

22 - Chosen

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[00:04] @Miyuki

You both need to practice
with catchers besides me.

[00:09] @Miyuki

Preferably a first-year.

[00:12] @Miyuki

On another note...

[00:14] @Miyuki

If you want to pitch, come see me.

[00:17] @Miyuki

I'll do my best to help.

[00:25] @Sawamura

Hey, Okumura!

[00:28] @Sawamura

I'm pitching for the batting drills today.

[00:31] @Sawamura

Wanna catch?

[00:35] Kukki

Wow, he came to ask in person.

[00:38] ---

Yeah.

[00:40] Okumura

No, thanks.

[02:15] Okumura

I haven't made the first string yet.

[02:21] @Sawamura

This is *practice*!

I'm here asking you to catch!

[02:24] Okumura

That's why I have to refuse.

[02:26] Okumura

I promised to catch for you
when I was on the first string.

[02:29] @Sawamura

You're such a pain—such a finicky guy!

[02:33] @int_Seto

When did he make a promise like that?

[02:38] @Sawamura

A powerful barrier!
I can't get any closer!

[02:41] @Yui

Sawamura-senpai.

[02:44] @Yui

Would you mind if I played catcher?

[02:47] @Sawamura

That would be great, young Yui!

[02:49] @Yui

Just call me Yui.

[02:51] @Sawamura

Are you some kind of angel?

[02:53] @Sawamura

Do you have wings on your back?

[02:56] @Yui

No.

[02:57] @Sawamura

Then were you an angel in a past life?

[02:58] (Flashback) @fb_Miyuki

You both need to practice
with catchers besides me.

[03:03] (Flashback) @fb_Miyuki

Preferably a first-year.

[03:09] @Furuya

I'm pitching in the bullpen today.

[03:11] @Furuya

Do you want to catch?

[03:15] @int_Yui

Furuya-san...

[03:17] @Sawamura

Don't, Furuya. You're asking the wrong guy.

[03:20] @Sawamura

I asked him to and he refused.

[03:23] @Sawamura

It's like trying to tame a wild wolf.

[03:26] Okumura

Are you okay with me catching for you?

[03:28] @Furuya

Sure.

[03:31] Okumura

Thank you.

[03:32] @Sawamura

Don't thank him!

[03:34] @Sawamura

Why did you say no to me but not to him?!

[03:37] @Sawamura

This makes it seem like you hate me!

Are you okay with that?!

[03:41] Okumura

I've never caught one of

Furuya-san's pitches yet.

[03:45] @Sawamura

I see!

[03:47] Okumura

As a catcher, I'm curious

what his pitches are like.

[03:54] @int_Yui

Furuya-san...

[03:56] @Furuya

I'll see you there.

[03:57] ---

Right.

[03:59] @Sawamura

Why am I so ticked off?!

[04:02] @Maezono

Why are those two pairing up

with first-years?

[04:05] @Kuramochi

Is this your doing?

[04:08] @Miyuki

I wanted to see how well

they can teach the first-years.

[04:12] @Miyuki

I didn't think they'd up

with that combination, though.

[04:16] @Miyuki

If it goes well, they'll improve quickly,

[04:18] @Miyuki

and even if it doesn't,

it's still valuable experience.

[04:21] @Miyuki

I'll question them about it after practice.

[04:25] @Kuramochi

Hey!

[04:26] @Miyuki

I can't wait to hear what they have to say!

[04:32] @Kuramochi

There's so much malice in your voice.

[04:34] _Sign

Seido Practice Field

[04:34] @Kuramochi

You're enjoying this way too much.

[04:41] Ota

The biggest game on the
schedule for Golden Week

[04:45] Ota

will be the one against Hakuryu,
who were at the Invitational.

[04:49] Takashima

They're one of the best
small-ball teams in the country.

[04:53] Takashima

This will help us prepare for the summer.

[04:57] Ota

The second string has a
lot of games coming up.

[05:00] Ota

They're all very excited.

[05:03] Ochiai

Have you decided who will
start the Hakuryu game?

[05:07] @Kataoka

Yes. Since this game was by invitation,
they'll probably be expecting Furuya.

