

Rikishi Diary

by Mark Kent

Mark Kent, a 194 kg, 187 cm Warehouse Manager by day, is, by night the UK Champion (2004, 2006) Professional Wrestler as well as the most recent heavyweight representative of his nation at the last Sumo Worlds in Sakai, Osaka.

A man clearly at home in the ring, Mark is not afraid of the pen either and has kindly agreed to let SFM follow him, by way of a diary, through the year as he trains and prepares for and, injuries notwithstanding, competes in amateur sumo events across Europe.

As a former footballer and rugby player, UK born and bred, Mark is married with two kids - a boy and a girl - themselves heavily into sports and, although his ventures into boxing, judo and even American football may now be behind him, he is just getting started on the road to amateur sumo stardom.

As part of that journey, Mark's diary will let SFM, our readers and sumo fans from around the world know just how it feels to be setting out on a relatively lonely road in a nation not exactly known for its male sumotori in years past.

Any and all comments of support for Mark as he works his way through the year can be sent via editor@sumofanmag.com

April 14th Had a few days off training recently to recover from the wrestling tour. My hip is just not right but did another taped show for TV - LDN wrestling. The ice packs are back.

April 15th Another day another LDN show (I'll soon be a TV star) More pain killers and ice packs.

April 17th Training today was hard work. My hip is really bugging me now.

April 19th Tried to get stuck into training today, but now I've got stomach cramps. If its not one thing then it's another.

April 20th Could not sleep last night and can hardly move - the stomach pains are so bad. Not going to work today. Went to the doctor and he checked me over and sent me up to the local hospital where I had loads of tests and was given some pills. I really can't believe my luck this year. I even had to pull out of a show planned for tonight.

April 23rd Still off work. This is the first time I've been off sick in over 13 years. Ironically, the test results show that the pills I have been taking for my hip have messed up my bowels.

April 28th Sent an e-mail to the British Sumo Federation, detailing injuries and the setbacks I've had. Also asked when the Dutch team was coming over to train so I could assess if I would be OK to join them.

May 1st Had no reply from the BSF so I sent another e-mail asking about the Dutch visit.

May 4th Went back to work today. Just got a slight niggle in my hip but I do have full movement and no pain.

May 8th Back to the doctor to get the all clear and then back to training. Found it very hard but hopefully I can get right into it this time.

May 12th Got stuck in today, stretches, squats and circuit training lasted nearly 2 hours. Now I'm totally shattered but

that's to be expected at my age - 40 tomorrow!

May 13th Still no answer from the BSF so I looked at their web site to make sure they were still about. The web site is still there and has a piece about how well the women's team did in Japan. I looked at the British rankings page and found the name of everyone that went to Japan except mine. I e-mailed them one more time, thanking them for taking me to Japan and wishing them all the best in the future.

May 14th Had an email from the BSF today stating that they will not be taking a team to the European Championships (in mid-June) but that they will be going to the Worlds in November - that I will have to prove myself the best by going training in Derby. I'm now unsure of what to do. Yesterday my short sumo career was over but now I've got a lot of thinking to do.

May 16th Contacted some pro-wrestlers to see if they would like to share the cost of the trip to Derby and give sumo a go. I'm now awaiting their response.

May 19th Did another TV tape for LDN wrestling. As I'm getting booked to doing a few of these I may just stick to pro-wrestling.

May 24th My hip and thigh have started to play up again. Yet another LDN show tonight. Not a lot of interest about in coming to Derby with me.

May 27th Can hardly stand up straight. I'm really getting down about it all, thinking of quitting wrestling all together.