

Exhibition "The great match!"

Subcommittee on Exhibition
Committee for Exhibit



Introduction

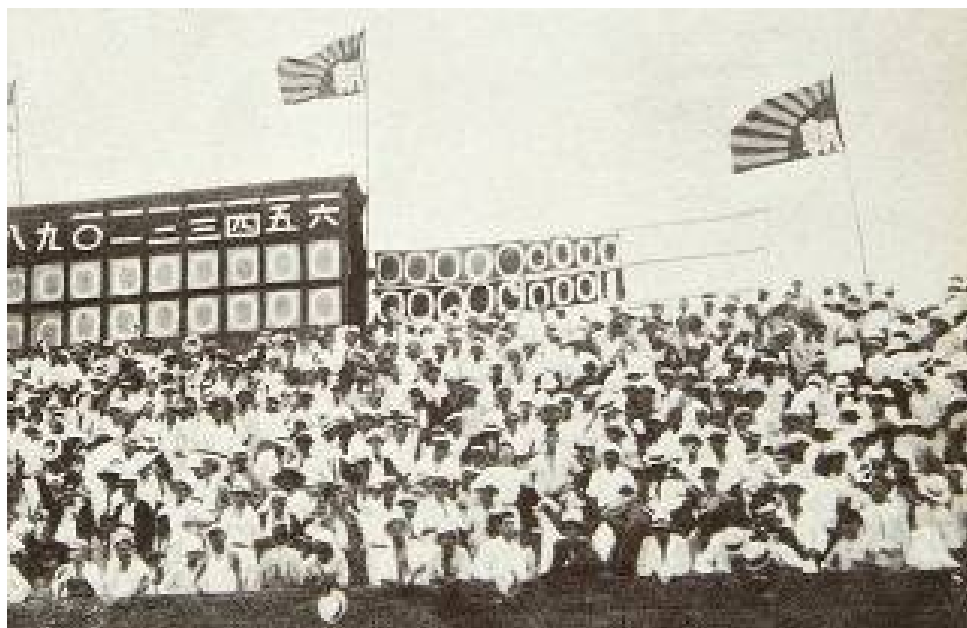
The National Diet Library (NDL) acquires and preserves various materials including newspapers and weekly magazines as the cultural heritage of the nation. The NDL held an exhibition from October to December, 2013, showing the materials which cover famous scenes in various fields in 20th century Japan. We chose about 90 great sporting events in wide range of fields including baseball, soccer, sumo, judo, tennis, rugby, golf, horse racing, boxing, pro-wrestling, the game of go and Japanese chess.

You cannot talk about the birth of great matches without the development of mass-media like newspapers, radio and television. These stories are born when the players fight with body and soul, the mass-media report it and people talk about it and pass down the story to the next generation. Tracing the memory of famous scenes, you can get a fresh perspective on sports as mass entertainment. This article shows four selected scenes

from the exhibition which showed about 160 rare materials related to 90 various great matches.

◦ Longest extra innings in history: high school baseball game

Winner: Chukyo Commercial High School vs. Loser: Akashi High School (1-0)
Semi-final game of the 19th high school baseball championship
Koshien Stadium in Hyogo, August 19, 1933

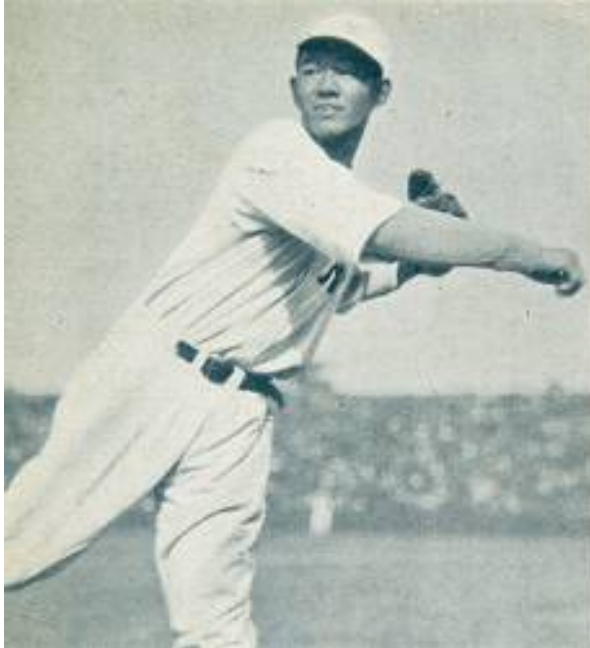


<<Photo 1: *Kokusai shashin shinbun*, number 27, Domei-Tsushin Press Agency, September 1933.: NDL call no.: 雑 53-53>>

