

# Enho: “A Haru Basho comeback is in sight”

The 29 year old former Maegashira, who has been kyujo for 3 basho in a row, visited the Hokkoku Shimbun headquarters, where he met the head of his Ishikawa koen-kai, and sat down for a talk. At one point, he was paralyzed from the neck down, and the doctor advised him to retire. But strenuous rehab and treatment improved his situation. “I’ve not considered retirement for a millisecond. A comeback in Haru Basho in March has finally come into sight”.

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## Kyujo and hard rehab, “Considered retirement? Not even for one millisecond!”

Though whispers about retirement can be heard even among fans, his gait as he entered Kanazawa was light and his expression cheerful. “My neck has improved so much it surprised even the doctors. I’m also surprised”, he explains in a lively voice.

“Now that it’s behind me I can talk about it”, he says, revealing what happened in Natsu basho in May. He lost his match and returned to the heya, where he collapsed to the floor. He couldn’t control any part of his body, flapping his limbs ineffectually. “The other rikishi thought at first that it was some sort of a joke and laughed”. However, the gravity of the situation soon became clear, and he was taken away to hospital.

For two weeks of admission, he was generally bedridden. His nerves being pinched, he couldn’t even close his fists. His doctor said: “Sumo? You wouldn’t be able to live a normal day-to-day life”, requesting that he undertake an emergency operation. Miyagino oyakata also hinted that he should retire, but Enho would not nod in consent. “I had no worry and no fear, I could only think about getting back to the dohyo. I’m a fool for sumo.”

He called on highly reputable doctors and therapists, looking for a path to recovery. In addition to rehabilitative therapy, he worked with a trainer famous for having rehabilitated members of Japan’s Rugby team, and managed to get back to practicing with opponents before the end of the year. Although his oyakata told him not to overdo it, he did assent to him making a comeback in Haru basho.

Three years ago in Haru Basho he reached his highest rank of Maegashira 4E. His prolonged kyujo caused him to drop to Makushita and Sandanme, and in Haru 2024 it seems he will start

his journey again from Jonidan. “I’ll just be back to where I was when I joined Grand Sumo”, he dismisses it as a non-issue.

## Inspired by the young rikishi’s progress

Other rikishi from Ishikawa prefecture are coming up. Onosato is about to debut in Makuuchi, and Oshoumi’s promotion to Juryo has been confirmed. The progress of his young homies also serves as a motivation. “I want to fight with the two of them in Makuuchi. I’ve been focused entirely on a return. That thought is about to bear fruit”.

## Q&A

### The goal is “Makuuchi yusho”

Q: Do you have no worries?

“When I finished university and decided to go into professional sumo, I got a ‘you should give up’ from everybody. When I was told I couldn’t do it, it filled my heart with fire. The doctor recommended that I quit, but I said “Nothing is impossible. It will be alright”.

Q: What were your thoughts on sumo while you were kyujo?

“People around me worry because I’m small, but the beauty of sumo is that it doesn’t have weight categories. When I won the World Championship within my weight category in my university days, it didn’t make me happy. I have fallen in love with sumo once again.”

Q: Do you get any encouragement from other rikishi?

“Kagayaki-zeki is kind. When I got injured he soon called me, and treated me to dinner. I am also encouraged by the comebacks of my peers, Tomokaze and Wakatakakage.

Q: Have you lost muscle tone?

“Because of the training, I actually gained power. I also kept a body weight of 102-103kg”

Q: What is your goal from now on?

“I have many. Get to san-yaku, win the Makuuchi yusho. When I joined Grand Sumo I thought that would be tough. Now I don’t have worries like that. I have more confidence than then.”