# J1 TEAM CAPSULES

#### Nagoya Grampus Manager: Dragan Stojkovic

2010: 23-3-8 (1st) Signing to watch: Kensuke agai. Grampus beat numerous clubs to the signature of the direct and confident Japan U-23 striker. Prospects: Dealt smartly in the transfer market. With Jungo Fujimoto and Mu Kanazaki creat

ing from wide positions, Nagai bolstering the ex rienced forward-line of Keiji Tamada and 2010 op-scorer Josh Kennedy, and Marcus Tulio Tanaka and Seigo Narazaki still in place at the back, Grampus are well-prepared to defend title.

#### Cerezo Osaka

Manager: Levir Culpi 2010: 17-10-7 (3rd) Signing to watch: Kim Bo yung. Returns after a year on loan at Trinita, with whom he won many admirers for his enerprising approach play.

Prospects: Last year was sensational but Ceremay struggle with "second season" syndrome. Akihiro Ienaga, Amaral and Adriano are difficult players to replace and with the added distraction of the AFC Champions League, the side will do well to secure a finish in the top half this time.

# Kawasaki Frontale

Manager: Naoki Soma 2010: 15-9-10 (5th) Signing to watch: Koji Yaase. F Marinos fans were not happy to see Yamase leave. Has he potential to become a key gure at Todoroki.

Prospects: Losing Eiji Kawashima and Chonc Tese in the middle of last season derailed Frontale's campaign and more have followed this winter. Yamase and Yusuke Tanaka arrived rom Marinos, but this could be a transitional

AAWASAK

# Sanfrecce Hiroshima

eason for the club

Manager: Mihailo Petrovic 2010: 14-9-11 (7th) Signing to watch: David Muiiri. Expect the experienced Georgian international to prove to be the latest of Mihailo Petro-

vic's inspired signings **Prospects:** It will be interesting to see how ne defense copes with the loss of Tomoaki Maki

no and Ilian Stoyanov, but Mujiri and Croatian Ante Tomic will look to complement the sprinkling of former youth teamers and an attack of Hisato Sato and Tadanari Lee

#### Albirex Niigata Manager: Hisashi Kurosaki

2010: 12-13-9 (9th) Signing to watch: Bruno opes. Albirex fans will hope Brazilian striker is as prolific in prange as compatriots Edmilson

and Pedro Junior were.

Prospects: Mitsuru Nagata, Marcio Richardes huge losses. Naoki Ishikawa and Seiya Fujita have arrived from Consadole, but Niigata will dc very well to match their success of the past couple of seasons.

## Jubilo Iwata

Manager: Masaaki Yanagishita **2010:** 11-11-12 (11th) Signing to watch: Yoshiak jita. Adaptable defender was prought in from Trinita to shore up a backline that conceded 49



goals in 2010. Prospects: Should not be too concerned about relegation in 2011, but any ambitions for a

#### finish much above the trapdoor are probably best shelved. Transfer activity was fairly unspectacular, but Rvoichi Maeda's inevitable double-figure goal tally should see Jubilo survive the drop.

## Montedio Yamagata

Manager: Shinji Kobayashi 2010: 11-9-14 (13th) Signing to watch: Hugo Brazilian defender ioins after stints in Poland, Portugal and Ro

mania, where he sampled the UEFA Champions League with CFR Cluj. **Prospects:** Have punched well above their weight for the past two seasons and 2011 could be make or break for them. Yuzo Tashiro and Chikashi Masuda have returned to Kashima after loan spells and another relegation battle looks to

## Vissel Kobe

be in the cards.

Manager: Masahiro Wada 2010: 9-11-14 (15th) Signing to watch: Kenii Haneda. Defender spent several seasons struggling to establish nimself at Antlers before becom

ng a fixture in the Cerezo defense Prospects: Masahiro Wada worked wonders to save Vissel last season and had the team playing some wonderful football to boot. Whether h can inspire the same level of performance over a

## full season remains to be seen, and another rele gation battle could await.

Ventforet Kofu Manager: Toshiya Miura **2010:** J2 19-13-4 (2nd) Signing to watch: Daisuke hikawa. Former Japan defender: orings much-needed J1 experience after 13 years at S-Pulse

Prospects: Despite having earned them pronotion to J1, Ventforet replaced head coach Kazuo Uchida with Toshiya Miura for 2011. The former Kobe boss will need his new defensive re cruits to work wonders and Mike Havenaar to match his 20-goal haul of last season to avoid the drop back to J2.

