

Ones To Watch – Nagoya 2011

*Text by Alexander Herrmann
Photos by Chris Gould*

On to happier climes! After the last months of scandals it should be the time to turn the attention to some nicer things again. And there are hardly many things that are nicer than a promotion to ozeki. So we will take this issue to look at the top five names looking to convert their candidate status for the ozeki club successfully into a full membership.



Kotoshogiku

Lead candidate is Sadogatake's [Kotoshogiku](#), who will be the East sekiwake in July and who has got 30 wins over the last three tournaments. An excellent score in Nagoya (a minimum of 13-2, preferably even better plus being in the yusho race until the last day) could seal the deal for him, but I don't see him getting there yet. His only score that high was in juryo six years ago. With every new basho this task will become more difficult and he will have to fight several tournaments or even

years yet until he will have a chance to follow Kotomitsuki's footsteps.



Kisenosato

Speaking of footsteps... One must think by now that [Kisenosato](#) will also follow some marks on the floor left by a heya member, but unfortunately this member's name is not [Takanosato](#) (former yokozuna) but instead [Wakanosato](#) (former perennial sekiwake). What is the matter with this talented 25 year old boy? Not enough fighting spirit? Or not enough power after all? One can only wonder where his journey will go, but he won't lose his ozeki candidate status too soon as he is definitely good enough for this category (which must be quite an unsatisfactory one, if you ask me).

It was jun-yusho and gino-sho (his

fifth one within the last 13 basho and sixth in his career) in May for [Kakuryu](#), but that was nothing more than a test basho. His overall numbers aren't too convincing yet to consider him as an ozeki in 2012 or 2013. However, his long-term prospects are a bit better. He just needs some seasoning here and there to consistently post double-digit numbers, especially when he will meet his competitors for the second highest rank on a regular basis.



Kakuryu

[Goeido](#) has also picked up a Gino-sho and has the most wins of the five candidates during the last four basho. None of those numbers will count for an ozeki run, though (I doubt that even the last 11-4 from M1e will count), as they were achieved on too low



Goeido

ranks. Following his forced vacation in Nagoya 2010 after baseball betting shenanigans he has posted double-digit results since then, but none of them against (for him) serious competition. His showings in the second half of 2011 will show whether he has utilised the time meaningfully and improved his sumo. Otherwise it will be hard for him to reach the ozeki rank.

The last man in our list is [**Tochinoshin**](#), who got a 12-3 from M6w in May. Before thinking of the ozeki rank he has to reach sekiwake first. He is still young but shows a lot of promise, too, and he will become a constant member of the lower sanyaku. Whether he can advance in some years' time also depends a bit on what his competitors will do. But just like the other four in this column he is good enough to stay a top-five ozeki candidate for the



Tochinoshin

next few years; he is still miles ahead of the next conceivable aspirants.

Enjoy the Nagoya Basho (or whatever the technically correct term for it will be)!