

# A Study on the Management Strategy of the Hiroshima Toyo Carp

## - The Effect of the Return of the Pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda -

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to verify the impact of Kuroda's return on the Carp. This verifies the expectation and economic effect Kuroda's "chivalry" has on the Carp fans who are mainly women. The result of the study below verifies the following three points.

1. The expectations of fans on Kuroda was high.
2. Kuroda's "chivalry" increased the expectations of female fans and male fans alike.
3. From the increase in the number of visitors at the opening of 2015 season 14, the management strategy of Carp had also shown great effect in financial terms.

**Key words** : Management strategy, Baseball, Fans, Carp

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## Introduction

December 27, 2014, "On the 27th, it was announced that Hiroshima Toyo Carp successfully acquired pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda (39) who had just turned Free Agent (FA) after US Major League." reported Nihon Keizai Shimbun (2014). This news both shocked and surprised Carp fans. The cost to acquire Kuroda was about \$ 3.2 million. Carp is the only among the 12 teams who does not enjoy the blessings of a parent company's financial support. Aside from the Carp, other teams are able to secure additional funds to make up for their deficit from parent companies in the form of advertising expenses. Since the Carp does not enjoy this benefit, they cannot go into the red. Due to the fact that the Carp does not have a parent company, the annual salary of the players in the team are low. This investment of about \$ 3.2 million, is considered a major burden for the Carp.

And, they have not won any championships since 1991. This is the longest among the 12 teams (Central League,

Pacific League). In addition, good players that they had raised have moved at a high annual salary to other teams and MLB. Also, Carp as a team is stereotyped as "Carp women", a baseball team popular with female fans. Due to the above, on Carp born Kuroda return after the Yankees, "chivalrous" was the term the mass media used to describe his return.

The purpose of this study is to analyse if the return of Kuroda was a successful management strategy. For the purpose of this analysis, the following three questions are posed.

Question 1. Research and analyse the expectation of Carp fans on Kuroda.

Question 2. Research and analyse if female fans hold similar expectations on Kuroda.

Question 3. The performance in terms of visitor numbers since the season opening of 2015 season against the previous year.

**Explanation of term**

The terms used in this study are defined as follows.

“Carp” refers to Hiroshima Toyo Carp.

“Kuroda” refers to Hiroki Kuroda pitcher, who transferred from the New York Yankees.

“Carp women” are the female fans wearing red and pink uniforms, who enthusiastically cheer the young Carp players who are drawing low annual salaries.

“Kuroda's chivalry” refers to Kuroda's chivalrous spirit in giving up his annual salary of about \$ 16 million as a New York Yankees to return to Carp.

“Yankees” refers to a team in the East division of Major League Baseball called New York Yankees.

**Methodology**

For this survey, the reason for using the internet as the medium for survey and analysis is the ability to obtain real time data on Carp fans' expectations.

**Subject**

The study subjects are Carp fans. Excluding incomplete answers, 529 respondents' answers were analysed.

**Survey period**

Survey period was from March 13 to March 26, two weeks before the 2015 season opening.

**Survey methodology**

The survey was carried out on the internet and data collected. The reason for employing this method was because it is possible to investigate the expectations of the fans in real time.

Survey cooperation requests were written to the following Social Networking Services (SNS) : LINE, Facebook, Twitter, and mixi. Survey respondents, go to the survey page by accessing the listed URL to input their response. Respondents provide their response in four stages.

**Survey content**

The survey included questions about the management

strategy of the Carp. Through that, six questions regarding the expectation of Kuroda return are obtained. It showed the six questions below

- Q 1. I hoped for the return of pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda.
- Q 2. I thought the return of pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda could be realized.
- Q 3. I was touched by the “chivalrous spirit” of pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda.
- Q 4. I want pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda to be the a starting pitcher.
- Q 5. I think pitcher, Hiroki Kuroda will be active.
- Q 6. Even if pitcher Hiroki Kuroda is not active, his presence in the Carp is necessary.

