THE DAILY LIFE OF A SUMO WRESTLER

By Jason Mori

If you’ve ever seen a sumo wrestling match, you might have thought it was pretty simple: Large men stomping around in a ring, bashing into each other in a test of brute strength. But a closer look at the wrestlers’ daily lives shows us that every moment is planned out, each hour designed for excellence in this ancient sport.

Most wrestlers live together in a dormitory called a stable. Their day begins around 5 a.m. when they rise from bed, arrange their hair into topknots, and put on their traditional loincloth.

Next come chores: Some wrestlers prepare the food for later in the day, while others sweep and clean the practice area.

When these tasks are done, training begins. The wrestlers stretch, then do hard physical training for 3-4 solid hours. Their regimen includes drills, weight lifting, and going head-to-head in their own wrestling matches.

You may have noticed breakfast wasn’t mentioned. That’s because the wrestlers have to skip it. Skipping meals slows the body’s metabolism, resulting in weight gain. And most wrestlers want this: Sumo wrestling has no weight limit, so bigger players have an edge. Once they finally eat at lunchtime, the meals can be as much as 10,000 calories, mostly in the form of a stew of meat, vegetables, and noodles.

After lunch, the wrestlers take naps in order to keep as many calories in their bodies as possible. Three hours later, the training begins again, followed by another massive evening meal, then preparations for bed.

The next day, they will start all over again, renewing their commitment to a tradition that is anything but simple.

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