Tokuchi Toua

Introduction

"Winning is about trampling over corpses…it is not something beautiful. It's brutal. If you want to make it to the top, then - steel yourselves."

Tokuchi Toua is a baseball player and the main character of One Outs. His primary goal in the series is to take a particular baseball team, the one ranked lowest in an ongoing league, the Lycaons, and lead the team all the way to a victory at the league and on the path to become the strongest team in Japan. This doc serves to cover the feats he has done throughout the series to achieve that goal.



Please note that reading this doc requires some familiarity with baseball since One Outs is a baseball manga after all.

Sorry for mid doc btw, it's my first one.

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Red - Strategy, Planning, Tactics, Setting Traps
Blue - Detective Skills (Observation, Perception, Cold Reading, Information Gathering)
Orange - Emotional + Social Intelligence
Green - Manipulation + Deception
Pink - Logical Reasoning + Overall Thinking + Foresight (Anticipation, Prediction, Trap Evasion)
Cyan - Overall Intelligence + FSIQ
Purple – Miscellaneous

Feats

One Outs game vs. Nakane (Ch. 1-2)

Lycaons player Nakane challenges Tokuchi to a game of One-Outs.

One-Outs is a simpler variation of baseball played by Tokuchi at the start of the series. It involves just a pitcher and a batter. The pitcher throws the ball to the batter and if the batter can hit the ball into the outfield, they win. It's a game that also involves a lot of gambling, where people place bets on who they think is going to win in each round of the game.

But in this case, with Nakane challenging Tokuchi, Tokuchi proposes the following bet:

- If Nakane can just hit Tokuchi's pitch, Tokuchi will pay him 40 000 dollars.
- If Nakane fails to do so, he will owe Tokuchi 40 000 dollars.

Tokuchi likely proposed the bet to create fear in Nakane. Nakane's a young, inexperienced player, so it's natural to assume he wouldn't be able to handle a game with such high stakes. And this shows as the game actually starts. Nakane's fear causes him to hesitate when the ball is thrown and as such, he fails to hit the first two pitches.

And for the third pitch, Tokuchi uses his grip on the ball to trick Nakane into thinking he's gonna throw a forkball. And due to Nakane's fear, he's very willing to lean onto that possibility to win. As a result, he misses the ball again when it turns out it was actually a fastball Tokuchi threw.

(Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation, Deception)

First One Outs game vs. Kojima (Ch. 4-5)

The news about Nakane's loss to Tokuchi reaches the Lycaons' ace player, Kojima, prompting him to challenge Tokuchi himself. He finds the field in which Tokuchi tends to play, and challenges some of the other pitchers first while waiting for Tokuchi to show up. Tokuchi could guess that Kojima came here to challenge him specifically. Because it's about now when Tokuchi makes a deal with the audience. If all the audience members bet on Tokuchi for his eventual match against Kojima, Tokuchi will take 400 000 dollars from Kojima and split the money with the audience members. Not only that, but Tokuchi also anticipated that Kojima himself would drive up the ball-strike count to 3-2, in other words digging his own grave.

(Abductive Reasoning, Emotional Understanding, Negotiation, Anticipation)

When the game starts, Tokuchi starts by first throwing an awful pitch that is way off the strikezone, followed by slightly improving each successive pitch. This gets Kojima to think that Tokuchi is just nervous about facing off against a pro batter like him, and that Tokuchi's pitches are only getting better because he's recomposing himself.

Eventually, the pitches reach close enough to the strikezone that Kojima can hit them, albeit only getting foul balls in return. Notably, Kojima attempts to hit the balls despite the fact they would've been balls and he would've won if he let them slide by. This is because of his pride as a batter. Since Toua made everyone bet on him, Kojima felt insulted, and felt that he needed to prove himself to change the audience's mind. He couldn't do that by just letting the balls go by, and so he tried hitting them anyway.

All this became his downfall for the final pitch, which was an easy slowball that Kojima nevertheless couldn't hit, because Tokuchi's previous pitches and everyone betting on him got Kojima thinking that Tokuchi would go all out for this final pitch. After all, it seemed like the only reasonable decision if one wanted to defeat a professional batter like Kojima, except Tokuchi had set Kojima up to think like that. Ultimately, Tokuchi won by using Kojima's pride against him.

(Strategy, Strategic Deception, Emotional Facilitation)

Tokuchi's One Outs debut (Ch. 6)

In this chapter, Big Mama talks about the first time she met Tokuchi. It was during a game of One Outs, and Tokuchi was standing just behind the batter. And he whispered to the batter what kind of pitches he expected the pitcher to throw, and it turns out he guessed correctly every time. Most likely, he could guess accurately by observing the pitcher.

(Anticipation, Observation, Cold Reading)

Eventually, Tokuchi was invited to play a round of One Outs. When looking for a player to challenge, he was immediately able to find the best player out of everyone in the arena just by just taking a look at him.

(Observation, Cold Reading)

Before the game with this other player began, he added a rule that the game would end after just one pitch. In addition, he made it clear to the batter that he knew what his favorite pitch to hit was - an inside high. This was intentional because, as the game started, since it was a 1-pitch game, the batter would think carefully about the pitch they find most difficult to hit and focus on that pitch. Since both he and Tokuchi each only have one shot to win and since Tokuchi already revealed to the batter that he knew the batter liked inside high's, the batter would conclude that Tokuchi would try pitching an outside low. But that's what Tokuchi wanted the batter to think. What Tokuchi actually threw was an inside high, catching the batter off guard and causing him to lose the game.

(Setting Traps, Logical Manipulation, Strategy)

After Big Mama tells the story, she suggests that Tokuchi has a tough spirit, and also states that Tokuchi is the type of person that "can see the slight disturbances of the human psyche", like anxiety, uncertainty and haste, and manipulate them, preventing them from being able to do the simplest of tasks.

(Emotional Management, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation)

Tokuchi playing poker (Ch. 7)

Calls the "perfect bluff" of another player.

(Observation, Cold Reading)

Tokuchi playing Darts (Ch. 8)

Tokuchi is challenged by someone else to a game of darts, where the rule is that Tokuchi must hit the bullseye three times in a row, otherwise the other player will break his arm. Tokuchi wins, all the while being confident and concentrated while even being able to ignore the moves made by the other player during the 3rd round. Tokuchi was seemingly not bothered at all by the possibility of his arm getting broken.

(Emotional Management)

Second One Outs game vs. Kojima (Ch. 9-10)

Just before Tokuchi and Kojima are about to have their second match, Tokuchi tells Kojima that he's gonna do some "practice pitching". As Tokuchi does this, he "accidentally" gets the ball to land near Kojima and asks Kojima to throw the ball back. But while Kojima does this, Tokuchi realizes the way in which he does so – by putting his bat down on the muddy ground, despite the bat just having been cleaned, and then throwing the ball, when he could've just shifted the bat over. That and the fact that Kojima threw the ball with his left hand allowed Tokuchi to deduce that Kojima's right wrist must be injured.

With that in mind, he understands that Kojima won't be able to hit inside pitches at all, and that Kojima will put all his efforts on hitting an outside one instead. And so, throughout their game, Tokuchi throws nothing but inside pitches, and he would've won if it weren't for Kojima suddenly allowing himself to be hit by the ball after the final pitch.

Regarding the "practice pitches" Tokuchi threw in the beginning, we know from later on in the series that Tokuchi tends to never throw any warm-up pitches. This means that, when facing off against Kojima here, Tokuchi somehow already suspected that he might be injured. Which means that when he asked Kojima to throw the ball back to him, he was actually tricking Kojima into revealing what kind of injury he had and confirm his suspicions.

(Setting Traps, Observation, Deductive Reasoning)

Signing of the 'One Outs' contract (Ch. 11)

Tokuchi proposes a special deal to Saikawa upon meeting him for the first time. For every out Tokuchi gets, Saikawa will pay Tokuchi 5 million yen. For every run Tokuchi earns, Tokuchi will pay Saikawa 50 million yen. As Saikawa later explains, this contract is extremely risky for the pitcher, since even a player with an earned run average (ERA) of 2.7, which would be slightly better than the best ERA at the time, would end up with a net amount of 0 yen with this contract. But as we learn throughout the series, Tokuchi is no ordinary pitcher, which is why he could afford to take this risk.

(Risk-taking, Negotiation)

Baseball match vs. the Eagles (Ch. 13-17)

As part of his deal with Kojima, after losing to him in One Outs, Tokuchi joins the Lycaons in order to lead the team to a championship victory.

After playing in a few matches, Tokuchi would go on to state that the reason the Lycaons played so poorly is because they lack a sense of urgency. In other words, they're practicing to play instead of practicing to win, sticking to old rules instead of coming up with new solutions. In order to make the Lycaons truly understand this, Tokuchi would, during this match, first remove Yoshida, the Lycaons' shortstop defender, from the field when the team was defending, and then taunt the opposing team by saying the Lycaons will still win even with only 8 players. More about Yoshida later.

This strategy worked wonders. It was apparent that Tokuchi's actions heightened the other players' sense of urgency, making them invest themselves more in the game. As an example, one of the Lycaons players, Imai, successfully caused a triple play by fooling a batter into thinking the shortstop would be a safe place to hit the ball. As Tokuchi was pitching to the batter, he would then quickly move to the shortstop to catch the ball in flight despite breaking the team's usual formation by doing so. The players all realized how much more they started taking the game seriously.

(Social Awareness, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Understanding, Strategy)

Tokuchi's next scheme is against the Eagles' pitcher Mizuhashi. Upon hearing that he can only throw fastballs and sliders, with the problem being that his pitching form is indistinguishable because the pitcher has no habits, Tokuchi comes up with a strategy to handle Mizuhashi. He timeouts the game and tells the next batter in his team that Mizuhashi has a habit of keeping his glove open when pitching sliders. He intentionally does this loud enough to make an opposing team player hear their conversation. Tokuchi then tells the batter, quietly this time, that Mizuhashi actually closes his gloves when pitching sliders.

Now, because the fielder only heard the first part, he is going to tell Mizuhashi that he (falsely) has a habit of keeping his glove open when he pitches sliders. This will make Mizuhashi start closing his glove whenever he pitches sliders, just as Tokuchi said

Mizuhashi would do. Tokuchi has effectively created a new habit for Mizuhashi. And now, thanks to this, the Lycaons' batters can now tell apart Mizuhashi's pitching forms and with success decide on how they're going to hit the ball, eventually forcing the pitcher to leave the mound. This strategy of Tokuchi's was especially successful because now the fielder who informed Mizuhashi about his "habit" thinks they will be fine so long as Mizuhashi closes his glove when pitching sliders, effectively digging their own grave by doing so.

(Strategy, Anticipation, Verbal Deception, Strategic Deception, Indirect Manipulation)

As a result of the above, the Lycaons were able to score 11 runs and tie the game. After this, Tokuchi has a conversation with Yoshida, in which he admits to somehow knowing about Yoshida's secret deal with Saikawa. The deal was that Saikawa would pay Yoshida money if he sabotaged the team by playing poorly when they were defending. This way, it would be harder for Tokuchi to keep runners at bay. He could've potentially earned a few runs and been forced to pay Saikawa a huge amount of yen as part of their contract. This is why Tokuchi forced Yoshida off the mound at the start of the game.

Tokuchi doesn't explain how he got the info, but he likely got it by hiding in Saikawa's room when he and Yoshida made the deal, just like he did later when Yoshida revealed to Saikawa that he was quitting Japanese baseball. Tokuchi eventually agrees to allow Yoshida to play with the team again.

(Espionage?)

During the 9th inning, when Tokuchi's manager Mihara refuses to take him off the mound despite him being tired, Tokuchi forces himself out of the mound by beanballing the next batter. What's notable is that he beanballed him with such accuracy that the batter wouldn't get hurt by the pitch.

(Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence)

Tokuchi's final feat in this match is when Yoshida pitches during the final inning. Tokuchi sees how poorly Yoshida throws his pitches. So when the ball-strike count is 3-1, Tokuchi calls out to him, telling him to not think about winning or losing or the crowd and to just focus on one thing – whether he is truly a pitcher or not. He tells him to pitch for none other than himself. This change of focus in Yoshida ultimately leads him to throw a powerful pitch that breaks the batter's bat, resulting in the batter-runner getting tagged out and the Lycaons winning the game.

(Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Understanding)

Revision of 'One Outs' contract (Ch. 18)

After the previous match, Saikawa has a meeting with Tokuchi in which he suggests a couple things to add to their original contract because the old contract was apparently too undetailed. There's 4 things in total.

1. Tokuchi must always follow instructions from the dugout. If this clause is broken, including when Tokuchi is unable to follow the instructions due to his own negligence, Tokuchi must pay a fine of 500 million yen.

2. From now on, any run that Tokuchi gives up as a pitcher, not just earned runs, is subject to the contract. In other words, Tokuchi will have to pay Saikawa for each point lost in the game whenever he's pitching.

3. The stakes of the contract can be adjusted depending on the importance of the game.

4. Tokuchi must not reveal the existence of the contract to anyone. If this clause is broken, Tokuchi will pay a 500 million yen fine on top of having his salary completely wiped.

Tokuchi accepted the clauses, aware that Saikawa is planning something, yet confident he can best him anyway.

(Risk-Taking)

Just before Baseball match vs. the Mariners (Ch. 19)

As the Lycaons' match against the Mariners is about to start, the Lycaons players are watching the Mariners practice. The Lycaons' catcher, Ideguchi, hands Tokuchi some papers showing the past data of some of the Mariner players. However, Tokuchi immediately rips apart those papers, explaining to Ideguchi and the others that the only thing that matters is not how the Mariners have previously performed, but how the Mariners will perform today. He then criticizes the team for worrying so much about the past Mariners that they didn't even notice certain interesting happenings in the opposing team, which Tokuchi did. See the below image.



(Observation)

Baseball match vs. the Mariners, Game 1 (Ch. 19-22)

When the Mariners' Tomas is at-bat for the first time, he comments on Tokuchi's pitching ability, saying that he scatters the balls so that they seem like ball pitches, yet they're actually just barely within the strikezone. Later, when the Mariners' Takami is at-bat for the first time, he also comments on Tokuchi's placement of the ball and his control.

(Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence)

Also during this time, for the first pitch, Tokuchi sees through Takami's decision to not hit the ball for the first pitch and can thus safely throw an easy pitch down the middle of the strikezone.

(Observation, Cold Reading)

However, for the third pitch, Takami doesn't hit the ball and instead observes how the ball Tokuchi threw moves. From this, he understood the method Tokuchi used to strike out the previous two batters.

What Tokuchi did was the following: for each batter he faced, he would bait them by pitching normal fastballs, making the opponent think that's all Tokuchi got as a pitcher, and once that happens, Tokuchi, for his final pitch, uses his great pitching control to throw a low-rotation, sinking fastball to catch the opponent off-guard and strike them out. What

makes this strategy especially effective is that Tokuchi can grasp what their opponent is thinking, letting him know when exactly it's time to trick them.

(Strategy, Setting Traps, Methods, Observation, Cold Reading, Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence)

However, the Mariners' attempt to counter Tokuchi's strategy doesn't work, as Tokuchi is just too good at knowing what the opponent is thinking. One batter, Yamakawa, tried to anticipate Tokuchi throwing a low-rotation fastball and tried to act accordingly, but Tokuchi saw through that and threw a ball pitch instead, striking Yamakawa out as he was attempting to hit the ball. After this, the next batter, Nozoe, reasons that, because Tokuchi starts his pitches by baiting with normal fastballs, that means the first pitch will definitely be a fastball, so Nozoe prepares for a fastball. But Tokuchi sees through this again, and throws a low-rotation fastball again, causing Nozoe to hit a grounder and get an out.

It's revealed that Tokuchi, in fact, always watches his opponents closely, even when they aren't at-bat. For example, Tomas, after missing a pitch by Tokuchi, adjusted his grip on the bat downwards a little, and then did a practice swing, making it obvious to anyone watching that he was concerned about his timing when hitting.

(Observation, Cold Reading)

As the Mariners realize they aren't getting anywhere by trying to outsmart Tokuchi, Takami comes up with another plan. Takami tells his teammates two things: to ignore Tokuchi's low-rotation fastballs and to only swing the bat once when at-bat and at no other point. The reason Takami tells them this is the following: to make the players play with a heavier bat instead of their own. Because like this, whenever the batters aim for a normal fastball, and Tokuchi catches on, Tokuchi will wanna throw a low-rotation fastball to get them out. However, because the batter is holding a heavier bat, and because the batters aren't used to it because Takami didn't allow them to do practice pitches, the batter will end up swinging the bat further down than intended, causing them to hit Tokuchi's low-rotation fastball.

However, this plan would only work until it was Brooklyn's turn to bat. Brooklyn is a Mariner batter whose main bat is the heavy bat Takami told everyone else to use. So Brooklyn would fail to hit the ball as usual, which would have likely made Tokuchi realize the trick with the heavy bat. So when Takami comes to bat, Takami expects that Tokuchi will, for his last pitch, assume Takami's holding the heavy bat and go against Takami's strategy by throwing a normal fastball. Which is why Takami brought out his normal bat to use instead so he could hit the ball properly.

But Tokuchi struck him out anyway. It turns out that Tokuchi's pitching control also allows him to throw balls with relatively high spin as well, something Takami couldn't predict based on what he's seen of Tokuchi so far. In other words, Tokuchi realized the Mariners' trick with the heavy bat, thought of the possibility that Takami might try trapping him by bringing out his normal bat instead of the heavy one, and to ensure that doesn't happen, threw a high-spin ball instead which he knew Takami probably wouldn't see coming.

(Inductive Reasoning, Anticipation, Trap Evasion, Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence)

Baseball match vs. the Mariners, Game 2 (Ch. 23-24)

When Kojima shows up to bat for the first time since being injured, Tokuchi interrupts him just as he's about to bat, and tells him that he won't be able to bat with the current state of his elbow, saying that it's like he wants to retire after the current game. So Kojima gets a bandage for the elbow, and then goes out to bat, but not before Tokuchi tells him that the pitcher's, Tomosaka's, pitch, will be a fastball on the outside corner. And it turns out that's what happened, despite the fact the catcher told Tomosaka to pitch high and inside.

It turns out that Tokuchi intentionally called out Kojima before he was to bat and let him bandage himself. This was to induce psychological repression on the pitcher. Tokuchi's strategy was an application of a psychological experiment in which a professional marksman was asked to hit a target. However, they placed a large priceless artifact just to the left of the target that you wouldn't want to break, which caused the marksman to subconsciously avoid it by shooting on average a little more to the right of the target instead.

In this case, now that Tomosaka can see a bandage wrapped around Kojima, the young pitcher becomes, at least subconsciously, hesitant to pitch high and inside, due to the risk of damaging Kojima's elbow and forcing him to retire. As Tokuchi puts it, "nobody wants to break a priceless artifact", which in this case was Kojima's bandaged elbow. This is why Tomosaka ended up pitching outside despite the catcher telling him to pitch inside, allowing Kojima to successfully hit the ball and get a home-run.

(Anticipation, Analogical Reasoning, Knowledge, Psychology, Psychological Manipulation, Crystallized Intelligence)

Baseball match vs. the Mariners, Game 3 (Ch. 25-33)

Tokuchi started this game knowing that there was soon going to be a severe thunderstorm that could potentially cancel the game as it was going. So as the game started, he deliberately delayed it for the first four innings by pitching 3 balls followed by an easy pitch down the middle of the strikezone to every batter he faced. This had the additional effects of both making the opposing team think he was fatigued from being the starting pitcher for the two previous games and letting them score 16 runs in total while the Lycaons couldn't score any runs at all at this time. All this progress Tokuchi allowed the Mariners to make would distract them from realizing that a storm was coming. Once they did realize what was going on, the team's focus would switch to just getting the game to the end of the 5th inning as quickly as possible, because if the game gets canceled after that point, the results of the match will be kept instead of invalidated.

(Preparation, Setting Traps, Distracting)

Now that the Mariners know what Tokuchi's up to, they first try to hurry up the game by just swinging the bat whenever Tokuchi pitches, regardless of if they hit or not. But this

isn't fast enough, so one of the Mariners' players decide to speed the game up by breaking a rule – hitting the ball with one foot outside of the batter's box. This should grant the batter with an instant out instead of having to wait for Tokuchi to strike them out. However, Tokuchi counters this by dropping the ball when he pitches, which grants the batter a walk instead and thus halts the game's progress.

However, Takami comes up with a counter to that counter by letting the batter change position to the opposite batter's box when at-bat. This gets the batter out before Tokuchi can even drop the ball on to the ground. But Tokuchi manages to bypass this as well by not stepping on the pitcher's plate when pitching. As he does this, unbeknownst to anyone else, he's digging a small hole on the mound where the pitcher is supposed to stand. The effect of this will come up later. Anyway, Tokuchi's counter is treated as a ball and the batter gets a walk. Though he gets out anyway after Takami tells him to walk to third base instead of first. With this, the teams change sides and now the Mariners are defending, with a pitcher named Kira.

(Short-Term Strategy, Preparation, Creativity)

Tokuchi's intention is to make the Mariners panic. Now that the Mariners are focusing on getting the game to progress as quickly as possible, which is itself because of the fact that they have a massive lead over the Lycaons at the moment, they cannot waste pitches and they do not have time to come up with a plan, like Tokuchi says. They don't have time to try anything out.

(Social Awareness, Emotional Facilitation, Pressurizing, Mass Manipulation, Logical Manipulation)

However, Tokuchi is still intent on winning the game despite the Mariners' huge lead. This is because even if the Lycaons successfully cancel the game and invalidate the results, the Mariners will still consider the match a massive victory in their heads with their score of 16-0. This will help hold up their self-confidence and momentum for the next games they play. And so, it's important for the Lycaons to not let this happen and emotionally crush the Mariners by racking up points to win the game instead.

(Social Awareness)

Moving on to the beginning of the 5th inning, the first notable thing that happens is that Kira, despite being a pitcher with great control, can't get a single strike at the batter. This is because of that ditch Tokuchi made at the mound. And it's not like he can snitch on Tokuchi either, because even if Tokuchi gets punished for it, the cleaning crew are gonna take time cleaning up the mound, which is not what the Mariners want at the moment. What's worse is that Kira's manager, due to the Mariners' urgency, insists on Kira skipping practice pitches, which could've allowed him to notice earlier and adapt to the hole Tokuchi dug.

Another way the Mariners' urgency to make the game valid gives the Lycaons an advantage is the fact that they ignore any runner on base that tries to steal a base, even if the runner is really slow. This, combined with the pitcher's poor hitting due to the ditch on the mound, allows the Lycaons to score their first runs of the match.

It's worth mentioning how disabled exactly Kira is at this point due to the time constraint. In summary, the way the mound ditch disables Kira is that it forces him to either throw a pitch outside the strikezone or throw a pitch inside and high. With the Mariners' intention of making the game valid as quickly as possible, only the latter is an option (Kira probably pitched balls at the beginning because he was trying to pitch something else but failed because of the ditch). This makes the ball really easy to hit when the batter puts all his focus on the inside and high pitch. And on top of all this, he can't waste time to exchange signs or provoke the batter either, he must pitch as soon as he can. So there's a ton of constraints that the pitcher is facing right now. Ultimately, the Lycaons were able to get 10 runs out of Kira.

Soon enough, Tokuchi's strategy advances to its next phase. Tokuchi anticipates that all those constraints Kira has to deal with will stir something within him – rebellion. When faced with so much pressure from his team because of the time limit, and the team not even considering to give him a potentially beneficial timeout due to the time pressure, making Kira feel abandoned, Kira has enough, especially because his performance has gotten to the point where his stats as a pitcher will be seriously negatively affected if the game is allowed to become valid, and also especially because he's the only player that will suffer from this, since the batters performed so well in the early innings.

So now, he gives up on listening to the manager and just throws pickoff after pickoff instead of pitching to the batter, helping the Lycaons forestall the game. Even as the umpire deems Kira's pickoffs to be balks due to Kira intentionally delaying the game, which is an instant walk and in this case a point-giver for the opposing team, he continues to throw pick-offs. That's how tired he was of the treatment he was receiving. As Tokuchi puts it, this game has now gone from a 9v9 game to a 10v8 game.

Eventually, the manager has enough and switches pitchers, this time to a pitcher named Tashiro, whom he similarly tells to skip practice pitching and just pitch as quickly as possible. But when Tashiro first attempts to pitch, he slips. This is because Kira, still intent on canceling the game, made Tokuchi's ditch even deeper before being switched out.

(Strategy, Logical Manipulation, Pressurizing, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation, Anticipation)

Just like with Kira, Tashiro's pitches keep going horribly, allowing the Lycaons to score even more points. At one point, the bases are loaded and the batter is Kurumizawa, one of the worst batters in the Lycaons. What's important is that both teams know this. So Tokuchi quietly tells Kurumizawa just before he pitches that Tashiro's next pitch will be a fastball straight down the middle, before yelling out so everyone else can hear that he should just wait for the pitcher to give him a walk.

The reason Tokuchi did this was because it would make the Mariners think that Kurumizawa, knowing the Mariners are stressed out, was just gonna sit around and wait for the pitcher to get him a walk, especially because Kurumizawa is bad at batting. This, coupled with the Mariners being in a rush, leads to Tashiro throwing a relaxed pitch down the middle, because he thinks the batter won't hit it anyways. Just as Tokuchi told Kurumizawa. As a result, Kurumizawa got a home run despite his poor batting and the game is now tied as a result. Eventually, Tashiro also started feeling the same way about the game as Kira. Now that Tokuchi has gotten both pitchers to focus on just getting the game invalid instead of winning, the Lycaons get an even bigger advantage over the Mariners.

