



AS IT IS

Japan Celebrates Victory over USA in World Baseball Classic

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Japan's national baseball team defeated the United States Tuesday night in Miami to win the World Baseball Classic (WBC) for the third time. The final score was 3-2.

The team's star player, Shohei Ohtani, pitched the final inning. He recorded the last out by striking out his Los Angeles Angels **teammate**, Mike Trout. Some experts consider them the two best players in the world. It was the first time they ever faced each other.

Ohtani is a special player because he is both one of the best pitchers and one of the best hitters in baseball. He won the tournament's Most Valuable Player **award** for his hitting and pitching during the two-week event.

After the game, Ohtani said on the worldwide television broadcast, "I believe this is the best **moment** in my life."

Fans in Japan celebrated as Ohtani threw the final pitch early Wednesday Tokyo time. Over 100 people gathered near the Shimbashi Station area to get special printings of a newspaper with the game result. Police helped control the crowd and passed out copies.

Yuji Takeno, 33, was there. "I am so **proud** as a Japanese national," he said. "I also play baseball (for fun) ... and it makes me want to work harder, that's how well they played."

Sho Ishii, 29, watched the game on a large screen at a public viewing event near Tokyo Tower. "Thank you Ohtani, thank you samurai Team Japan!" he shouted after the final pitch.

The words "Nihon yusho," which mean "Japan victory," became the number one subject of a discussion on Twitter in Japan.

Ohtani did not win the game on his own. Japan's pitchers set the record for the most **strikeouts** in the WBC. They contained a strong USA team that had scored 23 runs in its **previous** two games.

Robert Whiting writes about Japanese baseball. He said Japan may have the three best pitchers in the world and called Ohtani "**charismatic.**"

The baseball seasons in both the United States and Japan start on March 30.

I'm Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on a report by Reuters.

Words in This Story

teammate -*n.* a member of the same work or sports team or group

award -*n.* a prize or honor

moment -*n.* a single event in one's life

proud -*adj.* a strong feeling of happiness or satisfaction about an accomplishment

strikeout -*n.* the act in baseball when a pitcher throws the ball past the batter to get an out

previous -*adj.* something that happened earlier, or before the current time

charismatic -*adj.* used to describe a person who is special or talented

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