**Method of processing data**

Statistical tests (comparison of the mean value, significant difference between groups) were carried out on the results from the survey. Statistical tests were performed using a general - purpose PC statistical software (such as SPSS ver. 23).

**Limitation of this study**

Since the survey was conducted over the internet, it is not possible to verify all expectations of Carp fans. And, there is a limit to the reliability of the survey results.

**Result and consideration of study 1**

<Table 1> showed the number and percentage of respondents.

Table 1. Number and percentage of respondents

	N	Percentage
Male	295	55.8 %
Female	234	44.2 %
Total	529	100 %

<Figure 1> showed the expectations of fans on Kuroda. This pie chart showed the answer to all six questions about Kuroda. And on Question 6, the affirmative answer showed a high value of 90 %. In addition, it also showed a very high expected value of 74 % on Carp fans. From this fact,



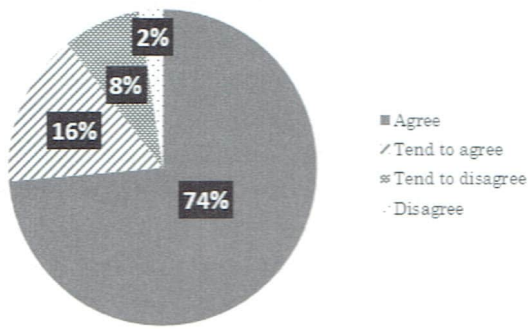


Figure 1. Expectations of fans for Kuroda

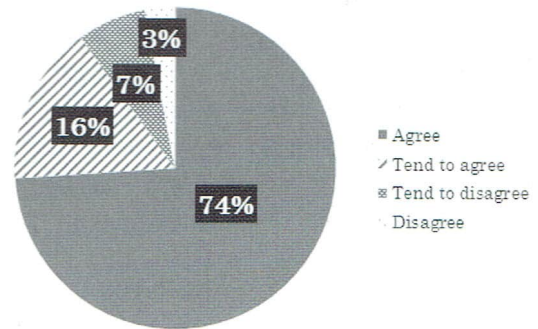


Figure 2. Expectations of male fans for Kuroda

it can be inferred that fan expectations on Kuroda was surprisingly high from before the start of the season.

## Result and consideration of study 2

From the results shown above, expectations of Carp fans on Kuroda showed a significantly higher result. Thus, <Figure 2> and <Figure 3> showed the breakdown by gender.

The expectations of male fan on Kuroda is shown in <Figure 2>. The percentage of respondents who answered affirmative to the 6 questions was the similar to all Carp fans at the high value of 90 %.

The expectations of female fans on Kuroda is shown in <Figure 3>. Affirmative answers to the 6 questions are 88 %, similar to the high numbers of the male fans.

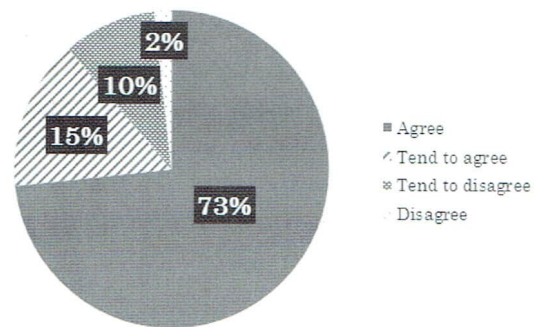


Figure 3. Expectations of female fans for Kuroda

Kuroda is a player who returned to Carp from the Yankees. Kuroda's "chivalrous spirit" has been highly praised by the mass media. Also, Carp has a high percentage of female fans known as "Carp women". The female fans hold high expectations on Kuroda's "chivalry".

