



大相撲新報

SUMO SHIMPO

THE VOICE OF CALIFORNIA SUMO SINCE 1999



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“23-Skidoo” for Shoryu

Wins First 14; Bests Hakuho in Playoff; Passes Takanohana II

Snake River Event Survives Snow, Car Wreck to Go On

By “Yukikaze” for SUMO SHIMPO

By “Yukikaze” for SUMO SHIMPO

When yokozuna-West ASASHORYU (MGL) didn't even come to Fukuoka in November, you could hear the whisperings about him planning to announce he was going to retire. Make a comeback? Most folks said that was “just not in the cards”.

If this writer had known how “interesting” the 2008 Snake River Sumo Classic was going to turn out, he might have done some things a whole lot differently. But I'm glad I went, and I'm glad I was able to help Kelly Gneiting and Casey Burns with their latest charity sumo event.

Good thing those people weren't betting their all in a game of strip poker... because they would have come out looking like the Emperor in the fabled fairy tale. SHORYU ripped a strip off the assembled competition, taking down the first fourteen men who challenged him. Yokozuna-East HAKUHO (MGL), who had won his ninth title in November in Kyushu, kept pace until day 9 when he was forced out by the newest ozeki, #3-East HARUMAFUJI (MGL: formerly known as AMA). “Sleeping Thunder” didn't lose his cool: he knew he'd be getting his chance at “The Express” on senshuraku. And he proceeded to draw even by crushing SHORYU out of the ring. This set up a playoff for the yusho; a situation where HAKUHO had been enjoying an edge in recent history. But SHORYU just would not be denied this time out... and when it was over, the Tenno-Hai was again firmly in his hands for the first time since last March in Osaka.

What with the 6:00PM flight from Long Beach Airport to Salt Lake City, then a one-hour wait for the 10:00PM Salt Lake Express shuttle, and a four-hour ride to the Idaho Falls bus terminal... it was pretty late (and pretty cold) when I finally arrived in town. But Casey (bless his mighty heart) picked up Rene Marte and myself and conveyed us to the Guesthouse Hotel on the banks of the nearly frozen-over Snake River.

SHORYU's win was number 23 in his extra-legendary career, which shakes him clear of **Takanohana II (65)** and moves him into sole possession of fourth place on the all-time yusho list. His next championship (when it happens) will pull him into a tie with **Kitanoumi (52)** for third place.

I had good reason to consider myself very fortunate when I found out that Justin Crite, Javonn Rushing and Ryan White had been in a rollover car wreck on I-15 near Pocatello. Kelly, Trent Sabo and Carl Pappalardo had rushed down there to lend assistance. Ryan's car was totaled, but Ryan had only mild head trauma, while Javonn's only apparent injury was some stitches in his arm. Justin appeared to be unhurt, and was able to compete that evening. Sometime during this string of events, Carl slipped on some ice and whanged himself good: he reluctantly had to remove himself from the events.

The best finish among the five members of the ozeki cartel was posted by “the Skyscraper from Sofia”, #2-East KOTOOSHU (BUL). He won 8 of his first 9 matches, then got a bit sloppy in his final six to post a 10-5 mark. #1-West CHIYOTAIKAI (in his 60th

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(continued page 2)

IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, BUT SO WHAT?... Some of the competitors (including host Kelly Gneiting, at lower left) get together with some of the brave folks who endured snow and cold to come to the 2008 Snake River Sumo Classic in Rigby, Idaho. (Photo: “Yukikaze”)



ASASHORYU (from front page)

basho at the rank), #2-West KAIO (in his 93rd Makunouchi tournament) and HARUMAFUJI (in his shin-ozeki appearance) all finished with 8-7 marks, which don't garner them any real kudos. #1-East KOTOMITSUKI got pushed around badly, with 6 of his first 7 matches ending in defeat. He then proceeded to go 1-4 in his next 5, finally pulling out before he was due to face HAKUHO. His 2-10-3 makes him the latest member of the contingent to face kadoban at the Osaka Taiikukan in March.

