

Ones To Watch – Kyushu 2011

by Alexander Herrmann

Last time on OTW we visited juryo. It was thought of as a short trip to the second division but it has now oft thought of as a wall between unpaid ranks and the first “premier” league of Ozumo. We will talk about juryo again now. Not about the debutants again, but about the really successful ones: those who have racked up at least ten wins in September. Interestingly there is almost no overlap between those two groups. Just one juryo returnee (but no debutant) of the last issue can be found in this issue as well.

The juryo yusho was **Myogiryu's** and that already on day 14. You may remember that he has been in the second division since as early as in January 2010. No? Never mind. An injury forced him to drop out on day 4, miss three more tournaments and return to the September Basho one year ago only. From this point he was again the man we have been watching in the last tournament. He will follow all those other talents into makuuchi to add further excitement to the hiramaku (and soon sanyaku) ranks.

The man who gave him the hardest run for his money was

Matsutani. If you had asked anyone three months ago the odds (sorry, bad word) would probably have been in favor of him. While Myo reached only a 10-4 in January and May, Matsutani took two yusho and a 14-0. And the odds may swing back to him as soon as the upcoming basho, as it is the home basho for the Fukuokan. He will join Myogiryu on the way to makuuchi where we can surely watch another bout between them.

Aoiyama didn't even need 15 days of presence to collect ten wins. After missing the first two days, he entered the basho and came to a safe kachi-koshi. Can he follow his countryman's footsteps and become the second Bulgarian in makuuchi? And more important, can he become the first maegashira of the current Tagonoura-beya? Tagonoura-oyakata will without doubt soon get a resident makuuchi man but may have to wait another 12 years for a sanyaku man. Aoiyama is probably not yet ready for it.

Chiyonokuni has a really long career already when compared against the aforementioned three, but he is actually the only one who

has been born in the Heisei era. He entered sumo at the tender age of 15. After no big results, just one yusho (after injury and demotion to one division lower) but a steady climbing up the ranks he capitalised on the yaocho scandal and got his first payckeck following a 5-2 as ms9. His 10-5 in September was a bit of a surprise, and it remains to be seen whether he can hold up at that level.

And now for the famed juryo returnee **Hokutokuni**. Would anyone have expected the return? Let alone the 10-5? Especially after his 16 months of non-competition (minus one bout)? And then beating the eventual yusho winner? I would not have, and am thus all the more happy for him. His 26-2 after his second maezume basho is hopefully an indication that he has fully recuperated and also that he is a lot more seasoned. Just like the other Kuni in this issue Hokutokuni was capitalising on the yaocho scandal, too, but his possibilities are likely not exhausted yet.

Enjoy the Kyushu Basho!