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# Sports

## Import in the infield

### Speedy Japanese player chose Mavericks baseball program out of the blue

By Brian Ojanpa  
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**MANKATO** — Minnesota State baseball coach Dean Bowyer was hitting grounders to his infielders in MSU's field house.

He peppered one at his freshman second baseman, who fielded it cleanly near second base and backhanded a toss to the shortstop to start a double play.

Bowyer wanted the second baseman's arm angle a bit higher on the toss, and yelled out accordingly.

Then, realizing he'd have to make the instruction clearer, he shouted again, this time fling-

ing out his arm to emphasize the correct throwing motion.

The second baseman nodded. Good thing baseball has a universal body language, because Kosuke Hattori's English is still a work in progress.

Hattori, from Kanagawa, Japan, is the Maverick baseball program's first-ever international player.

"We've had other Japanese players show interest in the program here, but they never followed up on it," Bowyer says.

Hattori, however, was dogged in his efforts to recruit himself to a school he essentially chose out of thin air.

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Second baseman Kosuke Hattori from Kanagawa, Japan, sold himself on — and to — the Minnesota State baseball program.

John Cross