Now that AMA has moved up (deservedly so, in this writer's opinion) and changed his name, the lower sanyaku has become more wide-open and up-for-grabs. Sekiwake-East BARUTO (EST) looked about ready to fulfill the promise he showed when he first entered pro sumo. The "Blond Bomber" won his first six torikumi and 7 of his first 8. He then slipped against the two yokozuna and some tough veteran competition, but pulled out his last two matches for a credible 9-6 effort. Komusubi-East KISENOSATO went 3-3 in his first six, then continued to keep his shiroboshi and kuroboshi balanced until senshuraku, where he won magic number 8 to stay in the joi-jin. Sekiwake-West AMINISHIKI had been a "giant killer", but those days appear to be over for the nonce. Five losses in eight days, coupled with withdrawal, means he will be collecting a hiramaku's paycheck for awhile after posting a 3-6-6. Komusubi-West TOYONOSHIMA fared even worse, going 2-6-7 and landing on the down "erebeta" once again.

#15-East TAMANOSHIMA and #16-East HOMASHO both posted 11-4 marks, to tie for the best maegashira performance. HOMASHO also won the Kanto-Sho. Other hiramaku efforts worth noting herein:

#1-West KYOKUTENHO (9-6)
#3-West GOEIDO (10-5) (Gino-Sho)
#7-East HOKUTORIKI (9-6)
#8-West KAKURYU (MGL) (9-6)
#10-East TOKITENKU (MGL) (9-6)
#12-East TOCHIOZAN (10-5)

The Shukun-Sho was not awarded.

In Juryo: #1-East SHOTENRO (MGL) posted an 11-4 to win the division crown and earn a spot under the bright lights in Osaka. Other second-division efforts worthy of these pages:

#1-West KIMURAYAMA (9-6)
#2-East SHIMOTORI (10-5)
#3-East WAKAKIRIN (9-6)
#3-West TOSAYUTAKA (9-6)
#4-East TOYOZAKURA (10-5)
#12-East USHIOMARU (9-6)
#12-West MOKONAMI (MGL) (9-6)

WAKAKIRIN became the latest sumotori to see his sumo career go 'up in smoke' because of marijuana use, and the first Japanese to make this very bad mistake.

SNAKE RIVER (from front page)

(I hope the injury cloud that has dogged Carl since 2005 eventually goes away: he's too nice a person to keep having such bad karma!)

Eventually, we convoyed from Casey's house to the Rigby Junior High School gymnasium. The crew put the dohyo together, and the event finally got started, although late.

Coming off his bronze medal at the Worlds, Trent Sabo had little difficulty showing the form that finally got him onto that podium. One big surprise: Patrick Greer made the trip. He looked as if he's been hitting the weights pretty hard... and it showed in the ring as he muscled his way to the middleweight gold and openweight bronze. Dan has firmly established himself as the top "big man" in US amateur sumo, as he copped the top prize in both the heavy and open divisions.

Considering the weather, we had a very enthusiastic crowd of good proportions. They got a great show, with Troy Collins handling the referee responsibilities and Casey Burns working with this writer to emcee the event. Some interesting photo ops came when the fans and rikishi got together. After it was over, this writer gave some video background to a reporter from the local news station (which can be found at

<http://www.postregister.com/special/prvideo/index.php?id=34>).

Kelly has already said that next year's Classic will be in October rather than December. This writer will make different travel arrangements next time out... but he will be honored to go again if he's invited.

RESULTS: 2008 Snake River Sumo Classic (December 13th, 2008: Rigby JHS, Rigby, Idaho)

Men's Light	1. Trent Sabo 2. Tyler Olsen 3. Levi Kendrick
Men's Middle	1. Patrick Greer 2. Rene Marte 3. Rye McAfee Also competing: Matt Anderson, Packy Bannevans, Steve Bird, Pablo Jones
Men's Heavy	1. Dan Kalbfleisch 2. Kelly Gneiting 3. Joe Isamau Also competing: Justin Crite
Men's Open	1. Dan Kalbfleisch 2. Kelly Gneiting 3. Patrick Greer Also competing: Bannevans, Bird, Crite, Kendrick, Marte, Olsen, Sabo
Special "Fighting Spirit" Award	Trey Fuel
"Big Help" Award	"Yukikaze"

