

# Hosting the First Rugby World Cup™ in Asia



Rugby World Cup 2019™  
<http://www.rugbyworldcup.com/>

“Connect Create Go Forward” is the vision for the Japanese tournament. This means “Connecting people in Japan, Asia, and around the world to create a groundbreaking and inclusive celebration of Rugby and Community. We will go forward as one, to build a better future for all.”

The Rugby World Cup (RWC), held once every four years, will be hosted by Japan two years from now, marking the first time the RWC is held in Asia. A total of 20 teams—12 that secured their spots by proving themselves last time in RWC 2015 in England, plus eight more who win preliminary matches held around the world—will compete for the venerable Webb Ellis Cup. RWC 2019 Japan starts in Tokyo on September 20, 2019, leading up to a final match in Yokohama on November 2.

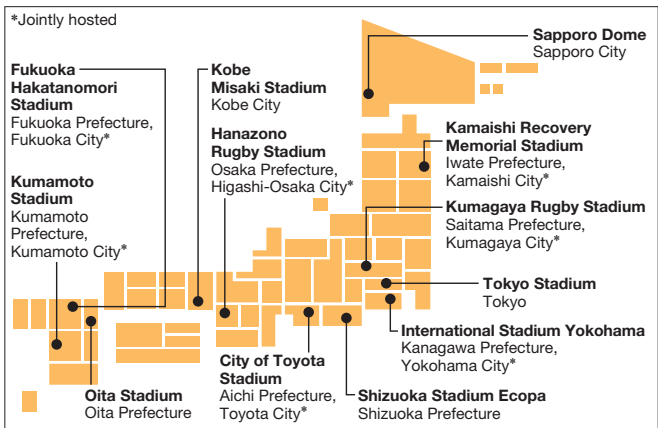
According to Akira Shimazu, CEO of the Rugby World Cup 2019 Organising Committee, “Rugby has been a popular sport in Japan since the 1890s and has a very enthusiastic following of fans, but Japan isn’t considered a “traditional rugby country” by the rest of the world. That’s why holding RWC in Japan is something the fans here have really been wanting for a long time.”

When it was announced in 2009 that RWC would finally be held in Japan, the Japanese national team began training even harder to raise its performance to a level worthy of representing the host country. The extra training paid off in the last RWC: although the Japanese team was unable to proceed to the finals, they fought hard and earned three wins in their pool matches. In particular, the team impressed the world with their dramatic winning try just before the end of their match with South Africa. It was a come-from-behind win that earned the team the RWC’s “Best Match Moment,” an award which was newly established for this tournament. The sight of Japanese players alongside foreign ones competing as one team was something that helped raise the level of excitement for rugby to fever pitch throughout Japan.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended the RWC 2019 pool draw which took place in Kyoto. This was the first time the pool draw was held in a location other than England or Ireland.

**Rugby World Cup 2019 Host Cities**



RWC 2019 will be held at stadiums in 12 cities throughout Japan.

Preparations for RWC 2019 Japan are already well underway. On May 10, 2017, the pool draw for the tournament took place at the Kyoto State Guest House, and the candidate sites for the official training camps for the teams will be decided starting this summer. Sales of tickets for RWC 2019 matches are scheduled to begin in 2018.

RWC 2019 Japan will consist of 48 matches which will be held at 12 venues located throughout the country. Shimazu explains that “All of the venues are located in cities with unique local attractions and plenty for tourists to see and do. This means that our foreign visitors will have memorable experiences of their stays in Japan along with enjoying the tournament.” In addition, two of the venues are located in Kamaishi and Kumamoto, which are both rebounding from major earthquakes that occurred in recent years. Shimazu states the significance of holding the matches in these disaster-stricken areas: “The excitement of watching the world’s best players compete is sure to boost the spirits of the people of these cities as they continue to revitalize. Along with expressing our appreciation for the warm support of people overseas, RWC 2019 Japan is also a chance to demonstrate how far we’ve come in our recovery.”

RWC 2019 Japan is very important to the growth of rugby. In Shimazu’s words, “RWC 2019 Japan is the first RWC to be held in Asia. We would like as many Asian spectators as possible to experience the excitement and attraction of rugby. The success of this tournament will be an ideal opportunity for spreading rugby throughout Asia.”



The Official Supporters Club is now taking members! This is just one of the many activities underway to ensure that RWC 2019 Japan will be a success. The goal is to completely fill the stadiums for all 48 matches.



**Akira Shimazu**  
 CEO of the Rugby World Cup 2019 Organising Committee  
 Born in 1943. Entered the Ministry of Home Affairs (now the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) in 1967. Successively served in said ministry as Chief of Local Bond Division of Public Finance Bureau, Deputy Director-General of Minister’s Secretariat of Home Affairs, and Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination of Minister’s Secretariat of Home Affairs. Appointed in 2001 as the first Vice-Minister of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Present post since March 2014.