(Same categories as with Kira + Setting Traps, Convergent Thinking, Abductive Reasoning)

Just before the game continues, Tokuchi notices that his teammates are lowering their guard after having caught up with the Mariners. So he "informs" them that there is still a hurdle to overcome in the 5th inning. However, before the second half of the 5th inning, Tokuchi reveals that this warning was actually just a bluff Tokuchi told to make his teammates not lose concentration and their sight on victory. He understood that the team didn't really know what they were going to do once they lost their "invalid game" trump card, otherwise they wouldn't have shrugged it off by saying "we've done good so far". Even the manager failed to encourage them.

(Social Awareness, Bluffing)

Once the game continues, Tokuchi's next scheme comes when Tashiro is facing the batter Arai. Tashiro at first pitches 2 curveballs, each landing just outside the strikezone, i.e. landing better than his previous curve ball pitches. It's worth mentioning that Tashiro is mainly a curveball pitcher. And with the 2 curveballs he just threw, Tashiro probably discovered the technique behind throwing them in the heavy rain. But he couldn't afford to try it a third time due to the strike-ball score being 0-2. So he threw two fastballs to up the score to 2-2.

Tashiro at this point must've noticed that Arai started to freak out, especially because Arai's teammates were shouting at him to calm down. This would make Tashiro realize he could waste one more pitch on trying his curveball technique, which he does. Tokuchi understands all of this, realizes what Tashiro is going to do, and proceeds to warn Arai about it, leading to Arai successfully hitting the ball and getting a triple. With this, the Lycaons scored another run, finally putting them in the lead.

But that's not the only reason Tokuchi warned Arai about that pitch. It was also to get rid of Arai's hesitation. When the strike-ball score was 2-2, Tokuchi understood that Arai was having trouble deciding what he was going to do next, so he told him the pitch that Tashiro was going to throw, which would make Arai focus on nothing more than the timing of the hitting of a curve ball.

(Anticipation, Abductive Reasoning, Emotional Facilitation)

Once the second half of the 5th inning begins, Tokuchi confronts the Mariners' manager and provokes him, saying it's his fault the Lycaons ended up in the lead and that, if he were the manager, he would've tried stalling the game to make it invalid. But the manager declines the advice, insisting that the Mariners will still end up winning, which Tokuchi responds to by saying that the manager should then be ready to take responsibility for the Mariners' eventual loss.

(Provocation, Reverse Psychology, Guilt-Tripping)

Once the second half of the 5th inning begins, Tokuchi is pitching, with Takami being the current batter. Here, Tokuchi throws his pitches in a way that makes Takami, a very observant and calculating person, doubt that Tokuchi is still able to throw good pitches. Takami thinks instead that Tokuchi is trying to bluff him with weak pitches instead, and so, lowers his guard and focuses only on hitting the ball to the stands for Tokuchi's next pitch. But this is what Tokuchi was waiting for. Now, Tokuchi throws a pitch which he hasn't thrown before – a very low rotation ball, only made possible because of the rain, something Takami didn't realize until it was too late.

(Setting Traps, Strategic Deception)

Just before this half of the inning begins, Tokuchi confronts the Mariners' manager and provokes him, saying it's his fault the Lycaons ended up in the lead and that, if he were the manager, he would've tried stalling the game to make it invalid. But the manager declines the advice, insisting that the Mariners will still end up winning, which Tokuchi responds to by saying that the manager should then be ready to take responsibility for the Mariners' eventual loss.

Tokuchi's final scheme in this game comes at the very end, when he pitches in a way that makes the batter hit a grounder back to him. Now, all Tokuchi has to do to win the match is to touch that batter while holding the ball. But instead, Tokuchi confronts the manager again and reminds him of the responsibility he has to take as a manager, both because of the terrible decisions he's made throughout the match, and for the suffering he caused his own pitchers because of it. He advises the manager to do this by forfeiting the match, because that's the only way that he'll be able to save Kira's and Tashiro's records from getting ruined. To put even more pressure on the manager, Tokuchi only gives him three seconds to make his choice, finally leading to the manager making the choice to forfeit the game.

(Provocation, Reverse Psychology, Guilt-Tripping, Pressurizing)

The reason Tokuchi set up this complicated plan to have the game forfeited was to massively increase his profit off of Saikawa. At the beginning of the game, before anyone realized what he was planning, the runs Tokuchi earned had cost him so much money that there was no hope of getting out of the red by the end of it. Not unless there was an extraordinary circumstance like what happened here. Now that Tokuchi has convinced the manager to forfeit, the rules of baseball states that in cases like this, the score of the match changes to 9-0 regardless of any previous developments. This nullifies the number

of points Tokuchi lost to the opposing team during the match, thus nullifying the debt he accumulated during this match while keeping the money gained from striking out his opponents.

(Crystallized Intelligence, Problem Solving (FRI), Creativity, Knowledge, Planning)

Note that Tokuchi's plan implies he knew that Saikawa, due to his greed, was going to keep him on the mound to make more money out of him even as Tokuchi's debt placed him in the red and Saikawa no longer had to let Tokuchi continue pitching.

(Anticipation, Emotional Understanding)

Baseball match vs. the Bugaboos, Game 1 (Ch. 34-37)

In this set of games, the Lycaons will face off against a team whose coach is Shirooka, a strategist just like Tokuchi. Also for this set of games, Saikawa will try a new strategy to get money out of Tokuchi. This strategy consists of having Tokuchi on the mound only when there's a runner on third-base. The baseball rules say that once any player is substituted out of the field, they can't play anymore. So whenever there isn't a runner on third, Saikawa, via the dug-out, will make Tokuchi defend first-base instead. This way, because Tokuchi isn't that great at defending, runners can take bases more easily and thus increase the likelihood of a runner getting from third-base to home when Tokuchi is the pitcher.

The first feat in this match comes when the Lycaons are on defense, with runners on first and third. Tokuchi is the pitcher. As Tokuchi is about to pitch, Ideguchi notices that coach Shirooka is sending a signal to his team. Ideguchi interprets the signal as the players preparing for a double steal, and warns the rest of the team about it. However, coach Shirooka is aware of this and then sends another signal to the team, leading Ideguchi to try interpreting that signal too. Then he sends a third signal, making Ideguchi completely confused on what Shirooka is planning. However, Tokuchi sees that Ideguchi is panicking, and tells him not to worry about it, saying it will all be useless if the batters are struck out, which Tokuchi then proceeds to do. As it turns out, those signals Shirooka sent were fakes meant to rattle the Lycaons. And Tokuchi was the only one who saw through that.

(Trap Evasion)

Later in the match, Tokuchi is assigned as defender of first base. He at first pretends to be a poor defender, hardly reacting when the ball approaches him. That is until the match gets to a situation where there are runners on first and second. At this point, Shirooka wants to ensure that a runner ends up on third base so that the Lycaons will put Tokuchi on the mound and Shirooka can challenge him again. So, in order to do this, he signals the next batter to do a safety bunt, a hit where the ball passes through the pitcher and towards the left side of Tokuchi, who they think is bad at defending.

But surprisingly, Tokuchi goes up behind the pitcher to successfully catch the ball before throwing it to second base, getting out the runner on first, before the ball is thrown to first

base, getting the batter out - a double play. Tokuchi must've gotten behind the pitcher on purpose, since otherwise there'd be no way he could throw the ball to second base. This also means he anticipated that the Bugaboos would try hitting the ball in his direction, which in itself means that he tricked the Bugaboos this whole time into thinking that he was a bad defender by acting like one until this moment. In other words, when there were runners on first and second, he got the Bugaboos to hit the ball exactly where he wanted them to hit.

(Anticipation, Acting, Indirect Manipulation, Setting Traps)

Baseball match vs. the Bugaboos, Game 2 (Ch. 38-43)

In this match, Tokuchi faces off against Bugaboos player Johnson. Johnson is a former track-and-field athlete that Shirooka recruited into the Bugaboos due to his immense running speed which would prove useful in baseball. Whenever the Bugaboos are in a game, Shirooka's tactic has been to get Johnson to third base so that he can then steal home, which is quite easy for Johnson due to his speed. Now, the Bugaboos are playing against the Lycaons and Johnson has to deal with Tokuchi as the pitcher.

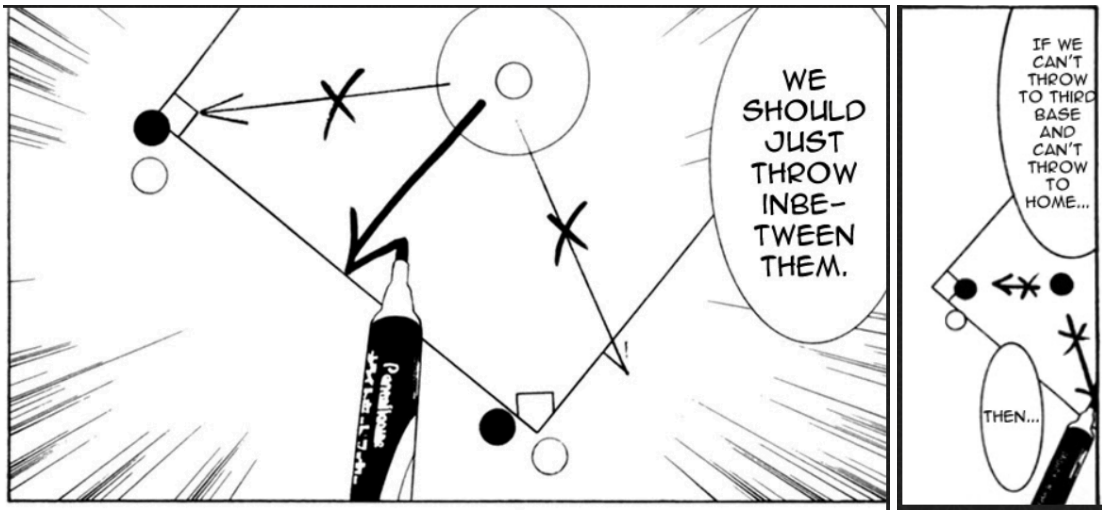
The first time Tokuchi as a pitcher faces off against Johnson at third base, he decides to set a trap for Johnson to find out more about his behavior when playing baseball. He first does a check throw to the third baseman. Johnson responds by attempting to steal home but then running back. Then, Tokuchi pitches a ball to the batter (he can't pitch a strike because he knew the batter would try bunting, which would definitely give Johnson enough time to steal home), and Johnson steals successfully. What Tokuchi just did was for two reasons.

1. Tokuchi knows that base-stealing is about more than just running. A base-stealer has to first think and decide whether a base is worth stealing or not. In reality, this should've caused Johnson's steal attempt to fail, yet a recording shows that Johnson can apparently make decisions so quickly that his steal attempt succeeds anyway. It's also worth mentioning that Johnson responded the exact same way both when Tokuchi did his check throw and when he was pitching to the batter. Johnson's two responses here leads Tokuchi to conclude that what Johnson did was pre-planned.

   However, while Tokuchi is explaining this to the team, he also points out that, when Shirooka earlier said on TV that Tokuchi as a pitcher couldn't defeat Johnson's speed, it was weird that Shirooka pointed this out in the first place. Normally, you'd want to keep stuff like this hidden from the enemy team. Additionally, Tokuchi noticed how, during the current and previous game against the Bugaboos, Shirooka was observing the third baseman, Fujita, closely. This, combined with the knowledge of Fujita's disability, namely his damaged right thigh that prevents from being able to step fully with his right leg, making it harder for him to catch and throw balls, leads Tokuchi to conclude that this is the real reason Johnson can get

home successfully, and also why any check throw Tokuchi attempts will inevitably fail.

But Tokuchi has a solution to this. Understanding that he can't throw to the third baseman and then to home because that will be too slow, and that it will also be too slow to throw directly to home, Tokuchi suggests putting the third baseman in between third base and home. This way, the distance between Tokuchi and Fujita, and between Fujita and the catcher Ideguchi, will be much shorter, effectively forcing Johnson to stay where he is while on third base.



2. He purposefully let Johnson steal a base because by doing this, Johnson will have in total, including a previous game, successfully performed 2/2 attempted base steals. Because of this, Shirooka will look at Johnson more favorably, and have more confidence that Johnson will be able to score more runs like he previously did. And Tokuchi was right, because after Tokuchi explained all of this to the team, Shirooka decided to keep Johnson as an infield defender, suggesting he's gonna be given at least 2 chances to be at-bat and score runs.

   However, there's an issue. Tokuchi had previously observed Johnson practicing bunts and only bunts while not playing in the game. So it shouldn't be too hard for Johnson to just bunt to be able to get on base. But at the same time Johnson can be assumed to be bad at everything else, so while Johnson might have 2 chances to steal a base, the Lycaons will have at least 15 chances in total (since this is just before the 5th inning) to make use of Johnson's weakness as an infield defender to score runs themselves. This was what Tokuchi was aiming for, and it would've worked if it weren't for Johnson being faster than they initially thought.

(Setting Traps, Information Gathering, Inductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Observation, Deductive Reasoning, Strategy, Lateral Thinking, Indirect Manipulation, Convergent Thinking)

As previously stated, the Lycaons were still in trouble even while playing offense because of Johnson's speed. However, as the team was losing hope, Tokuchi noticed that it was

strange how Johnson kept staying further back than a defender would normally do in his position. Yet he understands that it can't be because Johnson's a complete newbie, because considering how much bunting Johnson practiced, it would be unlikely that Shirooka didn't teach him the other basics of baseball. And because of this, Johnson standing where he is during defense is probably because that's simply a natural position for him.

Tokuchi never bought the idea that Johnson was a good baseball player, because Johnson has his background in track-and-field, not baseball. One could say he's still just a track-and-field athlete. So with that said, there had to have been some form of weakness Johnson had while defending, and Johnson's special position as a defender meant it probably had to do with that. Tokuchi just couldn't find what it was initially.

(Observation, Abductive Reasoning)

Eventually, it's Tokuchi's turn to bat. When the ball is thrown, he hits a foul ball in Johnson's direction. Johnson fails to catch it, but what's more important is what Johnson did here. He crashed into the wall trying to catch the ball. From this, Tokuchi understood his weakness. Because someone with experience in defending would, in that situation, run up to the wall *and stop just before the wall* while keeping an eye on and getting ready to catch the ball. Tokuchi hit another foul ball in Johnson's direction to confirm his findings and it seemed like he was right. But there's something else that's happening too. The more Johnson crashes into the wall, the more he subconsciously becomes aware of it whenever he runs towards it again. Tokuchi was aware of this, so afterwards he did the following:

He asks Ideguchi to play catch with him while his teammates are playing in the actual game. However, while he's playing, he goes up to the next person in his team who is going to bat and tells him to not listen to whatever the manager is saying, and instead hit a fly ball in Johnson's direction, or else Tokuchi would expose the batter's affair with his wife. The batter obliges and Johnson once again runs towards the fence to try and catch the ball. But just before he's about to catch it, Tokuchi yells "watch out!" to Johnson. Now, Johnson, hearing Tokuchi, looked at the fence without thinking, and when Johnson stopped looking at it, it was already too late. He cut his line of sight of the ball, and as a consequence of this, he failed to catch it, letting two runners reach home and turning the game around for the Lycaons.

(Tactics, Information Gathering, Inductive Reasoning, Psychology, Psychological Manipulation, Blackmailing)

Later in the game, the Lycaons are defending and Johnson is at-bat. But before Johnson is about to bat, Tokuchi calls time-out and gathers the team to reveal to them his plan. To start off, they are to make it look like they're discussing how to counter Johnson's bunts while in actuality Tokuchi is telling them his real plan. Then they will as part of the act assume an anti-bunt defense. This fails due to Johnson's speed, as Tokuchi anticipated, and eventually, Johnson gets to third base. As Tokuchi previously suggested, the third baseman takes position in front of Johnson, in between third base and home, successfully preventing Johnson from being able to run.

However, this plan so far is flawed, because there's still the batter to think about. If the Lycaons' pitcher pitches and the batter bunts, there'll be enough time for Johnson to reach home while the defenders are busy catching and throwing the ball. So to avoid this, the pitcher would have to throw where the batter can't hit it, in other words, he'd have to pitch a ball. Such pitches would eventually result in the batter getting a walk. And what eventually happens is that Tokuchi ends up getting the bases fully loaded because of this. And at this point, no matter where Tokuchi pitches, he will end up losing a run regardless.

After this, the team gathers once again, this time to, as an act, berate Tokuchi for throwing waste pitches like a coward while Tokuchi acts humiliated. However, while this is happening, Tokuchi secretly gives Imai, a defender who's usually standing close to third base, the ball. And after this, the team returns to position. Now, with bases fully loaded, Tokuchi could guess that the Bugaboos would let their guard down, thinking the Lycaons wouldn't make it out of the situation unscathed. And while this happens, a defender Imai comes up behind Johnson and touches him with the ball Tokuchi gave him, getting Johnson out. And as such, by the end of this inning, the Lycaons kept their lead.

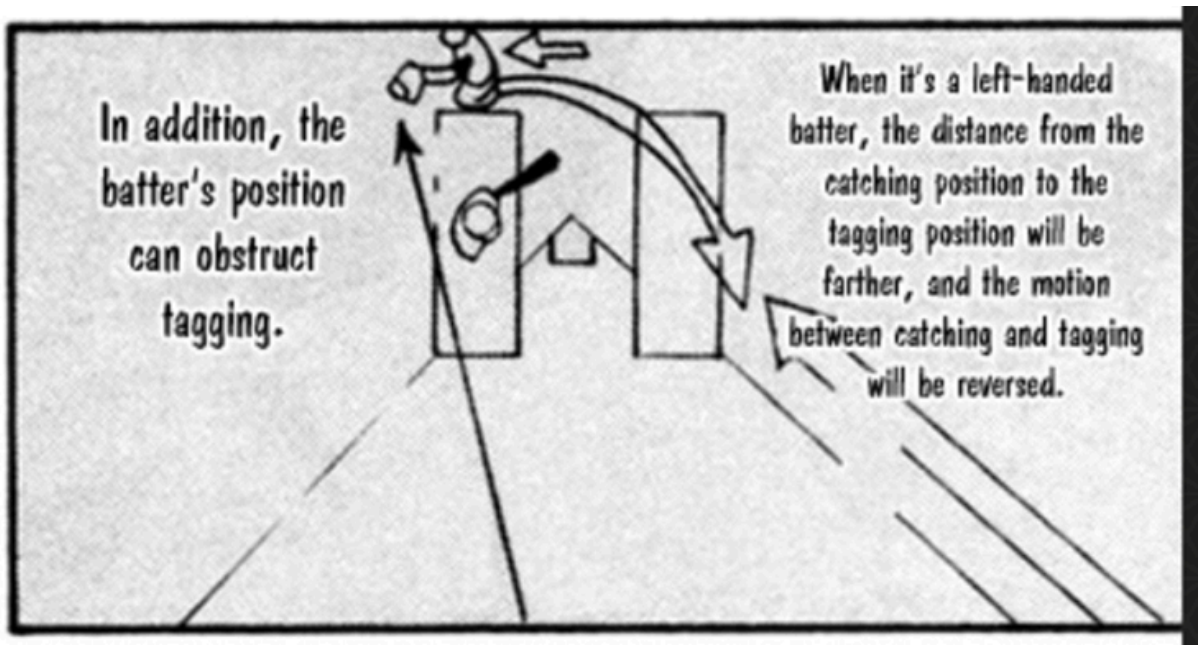
(Short-Term Planning, Anticipation, Acting, Mass Deception)

Of course, a trick like the one above is only gonna work once. Johnson eventually shows up to bat again and ends up getting to third base again. What Tokuchi does this time is that he first tells Fujita to go back to actually defending the third base, giving Johnson a chance to steal home. As stated before, the current situation doesn't seem advantageous to Tokuchi. If the batter bunts, Johnson will be able to steal home comfortably. If Tokuchi throws outside the batter's reach, the time it takes for the catcher Ideguchi to catch the ball will lead Johnson to still be able to steal home. But Tokuchi spotted a third option - to throw behind the batter's legs. This way, the batter won't be able to bunt because of where the ball is going, and Ideguchi will be able to catch it faster. This successfully gets Johnson out once more, and because this was in the final inning, the Lycaons end up winning the game.

(Lateral Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Observation, Strategy)

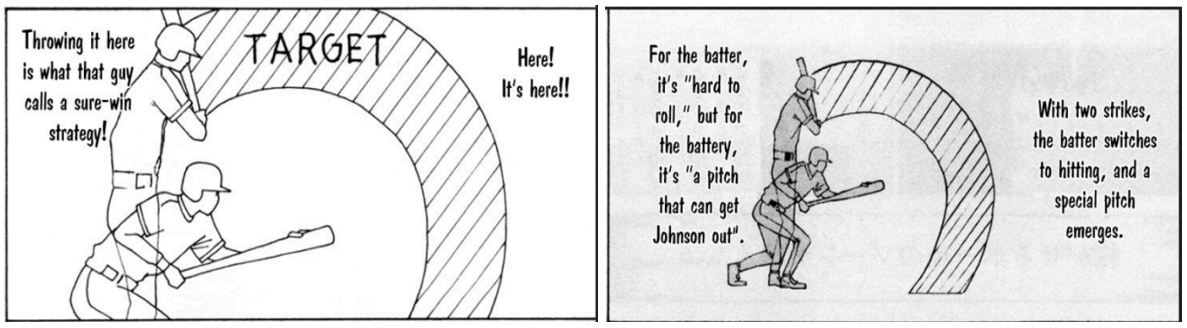
Baseball match vs. the Bugaboos, Game 3 (Ch. 44-53)

Tokuchi's first scheme in this match is when he's pitching against left-handed batter Kinouchi with Johnson on third base. It's important to mention that Tokuchi can no longer use the heel pitch strategy that he used in the previous game. This is because that only works for right-handed batters. When a left-handed person is at-bat, and Tokuchi tries pitching under that batter's heel, it will take a longer time because of the pitcher's and batter's position relative to each other, and it will also be more difficult for the catcher to tag Johnson because the batter is now in the way.



But Tokuchi isn't bothered by this, and that's because he realized Kinouchi made one big mistake up to this point. Up until now, Kinouchi had intentionally swung and missed twice to give Johnson opportunities to steal bases. As a result of this, his strike count was 2-0. This meant that, if he tries bunting when Johnson is on third base, and the bunting leads to a foul, he will get an out and Johnson will be forced to return to third base. So Kinouchi should instead just hit normally. But this is just the "One Outs" game all over again for Tokuchi, and because of that, he proclaims that he will have a sure-fire victory against both Kinouchi and Johnson with his third pitch.

This, combined with his irradiating confidence, causes Kinouchi to waver and call a timeout to try and figure out where exactly Tokuchi will pitch next. He reasons that, since Tokuchi can see when Johnson first attempts to steal a base, he will try hitting a pitch on the outside where the batter will have a hard time reaching. But where outside? Well, since the hitting area decreases when you switch from bunting to normal hitting, Kinouchi concludes that it is in that area, which goes lost when you switch to hitting, where Tokuchi will pitch. So Kinouchi decides that, since he's an expert buntist, he'll bunt in that exact area.



Yet when Tokuchi pitches and he tries this, he realizes that the ball is actually going down the very middle. Kinouchi manages to hit it, but it's a fly ball that goes right back to the

pitcher. Tokuchi then throws the ball to third, getting Johnson out too. A double play, just as Tokuchi proclaimed earlier.

As it turns out, Tokuchi could tell by watching Kinouchi's hands exactly what he was thinking, and even how Kinouchi had reasoned his way to his decision. Especially so because Tokuchi specifically said that he was gonna end up with a sure-fire victory. Because of that, Kinouchi immediately went off looking for that road to victory, and came to a conclusion about where Tokuchi would pitch that was seen through. In other words, Tokuchi manipulated Kinouchi into reaching a particular conclusion that he could later exploit to get a double play.

(Observation, Cold Reading, Abductive Reasoning, Intimidation, Indirect Manipulation, Setting Traps)

After this, Tokuchi is sent back to defend first base. However, now, he makes several errors while the Bugaboos are on the offensive. First, when Johnson is up to bat and he hits, Tokuchi suddenly starts playing poorly as a defender, failing to catch the ball several times. As a result, Johnson successfully gets to third base and Tokuchi is sent to be pitcher again. But now, the situation is a little different. At this point, the Bugaboos have 2 outs. If one more Bugaboos player gets an out, that half of the inning is over and the teams will change sides. This means that, with Johnson on third base, if the next batter attempts to bunt, there is a risk that the ball will easily be caught and get that batter out. And if that batter gets out, whether Johnson makes it home or not won't matter. So the batter's only option is to hit the ball normally, which, again, just like with Kinouchi earlier, is just the "One Outs" game again for Tokuchi. As expected, the batter hits a grounder and gets out, preventing another attempt at home stealing by Johnson.

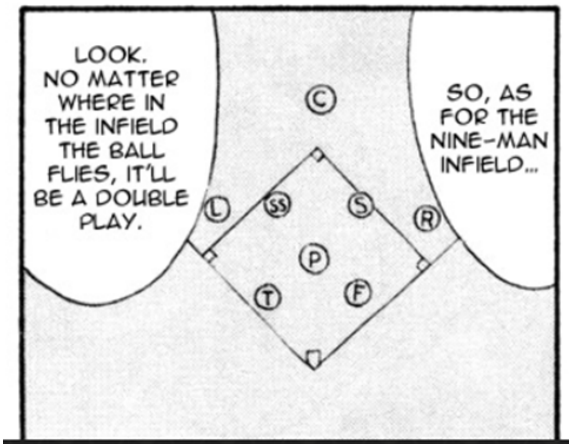
Tokuchi's next set of "errors" is, again, while defending first base. The next batter at-bat is the ninth batter, Miyama, and after him, Johnson. So here, Tokuchi again messes up and gets Miyama onto first base. Johnson then bunts the ball after him and gets on first base while Miyami gets on second. But now, there's a problem for the Bugaboos. Because there's a runner in front of Johnson (and a slow one at that), Johnson will be held off from stealing any bases.