Current Holders of USSF Dan Rank

Rank (Degree)	Name (Club)
Sandan (3rd)	Tom Zabel (LSSA)
Nidan (2nd)	Hiroshi Matsuzaki (SCSK), Harry Dudrow (SCSK), Kelly Gneiting (SRSA), Jim Lowerre (SCSK), Doug Cochran (GSS)
Shodan (1st)	Jeff Riddle (GSS), Andrew Freund (CSA), Troy Collins (CSC), Rene Marte (JKC), Tyler Olsen (GEM), Trent Sabo (OSK), Marcus Barber (SCSK), Kurt Rightmyer (SCSK), Bart Harris (LSSA), Art Morrow (SCSK), Packy Bannevans* (GSA)

* Rank conferred by the Japan Sumo Federation

SUMO SHIMPO is published six times a year (following each official basho in Japan) by the **Southern California Sumo Kyokai**.

Effective with this (Hatsu) issue, SUMO SHIMPO will become a solely-electronic publication, with issues being available in Adobe PDF format at www.sumoshimpo.com. We will no longer produce a print version. Subscriptions will no longer be offered or accepted. Membership in the SCSK will still be available at \$5.00/year.

Comments and contributions from readers are not only welcome, but strongly encouraged.

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IF YOU REALLY LOVE SUMO, AND WANT TO STAY CLOSE TO IT FOR MANY YEARS TO COME...

MAKE THE COMMITMENT!!

Become a United States Sumo Federation LIFE MEMBER

A one-time tax-deductible donation of \$200.00 eliminates your worries about annual USSF dues **FOR LIFE**. If you compete in USSF-sanctioned amateur sumo events for ten years or more, a Life Membership will pay for itself. It also shows you are very serious about the sport, and is a definite 'resume enhancer' if you decide to seek office in the USSF or any other amateur sports body.

Application form is available at www.sumoshimpo.com

The 700-Win Club

(after Hatsu 2009)

Rikishi (Top Rank)	MD Basho	MD Wins	Wins/Basho
Chiyonofuji (Y58)	81	807	9.96
Kitanoumi (Y55)	78	804	10.31
KAIO (O)	93	766	8.24
Taiho (Y48)	69	746	10.81
Musashimaru (Y67)*	73	706	9.67
Takanohana II (Y65)	75	701	9.35

* Non-Japanese

The ASASHORYU Watch

(after Hatsu 2009)

Rikishi (Top Rank)	MD Basho	MD Wins	Wins/Basho
ASASHORYU (Y68)	49	525	10.71

Poll question:

Now that SHORYU has won 23 championships (and looks as if he's good for a few more), does he deserve ichidai toshiyori (one-generation elder) status when his active career is over?

(This would, of course, be predicated on SHORYU becoming a citizen of Japan. If he doesn't, he would be ineligible regardless of the number of yusho he wins.)

Please send your comments to jimlowerre@yahoo.com.

The Fit Expo: Great Showcase, Good Future

by “Yukikaze” for SUMO SHIMPO

“What if they gave a tournament and nobody came?”

At the 2009 Fit Expo at the LA Convention Center, that question still waits for an answer. High-caliber talent from the United States and several foreign countries where sumo is big (pun intended) came to try their chikara kurabe skills against each other. And there may have been more than a few empty seats (parallel events included MMA, powerlifting, martial arts demonstrations and a bodybuilding show) but whoever came to watch the sumo got a great show, IMHO.

This writer served as scorer and co-emcee, with Troy Collins as referee. The competition was judged to be excellent by those who have BTDT (been there, done that).

“Legendary” Yokozuna (10+ Yusho)

(updated after Hatsu 2009)

YOKOZUNA	Heya	Yusho	Zensho
Taiho	Nishonoseki	32	8
Chiyonofuji	Kokonoe	31	7
Kitanoumi	Mihogaseki	24	7
ASASHORYU	Takasago	23	5
Takanohana II	Futagoyama	22	4
Wajima	Hanakago	14	3
Musashimaru	Musashigawa	12	1
Futabayama	Futabayama	12	8
Akebono	Azumazeki	11	0
Kitanofuji	Kokonoe	10	3
Tochinishiki	Kasugano	10	1
Tsunenohana	Dewanoumi	10	1
Wakanohana I	Hanakago	10	1