Gamba Osaka Manager: Akira Nishino 2010: 18-8-8 (2nd) Signing to watch: Adriano. quired from Brazilian side SC In nacional after scoring 14 goals 2010 on loan at local rival Cerezo. Will face his old teammates in opener. **Prospects:** Shoki Hirai and Adriano present

ry strong front-line, and if experienced Yasuhi o Éndo and precocious Takashi Usami can match their form of last season, Gamba certainly have enough quality to maintain their usual push for the title

#### Kashima Antlers Manager: Oswaldo de Oliveira

2010: 16-12-6 (4th) 4P Signing to watch: Carlao. zilian scored freely in Portugal ast season. Replacing Marquinhos means big shoes to fill, but at 1.90 meters, that shouldn't be a problem.

Prospects: Lost the fewest games of any team t season (6) but drew 12 times. As well as Car io, fullback Alex joins from JEF, Daigo Nishi arrives from Consadole and Takuva Honda has been recruited from S-Pulse. Expect Antlers to make Grampus work for the championship

Shimizu S-Pulse Manager: Afshin Ghotbi

#### 2010: 15-9-10 (6th) Signing to watch: Naohiro kahara. Much-traveled frontnan hopes to follow in the foot-

steps of former Reds teammate inji Ono and reignite his career at S-Pulse. Prospects: Shinji Okazaki, Jungo Fujimoto nd Frode Johnsen, who scored over half of S-Pulse's league goals in 2010, have all moved or Daigo Kobayashi, Toshiyuki Takagi and Alex Brosque have all arrived but it looks like a long slog lies ahead in 2011

# Yokohama F Marinos

Manager: Kazushi Kimura 2010: 15-6-13 (8th) Signing to watch: Hiroyuki niguchi. Suffered at Frontale after the arrival of Junichi Inamoto, but regular minutes could see m rediscover his best form.

**Prospects:** Masashi Oguro is not the man nany would choose to lead the strikeforce of a club vying for a championship. Yuji Ono does provide a ray of hope, but the best Marinos car realistically hope for is to challenge for an Asian Champions League spot.

#### Urawa Reds Manager: Zeljko Petrovic

2010: 14-6-14 (10th) Signing to watch: Marcio hardes. With 16 goals from nidfield for Albirex last season, vill be expected to fill the void eft by the departure of Robson Ponte. Prospects: Will continue to make chances this lack a striker with enouc o match the guile of their many playmakers. If

oan signing Mazzola can squeeze into the start ing XI, they may sneak into the scrap for the Asian Champions League.



Prospects: Could be the surprise package this eason. Have brought in some promisi ngs in Ueda, Kim Young Gwon from FC Tokvo and Oita Trinita's Japan U-23 Keigo Higashi, and did very well to keep hold of Rafael. Expect a

#### Vegalta Sendai

Manager: Makoto Teguramor **2010:** 10-9-15 (14th) Signing to watch: Marquins. One of the sharpest finishers league history with 109 goals n 229 matches, the 2008 MVP joins his sixth team after three years with Antlers.

**Prospects:** The acquisitions of Atsushi Yanagi awa and Marguinhos will provide a huge boos to the Tohoku team. If Ryang Yong Gi continues to assert himself in the middle of the park, Veg alta will surely finish comfortably away from the relegation zone.

### Kashiwa Reysol

Manager: Nelsinho **2010:** J2 23-11-2 (1st) Signing to watch: Akihiro odo. Hard-working midfielde rought in from S-Pulse adds

ome guile to the ranks. Prospects: Nelsinho has made some intellient additions to a squad full of confidence afte sing just twice en route to the 12 title last seaon. Hyodo, An Yong Hak and Jorge Wagner will poost Reysol's midfield options, while a fit-again Koki Mizuno should see them settle safely above

# Avispa Fukuoka Manager: Yoshivuki Shinoda

the drop zone.

Text by Sean Carroll, Special to The Daily Yomiuri

**2010:** J2 21-6-9 (3rd) Signing to watch: Norihisa nizu. Spent nearly a decade t F Marinos and his knowledge f what is required in the toplight could be invaluable. **Prospects:** The last side to come up and so,

naturally, everyone's first choice to go down. osing last season's top-scorer, Genki Nagasato doesn't exactly help matters, although the acqui sition of Kentaro Shigematsu from FC Tokyo should give them a fighting chance.

