

# E7 - Mutsuko's Special Training

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**[00:00] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[00:00] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[00:00] Txt**

Baseball Team

**[00:01] Tao**

Seriously, what the hell?

**[00:03] Tao**

I was chilling out at home after the game.  
Why are we all back here again?

**[00:07] Kan**

Seems our second round opponents  
tomorrow, Seiwa Middle, are crazy good.

**[00:12] Kan**

They beat Koutou Middle 10-2  
in a game called after the fifth.

**[00:16] Tao**

Wow.

**[00:17] Tao**

I thought Koutou and Seiwa  
were supposed to be evenly matched.

**[00:21] Yay**

I heard they found a coach who  
knows his stuff a few years back.

**[00:25] Yay**

They scored ten runs, but their playstyle  
revolves entirely around small ball.

**[00:31] Tao**

Small ball?

**[02:03] Dai**

Seiwa Middle are  
stronger than I anticipated.

**SIGN** Mutsuko's Special Training

**[02:07] Dai**

I called you all here so we can come up with ways to deal with their offense.

**[02:10] Dai**

In particular, their base stealing.

**[02:13] Nis**

Base stealing?

**[02:16] Dai**

The main focus of their batters will be getting runners on base.

**[02:21] Dai**

And once on base, they'll attempt to steal at every opportunity.

**[02:25] Dai**

Bunts will be a factor, too.

**[02:26] Dai**

As soon as they see any kind of opening, they'll try to advance the runners.

**[02:29] Dai**

Aside from their cleanup, they're all fast runners.

**[02:32] Tao**

You sure the other team's catcher wasn't just bad?

**[02:35] Yay**

That's totally a thing. If the catcher sucks, you can steal bases for fun.

**[02:40] Chi**

I don't think Anita will give them such an easy ride.

**[02:44] Ani**

Darn tootin'!

**[02:46] Ani**

I tol' him straight up my arm'd stop 'em runnin' as freely as they did in that game.

**[02:50] Ani**

But Cap's still insistin' we practice stoppin' 'em.

**[02:53] Dai**

The catcher's arm isn't the only thing that prevents base stealing.

**[02:57] Dai**

The pitcher needs to do slide steps and pickoffs.

**[03:00] Dai**

The catcher can't do it alone.

**[03:03] Mut**

Pickoffs aren't something

I'm comfortable with yet.

**[03:07] Mut**

I have my hands full just  
pitching at the batter.

**[03:10] Tan**

Okay, then.

**[03:11] Tan**

If that's how it is, it's best we practice.

**[03:14] Tan**

After all, pickoffs are an  
important part of my basework.

**[03:16] Kan**

Oh, yeah.

**[03:18] Yay**

Well, we're all already here, so might as well.

**[03:21] Tao**

Yeah.

**[03:22] Dai**

We don't have a lot of time,  
so I don't know how far we'll get,

**[03:25] Dai**

but let's give it a go.

**[03:27] Mut**

*Give it a go, huh?*

**[03:31] Dai**

All right. Let's start  
with first base pickoffs.

**[03:35] Dai**

Chisato, pretend you're on the  
opposing team and try stealing a base.

**[03:39] Chi**

Roger.

**[03:41] Dai**

Mutsuko and Anita, do everything  
you can to stop Chisato from stealing.

**[03:46] Chi**

We're starting with runners?

**[03:48] Dai**

Yeah, we won't have time otherwise.

**[03:51] Dai**

All right. Play!

**[03:55] Dai**

Balk!

**[03:56] Mut**

Huh?

**[03:57] Dai**

No good. You can't stop halfway on

a pickoff attempt if your foot's on the rubber.

**[04:03] Mut**

My foot's *not* on it. I moved it off.

**[04:05] Dai**

If you don't release,

**[04:06] Dai**

you have to step way back from  
the rubber or a balk gets called.

**[04:10] Dai**

You didn't do that just then, so you  
should've committed to throwing it to first.

**[04:15] Dai**

All right, let's go again.

**[04:17] Mut**

R-Right...

