



The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum
(<http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/>)
Articles in NEWSLETTER, Vol.29, No.4 (February, 2020)

p.1 2020 Hall of Famers Elected

Masanobu Shoji, President

On January 14 (Tue,) the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum was temporarily closed and members of the press and charter sponsors were invited to the 2020 “Hall of Fame inductee” notification ceremony at the museum’s Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery that started from 2 P.M.

There were no eligible players elected by the Players Selection Committee and the Players Division for the first time since 2008 when the players selection was split up into the Players Division and Experts Division. Koichi Tabuchi, whose resume includes being a member of the Hanshin Tigers and Seibu Lions during his playing days, the manager of the Daiei Hawks (currently the SoftBank Hawks,) and coach for the Hanshin Tigers, the Japan national team and the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles after retiring as a player, was elected in the Experts Division. Yukichi Maeda, a former manager of the Keio University Baseball Club and Renzo Ishii, a former manager of the Waseda University Baseball Club, were selected through the Special Selection Committee.

Following the announcement of this year’s Hall of Fame inductees and greeting by Chairman Atsushi Saito, reports on the selection process of the Director of the Players Selection Committee and Special Selection Committee were announced by Representative Director Gotaro Nagase and Chairman Tsuneo Ikeda, respectively. Subsequently, the awarding of the Hall of Fame induction notifications were presented, and the inductees stated their greetings. To kick things off, Tabuchi, who was elected in the Experts Division, conveyed words of gratitude to his mentor, stating, “My baseball life began after Reiichi Matsunaga (2007 HOF) taught me the fundamentals of baseball.” He also shared inside stories about when he was drafted. Daisuke Maeda, the son of Yukichi Maeda, who was selected by the Special Selection

Committee, expressed his joy, adding, “Of course we’re all thrilled, but it’s also great that all of the members of the Mita Club (alumni association of the Keio University Baseball Club) are able to share the same joy.”

Takuzo Ishii, the son of Renzo Ishii, stated, “I think that my father is very happy to be included alongside such prominent members of the Hall of Fame.” Following the greetings, guest speeches were made, and Masatake Yamanaka (2016 HOF,) a junior of Tabuchi who was also his catcher at Hosei University, praised his senior’s achievements, “As an amateur player who could draw so many spectators to Meiji Jingu Stadium, he provided a huge contribution to the Japanese baseball world.”

Hideaki Okubo, the former manager of the Keio University Baseball Club and a former student of Yukichi Maeda expressed his gratitude, stating, “He was always friendly and cheerful, and he taught me a lot of things.”

Satoru Komiyama, the current manager of the Waseda University Baseball Club and also a former student of Renzo Ishii, recalled his impression of his mentor, “He was referred to as “Renzo the Demon,” but to me he was a saint of a man.”

Lastly, commemorative photographs were taken with the Hall of Fame inductees and the guest speakers.

To view the greetings by the inductees and guest speakers, please visit http://i.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/news/halloffame2020_02.html.

Continuing from last year, all of the Hall of Fame inductees and other affiliates, including Chairman Saito, attended the party at the Tokyo Dome Hotel following the notification ceremony.

On the day of the party, approximately 35 people participated, including Yukichi Maeda’s grandchildren. It was a small party that lasted around an hour, but the participants were able to deepen their friendships in a harmonious manner.



Photo:

(From left in back row)

Masatake Yamanaka, Hideaki
Okubo, Satoru Komiyama.

(From left in the front row)

Koichi Tabuchi, Chairman Atsushi
Saito, Daisuke Maeda, Takuzo Ishii

p.2 2020 Hall of Famers elected by the Players Selection Committee

The 60th Players Selection Committee selected Koichi Tabuchi, who hit a total of 474 homeruns, the 11th most homeruns in Nippon Professional Baseball history, as the first inductee of the Hall of Fame in the Reiwa era in the Experts Division.

In the Players Division, 354 out of 361 committee members with 15 or more years of baseball reporting experience cast votes for up to seven members on the multiple-entry ballot for the 21 eligible candidates selected by the Board of Directors, who become eligible for the Hall of Fame five years after and less than 21 years since retirement.

