

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

Hokutoriki got one more win than I predicted in the Kyushu Basho but his five wins there was still good enough for a seven spot drop on the banzuke, which kicked him up to 14th place all-time, instead of 13th, as I thought would happen. Whatever, there's no denying that he's back on one of his elevator rolls again and that should continue for at least a while.

The 9-6 record he posted at maegashira 7e in January should place him at the top of the maegashira ranks in March – a 12 spot boost – and you know what that means: another 3-5 win performance to bounce him back down maybe another 12 or more spots. He's inching toward the top ten and could even creep up that list, depending on how his career might wind down. For the present, he should be at least in 12th place in a few more basho.

[Here](#) is the list of all-time top 20 elevator rikishi.

This recent elevator spurt has completely squashed the 'hopes' of any other active rikishi of catching him. Heretofore main challenger Takekaze has at times been surprisingly competitive at the higher maegashira ranks and surprisingly not so further on down. This has produced smaller banzuke moves, and in the same

direction as well – both very damaging to one's elevator career.

Takekaze's hold on 2nd place is now loosening, as Futeno is closing hard. I actually thought Futeno would be the number two guy in this report but his 5-10 mark in Kyushu only took him down seven banzuke spots to maegashira 5 (you can see why I don't play Guess the Banzuke anymore...). Now that he has repeated that record in the Hatsu Basho, he will continue in the same direction, which means that his Elevator Index (EI) will be stunted somewhat, regardless of how many spots he goes down. So despite Takekaze's un-elevator-like 7-8 Hatsu showing, I'm now predicting that he will continue in 2nd place.

The active top ten elevator rikishi list is found [here](#) and the Elevator Rules are [here](#).

One of my other predictions is coalescing though, which is that the trio of Hokutoriki, Takekaze and Futeno has formed an elevator bloc, slowly putting distance between it and the rest of the makuuchi division. The gap will increase even more when the Haru banzuke is published, since no. 4 Kyokutenho will move a maximum of only three spots with no change in direction – this based on his slightly stunning 9-6 record at

maegashira 1w – while no. 5 Asasekiyu also continues downward.

For the record, the content of the top ten list – though reshuffled at the bottom – is exactly the same as before, but things are just about to the point where there IS no point in discussing anyone else, except perhaps to speculate on the elevator potential of the recent newcomers to the division. Many of them haven't even shown that they can stay there, so even that is a hard conversation to start.

Homasho will probably have the largest bump to his EI based on the Haru banzuke, but only because his recovery from the wrist injury gave him an 11-4 record at maegashira 16. His long-term potential is that of a stable upper to mid-maegashira rikishi, so I don't see him as a comer.

So as long as Hokutoriki doesn't pull a Kyokutenho on us in Haru, he should continue his assault on the all-time elevator greats. Other than Asashoryu, that's our best short-term hope for a 'legend in his own time' in the world of ozumo. He is fun to watch – so let's keep watching!

The Haru banzuke was not published when this report was prepared, so Elevator Ride – as usual – is one issue 'behind.'

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	Hokutoriki	8.85	0.7436	6.58	1.41	9.28	
15	Tochiazuma (1)	8.34	0.7414	6.18	1.50	9.27	1972
16	Kyokushuzan	9.51	0.6500	6.18	1.50	9.27	###
17	Ozutsu	8.19	0.7500	6.15	1.50	9.22	1985
18	Tochihikari (2)	8.52	0.7049	6.00	1.50	9.00	1979
19	Kotofuji	10.00	0.6571	6.57	1.37	9.00	1991
20	Toyokuni	9.00	0.7143	6.43	1.37	8.81	1965

- (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 *	8.85	0.7436	6.58	1.41	9.28
2	Takekaze *	7.55	0.7333	5.54	1.32	7.31
3	Futeno *	7.56	0.7143	5.39	1.30	7.01
4	Kyokutenho *	6.67	0.6316	4.21	1.50	6.32
5	Asasekiryu *	7.66	0.5882	4.50	1.36	6.13
6	Takamisakari *	5.98	0.6500	3.88	1.42	5.52
7	Kakizoe *	6.72	0.6129	4.12	1.33	5.48
8	Tamanoshima *	6.98	0.5208	3.64	1.50	5.45
9	Homasho	7.88	0.5333	4.20	1.17	4.91
10	Aminishiki *	6.12	0.5200	3.18	1.50	4.77

* Fully qualified rikishi.

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

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

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

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.