[05:13] @Kataoka

But I'll let the pitcher who's
looking the best start the game.

[05:29] @int_Okumura

He's more intense than I imagined.

[05:32] @int_Okumura

*His pitches move so much,
they naturally go to the four corners.*

[05:37] @int_Okumura

If you don't frame them right,

[05:40] @int_Okumura

*pitches that paint the black
could be called balls.*

[05:44] @int_Okumura

*His pitching lays the extent of a
catcher's ability bare for all to see.*

[05:50] @int_Okumura

That is Satoru Furuya.

[06:02] int_Kariba

He's good.

[06:03] int_Kariba

*He's catching Furuya's pitches the
first time they're practicing together.*

[06:08] @Okumura

Nice pitch.

[06:12] @Furuya

He makes me comfortable.

[06:17] @Furuya

Next is a vertical breaking ball.

[06:21] @Okumura

Yes, sir.

SIGN Practice Field A

Batting Drills

SIGN Sawamura-Yui Battery

One Out, Runner on First

SIGN Batter

Kominato

SIGN Runner

Kuramochi

[06:34] @Sawamura

I won't make it easy for you to run!

[06:34] @Sawamura

I won't make it easy
for you to run!

[06:36] @int_Yui

Different strategies depending on the count.

[06:38] @int_Yui

*It's exactly what Miyuki-senpai
told us about yesterday.*

[06:44] @int_Yui

The runner could take off at any time.

[06:47] @int_Yui

The batter is focused on the right side.

[06:50] @int_Yui

*We can't look for a double play
or pitch carelessly to the outside.*

[06:58] Yamaguchi

Steal!

[07:03] _Player

Near-right field!

[07:06] _Player

The runner has advanced to third base!

[07:09] @int_Yui

*The pitch was inside, but he swung late
to hit it the other way.*

[07:14] @int_Yui

What advanced bat control.

[07:18] @int_Kominato

*They were worried about You-san's running,
so they threw more fastballs.*

[07:23] @int_Kominato

*It's up to the hitter after him
to consider how to use that advantage.*

[07:29] @Sawamura

Damn you, Haruichi! You tricked me!

[07:32] @int_Tojo

I might be able to use that.

SIGN Two Outs, Runner on First

SIGN Batter

Miyuki

SIGN Runner

Tojo

[07:38] @int_Yui

There are two outs.

[07:40] @int_Yui

If they take the risk and steal second,

[07:42] @int_Yui

they can try to score with the cleanup.

[07:44] @int_Yui

If they're going try it,

they'll do it early in the count.

[07:49] @int_Yui

Let's try some outside pitches.

[07:58] @int_Sawamura

We can't beat him just by pitching outside.

[08:02] @int_Sawamura

With two outs, we really need to

focus on getting the batter out.

[08:08] @int_Yui

Okay.

[08:10] @int_Yui

Make sure to check the runner.

[08:13] @int_Yui

We'll start with some aggressive

inside pitches, and finish on the outside.

[08:35] _Player

An extra-base hit down the first base line!

[08:38] @int_Miyuki

Everyone wants to throw their best pitches

in high-pressure situations.

[08:42] @int_Miyuki

You had inside pitch

written all over your face.

[08:46] @int_Sawamura

Damn it!

[08:49] @int_Yui

I thought he could only pull it foul

from that location,

[08:52] @int_Yui

but he hit a double in one swing.

[08:55] @int_Yui

These guys are good!

[08:58] Ochiai

A batter with a first-year
is quite the interesting idea.

[09:02] @Kataoka

Yes.

[09:04] @Kataoka

Miyuki suggested it to help the pitchers
become more independent.

[09:13] @Sawamura

It's okay! Worry not, young Yui!

[09:16] @Sawamura

I have the quirks of all
these batters inside my head!

[09:20] @Sawamura

You're in good hands!

[09:23] @Yui

But wouldn't they know our quirks, too?

[09:27] @Yui

We're all on the same team.

[09:30] @Sawamura

O-Okay, let's take a breath and calm down.

[09:34] @Yui

A breath?

[09:36] @Sawamura

It's the best thing to do in a pinch!