The committee members belonging to the Tohoku Sports Press Club have been newly added after 15 years since the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles were established in Sendai.

There were no invalid votes and 354 valid votes. The total number of votes on the maximum seven-person ballot was 1,903. The average of 5.4 votes per voter surpassed the previous average of 5.2 votes by 0.2 votes.

However, there were no candidates who exceeded the required number of votes reaching 75% of the valid votes with 266 votes.

This year marked the first year since 2008, when the players selection was split up into the Players Division and Experts Division, where there were no elected candidates by the Players Selection Committee.

Shingo Takatsu had the most number of votes with 259, or 73.2% of the valid votes. Although it increased greatly from the 60.6% of votes from the previous year, he fell just seven votes short of the required number of votes. Following Takatsu, Alex Ramirez received 233 votes, or 65.8%. He also saw a significant increase in votes from the 40.4% of votes from the previous year.

Furthermore, Masahiro Kawai received 218 votes, increasing his percentage from 50.7% in the previous year to 61.6%, and Shinya Miyamoto received 206 votes, which was an increase from 41.2% to 58.2%.

Unfortunately there were no Hall of Fame inductees this year, but the four above-mentioned players exceeded 50% of the share of the votes, and we can expect those numbers to increase in the future.

In the Experts Division, 135 out of a total of 138 members who have already been inducted into the Hall of Fame, secretaries from the Players Selection Committee and committee members with 30 or more years of experience covering baseball held a vote on the maximum five-person ballot for the 16 eligible candidates selected by the secretaries from the Players Selection Committee.

Similarly, there were no invalid votes and 135 valid votes. With a total of 564 votes, the average of 4.2 votes per voter was the same figure as the previous year.

As a result, Tabuchi was inducted into the Hall of Fame after receiving 109, or 80.7% of the valid votes.



Koichi Tabuchi

During his days at Hosei University, Tabuchi hit a total of 22 homeruns, a Tokyo Big6 Baseball League record at the time, and joined the Hanshin Tigers as a catcher known for his slugging skills and strong arm as the first pick in the 1968 draft. He mesmerized fans with his high-flying homeruns.

After being traded to the Seibu Lions, he contributed to the team's two consecutive Nippon Series victories from 1982, and in 1983 he won the Shoriki Matsutaro Award.

After retiring, he served as the manager of the Daiei Hawks (currently the SoftBank Hawks,) and as a coach for the Hanshin Tigers, the Japan national team during the Beijing Olympics and the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles.

In the Players Selection Committee voting, he received 211 votes in the Players Division in 2008, but fell short of the required 231 votes by 20 votes, and became a candidate in the Experts Division after his eligibility expired on the ballot.

In the Experts Division, which reached its 13th year, it was the first time a Hall of Fame inductee was selected for the fifth consecutive year. Tabuchi became the 10th player selected by the Experts Division.

Randy Bass received the second largest number of votes by reaching 65.9% on the ballot with 89 votes, followed by Masayuki Kakefu, who reached 45.9% on the ballot with 62 votes, resulting in a row of former Hanshin Tigers sluggers.

Gotaro Nagase, Representative Director of the PSC

p.3 2020 Hall of Famer elected by the Special Selection Committee

The voting conducted by the 59th Special Selection Committee was held at the “Hatsune no Ma” at the Tokyo Dome Hotel in Koraku, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo from 2 P.M. on January 8, 2020 (the notification ceremony was held on January 14.)

This year, the voting was conducted for a total of 10 candidates, including three new candidates and excluding two others and Haruo Wakimura, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame last year by the Special Selection Committee.

The total number of voting members was 14. According to the regulations, 75% or more of the valid votes are required to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. As a result of the votes, Yukichi Maeda and Renzo Ishii were honored as Hall of Fame inductees (Maeda received 12 out of 14 votes, and Ishii received 11 out of 14 votes.)



