

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

Welcome back to Elevator Ride, after a one-basho hiatus! I wish there was more to report, but all the movement is currently taking place on the active top 10 list instead of the all-time top 20 list. The only thing that could impact the all-time list for the foreseeable future would be the re-appearance of Hokutoriki. That almost happened this time, as the last two basho have been good for his elevator credentials. He moved 15 banzuke spots up in Aki and 14 spots back down in Kyushu; but with a change of direction only in Kyushu, he fell .03 points shy of tying #20 Kurama's Elevator Index (EI) of 8.90. And so he sits at #21 with 8.87.

The good news for our lead banzuke bouncer is that his 8-7 record in Kyushu will send him up the banzuke, resulting in the prized change of direction credit – the bad news being that it won't send him up very far. He'd have to move from his current M10e to M7w to get back on the list, so it could happen. I'm beginning to have doubts about his long-term elevator prospects though. Whether through nagging injuries or whatever, he no longer seems capable of going much higher on the banzuke than he already is, and if that continues, one abysmal basho could re-send him to juryo, which of course would again diminish his EI. The all-time top 20 list of elevator rikishi can be

found [here](#).

One of my predictions is slowly unfolding, and that is the emergence of Futeno as a budding elevator star. He seems to have all the tools necessary to be a perennial joi-jin, but lacks the 'it' factor, a boss-man attitude or whatever. And so he struggles every other basho when he gets even the slightest banzuke boost. As a matter of fact, it's been two years since he's failed to change direction on the banzuke. These are great implements for the elevator tool-kit, and I'm bullish on his prospects (I just hope he's not reading this...). He's now in 3rd place on the active list but will probably not overtake 2nd place Takekaze just yet, as they both take a 6-9 record into Hatsu, each with a change of direction.

Actually, for the Hatsu Basho, they both could be overtaken by 4th place Asasekiryu, who will take a dive as a result of his 3-12 collapse in Kyushu, but I don't think that will happen. Asasekiryu is a curious example of an elevator rikishi. He seems to have the well-rounded skill set to be consistent, and in fact does have many short runs of consistency. But that's the problem... he has many of them, which means they are interspersed with just as many runs of volatile results.

Two names that have disappeared

from the active top 10 list are Kaiho and Tokitsuumi. Kaiho, as you may (or may not!) recall, had already qualified for inclusion on the all-time list before he was injured several years ago and went down to juryo. So at that time, all those subsequent juryo appearances were ignored when calculating his EI. But now that he has spent two consecutive basho back in makuuchi, those juryo showings are included, which of course takes a large slice out of his EI. Tokitsuumi, of course, is now retired.

The current active top 10 list can be found [here](#).

The Rules governing the calculation of the Elevator Index are found [here](#). As a reminder, they are weighted toward recognizing makuuchi rikishi who compile big elevator numbers without going back and forth into juryo and below. They are also designed to allow someone to get 'settled' in makuuchi before calculating their data, and to allow a cameo appearance in makuuchi with no harm done after beginning a career wind-down in juryo and below.

That's the Elevator Ride for December; so now let's see what the Hatsu Banzuke does to our top dogs on the makuuchi elevator. See you in February, and happy holidays!

All-Time Top 20 Elevator Rikishi

	<u>RIKISHI</u>	<u>MOQ</u>	<u>AFQ</u>	<u>REI</u>	<u>LF</u>	<u>EI</u>	<u>MY</u>
1	Itai	11.58	0.8039	9.31	1.53	14.24	1987
2	Takanofuji	11.00	0.9355	10.29	1.33	13.69	1988
3	Kirinji	10.23	0.6867	7.02	1.85	12.99	1981
4	Daijuyama	9.91	0.7460	7.39	1.65	12.19	1986
5	Sadanoumi	10.61	0.7674	8.15	1.45	11.81	1984
6	Takamisugi	9.70	0.6812	6.61	1.71	11.30	1989
7	Jingaku	9.47	0.7955	7.53	1.46	10.99	1987
8	Ozutsu	8.19	0.7500	6.15	1.78	10.94	1985
9	Higonoumi	10.06	0.6863	6.90	1.53	10.56	1997
10	Daitetsu	10.13	0.7586	7.69	1.31	10.07	1986
11	Kyokushuzan	9.51	0.6500	6.18	1.62	10.01	2001
12	Kyokudozan	8.40	0.8043	6.76	1.48	10.00	1992
13	Tochiazuma (1)	8.34	0.7414	6.18	1.60	9.89	1972
14	Tochihikari (2)	8.52	0.7049	6.00	1.63	9.79	1979
15	Kasugafuji	8.88	0.7619	6.77	1.44	9.75	1992
16	Mainoumi	9.21	0.7368	6.78	1.40	9.50	1994
17	Koboyama	9.06	0.6875	6.23	1.50	9.34	1985
18	Kaiki	8.27	0.6615	5.47	1.67	9.14	1981
19	Kotofuji	10.00	0.6571	6.57	1.37	9.00	1991
20	Kurama	8.37	0.6610	5.53	1.61	8.90	1982

- (1) The sekiwake
 (2) aka Kaneshiro

Explanation of the Terms:

MOQ (Move On Quotient): Average number of banzuke spots (not numbered ranks) moved per basho.

AFQ (About Face Quotient): Percentage of time rikishi changed direction on the banzuke.