**[04:20] Mut**

*This is hard.*

**[04:21] Mut**

*It's super hard concentrating on the runner  
and slide stepping and all that junk...*

**[04:29] Dai**

Balk!

**[04:30] Mut**

Again?!

**[04:31] Dai**

Not "again." A balk's a balk whenever it's called.

**[04:35] Dai**

When you step out with your left foot,

**[04:37] Dai**

you have to point it at  
first base, but you didn't.

**[04:42] Dai**

You rushed your throw  
and only twisted from the waist.

**[04:45] Dai**

And what's more, your swivel was too slow.

**[04:48] Dai**

Chisato strolled back to first.

**[04:51] Dai**

If you throw like that, you'll embolden  
the runners, and they'll take bigger leads.

**[04:55] Dai**

You need to speed it up.

**[04:57] Dai**

All right. Again.

**[04:58] Mut**

*What a nag.*

**[05:00] Mut**

*I'm trying my best here...*

**[05:05] Dai**

Balk!

**[05:05] Mut**

Huh?

**[05:07] Chi**

Heya.

**[05:09] Dai**

Your glove didn't come to a stop.

**[05:11] Dai**

In the set position, a balk's called if your glove doesn't come to a complete stop.

**[05:17] Dai**

All right. Again!

**[05:19] Mut**

*And there we have it.*

**[05:20] Mut**

*When Daigo says, "let's give it a go,"  
it's never a casual training session.*

**SIGN** Six Months Ago

**[05:28] Dai**

Since the baseball team is just us six now,

**[05:31] Dai**

I'd like to preliminarily decide positions  
so we can run defense drills and so on.

**[05:37] Dai**

First, Tanba-san. You were a starter on  
third last year, so I'd like you to stay there.

**[05:42] Tan**

S-Sure.

**[05:43] Yay**

I'll take second.

**[05:45] Yay**

Shortstop for me, then.

**[05:46] Mut**

Ooh! Outfield for me please!

**[05:48] Kan**

Anywhere's fine as long as I get game-time.

**[05:52] Tao**

First base is free.

**[05:54] Kan**

Th-Then, first it is!

**[05:59] Mut**

Pitcher?

**[06:01] Dai**

Yeah. We don't have a pitcher right now, you see.

**[06:05] Mut**

Well, yeah, but I'm sure one of the new sign-ups in spring will want to pitch.

**[06:11] Dai**

Spring's way too late.

**[06:13] Dai**

We won't know if we can throw them straight into a game,

**[06:15] Dai**

so we need to train up at least one pitcher from our current roster.

**[06:22] Dai**

Based on skill, I think either Tao or Sawa-san will be our best bet.

**[06:28] Dai**

They're both talented, so I think they'd pick it up quite quickly.

**[06:32] Tao**

Excuse me? No way am I gonna pitch!

**[06:35] Dai**

Huh?

**[06:36] Tao**

Since Little League, I've only ever played shortstop!

**[06:40] Tao**

I have zero interest in playing any other position.

**[06:43] Dai**

Right... Sawa-san, what about—

**[06:45] Tao**

Nope and nope!

**[06:46] Tao**

You can't split up the Yayoi-Tao middle-infielder dream team.

**[06:50] Yay**

Sorry, Shigeno.

**[06:52] Yay**

I also have zero interest in pitching.

**[06:57] Mut**

Shigeno-kun!

**[06:59] Mut**

Did Tao and Yayoi agree to pitch?

**[07:02] Dai**

Nope. Both said no.

**[07:04] Mut**

So what are we going to do?

**[07:06] Dai**

Well, I can't force anyone into doing it.

**[07:09] Dai**

Oh well. Guess it's back  
to the drawing board.

**[07:12] Dai**

Second!

**[07:18] Dai**

Okay!

**[07:19] Dai**

First!

**[07:20] Kan**

Bring it on!

**[07:27] Tao**

Whoa! Kandori, that's some arm you've got!

**[07:31] Kan**

You think so?

**[07:32] Yay**

First isn't the place for an arm like that.

**[07:34] Tan**

Oh, how about third, then?

**[07:38] Kan**

Third, huh? That sounds kinda cool...

