

I was just talking to Moriguchi-san about the heat this summer. I was surprised to hear that this seems cooler than normal to her! Especially after last weekend, I'm already thinking back longingly to the days of winter and it's not even July yet. I think that my American body must be accustomed to lower temperatures and humidity—I just need cooler weather to survive!

Last week, a teacher approached me in the hallway to ask if I knew how to play softball. I hesitated, because I have never been very good at sports, and even though I did play for four years in grade school, I didn't want to make it sound like I had any actual skills. I told him that yes, I knew how to play, and before I knew it, I was part of the teachers' softball team for last weekend's tournament. As with most things I take on in Japan, I didn't know exactly what I was getting myself into—but I knew what time to be at practice and that was all that really mattered.

When I went to practice with the other ALT at my school, it all came back to me. Memories of all my years standing around in the outfield, waiting for a ball to come my way and then getting so nervous when one did come that I dropped it. I didn't have very high expectations for myself, especially after my recent embarrassments at tennis practice, but I was still looking forward to a fun time. After a little warming up and throwing the ball around, we started to practice and I was put at second base! I was a little bit nervous, but I didn't think the teachers expected much from me so I just decided to try my best and have fun. As it turns out, I'm not too bad at softball after all! Maybe all those years of practice paid off in the long run.

The game on Saturday was so hot, I almost can't believe that I survived. Even though I was really dragging by the end of the game, our team had a good game (except for the fact that we lost). It was a blessing in disguise that we didn't advance in the tournament because I don't think I could have made it through another game in the heat. It was a really fun time to talk and spend time with teachers outside of school. Everyone seemed pretty shocked that I could hold my own at second base, which I think is funny. Maybe they've seen me play tennis and they thought I would strike out.

I was surprised that I did well, too, and I still don't really know how it happened. Maybe when I was younger I was still embarrassed about being bad at sports and got too nervous to play well. Because I'm a foreigner in Japan and I stand out everywhere I go, I have gotten used to people looking at me and learned not to get embarrassed so easily. Could this have helped me play softball more seamlessly? I don't know. Hopefully my good work at softball will mean that I can hit the ball more easily at tennis practice after the exams. That, or I will just have to look forward to the next softball game. I hope everyone is handling the heat better than I am! I'll see you next Wednesday.