It's revealed that all the errors Tokuchi made up until this point were intentional so that he could set up those two situations just described, because these situations put a shackle on Johnson.

Shirooka tries to evade the current issue with Miyama by telling him to try stealing a base every time the ball is pitched regardless of his speed. This way, if the Lycaons try getting Johnson out, it will fail because of Johnson's speed and Miyama will have successfully stolen a base. But if the Lycaons try getting Miyama out, they will likely succeed, but that would mean Johnson would no longer have a runner in front of him to stop him. As a result of this, Miyama successfully gets to third and Johnson to second.

However, Tokuchi, assigned as pitcher again, is now able to counter this. First, he pitches a dead ball to the next batter, giving the batter a walk. This prevents Miyama from getting

himself out and also leads to bases getting loaded. For the defenders, one benefit of bases being loaded is that it makes getting double plays easier. Especially after what Tokuchi does next. He gathers all the outfielders into the infield so that the entire team is defending the infield.



One effect of this is that the shortstopper is now right in-between second and third base. It's the same situation as in the previous game when the team had their third baseman go in-between third base and home to stop Johnson from stealing it, so Johnson won't be able to steal a base here either. And again, the batters will have a hard time hitting the ball to the outfield because that's what Tokuchi excels at preventing due to his experience playing "One Outs".

There's one more effect all this has. Because the batter needs to hit the ball into the outfield or else get a double play, it puts psychological pressure on the batter because of the potential disastrous consequences. To the next batter, Mishima, the outfield seemed much further away than usual. And while that batter is lost in thought, Tokuchi pressures him further by forcing the batter to try hitting his pitch unprepared, resulting in a double-play. And because the situation is now two outs, as previously stated, this makes Johnson unable to do anything, and the next batter is struck out. Tokuchi once again escaped Shirooka's attack unharmed. He additionally noticed how it psychologically affected Mishima afterwards, giving him the idea to take advantage of it.

(Strategy, Trap Evasion, Pressurizing, Observation)

During the eighth inning when the Bugaboos are on attack, Tokuchi intentionally sets up a bases-loaded situation with Johnson at second base and Mishima at-bat. Before I continue, it's worth mentioning that Mishima and the batters just before and after him aren't at a disadvantage just because of psychological pressure. It's also because, when Shirooka countered Tokuchi's heel pitch strategy, he did so by changing the batting order so that Johnson goes first and is then followed by left-handed batters…left-handed batters whose skill is to roll the ball into the infield, not the outfield, to ensure Johnson would make it home. And Mishima is one of those batters.

And it's not like the Bugaboos can just substitute batters. If they substitute Mishima with a left-handed outfield hitter, they can't because by the eighth inning there's none left to substitute with, and they can't change to a right-handed hitter either because that's what Tokuchi would want – for it would ruin the line-up Shirooka had prepared to get Johnson home, since Tokuchi already knows how to counter the right-handed batters when they try bunting for Johnson. And on top of all of that, Tokuchi successfully reads what Mishima intends to do with Tokuchi's pitch, his pitch eventually resulting in another double play. The fact that Mishima is stressed out probably made it easier for Tokuchi to see what he was thinking.

But there's one more thing that Tokuchi wins out of all of this. Normally, because he's only added in as a pitcher whenever there's a runner on third, he won't get that many chances to strike their opponent out on top of having to deal with Johnson whenever he's on third base. But with the nine-man infield defense, no outs, bases loaded strategy, Tokuchi not only keeps the Bugaboos in check, but also has the chance to get many more outs than he usually does.

Due to the contract with Saikawa, this not only undoes the money Saikawa gained from Tokuchi giving up a run from Johnson in the second game, but causes Saikawa to fall into the red as well. So in total, Tokuchi managed to find a strategy to deal with the Bugaboos and Saikawa at the same time. And this strategy is only possible because of how Saikawa has chosen to treat Tokuchi during this match, i.e. to put him on first base whenever there isn't a runner on third, and to put him on the mound otherwise. So what Tokuchi has done is effectively turn Saikawa's strategy to make himself money upside down.

(Strategy, Observation, Cold Reading, Emotional Understanding, Creativity, Trap Evasion, Problem Solving (FRI))

Next, at the bottom of the ninth inning, the Bugaboos are on attack. One of the batters manages to hit the ball far, ending up in third base. So Tokuchi is substituted in as a pitcher again. The first thing Tokuchi does is that he walks the next batters so that bases are loaded. Now it's the eighth batter, Asakura's, turn to bat. Now, unlike before, Tokuchi's nine-man infield defense strategy might not work so well this time, because, since the Bugaboos' clean-up hitters were replaced with infield hitters, it left their power sluggers, like Asakura, at the bottom of the running order. To avoid the risk of such a batter hitting a long shot that breaks through their defense, Tokuchi takes the three outfielders he used previously in his strategy, and replaces them with three infielders, making the infield defense more robust. This will be more important later.

Once everything is set, just before Tokuchi pitches, he notices Asakura's confidence and comments on it. Asakura responds by saying it's because he simply doesn't give a shit about Tokuchi. Tokuchi then tells Asakura that he will definitely cause a double play with his lack of tension. But it's not just that. If Asakura does indeed cause a double play, then the situation after that will be two outs, runners on second and third. Because Asakura was the eighth batter, Tokuchi can just walk the next batter, thus not having to deal with that batter's power. The batter after that will then be Johnson, who will be doomed by

Tokuchi's defense strategy because the only type of hit he knows is bunting. So if Asakura got a double play, it would in the end be tantamount to a triple play.

Evidently, Asakura is a little panicked because of this. He misses the first pitch, a low-spin pitch. He guesses that he can hit Tokuchi's next pitch by hitting the underside of the low-spin ball. But Tokuchi sees through him and pitches a high-spin ball, getting Asakura another strike. When Asakura tries to think about what Tokuchi's next pitch will be, he suddenly starts feeling very intimidated by Tokuchi, as if Tokuchi's a giant looking down on him. In the end, he doesn't even attempt hitting Tokuchi's pitch.

After this, Asakura has a conversation with Shirooka about Tokuchi where we get some more insight into the pitcher. We learn that Tokuchi, unlike other pitchers, doesn't exchange signs with his catcher to decide what pitch he's gonna throw and adjust his grip accordingly. When Tokuchi starts his pitching motion, he hasn't actually decided yet what he's going to pitch.

Because he can control his straight-ball grip very well, it's not until the very last second, when he's gotten a good enough look at the batter's body language, that he makes his decision. The more the batter gambles on a certain pitch, the easier Tokuchi can catch him off-guard. There's one more thing we learn about Tokuchi that makes him formidable. That's his tendency to taunt his opponents and make them question what they're doing. It's these two things that allowed Tokuchi to strike out Asakura.

(Strategy, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Intimidation, Observation, Cold Reading, Anticipation, Strategic Thinking)

After this, the game goes into overtime. At one point, Tokuchi is off the arena, having a conversation with the manager Mihara. He shows Mihara the current news on a newspaper, which credits Mihara for successfully countering Shirooka by having Tokuchi defend first base so that he can substitute him in whenever the Lycaons are in a pinch. Tokuchi uses this to convince Mihara that winning this match is worth it at all costs. This will be important later.

After this, we find the second reason for why Tokuchi came up with the idea to strengthen his nine-man infield defense. This ties back to Saikawa's exploitation strategy explained at the beginning of the section for the first Bugaboos game. For this match, Saikawa had prepared eight pitchers in total for Tokuchi to substitute with. Saikawa's intention was to be able to put Tokuchi on the mound as a pinch pitcher 9 times in total.

But Saikawa's strategy has a problem. By constantly changing Tokuchi's position between pitcher and first baseman, he has also rendered each player substituted as first baseman as unusable for the rest of the match. So, because 10 players were used for the starting line-up, 7 pitchers were so far relieved by Tokuchi (including the pitcher in the starting lineup), and 6 pitchers were so far used up when Tokuchi was defending first base, they've ended up using 10+6+6=22 players out of 25 excluding Tokuchi. But just when Saikawa thinks he can make use of the remaining 3 players on the bench, that doesn't work either

because they were the three in-fielders that Tokuchi added to his nine-man infield defense earlier.

As a result, this forces Saikawa to keep Tokuchi on the mound as a pitcher. And while he could just substitute Tokuchi for someone who's already on the arena, it turns out that that didn't work either, because Mihara, the one who actually gives orders on what players should be substituted, wanted to rebel against Saikawa after Tokuchi talked to him earlier about the importance of winning the match and the impact it would have on Mihara's image. So now, Saikawa is stuck using Tokuchi as a pitcher, meaning Tokuchi can now pitch even when there isn't a runner on third base, allowing him to get even more outs.

So to summarize, Tokuchi replaced his three outfielders with three infielders to strengthen his nine-man infield defense. This not only had the effect of keeping the batters at bay, but in the long run forced Tokuchi to stay on the mound. This would mean the following:

By the time Tokuchi told Mihara to replace their outfielders with infielders, he had already realized that Saikawa was the one that constantly switched Tokuchi's role between first baseman and pitcher, since he was only allowed to pitch in the most dangerous moments of the game - when a runner is on third base. This way, the risk of Tokuchi getting an earned run is higher, which would be very convenient for Saikawa, especially so because the One Outs contract pay rate for this match was set to 20 times the normal amount.

Tokuchi must've also realized by this point that Saikawa's strategy means he will, due to the rules of baseball, eventually run out of pitchers to use. To ensure this happens as soon as possible, Tokuchi replaces the outfield defenders with infield defenders, using up 3 additional players.

Tokuchi also made sure to inform Mihara of his earned reputation after the previous match when the newspaper claimed he was the one behind the Tokuchi swap strategy. Understanding that Mihara is currently Saikawa's dog, he gives Mihara this one chance to be something more than that, which Mihara accepts. This means Tokuchi also anticipated that Saikawa, once he ran out of players to use, would order Mihara to replace Tokuchi with a fielder as the pitcher. Tokuchi had already prepared for Mihara to refuse Saikawa's orders.

(Flattery, Strategic Manipulation, Long-Term Strategy, Inductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Strategic Analysis, Anticipation)

Tokuchi eventually faces Johnson again. Except this time, no base is occupied. All Johnson has to do is bunt, use his great speed to get on first base, and then there's no stopping him. Tokuchi intentionally allowed it to be like this instead of walking the previous batter and holding Johnson down that way. Because what Tokuchi now wants to do is demoralize the Bugaboos by proving how useless Johnson actually is as a baseball player, starting with exposing his ability as a batter. First, he moves the entire infield defense closer to Johnson, so that they're mere meters away from him. This essentially means any attempt at bunting is doomed to fail.

Johnson could theoretically avoid this by just hitting the ball normally. But Tokuchi already took that possibility into account. He had in fact already tested Johnson's batting skills back when Asakura had that conversation with Shirooka about Tokuchi. The nine-man infield defense prevented Johnson at that time from bunting, meaning that was the opportunity for Tokuchi to test him. He did so by pitching three easy strikes, all of them being thrown identically. Johnson failed to hit each and every one of them, thus revealing how terrible he is at batting to everyone watching, and because of this, Tokuchi can rest assured that, right now, with the infield defense closing up on him, Johnson is screwed. And unsurprisingly, Johnson did get out.

Near the end of the game, Tokuchi is once again facing Johnson as the batter. This time, he pitches a dead ball, giving Johnson a walk. His aim now is to expose the truth about Johnson's main weapon – his legs – without any tricks. To assure Johnson he's serious about this, he sends the entire infield team outside the infield, so that Tokuchi is the only one remaining in the infield, and allows Johnson to steal third base. Now is when Tokuchi challenges Johnson in a game of pure strength. He's going to throw the ball outside the reach of where the current batter can bunt, thereby not having to worry about him, and show Johnson that, this time, he won't be able to catch up to it. And Johnson fails. What Tokuchi realized here was that.

With this, that inning is now over, and because the Lycaons had earlier in the inning scored a point, the game is over. The Lycaons have beaten the Bugaboos, and Tokuchi has once again beaten Saikawa.

Shortly after the previous match, Tokuchi explains how he dealt with Johnson at the end of the previous game. There was something he was curious about when coach Shirooka first announced that Johnson was the world's fastest baserunner. It got Tokuchi wondering why Johnson wasn't just the world's fastest man. So he picked up a tape containing an interview with the actual world's fastest man, where the man talks about how he achieves the world record in running. To summarize, it boils down to effort and technique. Without technique, a runner's stamina would've run out mid-race and he wouldn't be able to take the world record.

This leads Tokuchi to hypothesize that, for this reason, Johnson should eventually also lose his stamina over the course of the match he is in. So, during the previous game, Tokuchi did everything he could to make sure Johnson moved as much as possible. This would include the time when he got Johnson to run from first to third base in the final inning of the game to prove the uselessness of his legs. He had the coach record the times it took for Johnson to reach each base and, as Tokuchi expected, they became longer over time. So he, on top of trying to beat the Bugaboos and outsmarting Saikawa, he also made sure that Johnson would exhaust himself while playing.

(Information Gathering, Critical Thinking, Prediction, Setting Traps, Strategy, Problem Solving (FRI))

Tokuchi watches the Blue Mars play (Ch. 53)

Later, Tokuchi and Kojima are watching a game between the Bugaboos and the Blue Mars, which will be the Lycaons' next opponent. What's interesting is that at one point, Johnson is running for home, but just as he reaches it, the catcher gets a hold of him and apparently, both of them get injured. But Tokuchi sees through this. He understands from watching the tape that the catcher deliberately injured Johnson's legs by putting all his weight on Johnson's thigh and springing up to twist his knee. The catcher would then fake getting an injury himself to avoid criticism.

(Observation)

Before 1st game vs. the Blue Mars (Ch. 54)

When the Lycaons are holding a meeting to discuss the Blue Mars, the coach is giving out information and statistics about their next team. Among the things he mentions are the winning statistics of that team. Their overall winning percentage is 0.562, yet when they're playing at their home arena, their winning percentage is 0.772. Tokuchi immediately called this out because this would mean they wouldn't be able to win even half their games as an away team, which is abnormal.

During and after the meeting, when everyone else was getting distracted by the drama surrounding the opposing team's new foreign players, Tokuchi closely watched the tapes showing the Blue Mars playing. After observing them, he concludes that, based on their plays and behavior, they're most likely cheating.

(Critical Thinking, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, Observation, Information Gathering)

After 1st game vs. the Blue Mars (Ch. 57-58)

The Lycaons' first match against the Blue Mars ended in defeat, a big reason for it being Williams and his "miracle knuckleball" that sways so much when flying towards the batter that it is extremely difficult to hit. After that match, the Lycaons are hopeless, believing they'll never be able to beat them. Except for Tokuchi.

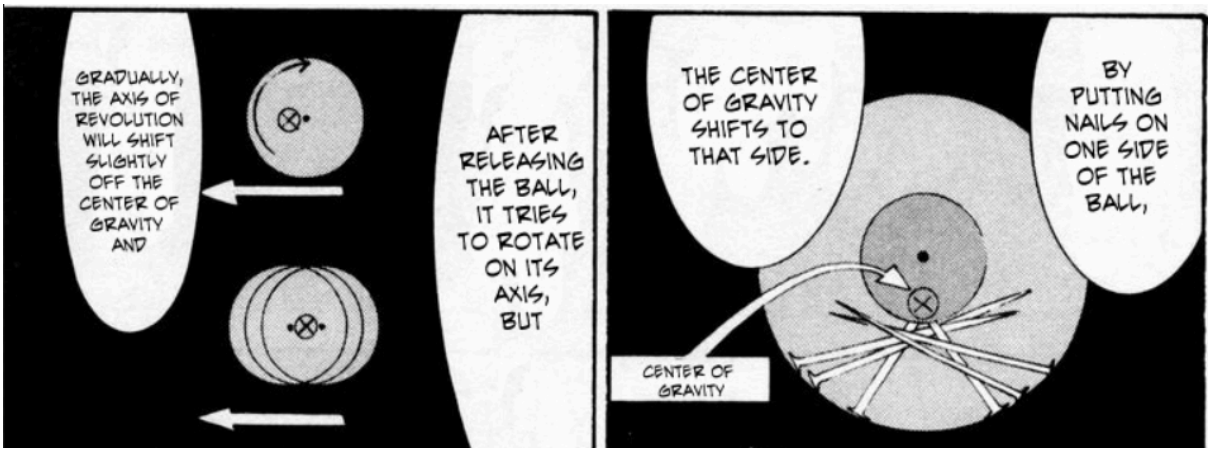
While the team is discussing what went wrong during the game, Tokuchi asks the coach if anyone has ever successfully hit Williams' pitches. The coach's answer is that there was only one – Takami Itsuki, the prodigy batter from the Mariners – but that this was only because Williams for some reason never threw any knuckleballs at him. This will be important later. He asks the team to follow him to an arena outside to "practice" and tells fellow batter Tomioka to try hitting Tokuchi's pitches while pretending Tokuchi is Williams. He tries this, not expecting much, knowing Tokuchi can only throw fastballs. Yet surprisingly, when Tokuchi pitches, the ball sways just like Williams'. And Tokuchi explains this by saying Williams actually can't pitch such a knuckleball.

First, some info about the knuckleball is needed. Basically, if the ball thrown is a knuckleball, because the knuckleball has an extremely low rotation, the seams around the ball decide how the ball changes direction when approaching the batter, causing it to sway as it's moving. However, this is only true as long as the ball doesn't complete one rotation.

Yet what Tokuchi observed while watching the Blue Mars' tapes was that, when Williams was pitching, Tokuchi could never see the seams of the ball when it was thrown, implying that the ball rotated too fast for the camera to pick up the seams, itself meaning that the ball has to have rotated several times before reaching the batter.

Now, this alone wouldn't be enough to prove anything about Williams' pitch, but there is one more thing that caused Tokuchi to come to his conclusion regarding Williams – the fact that Williams never threw a single knuckleball at Takami, despite how that apparently would've been the best option for Williams due to Takami's record as a batter. The only possible reason why this is the case has to be due to Takami's insane perception ability. He and he alone could spot what kind of pitch Williams' magic knuckleball truly is, which is why Williams didn't pitch it to him. This leads Tokuchi to conclude that Williams' knuckleball must be fake.

How could Williams fake it? By putting something inside the ball to change the ball's center of mass, altering its usual rotation when pitched. Because when the ball is rotated like this, it will try rotating around its own axis, but overtime, the axis of revolution will shift to its new center of gravity instead, causing the ball to sway.



Tokuchi believes that the team has most likely injected water into the ball to do this, both because you can't tell from the outside that this was done and because the water contents over time will become uniform and not leave any traces. Such balls are probably hidden among the team's regular balls, waiting to be secretly switched with a normal ball whenever Williams is pitching.

And it's not like this would have been exposed when the Blue Mars' catcher throws back to Williams instead, because the catcher can face the ball to the pitcher by aligning it's center with its center of gravity and then throwing it like a screwball.



And it's not like the opposing team or umpire will ever get to touch this ball during the match either. Because the only times this can happen is if the catcher calls for a ball exchange or if the batter hits a foul ball to the opposing team's bench, but the odds of that happening are virtually zero due to the nature of Williams' pitches.

After Tokuchi explained how Williams cheated, the entire team, except for Tokuchi, gets angry and decides to storm the dorms of the opposing team, yet Tokuchi is able to get them to calm down. He talks to them about how, first of all, they don't know how involved every Blue Mars player in the scheme, and second of all, violence might not get them to talk and might just put the Lycaons themselves in the spotlight instead, meaning the Blue Mars will effectively get away with their deeds.

The fact that the Blue Mars didn't throw the magic pitch to Takami but did throw it to everyone else in the Lycaons implies they're looking down on the Lycaons, and this perception won't change if the Lycaons decide to directly attack the Blue Mars. The only way they can change the Blue Mars' minds is by exposing their cheating for everyone else to see.

(Observation, Information Gathering, Abductive Reasoning, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation)

Baseball match vs. the Blue Mars, Game 2 (Ch. 59-67)

Before this game even started, Tokuchi already suspected that the Blue Mars had something else up their sleeve than just Williams' fake pitch based on his previous observations. This will come up shortly. As this game enters the second inning, Tokuchi, after having made enough observations, talked to Ideguchi about his conclusion that the Blue Mars were still cheating by stealing the Lycaons' signals. Tokuchi suspects this for several reasons:

1. Up until now, the Lycaons had made two attempted sacrifice bunts and one attempted base steal. And yet every time, the Blue Mars defense managed to catch onto them perfectly. As Tokuchi describes, they not only completed difficult plays three times, but

they didn't waste any moves doing so either.

2. In the previous match, at one point near the end, the game was tied, and despite being tied, Williams was still sent out as relief pitcher, even though that's a bad idea. That's because if the game's tied, having a good relief pitcher on the mound is just gonna increase the risk of prolonging the game and make the pitcher lose focus. Which means the real reason for substituting Williams must have been because the Blue Mars knew they were going to win at the time.

   This is likely because the Lycaons' pitcher at that time was Hasegawa Junpei, a pitcher who can only throw straights and curveballs. This would be advantageous for the Blue Mars if they could somehow tell what pitch Hasegawa was going to throw. This is something that Tokuchi thought likely was the case. Because during the last game's final inning, of all the pitches Hasegawa threw that time, the two that were successfully hit off of were both straights. And they gave up too quickly on the curveballs with their unnatural trajectories (keep in mind, the batters who hit these pitches were at the bottom of the batting lineup, meaning they were supposed to be weak batters).

   Secondly, the one batter that Hasegawa walked that inning let the first two balls go by too hastily, even though there should have been pressure on him to hit the ball because the game was tied and almost over. Clearly, they all knew what pitches Hasegawa was gonna throw. Side note, he and Ideguchi also realize that because of this, Rodrigo, who is claimed to have fixed his weakness with hitting breaking balls and getting home-run after home-run afterwards, is possibly a fraud thanks to this signal-stealing scheme.

(Inductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Observation)

So with that being said, Tokuchi, along with a few others, will now have to figure out how their signs are being stolen. Tokuchi understands that the Blue Mars' fielders can't just behave however they want when playing, and as such, there can't be many possible ways the stolen sign is being communicated to them. Yet he doesn't immediately start searching for the signs and make it a priority. This is because there's two cases where the opponent might stop stealing their signs.

1. The first case is if the point gap becomes wide. If this happens, the Blue Mars might feel that they no longer need to cheat to win, and so they'll stop cheating. This is why Tokuchi stepped up to the mound to prevent that from happening, because he is the only pitcher in the Lycaons that doesn't exchange signs and thus has his thoughts undetectable.

2. The second case is if the Blue Mars find out that the Lycaons are investigating them. Then they could stop cheating to avoid suspicion. This is why Tokuchi tells Ideguchi that their investigation must be kept a secret from most of the rest of the Lycaons. Because those guys might not be able to search for the origin of the sign-stealing discreetly.

Tokuchi also understands that it's pointless to search for the cheating when the Lycaons are defending. This is because, when the eavesdropper sends the signal to his teammate batter, only the catcher could potentially see what the signal is. Except this would get in the way of his job of being a catcher. So the Lycaons players can only hope to find the source of the cheating when attacking.

(Methodology Analysis)

After some time, Ideguchi, unable to find how the signs are being stolen, approaches Tokuchi and tells him that perhaps the Blue Mars have already stopped stealing their signs. However, that's OK because, as Tokuchi says, they'll just have to draw the cheating out again. To do this, he first waits for when it's Kojima's turn to bat. The first thing Tokuchi does is convince Mihara to let Kojima do a squeeze play. So Kojima does it and gets a foul. However, since the manager had given Kojima a squeeze play sign, which is something unexpected for a power-hitter like Kojima, naturally, the opposing team will be suspicious of what the Lycaons are planning and will send out the signs again to be safe.

Next, Tokuchi convinces Mihara to tell Kojima to stop doing squeeze plays, assuring him with his own confidence. So he stops. Of course, the opposing team would wanna know that, so the sign will have likely been sent out to them again. And now that Kojima has attempted a squeeze play, it also makes the current pitcher wary of what Kojima will do next, likely because Mihara didn't give any specific instructions to Kojima when he told him to "stop squeeze playing". As a result of this, he pitches nothing but balls for the next three pitches.

Now the strikecount is 3-1. What Tokuchi does now is that he again convinces Mihara to make Kojima do the squeeze play, and again assures him with his confidence. And again, the other team, including the pitcher, would've wanted to know this and they would've thus stolen the manager's sign again. So now that the pitcher knows this, he has to consider what sort of pitch he's gonna throw. Firstly, since the count is 3-1, if the pitcher wants to avoid a walk, he has to pitch into the strikezone now. Secondly, the pitcher can't pitch sliders because they're too easy to bunt. A fastball would've been a good option.

So now the question is, where exactly will the pitcher throw his fastball? Considering Kojima's attempting a squeeze play, meaning he's holding his bat in the upper strikezone, the only option remaining is to throw a fastball into the lower part instead – so his pitch will be a low fastball.

Tokuchi anticipated this and discussed this strategy with Kojima before-hand, and now, since Kojima knows what pitch will be thrown at this point, hitting the ball and getting a home-run is easy. And because there were already runners on third and first base, the

score went from the Blue Mars leading by 5 points to only leading by 2 points. And because Tokuchi now shortened the gap between the teams, the Blue Mars will now out of desperation go back to stealing the signs of the Lycaons, giving Tokuchi and the others more chances to investigate the source.