[09:38] @Sawamura

In...

[09:40] @Yui

In...

[09:41] @Sawamura

and out...

[09:42] @Yui

and out...

SIGN May 1st

SIGN Practice Field A

Batting Drills

SIGN Kawakami-Ono

One Out, Runner on First

SIGN Batter

Kanemaru

SIGN Runner

Aso

[09:57] (Flashback) @fb_Kataoka

I'd like you to pitch outside to the batters

[10:00] (Flashback) @fb_Kataoka

who have a hard time
hitting the ball the other way.

[10:03] (Flashback) @fb_Kataoka

It can be any pitch you like.

[10:06] (Flashback) @fb_Kataoka

Throw whatever you think
would be hard to hit.

[10:09] int_Kawakami

Only to the outside.

[10:12] int_Ono

*It's a tall order, but let's use
as many variations as we can.*

[10:22] _Umpire

Strike!

[10:24] @Sawamura

What's wrong, batter?

[10:26] @Sawamura

If you let strikes go by,
the runner can't advance!

[10:30] int_Aso

That makes the count 2-2.

[10:32] int_Aso

*If they're gonna try to finish
it with a breaking ball...*

[10:35] Yamaguchi

Steal!

[10:40] _Player

Oh, yeah! A strike-out double play!

[10:42] _Player

Way to get the out after he ran like that!

[10:45] @Sawamura

That was a ball!

[10:47] @Sawamura

If you're gonna swing, you'd better
make contact at least!

[10:51] Kanemaru

I can't say he's wrong.

[10:54] @Sawamura

Nori-senpai, nice pitch!

[10:56] @Sawamura

Ono-senpai, that was awesome!

[10:58] @int_Yui

*Wow, even though they're
limited to outside pitches,*

[11:03] @int_Yui

they stay just inside the strike zone.

[11:05] @int_Yui

After they had two strikes,

[11:07] @int_Yui

*they used a slider wide of
the strike zone as a ball.*

[11:10] @int_Yui

*They used fastballs and breaking balls
to get the better of the batter.*

[11:14] @int_Yui

That's what a battery of third-years can do.

[11:17] Ono

One out, runners on first and second!

[11:20] Ochiai

Kawakami is looking good.

[11:22] Ochiai

This is good practice for the batters, too.

SIGN Runner

Seki

SIGN Batter

Maezono

[11:31] _Umpire

Ball!

[11:36] @int_Yui

Unlike free batting,

[11:41] @int_Yui

*live practice shows who
has real batting prowess.*

[11:48] @int_Yuki

*Team-oriented batting
that can adapt to any situation,*

[11:51] @int_Yuki

*the perseverance to draw an at-bat out
to create a chance,*

[11:54] @int_Yuki

*and the ability to pressurize
the opposition pitcher.*

[11:57] @int_Yui

*That's what it takes to
bat on the first string.*

[12:02] _Umpire

Ball four!

[12:03] Kishima

Yeah!

[12:05] Ono

One out, runners on first and second!

SIGN Batter

Takatsu

[12:10] @Sawamura

Okay, I'm gonna run! Here I go!

SIGN Runner

Sawamura

[12:15] @int_Takatsu

To stay on the first string,

[12:19] @int_Takatsu

I need the team to rely on me!

[12:24] @Sawamura

Nice, Takatsu!

[12:25] @Takatsu

Yeah!

[12:26] _Player

Near-center field!

[12:28] Ochiai

That was a bold step-in.

[12:31] Ochiai

He may have more guts that

I gave him credit for.

[12:35] @Kuramochi

Takatsu, eh? It felt good

to watch that swing.

[12:40] @Takatsu

Yeah!

[12:42] @Tojo

Takatsu is trying to stand out.

[12:46] Ono

Runner on first!

SIGN Fielders Switched

SIGN Furuya-Ono Battery

[12:56] Ochiai

Did you tell him to pitch

to the outside, too?

[12:59] @Kataoka

Yes. If he can learn to direct

his potent pitches,

[13:03] @Kataoka

that alone will prove an asset.

[13:05] Ochiai

I see.

