

# Eternal Banzuke Phase 5

*by Lon Howard*

Eternal Banzuke has taken a back seat lately to health and personal issues, but the study is back underway now. Just a few more names have been added, but we'll cover some highlights.

To brief new readers, let's recap what it is. Basically, it's just compiling all the ranks rikishi have held, from the beginning to the end of their makuuchi career, and finding their median rank during that period of time. The results are then displayed in a banzuke format. It's not to judge if any rikishi was stronger or better than another, but to serve as a reminder of approximately where rikishi stood on the banzuke throughout their makuuchi career, relative to their peers.

It works pretty well for those below ozeki, but can be misleading in the ozeki and yokozuna ranks, because some ozeki and yokozuna rose to their status quickly, while others took longer. So the ones who took longer 'suffer' on the Eternal Banzuke because of counting all those lower ranks they held on the way up... Akebono outranks Takanohana, for example. Just keep in mind that it's not a determination of strength, skill or prestige – it's just a snapshot of their career. Due to the fact that the yokozuna and ozeki can take off or sub-perform multiple basho without affecting their rank (compared to the rank-and-filers), any basho in which they didn't achieve 10 or 8 wins, respectively, is removed entirely from the calculation of their standing on the EB.

Scroll down to pages 2 and 3 to see

the [Banzuke](#), and also, see the [Rules and Criteria](#) on page 4 for a complete description of the rules used in placing rikishi on the EB. As a reminder, some of the ranks on the Banzuke aren't occupied, and may never be occupied. It just depends on where the rikishi end up after the study of their career.

At this point, I have only gotten back to the late 1970s and have many more names yet to add, so it'll be a work in progress for awhile yet. New names of note in the 70s era are Arase – the first and most successful 'Elvis' rikishi, Kurohimeyama – who took my ticket the last time I saw sumo live in 2004, and then there is Tamanofuji. He was such a dull and plodding grinder that the Sumo World magazine writers kept asking, "What's he doing up here; it'll never last, but yet he stuck in sanyaku for eight consecutive basho in the late 70s, and there he is at M4w.

For just two months, Kotomitsuki stands apart. With this issue he became the first and only rikishi ranked as sekiwake on the EB who had never appeared as ozeki on an actual banzuke, which speaks to both his consistent excellence and his consistent disappointment. That of course will change when the EB is updated in the next issue. Maybe there's a rikishi who did that for an entire career, waiting in the archives to be discovered.

At M2w, Tosanoumi is interesting because he's only been at or above that rank twice in nearly four years, which shows how good he was for such a long time before

that. When he arrived in makuuchi in 1995, he had Kotomitsuki-like promise but, like his counterpart, he struggled to achieve his potential, which was considered to be ozeki, at the very least. Unlike Kotomitsuki though, he no longer has a chance.

In looking at all of the active rikishi currently qualified to be listed on the EB (30 basho from beginning to end of their makuuchi career), Aminishiki at M8w is the only one with a reasonable chance to improve his position, as he spent much of his early makuuchi career in the lower ranks. If he can continue on as a joi-jin for another couple of years, then he might get to M5e. But can those creaky old legs make it that long, performing at that level?

This study is far enough along now to confirm with hard data what would normally be expected – which is that almost all of the prolific elevator rikishi are those with makuuchi median ranks from M5 to M8 (See [Elevator Rikishi List](#)). Only one of the top 20 elevator rikishi has yet to be studied for a rank on the Eternal Banzuke – that being Tochiazuma the sekiwake, currently Tamanoi oyakata. With that, only two top 20 elevator rikishi hold an EB rank higher than M5 (Kirinji, Ozutsu), and only two are ranked lower than M8 (Kasugafuji, Mainoumi).

In the next issue, I hope to be back into the 1960s, to include the likes of Taiho and Tamanoumi. Thanks for following along, and see you next time.

## Never Ending Jidai Blending ETERNAL BANZUKE

TB	East	Rank	West	TB
	Asashoryu	Y	Kitanoumi Akebono	43 33
47 29	Chiyonofuji Takanohana (Y)	Y2		
32 23	Musashimaru Hokutoumi	O	Chiyotakai Onokuni	27 20
28 26	Hokutenyu Wakanohana III	O2	Asashio (O) Wakashimazu	30 18
47 25	Kaio Asahifuji	S	Konishiki Musoyama Tochiazuma (O) Kotokaze Kotomitsuki	39 35 32 28 22
	Takanonami	S2		
	Kotomitsuki	K		
		K2	Kotonishiki	
28-26 28-23	Wakanosato Miyabiyama	1	Takatoriki Takanosato	36 32
	Akinoshima	2	Tosanoumi Arase	37 26
51 31 29	Takamiyama Dejima Sakahoko	3		
44 39 31 28	Kirinji Tochinowaka Tochinonada Misugisato	4	Ozutsu Kurohimeyama Fujizakura Kyokutenho Tamanofuji Tamanoshima (S)	41-36-34 41-36-29 41-35 30 23 22
48 33 32	Kotonowaka Daijuyama Dewanohana	5	Tochihikari Kotogaume Jingaku Ryogoku	33 30 26 18
50 33-32 33-30 18	Terao Kirishima Kyokushuzan Kenko	6	Aobajo Sadanoumi Toki Kotofuji	35 25 22 19
39 35 17-16 17-15	Kurama Tamakasuga Takanofuji Daishoho	7	Itai Masudayama Kyokudozan Tochiakagi Takamisakari Aobayama	29 26 25 23 22 20

Continued overleaf...

