

Will She Make The Big Leagues?

For many people, the start of spring means the start of baseball season too. But this season is a bit different from all the ones before. As shouts of “Play ball!” are heard around big-league ballparks, there are whispers about a young Japanese girl. Might she be the first woman to play in the big leagues?



Sixteen-year-old Eri Yoshida was drafted last fall by a new Japanese baseball team. In her tryout for the team, she used her knuckleball to pitch an inning of hitless ball against an all-male team. Team owners were impressed. They think she has the skills to become the first female to break into the big leagues.

Yoshida has been playing baseball since she was in the second grade. When she was in junior high school, she played first base on an all-boys team. Then her father showed her video of Tim Wakefield, a knuckleball pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. She watched the video and thought she could learn to throw the knuckleball too.

Some people think Yoshida was signed in order to make news headlines and bring attention to a new team. But the team’s manager doesn’t see it that way. “Her sidearm knuckle balls dip and sway, and could be an effective weapon for us,” he said.

NEWS WORD BOX

drafted impressed
effective weapon
professional achieve

For Yoshida, she never dreamed she might be the first woman to play professional ball. “I have only just been picked by the team and have not achieved anything yet,” she said.

The knuckleball has been Yoshida’s key to success so far. When news reporters asked her to show how she holds the ball when she pitches, she told them she couldn’t do that. “It’s a secret,” she said.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

What, do you think, are Eri Yoshida’s chances of success in the big leagues? Explain your response.