

## 総合英語レベル8 第1回 ベースボールについて

予習課題：次の英文を読んで、内容を理解しなさい。

Modern baseball, a hybrid of rounders and cricket, has become the USA's national game, and the batters and pitchers starring in the baseball diamond among the most enduring of the USA's sport legends. The sport is also a lucrative business. In 2010, the average value of the one Canadian and 29 US teams in Major League Baseball (MLB), whose play-off for the national title since 1903 has been confidently labelled the World Series, was \$491 million.

The sport has also flourished in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Venezuela, partly as a form of US "soft power". Fidel Castro's regime, on the other hand, promoted the game as part of its explicitly anti-US policy, and Cuba headed the Olympic medal haul (with three golds and two silvers) from 1992 to 2008.

The International Baseball Federation's World Cup—which typically draws upon rookies and veteran professionals for the US team—has seen Cuban domination challenged by consecutive US victories in 2007 and 2009. Asian strongholds include Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, which have been central to the marketing strategy of MLB's World Baseball Classic, inaugurated in 2006 and won by Japan in the San Diego final. In 2009, Japan's Daisuke Matsuzaka was voted in the tournament's Most Valuable Player for his contribution to his country's successful defense of its title.

Major League Baseball in the USA remains the power base of the sport, and has given rise to some of America's greatest sporting heroes, including three New York Yankees players: Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Jo DiMaggio. Revelations of steroid use by top-earning Alex Rodrigues and others have disillusioned some. The number of "informal" players is thought to have declined, from 15.5 million in 1990 to 8 million in 2007, but the finances of the elite sport, and its organized base within schools, are stronger than ever. The global impact of the World Baseball Classic indicates a successful integrated marketing model, taking MLB to the world and the world to MLB.

(注) rounders : ラウンダーズ (野球に似た英国の球技)、soft power : ソフトパワー (文化的影響力、軍事力等のハードパワーに対する)、medal haul : メダル獲得数、consecutive : 連続的、strongholds : 拠点、inaugurate : 開始する