Table 2. Answer of Carp fan of six question items

		Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree	Ave.
Q.1	N	394	100	26	9	3.66
	Percentage	74.5 %	18.9 %	4.9 %	1.7 %	
Q.2	N	138	141	190	60	2.67
	Percentage	26.1 %	26.7 %	35.9 %	11.3 %	
Q.3	N	457	58	11	3	3.83
	Percentage	86.4 %	11.0 %	2.1 %	0.6 %	
Q.4	N	473	45	10	1	3.87
	Percentage	89.4 %	8.5 %	1.9 %	0.2 %	
Q.5	N	424	97	6	2	3.78
	Percentage	80.2 %	18.3 %	1.1 %	0.4 %	
Q.6	N	452	58	15	4	3.81
	Percentage	85.4 %	11.0 %	2.8 %	0.8 %	

<Table 2> showed the detailed answers of the 6 questions from Carp fans. Aside from Question 2, the average value was a high value of 3.60 points out of a full score of 4. The average value of Question 2 was as low as 2.67 points. Questions 2, was about whether Kuroda of return can be realized. This questions was asking if fans really believed that Kuroda would return from the Yankees to Carp. This question was to ask if fans believe that their expectations about Kuroda' s return to Carp would be betrayed. This is the possible reason on why the value of this question is low. Therefore, this does not reflect a low expectation on Kuroda.

<Table 3> showed the details of the six questions to Carp fans divided by gender. <Table 3> showed that for all questions the value is similar for both the men and women. These male and female values, showed a high number in all items on a 4 point scale. Through this, we can conclude that the expectations on Kuroda is not isolated to female fans but male fans hold equally high expectations.

Table 3. Answer of Carp fan of six question items by sex

	Sex	Ave.	SD	<i>p</i>
Q.1	Male	3.72	0.62	*
	Female	3.59	0.69	
Q.2	Male	2.65	1.05	n.s.
	Female	2.70	0.89	
Q.3	Male	3.82	0.49	n.s.
	Female	3.85	0.43	
Q.4	Male	3.94	0.30	***
	Female	3.79	0.49	
Q.5	Male	3.76	0.50	n.s.
	Female	3.81	0.42	
Q.6	Male	3.83	0.51	n.s.
	Female	3.79	0.50	

\**p* < .05, \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 4. Attendance of the home game

	2015 season	2014 season	Comparison with last year
Games no.	14	13	
Attendance no.	411,061	287,486	+ 32.8 %
One game average no.	29,362	22,114	

## Result and consideration of study 3

<Table 4> showed the number of visitors to Carp' s home game. The average number of visitors for the 13 games after the 2014 season opening was compared against the average number of visitors for the 14 games after the 2015 season opening. The average number of visitors per game in 2015 had increased by 32.8 %. Results of the Carp at this point was the lowest in the Central League. In spite of the results, the average number of visitors was increasing, which can be considered as a clear indication of Carp fan expectations on Kuroda. From this fact, we can conclude that the management strategy to transfer Kuroda from the Yankees to the Carp was a success.

Calculating the revenue from 2015 season opening till the end of the 14 games, there was an increase of about \$ 2.4 million. Aside from that, it can projected that the sales from goods due to the Kuroda effect has also increased. The annual salary of Kuroda has been estimated to be about \$ 3.2 million. From a financial perspective, the investment on Kuroda can be recouped in one season. Again, it can be concluded that not just on fan expectations, from a financial management perspective, this strategy is a success.

## Conclusion

Carp' s acquisition of Kuroda, can be considered a successful as a management strategy.

Below are the three reasons to illustrate that.

1. The expectations of fans on Kuroda was high.
2. Kuroda' s "chivalry" increased the expectations of female fans and male fans alike.
3. From the increase in the number of visitors at the opening of 2015 season 14, the management strategy of Carp had also shown great effect in financial terms.



## Future subject

In taking advantage of the net investigation that can be done in real time, a follow - up investigation should be performed. The research and analysis related to the Carp brand strategy and “Carp women” is necessary.

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