

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

Takekaze's challenge to Hokutoriki's place on the elevator throne has now hit a serious snag. His fall from komusubi to maegashira 8 for the May banzuke put him in view of the top spot and I expected him to put up at least 10 wins from there. That would have allowed his Elevator Index (EI) to keep pace and also would have moved him back up high enough to take another large tumble back down and rack up even higher elevator numbers. But the Oguruma bowling ball wasn't up to the task and his 6-9 in May moved him even farther down the banzuke to maegashira 12. It wasn't a total loss because it was still a 7 point move, even though there was no change of direction.

Now at maegashira 12e for July, I expected a big upwards leap with maybe 11 wins, which was crucial since Hokutoriki was also set up for a collapse at maegashira 2. I guess the lesson learned here is that with the elevator guys, a collapse at a high rank is far more reliable than a bounce back at a low rank, because Hokutoriki

came through with flying colors at 4-11, while Takekaze slogged to a measly 7-8. This means that when the Aki banzuke is posted, Takekaze will have to start his 'ozeki run' (in elevator terms...) all over again because Hokutoriki's EI will be nowhere in sight.

Futeno had made major strides toward turning the Top Two (Hokutoriki/Takekaze) into the Big Three, but actually fell to 5th place when his 9-6 surprise at maegashira 6 kept moving him in the same upwards direction – to maegashira 3. But to underscore the point just made, when an elevator man gets to a relatively high rank, a major crash is a safe bet, and the 3-12 he just posted in July will put him solidly back in the number three spot, which he richly deserves and can safely defend, since the next guy down, Asasekiryu, has now stabilized his sumo at the joi jin level.

In checking out the relative newcomers to makuuchi not eligible to be on the top ten list (those with 15 or less makuuchi

basho in their string), Kakuryu is the only one with an Elevator Index (EI) as high as Futeno.

The current active top ten list is [here](#).

But in the big picture, Hokutoriki is the only active rikishi who can play with the big boys of the 1980s and early 90s. Those guys really kept the banzuke elevator maintenance crew busy. On that all-time top 20 list, Hokutoriki has temporarily slid back down to 20th from 19th place but that will change when the Aki banzuke is published. In fact, if he is placed at maegashira 10e or lower, he will then be at 17th place all-time. He definitely has top ten potential, as long as he can stay healthy.

The all-time top 20 list is [here](#), along with the Elevator [Rules](#).

That's the latest elevator news. Let's all hope that Takekaze can right his ship, and not only resurrect his elevator career, but his real one as well. Thanks for following along.

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	1.50	13.96	1987
2	Takanofuji	11.00	0.9355	10.29	1.33	13.69	1988
3	Sadanoumi	10.61	0.7674	8.15	1.45	11.81	1984
4	Daijuyama	9.91	0.7460	7.39	1.50	11.09	1986
5	Jingaku	9.47	0.7955	7.53	1.46	10.99	1987
6	Kirinji	10.23	0.6867	7.02	1.50	10.53	1981
7	Higonoumi	10.06	0.6863	6.90	1.50	10.35	1997
8	Daitetsu	10.13	0.7586	7.69	1.31	10.07	1986
9	Kyokudozan	8.40	0.8043	6.76	1.48	10.00	1992
10	Takamisugi	9.70	0.6812	6.43	1.50	9.91	1989
11	Kasugafuji	8.88	0.7619	6.77	1.44	9.75	1992
12	Mainoumi	9.21	0.7368	6.78	1.40	9.50	1994
13	Koboyama	9.06	0.6875	6.23	1.50	9.34	1985
14	Tochiazuma (1)	8.34	0.7414	6.18	1.50	9.27	1972
15	Kyokushuzan	9.51	0.6500	6.18	1.50	9.27	2001
16	Ozutsu	8.19	0.7500	6.15	1.50	9.22	1985
17	Tochihikari (2)	8.52	0.7049	6.00	1.50	9.00	1979
18	Kotofuji	10.00	0.6571	6.57	1.37	9.00	1991
19	Toyokuni	9.00	0.7143	6.43	1.37	8.81	1965
20	Hokutoriki	8.73	0.7222	6.30	1.38	8.70	

(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 *	8.73	0.7222	6.30	1.38	8.70
2	Takekaze	7.43	0.7778	5.78	1.29	7.45
3	Asasekiryu *	7.81	0.5806	4.54	1.33	6.03
4	Kyokutenho *	6.51	0.6111	3.98	1.50	5.97
5	Futeno	6.88	0.6800	4.68	1.27	5.95
6	Tamanoshima *	7.22	0.5333	3.85	1.47	5.66
7	Takamisakari *	5.68	0.6757	3.84	1.39	5.34
8	Kakizoe *	6.52	0.6071	3.96	1.30	5.14
9	Roho	7.22	0.5455	3.94	1.24	4.88
10	Aminishiki *	6.19	0.5106	3.16	1.49	4.71

* Fully qualified rikishi.

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

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

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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. When a rikishi's LF reaches 1.50, it

will go no higher, but remain at 1.50 for the remainder of his career. This is to prevent a rikishi from posting a large Elevator Index (EI) based more on his longevity than on his movement up and down the banzuke.

- 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.