RESULTS of the 2009 Fit Expo Open

(January 24, 2009: Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA)

Division	Results
Women’s Open	1. Lindsey Hood (USA) 2. Natalie Burns (USA) 2. Erica Sabo (USA) Also competing: Jill Kendrick (USA), Kim Noreen (USA)
Men’s Lightweights	1. Stiliyan Georgiev (BUL) 2. Battur Ganbataar (MGL) 3. Trent Sabo (USA) Also competing: Alfredo Gutierrez (USA), Brian Kalbfleisch (USA), Rony Schindhelm (GER), Noe Teelidze (GEO), Tsogsuren “Sogo” Tsogkhuu (MGL)
Men’s Middleweights	1. Rene Marte (USA) 2. Erdenebileg “Bilgay” Alagdaa (MGL) 3. Justin Crite (USA) Also competing: Packy Bannevans (USA), Steve Bird (USA), Tamazi Geladze (GEO), Jose Jimenez (USA), Alberto Sanchez (USA), Bradley Sutton (USA), Ryan White (USA)
Men’s Heavyweights	1. Byambajav “Byamba” Ulambayar (MGL) 2. Petar Stoyanov (BUL) 3. Avtandil Tsertsvadze (GEO) Also competing: Americus Abesamis (USA), Kelly Gneiting (USA), Siosifa “Joe” Isamau (USA), Dan Kalbfleisch (USA), Torsten Scheibler (GER)
Men’s Open	1. Petar Stoyanov (BUL) 2. Dan Kalbfleisch (USA) 3. Stiliyan Georgiev (BUL) Also competing: Abesamis, Bannevans, Bird, Crite, Gutierrez, Isamau, Jimenez, B. Kalbfleisch, T. Sabo, Sanchez, Tsertsvadze, Ulambayar, White

JUNIOR DIVISION YUSHO WINNERS (Hatsu 2009)

Division	Rank	Shikona	Heya	Rec.
Makushita	1-E	FUKUOKA	Hakkaku	7-0
Sandanme	30-W	AOZORA	Tagonoura	7-0
Jonidan	38-E	KAISHO	Shikihide	7-0
Jonokuchi	23-E	HISANOTORA	Tagonoura	7-0

Lone Star Asian Festival Tournament: January 31, 2009

Special Report for SUMO SHIMPO

The first tournament of the year that was held in Texas was in conjunction with the San Antonio Asian Festival. Over 9,000 people filtered through the grounds of the UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures and saw a wide variety of Asian influence and culture. Of course one of the cultural events was a sumo tournament hosted by Lone Star Sumo.

The tournament was looking to be quite an event, with over 18 sumotori projected to come in from California, Nevada, New Mexico, Louisiana, Georgia, and of course, Texas. As the day progressed only two states were represented. Six wrestlers participated in the round robin senior's open division. Packy Bannevans, traveling from Georgia, made the most of this journey, winning all five of his matches and also completing his undefeated ways during the exhibition matches/demonstrations held throughout the day.

Newcomers to the sport took the 2nd and 3rd place medals. Garrett Bockman (San Antonio), one of Tom Zabel's new students stole the silver, finishing 3-2. Meanwhile, Tom's nephew, Mark Zabel (Corpus Christi), took home the bronze with two wins - three losses. The crowd was polled and Garrett also earned the Kanto-sho Award for his tenacious "Fighting Spirit".

We also held two yonen divisions. In the younger division (under 10) we had four sumotori in a round robin competition. Three Chisolm brothers participated, all students of Tom's, with the middle brother, Dasen, going zensho yusho at 3-0. Older brother Cameron, made the crowd roar with approval as he let the smallest boy, Landon, push him around the ring and get his only win of the tournament. Because of Cameron's true sportsmanship, he tied for 2nd with his younger brother Evan and Landon, finishing with one win against two losses.

The older yonen (11-13) division kept growing and we finally ended with 11 sumotori. We used a double elimination bracket to sift through this group with Caesar holding the gold, Kevin taking the silver, and Barto carting home the bronze medal.