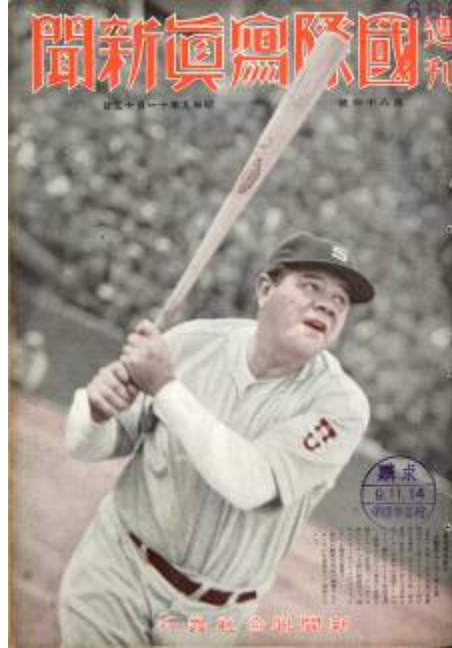
In the bottom of the extended 25th, after all the scoreless innings, a close game of two ace pitchers was settled at last. The length of the game was 4 hours 55 minutes. Two pitchers' numbers of pitches were 336 and 247, and both went the full distance. Because there was room for only 16 innings on the scoreboard at that time, an extra was added showing the 17th innings to the last. Pitching for the entire game by two ace pitchers was acclaimed as a manifestation of the Japanese spirit by a sports magazine at that time. Extra-inning games are now limited to up to the 15th innings.

◦ Good fight: Japan - U.S. baseball game

Winner: All U.S. vs. Loser: All Japan (1-0)
Goodwill games between Japan and U.S.
Kusanagi baseball stadium in Shizuoka, November 20, 1934



<<Photo 2 (Eiji Sawamura):
Yakyukai, Volume 25 Number 1,
Yakyukaisha, January 1935.:
NDL Call no.: 雑 35-83>>



<<Photo 3 (Babe Ruth): *Kokusai shashin shinbun*, number 84, Domei-Tsushin Press Agency, November 1934.:
NDL Call no.: 雑 53-53>>

A U.S. major league all-star team including Babe Ruth visited Japan in November 1934 and 16 matches were held in 12 cities all around the nation. People were excited about the visit of famous players from the birthplace of baseball. Although the Japanese team lost all games, Eiji Sawamura achieved the feat of pitching and losing only 1 point with Lou Gehrig's home run in a game played in Shizuoka. Actually, this visit was proposed by Matsutaro Shoriki, president of the Yomiuri Shimbun, a newspaper company. It was the newspaper companies' strategy to hold mass events with the aim of increasing that circulation at that time.

• Good fight: soccer

Winner: Japanese national team vs. Loser: Sweden national team (3-2)
First round of the tournament of 11th Olympic Games
Hertha Platz in Germany, August 4, 1936



<<Photos 4 and 5: *Berurin orimupikku taikan*, Manchuria Daily, October 1936.: NDL Call no.: FS27-G59>>

In this match, newcomer Japan team beat the Swedish team, one of the strongest in the world. Although Japan had trailed Sweden by 2 points in the first half, it equalized with two goals in the 49th and 62nd minutes in the second half and made a goal in the 85th minutes despite Sweden's fierce attack. The Swedish radio announcer broadcasting this match depicted the nimble Japanese players as "Japaner, japaner, japaner." This defeat is said to hold a special place in the pages of Swedish sports history with this expression.

Special Column by Ms. Doreen Simmons, who has been following sumo for 40 years. She is a writer and TV commentator.

◉ Winning streak ends! : sumo

Jan. 15, 1939: Akinoumi (安藝ノ海) defeats Futabayama (双葉山) by sotogake (Ryogoku Kokugikan)



<< Photo 6: *Yakyukai*, Volume 29 Number 5, Yakyukaisha, February 1939.: NDL Call no.: 雑 35-83 >>

This is one of the most famous scenes in the history of sumo. The man going down in defeat is Futabayama, the 35th man to bear the title Yokozuna (Grand Champion). He had won 69 successive bouts, and on the 4th day of the January tournament in 1939 he was expected to get his 70th win against Akinoumi, a relative newcomer to the top division. Instead, in a fast and furious fight the challenger managed a sotogake, outer leg trip, and the great man was vanquished, his winning streak (rensho) stopped at 69 - which is still a record, more than 70 years later. Akinoumi went on to become a yokozuna himself, though not nearly as successful as Futabayama.