

Eric Evaluates

by Eric Blair

Asa had his botty whooped and the corner no-one is apparently allowed to put him in was filled with his flapping arms and backpedalling figure on Day 3. Yet not a soul commented on it online for hours!

Rewind just a couple of years, three at most, and the WWW would have been alive with posts flying hither, thither and yonder on the disaster that had just befallen sumo's greatest victim in living memory.

Even attendance rates on the sites maintained by non-Japanese fans are, for want of a better term, falling. The SML now relies on a poster known to aim potshots at all things forum-related to keep it alive – between visits to the (cough, cough) Sumo 'forum' that is!

Sumo Talk (there is no ST-esque programmed censorship on SFM about what we can and can't type) showed itself to be what it has always been: an also ran, not unlike a steed with three legs and a jockey with muck in his eyes at times. Under-10 users and a pitiful 13 guests were treated to activity in just two areas of the board on the day preceding Asa's

loss. Ten of twelve forum segments within the said forum had not seen life for days, weeks and even months, despite the ongoing efforts of the resident Macc Ladd to keep alive the thread aimed at the great one himself.

Over on the (proper Sumo) forum which ST has so long sought to compete with, (through acceptance of its superiority in terms of both fans with relevant sumo awareness and posts before, after or during a basho), the numbers were slipping and likely will keep heading south. Just 16 members and 43 guests were frequenting the forum a full forty-five minutes after Asa flip-flop-flapped his last. Post wise, there was nil mention of the yokozuna's loss, a far cry from the 227 users online at the forum in May 2006! A far cry indeed!

What a difference three years (and threads that don't so much as scrape the bottom of the barrel, but cut through it as if it were wet tissue paper) make.

Now, it could just be EB (it isn't), but presumably the other missing 170 users that no longer find interest in the bouts (or more likely fail to be impressed by the

know-it-all attitude of many senior members who consistently fail to recall their own days of daft, beginners questions back in the day) are just fed-up.

Then again, perhaps it is only yours, Le Grand Erique, who fails to find a place in his WWW life for The Wall Part IV, Chiyotakai Watch: more static, cushion-denting images of bottoms and pre-bout rituals than might be deemed healthy, and of course, lower division reports in which the adjective 'young' is applied to every second sentence. Thesaurus, anyone?

Then again, it might just be me misreading the numbers, the falling member numbers, the lack of participation and limited contributions offered during a basho. Perhaps this is really a sign that things are safe and sound, interest in sumo is on the up, and that long posts pondering a given sandanme rikishi's opponents in the coming days really is of national – and international – interest. Hmmm, me thinks not, but in closing I add a cheery 'how do' to all fellow fans for whom this text will serve as thread prep.