

Nagoya Henka Summary

by Ben Doolan

While henka-wise there was nothing spectacular about the Nagoya Basho, Roho, the cream of the henka world continued his strong running. Apart from his usual effort, henka pulling was reasonably spread with 21 henka being pulled by 15 different rikishi. Included in this result were a number of faces who decided to try their luck while looking for a cheap win.

Roho added to his extensive collection of henka with three more during the Nagoya Basho. While this is about average for him and so doesn't greatly affect his henka rate of nearly 17%, it does take him to a total of 44 henka spotted since the beginning of Henka Sightings. Another good basho for him might see him crack the half century mark. If he's aiming for a kachikoshi in the Aki Basho, then it might just be such a basho, as he'll find himself higher up the banzuke than he has been in a year and probably won't be facing too many rikishi that a betting man would back him to beat straight up.

Ama, Asasekiryu, Kakizoe and Kimurayama all added two henka to their tally during Nagoya Basho. Ama appears to be employing the henka more often in his efforts to reach the Ozeki rank, with only one henka in 2006, three in 2007 and already six in 2008 with two basho still to go. In terms of getting wins it seems to be working for him, having won 10 of his 11 henka bouts (including all six so far this year).

Out of the four new makuuchi promotees, only Koryu abstained from henka at Nagoya Basho. Kimurayama led the shin-

makuuchi henka brigade pulling two, with Masatsukasa and Chiyohakuho claiming one each.

As well as the new starters, one late bloomer was spotted pulling his first makuuchi henka. Homasho henka'd Kotoshogiku on day 15, handing the sekiwake his 9th loss of the basho and almost certainly knocking him out of the sanyaku ranks for Aki Basho. Given Homasho's previous record of over 200 makuuchi bouts and not a henka among them, it was a somewhat surprising turn of events, especially for Kotoshogiku.

Wakanoho continues to employ tachiai shenanigans, with another attempted jumping henka. This time it was against Ama, and resulted in a seemingly lucky win for the young Russian. Who can forget Wakanoho's claim after being humiliated by Iwakiyama at Hatsu Basho that he would never again attempt a jumping henka? Or Magaki Oyakata saying that he would send Wakanoho straight back to Russia to work in a caviar factory if he ever tried another one? While it remains unclear at this stage whether Wakanoho is headed for retirement or the caviar factory, I'm sure the young rikishi is going to be missed by many sumo fans. But the chance of never again seeing him on the dohyo aside, Wakanoho still doesn't have enough bouts under his mawashi to be considered for the top 10 list. In two basho time when he will be fully qualified he can expect to hold 2nd place on the list, even if he displays squeaky clean sumo until then.

Toyozakura was removed from the list a year ago due to the duration of his stay in juryo, but managed a

henka in one of his two visits to makuuchi during Nagoya Basho. If he can make it back to the makuuchi division before Wakanoho becomes fully qualified, he'll be back on the list in second place.

There was only minimal change in the top ten list of henka perpetrators, with Yoshikaze moving above Kotooshu thanks to a henka against juryo visitor Kasugao, and Asasekiryu jumping Kakuryu thanks to his two henka effort.

Here is the new top ten list of perpetrators, ranked in order of the *percentage of their total bouts in which they have henka'd*. As a reminder, only the bouts that were voted as henka with a majority yes vote are used in the calculations.

Roho	16.73
Hakurozan	6.87
Aminishiki	6.67
Hokutoriki	5.56
Yoshikaze	5.12
Kotooshu	4.83
Asasekiryu	4.80
Kakuryu	4.17
Ama	3.86
Kotomitsuki	3.51

Only those with a henka rate of over five per cent should be looked at as being overly prone to henka, since the average henka rate for all bouts since the beginning of our study in Nagoya 2005 is 3.09%. The entire breakdown can be seen on the henka database [here](#). The perpetrator and target lists are completely sortable by anyone on their own computer.

As with the henka pulling, there was no exceptional henka

targeting at Nagoya Basho. Despite posting a poor result for the basho, Hokutoriki can take some small solace in the fact that he was high enough on the banzuke that no one felt the need to henka him. This caused his henka target rate to drop below 10% for the first time this year.

Kaio, Kotooshu and Dejima were the only rikishi to be targeted twice. Kaio managed to win one, but the other two lost both bouts.

The rest of the henka were spread fairly evenly, with 15 rikishi being targeted once. These included three of the newcomers to the division, with Kimurayama, Chiyohakuho and Koryu all being targeted. Out of these, Chiyohakuho was the only one to win his bout.

Here's the current top ten list of

targets, ranked in order of the *percentage of their total bouts in which they were a henka target*. Again, only the bouts receiving a majority vote are used in these calculations:

Hokutoriki	9.52
Miyabiyama	6.50
Dejima	6.32
Kotooshu	5.58
Kisenosato	4.56
Tosanoumi	4.49
Kasugao	4.42
Iwakiyama	4.33
Chiyotaikai	4.21
Kaio	4.07

The big changes on the list were Chiyotaikai, who fell from 5th to 9th place due to a target free basho, and Baruto who also was not targeted and so has dropped off the list. These two were replaced by 7th place Kasugao who

was targeted in one of his two visits to the top division, and 10th place Kaio who was targeted twice.

Despite losing both of the bouts he was targeted in, Dejima still wins a very respectable 33% of bouts where his opponent pulls a henka. However, this doesn't even come close to Tosanoumi's record against those that target him. While remaining 6th highest target on the list, he wins an amazing 73% of bouts he is targeted in. Despite this record, rikishi continue to try their luck against the veteran, with Masatsukasa being the latest victim looking for an easy win but finding himself drawn into the trap.

Well that about wraps up another henka report, so keep your eyes peeled come Aki Basho, and keep posting those votes.