

Olympic and Paralympic Education Programme 2018

Dream and Future Project

Activity Report



The Date and Location:

July 4, 2018 (WED) 9:45AM – 12:35PM

Taito City Asakusa Junior High School (1-3-4, Kuramae, Taito Ward, Tokyo)

Number of Participants: 249 Students (1st – 3rd Grade) for the lecture
168 Students (2nd & 3rd Grade) for the sports session

Lecturer: Mr. Shigeo Yoshihara (blind soccer player, high jump player, track cyclist)

Records: 1992 Summer Paralympic in Barcelona	High jump, 4 th place
1996 Summer Paralympic in Atlanta	High jump, bronze medal
2000 Summer Paralympic in Sydney	Track cycling, gold & silver medals
2004 Summer Paralympic in Athens	Track cycling, silver medal
※A Japanese blind soccer team has not competed in the Paralympics yet.	

SUMMARY

On July 4, 2018, we invited Mr. Shigeo Yoshihara, a Paralympian and current blind soccer player, and organized an event for the whole school under the Dream and Future Project (“Challenge Yourself” Program) at Taito City Asakusa Junior High School. In addition to the lecture, we conducted a sports session for the 2nd and 3rd graders. Students actively engaged in the event and wanted to learn a lot from Mr. Yoshihara.

LECTURE

“My name is Shigeo Yoshihara. Please call me Yoshi.” The lecture began with a friendly self-introduction. Mr. Yoshihara was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa when he was 10 years-old and his vision gradually decreased. “I strongly felt at the time that I wanted to continue the same lifestyle I had even after losing my eyesight. I decided I would become a new model of what it is to be a visually impaired person. I focused on sports, which I was good at, and set my goal to become a Paralympian.”

Based on his own experiences, he told students “If you have something that interests you, please give it a try. Never give up on your goal and your dream.” He also taught students “the importance of cherishing your companions,” which he learned from his experience playing blind soccer.

At the end, he told students that he wishes that they will feel more familiar with people with impairments through activities such as watching the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, participating in volunteering, and practicing sports together.



Mr. Yoshihara giving his lecture



Demonstration of blind soccer

DEMONSTRATION

In the demonstration, Mr. Yoshihara showed passing, dribbling, and shooting with a guide who is called as “caller,” who provides instructions to players.

To demonstrate passing, the guide announced his location using his voice and claps, and then Mr. Yoshihara kicked the ball in the direction of the guide. The ball successfully rolled over to the

guide's feet. The guide kicked the ball back to Mr. Yoshihara who identified its location using sound and caught it. Next, he showed us his dribbling, stating that the key is "to touch the ball constantly and create sound." Students were amazed by the technique he used to keep the ball glued to his feet. For his shooting demonstration, he targeted a goal between cones several meters away from him. The guide indicated the location by tapping the cones and Mr. Yoshihara scored.

During the Q&A, students asked Mr. Yoshihara about the challenges he encounters in his life and communication with his teammates. He answered each of them sincerely, yet with some humor. In the end, he showed us his medals, and students who asked him a question got the lucky opportunity to touch them.



Demonstration of dribbling



Mr. Yoshihara showing his medals

SPORTS SESSION

We organized a blind soccer session for the 2nd and 3rd graders after the lecture. Mr. Yoshihara instructed everyone on what to be careful of when they have a blindfold on. The instructions were very important to prevent injuries and the students listened to him attentively.

Students tried carrying soccer balls and dribbling with blindfolds on. They also tried being guides to provide instructions to their friends who had blindfolds on, which made them understand the importance of speaking and calling out to people with visual impairments.

For the shooting practice, Mr. Yoshihara first showed a demonstration with a student who was chosen to be the guide. He made a goal 4 meters away from him. After the demonstration, students tried shooting following instructions from their guides but struggled to score any goals. Students helped other pairs by offering instructions and everyone worked together to help their fellow students score.



Mr. Yoshihara supervising students



Shooting demonstration

After the sports session, Mr. Yoshihara restated the importance of collaboration between those who can see and those who cannot. “With teamwork, you can achieve things you cannot do by yourself. If you see a friend or someone struggling in your daily life, please reach out to them.”

A student expressed gratitude to Mr. Yoshihara on behalf of the whole school, stating that “We learned that anyone can achieve their dream if they worked hard for it, even when they have a handicap like vision loss. We will try to speak to people in need. Blind soccer was difficult, but we enjoyed it very much. I have learned the rules of blind soccer, so I want to watch and support the blind soccer games at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.



Shooting practice



“Teamwork is important.”

Comments from Students:

“It was really difficult to kick the ball in a straight line with a blindfold on, but my friends gave me a lot of instructions such as “Kick the ball as hard as you can.” Thanks to them, I made a goal. It was fun to cheer for friends and help each other. When I watch a blind soccer game next time, I would like to pay attention to not only the players but also the how the supporting staff gives instructions.

(9th grade girl)

“I realized once again how difficult it is to do anything without eyesight. It was the first time for me to try a Paralympic sport, and I strongly felt the importance of teamwork. I was moved by his desire to change the perception that people with disabilities are “pitiful” and that “they cannot do anything by themselves.” I actually viewed people with disabilities like this before but the lecture changed my perception.”

(9th grade boy)

“I was surprised by his positive attitude and cheerfulness that doesn’t give any indication that he has a disability. During the sports session, since we are not used to being sightless, I tried to tell my partner the location of the ball by touching them with the ball and calling out. Through this event, I became more prepared for Tokyo 2020. I want to reach out to people if they are in need of help and proactively engage in volunteering.”

(9th grade boy)