Yukichi Maeda

Maeda was born on September 22, 1930. He passed away on January 7, 2016 (age 85.)

He played as a pitcher at the currently the National High School Baseball Championship while he was a student at Kochi Prefectural Kochi Joto Junior High School (currently Kochi Prefectural Kochi Otemae High School) in 1946. In 1947, his team advanced to the semifinals in the National Invitation High School Tournament.

In 1949, he entered Keio University. During his time there, he played as a pitcher and outfielder, and experienced three championship wins.

In 1954, during his second year at Nippon Beer (currently Sapporo Beer,) he contributed to the team's first appearance in the Intercity Baseball Tournament as a pivotal hitter. In 1959, he again appeared in the Intercity Baseball Tournament as a manager.

In 1960, he was appointed as the manager of his alma mater Keio University. In the autumn shortly after his appointment, Keio University dropped points by winning one game and losing two games in the Waseda-Keio series, and drew level with Waseda University at four points with nine wins and four losses. In the championship series, the first and second games ended in a draw, but Keio University lost the third game and lost the championship to Waseda University. However, the "Waseda-Keio six game series" was handed down to future generations as a legendary matchup in the history of baseball.

In 1982, he was entrusted with rebuilding with alma mater and was appointed as the manager for the second time. In autumn league matches of 1985, Keio University clinched the second undefeated championship win in history with a record of 10 wins, zero losses and one draw, and brilliantly lived up to his expectations as a manager.

From 1994, he served as the Strengthening Measures Committee Chairman of the Japan Amateur Baseball Association, and contributed to winning the silver medal at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996 in a backseat role. Furthermore, from 1997, he established a close relationship with 20 member countries and regions as the Director General of the

Baseball Federation of Asia, and administered tournaments such as the Asian Cup and Asian Games. He also worked hard to support international contributions and baseball in developing countries.



Ishii was born on June 26, 1932. He passed away on September 27, 2015 (age 83.) After entering Waseda University from Mito Daiichi High School, he served as the team's ace from his sophomore year and was hugely successful, recording a total of 21 wins in the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League. During his senior year, he achieved a double crown by winning the batting title and leading the league in RBI as a "captain, ace and cleanup hitter," and was a key player in the autumn league championship.

Renzo Ishii

After joining current JFE in 1955, he contributed to the team's first championship win at the Intercity Baseball Tournament in 1956 as a reinforcement player for current JX-ENEOS. In 1957, he was appointed as a coach of Waseda Baseball Club, his alma mater. In 1958, he was appointed as the manager following the resignation of his predecessor Shigeo Mori (1977 HOF.) Among them, the most noteworthy of his achievements was leading his alma mater to a championship win in the legendary "Waseda-Keio six game series" as a manager in the autumn of 1960. Motohiro Ando, the ace pitcher of Waseda University, pitched five complete games in the six game series. He displayed superhuman performance by limiting the opposition to three earned runs in 49 innings.

From 1965 to 1993, he belonged to Asahi Shimbun Company. In 1972, with the cooperation of Akihiro Ikuhara (2002 HOF,) his former student during his Waseda University days and special assistant to the president of the Los Angeles Dodgers, he worked hard to realize the USA vs. Japan Collegiate All-Star Series, a long-cherished wish of the Japanese baseball world.

In 1988, he was appointed as the manager of Waseda University for the second time. In the spring of 1990, he helped achieve the team's first championship win in eight years and 15 seasons.

Strangely enough, this year marks the 60th anniversary year of the "Waseda-Keio six

game series” that produced many legendary heroes. Maeda, whose philosophy was to “enjoy baseball,” and Ishii, who inherited the Waseda University spirit of “*ikkyunyukon*” (throwing every pitch with the utmost heart,) which was advocated by Suishu Tobita (1960HOF,) the first manager of the Waseda University Baseball Club, will shine forever in people's memories as a baseball player who lived through the post-war turbulent period and the golden age of Japanese baseball.