After this, Tokuchi and the other players who are trying to find the source of the cheating discuss where it might come from, whereupon Tokuchi reveals that he's hatching a plan. The next batter to bat is Arai. Tokuchi yet again convinces Mihara to tell Arai to do a safety bunt in order to continue confusing the Blue Mars. However, the plan seems to initially not work, since Arai is getting out. However, it actually went just as Tokuchi wanted it to.

(Strategy, Setting Traps, Tactics, Persuasion, Anticipation)

Now we get to know what Tokuchi's true plan was this whole time. So to start off, we know that there isn't a single time when the Blue Mars' players all look at the source of their sign-stealing signal at the same time. But that doesn't necessarily mean that it's just a sign that's constantly visible. Because, while yes, the players don't have to look at it at the same time, the players in this case were generally pretty focused on the batter and the ball, usually not looking anywhere else.

But the thing is, this entire investigation so far has been done under the assumption that the sign is visual. They haven't considered the possibility that it's auditory. Because if that were the case, the sound would just have to reach the Blue Mars' ears, and it wouldn't be necessary for them to look anywhere. And to find that sound, Tokuchi made use of a tactic.

Whenever humans hear something unexpected, they have a tendency to unconsciously look at the source of that sound. Tokuchi made use of this by giving out weird instructions to Kojima and Arai when they were at-bat. That signal, as previously explained, would have to be transmitted to the defenders due to how unexpected it is, even if the Blue Mars had a big lead. And because the signal is now transmitted, the surprise of what the signal is will of course get the defenders concerned, and perhaps get them to unconsciously look at the source of the sound as Tokuchi just explained.

As it turns out, the defenders in this case are really good at keeping their instincts in check…except for one player – one who only debuted as recently as the current season. He would understandably have little to no experience suppressing that instinct. As a result, he looked at the source of the sound three times in total up 'til now. And from this, Tokuchi could point out where in the arena the sound was coming from – a section of the stands.

So we now know that the source of the sound is from that section. However, Kojima tries explaining to Tokuchi that they won't be able to find the sound because, first of all, they don't have many chances per inning to do so, and second of all, because they have to be able to isolate it from all the other nearby sounds, which is pretty much impossible due to all the sounds generated in the given section in the arena.

But, as Tokuchi explains, that is assuming that the sound is sent out suddenly and only when necessary. He explains that this can't be the case because the difficulty of isolating

the sound also has to apply to the other team. From that team's perspective, they'd have to try isolating the signal without getting distracted, and even then, they can't be guaranteed to catch the signal if it's drowned out by too much noise. On the other hand, if the signal was too loud, the opposing team would also have an easier time finding it. And if even one Blue Mars defender fails to receive the signal, the cheating strategy becomes meaningless, likely because that defender won't be prepared to catch the ball, and because he would stand out when playing compared to the ones who did get the signal.

So the nature of the sound can't be like that. What it instead could be is a signal that is kept on at all times. So the sound usually assumes a neutral form that the other players can listen to, and then, when it's time to steal signs, it adjusts accordingly. Then, all the Blue Mars would have to do is listen to the change in that sound.

So with this in mind, and their knowledge about the location of the source, leads the investigators to one conclusion – the bass drummer. This is later confirmed when Tokuchi again convinces Mihara to get the next batter, Fujita, to bunt. The investigators all noticed that each time Mihara gave the sign, the bass drummer changed the rhythm of his beating of the drums, before going back to a neutral form again. And once again, the defenders reacted accordingly to the bunt. So it most likely was the bass drummer that allowed the Blue Mars to cheat.

So the strategy Tokuchi used with Kojima by having him bunt actually had multiple layers to it. The first layer was to just confuse the Blue Mars in order to catch up to them in points. The second was to find out how they cheated.

(Lateral Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Analogical Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Deductive Reasoning, Divergent Thinking, Psychology, Psychological Manipulation, Strategy, Tactics, Information Gathering, Musical Intelligence)

Eventually, it's Ideguchi's turn to bat. Tokuchi has a strategy in mind which again involves convincing Mihara to give the batter a certain signal. But this time, because the previous two batters got out as a result of Mihara listening to Tokuchi, Mihara will no longer listen to him. But among the things Mihara does, he says that, because it's the eighth inning, he's "already only got six outs left".

Tokuchi notices Mihara's strange wording here and asks the Saikawa Corporation's public relations manager, Mitsuo Oikawa, what's going on, whereupon Oikawa reveals that, since the match against the Bugaboos where Mihara for the first time ignored orders from Saikawa, Saikawa threatened Mihara with cutting his annual pay in half if he didn't win at least two of the Lycaons' three games against the Blue Mars, since Mihara is apparently so confident in his abilities that he decided he doesn't need Saikawa anymore.

As a result of the info Tokuchi just got, he knows how to convince Mihara to join his side. While Ideguchi is buying time for them, Tokuchi brings Mihara to the locker room to talk, where Tokuchi tells Mihara that the reason he won't listen to Tokuchi is probably because Mihara doesn't believe in his self-confidence. So Tokuchi decides that a demonstration is

needed. He throws money on the ground in front of Mihara, 50 million yen, and offers Mihara a deal.

If Mihara listens to Tokuchi for the next two matches and they win both matches, Mihara gets 10 million of the money Tokuchi had. Otherwise, Mihara gets to keep all the 50 million. Now, in Mihara's mind, it's a win-win situation, because taking the deal means he will gain money whether they win the next two matches or not. So he takes the deal. In reality though, Tokuchi never worried about having to pay Mihara more than 10 million. So the extra 40 million he offered wasn't because he was willing to give it to Mihara at all, it was simply because that would be enough money to convince Mihara to take the deal and nothing else.

(Observation, Bribery, Confidence)

So Mihara now goes along with whatever Tokuchi says. The next batter is Ideguchi, and while he goes up to bat, Mihara gives him the bunt sign. Kojima tells Tokuchi that the opponents might not shift into an anti-bunt stance anymore, because the Lycaons have already done this twice before, and both times it was unnatural, so the Blue Mars would have to be suspicious by now. But Tokuchi refutes this, saying that in both of the previous cases, while yes, it was an unnatural decision for the Lycaons, the Blue Mars did manage to get both batters out in that case, so to them, assuming an anti-bunt stance is still their best option.

Now, Tokuchi's final strategy comes into play. While Ideguchi is at-bat, as stated before, Mihara gives him the sign to do a safety bunt. But Ideguchi isn't gonna do a safety bunt. Because Tokuchi told him beforehand to instead, while the opposing team is expecting Ideguchi to bunt due to their own sign-stealing, bat normally. And that's exactly what happens, Ideguchi fakes a bunt-stance before hitting the ball normally, resulting in Ideguchi successfully getting first base.

After getting to first base, Ideguchi sees that the next batter got the sign for a sacrifice bunt. And Tokuchi had previously stated that his strategy for after Ideguchi got on first base was to continue letting their signs be stolen by the Blue Mars for now. These two things make Ideguchi concerned. Because how exactly are they going to deceive the other team like this? And seeing as how the Blue Mars will make use of the anti-bunt position to quickly get Ideguchi out rather than the batter, Ideguchi decides that the best course of action is to steal second base while the ball is being pitched.

So he does that, but as it turns out, when the ball is pitched, the batter doesn't bunt. Instead, he also hits the bat normally, getting it into the outfield, effectively making all this a hit-and-run play. As a result of this, Ideguchi manages to get as far as third base while the other batter gets to first base.

The next batter is Nishimura. This time, Mihara gives Ideguchi the sign to steal home. But the thing is, it's really hard to steal home in baseball. Even if Ideguchi were as fast as Johnson's, it will be pointless to try stealing home now since the other team's sign-stealing has allowed them to prepare for it.

But there's also something else he realizes - Ideguchi's team has nothing to lose if he doesn't try stealing home. This is different from, for example, if there's a runner on base and the manager gives the sign for the batter to make a sacrifice bunt. That sign requires the batter and runner to cooperate to ensure success. If the runner doesn't obey the sign, the strategy would've been for naught and the Lycaons would've just gotten an extra out and nothing else out of it. But this time, the signal isn't one that requires Ideguchi to cooperate. He can remain on third base if he wants to without the team suffering any big consequences.

Regardless, Ideguchi decides that he should at least pretend to steal a base just to avoid scrutiny from Tokuchi later, because then he can just say "sorry, I tried to steal home but couldn't". So during the first pitch to Nishimura, Ideguchi at first runs towards home and then runs back quickly after that. He makes it back safely, but something else is happening.

While Ideguchi made his attempt to steal home, the batter who previously got to first base has started stealing second base. And when the third base defender, who currently has the ball after trying to stop Ideguchi from retreating to third base, tries throwing it to the second baseman to get the other batter out, the second baseman fails to catch it due to being too distracted by Ideguchi to be able to cover the second base and catch the ball in time. As a result of this, the ball ends up in the outfield again and Ideguchi manages to score a run while the batter who stole second successfully made it to third as well.

Once Ideguchi is back home, he's pretty confused by this whole ordeal since the other batter on base twice seemed to act on his own. Tokuchi explains that, first of all, no, he did not tell anyone else about the strategy. While Ideguchi was on first-base, he sent a note out to all the other players, but not to Mihara, that from now on they were gonna use sign pattern 2 instead of 1. Different sign patterns mean that a sign used in pattern 1 has one meaning while the same sign used in pattern 2 has another meaning. And now that the players know of the pattern change but Mihara doesn't, it would mean that whenever Mihara gives out a sign from pattern 1, the batter will interpret it as the sign from pattern 2.

This first came into effect when Ideguchi was on first base. The batter after him got the sign from Mihara to do a sacrifice bunt, but in pattern 2, that sign means a normal hit. And because it's Mihara's signs that the Blue Mars are stealing, they're gonna be deceived into thinking the batter is gonna do a sacrifice bunt. This discrepancy leads to the batter successfully getting a hit into the outfield due to the Blue Mars' anti-bunt position, successfully advancing himself and Ideguchi towards home.

The next time when Tokuchi's strategy came into effect was when Ideguchi was at third base. The sign Mihara gave out here was "steal home" according to pattern 1. But according to pattern 2, the sign is "steal second base". And as a result of this, the Blue Mars were too focused on Ideguchi to notice that the batter on first base was making a run for it, which, as we know, eventually resulted in a point for the Lycaons and the batter behind Ideguchi ending up at third.

This strategy of Tokuchi's appears to have a few holes at first glance. First of all, this strategy was heavily reliant on the decisions Ideguchi made over the course of the inning. For example, what if Ideguchi actually did try to steal home? Well, Tokuchi was confident that he wouldn't. In fact, Tokuchi was confident in every decision Ideguchi made throughout that inning. After getting onto first base and seeing Mihara sending out the sign for the next batter to do a sacrifice bunt, Tokuchi anticipated that Ideguchi, being "a professional catcher with a perfectly normal sense of responsibility", would of course realize the danger he himself was in and would attempt to steal a base.

And when Ideguchi got to third base, he, again, assuming he is perfectly reasonable, of course would see the infeasibility of trying to steal home as instructed. And then, when pondering over it, he would realize that he doesn't actually have to follow the instructions since, as previously stated, nothing too bad will happen if he does so. But Ideguchi would've felt bad about just not following Tokuchi's orders, so he would at least pretend to steal the base before running back. Fortunately for Tokuchi, he was right about Ideguchi being a completely normal rational person, and thus everything went exactly as he had expected.

There is one more hole in this strategy. And that is that the Blue Mars will eventually realize that the Lycaons have shifted patterns and adjust accordingly. But Tokuchi made sure that wouldn't happen, at least not for now. That's because everything about this strategy that has been described so far served another purpose other than what was previously written on, and that purpose is camouflage.

When Ideguchi was on first base, Mihara, as previously stated, gave the batter after him the sign for a sacrifice bunt. But how would this strategy have looked to the Blue Mars after the batter hit the ball normally? If the batter hit the ball normally, it means that the sign Mihara sent wasn't truly a "sacrifice bunt" sign. But then they must've changed patterns and the sign was actually a "hitting" sign, right? That might've been what the Blue Mars thought if Ideguchi hadn't tried stealing second base. Because this, combined with the other batter's surprise hit, made the whole strategy look not like a sacrifice bunt or just a hit, but a hit-and-run play, something Mihara's sign doesn't mean in either pattern.

And when Ideguchi was on third base, the Blue Mars believed Mihara gave the sign to steal home. But what they didn't catch on to was, as stated before, that the batter behind Ideguchi would also steal a base. All this combined would lead to the Blue Mars thinking that the Lycaons' strategy here was neither "stealing home" according to pattern 1 or "stealing second base" according to pattern 2, but an entire other strategy not coming from either pattern – a double steal.

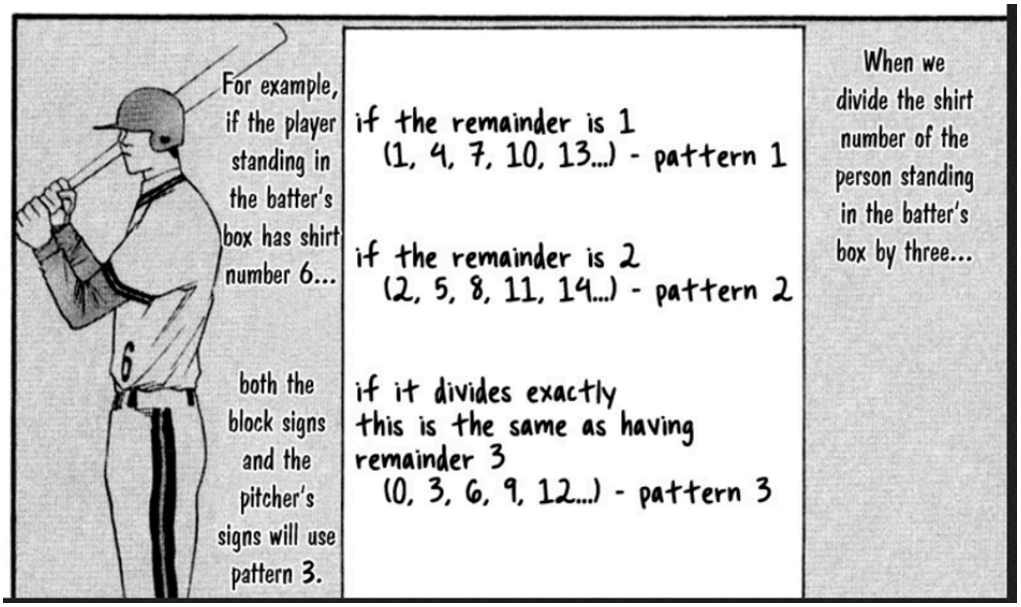
To summarize, Tokuchi looked at the Lycaons' sign patterns and formulated a strategy based on what meaning the signs had in each pattern. His idea was to confuse the Blue Mars by having Mihara and Ideguchi use sign pattern 1, but have the other players think they were using sign pattern 2. This resulted in the Lycaons doing plays that corresponded to a nonexistent sign pattern. Because of that, the other team thinks that the Lycaons are using a new sign pattern they haven't seen before, confusing them at least long enough for the Lycaons to take advantage of them and win the game. And Tokuchi could only go

through with this strategy knowing what Ideguchi was thinking and deciding on each step, and it all paid off in the end.

(Social Awareness, Strategy, Setting Traps, Mass Deception, Misdirection, Anticipation, Abductive Reasoning, Strategy Adaptability, Information Control, Problem Solving (FRI))

Baseball Match vs. The Blue Mars, Game 3 (Ch. 68-82)

Shortly before the start of this match, Ideguchi proposes a strategy to counter the other team's sign-stealing. His team has 3 different sign patterns currently. So Ideguchi suggests to start with pattern 1 for the first inning, then cycle through all the patterns for each inning throughout the game. But as Tokuchi points out, it probably won't work, since many teams already use this strategy, so it won't be that hard to detect. Because of this, Tokuchi proposes an alternative strategy which involves having the sign pattern decided by the number on the back of the batter's shirt like below:



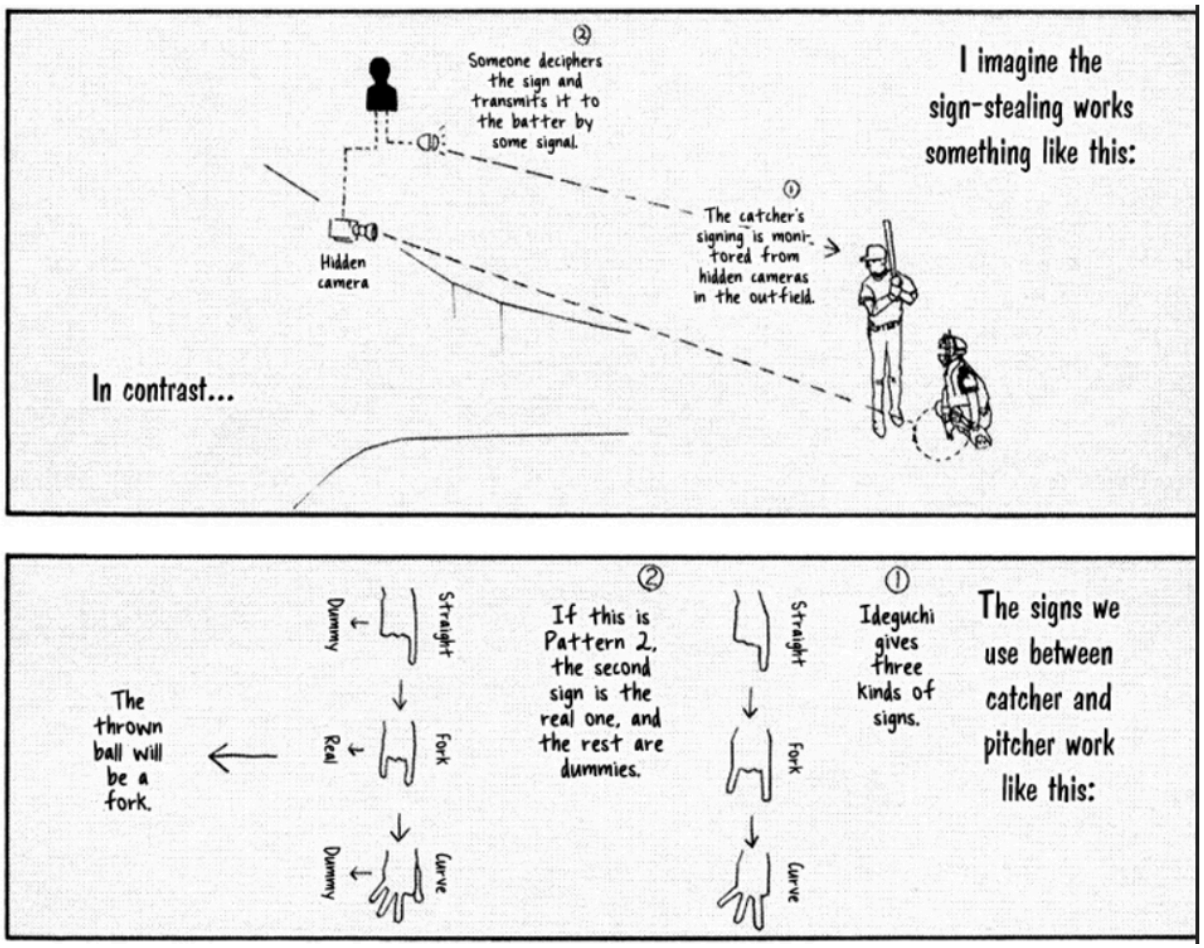
This strategy won't be a problem even if the number is a high number, like 82, because there's a special math trick Tokuchi presents which says that the remainder of a number is equal to the remainder of the sum of the digits of that number. The strategy can be used both when attacking and defending. Because of this strategy, the team is expected to change their sign-patterns about fifty times over the course of the match, meaning the other team won't have much time to catch on to any particular sign-pattern being used. It will be especially hard to detect because the sign-pattern will be changed irregularly.

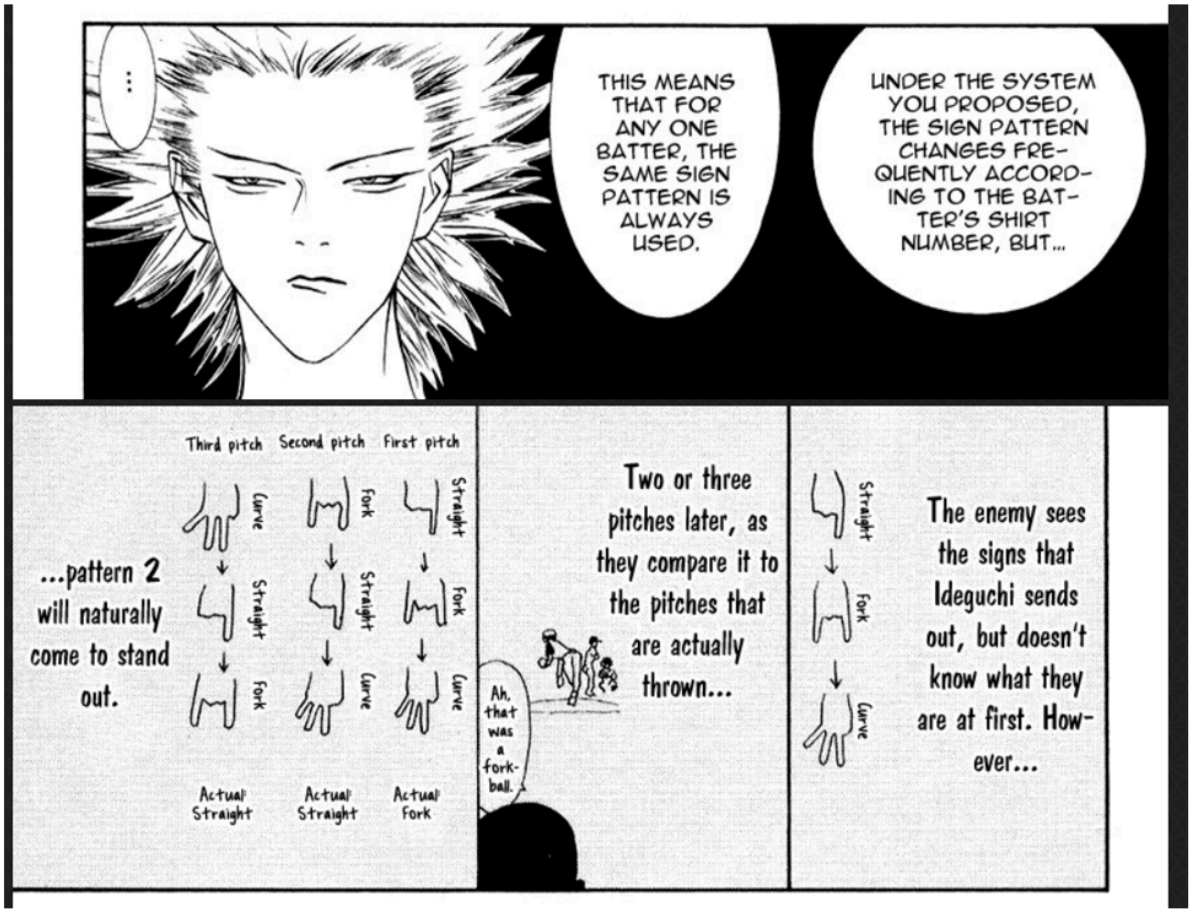
To make this strategy even more foolproof, Tokuchi adds that the team should wait until the fourth inning before using it. Because if they start the match by using their normal sign-pattern strategy, then, by the fourth inning, when the opponent's batting line-up is repeated, these batters, having grown accustomed to the Lycaons' pitches, will assume that the Lycaons will continue using their current strategy until the end of game, whereupon Tokuchi's strategy will take them by surprise. Overall, this strategy would've

worked as a good counter to the base-drummer they saw in the previous match, if it wasn't for the fact that there's another layer to the Blue Mars' cheating that had yet to be uncovered.

(Strategy, Tactics, Knowledge)

As it turns out, when the fourth inning begins, Tokuchi's strategy doesn't seem to work. All the opposing players still respond very well to the Lycaons' moves. The Lycaons assume it's because they've inadvertently used the same pattern too many times, so they try changing up their sign-patterns more regularly as a consequence of this, but the Blue Mars manage to catch onto them every time. At one point, Kojima suspects that perhaps Tokuchi's original strategy was doomed to fail, as he explains below:





Because of this, Kojima suggests that they instead change sign patterns before every pitch. However, as Tokuchi points out, while what Kojima said could be the case, it doesn't seem so likely because earlier in the inning, there was a batter in the Blue Mars, Arikawa, who managed to hit the first pitch despite the Lycaons having changed up their strategy by then. If what Kojima said is true, and the Blue Mars will only be able to adapt once two or three pitches have gone by, then how is this move by Arikawa possible? However, Tokuchi agrees with Kojima's idea to revise the strategy for now. From here on, the pattern will be decided by the number of strike counts instead.