**[07:43] Dai**

Forget bases for now.

Can you throw a fastball at me?

**[07:47] Kan**

M-Me? Pitch? Really?

**[07:50] Mut**

Kan-chan as a pitcher, huh?

I never even considered her.

**[07:53] Tao**

With your arm, pitching might  
suit you down to the ground.

**[07:56] Kan**

Uh, r-right.

**[07:59] Kan**

Here I go!

**[08:01] Dai**

Okay!

**[08:08] Dai**

*Not bad.*

**[08:10] Dai**

Good. Keep 'em coming!

**[08:14] Kan**

Uh, okay.

**[08:30] All**

Dead already?

**[08:33] Dai**

Maybe I was being a bit unreasonable...

**[08:41] Kan**

Too much, too much.

**[08:46] Dai**

Good work today.

**[08:47] Mut**

Yeah, you too. Good work.

**[08:51] Dai**

Hey, Sakura.

**[08:54] Dai**

How do you feel about  
pitching from tomorrow?

**[08:57] Dai**

You have amazing control...  
when we play catch.

**[09:03] Mut**

Yikes, you're asking *me* now?

**[09:05] Mut**

What is this? Eenie, meenie, miney, moe?

**[09:09] Dai**

I didn't realize it until now, but I think  
you'd take to pitching quite easily.

**[09:18] Mut**

N-No way! Not happening!

**[09:20] Mut**

My throws are slow, and all eyes are  
on you when you're on the mound!

**[09:23] Mut**

Just get Tao or Yayoi to do it!  
Or maybe get Kan-chan to train up a bit...

**[09:27] Mut**

Whatever you do,  
there's absolutely no way I can do it!

**[09:39] (Flashback) Dai**

Just give it a go.

**[09:40] (Flashback) Dai**

I'll help you out.

**[09:43] (Flashback) Dai**

If you want, you can throw as many pitches  
as you like at me every single day.

**[09:52] Mut**

Me... pitching...

**[09:57] Dai**

Since it's your first time,  
let's give it a go and see how we do.

**[10:02] Mut**

*Give it a go, huh?*

**[10:05] Mut**

All right.

**[10:12] Dai**

*She has good form.*

**[10:21] Dai**

Okay, nice ball!

**[10:25] Mut**

Uh, right!

**[10:27] Tao**

What's going on here?

First Kandori, then Mutsuko.

**[10:31] Tao**

Shigeno's kind of all over the place.

**[10:33] Yay**

This might not be a bad idea, though.

**[10:35] Kan**

I like third better, I think.

**[10:44] Dai**

Sakura.

**[10:45] Dai**

Try to consciously transfer more of your weight to your front leg as you throw.

**[10:50] Mut**

Okay, I'll try!

**[10:59] Mut**

*Wait, wasn't this meant to be casual?*

**[11:05] Mut**

I need... a breather.

**[11:07] Dai**

We can call it a day there.

**[11:10] Dai**

Your core's pretty weak.

**[11:13] Dai**

Daily runs every morning and after practice should fix that.

**[11:18] Mut**

What?!

**[11:45] Dai**

This is your first time pitching to a batter,

**[11:48] Dai**

but just aim for my mitt like always.

**[11:50] Mut**

Right!

**[11:56] Tao**

Whoa! That was real nice!

**[12:02] Tao**

High to the inside this time!  
You've got good control, Mutsuko!

**[12:09] Dai**

Don't just admire them.

**[12:10] Dai**

This is batting practice too, you know.  
You're meant to try and hit them.

**[12:14] Tao**

Oh, I have permission to hit them?

**[12:39] Dai**

Okay, nice pitching.

**[12:41] Mut**

What was "nice" about *that*?!  
They hit every single one!

**[12:44] Mut**

It's pretty obvious I'm not  
cut out to be a pitcher.

**[12:48] Dai**

Yeah, but you were only throwing fastballs.

**[12:50] Dai**

That's why we're going to add  
more weapons to your arsenal.

**[12:52] Mut**

What?

**[12:54] Dai**

Can you come over to my house tomorrow?  
It's Saturday and all.