REI (Raw Elevator Index): $MOQ \times AFQ$.

LF (Longevity Factor): $1.xx$ (xx = number of basho in qualifying string).

EI (Elevator Index): $REI \times LF$.

MY (Mid-Year): Year of the mid-point in rikishi's qualifying string.

For a detailed description, see the [Rules](#).

Active Top 10 Elevator Rikishi

	<u>RIKISHI</u>	<u>MOQ</u>	<u>AFQ</u>	<u>REI</u>	<u>LF</u>	<u>EI</u>
1	Hokutoriki *	9.21	0.7188	6.62	1.34	8.87
2	Takekaze	7.00	0.7826	5.48	1.25	6.85
3	Futeno	7.09	0.7143	5.06	1.23	6.23
4	Asasekiryu	8.18	0.5556	4.54	1.29	5.86
5	Tamanoshima *	7.38	0.5366	3.96	1.43	5.66
6	Kyokutenho *	6.18	0.6000	3.71	1.52	5.63
7	Tamakasuga *	5.80	0.5429	3.15	1.72	5.42
8	Hakurozan	7.14	0.6154	4.40	1.15	5.05
9	Takamisakari *	5.56	0.6667	3.71	1.35	5.00
10	Kakizoe	6.72	0.5833	3.92	1.26	4.94

* Fully qualified rikishi.

Some figures could seem inaccurate because the spreadsheet calculates unrounded numbers.

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Elevator Rules

THE GENERAL PROCEDURE:

These components are used in determining a rikishi's position in the Ranking:

- 1 *Move On Quotient (MOQ)*: The average number of banzuke spots moved per basho (currently 42 spots on the makuuchi banzuke): Starting with the 2nd basho in the string, count the number of spots moved – whether up or down – from the previous basho, and do this for each basho, through the final basho in the string. Total all those figures counted and divide by the number of figures used. This is the MOQ, and is expressed as a number with two decimal places., e.g., 6.25.
- 2 *About Face Quotient (AFQ)*: The percentage of time the rikishi changed direction on the banzuke: Starting with the 2nd basho in the string and going down, record a plus (+) if the rikishi moved up the banzuke from the previous basho, and record a minus (-) if the rikishi moved down (no mark is made if there was no movement). Then, starting with the 3rd basho in the string, determine if there was a change of direction from the previous basho or not. e.g., after a plus (+) is recorded, a change of direction occurs with the next minus (-), and vice versa. Finally, divide the total number of direction changes by *the total number of times a direction change was actually possible* (i.e., number of basho in the string, minus 2). This percentage is the AFQ, and is expressed as a decimal in four places, e.g., .6315.
- 3 *Raw Elevator Index (REI)*: Simply multiply the MOQ by the AFQ.
- 4 *Longevity Factor (LF)*: 1.xx, with xx equal to the total number of basho in a rikishi's qualifying

string. e.g., if a rikishi has 45 basho in his string, his LF is 1.45.

- 5 *Elevator Index (EI)*: Multiply the REI by the LF.

Rikishi are then ranked according to their Elevator Index, highest on top.

SPECIFIC RULES:

- 1 A rikishi must have an unbroken string of at least 30 consecutive qualifying basho in order to be listed in the all-time Ranking.
- 2 A rikishi's string is assumed to start with his first makuuchi appearance and end with his last – with these exceptions:
 - When a string begins with the first makuuchi appearance, in order for it to remain unbroken, as you count down the list of basho, the total number of makuuchi appearances must at least equal the total juryo or below appearances. At any point, when this is not true, that string is broken, and a new string is assumed to begin with the second makuuchi appearance, with the same test applied. The string actually begins with the first makuuchi appearance where the test is passed.
 - If using the above exception produces a string with less than 30 basho because the string doesn't start with the first makuuchi appearance, just start the string with the next oldest makuuchi appearance – going back in time – until you've gone up far enough back for a 30-basho string. If this exception is used to create a 30-basho string, it will be disregarded when and if it's no longer required.

- If the last makuuchi appearance is immediately preceded by at least three consecutive juryo or below appearances, the string will not end with that appearance. Instead, the string ends with the last makuuchi appearance that is not *immediately* preceded by at least three juryo or below appearances.

- 3 If a rikishi doesn't accumulate a string of at least 30 consecutive qualifying basho under these rules, his string will simply begin with his first makuuchi appearance and end with his last. If there are still less than 30 basho in the string, it will begin with his first makuuchi appearance and continue until he retires. As long as the string has at least 30 basho, he will qualify to be listed in the Ranking.
- 4 In calculating the Move On Quotient (MOQ), a rikishi is credited with zero banzuke spots moved for any demotion to juryo, and for the first makuuchi basho when transiting back from juryo – regardless of how many actual spots were moved. i.e., In counting the number of banzuke spots moved from any one basho to another, both basho must be in makuuchi. Similarly, no credit is given for a change of direction when transiting to and from juryo.
- 5 All sanyaku ranks other than East are considered West, e.g., S2e, S2w are both counted as Sw. *

* Note: Trying to be exact in accounting for more than two spots for each sanyaku rank (in the cases where that occurred) required a system which sometimes produced nonsensical outcomes further down the banzuke, such as rikishi going from M6e to M7e, yet being credited with a 0 or a 1 count in spots moved, even though two spots were actually moved.