









# SHOHE! OHTANI























Scholastic Inc.











If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

Copyright © 2025 by Scholastic Inc.

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or used to train any artificial intelligence technologies, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This unauthorized biography was carefully researched to make sure it's accurate. This book is not sponsored by or affiliated with Mr. Ohtani or anyone involved with him.

Photos ©: cover: AP Photo/Ashley Landis; Insert: 1: Jim McIsaac/Getty Images; 2 top: Kyodo via AP Images; 2 bottom: Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images; 3 top: Kyodo News Stills via Getty Images; 3 bottom: Gregory Shamus/Getty Images; 4 top: Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images; 4 top: Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images; 4 top: Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images; 6 top: Allen Berezovsky/Getty Images; 6 bottom: Kyodo via AP Images; 7 top: Harry How/Getty Images; 7 bottom: Allen J. Schaben/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images; 8 top: Daniel Shirey/MLB Photos via Getty Images; 8 bottom: Robert Gauthier/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images. All other photos © Adobe Stock and Shutterstock.com.

ISBN 979-8-225-01255-7

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

 $25\ 26\ 27\ 28\ 29$ 

Printed in the U.S.A.

40

First printing 2025

Series design by Sarah Salomon for The Story Division Cover and photo insert design by Lynne Yeamans for The Story Division











### **CHAPTER 1**







Excuse me, was that blur a *pitch*? That's what people in the stands watching the semifinal game between the Ichinoseki Gakuin and Hanamaki Higashi high school teams were thinking. Because on that day—July 19, 2012—Shohei Ohtani had just shown them something *no one* had ever seen before from a high school player.



Shohei was on the mound. He had just turned eighteen. He was six foot four, skinny, and focused like a laser beam. Shohei's face was expressionless as he faced the batter. He bent























over in his stance and nodded at the sign from the catcher. Then the windup—and the pitch.



The batter swiped at it—missed. The clock showed 160 kilometers per hour—95.7 miles per hour. Blistering.



Now the second pitch—the batter jumped back. Ball.



The third pitch, with Shohei lunging forward as he fired the ball at the plate. Strike! 157 kilometers per hour—97.6 miles per hour.





#### Record-Bashing



The batter grinned, astonished, as if to say, "What, you expect me to *hit* these pitches?" Shohei poised himself again. A moment of stillness as the batter crouched at the plate. Then the windup, fast as a machine, the ball firing, the swing, the miss, then the clock—160 kilometers per hour! 99.4 miles per hour! No one in Japan had ever pitched that fast in a high



























Out on the mound, Shohei clenched his





fists and shouted in triumph as the crowd cheered. The batter jogged off the field as Shohei ran in, slapping his teammates' hands as drums beat, the crowd chanted, and the amazed announcers marveled at what they'd just seen.





#### Rising Up





Shohei Ohtani never really left the mound after that day—unless it was to move directly to the batter's box. This left-handed batter and right-handed pitcher now playing in the United States has homered his way to a very small, very elite club made up of the greatest ballplayers ever—Ty Cobb, Willie Mays, and the great Babe Ruth. Whispers float among fans and pros-Shohei Ohtani

























might be the greatest of all time. From his time as a steel-armed high school player to his record-breaking pro seasons in Japan to his MLB debut-no one has any doubt-Sho-time is here to stay.

































### FAST FACT

The stadium at Shohei's high school could hold up to 12,000 students—about as big as a minor league baseball stadium in the United States.

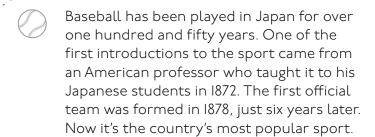




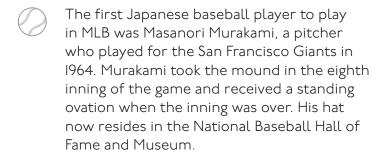
## ALL ABOUT JAPAN

Shohei loves his home country. Now his fans in the United States can learn to love this vibrant country, too!

- Japan is a string of islands. The four main ones are called Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. But don't stop there—there are fourteen thousand other tiny islands surrounding these larger pieces of land.
- Four-fifths of Japan is covered with mountains. Climbing trip, anyone?
- Japan is the only country in the world that still has an emperor. Emperor Naruhito took the throne in 2019 after his father stepped down.







Ready for a snack? At a Japanese baseball game, fans can nosh on *yakitori* (grilled chicken skewers), *takoyaki* (fried octopus balls), *yakisoba* (grilled noodles with toppings), and tiny hot dogs served with ketchup but without buns.