

# Ones to Watch – Nagoya

*Text and photos by Carolyn Todd*

*Hmm, who to watch in Nagoya...? I don't know, maybe... our new yokozuna!*

**Hakuho** looked like a different man in Tokyo compared to his last tsuna run: focused, calm, serene almost (although maybe just dazed from lack of sleep since his baby was born); he seemed both mentally and physically strong, and not intimidated by anyone, i.e., Asashoryu. But will that carry over to his first yokozuna basho? Or will the relief, the never-ending celebrations and ceremonies, and time with his new family lead him to take his eye off his opponents?



*Hakuho*

## **Asashoryu**

No longer sole top dog, injured and posting a shocking 10-5 result in Tokyo, will Asa be despondent, crushed, sobbing into his mawashi? I think not. If anything, I think he'll be relieved. The pressure and duties associated with being sole yokozuna must be immense, especially considering the jibes and accusations that have accompanied it. Now that Hakuho's no longer snapping at his heels and they're on the same level, he's no longer under so much pressure to win every basho.

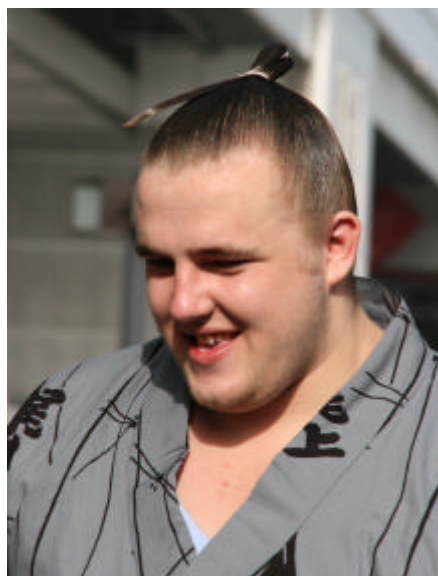
I'm sure he'll continue to want to dominate but now, if he loses to Hakuho, it's to another yokozuna and it's not such a drama. But I'm very sure that he'll be looking to crush the new yokozuna like a bug.



*Asashoryu*

## **Baruto**

After his overwhelming juryo yusho win, the ever-smiley Estonian should be back playing with the big(ger) boys in Nagoya. Will it be a re-run of last time when he surged up the ranks only to literally fall apart?



*Baruto*

He knows he has to change his style but down in juryo where he can overpower everyone with only slight effort, it's difficult to see how that's coming along. His test will come back in makuuchi where they're wise to his strengths (and his weaknesses) and have a whole multitude of tricks to counter with. He's understood that pure power isn't enough and isn't safe – so how will he approach his makuuchi challenge the second time around?

## **Ryuo**

And what of our shin-nyu-maku? 10-5 in his first makuuchi basho! And who did he lose to: Hokutoriki, experienced and fighting for position; Asasekiryu and Dejima who got jun-yusho, M7 Wakanosato, – and Takekaze... He's going to whoosh up the banzuke in Nagoya but is he ready to move up so quickly. Well, let's think: who does he train with? Hmm, let's think... That's right! Yokozuna Hakuho! So it's not as if he's bumbling around with no one in particular. The boost to his confidence from his own result and overall heya euphoria will have him all fired up for more of the same in Nagoya.

## **Hoshihikari and Sakaizawa**

A lot of column inches have already been devoted to these two, so I won't re-hash it all, but just wait and see how they do in juryo without building them up to dizzy heights. But they are OTW, we will be watching, and great things are expected.

## **Ichihara**

What's going on? He threw away his promotion chances more than once in Tokyo. Is the pressure

getting to him? He might still get it but it's extremely doubtful. He has to get his act together in Nagoya and seal the deal – if not, his peers are going to leave him behind to enter sekitorihood and how demoralizing will that be??



*Hoshihikari*

Looking further down the banzuke, we had a couple of interesting yusho winners: **Terashita** won jonokuchi. I admit, I didn't get up early enough

to see him fight. But he must have been good, right...? I like him for a



*Terashita*

very granny-type reason: when he was interviewed on NHK, he was a spoken, respectful young man (kind of reminded me of Homasho) and I think he'll go far

(but don't quote me).

In jonidan, **Yamamotoyama** overcame Ri to win the yusho. This 233kg giant rounded off a great basho for Onoe Beya, what with Baruto taking the juryo yusho and Sakaizawa about to be promoted to juryo.



*Yamamotoyama*