**[12:58] Txt**

Shigeno

**[12:58] Txt**

Shigeno

**[13:04] Dai**

What's with that outfit?

**[13:06] Mut**

Huh? Well, uh, I mean,  
you told me not to wear a skirt.

**[13:10] Dai**

Well, whatever. Get on over here.

**[13:14] Mut**

Wait, didn't you have a pool here before?

**[13:18] Dai**

Yeah, but we got rid of it  
so we'd have more room to practice.

**[13:22] Mut**

Wow.

**[13:23] Mut**

*I swear, rich people...*

**[13:25] Izu**

Good to see you!

**[13:27] Mut**

H-Hello!

**[13:29] Izu**

We haven't properly met yet, have we?

**[13:31] Izu**

I'm Izumi, Daigo's big sis and  
former Fuurin Middle baseball player.

**[13:35] Izu**

Thank you for looking out for my brother.

**[13:38] Mut**

O-Oh, no problem.

**[13:39] Mut**

My name is Sakura Mutsuko.

**[13:41] Mut**

I've heard so much about you  
from Tanba-san and the others.

**[13:45] Mut**

I'm a big fan!

**[13:48] Izu**

Stop, you're embarrassing me.

**[13:49] Izu**

I guess, unlike my bro,  
I didn't drag the team down.

**[13:54] Dai**

I wanted you to learn  
how to throw breaking balls.

**[13:58] Dai**

I figured seeing them up  
close was the easiest way.

**[14:00] Dai**

Breaking balls?

**[14:04] Dai**

Pay attention to how the ball moves.

**[14:05] Mut**

Okay.

**[14:08] Izu**

Here it comes.

**[14:15] Mut**

A-Amazing! It curved!

**[14:17] Dai**

That was a slider.

**[14:19] Dai**

This is the weapon that will  
make your fastballs shine.

**[14:22] Mut**

Yeah, I wanna learn how  
to do that. Please teach me!

**[14:25] Mut**

Put your middle finger on the stitching.

**[14:27] Mut**

Yeah, like that.

**[14:29] Mut**

Don't twist. Slice it like... this.

**[14:32] Mut**

Don't twist, slice.

**[14:34] Dai**

Okay! Now you give it a try.

**[14:41] Dai**

Great! That curved.

**[14:44] Mut**

Really? Awesome!

**[14:45] Izu**

Hey, good pitch.

**[14:47] Izu**

For a first go, that was  
excellent, Mutsuko-chan.

**[14:50] Mut**

Thank you so much!

**[14:57] Izu**

Nice, Mutsuko-chan!

**[15:00] Izu**

Good, Mutsuko-chan!

**[15:05] Izu**

That's it, Mutsuko!

**[15:08] Izu**

Good, Mutsuko!

**[15:15] Mut**

I-I'm sorry, Shigeno-kun! Are you okay?!

**[15:17] Dai**

That was awesome, Mutsuko!

**[15:19] Dai**

That slider just now was *perfect*!

**[15:22] Dai**

You've come on leaps and bounds.  
Let's keep this up!

**[15:25] Dai**

I'll catch all your pitches.

**[15:29] Mut**

Okay!

**[15:31] Kao**

Okay, time to take a break

and have some tea.

**[15:34] Izu**

Good luck with that. Those two can't hear you. They're totally in the zone.

**[15:38] Kao**

Oh, my.

**[15:40] Dai**

You're only using your hand and trying to force it to curve.

**[15:43] Dai**

Try using your arm more.

**[15:45] Kao**

Aw, don't they look so cute together?

**[15:48] Izu**

Yeah. You picked up on those vibes too?

**[15:51] Izu**

And you know something?

**[15:52] Izu**

I get the feeling, if anything, Mutsuko-chan's the one who's interested.

**[15:56] Kao**

Oh, really? And what about Daigo?

**[15:58] Izu**

He's useless. He's totally oblivious.

**[16:01] Kao**

Oh, boy.

**[16:03] Kao**

Like father, like son.

**[16:15] Dai**

Nice ball!

**[16:16] Izu**

I didn't think you'd pick it up this quickly.