Lone Star Sumo also hosted three other demonstrations throughout the day to large crowds that gathered around the outdoor dohyo. Beautiful weather and great participation allowed Lone Star Sumo to coax over 50 kids and a dozen adults to participate in small exhibition matches and informal tournament-style competitions during the informative and learning presentations.

Lone Star Sumo would like to again extend their thanks to Packy for his knowledge and assistance, and his "au naturel" appearance that really sparked interest in the day's activities.

United States Sumo Calendar for 2009

CLASSES/TRAINING SESSIONS

SESSION	DAY	START	END	FEE	LOCATION	STAGING ORGANIZATION
GSS Practice	SU	ongoing	ongoing	Yes	Combined Martial Science 13611-A 12th St., Chino, CA	Golden State Sumo (Doug Cochran)

Contact the listed STAGING ORGANIZATION for the latest fee schedule and other information.

COMPETITIONS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	STAGING ORGANIZATION
SHUNBUN 2009	April 4, 2009	"Dohyo of Dreams", Garden Grove, CA	Southern California Sumo Kyokai

All information on this calendar is subject to change. Contact the listed STAGING ORGANIZATION for latest information.

A League of Extraordinary Gentlemen

by Kelly Gneiting (Special for SUMO SHIMPO)

The morning of Friday, January 9th, 2009: Manny Yarbrough sits on his bed at a weight-loss center in Morristown, NJ. The best way to describe the expression on his face is bewilderment -- bewilderment and subtle annoyance. Standing in front of him are U.S. National Champs James Perry, Trent Sabo, and Kelly Gneiting, who had just walked in the door to his room in total surprise to Manny in an effort to support the big man in his weight loss. *The weekend just got interesting*, the 1995 World Champ had to be thinking.

"I don't even let my parents come and see me." Manny told us. But whether he wanted us there or not, we were there, with return flights that didn't leave until Monday. Yet who could blame the man? Care One, the "weight loss center" he was staying at, was actually a retirement center for the elderly in which Manny simply occupied a room. Stretchers and wheel chairs lined the walls of the facility, housing an assortment of white-haired residents.

Now Manny had to deal with us for three days, and damn-it, he was going to like it! And the wonder of it was that he thoroughly did. Living in an atmosphere that would have depressed any of us, Manny deserved the visit. At 44 years old, if Manny made 500 lbs (he's currently 650) and turned into James Brewster Thompson, he could be the world's first double-digit world champion. But that doesn't take away from his current accomplishments. Manny Yarbrough is more than a great sumo athlete. He is more than a 4th degree black-belt in the Martial Art, more than the country's only world champion. All of the man's athletic accomplishments combined are second to that of being a trailblazer; and not just A trailblazer, but THE ORIGINAL trailblazer. Every sport has 'em--guys with vision stomping down the grass, thistles, and debris, making a path for the rest of us.

Friday was spent touring the streets of NYC, including Ground Zero, the Hudson River, and a million little shops, and ended at a Brazillian rotisserie restaurant where everyone pigged out on the buffet including sumo old-timer Alex Vega. But not Manny. Manny didn't have a small plate of food, a biscuit, nor a mint. He just sat there yucking it up with a dozen of us while we all knocked ourselves out. As a man who overindulges in the pleasures of satisfying an appetite, I thought this showed incredible willpower. And before the trip was over Manny did this 3 more times. The man's definitely on the right track for taking it off.

The last full day together was spent being filmed by a British filming crew for the reality TV show 'Ugly, New York' to air in England sometime this April. We reenacted Friday's unexpected visit at Care One, hit the gym for stretching and a few matches between Trent and I, and finally made our way to Manny's hometown, Rahway, NJ to film a dozen of us hanging out at the cigar shop watching the NFL Playoff games. It was while at the cigar shop where I found out just what enduring 9 hours of heavy secondhand smoke does to virgin lungs (a week later I'm still on the verge of being violently ill, hacking up phlegm constantly). I may start smoking just to build my

immunity. (For your health's sake, please don't!! -- Ed.) One of the unexpected highlights of that evening, however, was Trent's San Diego Chargers losing to the Pittsburgh Steelers and Trent losing a bet. Trent now has to read the entire Book of Mormon (and be quizzed), and I thanked God He protected me from drinking 20 ounces of beer.