Tetsuo Ikeda, Chairman of the Special Selection Committee
(The photographs of the three inductees were provided by Baseball Magazine Sha Co., Ltd.)

p.4 Inductees Remembered(66)

The whole story behind the production of “Baseball Ready Reckoner”

Ryoichi Yamanouchi (Eldest son of Ikuji Yamanouchi, 1985 Hall of Fame inductee)

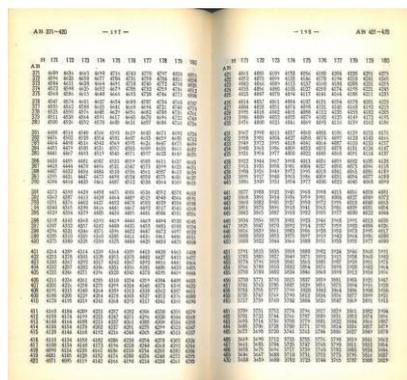


When a baseball game starts, it begins with the words, “play” from the umpire, and ends with the word “game.” Phrases such as “play ball” and “game set” are commonly used, but these are actually wrong. This is the only story about the rules of baseball that my father ever taught me. Other than that, I have never heard him talk about the rules of baseball. Since he became involved in professional baseball in 1938, I began watching baseball, and I always watched the games with my father, sitting next to him in the scorer’s seat. Because I was small, the

journalists around us always treated me with affection. Sometimes, I would hear famous players would come by and ask whether they got a hit or an error. Therefore, I had never seen a baseball game in any other seat than the scorer’s seat behind the backstop, and when I went to cheer on a Tokyo Big6 Baseball League from the outfield bleacher seats during my university days, the action was too far away and it didn’t interest me at all. Although he was at my side, I never knew what my father thought about baseball.

After the war, around the time when baseball was finally resumed, I began seeing my father turning a manual type Tiger mechanical calculator. My sister’s husband, who was

a naval technical officer, returned home, but he could not find any type of job and had no income, so my father made her start using a Tiger mechanical calculator in exchange for giving my sister pocket money. This was the first time I found out that he was thinking about creating a “batting average quick reference chart.” Thanks to my sister's hard work, they completed the quick reference calculation. However, there were no printing companies that would accept printing of only numbers, and he was apparently very troubled. I have absolutely no idea about the background about how he came up with his plan, but he consulted with Kiyoshi Honami from Yomiuri Shimbun, who he trusted the most out of all journalists and was very friendly with, established personal relationships with typesetters at the newspaper company who helped him pick out printing types. There were also no suitable places to work in, so he used a room in the newlywed Mr. Honami’s new home in Mamiana as a typesetting room and began his work by lining up the number printing types. This situation continued on for a while, but the typesetter stopped coming for some reason, and so my father began picking out the printing types. However, this did not last long and the work onto me. I stopped by the Honami residence on my way home from university, and the days of me picking out printing types until late into the night continued. I don’t remember how many years I spent picking them out, but as compensation for the work, my father bought me a used portable French typewriter, which was a valuable item at the time, and I was able to complete my master's thesis for graduate school. In 1956, I completed my master’s degree and left Tokyo, so afterwards my father, who was living with his sister, used her two sons who also lived at her house to pick up the printing types, and made them carry them to a printing shop near Edogawabashi in Bunkyo-ku. And thus, the 351-page reckoner filled with approximately 700,000 numbers was completed. The completed reckoner was soon passed over to baseball officials overseas and in Japan, and as you are all aware, immediately became well known and appreciated by many people.



Upon reflection, what kind of idea led “Ikuji Yamanouchi” to begin this kind of work? My family did not think that we struggled at all, but the biggest victims were the Honami household, and my father did not think twice about using so many other people. I believe that this work took an enormous amount of money, and I have no way of knowing how he worked it out. In modern society where civilization has developed, this

would be seen as unthinkable work. However, I believe that we must greatly appreciate this achievement that was very useful for baseball officials around the world up until the time when computers began emerging and reckoners became futile. I believe that my father is extremely satisfied as well.

p.5 Renewal of the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery

Masanobu Shoji, President



One of the matters considered by the Renewal Review Committee that was established in 2016 was the renewal of the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery.

