

University of Tokyo Ends a 94-Game Victory Drought



The University of Tokyo's players after breaking a 94-game losing streak with a 6-4 win over Hosei, a rival in Tokyo's Big Six college league. Credit Yohei Nishimura/Kyodo News, via Associated Press

- 1) Sooner or later, one way or another, the University of Tokyo's baseball team was bound to win a game. Any game. Just one.
- 2) The university, the top one in Japan and colloquially known as Todai, had not won a game in nearly five years, a stretch of 94 games. Even in the context of the team's well-established futility, the streak was demoralizing.
- 3) Back in October 2010, when Todai last tasted victory, 33 Chilean miners were rescued after weeks of being trapped underground. Who

knew that the Todai team was about to be trapped in a different kind of darkness?

- 4) Since 1925, when Todai joined the baseball league run by the most powerful Tokyo-area universities, the team has won just 13 percent of its games.
- 5) A national university, Todai does not offer athletic scholarships, which makes it hard to compete with Keio, Waseda and other private universities in what is known as the Big Six. The Todai losing streak was a league record.
- 6) But on Saturday, the team did the unimaginable: It beat Hosei University, 6-4, scoring two runs in the top of the 10th inning to secure the win. Some 8,000 fans at Meiji Jingu Stadium in Tokyo saw history. Tokyo University's cheerleaders during a game against Hosei University at Meiji Jingu Stadium in 2014.
- 7) Hosei, which has won a record 44 titles in the league's 90-year history, had been in the hunt for the spring tournament title.
- 8) The end of Todai's long drought brought cheers of joy and relief across baseball-loving Japan. Headlines in sports newspapers noted that the players no longer had to worry about their losing streak reaching 100 games.
- 9) "I'm very happy," Kazushi Hamada, the team's manager, told reporters. "We finally came out of the tunnel."
- 10) Seemingly overcome by the feat, he added: "Once I start to appreciate it, I will be able to talk for more than 24 hours."
- 11) Last summer, The New York Times chronicled the team, which had just broken its old record of 70 losses in a row.
- 12) The game was a collegiate version of "The Bad News Bears," only it seemed that all the losing had made Todai even more attractive to fans perpetually smitten with underdogs.
- 13) The Todai fans at Meiji Jingu Stadium in central Tokyo were optimistic that someday they would be rewarded for their perseverance.
- 14) Now the question is whether the rare triumph will take some of the shine off the team, or if the team will embark on a new streak to inspire the next generation of fans. Indeed, on Monday, Hosei blanked Todai, 6-0.

6-0.【MAY 25, 2015/ NY Times/ By KEN BELSON】

drought: 干ばつ、(長期の)不足 sooner or later: いつかは、遅かれ早かれ colloquially: 口語体で、会話で a stretch of ~: ~中ずっと context: 文脈 futility: 無価値、無意味さ demoralizing: 士気をくじくような miner: 鉱夫 hunt: 狩り、追求 losing streak: 連敗 feat: 偉業 chronicle: 記録にとどめる collegiate: 大学の "The Bad News Bears": 『がんばれ! ベアーズ』(1976年米映画) perpetually: 永遠に smite: 打ち負かす underdogs: 負け犬 optimistic: 楽観する perseverance: 忍耐力 triumph: 勝利 blank: 完封する、無得点に抑える

☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

1. Tokyo University is the flag bearer University of Japan. What is the significance of Todai's winning tournament.
2. What do you think of Todai's policy of not giving athletic scholarship?
3. This is a success of an underdog team. Do you know other success stories of underdog?
4. What do you think makes Todai Team win this year's tournament?
5. Do you think Todai will be able to make it again next year?
6. Do you know anyone who was a student of Todai? What is your impression towards them?
7. Make sentences using the following words: drought, demoralizing, streak, perpetually, underdog, optimistic, perseverance and triumph.

現在の浜田一志監督は、東大野球部OB。新日鉄に入社後、独立して東京・東久留米市で進学塾を運営していた。連敗続きだった母校・東大野球部のため、夏休みには勉強合宿を開催するなどして支援してきた。その活動が評価されて、東大野球部OB会から要請を受けて監督に就任。就任後も他の大学野球リーグのベテラン監督に教えを請い、指導法の研究も重ねていたという。