

Japan tops Korea in 10 innings to win World Baseball Classic

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By Lucy Nicholson, Reuters

By David Leon Moore, USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES — It involved teams from halfway around the world.

Playing baseball.

And it was a classic.

The World Baseball Classic, indeed.

South Korea, behind for most of the game and trailing by a run in the bottom of the ninth inning, rallied to tie the score against rising Japanese pitching star Yu Darvish.

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Team Japan's Seishiro Uchikawa, left, and Akinori Iwamura celebrate after scoring on Ichiro Suzuki's base hit against Team Korea in the tenth inning of their World Baseball Classic championship game in Los Angeles.

Then, in the 10th, the biggest star in the game — Japan's [Ichiro Suzuki](#), the incomparable Seattle Mariners hitting machine — delivered his fourth hit of the game, a two-out, two-run single, to propel Japan to a dramatic 5-3 win.

So the Land of the Rising Sun again rose to the top of the baseball world, successfully defending the title it won in the

inaugural WBC three years ago.

The taut defensive game was well-played and well-pitched, with several defensive gems and only four extra-base hits — one of them a home run by Korea outfielder [Shin-Soo Choo](#), who hit 14 homers for the Cleveland Indians in 2008.

Japan right-hander Hisashi Iwakuma, 27, MVP of his country's Pacific League with 21 wins last season, was mostly stellar through 7½ innings, allowing only two runs and four hits.

The largely Asian-American crowd of 54,846 was the largest in WBC history. There were more Korean fans than Japanese, and they made noise nearly constantly, banging drums and thunder sticks.

The place went bonkers when Korea, outscored 1-0 and out-hit 6-1 through the first 4½ innings, led off the bottom of the fifth with a line-drive home run over the center-field fence by Choo, the only major leaguer on the team's roster.

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