

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

Hokutoriki appears to have entered one of those twilight zones, at least as far as his 'elevatorness' is concerned. He's in robust condition and so can clean house once he gets to a mid to lower makuuchi level, but since the sanyaku ranks above him have some new blood that has stabilized itself, he's usually duck soup when he faces them every other basho. His elevator luck has also been aided by weak performances on the part of the upper maegashira men when he has fallen down the banzuke.

As a result, he's been steadily climbing the list of all-time top 20 elevator rikishi and now sits in 12th place, having moved up two positions based on his 10-spot advance on the Haru banzuke. Scroll down or click [here](#) for that list, along with a brief explanation of the terms used.

Since he'll be competing at the very top of the maegashira ranks in March, another precipitous slide down the ranks is assured. If he falls at least 13 spots on the Natsu banzuke, he'll surpass Kasugafuji for 11th place, while a

20 spot fall will move him by Takamisugi and into the top ten. I think he'll make it to 11th this time, and to 10th after that, assuming he stays healthy.

Now let's look at the top ten list of active elevator rikishi. Although they've been the next two down on that list for a while, you can't exactly say that Takekaze and Futeno have been 'chasing' Hokutoriki because Slick Rik's lead was so big that it's never been a real contest. In fact, both of them fell a little further off the pace as a result of their January showings. Takekaze failed to follow through by surprisingly winning seven bouts and dropped only two banzuke spots.

As for Futeno, although 5-10 is an acceptable record for an elevator pro ranked at maegashira 1, it only moved him down seven spots. Right now, both of them need a large collapse in order to regenerate some elevator momentum and since both are capable of winning 6-7 bouts at their current ranks, it's possible that neither one will make any big moves on the Natsu banzuke.

The name of Kakuryu suddenly appears on the top ten list for the first time, and that's because he now has the 15 basho under his belt that allows me to list him (an arbitrary benchmark, to be sure, but one that is needed to maintain list stability). I haven't thought of him as an elevator rikishi, but then again, there are only three active rikishi with any elevator tendencies. Someone has to be at number four, and for now that's Kakuryu. In the past, Asasekiryu has shown some brief elevator flash but has been hit by the double whammy of stabilizing his sumo, followed by injuries. So for now, Hokutoriki is the only show in town among the active rikishi, but oh what a show! Scroll down or click [here](#) for the active top ten list. So then, let's keep cheering his ups and his downs – otherwise I wouldn't have much to report (sorry if any of his fans are offended...)

As a reminder, because SFM is released on banzuke day, Elevator Ride is always one issue behind. This report was prepared prior to the start of the Haru Basho.

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	Hokutoriki	8.93	0.7500	6.70	1.42	9.51	
13	Mainoumi	9.21	0.7368	6.78	1.40	9.50	1994
14	Koboyama	9.06	0.6875	6.23	1.50	9.34	1985
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	2001
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 *	8.93	0.7500	6.70	1.42	9.51
2	Takekaze *	7.38	0.7419	5.47	1.33	7.28
3	Futeno *	7.60	0.6897	5.24	1.31	6.87
4	Kakuryu	7.00	0.7692	5.38	1.15	6.19
5	Kyokutenho *	6.59	0.6207	4.09	1.50	6.14
6	Asasekiryu *	7.61	0.5714	4.35	1.37	5.96
7	Tamanoshima *	7.20	0.5306	3.82	1.50	5.73
8	Homasho	8.47	0.5625	4.76	1.18	5.62
9	Takamisakari *	5.93	0.6585	3.90	1.43	5.58
10	Kakizoe *	6.55	0.6250	4.09	1.34	5.48

* Fully qualified rikishi.

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

Explanation of the Terms:

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

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

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

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.