

# Ones to Watch

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Well, this column could actually read "Ones To Watch – On Their Way Out Soon?" Of course, we – no, everyone – is talking about the yaocho scandal that has hit the Ozumo world recently. Bouts have obviously been thrown, and bout throwers in the second division have been careless enough to deliver proofs of their doings. There are 13 suspects whose names have leaked, a 14th whose name is yet unknown and some more names that were mentioned on different occasions.

\* Admitted to yaocho:

[Chiyohakuho](#), [Enatsukasa](#) (sandanme, as man in the middle) and [Kasuganishiki](#) (current Takenawa-oyakata).

\* Denying but strong evidence against him: [Kiyoseumi](#).

\* Denying and less or no evidence against them: [Kaiho](#) (current Tanigawa-oyakata), [Koryu](#), [Kyokunankai](#), [Shirononami](#), [Shimotori](#) (messages don't reveal clearly whether he is not part of it or whether he is just "pausing" because of his higher rank), [Shotenro](#), [Toyozakura](#), [Wakatenro](#) and [Yamamotoyama](#).

\* Maybe the 14th man:

[Kirinowaka](#).

\* Other mentioned names:

[Asofuji](#) and [Sakaizawa](#).

I've employed several assumptions to try to assess how many of these yaocho allegations – no, happenings – can be tracked down, and here I'll share them with you. They will probably not hold for a severe statistical challenge but should be good enough to start with.



Chiyohakuho

A) Only intra-juryo bouts are checked as the current revelations seem to involve only fighters who are shareholders of "Juryo Mutual Benefit, Ltd."

B) Yaocho does not happen when one or both contestants are in the yusho race. For that reason bouts of rikishi with 10 or more wins at the end of the basho are excluded. This sidelines also "late blooming" rikishi of the basho (e.g. with a first week of 3-5 and a second week of 7-0) who are obviously overly motivated in the second half and thus no yaocho candidates then.

C) Yaocho only happens if there is "something at stake" (i.e. the further stay in juryo and thus two additional months of salary). Only bouts with at least one J10 or lower are counted as these guys need at least six wins to be safe. J12 and J13 already need one more win, and a J14 needs eight wins.

D) Yaocho does not happen in the

first third of the basho as it is not yet sure if the rikishi in question needs assistance at this time. So only days 6 to 15 count. It does also not happen in playoff bouts according to rule B.

E) As to rule C a bout can only be considered a yaocho one if the needy J10-or-lower man wins. This includes bouts with both rikishi on J10 or lower: they count regardless of their outcome, too, if they meet the other criteria.

F) Time restriction: all core members of JMBL should even their "accounts" within three years. Having a big majority of wins would soon become too expensive as much of the earnings have to be put into the Ltd. A big majority of losses could soon become too profitless for them to keep their membership: you get lots of one-time money but forego long-time bonuses (e.g. for kachikoshi) or even a promotion to makuuchi. I've therefore only looked into the interval from 2008 to 2010.



Yamamotoyama



Kaiho

Applying rules A to F we get 107 bouts that are summed up in the "Matrix of All Possible Yaochos" (or for short: "MAP").

against Kasuganishiki. Within the whole matrix he has got 3 wins and 5 losses.

Now, what can we read out of this matrix? First, that Kasuganishiki, Kiyoseumi and Kaiho had lots of bouts that have possibly involved yaocho. Furthermore, they are all evened out. Kasu and Kaiho have been at the end of their careers, so this may not come as a surprise. But Kiyoseumi? Too injury-prone already to go without yaocho?

Kyokunankai seems to look over the rim of his tea cup. Born 1977 he has not too many years left but has built up available balances of six wins. Creditors may be Wakatenro, who is also born 1977 but probably more confident in his

man who died too young eight years ago. Curt Hennig ("Mr. Perfect"), wrestling star of the last millennium, who sang as a member of the short lived stable West Texas Rednecks the mocking song "Rap is crap!"

And I wanted to shout out "MAP is crap!" We all knew that there is yaocho, even without the proofs found. The genuine Japanese (and mostly not understandable to Westerners) [principle of Honne and Tatemae](#) not only encourages but forces the emergence of yaocho. The society's well-being is always more important than one's own well-being, and not playing along will be frowned upon. Even by us. Quite frankly, as

<i>R1 (down) wins against R2 (right)</i>	CHI	KAS	KIY	KAI	KOR	KYO	SNN	SMT	SHO	TOY	WAK	YAM	KIR	ASO	SAK		wins	losses
<b>Chiyohakuho</b>	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	<b>CHI</b>	3	5
<b>Kasuganishiki</b>	2	-	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	<b>KAS</b>	10	9
<b>Kiyoseumi</b>	0	2	-	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	<b>KIY</b>	10	10
<b>Kaiho</b>	0	1	1	-	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	<b>KAI</b>	12	11
<b>Koryu</b>	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>KOR</b>	0	3
<b>Kyokunankai</b>	1	0	2	0	0	-	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	<b>KYO</b>	9	15
<b>Shirononami</b>	0	1	1	2	0	2	-	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>SNN</b>	7	10
<b>Shimotori</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>SMT</b>	1	2
<b>Shotenro</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>SHO</b>	0	0
<b>Toyozakura</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	1	0	0	2	1	<b>TOY</b>	5	7
<b>Wakatenro</b>	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	-	0	1	1	0	<b>WAK</b>	11	8
<b>Yamamotoyama</b>	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	-	1	0	0	<b>YAM</b>	6	3
<b>Kirinowaka?</b>	1	1	2	2	1	4	2	2	0	0	1	2	-	1	2	<b>KIR</b>	21	8
<b>Asofuji??</b>	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	-	2	<b>ASO</b>	9	8
<b>Sakaizawa??</b>	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	<b>SAK</b>	3	8
	<b>CHI</b>	<b>KAS</b>	<b>KIY</b>	<b>KAI</b>	<b>KOR</b>	<b>KYO</b>	<b>SNN</b>	<b>SMT</b>	<b>SHO</b>	<b>TOY</b>	<b>WAK</b>	<b>YAM</b>	<b>KIR</b>	<b>ASO</b>	<b>SAK</b>			
<b>losses</b>	5	9	10	11	3	15	10	2	0	7	8	3	8	8	8			
<b>wins</b>	3	10	10	12	0	9	7	1	0	5	11	6	21	9	3			

The matrix reads like this: R1 (rikishi 1, in the left column) wins against R2 (rikishi 2, in the top row) n times (where the two lines intersect). The right column lists the total number of wins and losses R1 has, the bottom row the total number of losses and wins of R2. Example: Chiyohakuho has won 0 times and lost 2 times

future years, and Kirinowaka, who is one of the younger ones in this list. Sakaizawa seems to need future wins, too. Or is he just bowing to his sempai and hoping that others will do that for him later? Is he a member of the JMBL at all?

All that went through my mind when I suddenly remembered a

much sympathy we do have for the poor makushita men who have been blocked out of promotion because of the JMBL, we still do enjoy the old warhorses "fighting" against their make-koshi, "stemming hard" against their final demotion and "giving everything" for one more sekitori basho before the inevitable intai.

Some bad apples will probably be sorted out now but we can be sure that yaocho will continue to exist: young men not going out a hundred percent against a falling star of their own youth or best buddies who help the other when

in need. The borderline between that occasional "friendly yaocho" and organized "result adjustment" (I try to avoid the word "fixing" as it is too close to betting; I understand yaocho as a pure end in itself) will stay as blurred as it

has been for 250 years now. And you will have to check for yourself whether you can live with it or not.

If yes... Enjoy the Sumo!