

Don Nomura

Date of Birth: May 17, 1957



Career history

1975	Graduated Zama High School – Tokyo, Japan
1975 - 1977	California State Polytechnic University
1978	Signed with the Yakult Swallows
1981	Released by the Yakult Swallows
1981	Returned to Los Angeles, California
1993	Established Don Nomura Office
2008	Established KDN Sports Japan Inc. (Japan)
2009	Established KDN Management Inc. (U.S.A)

Baseball: MLBPA Certified Agent

Soccer: JFA Intermediary

Summary

Before becoming a sports agent that he is today, Don Nomura played baseball professionally in Japan. He couldn't give up on a dream of becoming a professional baseball player, so he dropped out of college to join the Yakult Swallows as an undrafted player upon passing a tryout. However, he was released from the team after four years without playing a major league game.

Nomura moved to the United States upon retiring from professional baseball in Japan. After gaining diverse experiences, he became the owner of the Salinas Spurs in an independent baseball league. During that time, Mac Suzuki, a 16-year-old boy from Japan, worked for the team as a team employee but later began playing with the team as a full-time player in 1992. In the following year, Nomura took on Mac Suzuki as his first client and negotiated a minor league contract with the Seattle Mariners, which marked the beginning of his baseball agent career. In the same year, Nomura became a full-time baseball agent by selling the Spurs and founding Don Nomura Office in Los Angeles, California.

During the 1994 offseason, Nomura assisted star NPB pitcher Hideo Nomo in leaving Japan and signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Initially, Nomura had to figure out a way to get Nomo released from his team, Kintetsu Buffaloes, because the Buffaloes held Nomo's exclusive rights until he had reached the international free agency. Later, Nomura discovered a loophole in the Japanese Uniform Players Contract that the rule requiring a voluntarily retired player to return to their original team upon reinstatement from the retired status won't apply to teams outside of Japan, and would allow a player to freely sign with a team overseas.

At the contract negotiation with the Kintetsu Buffaloes, Nomo demanded the team to allow Nomura to be his agent and offer him a multi-year contract. However, as Nomo and Nomura expected, the Buffaloes rejected Nomo's demand and threatened to make him voluntarily retired. Naturally, Nomo accepted the retirement from NPB and took advantage of the loophole to become a free agent in the United States, which led to signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers in February 1995.

There were lots of backlashes against Nomura and Nomo, but they stood their grounds and fulfilled Nomo's wish of playing at the highest level in the MLB. Nomo continued his success with the Dodgers and opened the door for fellow Japanese players to follow his path. If it were not for Nomo and Nomura's determination and courage, it is possible that the wave of Japanese players coming to the United States could have been pushed back more years.

In the summer of 1995, another top NPB pitcher Hideki Irabu contacted Nomura to seek help on accomplishing his dream of playing for the New York Yankees. However, the Chiba Lotte Marines, which retained his rights, sold his rights to the San Diego Padres despite his desire to play for the Yankees. Irabu, who insisted he would play only for the Yankees, refused to sign with the Padres. Since there is no rule governing trades between the two leagues, Nomura filed the grievance to the Major League Baseball Players Association for the legitimacy of the trade. As a result, MLBPA ruled that the trade is not permitted and Irabu can negotiate with the Yankees as a free agent. Finally, half a year after filing the grievance to the MLB Players Association, Irabu was able to join the Yankees in 1997.

Also, the criticisms raised against the improper trade from other MLB clubs,

who wished to sign Irabu, led to the establishment of the NPB Posting system in 1998, which allows the NPB players who have not met the international free agency requirement to get posted for MLB clubs. Although Nomura was not directly involved in the creation of the posting system, his effort to grant players' wish to play in the MLB had a significant impact on it. Today, Japanese players have more freedom to leave NPB and play in the United States, albeit there are still issues to be solved.

Nomura continued to represent various prominent players who played in the MLB, such as Masato Yoshii, Kyuji Fujikawa, and Yu Darvish, along with managing players in Japan. Recently, his work extends to the representation of soccer players, coaching a Japanese high school baseball team, and giving lectures. His impact resonates through the sports industry. Also, his adoptive father, Katsuya Nomura, is a baseball commentator who previously served as the manager of the Yakult Swallows and other NPB clubs.

Throughout his career, Don Nomura has stood by and fought along with his clients for what they believe in. Despite obstacles, he has found ways to overcome them and fulfilled the wishes of players, which earned him respects from players and the industry. As a result, he firmly established himself as a pioneer of agents in Japan.

Prominent Clients

Mac Suzuki	Seattle Mariners
Hideo Nomo	Los Angeles Dodgers
Hideki Irabu	New York Yankees
Masato Yoshii	New York Mets
Akinori Otsuka	San Diego Padres
Kyuji Fujikawa	Chicago Cubs
Yu Darvish	Texas Rangers

Publication

交渉力 (Koushoryoku)	Kadokawa
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