# **THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT**

# Hot newcomers look to fill gap left by overseas exodus

By Sean Carroll Special to The Daily Yomiuri

he J.League kicks off its 19th season Saturday minus a dozen players who have moved to European clubs to further their

careers in the past year. The mass migration may cause some to assume that the J.League will be weaker this season, but the youngsters left behind are ready to prove them

Nowhere is this truer than in Nagoya, where last year's champion Grampus have been given a huge boost after winning the race to sign highly rated striker Kensuke Nagai from Fukuoka University

Nagai, who turns 22 on Saturday, has had previous tastes of the J.League in brief spells at Vissel Kobe and Avispa Fukuoka. He was the top scorer at the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, last November and has also already been involved with the full national team—having made his debut against Yemen and been included as a "support member" at the World Cup finals in South Africa last summer.

The striker has a strong-mindedness that belies his youth, and in the buildup to the Asian Games, his individual style meant that his ability to function in tandem with his teammates was frequently called into question by the media.

While some players would be thrown off their game by such talk, Nagai instead used these com- club. He has a very good future." ments to spur himself on, declaring after winning "Before the competition some people doubted me This criticism became my motivation."

Such belief in his own abilities was a key attraction for Dragan Stojkovic, and the Grampus boss

"He is a player with huge potential," the 2010 J.League's gala Kick Off Conference last week. "I ing for think he will be very useful for the team. I think we "He has a football intelligence and speed and I

Sean Carroll's column, "The Back Post," appears in The Daily Yomiuri every fourth week on *Wednesday. The Tokyo-based freelancer also* writes for Weekly Soccer Magazine and the J.League Web site.



Although Stojkovic expects Nagai to take time the gold medal with Takashi Sekizuka's side, to adjust to the difference between the university league and the top of J1, he has a lot of confidence and whether or not I could be part of the team. in him and predicts that he will catch a lot of people out over the coming season.

"This is a new life for him and of course he needs a little bit of time to adapt—to my work and to the Grampus style," Stojkovic said. "But my opinion is that he is intelligent enough to under-Manager of the Year told The Daily Yomiuri at the stand what I am asking of him and what I am look-

made a good choice to bring him to Nagoya and he think that it will be a very good surprise for everymade a good choice to become a member at our body in the J.League. He will be a very, very useil plavei

> Josh Kennedy, last season's top scorrer, has also been impressed and hopes the two can form a gifted young players who look set to be key figures The Kansai side does welcome back South stance in 2011 and, like formidable partnership.

Tohoku Denryoku

# **1 SCHEDULE**

15:00 Shimizu vs Hiroshima	Outsourcing	JULI		19:00 Hiroshima vs Ni
19:00 Yamagata vs Kashiwa	NDsoft	27 (Wed.)	N 11	28 (Sun.)
7 (Sat.)		19:00 Kashima vs G Osaka	Kashima	18:00 Kashiwa vs Kaw
13:00 Hiroshima vs Kofu	Hiroshima Big Arch	30 (Sat.)	ND 6	18:00 C Osaka vs Urav
14:00 Iwata vs Yamagata 14:00 Kobe vs Kawasaki F	Yamaha Home's	19:00 Yamagata vs Niigata 19:00 Kawasaki F vs Urawa	NDsoft Todoroki	18:00 Kobe vs G Osaka 18:30 Kashima vs Fuku
15:00 Omiya vs Niigata	Nack5	19:00 Yokohama M vs Omiya	Nissan	19:00 Nagoya vs Kofu
15:00 Nagoya vs Shimizu	Mizuho	19:00 Iwata vs G Osaka	Yamaha	
16:00 Kashiwa vs Urawa	National	19:00 Kobe vs Kofu	Home's	SEP
19:00 Yokohama M vs Fukuoka 19:00 C Osaka vs Sendai	Nissan Kincho	19:00 Hiroshima vs Shimizu	Hiroshima Big Arch	10 (Sat.)
	KIIICIIO	31 (Sun.)		Kashiwa vs Nag
14 (Sat.)	Yurtec	18:00 C Osaka vs Kashima	Nagai	Niigata vs Kashi
13:00 Sendai vs Iwata 14:00 Shimizu vs Kobe	Outsourcing	19:00 Sendai vs Kashiwa 19:00 Fukuoka vs Nagoya	Yurtec Level-5	Iwata vs Shimizu
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17:00 Yamagata vs Omiya	NDsoft	AUGUS	Т	C Osaka vs Hiro Fukuoka vs Yok
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19:00 Urawa vs Fukuoka 19:00 Kashiwa vs G Osaka	Saitama Kashiwa	4 teams playing in Asian Champ		19:00 Omiya vs Niiga
19:00 Shimizu vs Kawasaki F	Outsourcing	Antlers, Nagoya Grampus, Gamba enter competition in knockout rou	osaka, Cerezo Osaka— nd	19:00 Kofu vs Yokoha
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players to European clubs.

his condition."