35	Kaiki Daitetsu	8	Mitoizumi	45	
16			Higonoumi	30	
			Kotoryu	29-26	
			Toryu	29-25	
			Tagaryu	27	
			Koboyama	25	
			Aminishiki	22	
			Takanowaka	19	
43	Takamisugi Hamanoshima Kirinishiki Chiyotenzan Kotobeppu	9	Kaiho	29	
23			Minatofuji	28	
21			Amanoyama	20	
16			Tochitsurugi	16	
15					
37	Kotoinazuma Washuyama Tokitsuumi Asanosho	10	Kitakachidoki	31	
36			Oginishiki	29	
27			Kasugafuji	22	
16			Mainoumi	20	
			Zaonishiki	18-15-15	
			Shikishima	18-15-14	
29	Ho-o Misugiiso Banryuyama Hayateumi	11	Oshio	43	
27			Tamaryu	21	
24			Oginohana	20	
17			Enazakura	17-16	
			Toyonoumi	17-15	
	Hidanohana	17-14			
44	Onishiki Asanowaka Kushimaumi Tochitsukasa Jumonji Shimootori	12	Tochisakae		
31					
27					
25					
22					
17					
30	Wakasegawa Wakashoyo	13	Wakajishi		
18					
	Aogiyama	14	Daizen		
25	Otsukasa Tochinohana	15			
23					

## Eternal Banzuke – Rules & Criteria

1. A rikishi must have a string of at least 30 consecutive qualifying banzuke appearances in order to be listed on the Eternal Banzuke.

2. A qualifying string begins with the first makuuchi appearance and ends with the last makuuchi appearance.

3. A rikishi's position on the Eternal Banzuke is based on his Median Rank (MR). It is the highest rank held at least 50 per cent of the time during his qualifying string. It is determined by first counting the total number of banzuke appearances in his qualifying string – if the result is an odd number, then add 1 to it in order to obtain an even number. That number is then divided by 2, and the result is called the determinator. Then, starting with the rikishi's

highest held career rank, begin counting the total number of banzuke appearances at that and each succeeding lower rank, carrying the total as you go down. Stop the count at the rank where the total equals or exceeds the determinator. That rank is the rikishi's MR, and it is the rank at which he resides on the Eternal Banzuke.

4. When two or more rikishi occupy the same rank on the Banzuke, the order in which they appear is determined by adding the total appearances each of them had at the MR and above, to obtain a tie-breaker number for each of them. They are then listed in tie-breaker number order – highest number first. If that number is also a tie, make the same determination at the next highest rank, and keep going up in rank until the tie is broken,

and no tie exists between or among any rikishi. If two or more rikishi are still tied at the rank of Ye, start at the next rank below the MR and make the same determination, and keep going down in rank until all ties are broken.

5. Special rules apply to banzuke appearances at the yokozuna and ozeki ranks. A minimum level of performance is set for these appearances – 10 wins for yokozuna and 8 wins for ozeki. If this level isn't met for any such banzuke appearance, then that basho is simply removed from the count of appearances in the rikishi's string, and correspondingly, no credit is given for an appearance at that rank. In other words – don't count the basho or the rank held – it's as if the basho never happened

## All-Time Top 20 Elevator Rikishi With Eternal Banzuke Rank

	<b><u>RIKISHI</u></b>	<b><u>MOQ</u></b>	<b><u>AFQ</u></b>	<b><u>REI</u></b>	<b><u>LF</u></b>	<b><u>EI</u></b>	<b><u>MY</u></b>	<b><u>EB</u></b>
1	Itai	11.58	0.8039	9.31	1.53	14.24	1987	7w
2	Takanofuji	11.00	0.9355	10.29	1.33	13.69	1988	7e
3	Kirinji	10.23	0.6867	7.02	1.85	12.99	1981	4e
4	Daijuyama	9.91	0.7460	7.39	1.65	12.19	1986	5e
5	Sadanoumi	10.61	0.7674	8.15	1.45	11.81	1984	6w
6	Takamisugi	9.70	0.6812	6.61	1.71	11.30	1989	8e
7	Jingaku	9.47	0.7955	7.53	1.46	10.99	1987	5w
8	Ozutsu	8.19	0.7500	6.15	1.78	10.94	1985	4w
9	Higonoumi	10.06	0.6863	6.90	1.53	10.56	1997	8w
10	Daitetsu	10.13	0.7586	7.69	1.31	10.07	1986	8e
11	Kyokushuzan	9.51	0.6500	6.18	1.62	10.01	2001	6e
12	Kyokudozan	8.40	0.8043	6.76	1.48	10.00	1992	7w
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	5w
15	Kasugafuji	8.88	0.7619	6.77	1.44	9.75	1992	10w
16	Mainoumi	9.21	0.7368	6.78	1.40	9.50	1994	10w
17	Koboyama	9.06	0.6875	6.23	1.50	9.34	1985	8w
18	Kaiki	8.27	0.6615	5.47	1.67	9.14	1981	8e
19	Kotofuji	10.00	0.6571	6.57	1.37	9.00	1991	6w
20	Kurama	8.37	0.6610	5.53	1.61	8.90	1982	7e

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.