

Ukrainian Sumo Star Makes History

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **refugee** (noun) /ˌref.juˈdʒi:/ – A person who has been forced to leave their country.
Example: He left his home as a refugee and moved to Japan to start a new life.
2. **tournament** (noun) /ˈtʊə.nə.mənt/ – A competition with many players or teams.
Example: The young wrestler won every match in the national sumo tournament.
3. **defeated** (verb) /diˈfiː.tɪd/ – To win a victory over someone in a fight or game.
Example: The Ukrainian athlete defeated the champion to win the gold medal.
4. **fluent** (adjective) /ˈfluː.ənt/ – Able to speak a language easily and well.
Example: After living in Tokyo for three years, he became fluent in Japanese.
5. **promoted** (verb) /prəˈməʊ.tɪd/ – To be moved to a higher rank or position.
Example: Because of his great skill, he was promoted to a top rank very quickly.
6. **excelled** (verb) /ɪkˈseld/ – To be extremely good at something.
Example: Many international athletes have excelled in Japan's traditional sports.
7. **delayed** (verb) /diˈleɪd/ – To happen at a later time than planned.
Example: The big game was delayed for one year because of the global pandemic.



Aonishiki Arata is a talented sumo wrestler from Ukraine who lives in Japan. He recently made history by winning a very famous sumo grand tournament. This is a special victory because he is the first Ukrainian to win. Many people in Japan were surprised and impressed by his great skill. He proved that hard work can lead to amazing success in sports.

The person he beat in the final match was a famous wrestler named Hoshoryu. Hoshoryu is a top-ranked champion who was born in the country of Mongolia. Winning against such a strong opponent is a very difficult task for anyone. Only two people in the world currently hold the highest rank in sumo. Aonishiki showed that he can compete with the best athletes in the world. Aonishiki's real name is Danilo, and he started wrestling when he was seven. By age seventeen, he was already the best young wrestler in his country. He had to leave Ukraine as a refugee because of the war there. He lived in Germany for a short time before moving to Japan. Even though he faced many challenges, he never stopped practicing his favorite sport.

When he first arrived in Japan, he could not speak any of the language. He made a Japanese friend at a competition which helped him move there. Now, he is fluent in Japanese and communicates easily with his coaches. He is only twenty-one years old but is already becoming

very famous. His fast success is breaking many old records in the sport of sumo. Ukraine has a very long and proud history of successful Olympic wrestling. For many years, athletes from other countries have done well in Japanese sumo. This list includes people from Hawaii, Mongolia, and now the nation of Ukraine. Aonishiki is expected to reach the second-highest rank in sumo very soon. This would be the fastest promotion since the current system began in 1958.

DISCUSSION

1. How do you think Aonishiki felt when he won a Japanese tournament while his home country was at war?
2. If you had to move to a new country and learn a difficult language, what would be the hardest part for you?
3. Sumo is a very traditional sport. Do you think it is important for traditional sports to welcome people from different countries?
4. Aonishiki moved to Japan because of a friendship. How important do you think friends are when starting a new life?
5. If you were a professional athlete, would you prefer to compete in the Olympics or in a traditional national sport?
6. What are some things a person can do to become "fluent" in a new culture, not just the language?
7. Imagine Aonishiki returns to Ukraine one day. How do you think people there will welcome him?