

Two Oldest Turrets at Matsuyama Castle to Open to the Public in August

Ahead of the special public opening of the Nohara Turret and the Kakure-mon Tsuzuki-yagura (Hidden Gate Connecting Turret)—both designated as National Important Cultural Properties—at Matsuyama Castle, a group of about 20 people, including students from the Ehime University Faculty of Law and Letters and members of the Matsuyama Cultural Property Support Association, cleaned the interiors of the turrets on August 15th. They removed dust and learned about the structural details of these buildings, which are the oldest within the castle complex.

As part of the "Hospitality of Light in Matsuyama Castle 2026" event starting on July 24th, the interiors of turrets—normally closed to the public—will be specially opened on August 8th and 14th. Members of a support group will serve as guides, with university students also assisting. These two turrets, believed to be the original buildings, will be opened to visitors.

Participants split into two groups to begin cleaning. In the group assigned to the *Kakure-mon Tsuzuki-yagura* (Hidden Gate Connecting Turret), participants wiped away sweat as they removed dust from beams and window frames.

The turret features ingenious designs for both offense and defense; these include "*taiko-kabe*" (drum walls)—thickened walls packed with stones and roof tiles to enhance defensive strength—and *sama* (loopholes), which are small windows designed for firing bows and arrows or matchlock guns. The university students listened to explanations from the support group members and appeared impressed by the meticulous craftsmanship.

One student said, "I've visited Matsuyama Castle several times, but this was the first time I really focused on the architecture. It was great to gain a deeper understanding." (July 14, Ehime Shimbun)

Nagatomo Surprised his Alma Mater after the World Cup

The dream he held in Ehime took him to the world's highest stage as many as five times.

Yuto Nagatomo (39), who finished his record-breaking 5th World Cup for the Japan national team, returned to his hometown of Saijo, Ehime, and paid a

surprise visit to his alma mater, Jimpai Elementary School and Saijo Kita Junior High School, on July 13. Greeted by huge cheers from his juniors, he expressed his gratitude, saying, "Going back to Saijo gives me incredible energy, and makes me want to do my best again."

At Jimpai Elementary, with about 680 students gathered in the gymnasium, Nagatomo appeared from the back entrance with both arms spread wide. The students were thrilled, exclaiming, "Wow!" and "It's the real deal!" Nagatomo asked the children, "I remember practicing here every day dreaming of becoming a professional player. Does everyone have a dream?" He emphasized the word "dream" many times.

In front of about 550 students at Saijo Kita Junior High, he looked back and said, "When I said 'I'm aiming for my 5th' after the World Cup four years ago, everyone laughed at me. But I believed in myself, and was supported by many people, so I was able to stand on that stage for the fifth time."

Nogatomo made a substitute appearance in the first-round match against Sweden, achieving the feat of taking the pitch in five consecutive World Cups, the most by a Japanese player.

He described the World Cup as "There is no other stage in life that gets you this excited." Although his future plans are undecided, he stated, "I want to make a decision very soon." (July 14, Ehime Shimbun)

For Reference: At the 2026 World Cup, Japan advanced through the group stage with the Netherlands, Tunisia, and Sweden, but was defeated by Brazil in the first round of the knockout stage.

Please Cherish This Toy for a Long Time

A "Toy Hospital", where broken toys are repaired by volunteers, was held on July 5 at the recycle facility called "Rikkuru" in Matsuyama. Six "toy doctors," who are members of the Japan Toy Hospital Association accepted 26 items from parents and children, including remote-controlled cars, and worked up a sweat repairing them.

The event is held every month at the facility by the volunteer group. The "doctors" searched for the causes of malfunctions and made repairs using special tools, and testing electrical conductivity.

A 6-year-old first-grader, who brought a doll to play with in the bath, said with sparkling eyes, "It was fun watching them fix it. I want to float it in the bath and play with it."

The group is scheduled to hold another "Hospital" on August 30 at the hands-on facility, "Shimanami Wooden Toy Museum" in Ion Mall Imabari Shintoshin, Imabari City. (July 9, Ehime Shimbun)

Environmental Conservation Through Sports

Starting this season, the J3 soccer team Ehime FC and its supporters have been conducting cleanup activities to protect the marine environment. On match days, supporters pick up trash around the team's home ground—the Ehime Prefectural Sports Complex Ninjinia Stadium in Ueno-machi, Matsuyama City—working hard and taking the initiative with the hope that "the spirit of contributing to the community and conserving the environment will spread."

This initiative is part of "LEADS TO THE OCEAN (LTO)—A Project Connecting to the Sea," which aims to conserve the marine environment through sports (co-organized by the NPO Umi-Sakura and The Nippon Foundation).

The NPO is collaborating with professional sports teams nationwide to raise awareness of the fact that "about 80% of marine debris originates in cities and rivers". This marks the first such partnership with a J.League club in Shikoku

Since the activities began in late April, over a dozen supporters have participated each time, collecting trash from the stadium's perimeter and the stands.

The supporter group "Ehime Goal-Ura Net" has been conducting its own cleanup activities across the prefecture about six times a year since Ehime FC joined the J.League in 2006. Volunteers also carried out a cleanup in Matsuyama City in mid-June, during the off-season. The group's representative welcomes this new project, describing it as "a meaningful initiative that aligns with the activities we have been doing all along."

Supporters plan to continue cleaning the stadium during the new season, which begins in August. The group's first "call leader," expressed hope for the activity's expansion, saying, "I hope that the small desire to protect the beautiful Seto Inland Sea will grow into a massive wave of action." (July 1, Ehime Shinbun)