19:00 Shimizu v

Group A 19:00 Kashiwa vs Yokohama M Kashiwa

s confident that he has pulled off quite a coup.

Niigata vs Kobe

9:00 Nagoya vs Urawa

18:00 G Osaka vs Hiroshima 18:30 Shimizu vs Sendai

19:00 Omiya vs Kobe

9:00 Yamagata vs Yokohama M

9:00 Fukuoka vs Iwata

Tohoku Denryoku

Toyota Level-5

Expo'70

Group B

19:00 Hiroshima vs Iwata 19:00 Fukuoka vs Kobe 19:30 Urawa vs Shimizu

Group A 16:00 Omiya vs Yamagata

6:00 Kawasaki F vs Kofu

Group B 13:00 Shimizu vs Iwata

March 26 (Sat.)

Saitama

Todoroki

MARCH 5 (Sat.) 19:00 Yamagata vs Ka 00 Kofu vs Iwata 7 (Sat.) 4:00 Nagoya vs Yokohama M 4:00 G Osaka vs C Osaka 1:00 Hiroshima vs Sendai Hiroshima Big Arch 14:00 Fukuoka vs Niigata Level-5 Todorok 5:00 Kawasaki F vs Yamagata Kashiwa 9:00 Kashiwa vs Shimizu 6 (Sun.) 3:00 Kobe vs Urawa 5:00 Kashima vs Omiya Home's Kashima 14 (Sat.) 12 (Sat.) 3:00 Shimizu vs Kashima 4:00 Niigata vs Yamagata 5:00 C Osaka vs Kashiwa Kincho 17:00 Yamagata vs Or 19:00 Niigata vs Kash :00 Sendai vs Nagoya 5:00 Urawa vs G Osaka Saitama 15 (Sun.) 19:00 Fukuoka vs Kofu Level-5 13 (Sun.) 5:00 Yokohama M vs Kawasaki F Nissan 5:00 Iwata vs Kobe Yamah 6:00 Omiya vs Hiroshima Nack5 16:00 Kawasaki F vs K Yamaha Nack5 20 (Fri.) 19 (Sat.) 3:00 Kawasaki F vs Fukuoka Todorok 21 (Sat.) 14:00 Kobe vs Nagoya 15:00 Kashiwa vs Sendai NDsoft Yamaha 6:00 Yamagata vs Urawa 9:00 Iwata vs Yokohama M 20 (Sun.) 13:00 Kofu vs Shimizu Yamanashibanl 13:00 Hiroshima vs C Osaka 16:00 Kashima vs Niigata 16:00 Omiya vs G Osaka Hiroshima Big Arch 22 (Sun.) Kashima Nack5 13:00 Yamagata vs Ser 16:00 Omiya vs Shimiz APRII 14:00 Urawa vs Niigat 14:00 Kashiwa vs Kob 2 (Sat.) 00 Kashiwa vs Hiroshima 3:00 Nagoya vs Kashima :00 Nagoya vs Kashima Toyota :00 Yokohama M vs Yamagata Nissan 17:00 Kofu vs Yamaga 5:00 C Osaka vs Iwata 29 (Sun.) 16:00 Fukuoka vs Omiya 19:00 Urawa vs Kawasaki F Level-5 Saitama Expo'70 13:00 C Osaka vs Omi 16:00 Kawasaki F vs G 9:00 G Osaka vs Kobe 3 (Sun.) 19:00 Hiroshima vs Ka 13:00 Sendai vs Shimizu 16:00 Niigata vs Kofu Tohoku Denrvok 9 (Sat.) 3:00 Shimizu vs Niigata 3:00 Kobe vs C Osaka 13:00 Niigata vs Hiros Todorol 5:00 Kawasaki F vs Kashiwa 6:00 Hiroshima vs Fukuoka Hiroshima Big Arch Nack5 19:00 Omiya vs Yokohama M 10 (Sun.) 13:00 Yamagata vs Nagoya 13:00 Kofu vs G Osaka Yamanashiban 19:00 G Osaka vs Shin 6:00 Kashima vs Sendai Kashima Ecopa 16:00 Iwata vs Urawa 15 (Wed.) 16 (Sat.) 3:00 C Osaka vs Shimizu Kincho 1:00 Niigata vs Kawasaki F 5:30 Kashiwa vs Kashima Tohoku Denryoku National 19:00 Kashiwa vs Iwat :30 Nagoya vs Hiroshima Mizuho 19:00 Nagoya vs Niig 19:00 C Osaka vs Yoko 6:00 Urawa vs Kofu 9:00 Sendai vs Omiya Saitama Yurtec 9:00 G Osaka vs Iwata Expo'70 17 (Sun.) 18 (Sat.) 3:00 Fukuoka vs Yamagata 5:00 Yokohama M vs Kobe NHK Mitsuzawa 23 (Sat.) :00 Shimizu vs Fukuoka 16:00 Cashima vs Yokohama M 16:00 Omiya vs Kashiwa 16:00 Kofu vs Kobe 16:00 Kofu vs Kobe 16:00 Kofu vs Kobe Yamanasi Tadausi 19:00 Niigata vs Senda 19:00 Nagoya vs Omiy 19:00 Fukuoka vs Kash 19:00 Kawasaki F vs Sendai Todoroki 24 (Sun.) 3:00 Yamagata vs C Osaka 3:00 Niigata vs Iwata 3:00 Hiroshima vs G Osaka 6:00 Urawa vs Nagoya NDsoft 22 (Wed.) Tohoku Denrvok Hiroshima Big Arch Saitama 29 (Fri.) 3:00 Fukuoka vs Kashima Level-5 4:00 Kashiwa vs Kofu Kashiwa 14:00 Kobe vs Omiya 15:00 C Osaka vs Niigata 16:00 Sendai vs Urawa Kincho Miyagi Nissan 19:30 Yokohama M vs Niigata 7:00 Yokohama M vs Shimizu 25 (Sat.) 8:00 G Osaka vs Yamagata 9:00 Iwata vs Hiroshima Expo'70 Yamaha 18:30 Kashima vs Kawas 19:00 Kofu vs Kashiwa 9:00 Nagoya vs Kawasaki F 19:00 Niigata vs C Osaka MAY 3 (Tue.) 26 (Sun.)