Sunday at the gym, on air the question was posed to Manny by the British filming crew "What makes the sport of Sumo and the guys involved so unique?" Manny's response was genuine.

"Well, I heard something from Trent the other day that seemed remarkably on-target. We're involved in a League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. There's something about the guys that do the sport that's over the top. Frequently guys bring something else to the table along with sumo ability. Over there you have James Perry who for years was among the strongest men in America. Kelly here ran a marathon at 430 pounds. Trent frequently beats guys that are 3 times as big as he is..."

"And Manny breaks all the rules!" blurts Trent.

True.

More from Kelly...

A dozen guys bought flights into Salt Lake City, and 3 guys - Javon Rushing, Ryan White, and Justin Crite - drove together to Snake River's '08 event in Rigby, Idaho. But these Southern California drivers weren't prepared for the 4 inches of blowing snow that the rest of us woke up to the morning of December 13th. "The car flipped around 12 times." says Justin, the only one of the three to walk away from the accident without injury. "We're all lucky we had our seatbelts on." Yes they are. The three were treated and released from Pocatello Hospital in Pocatello, 75 miles away from Rigby. Javon received stitching on his arm for a massive cut, and Ryan took the worst of it, receiving treatment for head trauma. Eventually they were all released, though their car was totaled.

As Freddie Mercury of Queen sings in his final song to the world before dying, The Show Must Go On. And so after only an hour delay, it did. Around 70 matches were fought to the gracious officiating of Troy Collins. The leading area newspaper compiled a short narrative with pictures and video footage to the narration of (our guest emcee) Jim Lowerre, which can be found at <http://www.postregister.com/special/prvideo/index.php?id=34> and is rather nicely done. (I agree totally, of course -- Ed.)

Special thanks to Carl Pappalardo for cooking a superb meal for a dozen of us at Grandpa Gneiting's house the night before the event. You're a maestro at the art of sumo in more ways than one - keeping us all on the high end of our weight class!

Thank you all.



Mstr. Trey Fuel and "Yukikaze"



The SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SUMO KYOKAI proudly presents
a tournament sanctioned by the
United States Sumo Federation



SHUNBUN 2009

The Spring Equinox Tournament

- WHEN:** Saturday, April 4, 2009
Competitors check-in begins at 1:00PM; matches begin at 2:00PM
- WHERE:** “Dohyo of Dreams” at Meade Station
12291 Meade Street, Garden Grove, CA 92841 (see map below)
- WHO:** Amateur sumotori of both genders, all ages and weight classifications,
from anywhere in the world
- COST:** Spectators admitted FREE: competitor entry fee is \$10.00

NOTES TO PROSPECTIVE COMPETITORS:

United States Sumo Federation membership is required to compete in this tournament if you are either: (1) a US citizen or (2) a citizen of another country who is permanently residing in the USA. (Non-resident citizens of other countries should be members of the sumo sanctioning organizations for their countries.)

USSF membership application forms will be available at the registration table during check-in. Annual dues are as follows:

Seniors (+18 years as of 1/1/09): \$20.00
Juniors (13-18 years as of 1/1/09): \$20.00
Yonen (-13 years as of 1/1/09): FREE

A waiver form, filled out and signed, will be required from all competitors prior to competition. Minor competitors (less than 18 years of age) must have their waiver forms signed by a parent or adult guardian.

The “Dohyo of Dreams” is a ‘shorts-optional’ venue: “traditional”, “raw dog” and “bareback” are allowed.

Friday night weigh-ins will be available. Call or E-mail Jim (see below) for an appointment.

This tournament is sanctioned by the United States Sumo Federation under sanction number:

2009-4

NOTE TO SPECTATORS:

The “Dohyo of Dreams” is located in the backyard of a private residence. It is strongly advised that you bring your own lawn chairs, blankets, cushions or whatever to sit upon. It is also strongly advised that you bring hats, sunscreen lotion, or other sun protection. Please feel free to bring food and drink to enjoy while you watch the competition. Alcoholic beverages may be consumed on the premises (BYOB) by persons of legal drinking age.

MAP TO THE “DOHYO OF DREAMS” (larger street map on back of flyer)