Approximately 30 years have passed since the museum was relocated inside Tokyo Dome, and there have been 204 people inducted into the Baseball Hall of

Fame (as of 2019,) and the reason for the renovation was the lack of space to display the plaques.

As a means to secure a space to display the plaques that can be endured for the next ten years and retain the elegance of the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery, various proposals, such as “getting rid of the adjacent partition walls in order to make space,” “installing a new wall surface inside the Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery” and “installing display fixtures,” were made.

As a result of the repeated considerations, the proposal to install display fixtures was selected, and they were installed on October 29, 2019 (Tue) with the cooperation of the following organizations.

Again, we would like to express our gratitude to all of the organizations for their cooperation. Thank you very much.

Organizations that offered their cooperation

Nippon Professional Baseball Organization
Japan Amateur Baseball Association
Japan Student Baseball Association
Japan University Baseball Federation
Japan High School Baseball Federation
Japan Rubber Baseball Association
Tokyo Dome Corporation
(Listed in no particular order, titles omitted)

The new fixtures are trapezoid-shaped, with a 3.5m length, 75cm width and 1.3m height, and four fixtures were created (currently using three fixtures.)

12 plaques can be displayed on one fixture, and a total of 48 plaques can be displayed.

Currently, we are displaying 24 plaques, from Hideo Nomo, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2014, to Haruo Wakimura, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame last year.

We look forward for your visit to the newly renovated Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery.

©Photo exhibition “Stars of Japanese and American baseball as seen by Teruhiro ‘Joe’ Hoshino”

Exhibition term: November 2, 2019 to March 1, 2020

Last April, a series of photo albums relating to Japanese and American baseball was donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum by the bereaved family of the late Teruhiro Hoshino. Hoshino supported Team USA during their visits of the Major League Baseball Japan All-Star Series for over a half century until 1998 (Major League selection team,) and was a popular figure among many players.



14 albums and approximately 1,400 photos were donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum by journalist Toyoaki Hiruma from Sports Hochi serving as an intermediary, and 33 photos of the selected Japanese and American superstars are displayed as panels.

◎Exhibition of the 2nd WBSC Premier 12 championship trophy and other related materials

Exhibition term: November 19, 2019~



The first-ever Premier 12 championship trophy won by the Samurai Japan National Team, the three-run homerun ball hit by Tetsuto Yamada in the championship game, the bat used by Seiya Suzuki, who was selected as the MVP of the tournament and the cleats worn by Ukyo Shuto, who contributed to the team's victory as a pinch

runner were collected after the championship game on November 17 (Sun.) and were displayed from November 19 (Tue) following the closing day of the museum. These items will be on display at the "Baseball Press Photo Exhibition" until March 1 (Sun.)

◎The 100th anniversary of the birth of Tetsuharu Kawakami commemorative exhibition "Manager Tetsuharu Kawakami and the "V9" Yomiuri Giants team"

Exhibition term: January 18, 2020 to February 24, 2020

In conjunction with the "100th anniversary of the birth of Tetsuharu Kawakami commemorative project" that is currently ongoing in Hitoyoshi and Kumamoto in Kumamoto Prefecture, a commemorative exhibition that introduces Kawakami's managerial days titled "Manager Tetsuharu Kawakami and the "V9" Yomiuri Giants team" is being held at the museum.



Approximately 20 items, including materials relating to the team at the time and Kawakami's old possessions are on display, and Kawakami and the members of the "V9" Giants team are introduced at the exhibition.

p.6 “4thIndependentStudyAwards” contest

The “4thIndependentStudyAwards” contest held at the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum. The application period for the works was from August 1 (Thu) to September 30 (Mon,) and we received applications from 107 applicants, a record high.