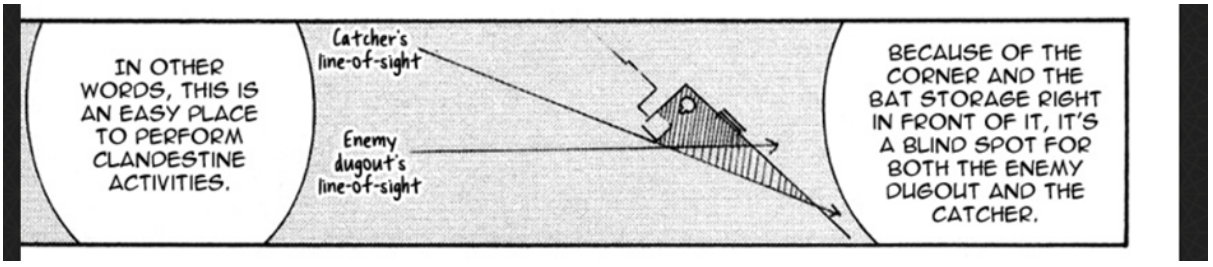
And yet the Blue Mars still catch on. This leads Tokuchi to one single conclusion that could explain what's going on – they're being bugged. When Tokuchi first tells Kojima this, Kojima panics, but Tokuchi quickly tells him to calm down and act nonchalantly, since the other team might notice. He also goes on to explain that it is when you think calmly that certain things naturally come to mind about the bugging. Firstly, how many people are listening in? As Tokuchi explains, signs fly at a fast pace during a baseball match. The ones stealing the signs will have to work fast to process the sign using the info they've obtained from the other team's bench. For example, if the opposing team's catcher sends out a sign to the pitcher, it won't be long before the pitcher carries out that sign. Because of this, having a lot of people around would just be a hindrance, which leads to the conclusion that it's probably no more than one or two people listening in at one time.

Next, one has to consider the fact that humans will have a hard time listening in to more than one sound at a time. This, combined with there likely being no more than two listeners at the same time, leads to the conclusion that there's probably no more than two listening devices either.

Kojima then asks Tokuchi how that's possible by giving an example. If the listening device were in the meeting room, how would they be able to pick up any voice at all if the meeting room held the entire team of 30-ish people. Their voices would drown out each other, after all. It's especially a problem if the room is spacious like the meeting room. This applies to the dugout too. But as Tokuchi explains, that's only when nothing important is being discussed. Because otherwise everyone would be quiet, listening to the one person that had the important thing to say. But how did the Blue Mars then know about all the times they changed their strategy in the middle of the game? This would mean at least one of their listening devices are probably in the dugout.

Why exactly would it be in the dugout? Information here is communicated between team-members in many different ways, some subtle, compared to the meeting room where it's one person talking. But as Tokuchi points out, all those methods have one thing in common – the information shared must pass through manager Mihara at some point. If this were true, it means they wouldn't have to use bothersome methods to pick up the voices of unspecified numbers of people when you can just use one device to pick up the voices around Mihara. That would explain how the Blue Mars kept catching on to the Lycaons' changes in sign patterns and sign pattern strategies.

But in that case, how would they be able to track a live person moving around if they didn't happen to plant a device in the manager's uniform? Well, the answer Tokuchi presents is quite simple. The manager, being the manager, won't move around much. He'd want to spend his time observing the game, and moving around just isn't necessary for that. Furthermore, there is one place in the dugout where the manager, or any manager really, would prefer to be more than anywhere else during the game. And that is the corner of the dugout that is covered by a bat storage from outside. The biggest reason for this is that the enemy team can't see what signals the manager sends out from that position. So the listening device has most likely just been planted in that area.



After Tokuchi explains all of this, Kojima becomes infuriated, saying he's gonna go find the device immediately, but Tokuchi manages to stop him, saying that first of all, the other team must've hidden it really well to avoid the risk of being caught cheating, and secondly, while Kojima searches for the device, the game is still ongoing. The best they can do is to

act based on the info they have currently. In this case, that would mean to move Mihara away from his current position.

However, despite this, the Blue Mars are apparently still able to somehow pick up Mihara's voice. So as Tokuchi tells Mihara to change the sign pattern again from what it previously was, he sits back and observes his surroundings. That's when he notices how Mihara's voice is actually intercepted.

Now that he's discovered it, he goes out to the arena to call for Ideguchi, and while doing so, he "accidentally" knocks over a box of practice balls, forcing the arena's ball boys to go and pick up the balls, interrupting the game. As they do this, Tokuchi calls Ideguchi and the rest of the team to gather around him in the dugout. He explains that a new sign-pattern change has been decided on, completely different from the ones they've previously used. When the game continues, the Lycaons are on defense with no outs. Yet this time, somehow, all three batters are struck out, even though Tokuchi relayed the change in strategy right next to Mihara whom he suspects is being bugged.

Why Tokuchi did all this was because what he saw when he realized what the Blue Mars were up to was the ball boys hanging around and squatting just outside the part of the dugout where Mihara was standing, pretending to do chores when there was nothing really important to be done at the time. Also, the thing about Mihara standing in a corner of the dugout to avoid being seen is that there still is a group of people always close to Mihara during that time, and that group is again, the ball boys. With this in mind, they probably have a hidden mic somewhere on them which allows them to record Mihara's voice even as he moves.

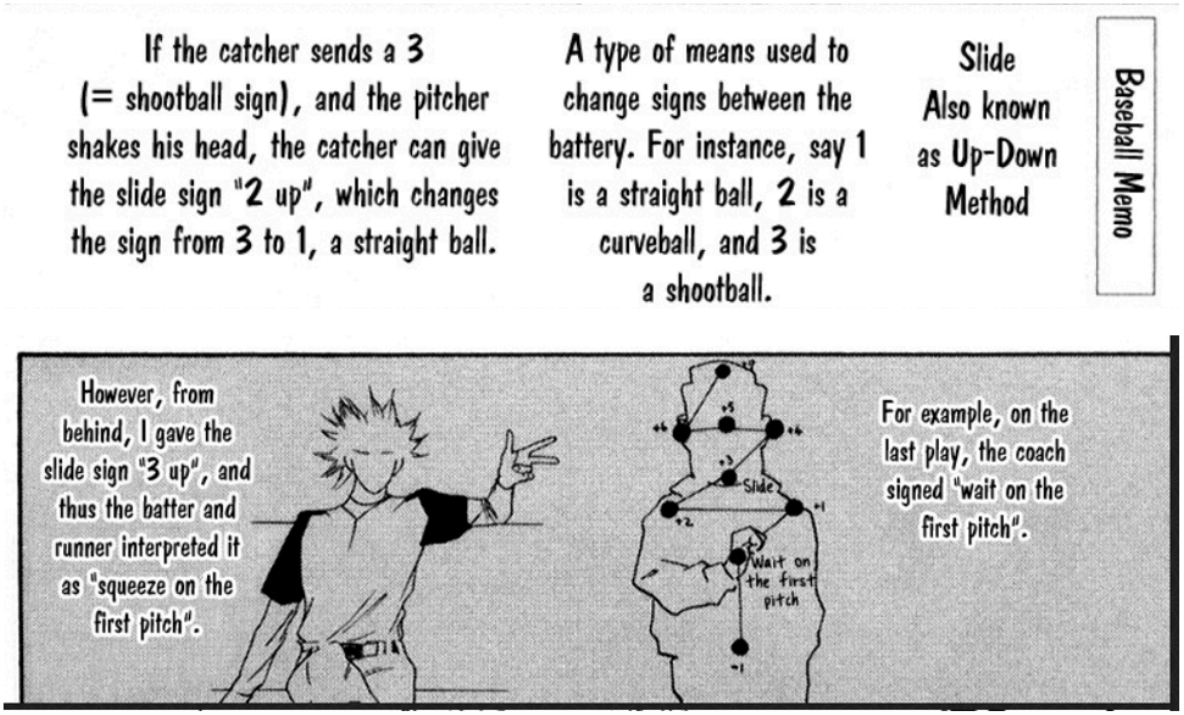
The reason he tipped over the ball box was to intentionally get the ball boys away from the dugout so that he could announce the next strategy to his team in private for the first time. Since the ball boys were away then, they couldn't hear what they were saying, and thus couldn't relay the info to the other team. For the first time, the Blue Mars were left in the dark about what the other team was gonna do next.

Kojima becomes furious again upon hearing this, saying he's gonna go up to the ball boys and yank their mics out of them. And yet again, Tokuchi gets him to calm down. He explains that the ball boys aren't gonna hand over the devices so easily, and second of all, even if they do that, there's no proof that the Blue Mars is involved. And aside from that, their team was seven points behind right now. So what if they instead made the ball boys cooperate with them?

(Critical Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Management, Knowledge, Observation, Strategy)

The "cooperation" would go like this: when the Lycaons are attacking, the manager will send out a signal to the batter. However, Tokuchi has sent out a letter to each batter, but not Mihara, beforehand. The letter, which claims to have been written by Mihara, states that the batters are to, from Mihara's sign, slide according to what Tokuchi signs from the

dugout to get the true signal. This should hold the Blue Mars down considering how reliant they've been on the sounds around Mihara.



The strategy is a success initially. The Lycaons managed to drive up their score so that they're now only 2 points behind.

(Strategy, Information Control)

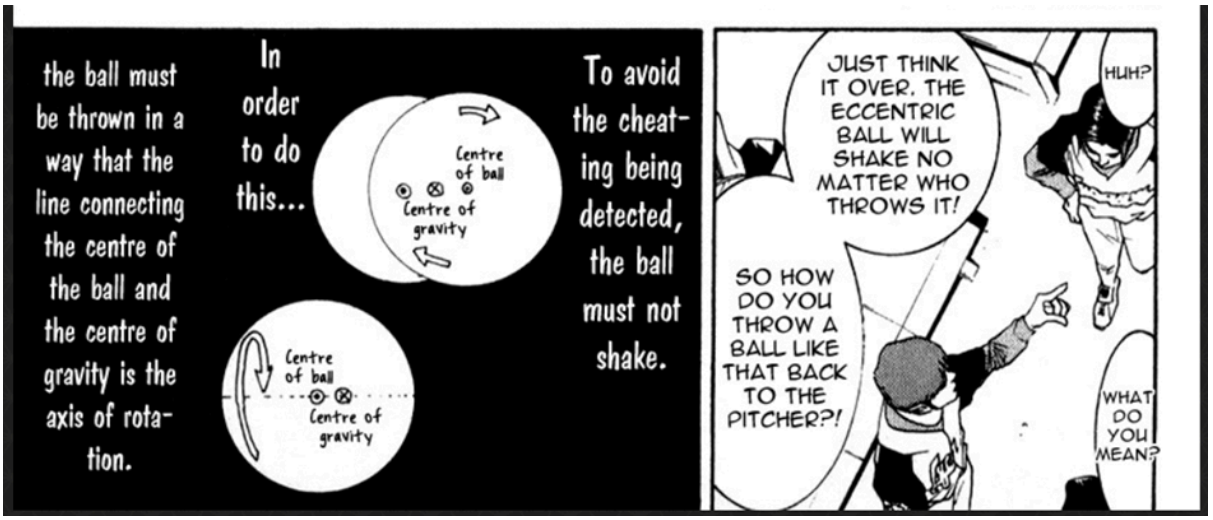
However, the Blue Mars' coach Shirooka eventually discovers what Tokuchi and his team is doing, and decides to stop using tricks against them. Then, during the final inning, when the Lycaons are attacking, the Blue Mars change their pitcher to Williams. And the Lycaons members realize something. Even if they know how Williams' knuckleball works, that's not the same as actually defeating it. But Tokuchi came up with a plan regardless. The next batter to bat against Williams is Kojima. As Williams is pitching to Kojima, he pitches nothing but knuckleballs initially. But because those pitches have poor accuracy, the strike count eventually becomes 1-2, with Kojima yet to even attempt hitting the ball.

Right now, it seems to everyone that Kojima is waiting for a straight pitch because he's apparently given up on hitting the knuckleball or even Williams' sinker that looks like a knuckleball initially. So, with this in mind, the catcher decides to send Williams the signal to pitch a loose ball. But since the strike count is 1-2, it should be a deciding pitch that gets the count up to 2-2. Therefore, Williams should pitch a sinker. So that's what he does and…Kojima hits. He gets an out-of-the-park hit and scores another run for the Lycaons. The score is now 7-6.

As it turns out, Tokuchi found a way to identify what pitch Williams was gonna throw before the pitcher even got ahold of the ball. As he revealed in an earlier chapter, the Blue Mars need a way to hide the knuckleball when it's not being used to avoid being caught

cheating. Reasonably speaking, the one hiding the ball should be the catcher, not the pitcher, because what the catcher wears allows for plenty of hiding spots in them. So if the catcher wants Williams to throw a knuckleball, he will throw the ball that's been tampered with to him for the next pitch. Otherwise, he will throw a normal ball. Once the catcher throws a ball, he stashes the other ball away somewhere on his body.

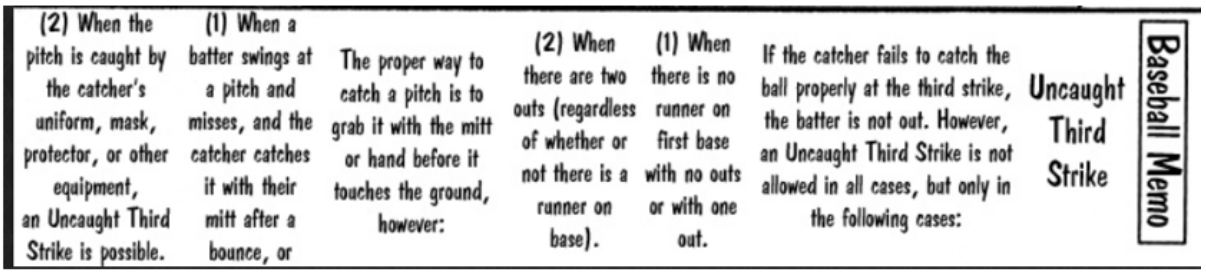
But there is a way to tell what ball the catcher throws. If the catcher wants Williams to pitch a knuckleball, he's gonna throw the modified ball, but the thing is, due to the ball's nature, in order to prevent it from shaking uncontrollably on the way back to the pitcher, the catcher needs to grip and throw the ball in a certain way.



But adjusting the grip so that it's just right before throwing takes time, unlike when the catcher throws a normal ball, because then the grip doesn't matter. So what Kojima did when at-bat was that he waited for the moment the catcher would throw the normal ball, and then placed a safe bet on the next pitch being a sinker before hitting it. All according to what Tokuchi foresaw.

(Setting Traps, Anticipation)

The next batter to bat is Tokuchi who, as he himself says, can't hit, but can at least foul. Yet he was still able to get on first base. How? First, he provokes Williams into pitching two straights to quickly get him two strikes. After this, each pitch Williams throws is fouled by Tokuchi. Eventually, the pitcher and catcher have enough of his fouling and the catcher now throws out the tampered-with ball to Williams, which Tokuchi catches onto for reasons above. So now Tokuchi expects Williams to throw a knuckleball, which he does. Tokuchi swings and misses but doesn't get a strikeout. Why? Because the catcher once again failed to catch the ball due to the pitch's poor accuracy. This leads to a special situation called an Uncaught Third Strike.



This basically means that Tokuchi can attempt to run to first base. Notably, he knew the Uncaught Third Strike was coming since he started running immediately after he swung, likely because he could tell the catcher threw the altered ball to the pitcher. However, as he does this, his teammates notice that the catcher isn't throwing the ball to first base to try getting Tokuchi out. It quickly becomes apparent why. It's again due to the nature of the ball. The ball will shake a lot, no matter who throws it, so long as it's not thrown the right way. In this case, it would be a problem for the catcher, because he has to do one of two things now:

1. Immediately throw the ball to first base to try getting Tokuchi out without adjusting his own grip first. This is not an option since the ball will almost definitely shake, which will draw a lot of suspicion on the ball, since it shouldn't shake when being thrown in this situation.

2. Adjust the grip before throwing the ball to first base. This, as stated before, takes time, and coupled with the time taken to even get ahold of the ball after failing to catch it from the pitcher, this is almost doomed to fail.

The catcher has to go with option 2 to be safe. But it's a win-win for the Lycaons in any case. Now Tokuchi's on first base. To prevent an Uncaught Third Strike from happening again, the catcher approaches Williams and hands over the doctored ball to him, telling him that they'll from now on only be using it for waste pitches. Tokuchi observes and takes note of this.

Now, Williams is ready to pitch again. However, because he now has the altered ball in his hand, Tokuchi attempts to steal a base. But because Williams is holding the faked ball, the same problem from before arises – he has to adjust his grip before throwing out to prevent the ball from shaking, which takes time. And so, Tokuchi manages to get to second base as well.

At this point, the catcher suspects that Tokuchi knows about their eccentric ball, so he decides to get the normal ball to the pitcher instead. However, that's only possible if the pitcher first throws the ball to the catcher, prompting the catcher to call out to Williams to focus on the batter instead of Tokuchi. So Williams does as the catcher says, allowing Tokuchi to steal third base as well. But this isn't all he does. He also pays attention to what the catcher is doing. He realizes that the catcher is, as he predicted, switching out the changed ball for the normal one, and stashing the changed ball inside his left leg guard, which the catcher let slip because Tokuchi's stunts made him too preoccupied with just changing the ball to realize Tokuchi was watching him.

Now that Tokuchi knows where the balls are being hidden, he first calls a time-out to tell Mihara something, which turns out to be an order for the next batter to do a squeeze. This is something the Blue Mars won't expect, since they can see that Tokuchi, upon returning to third base, isn't taking a lead to steal home, which they assume is because he realized Williams is holding a normal ball now so stealing home would fail. Except it doesn't fail. When Williams throws, the batter does the squeeze. Tokuchi runs for home but, at first glance, seems to have gotten caught. However, when at home, Tokuchi points out that the catcher "dropped the ball on the ground" before tagging him, which would make Tokuchi safe and the run would've counted for the Lycaons.

The ball that was dropped wasn't the normal one the catcher was holding on his mitt at that time, but the fake one that he was hiding in his leg guard. And it wasn't actually dropped. Tokuchi pretended to steal home to get close to the catcher, then, when the catcher tagged him, he pulled out the ball from the leg guard and threw it away. And it's not like the catcher can just show the umpire that he actually did tag him with the ball in his mitt, because that would reveal the existence of both balls on the arena, which would obviously call for an investigation. The catcher will just have to deal with it. After this, the Blue Mars are forced to give up on the fake knuckleball and Williams returns to pitching normally.

(Provocation, Strategy, Setting Traps, Observation, Emotional Facilitation)

Though Williams' pitches didn't help much, as the Lycaons kept getting hits after hits. And they kept getting hits even after he was substituted. By now, the Lycaons scored an additional 4 runs, making them 4 runs ahead of the other team. However, while Tokuchi may have defeated the Blue Mars, he has yet to defeat Saikawa in this match.

As it turns out, Saikawa had bribed the other team into injuring Tokuchi during the match to try forcing him to stay out of the upcoming matches. The One Outs contract stated that Tokuchi must follow instructions from the bench or else pay a fine of 500 million yen per match. This includes the case in which Tokuchi is unable to follow the bench's instructions, which includes taking a forced break due to injury.

In the actual match, Saikawa's plan first takes form during the top of the ninth inning, when the Lycaons are on attack and Tokuchi is at-bat. The pitcher is Minamishiba. When Minamishiba pitches, he isn't aiming for the strikezone, but rather Tokuchi himself, with the hope that that will be enough to force Tokuchi out of the game due to being hurt. Minamishiba would then be able to get away with this using the excuse that he doesn't have great pitching control.

Anyway, after Minamishiba has aimed for Tokuchi twice, Tokuchi catches on to what he's doing. So the next couple times Minamishiba pitches, Tokuchi responds by throwing his bat at the pitcher, claiming that it's because Minamishiba's pitches made him nervous and made his grip on the bat loosen. And that it will keep happening if Minamishiba continues pitching the way he has up until now. Minamishiba, hearing this after just having been hit twice by Tokuchi's bat throws, is understandably freaked out. As a result of this, the next time the catcher for Minamishiba tells him to throw the ball at Tokuchi, he doesn't comply,

and instead just strikes Tokuchi out. With this, Tokuchi escaped the first part of Saikawa's plan to force his temporary retirement.

(Threats)

Next, during the bottom of the final inning, Tokuchi is defending first base. A batter, Hayashi, is substituted in as a pinch hitter, someone with great speed and on-base percentage. The Lycaons' current pitcher pitches and Hayashi hits it and runs towards first base. But as he reaches first base and as Tokuchi does the same to get him out, Hayashi crashes into Tokuchi and feigns injury afterwards. Though Tokuchi did catch onto what he was doing quickly enough to get out of harm's way. He likely would've guessed by this point, based on Minamishiba's actions earlier, that the Blue Mars were seeking to injure him.

But unlike before, the intention here wasn't to injure Tokuchi. It was to make him realize he should get on the mound as a pitcher if he wants to avoid further attempts to hit him like this. Because there, the Blue Mars can't get to him in the same way they can get a base-defender. But this time, the Blue Mars aren't trying to injure him. Now that Tokuchi's a pitcher, the Blue Mars coach approaches him to reassure him that Hayashi's action won't be repeated, patting him while doing so. The patting was done so that he can sneak in sandpaper into Tokuchi's back-pocket.



Now that he's done that, when Tokuchi pitches, the batter allows the catcher to catch the ball. This is so that the batter can then take the ball from the catcher in order to show everyone that it's been scratched with sandpaper and that the umpire should search Tokuchi to see if he's hiding it. However, Tokuchi counters that by asking the umpires to search not just him, but everyone else who's touched the ball, including the head umpire, the catcher, and the batter himself. It just makes more sense, after all.

The batter agrees to this easily. Because what actually happened was that the ball wasn't scratched until the batter got ahold of it. As the batter was holding the ball, he used his own sandpaper to scratch it before throwing away his piece on the ground and let a teammate come to pick it up under the guise of approaching the batter to see what the situation is. As a result, the only one who should have sandpaper on them now is Tokuchi.

If things went as the Blue Mars have planned, Tokuchi would get suspended, and under the One Outs contract he would be forced to pay Saikawa 500 million yen for every match he was absent from as previously stated. But Tokuchi also wouldn't be able to accuse the younger Shirooka of cheating either because, as Saikawa puts it, "if someone is labeled as a cheater, then nobody will believe them if they say the other team is cheating without proof." This plan was the result of a deal between Saikawa and the younger Shirooka where Saikawa would pay Shirooka money to find a way to suspend Tokuchi. If Tokuchi gets "caught cheating", even if Tokuchi's cheating accusation leads to an official investigation on the Blue Mars, it will take time before that investigation is concluded. And during that time, Tokuchi will be forced to stay out of each game.

Back to the match, as the four people who touched the ball in question are being searched, the batter realizes something – there's still sandpaper in his pocket, even though he made sure a teammate had picked it up. As it turns out, Tokuchi again caught on to what the Blue Mars were doing, ever since the coach came to talk to him about Hayashi.

When Hayashi patted him, he had already suspected that something was put in his back-pocket, discovering that it's sandpaper. Because of this, he goes to Ideguchi, appearing to have a normal conversation with him. It's here where Tokuchi discreetly hands him the sandpaper he found, whereupon Ideguchi, while returning to his position, sneaks it onto the batter who accused Tokuchi of the emery ball. This way, it's the batter who has to deal with having sandpaper in his pocket now. The batter would've been digging his own grave if he kept pushing his accusation, and potentially digging a grave for his own entire team at that.

When the batter discovers that there's still sandpaper in his pocket, he nervously tells the umpires to call the searches off, as he now claims the scratches were probably a result of the ball bouncing off the ground or something. Though Tokuchi urges the umpires to continue, unless the batter apologizes for his accusation by groveling, something he also discretely encourages the batter to do if he doesn't want his team's secret to be exposed. Ultimately, the batter chose humiliation over retribution.

And with this, Tokuchi escaped Saikawa's second and much more elaborate part of his plan, while also to an extent humiliating the Blue Mars. Even if Tokuchi missed his chance to accuse the Blue Mars of cheating, at least Shirooka has now run out of tricks to use. Tokuchi has gotten out of falling for every single one of them at this point. And the match ends with the score unchanged – 11-7. Thanks to Tokuchi, the Lycaons have defeated the Blue Mars in 2 out of the last 3 matches, meaning they're no longer the team with the lowest winning percentage after the season opener…and Mihara gets to keep his salary as-is.

(Anticipation, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Humiliation)

Tokuchi's car accident (Ch. 82-83)

After the previous match, Saikawa made an attempt to clear his debt to Tokuchi in a way that doesn't have to do with baseball. This was another attempt to get Tokuchi suspended for an extended period of time. What Saikawa did was that he hired an accident faker, Nakamori Hisatake, to stage an accident involving Tokuchi and a car Tokuchi bought that he was driving around in at the time of the "incident". The faker pulls off the act successfully and gets himself hospitalized. Tokuchi himself isn't injured. As a result, it looks like Tokuchi was just driving recklessly and hit a biker as a result. What's worse is that, because Tokuchi was an away player at this time, the League rules state that he can only use the visited city's bus or public transit to get around, not his own car. Due to this incident, the League's commissioner has called upon an emergency meeting to decide Tokuchi's penalty.

At one point while Nakamori is still in the hospital, he gets visited by Saikawa where he gets paid for a done deed, 25 million yen specifically. But unbeknownst to Saikawa, after he leaves the hospital, Tokuchi pays a visit to Nakamori as well. As Tokuchi implies in a later meeting with Saikawa, he paid Nakamori an even bigger amount of money than Saikawa did to ensure he would shrug off the accident and get off Tokuchi's back. This means that he already suspected this was Saikawa's doing, considering how much money he would lose due to the contract if he was suspended as a result of the accident. This also implies that he's just as familiar with the contract's loopholes as Saikawa has shown to be. Anyway, Nakamori ends up fulfilling Tokuchi's wishes instead of Saikawa's, and as a result, Tokuchi only gets penalized for the other League rule he broke, which isn't enough to clear Saikawa's debt.

