

Nippon Professional Baseball League

Current standings: <http://bis.npb.or.jp/eng/2011/standings/>

Nippon Professional Baseball or **NPB** is the highest level of [baseball in Japan](#). Locally, it is often called **Puro Yakyū** (プロ野球[?]), meaning *Professional Baseball*. Outside of [Japan](#), it is often just referred to as "Japanese baseball". The roots of the league can be traced back to the formation of the "Greater Japan Tokyo Baseball Club" (大日本東京野球倶楽部 *Dai-Nippon Tōkyō Yakyū Kurabu*[?]) in [1934](#) and the original [Japanese Baseball League](#). NPB was formed when that league reorganized in 1950.

The league consists of two six-team circuits, the [Central League](#) and the [Pacific League](#). Each season the winning clubs from the two leagues compete in the [Japan Series](#), the championship series of NPB.

The **Climax Series** (クライマックスシリーズ *Kuraimakkusu Shirīzu*[?]) is the current annual [playoff](#) system employed by [Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball](#) (NPB). It determines which two teams from the [Central League](#) (CL) and the [Pacific League](#) (PL) will compete in the [Japan Series](#) for the national championship. Since the creation of the NPB's two-league system in 1950, the leagues have used several different methods to determine entry to the Japan Series. The current system has been used since the [2007 season](#).

Both leagues play a 144-game [regular season](#), after which the top three teams in each league compete against one another in a two-stage playoff. In Stage 1, the teams that finish the regular season with the second- and third-best records play one another in a [best-of-three series](#). The winners of these three-game series advance to Stage 2 to face each league's regular-season champion in a six-game series, which the regular-season champion starts with a one-game advantage. The winners of each league's Stage 2 series compete against one another in that year's Japan Series.

Standings as of 9-19-2011

If the season were to end today, the Tokyo Yakult Swallows, Chunichi Dragons and Yomiuri Giants would make the playoffs in the Central League while in the Pacific it would be the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks, Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters and Orix Buffaloes.

SPECIAL NOTE as of 9-19-2011:

The Hanshin TIGERS of the Central League are only a game-and-a-half back of the Yomiuri Giants for the third playoff spot. GO TIGERS!

Central League							Pacific League						
Team	G	W	L	T	PCT	GB	Team	G	W	L	T	PCT	GB
Yakult	117	59	43	15	.578	--	Softbank	123	73	41	9	.640	--
Chunichi	116	57	52	7	.523	5.5	Nippon-Ham	120	66	49	5	.574	7.5
Yomiuri	120	57	55	8	.509	7.0	ORIX	122	59	57	6	.509	15.0
Hanshin	114	54	55	5	.495	8.5	Rakuten	124	56	62	6	.475	19.0
Hiroshima	117	51	60	6	.459	12.5	Seibu	120	54	60	6	.474	19.0

Yokohama	116	36	70	10	.340	25.0	Lotte	121	48	66	7	.421	25.0
-----------------	-----	----	----	----	------	------	--------------	-----	----	----	---	------	------

►►More

Teams

Team	City/Area	Stadium	Founded	Joined	Notes
Central League					
Chunichi Dragons	Nagoya , Aichi	Nagoya Dome	1936	1950	
Hanshin Tigers	Nishinomiya , Hyōgo	Koshien Stadium	1935	1950	
Hiroshima Toyo Carp	Hiroshima , Hiroshima	Mazda Stadium		1950	
Tokyo Yakult Swallows	Shinjuku , Tokyo	Meiji Jingu Stadium		1950	
Yokohama BayStars	Yokohama , Kanagawa	Yokohama Stadium		1950	
Yomiuri Giants	Bunkyo , Tokyo	Tokyo Dome	1934	1950	
Pacific League					
Chiba Lotte Marines	Chiba City , Chiba	Chiba Marine Stadium		1950	
Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks	Fukuoka , Fukuoka	Fukuoka Dome	1938	1950	
Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters	Sapporo , Hokkaidō	Sapporo Dome	1946	1950	
Orix Buffaloes	Osaka , Osaka & Kobe , Hyōgo	Osaka Dome	1936	1950	
Saitama Seibu Lions	Tokorozawa , Saitama	Seibu Dome		1950	
Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles	Sendai , Miyagi	Miyagi Baseball Stadium		2005	