[13:07] int_Ochiai

Still, though, he's very tense.

[13:11] @int_Okumura

He's forcing it more than in the bullpen.

[13:14] @int_Miyuki

His balance is off in the stretch, too.

[13:17] @int_Miyuki

His weight isn't where it needs to be.

[13:24] @Furuya

One out.

[13:29] @Furuya

One out!

[13:32] Ono

Furuya...

[13:34] @int_Yui

Furuya-san...

[13:35] @Sawamura

Say it louder!

[13:37] @Sawamura

One out!

[13:39] @int_Furuya

I'll do what I can, one thing at a time.

[13:46] Yamaguchi

Steal!

[13:57] Ono

Nice pitch, Furuya!

[13:59] int_Ono

*Limiting where the pitches
go keeps things simple.*

[14:04] Ono

Two outs, runners on first and second!

[14:10] @int_Miyuki

*When he's good, his pitches are untouchable,
but otherwise they're terrible.*

[14:15] @int_Miyuki

*That kind of inconsistency
is deadly in a tournament.*

[14:21] @int_Miyuki

*The ace is the one who pitches to win,
even if he's off his game.*

[14:29] @int_Miyuki

*It's a challenge he'll have to
overcome to become a true ace.*

[14:42] @Maezono

He doesn't normally practice batting with us.

[14:47] @Kominato

Yeah.

[14:57] @Okumura

Want to call it a day?

[14:59] @Furuya

Thanks.

[15:01] @Okumura

You really are pitching better in the bullpen.

[15:04] @Furuya

Yeah.

[15:11] Kukki

This team sure practices a lot.

[15:14] Asada

Yeah.

[15:15] Asada

The third-years always stay until the end.

[15:25] @Sawamura

My day's not complete until I run with this!

[15:31] Kukki

A floating ring?! No, it's...

[15:34] Asada

A-A tire!

[15:36] @Sawamura

Hey, Yui, catch for me when I pitch in the bullpen tomorrow.

[15:41] @Yui

Yes, sir!

[15:43] @Yui

Is everyone going to Miyuki-senpai's room again tonight?

[15:46] @Sawamura

No, it's his night to help me practice!

[15:51] @Yui

You look quite happy about it.

[15:54] @Sawamura

The captain almost never willingly practices with others!

[16:21] @Miyuki

Can you wait a little longer while I clean up?

[16:29] @Miyuki

Sorry to keep you waiting, Sawamura.

[16:32] @Miyuki

Let's get to it.

[16:34] @Miyuki

The sun's down, so we'll use the indoor practice field, okay?

[16:40] @Sawamura

Are you sure about this?

[16:42] @Miyuki

About what?

[16:45] @Sawamura

They're still practicing.

[16:52] @Miyuki

What's that? You don't

want to throw the numbers?

[16:55] @Sawamura

Of course I do!

[16:57] @Miyuki

There's your answer! So...

[16:59] @Sawamura

I mean, you were practicing hard for once.

[17:02] @Miyuki

What the heck?

[17:05] @Miyuki

I was planning to go all-out with the signs during the Golden Week practice games.

[17:12] @Miyuki

We need to use them in a real game.

[17:15] @Miyuki

I want to know which pitches are good enough to use.

[17:19] @Sawamura

In that case, let's do it!

[17:20] @Miyuki

Seriously, what is with you tonight?

[17:23] @Miyuki

What number do you want to go up to?

[17:24] @Sawamura

All of them, if possible!

[17:25] @Miyuki

How ambitious.

[17:27] @Sawamura

Please!

[17:29] @Kominato

They're going to practice the numbers.

[17:33] @Kominato

Miyuki-senpai sure is busy.

He's got his own practice, too.

[17:39] (Flashback) @fb_Miyuki

We can't let him outshine us like this.

[17:42] @Maezono

That's not it.

[17:44] @Maezono

He's steeled his resolve, too.

[17:48] @Sawamura

You shook your head a little too much at Yui's signs.

[17:51] @Sawamura

Huh? Did I?

[17:53] @Miyuki

Yeah, you did.

[17:54] @Sawamura

Did it look that way?