(Bribery, Critical Thinking, Abductive Reasoning, Awareness)

Signing of new One Outs contract (Ch. 86)

At this point, while Tokuchi is suspended, he spends his time observing some of the players from the Lycaons' minor team. There's three players in particular that catch his attention.

1. Muruwaka, a batter who's somehow always a little too late to hit the ball, no matter what type of pitch it is.

2. Kurai, a pitcher with pretty much no other talent who constantly gets picked on and forced to do chores by his teammates.

3. Sugadaira, a former professional batter who ruined his life by gambling.

After observing these players, Tokuchi comes to Saikawa with a proposal. It needs to be noted that at this point, Saikawa was considering selling off Tokuchi and the other 3 players just mentioned to the Gallarians, another baseball team. This was generally

known, but Saikawa's real intention with the deal was to clear his debt to Tokuchi. The money he'd receive would be more than enough to pay him off.

After provoking Saikawa by saying he will always be a loser to Tokuchi if he sells him off, Tokuchi gives him a counter-proposal to his deal with the Gallarians. It's about signing what he calls the "new One Outs Contract". The fundamental difference from the original contract is that now not only Tokuchi's performance determines his salary, but also the performance of the 3 above players. In the pitcher Kurai's case, the deal is the same as when Tokuchi is pitching. In the batters' case, 1 run batted in = 50 million yen, 3 outs = -50 million yen for Tokuchi.

Another difference to the old contract that Tokuchi suggested was the following: To ensure that Tokuchi won't be the only one playing on the field and thus reduce the new contract to just the old contract again, there will be a new rule which states that Tokuchi will choose 2 of the 4 subject players to be starter players in every match. These 2 players then have to remain on the field for at least 5 innings. If this rule isn't kept, Tokuchi will pay a penalty of 500 million yen. Something important to note here is that, this way, Saikawa will no longer be able to extract money from Tokuchi by force-suspending him from playing baseball, because 2 of the other 3 players can still play.

Now, as Saikawa later explains, this contract is, just like the old one, extremely risky for Tokuchi because the other players he picked to be involved in it appear to be nowhere near a professional level, which is something Saikawa thinks he can exploit. So why did Tokuchi decide to go through with this? Because, first of all, he still has to settle his own debt to Kojima after losing to him in a game of 'One Outs', the debt in question being that Tokuchi must get a championship victory for Kojima's team. And second of all, because the 3 players he chose as subjects of the contract are, as he later would go on to state,were in fact no ordinary players. This means that Tokuchi saw a big chance for victory in them, enough to warrant this new contract with Saikawa.

(Provocation, Risk-Taking, Negotiation)

Conversation with PR chief (Ch. 90)

After the 3 batters Tokuchi added as subjects of the contract kept showing really poor performance, Saikawa Corporation's PR chief calls out Tokuchi for a quick meeting. He wants to remind Tokuchi that he made a bad decision by introducing these 3 players to the contract and that he should cancel the contract. But Tokuchi doesn't see it that way.

He basically explains to the PR chief the reason for why he was able to win so many 'One Outs' games in a row back in Okinawa. Simply put, it's because he has eyes that carefully study whoever Tokuchi is up against, gauging their strengths and weaknesses. That's how he discovered that the 3 new players chosen for their contract actually had hidden talents, and that's why he brought those 3 players specifically to the pro team.

(Observation, Cold Reading)

Baseball match vs. the Fingers, Game 1 (Ch. 94-113)

Tokuchi's first tactic that's shown here is when he's pitching for the first time in this game. Because of Tokuchi's previous consecutive outings, he's fatigued and can't perform at his best as a pitcher. But he has a tactic to avoid this issue for now. Before he comes up to the mound to pitch, he first times out the match in order to do some batting practice with Ideguchi. As he does this, he tells Ideguchi that his next pitch will be "that pitch", which then appears to be a sharp breaking pitch. This gets the Fingers, who are watching his pitches, worried since they thought Tokuchi could only pitch easy-to-hit fastballs due to being tired. Tokuchi makes sure to end his warm-up session with one throw of "that pitch" just before the other team catches onto what Tokuchi is doing.

Now Tokuchi's pitching for real, and he manages to get all three of the next batters out. Not because of "that pitch", which is actually just a fastball pitch but with the nailed knuckleball Tokuchi had earlier, which he only used in his practice pitches. But because of him constantly and successfully confusing the batters over what pitch he's gonna throw next. For the first batter, he constantly baits him with "that pitch", but "that pitch" never comes. As a result of all this, Tokuchi helps the Lycaons successfully evade a no-outs, bases-loaded situation for the Fingers.

(Tactics, Gaslighting)

Tokuchi's next scheme comes up when he's at-bat. At that time, Ideguchi was on base. Some background before this: currently, the one pitching for the Fingers is a pitcher named Nakahayashi. As this guy was pitching, Tokuchi noticed something off about him. This pitcher is known for having an inconsistent start with his pitches – he can throw well if his first few pitches go well. However, Tokuchi noticed something more. Additionally, just before he was up to bat, Tokuchi was reading the newspapers for more info about the Fingers' current state.

What he found was that the Fingers had a pretty competitive last few matches, causing all of their middle relief pitchers to be exhausted. This would mean that, in this match, the team would probably want to ensure that they don't exhaust their pitchers any further and instead keep Nakabayashi on the mound for the entire duration of the game. However, Nakabayashi had a poor start as a pitcher in this match, so by the second inning, he will want to get the batters out as quickly as possible to preserve his own stamina, especially when he sees who the last three batters in the Lycaons' starting lineup are.

Before this match began, Tokuchi chose Kurai and Sugadaira as the starting players in the match in accordance with his contract with Saikawa. In addition to this, he also defended a base whenever the Lycaons were defending, occasionally taking over for Kurai as pitcher. However, due to this, the Japanese baseball rules state that there can no longer be a designated hitter that can substitute for them when they're in the batting line-up. This is a result of the pitcher taking up the fielder role. And as a result, not only Sugadaira, but Kurai and Tokuchi, also have to bat. These three players are at the bottom of the starting line-up.

And when Nakahayashi sees this, he's likely thinking to himself to quickly get those three players out and aim for stamina recovery. And that showed. Because he quickly struck out Sugadaira and Kurai, and that was done using only fastballs. This is what Tokuchi noticed about Nakabayashi.

So with this in mind, Tokuchi enacts a plan when he's up to bat. For Nakahayashi's first pitch, Tokuchi intentionally swings the bat too late. For the second pitch, he does it again, except this time, he gives out instructions to Ideguchi, who's on first base, to steal a base. The steal is successful, which shows just how focused Nakahayashi is on taking out Tokuchi.

Why does Tokuchi swing and miss? Because this way, Nakahayashi will be tempted to throw a very certain pitch to finish him off – a fastball. If he threw a breaking ball at this point, due to Tokuchi's apparently poor accuracy, he could hit that ball if he was lucky enough. But he could never hope to hit a fastball if he's too slow to react to it. So that's what Nakahayashi throws, just like Tokuchi anticipated. And so, he manages to hit the ball to center field, causing Ideguchi to successfully reach home and tie the game for the Lycaons.

(Observation, Information Gathering, Anticipation, Abductive Reasoning, Setting Traps)

After this, things seem to go downhill for Tokuchi in regards to the contract. His pitches became poorer on top of having to keep Kurai and Sugadaira on the field. As a result, he ends up somewhat far in the red. Because of this, you'd expect him to, after the 5th inning, when they no longer have to play according to the contract, at least put Kurai and Sugadaira back on the bench to minimize the losses.

Yet that's not what he does. Another thing he does once the 6th inning starts is that he makes himself the starting pitcher instead of Kurai while keeping Kurai on first base. This is because Tokuchi is getting tired, to the point where he is no longer able to deal with the runners Kurai allows to get on base. But Tokuchi puts up with this because he's waiting for a certain man to come to the arena where they were playing.

Because of his faltering stamina due to his decision, he eventually ends up allowing one of the opposing batters to score a run. But that's fine, because it's about now when that man shows up. And it turns out that that man is Kurai's 8th grade teacher, the first man who managed to catch a glimpse of Kurai's true ability. He's now come to the arena to encourage Kurai to use his full potential even if people have done nothing but boo at him since this game started.

As the teacher says, Kurai has many poor qualities, but he's not useless, and because he had no other talent, he spent his time polishing the one skill he had instead. And with that being said, the teacher wants Kurai to show him the skill he's built up over the years. After hearing this, Kurai changes. Upon the teacher saying all of this, Kurai no longer thinks about the public, or whether he'll get a hit or not. The only thing he's thinking about is throwing that one blazing pitch. And he does. And it turns out that this is the fastest pitch thrown in baseball history.

It's important to explain some things about Kurai. As previously stated, Kurai has little talent, so he spent his life polishing his one and only skill of throwing a really good pitch. But then an incident occurred. He was put as a practice pitcher for the Lycaons minor team's, at the time newly acquired, player Muruwaka. While attempting to show off his true pitching skills to the coaching staff, Kurai tensed up and his fastball ended up hitting Muruwaka in the head. He has felt guilty ever since. He never wanted to throw a pitch like that again if it meant hurting another batter.

As such, he always held back, and was being treated as a loser as a result. That was until Tokuchi saw through him and recruited him to the pro team because it would give him a great advantage contract-wise if he could bring out Kurai's true potential. And in order to do that, for this match, he made sure to keep Kurai on the field the entire time. When Kurai was pitching, every pitch would end badly and Kurai would be showered with boos. When Tokuchi was pitching instead of Kurai, he put Kurai on first-base, the position closest to the booing crowd. And it would keep being like this, putting more and more emotional strain on Kurai until Kurai's teacher arrives.

Why did Tokuchi put Kurai through this shower of boos before getting his teacher to encourage him to be stronger? It was likely to make Kurai feel as useless as possible before he found out his teacher showed up. It's apparent when the teacher arrives that Kurai has lost all hope in himself, lamenting about his own uselessness as a player. But when the teacher encourages him to do his best, this does more than just encourage Kurai.

Because of all the booing Kurai has received up until now, Kurai has even more reason to pitch his best pitch because the teacher is the last person who hasn't lost hope in him. And if Kurai doesn't impress the teacher here and now, he fears that the teacher will be as disappointed and upset at him as everyone else watching the match has proven to be so far. At that point, there would be truly no one to have his back. At that point, Kurai would feel truly *worthless.*

That's probably why Tokuchi saw it as important to break Kurai before making him use his full potential. Because if Kurai wasn't showered with boos, the teacher's words might not have gone through to him enough because he wouldn't have felt like his worth as not just a player, but a person was at stake. Thanks to Tokuchi's planning, after this match and for the rest of the series, Kurai would continue to play at full power, becoming an extremely useful asset for the Lycaons.

(Humiliation, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Lateral Thinking, Planning)

Kurai has now unlocked his true potential. That leaves two players left who need awakening. The next player to awaken is Muruwaka. However, there's a problem. After Kurai started pitching at full power, the Fingers had a pitcher change. The pitcher now is Kawanaka, a pitcher who's also known for his extremely fast pitches. But especially his extremely fast forkballs – perhaps the fastest in the world. And the thing is, Kurai's pitches hit Kawanaka hard in his pride as a baseball player. So now he's especially fired up for his pitches.

And despite all that, Tokuchi still sends out Muruwaka to pinch-hit for him. So he comes out there, Muruwaka throws his extremely fast pitch, and Muruwaka somehow hits it, getting a three-run homerun and immediately putting Tokuchi back in the black! What did Tokuchi do here? As he himself says, it's not that he removed Muruwaka's phobia of balls or his habits. Tokuchi's plan for Muruwaka didn't involve getting rid of anything because Tokuchi understands that getting rid of Muruwaka's problems entirely isn't gonna be easy, and they need a solution right now, for this match.

So what did Tokuchi do? Well, first, we need some background on Muruwaka's flaw. The problem with him is that he swings late not just on certain pitches, but on every pitch, no matter its speed. That's because of an incident that happened during batting practice where he got hit by Kurai's extremely fast pitch. As such, whenever someone pitches at him now, he instinctively backs away. This backing away causes his bat to swing along a longer trajectory compared to the typical batting form, and that's why Muruwaka misses every pitch thrown at him.

So how does Tokuchi counteract this? By making use of the flawed human speed sense. To summarize, if you're used to an object moving at a particular speed, then, if that same object comes at you with a completely different speed, it will mess up your speed sense. For example, when a batter's trying to hit a ball, if the ball moves at 150 km/h a couple times, the batter can eventually get used to it. But if the pitcher then suddenly throws a 70km/h pitch, the batter, due to being used to the faster pitches, will likely miss horribly.

That sounds like a bad thing, but it can actually be put to good use as seen with Muruwaka. Because what Tokuchi did was that, in anticipation of Kawanaka's 150 km/h pitches, he had another pitcher in his team pitch 100 pitches to Muruwaka, except Muruwaka was standing closer to the pitcher than usual. This is so the pitcher could simulate a 220km/h pitch because it wouldn't be possible otherwise. After 100 pitches, Muruwaka will have gotten used to them. But once he comes onto the field and Kawanaka throws a 150 km/h, that will be canceled out by his fear of the ball. As a result, he hits the pitch as if he knew it was going to be a 150 km/h pitch even if he's used to 220 km/h pitches.

But there's more to be said here. The thing is, of all pitchers in the Fingers, Kawanaka is the only one capable of pitching as fast as he did. So the fact that Tokuchi had Muruwaka hit 100 pitches as fast as 220 km/h (hypothetically) meant he anticipated that the match would come down to the point where Kawanaka would face off against Muruwaka. What this means is that he anticipated from the very beginning: Kurai's awakening, the Fingers changing pitcher to Kawanaka, and that Kawanaka would try dealing with Muruwaka using his 150km/h forkball. And he responded accordingly the way he just did with Muruwaka. After this match, just like Kurai, Muruwaka would become another important asset for the Lycaons.

(Psychology, Psychological Manipulation, Anticipation, Lateral Thinking, Creativity, Planning)

With this, there's one more player that has yet to unlock his true ability (not really though) – Sugadaira. However, unlike the previous two players, Tokuchi completely dismisses

Sugadaira and reveals that it's not because Sugadaira has talent that he's in the pro team. Tokuchi only brought him into the team on Kojima's recommendation, which was based on him simply having a great spirit.

The only advice Tokuchi gives Sugadaira at this time is to hope that the two batters before him don't get out. Because if they do, since we're now at the final inning and the Lycaons have already taken one out, if both of the batters before Sugadaira get out, Sugadaira won't have a chance to bat anymore, meaning all the times he's batted in the match were poor bats. Tokuchi revealed that if any of the three players he brought from the minor team didn't show a good performance by this match, he would send them back to the minor team. As such, the stakes are enormous for Sugadaira who not long ago got the chance to play in the pro team.

Later, Tokuchi calculates for Sugadaira that the odds of any of the batters landing a safe hit is approximately 50%, but explains that there is a way to turn that 50% into 80 or 90%. That's if Sugadaira goes out into the field and starts doing some dry swings. Sugadaira doesn't understand why, but does so anyway. But as it turns out, the effect of this is that both of the batters before Sugadaira are pitched balls, leading them to be walked, meaning bases are now loaded for the Lycaons. This gives Sugadaira a chance to prove himself one last time.

As it turns out, Tokuchi anticipated the Fingers' actions here. Because once the Fingers saw Sugadaira desperately practicing dry swings, they would think that it's because he's gonna go up to bat. So they make a plan to walk the two batters before him and then try getting a double-play out of Sugadaira. But even if they only manage to get Sugadaira out, the next batter is Kurai, another batter that's guaranteed to get out. And it's not like Kurai can be substituted by a pinch hitter, because that would mean he wouldn't be able to pitch later when the Lycaons are on defense. So it seemed like an easy win for the Fingers if they just let the two batters before Sugadaira get away.

So now Sugadaira has gotten the chance that he hoped for. But the chances of actually scoring an RBI still seems far away, especially because the pitcher, Yoshikawa, put Sugadaira between a rock and a hard place with his pitches. He first pitched the low-and-outside slider to Sugadaira, which would be extra hard for a batter like him to hit. Then, anticipating Sugadaira would take a step toward the outside part of the strikezone in response, he then pitches a high-and-inside fastball to force Sugadaira to back away. This way, if Sugadaira tries to hit one pitch, he's guaranteed to miss the other. And he can't guess, because he's up against a pro.

So now, what will Sugadaira do? Well, for the third pitch, Yoshikawa throws a pitch, a brush-back, even further inside than before with the intention to ensure Sugadaira won't aim for the outside pitch. But Sugadaira responds by doing something unthinkable – taking a hit from it, resulting in a hit-by-pitch. As a result of this, he gets a walk. But because bases are loaded, everyone else on-base gets a walk too, which means the third baseman gets a run and Sugadaira gets an RBI!

As it turns out, before Sugadaira was gonna go up to bat, Tokuchi told him about the time he faced off against Kojima in the game One Outs in Okinawa and how it was Kojima's spirit that allowed him to defeat Tokuchi. Tokuchi thought that if he told Sugadaira this, and if what Kojima said about Sugadaira's spirit really is true, then Sugadaira would remember that story as he was playing. And when he's at-bat with two strikes, as a final nail in the coffin, Tokuchi reads Sugadaira's thoughts about asking God for help, to which Tokuchi yells out that only Sugadaira can help himself. That was enough for Sugadaira, leading him to do what he did afterwards.

Now Sugadaira has scored an RBI. This causes the Fingers' coach to come out and accuse the Lycaons of staging a hit-by-pitch. With that said, Tokuchi also comes out and defends the team by explaining they would have no reason to sacrifice one of their players like that considering the massive lead they have at the moment. Tokuchi instead shifts the blame to the Fingers, basically saying that you can't throw a brush-back without the possibility of hitting the batter.

In other words, they knew the risks of throwing such a pitch, yet went ahead with it anyway. And if the Fingers can't accept this, then they have no right to throw inside. Tokuchi roars that last part out loud, causing the coach to fall to the ground with Tokuchi looking down on him. The coach listens to Tokuchi and backs away, allowing the Lycaons to keep the point they got from the hit-by-pitch.

But Tokuchi's speech actually does more than letting the Lycaons keep that point. Because the coach took Tokuchi's words to heart, he likely instructed the Fingers' pitchers to go easier on their pitching to prevent further hit-by pitches by the Lycaons. But as Tokuchi says, "If you're too lenient, you'll die". The next pitch that's thrown is weak enough to successfully be bunted away by Kurai of all players. And as a result, with bases loaded, another run was scored for the Lycaons. This is especially a win for Tokuchi, since Sugadaira and Kurai are both subjects of the contract, a contract in which Tokuchi wins as much as 50 million yen (x20 in this match) for each RBI these guys bat in.

All this went according to Tokuchi's strategy. His goal from the beginning was to get Sugadaira to hit himself with a pitch and then, knowing the opposing team's coach would try rebuking this action, Tokuchi would tell him off by putting the blame on the other team instead, all to get the team to loosen up and give the Lycaons and Tokuchi an advantage.

(Strategy, Anticipation, Abductive Reasoning, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Understanding, Observation, Cold Reading, Emotional Perception, Guilt-Tripping, Aura)

Now the match is almost over. Tokuchi is back in the black, and if he wants to, he can call it quits there and stop putting himself or Kurai on the mound to ensure there won't be any more losses. That's what he intended initially, but seeing how poorly the current pitcher performed, Tokuchi got an idea. He tells Mihara to give the current pitcher some pep talk while he's away. Tokuchi proceeds to contact Saikawa and offer him another game they can play while the match is yet to finish.

The game goes like this: if Saikawa accepts the deal, Tokuchi will order the current pitcher to walk the next batter, resulting in a bases-loaded situation. Then, he will substitute that pitcher for Kurai again. Now, if Kurai ends up getting even one earned run, it would mean a huge blow to Tokuchi's salary. 2 earned runs, and his profit is around zero. Anymore, and Tokuchi will be in the red by a long shot. But if Kurai manages to prevent that from happening, which Tokuchi notably phrases as extremely unlikely to happen to Saikawa, Saikawa has to pay Tokuchi an extra 2 billion yen. Saikawa, seeing which batter Kurai is gonna face, accepts the deal.

The batter Kurai will face while bases are loaded is Amami Taiyou, one of the best batters in baseball at the moment. Ultimately, it's Kurai who gets Amami out, making Tokuchi the winner of his little game against Saikawa. How could Kurai get Amami out? Well, as Tokuchi puts it, "Amami has already decided the fate of this match". Amami, just like Tokuchi, has the ability to discern an opponent's true abilities by seeing them in action. But not only that, earlier in this match, when he was facing off against Kurai before his awakening, he made clear that his interest lied not in hitting Kurai's easy pitches, but for Kurai to bring out his full power against him. Amami made it clear that he's a person who values being challenged.

So for this final showdown, he intentionally waited for Kurai to throw his best pitch, even if it meant acquiring strikes. When Kurai finally did throw his best possible pitch, Amami hit it. The ball went far, but it didn't have good enough speed, and was caught before bouncing. It's not surprising that he would fail. He had never hit a pitch as fast as Kurai's before. But since he wanted a challenge to the point where he was wasting his own chances for a home run just to bring out Kurai's full strength, it's like he set himself up to fail. That's what Tokuchi meant when he said Amami had already decided the fate of the match. And because this inning already had 2 outs, Amami's out ends the game, with the Lycaons as the winners.

(Opportunism, Negotiation, Emotional Understanding, Anticipation)

Final battle vs. Saikawa (Ch. 114-118)

During the last match, Tokuchi went from being in the black by 2 billion yen, to ending up in the red by 1 billion yen, to jumping into the black far beyond where he originally started. Right now, his salary stands at around 6 billion yen.

Saikawa is devastated after those huge losses. He comes up with one more plan to not only take the money back from Tokuchi, but put Tokuchi in huge debt. To do this, he had to make sure of several different things. The first step was to take care of Muruwaka, one of the best batters in the team at the moment and a big factor in the contract. To deal with him, just before a match against the Blue Mars, Saikawa bribed that team to deal with Muruwaka by just walking him every time he's at-bat. This way, Muruwaka can't score any runs and the contract will depend purely on Tokuchi's performance. Things are looking good for Saikawa, especially since Sugadaira is now injured and Kurai reached his limit due to his 30-pitch arm, making him most useful as a middle reliever instead.

This means that if Tokuchi decides to pitch, then, because he can no longer rely on Kurai to pitch, he's doomed. Because hypothetically, let's say that he pitched a perfect game. Then, Saikawa just has to raise the rate for the next game by 5x. And in that game, if Tokuchi decides to pitch again, it's gonna be more difficult to win money because he's gonna be fatigued from the previous game. What's worse is that his team will realize this and put him as a fielder. This means he'll have to show up to bat, guaranteeing even more money for Saikawa due to Tokuchi's poor batting. And even if Tokuchi scores a perfect game again for the next game, all Saikawa has to do is to raise the rate 5x again for the game after that. Tokuchi definitely wouldn't be able to pitch a perfect game three times in a row.

So things are looking dire for Tokuchi. But that's not all Saikawa has planned for him. He has one more thing up his sleeve. As it turns out, before the Lycaons' current game against the Blue Mars started, when Saikawa was talking to the team about how to deal with Muruwaka, he noticed that one of their pitchers was practicing on a new type of breaking ball, namely the screwball, a type of pitch that kind of homes in on the batter when thrown. The pitcher wanted to try it in one of their upcoming games, after which Saikawa approached him and offered him money if he could use that pitch to hit Tokuchi, injuring him to the point where he can't play properly anymore.

Saikawa's plan appears to be successful, and the pitcher's ball lands right on Tokuchi's right hand, which is the hand he pitches with. Now that he's injured, Tokuchi will have to either leave the field earlier than the contract allows, resulting in a penalty for him, or try fighting through the pain until he doesn't have to play anymore. Either way, Tokuchi appears to be in a really bad place right now. Additionally, because Kurai can't be used as a starting pitcher and Sugadaira is injured, Tokuchi is forced to start in the next match despite his injury if he doesn't want to lose money. As a result, Saikawa raises the rate of the contract for the next match to 200x the original because there seems to be no way Tokuchi can have one up on him this time.

However, during the next match, some odd stuff happens. First of all, Tokuchi chooses to start as a pitcher even though it would've been better to start as a fielder/batter to minimize the losses he'd incur to his injury. After all, even one earned run would cost huge amounts of money, and it's very likely he will earn several runs in this game due to his injury. Speaking of which, it's very apparent that he's injured considering he came to the mound with a bruise where the ball had hit him. It would've been safer to bat because that way there are less instances when he can lose money because there's only so many times when a player has the chance to bat in a match.

Second of all, Saikawa's PR manager realized that, when Tokuchi was hit on his fingers by that one pitcher's screwball, it was his right hand that the ball hit when it should've been his left.



But Saikawa and his secretary chalk it up to Tokuchi just being an amateur batter.

The final odd thing is that, by the 3rd inning, despite Tokuchi having thrown poorly so far, somehow, none of the opposing batters have managed to get onto base. It turns out that it's because these batters, knowing Tokuchi is injured, were letting their guard down thinking Tokuchi would be easy to hit now.

But by the 4th inning, because Tokuchi has still chosen to pitch on the mound despite his poor play and because none of the batters have landed a hit on Tokuchi yet, they reveal to him that from now on, they're gonna go all out on him. But Tokuchi isn't fazed by their threats. As it turns out, that bruise Tokuchi had on his finger was nothing but pencil graphite. He was never injured to begin with. That time when he was hit by the screwball, he sensed the pitcher's intentions. Which is why he beforehand curled up his right index and middle finger in his batting glove. He put tar on the parts of his batting glove where the right index and middle finger are inserted so that he could still hold the bat properly.

