

VERY Brief bios of the 8 non Riho/Hikaru Shida Japanese Talent featured in AEW Women's Championship Tournament:

Important to note: Japanese companies are almost ways segregated based on gender. Women's promotions are called "Joshi" (pronounced Joe-she) Their company will be noted in parenthesis. Freelancers will also be noted as they work more similarly to independent talent here. Many talent share talent and use freelancers due to small rosters. Tokyo Joshi Pro is the most self sufficient promotion featured in the tournament and rarely shares talent elsewhere unless noted.

1) Yuka Sakazaki (Tokyo Joshi Pro)

- Yuka is the former Princess of Princess (World) Champion having lost her belt at their big annual show in early January after a very lengthy reign.
- She has appeared in AEW numerous times but now that she is no longer the champion, she may appear for longer stretches of time.

2) Maki Itoh (Tokyo Joshi Pro)

- insanely popular with western fans. Maki is a former idol whom often goes viral on wrestler twitter due to her "new English words/terms of the day" which are usually curse words and sexual terms that fans teach her. She swears a lot and likes to call people motherfucker. She sometimes goes by Maki "fucking" Itoh.
- Marked improvement as a wrestler in recent times and will be VERY popular.

3) Emi Sakura (Choco Pro fka Gatoh Move)

- legendary Joshi legend and even more legendary wrestling trainer. Well respected worker but more respected for the mega stars she has created which includes Shida, Riho and others.

-She now runs a company called Chocopro which is formerly known as Gatoh Move. The company is popular with wrestling fans as they both film in a tiny space with a mat layed down on a floor, and because they regularly upload to youtube, making it very accessible.

4) Mei Suruga (Choco Pro AND Tokyo Joshi Pro)

- Mei is the newest star trained by Emi. A tiny wrestler, she is a blend of kawaii (cute) and violence, often posing with her chin rested on her balled up fists while her opponent is in holds or she is perched on their shoulders.
- She also wrestles as a heel cult member in the top heel stable at Tokyo Joshi Pro. Her name there is Mei Saint-Michel and she plays an evil maid and uses a serving tray to attack opponents.
- is currently a Choco Pro/Gatoh Move tag team champion
- Maki will initially get most of the western fanfare but I think Mei is the dark horse for American superfandom.

5) Aja Kong (OZ Academy)

- A wrestling legend, Aja Kong boasts a career including the WWF.
- An underrated trailblazer for Black Athletes, Aja is the daughter of a Black American soldier and her Japanese mother. In fact, she was forced to be a monster heel solely because she is of mixed race heritage and companies said that would make her “angry at the world”. (Ahh wrestling racism)
- Very far into her career and a lot of hip and knee issues as of late. Expect Aja to rely on weapons and a few power moves in the tournament. I suspect she will be used to put an eventual finalist over.

6) Rin Kadokura (Marvelous)

- Rin is one of the first trainees of Chigusa Nagayo (legendary Japanese wrestler of the tag team The Crush Gals with Lioness Asuka , whom WWE’s Asukas named after) for her Joshi promotion Marvelous.
- Rin is a very fast paced and young wrestler whom I think is maybe the most exciting technical wrestler in this tournament. Is also a VERY experienced tag team worker.
- Despite being signed to Marvelous, the promotion is small and Rin regularly wrestles for many other promotions, and is a current tag champion in Pro Wrestling WAVE.

7) Ryo Mizunami (Freelance)

- Ryo Mizunami is a veteran wrestler whom just became a freelancer after a long tenure in the promotion Pro Wrestling WAVE and was trained by Meiko Satomura.
- She was featured in AEW’s Double Or Nothing six woman tag match and is a member of the Japanese babyface faction MAX VOLTAGE whom until recently often faces off in opposition to NXT signee Sareee.
- My friend describes her as “John Cena’s charisma combined with Randy Savage’s showmanship”

8) VENY (Freelance)

- Veny is the most exciting addition to the group. You will also hear her referred to as her former name ASUKA, which is understandably confused with WWE’s Asuka.
- Veny goes by the gender less superstar and is an openly Trans Joshi worker.
- She has a very diverse moveset and is both powerful and high flying.
- Began her career in a tag team with the late Hana Kimura called Flourish. She occasionally does Hana’s entrance as a tribute to her friend .
- She is somebody I could see being signed and relocating to America as she is very motivated and has wanted to come here for a very long time.