dec 17, Visit by Samurai Japan Women’s National Team
Members of the Samurai Japan who achieved five times consecutive titles in the WBSC Women’s World Cup, visited the museum.

Jan 8, Talk by Takeshi Koba

As part of museum’s ‘Stay Strong Kumamoto project Special Exhibition: Tetsuharu Kawakami’, the museum hosted a talk by Takeshi Koba (1999 HOF), who is from Kumamoto prefecture. During the event, Koba was interviewed by Kazuo Koguchi (announcer for Nippon Broadcasting). He responded with enthusiasm and introduced an anecdote about his very first greeting to his baseball idol Kawakami when he advanced to first base during a match. He also talked about a legendary story ‘Enatsu’s 21 balls’ as well as a secret story with pitcher Tsunemi Tsuda (2012 HOF).



Photo right:
Takeshi Koba (right),
Kazuo Koguchi (left)

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



December 4, Yoshinobu Takahashi, manager for the Yomiuri Giants visited the museum (photo left).

December 6, Yutaka Fukumoto (2002 HOF) visited the museum (photo right).

December 6, Hiroaki Shibaïke visited the museum. Shibaïke is a former Senshu University pitcher who held a record of 41 wins for the Tohto University Baseball League (photo middle).

December 21-22, Members of the JR East Baseball Team visited the museum.



January 11, NPB rookies for 2017 visited the museum.

A total of 116 NPB rookies and umpires visited the museum as part of their in-service training session. They spent about 40 minutes visiting exhibition galleries and the Baseball Hall of Fame. The Museum was closed during their stay.



p.7 December 6, The poll result of the exhibition: ‘Japanese Baseball Posters in 2016’ unveiled
The temporary exhibition ‘Japanese Baseball Posters’ (Nov 10 – Dec 11, 2016) displayed a total of 85 printed posters published in the entire baseball world in Japan during the 2016 season. Visitors took part in vote for their favorite poster and the Top 10 popular items are now shown on the following Museum webpage (Japanese).
http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/2016_poster.pdf

p.8 The Winner of the First Independent Study Awards Unveiled

During the 2016 summer school holidays, the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum hosted the first ‘Independent Study Awards’. The museum received a total of 81 works during the application period, which closed on September 30.

A third-grade student, Riro Matsubara, from Nagano prefecture was selected for the first prize through a careful and thorough examination by three judges, Masatake Yamanaka (2016 HOF), Dr. Joyce Sachiko Tsunoda (daughter of Yukio Nishimura, 1977 HOF) and President Hirose, which was held on October 6 at the museum’s reception room. Matsubara did tremendous work in putting together



information about baseball history, the motion of swinging the bat and holding the ball, using visual aids on large paper. The winners of the second prize were, Rio Sawa (second-grade, Miyagi prefecture), Yuuki Ohgi (fourth-grade, Gifu prefecture), Sakuto Harukawa (fifth-grade, Niigata prefecture) and Takumi Kondo (fifth-grade, Gifu prefecture).



Their works were displayed in the museum together with other great works between October 29 and November 6. The award ceremony was held on October 29 at the Temporary Exhibition Gallery. Following the comments and feedback from the judges, certificates and special gifts were presented to each recipient (i.e., Samurai Japan manager Hiroki Kokubo’s autographed baseball for first prize and Kokubo’s autographed card for second prizes). Their works are available on the museum webpage (Japanese):
<http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/jiyu-kenkyu/contest/award.html>



The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum will continue to strive to achieve our mission of engaging in activities to promote fun and interest in baseball, especially to our future generations.

◁Guide to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum▷

The entrance is located to the right of Gate 21 of the 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 of 20 or more)
¥400 Senior citizens aged 65 or more

Closed: Mondays except;

- 1) during the spring and summer school holidays,
- 2) on National Holidays,
- 3) when a professional baseball game is held at the Tokyo Dome.
- 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 6, 13, 20 and 27 ; March 6; April 10, 17, and 24.