Yurtec Saitama Todoroki 4:00 Sendai vs Fukuoka 14:00 Urawa vs Yokohama M 14:00 Kawasaki F vs Iwata 14:00 Kofu vs Omiya Yamanashiban



# J.LEAGUE 2011 SPECIAL



Gamba Osaka's Takashi Usami, left, and Yokohama Marinos' Yuji Ono are among the next generation of young stars the league will rely on to fill a hole left by the recent loss of top

Nagoya's Super Cup victory last weekend. "Once being desperately unlucky with injuries last season, Stojkovic feels that he must take better care of the former Oita Trinita wide-man. "Last year he refreshed our play," Stojkovic

said. "He is a very specific player and he does everything at 100 percent. Sometimes this is not very careful about that and I have to think about

in the next generation of Japanese football.

suffered with fitness problems in 2010, he could have been sitting pretty at the top of the league scoring chart as well.

The 18-year-old Usami's precocious talent, meanwhile, has seen him repeatedly linked with a tremenmove to Europe over the offseason, but he will con- dous suctinue his education in Osaka for now, having cess from penned a new deal with Gamba.

The 2010 Young Player of the Year is certainly not short of confidence, and declared when asked distraction of the AFC Champhis goal for the season, "I want to take all of the ti- ions League this time around. tles if possible."

Usami also suggested that the steady stream of youngsters appearing on the scene—dubbed by since last winning the league in some as the "platinum generation"—could be set 2006, will hope that its impresto continue over the coming months.

"Our age group does have many talented players and strong personalities," Usami told The all its promise. Daily Yomiuri. "At the moment it is me and [Ryo] Mivaichi and [Yuji] Ono who are playing regular- particularly keen on the prodiy, but maybe this year other players will emerge." The spotlight may be roving at the moment as assuming he can avoid adding football fans lap up the plethora of Japanese talent to the string of injuries that

on display, but Usami insists he will not take his have blighted his burgeoning eye off the ball. "I try not to think too much about what other him to start imposing him-

players are doing. I am impressed with them, but I self more on games. just try to focus on myself " One of the "platinum generation" Usami will a good talent, but you don't

struggle to avoid, though, will be Ono, who burst achieve your targets only onto the scene toward the end of last season.

