

Elevator Ride

by Lon Howard

There was only one addition to the list of top ten active elevator rikishi, but it did rattle the elevator just a little. As most recall, Kakizoe couldn't record a single win in May, finally shuffling off with a 0-12-3 mark. This sent him careening down the banzuke – from M3e to M16e. The 26 banzuke spot drop raised his Elevator Index (EI) a healthy .82 to 5.16, placing him in 10th place among the active men. More importantly it set him up for another rocket ride up the list because it was expected he'd clean house at the bottom of the banzuke in Nagoya. As of right now though, that hasn't happened, and it's unknown whether he'll even stay in the top division.

I did some digging, and could only find four occasions in modern sumo history where a rikishi moved more than 26 spots on the banzuke in a single basho – and stayed in makuuchi. Since all four of these moves were in an upward direction, it means that Kakizoe has tied the all-time record for the number of banzuke spots dropped in one basho, while remaining in the top division. The other two were Daishoho in Jan. 1997 and Takamisugi in Nov. 1986.

The four rikishi with the top upward marks were Fusanishiki (+31/Sept. 1957), Terunobori (+30/May 1942), Wakachichibu (+28/Nov. 1958) and Tamanoumi (+27/Jan. 1958)... this is NOT the yokozuna Tamanoumi.

I will qualify this information by saying that I didn't keep the records for rikishi without a 30 basho qualifying string... someday I may have the time to go back and re-look at everybody's career. Someday...

With Hokutoriki not doing quite as well as expected in his return to makuuchi in May (9-6), there was obviously no change in the top 20 all-time elevator list. You can find that on [page 2](#).

Speaking of Slick Rik, on the Nagoya banzuke he didn't get credit for a change in direction either, since his last move within the makuuchi division in Nov. 2006 was also upwards, so his EI actually dropped a few points. As of now though, he's having a bang-up Nagoya basho so look for his EI to move back up based on the Aki banzuke, even though he won't have a change of direction. And from there, it'll be back to big elevator shenanigans because he'll be way out of his depth in Aki and so will take a big tumble back down. I expect him to be back on the top 20 all-time list in no time.

Third place Asasekiryu's 14-spot jump gained .55 EI points on Hokutoriki while moving up to 2nd place, past Takekaze. Futeno's 10-5 mark at M13 gave him an 11-spot jump up and he's now tied for 4th place with Kaiho. Both Takekaze and Futeno are headed for major make-koshi in Nagoya and so when the smoke clears on the Aki banzuke, it looks like they'll be in the elevator big-time with Hokutoriki. Asasekiryu's doing better than expected in Nagoya and so he'll drop out of the top three.

The list of top ten active elevator rikishi is found on [page 3](#).

A word about Kaiho. He had already accumulated a 30-basho qualifying string before an injury sent him to juryo, beginning in Nov. 2005, so his EI of 5.96 has been locked in based on his last

makuuchi banzuke appearance in Sept. 2005. Normally, an EI is calculated using the last makuuchi appearance, but there is a one-basho grace allowed if one goes right back down to juryo. As of now, it's confirmed that Kaiho will stay in makuuchi for Aki. This means that all the intervening juryo appearances since his demotion to there in 2005 will be included in his qualifying string, which of course will send his EI plummeting. This means that he'll no longer be an elevator rikishi of note on our list. Maybe too bad, but adding accommodations for every quirk that can occur in a rikishi's career makes the Rules very sticky... in the end you just have to accept that sports injuries have always had a direct effect on an athlete's career statistics. I'm sure that he and all his fans – myself included – are very happy to see him back on the makuuchi dohyo.

See the Elevator Rules on [page 4](#).

Hokutoriki's career is already well developed and we've known for some time that he has all-time elevator potential. As Takekaze and Futeno continue their careers, it's looking more and more as if what we're seeing from them now is what we'll get from here on. They're still relatively young, and as long as they can stay out of juryo... who knows, perhaps they'll be in the same league with royalty such as Kyokushuzan, though not with the same panache, that's for sure. Well, thanks for following along, and let's gear up for more ups and downs in Tokyo in September. Since I hope to be there myself (fingers crossed), maybe I can push a few elevator buttons for the guys. Cheers and take care!

