

**Title: Soccer culture of Japan and Australia**

Topic: Consider soccer intellectually

## **Introduction**

Each country has its own soccer culture. First, I need to give some descriptions about soccer cultures. It has a great connection between its country's nationalism, culture, history and many other factors. For instance, the Spanish have little interest in their national soccer team. This is because, historically, their racial consciousness is much stronger than national consciousness. As you can see from this, each country has its own special soccer culture which is constructed by historical matters.

As I had been to Germany to see FIFA World Cup 2006 matches, I had a chance to realize the "soccer culture" of various countries very keenly. I realized the difference between them. I also recognized the nationalism and cultures appearing vividly from them. As I watched the game between Japan and Australia at the stadium which Australia won 3-1, I came to understand how amateurish Japanese supporters were. They could not sing loudly and continuously. They were so weak and helpless that it was no doubt of early defeat of team Japan. The supporters reprimanded their players when their players missed. I even thought that they were searching something to claim on, instead of cheering their players. On the other hand, Australian supporters, like other countries in Europe, big men sang their supporters' songs loudly and strongly like

rumbling sound. They never used abusive language to their players. Instead of that, they aimed their attack at the judges which referee had made. They trusted their players and cheered the players until the last moment of the game.

From this actual experience, I would like to analyze the soccer cultures of Japan and Australia by using the data which I had researched on questionnaire and also, widen the view to the sports culture.

### **Background of soccer of both countries**

First, it is necessary to understand the backgrounds of soccer of each country, Japan and Australia. The common point is that they're both island countries. Although, the ways of import of soccer are quite different. Soccer was brought into Australia by immigrants from England, Croatia, Italy, Greece, and etc. Although, soccer is not a popular sports among the Australian because they prefer Football(Rugby) to Association Football(Soccer). National Soccer League(=NSL) had begun in 1977 and it changed its name to Hyundai A-league in 2005 as changing its form, amateur league to professional league. The national Australia team had been failing to pass the FIFA World Cup qualifying ever since they had had taken part in the FIFA World Cup 1974 in West Germany, but this year, they had achieved to participate in the FIFA World Cup 2006 in

Germany. The interests to soccer from the Australian are getting higher and higher.

“After the World War II, Japan, actually, was occupied under the US Army, and the interests of the Japanese were headed only to politic, culture, and sports of America. But, when (everyone thought that) Japan reached America economically, after 80’s, their interests began to head toward Asia and Europe.” “in early 90’s, Italian professional soccer league was in the limelight” “Supported by that the Japanese professional soccer league was to launched out .“(Goto Takeo, 2002,p.331,p.332) The Japanese professional soccer league, J-League, opened in 1993 led by present J-League Chairman, Kawabuchi Saburo. He was the instigator of the J-League, who declared “promotion of soccer as sports culture” as the main point. Until then, industrial-league soccer was the center of the Japanese soccer. In the first place, international students brought soccer into Japan. Soccer was spread to university students and then to the industry sports. As you can predict, industry has great connection between Japanese soccer. Without its support, it was impossible to launch out J-League. This year, is 13th year of J-League. From the history, it seems that Japan soccer is much more developed than it of Australia. But we must say that both countries are still undeveloped compared to Europe.

## **Sports culture of both countries**

Next, based on the background, I would like to compare differences among each sports culture. Australia is known as great sports country. A lot of impressive players have born there and play active parts in the world sport such us track and field, swimming, tennis, and of course, football. “Australia is like a county of football museum.”(Goto Takeo, 2002,p.436) There are many kinds of football in Australia. For example, League Rugby and Union Rugby. Each football has its original rules as a result of the pursuit of individual of each state and country. As you can see , Australia’s sports culture is highly developed. “Almost 13 million Australians aged 15 years and over participate in some form of physical activity for recreation or sport. Close to 11 million Australians exercise at least once per week and about 4.2 million exercise at least five times per week” “ Australians also enjoy watching sporting events—sport is the most commonly watched genre of television programming after news and current affairs. Going to sports events is also a popular pastime, with about 48 per cent of Australians aged 15 years and over attending at least one sports event during 2002.”(A passion for sport-Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.(May 2005)Retrieved September 27, 2006, from<http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/sport.html>) This shows how strongly Australians are interested in sports. Behind this, there are strong

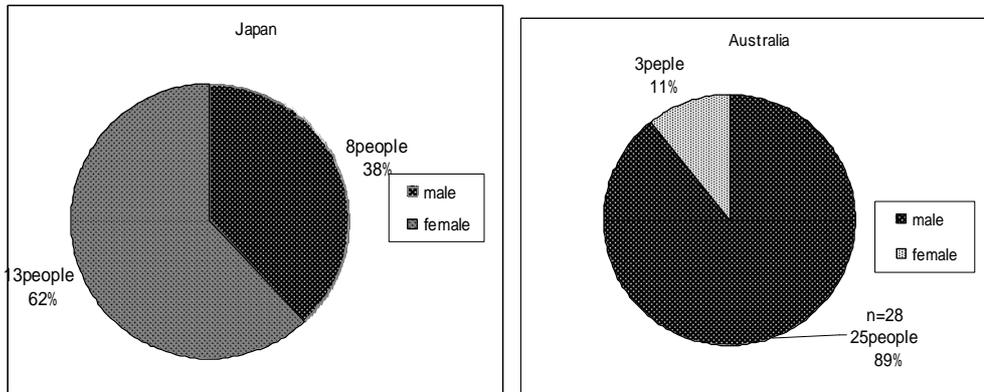
connection between the government, industry, and private. The environment which makes people enjoy sports is well-regulated.