The 18-vear-old has now officially graduated to midfielder said at the Kick he gets his chance, he'll show what he can do. He's the top team from the youth ranks and will be in-Off Conference. "There are extremely fast and he'll always caused problems." strumental as Yokohama F Marinos look to live up many players in the world In addition to Nagai, Grampus have fellow to their head coach's lofty ambition of winning the with big talent, but you also youngster Mu Kanazaki—also just 22—and after trophy for the first time since 2004.

> J1 last season, sealing third place ahead of seriously." Kashima Antlers, but it is the latter which

looks the stronger coming into 2011. Oswaldo Oliveira's side has strengthened as a when discussing his young result of bringing in Takuya Honda from Shimizu star, saying, "I think he has good, but this is his style. This year I have to be S-Pulse, Daigo Nishi from Consadole Sapporo and Brazilian forward Carlao.

Cerezo, meanwhile, has had to deal with losing rampus' closest challenger last season, two of its standout performers from 2010 in Akihi- I like him, he's a big talent." Gamba Osaka, possess in Shoki Hirai and ro Ienaga, who moved to Mallorca in Spain, and Takashi Usami their own pair of incredibly Adriano, who defected to crosstown rival Gamba. advised to adopt a similar Korea under-23 international Kim Bo Kyung, who every good parent, fans

"Hopefully he can do something for me and I can Hirai was Gamba's most prolific player last sea- earned many admirers while on loan at Oita Trini- should make sure to do something for him," the Australian said after son with 14 goals, and if he, like Kanazaki, had not ta last year, but will do very well to replicate its keep an eye on the kids.

2010-particularly with the added

Elsewhere, Urawa Reds, another club which has fallen away sive pool of young talent can finally deliver some substance for

New coach Zeliko Petrovic is giously gifted Naoki Yamada, career to date, and wants

"Yamada...is a big talent, with talent," the former Reds need good mentality, to erezo Osaka enjoyed an incredible return to change your mind and play

> The Montenegrin exhibits an almost fatherly affection the drive. He's a nice guy but he's also very hard. He looks nice, he looks like a baby, but

J.League fans would be well

Nagai gives Nagoya Grampus an added boost in their bid to repeat as league champions.

Rookie striker Kensuke

All photos by The Yomiuri Shimbu

By Sean Carroll Special to The Daily Yomiuri

soned professionals.

field in the coming season.

with Yokohama FC.

this time around.

a soccer heart."

And Kishino doesn't believe that the beat will be slowing down any time soon, predicting that the man who brought the "Kazu dance" to the world will be around for a while longer vet. "He will keep going. After this year I don't think he will finish. He always wants to play soccer. Next year he will work hard again," Kishino said before