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 | 1.53 | 14.24 | 1987 |
| 2 | Takanofuji | 11.00 | 0.9355 | 10.29 | 1.33 | 13.69 | 1988 |
| 3 | Kirinji | 10.23 | 0.6867 | 7.02 | 1.85 | 12.99 | 1981 |
| 4 | Daijuyama | 9.91 | 0.7460 | 7.39 | 1.65 | 12.19 | 1986 |
| 5 | Sadanoumi | 10.61 | 0.7674 | 8.15 | 1.45 | 11.81 | 1984 |
| 6 | Takamisugi | 9.70 | 0.6812 | 6.61 | 1.71 | 11.30 | 1989 |
| 7 | Jingaku | 9.47 | 0.7955 | 7.53 | 1.46 | 10.99 | 1987 |
| 8 | Ozutsu | 8.19 | 0.7500 | 6.15 | 1.78 | 10.94 | 1985 |
| 9 | Higonoumi | 10.06 | 0.6863 | 6.90 | 1.53 | 10.56 | 1997 |
| 10 | Daitetsu | 10.13 | 0.7586 | 7.69 | 1.31 | 10.07 | 1986 |
| 11 | Kyokushuzan | 9.51 | 0.6500 | 6.18 | 1.62 | 10.01 | 2001 |
| 12 | Kyokudozan | 8.40 | 0.8043 | 6.76 | 1.48 | 10.00 | 1992 |
| 13 | Tochiazuma (1) | 8.34 | 0.7414 | 6.18 | 1.60 | 9.89 | 1972 |
| 14 | Tochihikari (2) | 8.52 | 0.7049 | 6.00 | 1.63 | 9.79 | 1979 |
| 15 | Kasugafuji | 8.88 | 0.7619 | 6.77 | 1.44 | 9.75 | 1992 |
| 16 | Mainoumi | 9.21 | 0.7368 | 6.78 | 1.40 | 9.50 | 1994 |
| 17 | Koboyama | 9.06 | 0.6875 | 6.23 | 1.50 | 9.34 | 1985 |
| 18 | Kaiki | 8.27 | 0.6615 | 5.47 | 1.67 | 9.14 | 1981 |
| 19 | Kotofuji | 10.00 | 0.6571 | 6.57 | 1.37 | 9.00 | 1991 |
| 20 | Kurama | 8.37 | 0.6610 | 5.53 | 1.61 | 8.90 | 1982 |

Some figures could seem inaccurate due to the spreadsheet calculating unrounded numbers.

- (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, scroll down to the [Rules](#) on page 4.

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 * | 8.87 | 0.7333 | 6.51 | 1.32 | 8.59 |
| 2 | Asasekiryu | 8.65 | 0.6000 | 5.19 | 1.27 | 6.59 |
| 3 | Takekaze | 6.91 | 0.7619 | 5.26 | 1.23 | 6.47 |
| 4 | Futeno | 7.20 | 0.6842 | 4.93 | 1.21 | 5.96 |
| 5 | Kaiho * | 6.80 | 0.6047 | 4.11 | 1.45 | 5.96 |
| 6 | Tokitsuumi * | 6.38 | 0.5962 | 3.80 | 1.54 | 5.85 |
| 7 | Tamanoshima * | 7.63 | 0.5385 | 4.11 | 1.41 | 5.79 |
| 8 | Kyokutenho * | 6.10 | 0.6042 | 3.69 | 1.50 | 5.53 |
| 9 | Tamakasuga * | 5.78 | 0.5441 | 3.15 | 1.70 | 5.35 |
| 10 | Kakizoe | 7.04 | 0.5909 | 4.16 | 1.24 | 5.16 |

* Fully qualified rikishi.

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

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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.

- 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 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.