On the other hand, we cannot say that there is well-proportioned environment for playing sports in Japan. It is rather terrible, I must say. Public institutions for playing sports are limited. “Since the school club activity shoulders the main role of sports in Japan, and since Japanese hard-work society forces over-time work ordinary, there would be no time and space to enjoy sports freely”(Shikama Makoto(2006,May 21)Are there any sports rights in Japan? JANJAN-culture. Retrieved November 7,2006, from <http://www.janjan.jp/culture/0605/0605204678/1.php>) This means that the government, industry, and private is not balanced. The lack of local interchange is also a problem. In addition, Kawauchi Saburou J-League Chairman mentioned about the two bad nationalism of the Japanese, negative criticism and equalitarianism. He says that this two nationalism are preventing the Japanese from enjoying playing sports. He meant that the Japanese would not try to expand the talent but correct the bad part.

### **Analysis of data**

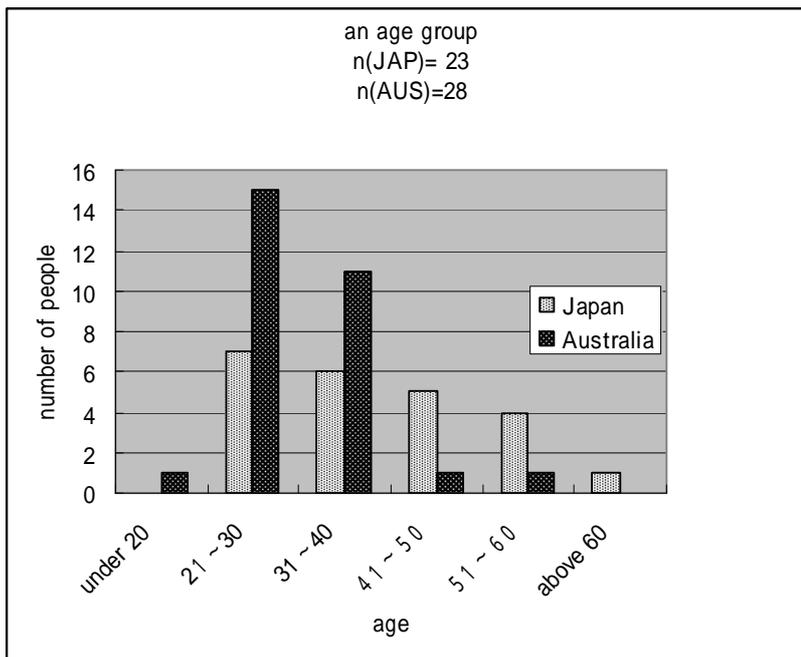
Now I would like to show the data which I had researched on questionnaire at Germany and consider soccer cultures from them. First, comparison between Japan and

Australia proportion of male and female.



Japan's 38% are male and 62% are female. Australia's 89% are male and only 11% are female. It is surprising to know that more Japanese women came to the stadium than the Japanese men. Comparing to that, you will recognize that most of the Australian who came to the stadium were men. In many countries in Europe, we could see the same phenomenon as the date of Australia. Women are often not fond of going to the stadium because long time ago, it was a place where big men gather around, drinking and singing, aware to be dangerous. This habit is still remaining and as Australia is an immigrant country, it is no doubt that the Australian have the same DNA.

On the other hand, from the data of the Japanese, we can infer that it is difficult for male workers to come to Germany as Japan is a hard-work society. Also, in my opinion, the Japanese are likely to get into groups. This habit often causes booms which are used to make money as a business. In this case, we can predict that some of the female spectators were just riding on the wave of the World Cup boom.



Next, comparison between the age group.

It is clear that the age group of Japan is higher than it of Australia. We can infer that soccer is popular among the young age group in Australia. This means that soccer is getting popular in Australia But it also means that soccer was not popular for a long time in Australia

On the other hand, we can infer that financial and time spare were needed for the Japanese to travel. Also, we can think that popularity of soccer is wide among all the age group. We can say this is the result of spread of the J-League.

## Conclusion

Finally, we can now definite part of the soccer culture of both countries.

Unfortunately, I can't tell you the whole definition because a soccer culture is formed by too many factors such as nationalism, culture, and history.

The similarity among both countries' soccer cultures are that both of them are undeveloped. But the great difference between them is the development of the sports culture. At the present time, Japan leads Australia in way of managing a professional soccer league. But I am sure that in the near future, Australia will be leading Japan and catching up Europe countries. I am convinced with this because Australia is a country with perfect environment for people to enjoy playing sports. Also, the increase of popularity of soccer is the important factor. I think Japan is along the way of development, too. But much more slower than Australia. The reason is simple. Japan do not have the right environment for playing sports. Japan will face many twists and turns unless changing the hard- work society and the environment.

## List of Referance

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