# THE DAILY YOMIURI

Yokohama M a vs Niigata	Outsourcing Hiroshima Big Arch	Fukuoka vs Sendai 16 (Sun.)	Level-5		
vs Kawasaki F	Kashiwa	Kashiwa vs Yamagata Kawasaki F vs Niigata	Kashiwa Todoroki		
s Urawa Nagai ; Osaka Home's ys Fukuoka Kashima s Kofu Toyota SEPTEMBER		22 (Sat.) Sendai vs Kawasaki F Yamagata vs G Osaka Kashima vs Kobe Omiya vs Nagoya	Yurtec NDsoft Kashima Nack5		
SEF I LIVID	LK	Yokohama M vs Urawa	Nissan		
rs Nagoya s Kashima shimizu rs Omiya	Kashiwa Tohoku Denryoku Ecopa Expo'70	Iwata vs C Osaka Hiroshima vs Kashiwa 23 (Sun.) Niigata vs Fukuoka Shimizu vs Kofu	Yamaha Hiroshima Big Arch Tohoku Denryoku		
s Hiroshima	Nagai	29 (Sat.)	Outsourcing		
vs Yokohama M Yamagata F vs Kobe endai Niigata	Level-5 Saitama Todoroki Yamanashibank	Sendai vs Hiroshima Urawa vs Iwata Kashiwa vs Niigata Kofu vs Yokohama M Nagoya vs C Osaka G Osaka vs Kashima Fukuoka vs Shimizu	Yurtec Saitama Kashiwa Yamanashibank Toyota Expo'70 Level-5		
a vs Kawasaki F ukuoka	NDsoft Yamanashibank	30 (Sun.)			
s Urawa Jashiwa a vs Iwata	Ecopa Kobe Univ	Kawasaki F vs Omiya Kobe vs Yamagata	Todoroki Home's		
a vs iwata	Hiroshima Big Arch	NOVEMB	EK		
vs Nagoya C Osaka a M vs G Osaka	Kashima Kumagaya Nissan	19 (Sat.) Yamagata vs Fukuoka Urawa vs Sendai Omiya vs Kashima Yakhara Mura Mura	NDsoft Saitama Nack5 Nissan		
s Kobe	Mizuho	Yokohama M vs Nagoya Niigata vs G Osaka Iwata vs Kofu Hiroshima vs Kawasaki F	Nissan Tohoku Denryoku Yamaha Hirochima Rig Ard		
Kashima F vs Shimizu	Saitama Todoroki	20 (Sun.)	Hiroshima Big Arch		
a M vs Sendai Niigata vs Kofu	Nissan Yamaha Expo'70	Shimizu vs Kashiwa C Osaka vs Kobe 26 (Sat.)	Outsourcing Kincho		
s Yamagata	Kincho	Kashima vs Shimizu	Kashima		
rs Omiya vs Hiroshima	Kashiwa Level-5	Kashiwa vs C Osaka Kawasaki F vs Yokohama M Nagoya vs Yamagata G Osaka vs Sendai	Kashiwa Todoroki Toyota Expo'70		
OCTOBE		Hiroshima vs Omiya Fukuoka vs Urawa	Hiroshima Big Arch Level-5		
a vs Iwata Fukuoka	NDsoft Nack5	27 (Sun.) Kofu vs Niigata	Yamanashibank		
awasaki F	Yamanashibank	Kobe vs Iwata	Home's		
s Yokohama M a vs Kobe	Tohoku Denryoku Hiroshima Big Arch	DECEMBI	ER		
		3 (Sat.)			
C Osaka vs Kashiwa s Nagoya vs Urawa	Yurtec Kashima Outsourcing Expo'70	Sendai vs Kobe Yamagata vs Hiroshima Urawa vs Kashiwa Omiya vs Kofu	Yurtec NDsoft Saitama Nack5 Nissan		
Omiya M vs Hiroshima Kashima s G Osaka s Kofu	Saitama Nissan Yamaha Mizuho Kincho	Yokohama M vs Kashima Missan Niigata vs Nagoya Tohoku Denryo Shimizu vs G Osaka Outsourcing Iwata vs Kawasaki F Yamaha C Osaka vs Fukuoka Kincho			
himizu	Home's	Kickoff times & venues from Septem	ber to be decided.		
KI NA	BISCO CL	IP			
Hiroshima <b>m.)</b>	Home's	19:00 Kawasaki F vs Yamagata 19:00 Niigata vs Kofu <b>Group B</b>	Todoroki Tohoku Denryoku		
na M vs Niigata	NHK Mitsuzawa	19:00 Sendai vs Hiroshima 19:00 Shimizu vs Fukuoka 19:30 Urawa vs Iwata	Yurtec Outsourcing Saitama		

	March 27 (Sun.)			Niigata vs Kofu	Tohoku Denryok
	Group A 15:00 Yokohama M vs Niigata Group B 13:00 Sendai vs Fukuoka	NHK Mitsuzawa Yurtec	19:00	Sendai vs Hiroshima Shimizu vs Fukuoka Urawa vs Iwata	Yurtec Outsourcing Saitama
		runce	May	25 (Wed)	
0	April 6 (Wed.) Group A 19:00 Yamagata vs Kashiwa 19:00 Omiya vs Niigata 19:00 Kofu vs Yokohama M Group B 19:00 Sendai vs Kobe 19:00 Iwata vs Fukuoka 19:00 Iivoshima vs Urawa	NDsoft Nack5 Yamanashibank Yurtec Yamaha Hiroshima Big Arch	<b>Group A</b> 19:00 19:00 19:30 <b>Group E</b> 19:00 19:00	A Omiya vs Kashiwa Niigata vs Yamagata Yokohama M vs Kawasaki F	Nack5 Tohoku Denryok Nissan Outsourcing Home's Level-5
	April 20 (Wed.)		June 5 (Sun.)		
1 1 1 0 1	19:00 Yamagata vs Kofu 19:00 Yamagata vs Niigata 19:00 Kashiwa vs Niigata 19:00 Kawasaki F vs Omiya Group B 19:00 Iwata vs Sendai 19:00 Iwata vs Sendai 19:00 Fukuoka vs Urawa	NDsoft Kashiwa Todoroki Yamaha Home's Level-5	15:00 15:00 <b>Group E</b> 15:00 15:00	Yamagata vs Yokohama M Kashiwa vs Kawasaki F Kofu vs Omiya J Urawa vs Sendai Iwata vs Kobe Hiroshima vs Shimizu	Kashiwa Yamanashibank Saitama Yamaha Hiroshima Big A
		Levers		KNOCKOUT ROL	IND
	May 11 (Wed.) Group A	<i>V</i> 11	Semifin	rfinals: July 16, 23 als: October 5, 9	