On October 10 (Thu,) a screening was conducted by four judges, including Masatake Yamanaka (2016 HOF,) Chairman of the Baseball Federation of Japan, former professor at Hosei University,) Joyce Sachiko Tsunoda (eldest daughter of 1977 HOF Yukio Nishimura, former Chancellor for the

University of Hawaii community colleges,) Junko Tahara (professor of Sport History within the Department of Education and Sports for Children, Faculty of Physical Education at Kokushikan University) and President Masanobu Shoji.

After careful consideration, fourth grader Sei Sawada from Tokyo’s “Comparison of professional baseball players between the first year of the Heisei era and first year of the Reiwa era” was selected as the winner of the Grand Prize Award. Sawada’s work, which compared players from the first year of the Heisei era and first year of the Reiwa era based on the “professional baseball players directory,” was filled with a large amount of content and was very well compiled.

The works of fourth grader Yu Shimahara from Tokyo, third grader Kota Tsukamoto from Kanagawa Prefecture, third grader Ryodai Hagiwara from Kanagawa Prefecture and sixth grader Daikou Shoji from Tokyo were selected as the winners of the Award of Excellence, and the work of sixth grader Soma Yamamoto from Tokyo was selected as the winner of the Idea Award.

The six selected works were displayed alongside the other works that passed the first selection round as part of the “4thIndependentStudyAwards” contest from November 30 (Sat) to January 5 (Sun.) The induction ceremony was held on December 1 (Sun,) and each winner was presented with the award certificates after the judges provided their feedback. As an extra prize, Sawada, the winner of the Grand Prix Award, was

presented with a baseball autographed by Samurai Japan manager Atsunori Inaba, and autographed sign cards were presented to the other five winners.

The award winners, their families and the judges attended a party after the induction ceremony, and the families and judges engaged in pleasant chats at the harmonious event.

The contest preached the “conveying and spreading the appeal and enjoyment of baseball to the children who will bear the next generation,” which is a mission of the museum, and will continue in the future as a key activity in order to “further popularize” the sport of baseball.

Please view the works that received the Grand Prix Award, Award of Excellence and Idea Award at the “4thIndependentStudyAwards” contest at the following address.
http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/jiyu-kenkyu/contest/award_2019.html

Topics from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (December 2019 to January 2020)

December 13, 2019 (Fri)

○Masaichi Kaneda’s son Kenichi Kaneda’s visit to the museum

A memorial exhibition introducing the achievements of Masaichi Kaneda (1988 HOF,) who passed away on October 6, was held (from December 13, 2019 (Fri) to January 13, 2020 (Mon,)) and valuable materials, including his uniform from his playing days with the Kokutetsu Swallows (currently Tokyo Yakult Swallows) and a perfect game memorial plate, which were carefully stored by his family, were open to the public.

On the first day of the exhibition, his son Kenichi Kaneda made a visit to the museum. He viewed the exhibition and talked about his memories about his father.



○”Best Shot of the Year 2018” Commendation for Nikkan Sports/Satoshi Suga!



The induction ceremony for Satoshi Suga from Nikkan Sports, who shot the “Ohtani and Ichiro playing tag” photo which received 404 votes, the largest amount of votes among fans who visited the “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2018” for the “Best Shot of the Year 2018,” was held before the opening tour

of the “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2019.”

○Pitcher Kosei Yoshida visits the museum for the opening tour of the “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2019!”



The opening tour of the “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2019” was held, and pitcher Kosei Yoshida of the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters made a visit to the museum. He inserted a commemorative autograph on the photo panels, which included Yoshida’s first winning game that is displayed at the exhibition, and enjoyed viewing the exhibition.

The “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2019” is scheduled to be held from December 14, 2019 (Sat) to March 1, 2020 (Sun.)

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○January 10, 2020 (Fri)



110 professional rookie baseball players and umpires visit the museum
Prior to the “2020 NPB rookie workshop,” a total of 110 rookie players and umpires made a visit to the museum. The players spent around 40 minutes viewing materials related to each of the baseball teams, the exhibitions relating to the history of professional baseball and the

Baseball Hall of Fame Gallery.

