



Friendship in International Exchange through Sport

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First of all, we congratulate 20th anniversary of the birth of democracy in South Africa. We respect all people who have contributed to develop their own country since the first all-race elections ended white rules on April 27, 1994. We hope South Africa's democracy last forever.

I am a member of the high school rugby team and I have the experience that I have enjoyed playing rugby with you, the national rugby players of South Africa when Sevens Rugby World Cup was held in Japan. It reminds me the most important word, sportsmanship, which is commonly used during training and games. Your members of South Africa speak English, but we speak Japanese and are not good at speaking English. At first, we were afraid we would have difficulty playing without proper communication; however we realized that sportsmanship is the best tool to know each other through the game.

Sportsmanship is defined as: "play politely, never look down on or shrink from opponents, hates injustice and play fair and square" It is a wonderful word! To bear in mind of sportsmanship during playing game is good enough.

I went to New Zealand with some members of our team in 2012 and participated in rugby training program in the local school of New Zealand. We had studied English at school, but we could not listen and speak English well. However during the rugby training and the games, we played politely, fairly, respectfully even though we can say only "hey, pass", "kick" and "try" and we could share pleasure. Sportsmanship is a style and an attitude, and it can have a positive influence on everyone around you and us.

In 2020, Tokyo Olympic Game will be held. We will be the hosts to welcome the foreign people and are looking forward to creating friendship with them.

We must make efforts to improve English skills and we could know each other quickly before or after the game. We believe it will contribute to develop friendship between South Arica and Japan.

We believe you are the best friends from now on.

Best Regards,

Hikaru Ito