[17:56] @Miyuki

Yui volunteered to catch for you, you know?

[18:00] @Miyuki

Did you explain the reason to him?

[18:01] @Sawamura

Of course I did!

[18:02] @Miyuki

Are you sure?

[19:05] @Miyuki

Too wide!

[19:07] @Miyuki

No one's gonna swing at that!

[19:10] @Miyuki

Number 6 next!

[19:18] @Kataoka

Continue.

[19:22] @Sawamura

Yes, boss!

[19:24] @Miyuki

Number 6!

[19:26] @Sawamura

Yes, sir!

[19:31] @Miyuki

Number 11!

[19:36] @Miyuki

He's got up to Number 7
pretty well under control.

[19:40] @Miyuki

Any higher and he gets less consistent.

[19:46] @Miyuki

There are a lot of incomplete numbers,

[19:49] @Miyuki

but what Sawamura showed off most
in the last game

[19:54] @Miyuki

were his concentration on the mound
and his increased ball control.

[19:59] @Miyuki

In order to pitch deep into the game,

[20:01] @Miyuki

he needs breaking balls
that can alter the hitters' eyeline.

[20:06] @Miyuki

I'm not sure how much he can do
with just the pitches up to Number 7.

[20:11] @Miyuki

I'd like to try them out on
a nationally-ranked team.

[20:21] @Miyuki

Number 7 next! The improved cutter!

[20:32] @int_Sawamura

*Bore a hole into the
right-handed batter's chest!*

[20:46] int_Ono

*It breaks that much
at the same speed as a fastball.*

[20:50] int_Ono

That pitch is crazy.

[20:53] int_Ono

If he can throw that anytime he wants...

[20:57] @Kataoka

That's enough for today.

[20:59] @Sawamura

Huh?

[21:00] @Sawamura

We were just getting started!

[21:02] @Sawamura

Boss, please watch some more of my pitches!

[21:05] @Kataoka

I've seen enough.

[21:08] @Kataoka

You're starting for the practice game
against Hakuryu in three days,

[21:13] @Kataoka

Sawamura.

[21:19] @Sawamura

Wait, in three days?

[21:21] @Sawamura

Golden Week starts in two days, right?

[21:23] @Sawamura

Don't I get to pitch that day?

[21:26] @Sawamura

We have a doubleheader that day, don't we?

[21:28] @Kataoka

You won't be playing the first day.

[21:30] @Sawamura

Why? Why do I have to wait three days?!

[21:33] @Sawamura

What am I gonna do for three days?!

[21:35] @int_Miyuki

*He's chosen Sawamura
to start against Hakuryu,*

[21:39] @int_Miyuki

*the strongest team out of
all our practice games?*

[21:45] @Kataoka

A number of press outlets will be there.

[21:48] @Kataoka

Make sure you condition yourself and
take the mound in the best shape possible.

[22:00] @Sawamura

Hakuryu? Hakuryu...

[22:02] @Sawamura

Where is Hakuryu from again?

[22:04] @Miyuki

Hakuryu's from Gunma.
They were in the Invitational.

[22:06] @Sawamura

Huh? The Invitational?

[22:08] @Miyuki

You shouldn't be surprised by that!

[22:10] @Sawamura

In three days?!

SIGN "Chosen"

[22:16] @Miyuki

"Chosen."

[23:49] @Maazono

We'll score enough runs that you
pitchers won't have to worry.

[23:53] @Miyuki

Hakuryu is the strongest team we play
during the Golden Week away series.

[23:57] @Miyuki

Just the fact that you're starting that game
shows they have high hopes in you.

[24:02] @Miyuki

Tomorrow, I'm only gonna focus on
helping you pitch your best.

[24:07] @Sawamura

I've wanted his acknowledgment...

[24:09] @Sawamura

Wanted to make him acknowledge me!

[24:11] @Sawamura

On the next episode of
Ace of the Diamond Act II:

[24:14] @Sawamura

"One Pitch, One Second."

SIGN Next Time

SIGN "One Pitch, One Second"

[24:16] @Sawamura

Let's win the national title!

SIGN Illustration / Yuji Terajima

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