

Kiyo Nogami



1938

Handwritten signatures and date:
Sincerely,
清 2/27/38

From Alameda to

JAPAN

**Kiyo Nogami Quits
Baseball to Enter
Japan Import Firm**



KIYO NOGAMI

ALAMEDA, Mar. 11—Kiyo Nogami has foreseen baseball for good or so it seems, according to a letter from Tokyo to a friend here recently.

The former University of California varsity star might play occasionally, but as far as making a career of it, he is through since he has taken up a position with the Asano Bussan kaisha, importing and exporting firm.

He accepted the post at the recommendation of Dr. Masao Kamo, honorary professor at Teidal university, where he was a student last year.

The Alameda youth went to Japan in 1937 with the Kono All-Stars. At the conclusion of the tour he played professional baseball for the Osaka Hankyus, quitting the team later to enter Teidal.

Kiyo is the son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Nogami of this city.

“The very best class that has ever graduated from Alameda High School.” said school Principal George C. Thompson, during graduation ceremonies held in December, 1932.

Among the 180 graduates were eight California-born Japanese. Among those eight was Kiyomitsu Nogami. He was an honor student and a member of the Star and Honor Society.

And among the many great athletes within the Alameda Japanese community, Nogami would go on to play to professional baseball... *in Japan.*

It's no surprise that Nogami was a standout athlete, as his father, Seiichiro, was an early star for Alameda's highly regarded Taiiku Kai (ATK) baseball team.

Just one year after graduating, he was the “baseball star of the ‘33 baseball team at the University of California” according to the Nichi Bei Shinbun (newspaper).



Nogami at Cal Berkeley

That same year, he was re-elected the president of the Alameda Japanese Student Club.

In April of 1936, Nogami would play his last game for Cal's Golden Bears, against their across-the-Bay rivals, the Stanford Indians (now known as the Cardinal). Cal won the game, and Nogami earned his letter for his efforts on the field of play.

Alameda ATK manager Harry Kono noted Nogami's accomplishments and tapped him to play on the 1937 all-star team that Kono took to Japan. Kono's teams were well-known for their successful tours against teams across the Pacific Ocean. What Kono didn't know was by the end of the tour, Nogami would stay in Japan and play for the Osaka Hankyus baseball team.

Nogami's stint with the Hankyus didn't last long. By 1939, he found full-time employment with a company in Tokyo. While he continued to enjoy baseball, his days as a professional ballplayer were over.



Kiyo was a great football player, too. He would captain and quarterback for the Alameda Mudhens team in the 1930s. When the Nichibei Shinbun selected their “all-star pigskin team” in December 1932, Nogami was chosen as quarterback. 1932 photo courtesy Phyllis Iwasaki.

Front page photo: Kiyo as a member of the Osaka Hankyus baseball team, courtesy Jean Hattori Howard.

We don't know what happened to Kiyo after that. The record of his existence ends in 1939, making it likely he stayed in Japan and never returned. His time in Alameda lasted a brief, but bright, 22 years.