Also, pitcher Yasunobu Okugawa of the Tokyo Yakult Swallows and pitcher Rouki Sasaki of the Chiba Lotte Marines signed their autographs on their own photos that are displayed at the “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2019” that is currently being held until March 1 (Sun.)



The tour was held at the museum, which was closed for during the morning for the event.

News from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum



(Obituary)

2006 Hall of Fame inductee Morimichi Takagi passed away on January 17. We would like to offer our sincere condolences.

(Resignation)

Museum librarian Yohei Kokatsu resigned from his position on July 31, 2019.

(Library)

The library will be closed during the following period in order to sort out the books.
February 1, 2020 (Sat) to February 21, 2020 (Fri)
We apologize for the inconvenience, but thank you for your understanding

p.8 Essays (75)

What I feel at the changing baseball broadcasting workplace

Director of the Players Selection Committee Tetsushi Sakanashi (NHK)

My grandmother, who lived in Omuta, Fukuoka Prefecture, was a Yomiuri Giants fan. I heard that thanks to Miike Technical High School's championship win at the National High School Baseball Championship (summer of 1965,) who were led by manager Mitsugu Hara, there were many fans of Hara and the Yomiuri Giants in Omuta. When I visited my grandmother's house when I was a child, Giants games were always playing on the television, and she would change the channel anytime they were losing. Not limited to Omuta, I think that there were many households where the father would watch Giants games while sipping on beer during dinner in the Showa era, but today, perhaps because fathers don't have a monopoly of the TV channels, the ratings gradually fell, which has resulted in fewer national terrestrial broadcasts.

On the other hand, the TV broadcasts of so-called "regional baseball teams" such as Hokkaido and Hiroshima are being viewed by even more people than before in each region. Each team is deeply connected to their regions and are deploying various events for fans, which is perhaps why there are more fans that want to cheer for their local teams and players on TV.

In recent years, when covering stories on sites, I feel that the trends and spirit of professional baseball fans are changing. The reason why it feels that way is the spread of smartphones. In today's age, it's not an exaggeration to say that smartphones have become an essential tool for obtaining information. For fans, it has become easier to obtain a wealth of information, including news relating to professional baseball and comments transmitted with SNS such as the players' own Instagram and Twitter accounts, during their spare time or on their work commutes. Meanwhile, I feel that there are more fans that have an interest in the personalities and private lives of the players.

Furthermore, I believe that "pitch-by-pitch reports" are one of the reasons why users are increasing with the spread of smartphones. Even if you don't watch or listen to the games on TV or the radio, it has become possible to check on the state of the games almost live. In addition to the progress of the games, they even cover the types of pitchers thrown per pitch. The up-to-the-minute reports for all games are transmitted on the Internet, and we are living in an age when it has become possible to easily check the games inside a train or at work even if you are not at home if you have a smartphone.

Under these circumstances, how can we make fans view or listen to baseball broadcasts

on TV or the radio? I think that what play-by-play announcers can do is to go back to the basics and take a hard look at the sport of baseball. If they can closely watch the games and practices and throw specific questions to the players and coaches, they may be able to obtain information that fans do not know about. Also, in order not to lose to the pitch-by-pitch reports, it is important to convey the “progress” of the games instead of just the “results,” and lead it to taking a “proactive approach.” It is the commentator’s job to discuss “why the results ended up in a certain manner,” and “what to do and what will happen in the future,” but when asking commentators to arouse the fan’s interest or presenting a second opinion, the play-by-play announcer’s knowledge of baseball will be questioned. By having them go to the stadiums, watch the practices, listen to the players and coaches and foster their knowledge of baseball, I believe that it will lead to “exciting” broadcasts that will impress the fans.

In this fast-changing world, I don’t know how the times will change in five or ten years in the future, but I believe that it is necessary to constantly think about how to create an era where fans will say that “watching or listening to professional baseball broadcasts on the TV or the radio is enjoyable.” I also hope that the appeal of baseball will continue to be transmitted on TV and the radio, and wish to do my best to contribute to continuing and developing the popularity of baseball.

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: 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.