

All-Star MVP Ichiro Suzuki Heeds Dog's Advice

Seattle Mariners' Ichiro Suzuki says he looked to his dog for guidance during months-long contract negotiations.

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The Seattle Mariners have outfielder Ichiro Suzuki's dog to thank for the All-Star MVP signing a five-year contract extension with the team.

When a reporter asked whose opinion the star hitter valued most during the eight months of contract negotiations, Suzuki said through an interpreter, "Ikky, my dog."

Turns out the dog said "ruff, ruff, ruff," according to a smiling Suzuki during the press conference to announce the contract. "That means, 'Stay, stay, stay.'"

"Of course, I listened," Suzuki said.

The deal, valued at \$90 million including a \$5 million signing bonus, will mean the Mariners won't lose the star player to free agency at the end of this year's baseball season.

Suzuki is the first player in major league history with 200 hits in each of his first six seasons. He currently leads the MLB in hits for the 2007 season.

The Seattle Mariners won the bidding war to bring Suzuki to the U.S. before 2001. Suzuki's current contract pays the perennial Golden Glove winner \$11 million for the 2007 season.