Then, when the screwball was thrown at him, he intentionally positioned himself so that the ball would hit his right hand. Then it would look like a severe handicap has been placed on him making him unable to pitch, which he tried to make especially apparent when playing as a fielder. He feigned injury at that time by pretending to have a hard time gripping the ball. Saikawa would see all this and would definitely want to raise the rate for the next match as a response. Just as Tokuchi wanted.

Now, in this game, Tokuchi continued to play poorly as a pitcher for the first three innings just to save energy for his real plan that would come just after. Since the Blue Mars kept underestimating him up until now, they weren't able to score any runs. But from now on, Tokuchi will play seriously, so the Blue Mars will now definitely not be able to score any runs. As Tokuchi says, the Blue Mars should've taken their chance while they had it.

And with this, Tokuchi ends up scoring a perfect game against the pitchers, and due to the 200x rate, this results in the biggest win for Tokuchi ever and the biggest loss for Saikawa ever in the game that is the One Outs contract. Saikawa now owes Tokuchi 27 billion yen on top of the 6 billion yen he's already won from him. Being this much in debt would eventually lead to Saikawa Corporation becoming bankrupt. As such, the battle between Tokuchi and Saikawa, with the One Outs contract being at the center of it, is now finally over.

(Setting Traps, Acting, Anticipation, Observation, Cold Reading)

Tokuchi acquires the Lycaons (Ch. 119-124)

It turns out that this entire time, ever since Tokuchi first made the One Outs contract with Saikawa, he was actually planning something. When Kojima first brought Tokuchi to the team, Tokuchi thought about the most important thing that had to be done at that time in order for the Lycaons to grow. That thing turned out to be dealing with Saikawa. Saikawa had intentionally avoided supporting the Lycaons by not paying the players high salaries. Tokuchi found out that this was to keep the income from the team as high as possible because he was later going to sell the team for 10 times that income.*

Tokuchi couldn't just wait and hope that the management would turn out better. So in order to start making the Lycaons a better team, Tokuchi was forced to get rid of Saikawa and the Saikawa Group completely. This was done by making a deal with the corporation interested in buying the Lycaons, the Tronpoes. The deal was that, alongside giving the Tronpoes information about any suspicious moves Saikawa would be making, Tokuchi would pluck as much money as possible out of Saikawa through the One Outs contract. For the Tronpoes, the latter would lower the income Saikawa gets from the Lycaons due to having to pay so much money to Tokuchi, which in turn means that the selling price for the Lycaons will decrease. For Tokuchi, this would mean eventually putting Saikawa in bankruptcy and causing his corporation to collapse and hastening the selling of the team to the Tronpoes.

Tokuchi knew Saikawa would eventually try setting traps to take Tokuchi down, which is why Tokuchi asked the Tronpoes to in return support Tokuchi financially and by gathering info for him.

Thanks to all that, he was eventually able to defeat Saikawa as planned. But the thing is, at some point when Tokuchi was still battling it out with him, the Tronpoes' manager, Mitamura, confessed to him that he was planning on selling off all the players of the Lycaons to be replaced with new ones. At that point, Tokuchi had to change his plan. The Tronpoes had at some point revealed to Tokuchi the amount of money they would buy the Lycaons with after the Saikawa Corporation collapsed and the team was put into auction.

So all Tokuchi had to do was pay an even higher amount of money to ensure the Lycaons would end up in his own hands and not the Tronpoes. He never saw the Tronpoes as an ally after all. Something worth mentioning is that the Tronpoes set up a largely negative press for the Lycaons to ensure no one else would be willing to buy it. As such, Tokuchi wouldn't face any competition in the auction. And with this, the Lycaons team is now in Tokuchi's hands, all after 4 months of careful planning, gambling and deceiving. No greedy manager will hold the Lycaons down anymore.

(Long-Term Planning, Information Gathering, Negotiation, Adaptability, Prediction)

Tokuchi negotiates with Tanabe (Ch. 125)

Now that Tokuchi has acquired the Lycaons, there's now a certain group of people that aren't very happy with that and have the power to do something about it. Not just Mitamura, but the baseball management ring he's a part of too. The plan was to get the Lycaons in their hands after all. So the leader of this ring, Tanabe Tsuneyuki, and his subordinates decide that they will call Tokuchi for a meeting to discuss his qualities as a team manager. However, the meeting is in reality just a formality as they don't believe a mere baseball player can run an entire team. At the end of the meeting, Tanabe and his underdogs were planning to all vote in favor of forcing Tokuchi to step down as the leader of the Lycaons.

When Tokuchi arrives at the meeting, they tell him that in order for him to remain as a manager, he'll have to pass a qualification examination to see if he's worthy of such a position. However, Tokuchi stops them before they describe the contents of it. He questions their ability to actually do so considering they somehow let Saikawa get away with mismanaging the Lycaons this whole time. And many of their managers have had their teams end up in the red on top of all this.

With that being said, the other managers are forced to admit that they can't properly judge Tokuchi's abilities as a baseball team leader. So Tokuchi proposes his own idea for an examination. Over the next week, if his team ends up in the red or if the team ends up being more than 10 games away from the leading team in match records, Tokuchi will step down as leader. But if that doesn't happen, he can keep being the leader for another week. Tokuchi will also step down if the Lycaons don't win the pennant race. Tanabe accepts this,

still believing Tokuchi is too incompetent to be a manager. But as can be seen later in the series, it turns out he was quite wrong about that.

So to summarize what happened, a baseball management ring intended to get rid of Tokuchi, the current owner of the Lycaons, so that they can take the Lycaons for themselves and continue with the original plan to sell off the team's players. They were going to put Tokuchi through their own qualification examination which they would've likely intentionally constructed so that Tokuchi would fail it. But thanks to Tokuchi exposing them as poor judges, he could set up his own terms for the qualification exam in place of the managers', terms that could favor him instead of putting him at a disadvantage. And the terms he did put out are pretty dangerous for a manager like him to make. But, again, it's Tokuchi, and as we've learned from the series so far, he most definitely knows what he's doing when making deals like this.

(Inductive Reasoning, Negotiation, Risk-Taking)

The MVP-tickets (Ch. 126-132)

Without support from Saikawa Corp., the Lycaons members suspect they'll go into deficit pretty soon. But Tokuchi comes up with an idea to counter this. His idea is the following. From now on, the tickets they sell whenever the Lycaons are playing at home will be replaced by a different type of tickets, called the MVP-tickets. The first difference from the normal tickets is their price – it's 1.5x times the original. But the thing is, the audience members only have to pay for the ticket if the Lycaons win. If the Lycaons lose, all tickets will be refunded.

The next difference is that it has a section with 5 slots. In each slot, the audience members can write down 5 names, names of the Lycaons players they thought had the best performance. They can either write the same name in all 5 slots, write a different name in each slot, or have for example 1 name take 3 slots and another take 2. Each time a player's name is written in one of those slots, they get 200 yen. So basically, the MVP-tickets decide the players' pays from now on. So if the Lycaons don't win, no one gets paid. And the old salary will be canceled.

But the effects of this ticket go beyond just increasing the income of the Lycaons team. The first apparent effect of this ticket is how baseball fans react to it. Because there's now a chance for the audience to be refunded their tickets, people suddenly find more reasons to attend the Lycaons' matches than before. For example, people reason that even if the Lycaons won only 1 of 2 games, attending both matches would be like paying a price even less than the normal price. It also encourages some who think poorly of the Lycaons' performance to attend the matches as well since they think the match is gonna be free anyway.

As a result, tickets are unlike before completely sold out not just for the Lycaons' next match, but the 5 matches they're in after that one too. In one of the matches, the tickets being sold out in combination with the price increase meant that the Lycaons would basically double their normal income if they won that match.

But that effect's only part of what Tokuchi was aiming for. The real goal Tokuchi had in mind when creating these tickets was how it would affect his teammates' behavior during matches. During one of their matches, Tokuchi informs the team that whoever scores the decisive points in the match will probably be the one awarded the most tickets in the game. This has an effect on the team especially because, prior to this, Sugadaira and Kurumizawa, thought to be the worst players in the team, suddenly started playing well and having a significant role in the Lycaons' progress in the match. They would surely end up getting a lot of MVP tickets after that, and Tokuchi made use of this fact.

He made use of it by informing the other players that it's not over for them yet, that they can still win a lot of money. Because the thing is, thanks to Sugadaira's and Kurumizawa's efforts, the Lycaons have only managed to tie the game. However, the most amount of MVP tickets will probably go to the player that scores the most decisive point, the one that gives the Lycaons the lead. This heavily rallies up the other team players, because to them, as Tokuchi puts it, "the next hit will make a world of difference to their pay".

The effect this has on the team is that they no longer care about the performance of their fellow teammates. All they care about is scoring that decisive point so that they can get those sweet yen. The focus on that greatly improves their concentration and it's even noticed by the opposing team, who feel intimidated by them. An opposing team would later point out that the Lycaons players were somehow still having fun despite losing.

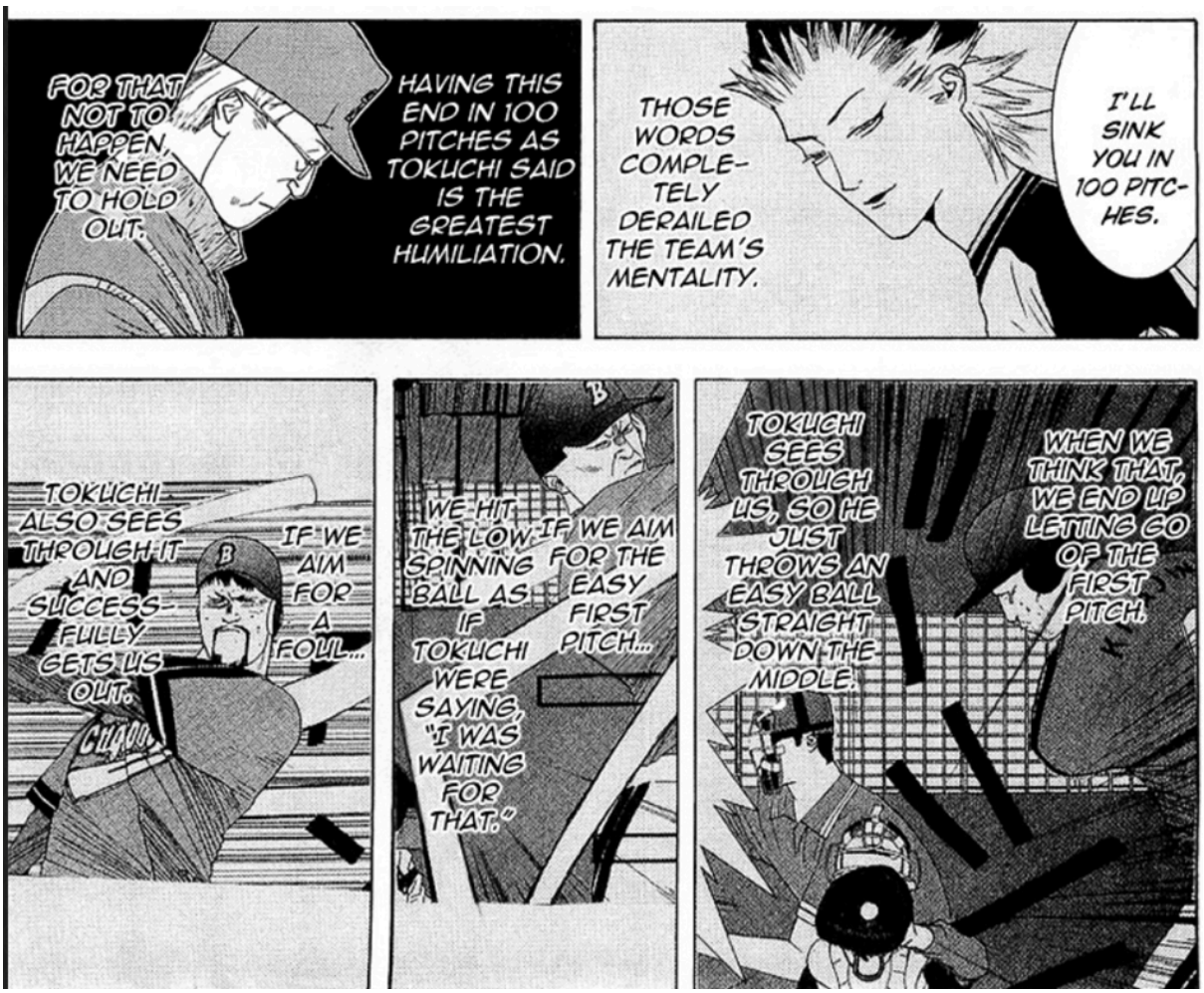
All this was according to Tokuchi's plan. It was to make the team realize the "true meaning of teamwork" and start acting based on that meaning instead. Because now, the players won't burden themselves with worrying about how others perform and how it affects the team's performance. From now on, they'll only care about what they themselves are doing as players, and nothing else. Each player wants to believe they're the main player. This is the "true meaning of teamwork" that Tokuchi wanted to teach his teammates by introducing the MVP tickets.

(Long-Term Strategy, Social Influencing, Emotional Facilitation, Leadership, Positive Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Behavioral Manipulation)

Baseball match vs. the Bugaboos (Ch. 133)

There is one notable thing Tokuchi does in this match against the Bugaboos. As the other team discusses how to defeat Tokuchi, Tokuchi observes them and responds by claiming that he will be able to take the other team down in less than 100 pitches, not allowing them to score a single point. This claim has two effects:

1. Now that the Bugaboos know this, their mentality is completely derailed, making their minds easier to read.



So even if Tokuchi actually couldn't take the Bugaboos out in 100 pitches, he can do so now that he's sufficiently scared the Bugaboos with his proclamation. He likely knew how they'd react based on the conversation the Bugaboos members had with each other beforehand. They felt so intimidated by Tokuchi as a player that they considered going for a single point and then keeping that 1-point lead for the rest of the match. They didn't care about scoring more runs than that. And as Tokuchi kept his pitch count under 100, the closer the match came to the end, the more hopeless it would likely seem for the Bugaboos to hit his pitches, the more advantage Tokuchi could take of their mentality and make the challenge he's set for himself easier.

2. The other effect his proclamation had was on his own teammates. The other teammates think that Tokuchi is making that claim just so he can take all the MVP tickets for himself if he succeeds. And so, they focus on their own performance, just like Tokuchi taught them the day before, in order to be able to contest Tokuchi for those tickets.

In the end, the match ends with a massive victory for the Lycaons. The final score was 27-0 and Tokuchi got the Bugaboos batters in 94 pitches in total, less than 100 as promised. The number of safe hits the Lycaons got in this match was 33, a Japanese new record.

(Setting Traps, Bluffing, Mass Manipulation, Emotional Understanding, Social Influencing, Observation, Cold Reading)

Before baseball match vs. the new Mariners (Ch. 133-138)

It's revealed after the previous match that the Mariners have acquired some new players from other teams in the P-League, namely the Fingers' pitcher Kawanaka, the Eagles' pitchers Yoshida and Mizuhashi, and the Fingers' batters, Amami and Kitaooji. This is actually a move planned out by Tanabe in order to crush the Lycaons. Unsurprisingly, the Lycaons are devastated after hearing these news, especially since the new Mariners very quickly started playing at record-level and many of their players started getting really good stats.

One day, the Lycaons are going through the stats for the Mariners' best players as well as footage of the Mariners playing. However, Tokuchi, upon observing the footage closely, concludes that the team is actually full of holes, which he intends to make use of later.

(Observation)

That being said, Tokuchi reveals to the team that he has a plan to counter the new Mariners with, but in order for Tokuchi to enact that plan, he needs the rest of the team to win their two upcoming games before they have to face the Mariners. Why he told his team this will become apparent later.

Tokuchi also announces that, from now on, he's going to hold a press conference before and after each match the Lycaons have. During the first press conference, he gets asked how he thinks the Lycaons' final match before the new Mariners is gonna go, to which Tokuchi answers that the Lycaons will completely win, which they end up doing. So during the press conference after the match, someone in the press comments on this, and says that the Lycaons sure have improved a lot thanks to Tokuchi. But Tokuchi denies this, saying that it's the players themselves' improved abilities and sense that helped the team grow. Tokuchi merely taught them how to play.

Tokuchi then goes into an explanation of what he means by "playing", namely strategizing, gambling and deceiving, as well as how modern-day Japanese baseball gives "players" like Tokuchi an advantage by just being focused on power vs. power over everything else. When the reporters then ask Tokuchi to show an example of his gambling skills, Tokuchi responds by saying lip-reading, and demonstrates that skill with some members of the audience.

Now having driven the conversation to this point, a reporter asks Tokuchi if he's scared by tomorrow's game against the Mariners. Tokuchi says he "wonders about that", and brings up something he supposedly picked up from Brooklyn when watching him on TV. By using his lip-reading skills, Tokuchi claims that he heard Brooklyn say "the Lycaons are nothing". This claim is something that ends up in the newspapers, and it likely helped that Tokuchi successfully predicted the Lycaons win a match beforehand, boosting Tokuchi's credibility.

However, as we later find out, this claim is just something Tokuchi made up as part of his plan.

(Tactics, Long-Term Planning, Prediction, VCI, Verbal Deception, Mass Deception)

Unsurprisingly the Lycaons, upon hearing Brooklyn's supposed statement, are brought back down into depression again. Tokuchi, upon seeing this, tells the Lycaons to go and lose their first match against the Mariners, and to do so in tatters. He assures the team by saying that, because they're playing in a league, and not a tournament, they won't immediately lose everything just for losing a single match.

And also, Tokuchi puts up some peculiar requirements for the team just to make sure the team loses in the way that Tokuchi intends them to do. He divides up the first eight innings of the game into four equally large sections. Each section will have their own Lycaons pitcher playing. For the 1st and 2nd innings, it will be Takahashi, then followed by Mitsui, then Nishioka and finally Hasegawa. This relay is to be immutable. The next rule is that the pitchers, no matter what, are not allowed to throw balls to the opposing batters, only pitches that land in the strikezone. To incentivize them to do this, he adds a reward-punishment system where if the pitcher throws a ball, he will get a 1 million yen penalty, but if he throws a strike, he will get a 500 000 yen reward. And the pitchers don't have to be too worried about all this since Tokuchi told them to lose anyway.

Obviously with this restriction, the Lycaons think they're gonna lose terribly. But when everyone's left the meeting room except for Kojima, Tokuchi explains to Kojima the real aim behind telling the Lycaons to lose. First of all, the Lycaons were dead set on thinking they were gonna lose this match, so it's not like Tokuchi would've had an easy time convincing them that the match was actually winnable. But more importantly, there's something about the Mariners which almost none of the members of the Lycaons seem to have realized.

There's a big reason why the Mariners have managed to score so many runs in these past couple of matches. That's because of the massive number of balls thrown at the Mariners' batters. The Mariners' opposing teams are convinced that, upon seeing a team as impressive as the current Mariners, their best course of action is to avoid confrontation and throw balls at the strong batters so that they can focus on striking out the weak batters. But the problem with this is that if you do this too often, you'll have walked the batters so many times that they eventually end up scoring a run anyway.

Due to all of this, the on-base percentage of the Mariners is as high as 51.3% for the team overall. Meaning every other time a Mariners batter is at-bat he can be expected to be walked. That's why Tokuchi told his own team to not throw any balls to the Mariners' batters. Because, and this is supported by data Tokuchi has collected, if the strike count is high enough, then the Mariners' batters will eventually be forced to try hitting the ball no matter how it's thrown in order to prevent getting an out, whereas they can just wait for a pitch course that they like otherwise.

If the Lycaons' pitchers throw nothing but strikes at the Mariners, their on-base percentage will end up becoming the same as their overall batting percentage, which is just 33%, the same as the Lycaons' on-base percentage.

There's a reason why Tokuchi neglected to tell the rest of the Lycaons his plan. That's because it wouldn't be enough to make the team grow further. It would be better for them if they had the feeling of dividing the Mariners by themselves. If Tokuchi told them his plan beforehand, they would just attribute their win to him, giving themselves too little credit, which wouldn't be good for their self-esteem.

Due to Tokuchi's strategy, tomorrow's match would end with a tie, which is far from what almost everyone in the Lycaons expected to happen. They all thought the Mariners were gonna win by 20, 30 or 40 points with their new players. Tokuchi uses this to point out to the team how they've gotten stronger, and now that they all know this, as Tokuchi says, the games they play from then on will be the games for them to win.

(Strategy, Information Gathering, Knowledge, Crystallized Intelligence, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation)

There is one more string Tokuchi pulls to set his plan in motion. Just before the Lycaons have their first match against the Mariners, he's in the audience part of the arena, calling out to the Mariners' new pitcher Kawanaka. Kawanaka responds by calling Tokuchi out on his supposedly bullshit lip-reading skills, but Tokuchi proves him wrong by lip-reading him. After this, just as Kawanaka starts walking away, Tokuchi lands the final nail in the coffin for his big plan. He calls out to Kawanaka about something he saw Brooklyn say, via lip-reading, that he hasn't revealed to the reporters yet. Apparently, Brooklyn thinks that the new players of the team are just nuisances that the Mariners don't actually need.

This gets to Kawanaka, who approaches Brooklyn to ask him if he really said what the newspapers claimed he said about the Lycaons, to which Brooklyn affirms, not that he actually said it, but that he does think the Lycaons are trash. This seems to build up some suspicion in Kawanaka. Here Brooklyn is saying exactly what Tokuchi claimed he said. With this, it looks like Kawanaka is starting to have some doubts in regards to the team he's been sent to. This is what Tokuchi really had in mind when he first claimed that Brooklyn was talking trash about the Lycaons, to make the Mariners' players doubt each other. This is only the start of it.

(Tactics, Long-Term Planning, Verbal Deception)

Baseball Match vs. the new Mariners, Game 1 (Ch. 138-142)

The first strategy Tokuchi employs in the actual match involves the pitcher Takahashi. As Takahashi first comes up to the mound, he looks at the Mariners' bench and is intimidated by all the strong players gathered there. As a result, he freaks out when pitching, resulting in too many balls being thrown instead of strikes. As this keeps happening, Tokuchi eventually informs him of his current tally as a result of his throws. Currently, he's lost 5

million yen. As a result, he in his mind reasons that, since he's going to get hit anyway, he might as well pitch just to get that 5 million yen loss away and not focus on anything else.

But this has a surprising effect. Suddenly, Takahashi starts pitching much better than he did before. Whereas he previously either threw balls or hittable pitches, pretty much none of the remaining batters can hit him as he is now, effectively halting the Mariners' progress in the match. And when his "shift" as a pitcher is over after the 2nd inning, he admits that he didn't even think about the batters he was facing at that time.

All this went according to Tokuchi's strategy. The day before, he had intentionally told the team to go and lose and set up the rule about only pitching strikes beforehand so that this could happen. Because this way, once Takahashi saw that his ball throws were costing him money, Takahashi realizes that the only thing he actually has to worry about is that money penalty, and as such, all his focus shifts to reversing that penalty. This is important, because as Tokuchi later describes, when Takahashi does this, he's clearing his mind off everything else. As a result, his "mental cap", in this case the stress he felt from the Mariners as previously described, comes off, allowing him to throw stronger pitches. The other of the Lycaons' pitchers would realize the exact same thing Takahashi did.

(Strategy, Emotional Facilitation, Psychology)

There's one more thing Tokuchi did in this match that was notable, and that is creating discord in the Mariners. Let's start off with some background first. The thing about the Mariners, as explained by Tokuchi, is that they pride themselves on their batters while not really caring about their pitchers. As a result, there already was some conflict in that team between the batters and the pitchers. And now, there's also the fact that the Mariners have acquired some new players as well, which they just see as position-stealing interlopers in a team that didn't need them in the first place. That's another potential inner conflict.

Tokuchi understood what the Mariners were going through and took advantage of it. This was done via a "lynchpin that would drive the fissure wider and wider". That "lynchpin" was Brooklyn's supposed statements Tokuchi claimed to be able to obtain by lip-reading him. Those claims were in fact lies. But it doesn't really matter if that lie eventually gets exposed or not, because for example, even if Brooklyn denied trash-talking their new players, could someone like Kawanaka really believe him? The point is, there was already tension in the Mariners, and Tokuchi's claims only helped intensify the animosity between the Mariner players.

The effects of this are clear. For example, when the Mariners discussed amongst themselves why the Lycaons' pitches suddenly became so hard to hit, Brooklyn reiterates that the Lycaons are garbage, to which Kawanaka very angrily retorts that Brooklyn should first try getting 10 or 20 hits before saying stuff like that. Amami explains to the Mariners that it's because Kawanaka is a perfectionist type of player that he's so mad, but we find out that his anger was also fueled by his negative perception of the Mariners in general, which Tokuchi helped shape.

Another example involves Kawanaka again. As the match was about to come to an end in the 9th inning, his frustration over what Tokuchi told him just before the match started caused him to seriously mess up his pitch for the first time in this match – and it was no less a pitch to Kojima of all batters. As a result of this, Kojima hit it and got a home run. And just after that, the Mariners' pitching coach came up to Kawanaka just to tell him to put some spirit into his pitches next time. This pisses off Kawanaka even more, since he pitched almost perfectly before this. He gets so mad he claims something's wrong with his shoulder just so he can get off the mound. He was not in the mood to play anymore.

(Mass Manipulation, Gaslighting, Emotional Understanding)

After that incident, the score becomes 5-1 with the Mariners in the lead. Due to Kawanaka's withdrawal from the mound, the Mariners' coach places another pitcher on the mound. And because of this, the Lycaons start thinking they might actually have a chance to win this. They start having the same thought process as they had in previous matches, namely that if the team was going to win, it was going to be because of themselves. And due to that focus, their mental caps came off too and they started going ballistic on the current Mariners' pitcher, pushing their score so that the game became tied.