**[16:19] Izu**

You're a natural at pitching, Mutsuko-chan!

**[16:22] Mut**

You think so?!

**[16:24] Izu**

Yep. You might become their trusty ace yet.

**[16:27] Mut**

Yay!

**[16:29] Dai**

Well, it's not game-ready just yet.

**[16:32] Izu**

That depends entirely on you.

**[16:35] Dai**

Ow.

**[16:40] Dai**

All right. Should we get back to it?

**[16:43] Izu**

This is another kind of grip.

**[16:46] Mut**

That one looks difficult.

**[16:48] Izu**

With how you pitch, I think  
you'll actually find it pretty easy.

**[16:51] Dai**

Sis, what are you showing her?

**[16:54] Izu**

The sinker. I mean, I think it's time  
she learned another breaking ball.

**[16:59] Dai**

Hold on. It's too soon.

She only just learned the slider.

**[17:03] Izu**

Why? It's better to have more  
weapons at your disposal.

**[17:07] Dai**

That's true, but breaking balls already  
put a strain on the shoulder and elbow.

**[17:12] Izu**

That's why I'm showing her the pitches  
that put the least strain on those areas.

**[17:16] Dai**

Instead of learning them all at once,  
it's better to get them down pat, one by one.

**[17:21] Izu**

You don't have time for that.

**[17:24] Izu**

You want to use them in the spring, right?

**[17:24] Mut**

Um, Shigeno-kun?

**[17:26] Dai**

I've made my own calculations!

**[17:29] Izu**

Okay, then let's hear them!

**[17:31] Dai**

It's none of your business!

**[17:32] Mut**

Shigeno-kun, I...

**[17:33] Izu**

Ah, but you're not a pitcher!  
Mutsuko-chan's the one pitching!

**[17:38] Dai**

There are things the catcher

can see more clearly!

**[17:40] Mut**

Please stop, Shigeno-kun.

**[17:41] Izu**

I'm telling you it's not  
your place to decide!

**[17:44] Dai**

I'm the captain of the Fuurin baseball team!

**[17:45] Mut**

Shigeno-kun.

**[17:47] Mut**

Shigeno!

**[17:49] Izu**

Yeah?

**[17:49] Dai**

What is it?

**[17:50] Mut**

Um, uh...

**[17:52] Izu**

See? She's all flustered because of you!

**[17:54] Dai**

Huh?! It's because you're going overboard!

**[17:57] Dai**

Teaching her stuff we didn't even ask for!

**[17:57] Mut**

*They're both called Shigeno...*

**[17:59] Izu**

Who do you think you are?! You're just Daigo!

**[18:02] Dai**

What the hell does that mean?

**[18:03] Dai**

Anyway, you're butting in  
where you don't belong!

**[18:03] Mut**

Da... Da... Da...

**[18:06] Mut**

Shut the hell up, Daigo!

**[18:07] Dai**

No, you shut up!

**[18:09] Mut**

Daigo!

**[18:13] Izu**

*Oh, wow. She called him by his first name?*

**[18:17] Mut**

U-Um, I... want to be useful  
sooner rather than later,

**[18:22] Mut**

so I'd like to learn the sinker.

**[18:24] Mut**

Okay, Daigo?

**[18:28] Mut**

*I used his first name for the first time.*

**[18:31] Dai**

Oh, really? Well, if you're all right with it, let's get to it!

**[18:40] Izu**

*Yup, thought so.*

**[18:42] Izu**

*It's classic Daigo, failing to notice how much this girl's heart is pounding.*

**[18:51] Dai**

Nice ball!

**[18:52] Dai**

You're getting into your groove, Mutsuko!

**[18:54] Sign**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[18:54] Sign**

Fuurin Academy Private Middle School

**[19:00] Dai**

All right!

**[19:06] Tao**

Mutsuko's pitching is evolving fast.

**[19:10] Yay**

If you add breaking balls to her precision, nobody's getting a clean hit.

**[19:14] Kan**

Is that "Coach" Shigeno's doing?

**[19:17] Mut**

Hey, Daigo.

**[19:19] Mut**

How were my sliders today?