Final: To be decided.

# J2's silver lining League legends Kazu, Gon still kicking in 2nd tier

**T T** hile the kids are taking over in the top flight and breathing **V** New life into the kindergarten of J1, the second division will take on a far more mature air in 2011, boasting as it does several of the J.League's most sea-

As the Samurai Blue's impressive showing at the 2010 World Cup provides more and more Japanese players with opportunities to move overseas, it is particularly fitting that Masashi "Gon" Nakayama—the first Japanese player to score at a World Cup finals—will be lacing up his boots this season for Consadole Sapporo for an incredible 19th J.League season. And yet the 43-year-old Gon is not the most senior player to be taking to the

That honor is reserved for the irrepressible Kazuyoshi "Kazu" Miura, who turned 44 last weekend. The golden boy of the league's early days will be looking to extend his record as the oldest scorer in league history, part of his swan song in the upper echelons of Japanese football

Yokohama couldn't make a strong enough claim for a promotion spot last season, eventually finishing 15 points behind third-placed Avispa Fukuoka, but head coach Yasuyuki Kishino is convinced that Kazu's vast experience can be a key factor in his side making the grade

"He's incredible, 44 years old," Kishino gushed at the J.League's Kick Off Conference last week. "He's a leader and he understands the life of soccer. Stoic soccer. The things to eat, how to care for his physical condition. He has a strong heart,



Consadole's Masashi "Gon" Nakayama, left, and FC Yokohama's Kazuyoshi "Kazu" Miura, 40-somethings who both won J.League MVP awards in the 1990s, have kept their careers going in the second division.

adding the caveat, "I don't think it is possible for him to play in the J.League until he is 50, though."

One team that will bring experience of a rather different kind to the party will be FC Tokyo, coming off its shocking relegation in 2010, when many had expected the club to build on its Nabisco Cup triumph of the previous year by making a concert- a battle. ed title challenge.

In Shuichi Gonda, Yuhei Tokunaga, Yasuyuki Konno, Naohiro Ishikawa and Sota Hirayama, the Gas Men possess a handful of current Japan internationals, and with the likes of Naotake Hanyu, Takuji Yonemoto and former Albirex Niigata and, briefly, Gamba Osaka striker Pedro Junior also in its ranks, Tokyo will have to do a lot wrong to not be restored to J1 at season's end in December.

They will do well to heed the example of JEF United, though, with the Chiba club having last season failed to earn an instant return to the division it called home for 17 years.

JEF finished fourth in 2010 and seems to have taken stock of the levels of experi- are in a position to graduate to J1 come ence on display at its rivals in opting for a the end of the season.

similar approach this time around. New head coach Dwight Lodeweges has arrived along with veteran Dutch midfielder Sander van Gessel and 33vear-old Norwegian striker Tor Hogne Aaroy, and the former Nagoya Grampus coach is in no doubt as to the value of having some wise heads around for such

"Sander van Gessel is 34, experienced and a very social guy," Lodeweges said "The team accepts him and he's a very nice guy and also a very good player—a leader.

"Young players can get upset. If we want promotion to J1 and it doesn't work out and we lose a game-and you will always lose a game, [Manchester] United, Real Madrid lose games—you must not get upset, you must recover from that. Those older players like Tor and Sander have seen the world and know it all and they can help us in this way."

Indeed, knowledge is power, and J2's professors of the game will be looking to utilize all of their expertise to ensure they