Eventually, the game reaches the bottom of the 9th inning, with the Mariners on attack. It is here where Tokuchi takes the mound. But this results in an even bigger problem for the Mariners than expected. Since all of the Lycaons' previous pitchers were throwing at their full power, the Mariners became used to trying to hit those high-speed pitches. So now that the soft pitcher Tokuchi comes up, the Mariners are in a tough spot. You could say that it's the same principle Tokuchi used to bring out Muruwaka's full potential, as in the Mariners' batters will now always be just a tad too early when hitting Tokuchi's pitches. And that's exactly what happens.

(Psychological Manipulation, Setting Traps)

Baseball Match vs. the new Mariners, Game 2 (Ch. 143-144)

Before this game begins, Tokuchi is informed that the Mariners' starting pitcher for this match will be Yoshida, whose most notorious trait is his ability to throw underhand pitches, apparently the best in the world.



The Lycaons, upon finding this out, falter a little, but Tokuchi reassures them by saying that Yoshida isn't a problem for the current Lycaons, and walks out of the meeting room. But just before he does so, he announces that he will give 10 million yen to whichever batter takes a dead ball to the back. Not that they should just focus on getting a dead ball, but try getting one if you find that it's possible.

The reason for this becomes clearer during the game. The reason Tokuchi told them this is as a way to handle Yoshida's pitches. As Tokuchi explains, due to the nature of Yoshida's pitches, opponents naturally become wary of them. The effect of this is that, when Yoshida throws an underhand pitch, the opponent, when trying to discern the ball's path, unconsciously confronts it, making their shoulders open up and their hitting ability to weaken. On the other hand, left-handed batters don't have this problem due to Yoshida throwing diagonally from his right hand. However, their problem is, due to the ball's trajectory, it creates an illusion of coming straight at the batter. The batter thus flinches and can't step in properly, leading to poor hits.

The solution to this problem is, as stated before, telling the players they'll be rewarded for taking a dead ball. This causes the players to unconsciously create a wall with their shoulders in anticipation of the dead ball and thereby preventing them from opening up, allowing the batters to hit at their normal power. The plan is a success, as the Lycaons suddenly start gaining points en masse until they change the match score from 5-0 for the Mariners to 5-5. One of those hitters, who got a home run, was Kondou, who in the last year only managed to hit the ball four times and never get a single home run from any of those hits.

However, Tokuchi's offer has an additional effect on the batters. Now that the batters can hit Yoshida's pitches, their confidence is boosted. That right there is what held the Lycaons back the most when facing off against Yoshida. There's a reason Tokuchi didn't tell them directly about the problem with their shoulders whenever Yoshida threw a pitch. That's because what Tokuchi wanted to do was instill in the batters the thought that Yoshida really isn't a big deal, just like Tokuchi told them. And the more relentless a match is, the more that confidence will turn to strength.

(Strategy, Psychology, Psychological Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Positive Manipulation, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation)

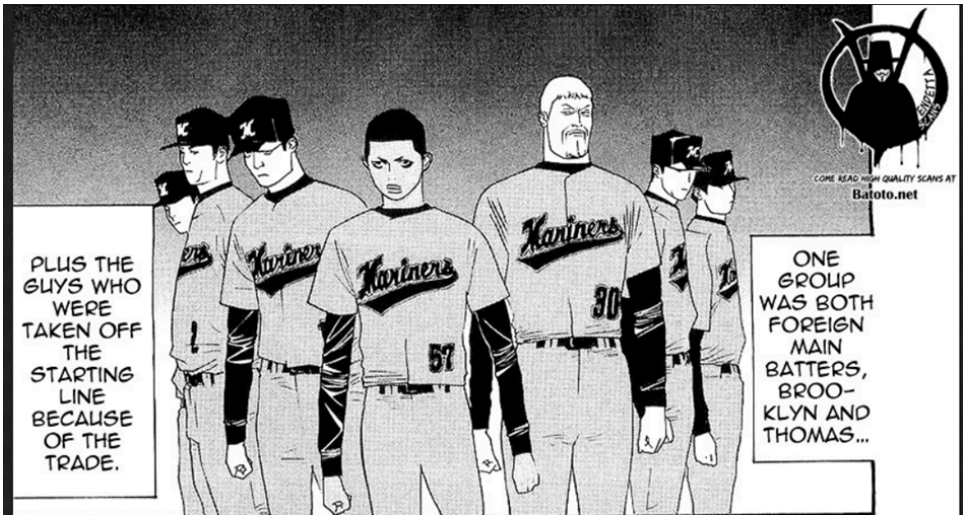
Baseball Match vs. the new Mariners, Game 3 (Ch. 145-147)

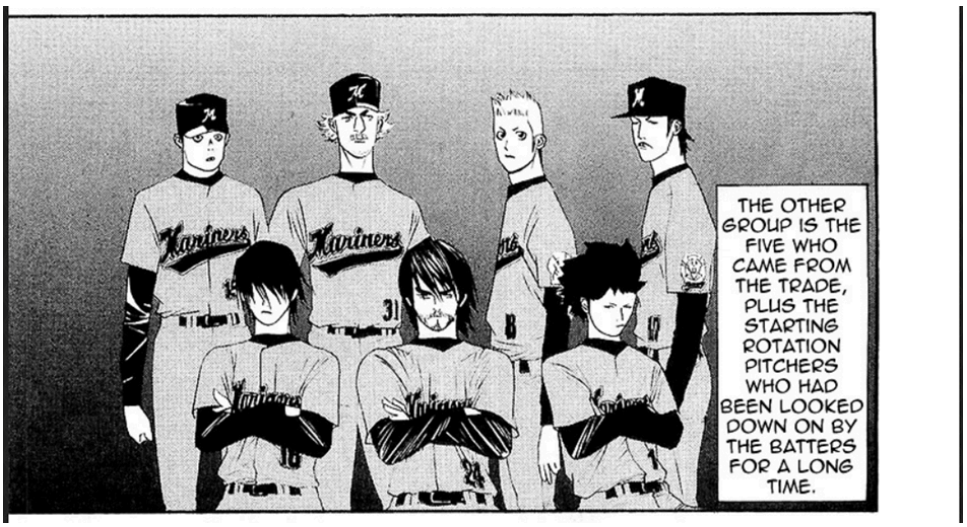
For this match, Tokuchi's goal wasn't just to win against the Mariners but to leave some long-term damage on that team as well. The first step was made in a press conference he held just before this match, in which he claimed that he through lip-reading caught Amami saying that Tokuchi was a terrible pitcher and that if any of the Mariners' batters can't hit his pitches, they should just quit as a professional. This makes it onto the newspapers, and leads to Brooklyn getting extremely pissed at Amami at their bench as the match is starting, not knowing Tokuchi made all that up.

Tokuchi catches wind of this from his own bench and figures out what he has to do next to further widen that fissure in the Mariners. Tokuchi is the starting pitcher in this match. Whenever Amami shows up to bat, Tokuchi intentionally throws a weaker pitch so that Amami can get on base. Then, when Brooklyn shows up to bat, since Tokuchi watched him and Amami fight, he can reasonably expect that Brooklyn will try to one-up Amami here by aiming for a home-run from the get go. So Tokuchi responds by first throwing pitches to get the strike count to 1-3. Like this, Brooklyn will realize that the next pitch has to be in the strikezone so that he doesn't get walked. So he prepares for that next pitch.

But the pitch Tokuchi throws is a low-spinning ball that sinks from the middle altitude as it approaches the batter. This, combined with Brooklyn's desperate attempt at hitting a home-run, which leads to him forcefully exerting his strength causing his swinging speed to drop and his upper swing to become terrible, ultimately ends in Brooklyn hitting the ball off the end of the bat each time instead. And with the ball stuck in the infield, the catchers end up easily getting a double play against the Mariners.

All this happens each time Amami and Brooklyn go up to bat, which serves to further cripple not only the relations between Brooklyn and Amami, but the team members' relations with each other as well. After all, the conflict isn't just between Amami and Brooklyn. As previously stated, the whole team is divided. One could say the team is divided into two "factions":





So Tokuchi's claims about Amami didn't just affect Brooklyn, they affected the whole team. Examples of this are Kira, one of the Mariners' pitchers, yelling furiously at Brooklyn after he got three double plays, and Kira again yelling at the Mariners' batters for not being able to hit Tokuchi's pitches, essentially nullifying his own excellent performance. Eventually, the Mariner players would even start booing at each other whenever a player made a mistake, perhaps further deepening the wound the team has right now.

As a result of all this, the Mariners lost the game 2-0, and it's revealed that the team even broke out into a fight after the match. Not only that, but the team's performance in later matches would be affected as well. In their next two three-match series, the Lycaons won all three games in each series, while the Mariners failed to do so in either of their next two series. At worst, they ended up with 1 win, 1 loss and 1 tie in a series. As such, the game difference between the Mariners and Lycaons in this league continues to shrink. Tokuchi's plan to create a civil war in the Mariners was a success.

(Tactics, Long-Term Planning, Setting Traps, Observation, Anticipation, Emotional Understanding, Mass Manipulation, Gaslighting)

Second Baseball Match vs. the new Mariners, Game 1 (Ch. 153-157)

By this point, the Mariners had discovered how to counter Tokuchi's pitches. The explanation is quite long, but basically has to do with assuming the buster stance whenever Tokuchi is pitching. However, while all the Mariner players trained to be able to counter his pitches using a machine that simulates Tokuchi's pitches, only three had made significant improvements at this point: Kitaooji, Amami and Takami.



So when this game started, Tokuchi realized that the Mariner's, adopting their new stances, were landing a few more hits than usual when he was pitching, and quickly caught on to what they were doing. But he also quickly came up with a way to respond to their new strategy.

What Tokuchi does is that, when batter number 3, Kitaooji, comes up to bat in the 3rd inning, Tokuchi walks him. This is followed by walking Amami and Takami as well, making the bases loaded. The next one to bat is Brooklyn. But before he can hit, Tokuchi says to him that the reason he walked the previous three batters is because they're the only ones he sensed any danger from and that Brooklyn and the other batters are still nothing to him. Takami calls him out on this, but Tokuchi twists his words to suggest that Takami also thinks Brooklyn is trash. This gets Brooklyn to frustratingly leave the field after being struck out, even after Takami tried reassuring him that what Tokuchi said isn't true.

But Brooklyn isn't the only one that was hit by Tokuchi's words. In fact, it hit everyone who wasn't among the top three players of the Mariners. Why? To summarize, despite the fact the current Mariners are a team consisting entirely of elite players, some players will still play better than others. As such, some of those elite players start having a feeling of inferiority which they've never experienced before, and because of that, it's natural to assume they wouldn't accept this difference in power between themselves and the Mariners' aces. What all this leads to is that the performance of these players falter during the match, both when attacking and defending.

Ultimately, the Mariners lost this match 3-0. The following match was another loss for them. And the match after that resulted in them barely winning, and that's only because Kawanaka was pitching. The impact Tokuchi's words had on the players didn't stop after those matches either. Afterwards, everyone was just too down. The players felt humiliated and no one bothered practicing with the Tokuchi machine anymore since it didn't seem like

it was helping…except for Brooklyn. The effects of that will be seen in the Mariners' next match against the Lycaons.

(Adaptability, Quick Thinking, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Humiliation, Mass Manipulation)

Tokuchi's "scariest move" (Ch. 158-159, 163-167)

After the previous three matches, Tokuchi understood that the Mariners' battle against him wasn't gonna end yet. Eventually, more of the Mariners' players would adapt to his pitches which would render his previous strategy useless. But Tokuchi prepared for this. To summarize, in the next match against the Mariners where Tokuchi is the starting pitcher, and also in the first match of the final showdown, Tokuchi intentionally manipulated his pitches so they'd be:

1. Inside high or outside low pitches, pitches that are notoriously difficult to hit. If one gets used to them, they'll no longer be used to pitches down the middle, for example.

2. Ease up on the spin of the ball making it slightly easier to hit.

This way, it would look to the Mariners like their strategy of assuming a buster stance was a massive success. In both of the mentioned matches, the Mariners would finish with an overwhelming victory against the Lycaons. Especially so in the first match of the finals, where they'd win with a record-breaking score of 36-1.

The idea was to distort the forms of the Mariners' batters without them noticing it. As described in the manga, for each of the Mariners' batters, Tokuchi only threw inside high or outside low pitches. He never threw pitches down the middle of the strikezone, a spot that allows the batters to hit with the ideal batting form. Tokuchi's strategy was especially effective since the Mariners owning a genius like Tokuchi would instill the feeling of intense success. Because of this, they've subconsciously conditioned themselves to continue hitting with the buster stance to keep that success going. As a result, the batting form they've built for years goes lost, and they will not be able to recover it quickly.

Because of this, the second, third and fourth match ended up being disasters for the Mariners. What's worse is that, for the final match, the Mariners were going to have Kawanaka as a starting pitcher, but Kawanaka had declined to participate here. The reason is because of something Tanabe introduced at the end of the league, namely that players who could attain certain titles would be rewarded. One of those titles was "Pitcher with lowest defense percentage". Up until the match where the Mariners beat the Lycaons 36-1, Tokuchi was the player with that title. But afterwards, due to Tokuchi's (intentionally) poor performance that time, his defense percentage had dropped to second place, allowing Kawanaka to take first. As said in the series, it's easy to raise your defense percentage, but not to lower it. As such, Kawanaka didn't want to take the risk of increasing it and dropped out of participating in the final league match.

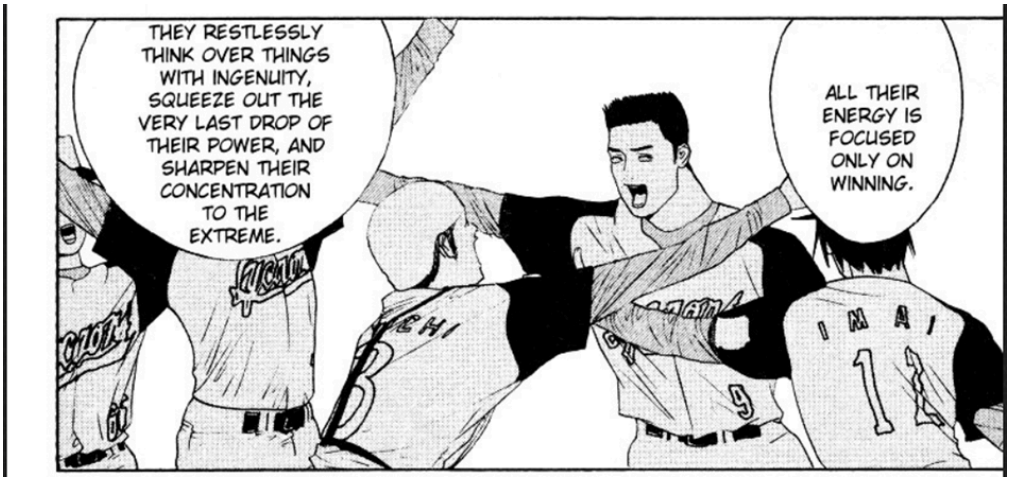
This is important because it's revealed that Tokuchi, on top of ruining the Mariners' batting forms, also intentionally lost in the previous match so that Kawanaka would think that the fifth game of the finals wouldn't be worth taking part in, giving the Lycaons an advantage for that match. Now, as it turns out, Kawanaka assumed the worst and changed his mind about pitching for the Mariners one more time. But it turns out that that decision didn't really matter all that much in the end.

(Short-Term Strategy, Setting Traps, Strategic Deception, Psychological Manipulation, Logical Manipulation)

The final match (Ch. 168)

In the very final match of the series, despite Kawanaka returning and pitching for the entire game, the Lycaons were still the ones that won. There's two reasons for how it ended up like this. The first is that the minds of the Lycaons were blank while playing, while the minds of other teams weren't.

As Amami explains, and as we've seen in the series too, Tokuchi taught the Lycaons players through various methods to remove all distractions from their mind so that they can focus on winning.



Meanwhile, the other teams didn't get that luxury. Even as pros, they're still distracted by things like money, fame or their fate as players while playing. But most of all, in recent times, they've gotten distracted by Tokuchi himself.



Amami realized after having finally lost what the biggest trap that Tokuchi ever laid on them was. And that was the very fact that he remained in the baseball world and drew so much of everyone's attention on him, which he could then exploit.

And with that, and everything else Tokuchi has done up 'til this point, Tokuchi finally fulfilled his promise to Kojima to turn the bottom-of-the-barrel Lycaons into a super-team that would get the championship victory they've always been longing for.

(Leadership, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation)

Bonus Volume Feats (Ch. 170-175)

Chap. 170: Tokuchi freaks Nishina out with his smile when Nishina is up to bat against Tokuchi.

(Intimidation)

Chap. 171: Tokuchi figures out that, in the two coming All-Star games, he will only be put on the mound at the very end of the second game. He likely first came to this conclusion after Nishina asked the All-Stars' coach, which is also the Mariners' coach, Imawano, when Tokuchi will pitch, to which Imawano noticeably takes time to answer and is even sweating a little. On top of this, he's a coach of an enemy team, the Mariners. Tokuchi's conclusion would make sense because, first of all, it would pull the interest of viewers who want to know when Tokuchi pitches, thereby increasing viewership and bringing the higher-ups more money.

On top of this, having Tokuchi pitch at the end while at the same time telling him it's uncertain when he'll pitch, would make Tokuchi mentally exhausted in the process of

eagerly waiting for his turn to pitch, diminishing his pitching abilities when it's finally time. This would be convenient for Imawano, since the teams were still fighting in the pennant race at this time. This is the reasoning Tokuchi presents, which is the exact reasoning given by Tanabe when he told Imawano to delay having Tokuchi on the mound.

(Observation, Critical Thinking, Abductive Reasoning)

Chap. 171: When the first game starts, the P-League is on attack, while the pitcher is Kyouichi Kagawa. For the first pitch of this game, Tokuchi makes use of the fact that the All-Star team was made with players from different baseball teams. The first player at-bat is the Lycaons' Inomachi. Before he's about to bat, Tokuchi tells him to do a surprise safety bunt for the first pitch. He does so and successfully gets on first base.

This is because, since this is the first game where players from different teams are made to play together, in the defenders' case, there won't be a mutual understanding between the defenders in the same way as in a normal baseball team. What's especially bad in this case is that, in the infield, Kagawa isn't from any of the teams the other infield defenders are from, making him in a way completely isolated. As a result of all this, they get caught off-guard when Inomachi bunts and successfully reaches first base.

The P-League now having a runner on first base is a problem for Kagawa, especially since he's originally a wind-up pitcher. Without the proper warm-up, he can't switch to the set position. And since the game's already started, it's too late for that. The set position is a position that takes less time to pitch and is thus useful for if a runner tries to steal a base. So now, while the next batter is at-bat, Inomachi attempts to steal a base and succeeds.

These two consecutive failures result in Kagawa's rhythm getting messed up, resulting in him getting showered with hits from the other batters before eventually having to leave the mound. And because of that, the other pitchers the S-League planned to use were assigned to the mound faster than planned, and because of things no longer going as the S-League pitchers expected, their pitching became imperfect and were obliterated by the P-League. Ultimately, the P-League won 11-4, all thanks to the few steps that Tokuchi took in the beginning of the match.

(Strategy, Social Awareness, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation)

Chap. 173: During the 6th inning of the second match, the P-League's coach puts Tokuchi on the mound and has Nishina as catcher. In this match, Tokuchi intends to set a record where he strikes out 10 batters in a row. However, Nishina plans to sabotage Tokuchi's attempt at that record as a result of getting blackmailed by another guy.

Nishina does this by first reaching out to Tokuchi and informing him of the S-League batters' strengths and weaknesses and where Tokuchi should pitch as a result. He can do this because he himself was a former S-League player. However, it seems that from the very first moment, Tokuchi caught on to Nishina's plan to ruin his record, likely because Nishina attempted to help him despite Tokuchi's insistence he can decide for himself

where to pitch. But Tokuchi decided to go with his advice for now in order to find out more about what exactly Nishina intends to do.

So for the first few batters, Tokuchi does exactly as Nishina instructs, which works wonders, as he gets the batters out. That's because Nishina started off with giving Tokuchi real instructions in order to gain his trust. This continued until the next batter to bat was Wakamatsu, an old friend of Nishina's. Nishina and Wakamatsu had agreed beforehand that Nishina would whisper to Wakamatsu as he was about to bat where he instructed Tokuchi to pitch so that Wakamatsu could hit the ball at that spot.

But Tokuchi of course saw through Wakamatsu's intentions and reacted accordingly by managing to throw the ball a little off the planned-on course. As a result, Wakamatsu couldn't get a clean hit, but still got to first base. With this, he knew what Nishina was really trying to do. So he calls timeout, goes up to Nishina and, with a devilish stare, threatens to beat him up if he gets in Tokuchi's way again. This is enough to scare Nishina away from trying anything again. Nishina would eventually go on to apologize to Tokuchi for what he did earlier and would no longer try to trap him.

(Critical Thinking, Trap Evasion, Observation, Information Gathering, Threats)

Chap. 174: Tokuchi read the minds of one of the S-League's batters who thought about how they would be the ones to end Tokuchi's record. He uses this to explain why he doesn't see the S-League team as a threat. It's because the team is now too focused on just stopping Tokuchi's record despite the fact they're only behind by two points.

(Observation, Cold Reading, Social Awareness)

Chap. 174-175: The game has by this point reached its 7th inning. The next batter that's up to bat after Wakamatsu is one of the most powerful hitters of the S-League, Enomoto. Despite that, Tokuchi's first pitch results in a strike. And Tokuchi uses that strike to mock him in order to get him riled up for his next pitches, which of course serves to ruin Enomoto's concentration as a batter. Ultimately, Enomoto gets struck out. This will have an effect later.

(Setting Traps, Provocation)

Tokuchi continues to strike out each and every batter that comes up to him, until eventually his streak reaches 8 batters in the 9th inning. However, if Tokuchi struck out the next batter the usual way, his streak would reach 9 batters, but due to having already struck out 3 batters in that inning, the team would have to switch sides. So what Tokuchi does for this next batter, Wakamatsu, is that he raises the strikecount to 2-0, then, for the third pitch, pitches the ball a little lower than usual. Wakamatsu tries to hit it but misses, but the catcher also fails to catch it, resulting in an uncaught third strike. This basically means that Wakamatsu can try taking first base. In this instance, the ball flew past Nishina, meaning that he has to run back to take it, giving Wakamatsu plenty of time to take first base.

Yet Wakamatsu stops just short of reaching first base. This is because he realized that, according to baseball rules, if he in this case takes first base, it will still be counted as a strikeout, but won't be counted for the out counter. This means that, in one inning, more than three strikeouts are possible, so Tokuchi can still strike out 10 batters in a row as he planned. This is exactly what Tokuchi was planning with his last pitch.

The batter after Wakamatsu, Enomoto, urges him to take the base anyway, ensuring Wakamatsu that he'll hit a home-run off of Tokuchi that will break his momentum and turn the game around for the S-League. Wakamatsu is convinced by Enomoto's words, and takes first base, so Tokuchi now has 9 consecutive strikeouts, with the possibility to make that 10 and Enomoto as the current batter.

(Strategy, Knowledge)

This time, in order to get Enomoto out, Tokuchi first pitches easier balls that Enomoto can hit. But each hit ends up being a foul, albeit way out into the distance, close to being a home-run. Next, he throws three pitches that end up being balls to make it appear like he's feeling cornered. Like this, Enomoto would unconsciously get too excited about getting a home-run against Tokuchi and shattering his record attempt.

Tokuchi could guess that he'd get excited because of his previous proclamation that he'd get a home-run off Tokuchi and end his record attempt. And so, he could also guess that Enomoto's plan would be to either make Tokuchi's throw a foul if it was a ball, or hit it into the stands if it was a pitch. So for his final pitch, he threw a ball just off the corner of the inside high part of the strikezone. It would have been a ball if Enomoto allowed it to pass yet he instead decided to hit it and make it a foul, assuming a stiff stance. But the ball would start to sink as it approached the batter, ultimately causing Enomoto, due to his stance, to miss it, ending the game with the P-League as the winners and with Tokuchi as the new record-holder for the most number of batters consecutively struck out.

(Anticipation, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Manipulation, Setting Traps)

However, Tokuchi's plan didn't stop here. The real reason he set out to break that record was in preparation for the Lycaons' win in the Japan Series. Because of him being the new record holder, the Gallarians would've, in preparation for the Japan Series, wanted to study Tokuchi's data in order to find out a way to beat him. They focused on Tokuchi especially because, as this was when the P-League pennant race was still ongoing, it wasn't obvious whether the Mariners or the Lycaons would end up winning and continue to the Japan Series. So they would've had to study both teams simultaneously to be able to prepare for both of them, which Enomoto admitted would be really hard to do. And so, they put all their focus on Tokuchi instead.

In the end, these guys did come up with a plan for how to handle Tokuchi, but it was for naught, because Tokuchi wouldn't show up in the Series at all, making the Gallarians' studies completely worthless, leading to the Lycaons winning the Japan Series and Tokuchi

finally succeeding in turning the Lycaons from a team of nobodies at the bottom of the P-League all the way to the number one baseball team in Japan.

(Long-Term Planning, Setting Traps, Deception)

Afterword

If you actually made it to the end, thank you so much for reading! This doc took so long to make partly cause other things got in the way, but mostly cause I made the dumb decision to work on it alone 🤦. So I think it has a lot of room for improvement and because of that, any feedback would be much appreciated!

hopefully tokuchi doesn't stay a PJ victim after this 😭