

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

In the last issue I said that Hokutoriki had entered an elevator twilight zone, being perfectly positioned to alternate between his dominating and hapless banzuke ranks from basho to basho. In the Haru Basho, I would say that he sailed through the twilight zone without even a wave and ruptured the ozone.

At his rank of maegashira 1, a meltdown was guaranteed but his 2-win crash and burn was 'under the bottom,' so to speak. It gave his elevator career an unprecedented surge – even for him – with a 24-spot drop to maegashira 13 and kicked him from 12th to 9th place on the all-time list.

Competing at that rank, 10-11 wins is almost a given in the Natsu Basho and he would easily replace Daitetsu in 8th place. And – if that boosts him far enough back up the banzuke to face a few joi jin in Nagoya, he could then take aim

at a spot in the top five, possibly as high as 4th all-time by year's end. That would be a fantastic accomplishment for a rikishi outside the 'elevator era' of the 1980s and early 1990s. The all-time top 20 list of elevator rikishi can be seen [here](#), along with a brief explanation of the terms used.

Takekaze's eight wins at maegashira 4 in Haru surprised most observers and also interrupted his elevator progress, at least temporarily. It will probably resume now though, as his Natsu rank of maegashira 2 is not sustainable for him and he should drop at least five or six ranks down the banzuke.

For the record, his Elevator Index of 7.31 is 33rd all-time, and he could advance to the top 20 list if he doesn't develop a streak of consistency. He and Futeno remain in second and third place respectively among the active

rikishi. Futeno did himself no elevator favors in Haru with his 7-8 at maegashira 9 and will try to resume his momentum from a number 10 ranking in Natsu.

Kakuryu made a brief appearance as the new number four man last time but his surprising entry into sanyaku from maegashira 1 has pressed him down to number eight. From there he'll probably climb back up the list a bit as I expect him to endure the usual shin sanyaku initiation (i.e. 4-11) in Natsu. The rest of the top ten active list reshuffled themselves again. That list may be seen [here](#). See you in August, as we track Hokutoriki's assault on the elevator kingpins – we're watching a legendary rikishi here, so let's not miss any of it.

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 Natsu 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	Hokutoriki	9.29	0.7561	7.02	1.43	10.04	
10	Kyokudozan	8.40	0.8043	6.76	1.48	10.00	1992
11	Takamisugi	9.70	0.6812	6.43	1.50	9.91	1989
12	Kasugafuji	8.88	0.7619	6.77	1.44	9.75	1992
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 *	9.29	0.7561	7.02	1.43	10.04
2	Takekaze *	7.27	0.7500	5.45	1.34	7.31
3	Futeno *	7.39	0.6667	4.92	1.32	6.50
4	Kyokutenho *	6.55	0.6271	4.11	1.50	6.16
5	Asasekiryu *	7.62	0.5833	4.45	1.38	6.14
6	Tamanoshima *	7.18	0.5200	3.73	1.50	5.60
7	Kakizoe *	6.50	0.6364	4.14	1.35	5.58
8	Kakuryu	6.73	0.7143	4.81	1.16	5.58
9	Takamisakari *	6.00	0.6429	3.86	1.44	5.55
10	Homasho	8.67	0.5294	4.59	1.19	5.46

* Fully qualified rikishi.

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

Explanation of the Terms:

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

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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.