

# Ones to Watch – Kyushu Basho 2007

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## **Kaio**

The Kyushu homeboy will make his 20th honbasho appearance in Southern Japan. Ever since he became Ozeki he has entered Fukuoka on the brink of one thing or another. In 2000 it was only his second Ozeki appearance. Since then he has been kadoban four times (and every time he has considered retiring after the basho) and tsunatori two times. In 2007 he is...? Right, kadoban



*Kaio*

again. This time it may really be his last basho. Let's face it, his body is a wreck now. It will be interesting how he will fare in this "last basho" (not counting how often that has been said already) and if he is able to end his career with a kachi-koshi – or if he just retires after a bad start.

## **Aminishiki**

If someone had told me one year ago that Aminishiki would be Sekiwake within the next six basho, I would have called him mad. And if the person had gone on to tell me that not only would he defend the rank but also in double digits, I would have called a



*Aminishiki*

psychiatrist. Aminishiki's transformation into a possible sanyaku regular is really remarkable. It remains to be seen whether the last basho was just "the basho of his life" or if he can stay there a bit longer. He will face very strong opposition again (but rather from the ranks below him than from those above).

## **Kotoshogiku**

He and Homasho are competing for the vacant Komusubi slot that has to be filled. No matter how the shimpan decide he will be at least M1e in Kyushu and will move closer again to his heya mates, the Ozeki pair of Kotomitsuki and Kotooshu. It may look like the Fukuoka native has a big advantage due to the heya-betsu-so-atari rule, but is it really an advantage to be not matched against these two Ozeki? Presumably not. Still, Kotoshogiku is strong enough to make his way alone – to be part of the memorable rivalries of the 2010 years. The next two years are just the beginning.



*Kotoshogiku*

## **Goeido**

Ending his makuuchi debut basho with a 11-4 performance and a Kanto-sho isn't unheard of. Meeting a yokozuna in your debut basho is! The last time someone had such an encounter – forced under his own steam – was more than thirty years ago. In Kyushu he may face the yokozuna again. He will be high enough on the banzuke but hopefully this will not

be his only qualification for that bout. His full shikona Goeido Gotaro features the “GO” (“great”, “powerful”) character twice, and these are obviously not just hot air.



*Goeido*

### **Wakanoho**

In Kyushu the third Russian sekitori will join the Boradzov brothers in the highest division. He was born in 1988 and will replace Tochiozan as the youngest makuuchi rikishi (a title that he will probably hold for a while as no Heisei-born hope is yet in sight). He has had only one make-koshi – in his juryo debut basho – and will soon be firmly established in the maegashira ranks. Hopefully he won't pick up the “Russian bad

boy” image, too. Resident bad boy Roho will also be interesting to watch now: How will he respond to the newcomer?

### **Shimootori**

In Aki Basho he was one of only two juryo rikishi who could keep up with Baruto's pace (well, somehow...) and secured a 10-5. Since the behemoth Estonian will probably be back in makuuchi in Kyushu, this might be the chance for Shimootori to take his first juryo yusho, the attached prize money and re-promotion to makuuchi for 2008. He is the new owner of Nishikijima-kabu and needs every yen now, as this was a pretty expensive bargain. He will also be extra-motivated to help his new shisho and his heya to make positive news again. Go, Frost Bird!

### **Ichihara**

In his five short basho in Ozumo he has had more than his fair share of bad banzuke luck, but finally he has arrived in the sekitori ranks. On the middle weekend of Aki Basho he sealed kachi-koshi, but just to make sure that he was not overlooked again, he added two more wins for a nice 6-1. He will rock the second division and be a serious contender for the yusho. And soon he will reach makuuchi and meet all the other young talents for

bouts that should have been fought already.



*Ichihara*

### **Tosayutaka**

The 22-year-old is another rikishi out of the scandal-ridden Tokitsukaze-beya. His career on the dohyo is a fabulous 20-1 so far, but no one is thinking about that kind of record at the moment, of course. His criminal past (or not) is far more interesting. It seems that he wasn't part of the hazing group, but still, he is a member of that heya. That really bad heya. How will he do in Kyushu with the police and press all around? Can he concentrate and post another 7-0 – or will his nerves just be shot?