

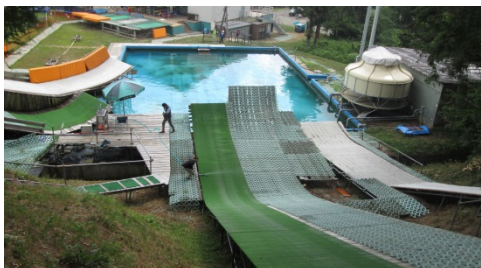
▲Mr. Takaku soaring into the air

Fukushima Mogulist News

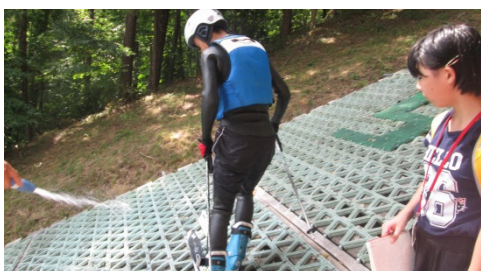
About mogul skiing

Mogul skiing is a freestyle ski event in which contestants are scored on technical turns, aerial maneuvers, and speed, for a total of 100 points. The event gained popularity in Japan when the mogulist Ms. Satoya won the gold medal in the Nagano Winter Olympics.

Going for the gold!



①The jump ramp is approximately five meters high.



②The skier is getting on the ramp now. The tension is palpable.



③From the steep ramp, the skier flies high into the air to perform aerials.



④Using complicated moves, the skier completes a total of 1080 degrees rotation.



⑤The skier lands in the pool with a big splash.



⑥Swimming with skis on requires skill.

Summer training sessions of Team Listel

Hotel Listel Inawashiro is a resort facility commanding a panoramic view of Lake Inawashiro. On July 31, we visited the hotel to interview the mogulists Mr. Keisuke Takaku (17) and Ms. Jyuri Miyamoto (17), who belong to Team Listel. It was an extremely hot day, and there were a lot of people using the hotel's swimming pool. In a sectioned-off area behind the main pool, the skiers were in the midst of their summer training session, which consisted of water jumps and practice on the trampoline. The water jump is a training method in which skiers, wearing ski gear, glide down a specially-made slide into a pool. Both skiers are training hard and have their eyes on winning a gold medal in the winter Olympics and other international competitions.

(Yokoyama, Sato, photos: Suzuki)



▲Mr. Takaku (left) and Ms. Miyamoto in the midst of training. They perform 30 to 50 water jumps a day.

Inspired by the mogulist Ms. Uemura

We talked to the two skiers after they finished training.

Ms. Miyamoto is a resident of Tokai Village, Ibaraki Prefecture. In response to our question as to why she started moguls skiing even though there is almost no snow in Ibaraki, she said, "When I was six years old, I saw the impressive performance of the mo-

gulist Ms. Aiko Uemura by chance when my mother switched on the TV one day. I was captivated and became a fan of the sport. I was convinced that I wanted to do it myself and asked my parents to help me start." Her enthusiasm is such that her mother drives her all the way from Ibaraki to Hotel Listel for practice.

Mr. Takaku, who is a resident of Inawashiro Town, was influenced by his parents' love for skiing and started mogul skiing when he was a fourth-grade elementary student. "When I first encountered mogul skiing, I thought it was a really cool sport. What I find most exhilarating is the sense of accomplishment after mastering a new stunt." (Kamiya)

Aiming for the world stage

Both skiers have impressive records - Mr. Takaku won first prize at the Tokyo Tournament held on the ski slopes of Hotel Listel; Ms. Miyamoto come in third at the Junior Olympics.

Their goal for the future is to do well at international level. Both hope to compete in the 2022 and 2026 Winter Olympics.

Ms. Miyamoto was leaving for a one-month trip to Australia the day following our interview to practice on

the snow. It was very kind of her to agree to the interview just one day before her departure. Mr. Takaku was getting ready for his entrance exam studies. According to their coach, Ms. Mayumi Arai, they are excellent students and diligent in their studies as well.

Play-by-play coverage of their training

Rotating 1080 degrees!

The water ramp used during the training is covered with hairbrush-like plastic. To further reduce friction, the surface is watered down regularly, and soap is applied to the bottom of the skis.

The skiers slide from a height of five meters. On reaching the kicker at the end of the in-run, they launch themselves high into the air, rotating 360 degrees on the horizontal axis and 720 degrees on the vertical axis, a total of 1080 degrees, before landing in the water with a big splash. To ensure skiers don't hit the bottom of the pool, the water is three meters deep. With their skis on, they cannot move their legs freely and have to use their hands to swim out of the pool. After each jump, still wearing their heavy ski suits,

they have to climb the steep stairs in the blistering heat to get ready for their next jump.

Even on extremely hot days, skiers perform anywhere from 30 to 50 jumps a day, with a total of 1500 to 2000 jumps each summer.

Before starting their water jumps, skiers train on the trampoline to practice their aerial skills.

We were told that the athlete's core strength is more important than their body size. Whenever they feel fearful and doubtful, the skiers said they take the jump by talking themselves into believing they can definitely pull it off.

The sight of the two athletes practicing in the summer heat in the grounds of a resort hotel has left a lasting impression on us. (Nakayama)

Reported by:



The five members of Group 5

Back row from the right

Hibiki Sato
(Wakamatsu Daisan Junior High 2nd grade)
Natsuki Kamiya
(Yotsukura Elementary 6th grade)
Yasuho Yokoyama
(Koriyama Xaverio Gakuen Elementary 6th grade)

Front row from the right

Suzumi Nakayama
(Inawashiro Elementary 5th grade)
Genta Suzuki
(Akai Elementary 6th grade)