

## Japanese soccer icon Sawa ready to hang up boots

- 1) Homare Sawa, the 2011 FIFA Women's World Player of the Year, announced her retirement from soccer on Wednesday. The 37-year-old Sawa, the former Nadeshiko Japan captain and 2011 Women's World Cup top scorer and MVP, will hold a press conference on Thursday.
- 2) "She led women's soccer in Japan for many years, a great player who played in many World Cups and Olympics with the national side," said Japan manager Norio Sasaki.
- 3) "She scored at crunch moments and led us to victories in many matches. She's one of the special players I've met in my career," he added. "It's unfortunate she's retiring, but I hope she continues to shine in the next stage of her life."
- 4) Sawa, who has a Japan record 205 caps and 83 goals, had previously said she wanted to play in next year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. It would have been a fifth Summer Games appearance for the London Games silver medalist.
- 5) The INAC Kobe Leonessa midfielder appeared in the World Cup for a record sixth time this summer in Canada, where Japan lost to the United States in the final.
- 6) Four years earlier in Germany, Sawa scored a vital, extra-time equalizer with a back-heel goal in the final against the United States as Japan went on to claim its first Women's World Cup title on penalties.
- 7) The triumph was achieved four months after the devastating earthquake and tsunami that ravaged the Tohoku region, and the entire team was given the Japanese government's People's Honor Award.
- 8) Sawa's role in Japan's World Cup win led to her becoming the first Japanese and Asian recipient of the FIFA Women's World Player of the Year award. "My feeling is of sadness rather than wanting to say 'thank you for your work,'" Japan center-back Azusa Iwashimizu said.
- 9) Striker Yuki Ogimi wrote on her Twitter account, "I feel only gratitude. She overcame many barriers and difficulties to blaze a historic trail for women's soccer."
- 10) "She was a great person both on and off the pitch," said Sawa's former Belezinha and Japan teammate Eriko Arakawa. "It feels as if a part of the history of women's soccer is coming to an end and it's sad. It was great to live the same time and play soccer together."
- 11) Former Japan and Celtic midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura also paid tribute. "I'm surprised and sad. Sawa-san left huge influence not just for women but Japanese soccer as a whole," said Nakamura. "That will be passed on to next generation. The No. 10 and the captain's armband really fit her."
- 12) Sawa played her first game for Yomiuri Belezinha's senior team at the age of 12, and made her Japan debut in 1993 at age 15. She moved to the United States in 1999, playing for the Denver Diamonds and Atlanta Beat for a total of four years.
- 13) In 2004, Sawa returned to Belezinha, where she scored 47 times in 85 games. She spent another two years in the United States, this time with the Washington Freedom in 2009 and 2010 before joining INAC ahead of the 2011 season. Sawa revealed she had tied the knot with former Vegalta Sendai player Hiroaki Tsujikami in August.【Dec 16, 2015/



Kyodo】 Homare Sawa, left, celebrates with her teammates after scoring a goal in her last match. ↑  
crunch:ピンチ、危機 extra-time:ロスタイム equalizer:同点ゴール ravage:破壊する People's Honor Award:国民栄誉賞  
recipient:受賞者 blaze a trail:先鞭をつける pay tribute:に称賛の意を表する reveal:明らかにする tie the knot:結婚する

### ★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. How significant is the existence of Sawa in women's soccer today?
2. What are the qualities that one should have in order to be good at sports?
3. Which athlete do you like the most? How does he/she inspire you?
4. After an athlete decides to retire, how do you imagine his/her life would be like?
5. Make sentences using the following words: crunch, ravage, recipient, blaze a trail, tribute and tie the knot.

皇后杯決勝戦でゴールを決め、「有終の美」を飾ってピッチを去った澤選手。小学2年生でサッカーを始め、13歳で日本女子サッカーリーグ（現なでしこリーグ）にデビュー、15歳で日本代表に。日本女子代表では史上最多の205試合に出場し、83得点を挙げた。ワールドカップは男女を通じ世界最多の6大会に連続出場。主将を務めた2011年のW杯ドイツ大会では初優勝、FIFAが選ぶ女子の2011年度年間最優秀選手にアジア人として史上初めて選ばれた。