



# Baseball icon Ichiro Suzuki retires

March 22, 2019



Ichiro Suzuki, the most prolific hitter in baseball history and an icon on both sides of the Pacific, retires as his fellow Seattle Mariners wept, bowed and hugged him in a Tokyo stadium rocking with cheers.

Ichiro Suzuki, the most prolific hitter in baseball history, is retiring.

On Thursday (March 21) the 45-year-old was sent off by a Tokyo stadium rocking with cheers. He was playing for the Seattle Mariners against the Oakland Athletics in the second game of the Major League Baseball opening series in Japan.

The Mariners won 5-4 after three extra innings.

Ichiro spoke to reporters on Friday (March 22).

SEATTLE MARINERS BASEBALL PLAYER, ICHIRO SUZUKI, SAYING:

"After this game, 9 years in Japan, 19 years in America, I will put an end to my career and announce my retirement. I am happy to be able to wear a Mariners jersey and retire."

Ichiro has over three thousand hits in the U.S. major leagues and over 1,200 in Nippon Professional Baseball.

His record at 4,367 hits is the highest ever at the top professional level.

SEATTLE MARINERS BASEBALL PLAYER, ICHIRO SUZUKI, SAYING:

"American fans were very critical at first.

During my first spring training in 2001, fans would tell me "Go back to Japan".

But, putting up results, they started to act differently.

I realized that when you perform and deliver results, they will respect me.

That made a huge impact."

Ichiro swept the American League in his first year, winning MVP.

He played the majority of his career for the Seattle Mariners and also had late-career stretches with the New York Yankees and Miami Marlins.

He's expected to continue work with the Mariners.

He became a 'special assistant to the chairman' last year.