**[19:21] Mut**

I tried holding on to the ball a bit longer.

**[19:25] Dai**

Yeah, I think that'll increase their precision.

**[19:29] Muts**

You think so too?

**[19:39] Tao**

Good work, Daigo.

**[19:40] Yay**

See you, Daigo.

**[19:42] Kan**

We're off, Daigo.

**[19:44] Dai**

What's that about?

**[19:46] Tan**

All the girls are calling Shigeno  
by his first name now.

**[19:49] Tan**

Do they think he's a mascot?

**[19:54] Mut**

It made me happy that I was able  
to get Tao and Yayoi out today.

**[19:58] Dai**

Once your accuracy with breaking balls  
improves, you'll get even more outs.

**[20:03] Mut**

But if someone amazing  
joins the team in the spring,

**[20:07] Mut**

I won't be pitching anymore.

**[20:10] Dai**

You're honestly worried about that?

**[20:14] Dai**

In no time at all, your pitching  
has improved by a crazy amount.

**[20:18] Dai**

I believe in your abilities, Mutsuko.  
And anyway, I consider you Fuurin's ace now.

**[20:25] Mut**

*He keeps calling me Mutsuko...*

**[20:28] Mut**

Okay!

**[20:32] Dai**

See you tomorrow.

**[20:33] Mut**

See you, Daigo.

**[20:39] Dai**

Mutsuko, when did you start  
calling me by my first name?

**[20:43] Dai**

The other girls do it now, too...

**[20:46] Dai**

Well, not that it matters.

**[20:48] Dai**

See ya!

**[20:50] Mut**

You only just realized *now*?!

**[20:59] Chi**

Heya.

**[21:01] Dai**

All right. Again!

**[21:03] Mut**

Again?!

**[21:04] Ani**

Senpai, she ain't gettin'  
it perfect by tomorrow.

**[21:08] Ani**

All this'll do is make us  
self-destruct 'cause we're focusin'

**[21:11] Ani**

on the runner an' forgettin' 'bout the batter!

**[21:13] Nis**

Yeah. As a pitcher, I agree with what she said.

**[21:17] Nis**

It's impossible to learn quick pickoffs  
and slide steps in one day.

**[21:23] Nis**

Someone who's never pitched  
before wouldn't understand.

**[21:26] Dai**

I never said this was going to be easy.

**[21:30] Dai**

But as we're up against a running team,  
I want to take the fight to them!

**[21:36] Dai**

If we can't shackle Seiwa's runners,  
we will lose tomorrow.

**[21:41] Dai**

We still have time.

**[21:43] Dai**

You can never be fully prepared,

**[21:46] Dai**

but if there's still stuff we can do,  
I want to do it before we take them on!

**[21:53] Mut**

It's all good. Let's get on with it already, Daigo.

**[21:56] Mut**

The sun's starting to go down.

**[21:59] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[21:59] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[21:59] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[21:59] Txt**

m 0 0 | 100 0 100 100 0 100

**[21:59] Txt**

Mifune Seiwa Middle School

**[21:59] Txt**

Mifune Seiwa Middle School

**[22:03] And**

Okay, last one. We'll call it a day after.

**[22:06] Ura**

What, stopping already?

**[22:08] And**

I don't want to wear us both out.

**[22:10] And**

Let's go into tomorrow's game  
firing on all cylinders.

**[22:15] Ura**

Gotcha.

**[22:17] Ura**

*Shigeno has hardly grown at all  
since our little league days.*

**[22:21] Ura**

*But me?*

**[22:25] Ura**

*I'm not the same guy I was back then.*

**[24:01] Ura**

Hey, Andy, who do we play  
after we beat Fuurin?

**[24:04] And**

What's that, Urabe? You think we've already won?

**[24:07] Ura**

They won't even get near my pitches.

**[24:10] And**

Before that, our small ball might throw them  
off their game and make them self-destruct.

**[24:16] Ura**

See? You're confident we're gonna win, too.

**[24:19] And**

Next time: "Extreme Small Ball."

***SIGN*** Extreme Small Ball

**[24:22] And**

Run to the stage of your dreams!

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