

Four indicted in sumo wrestler's death

by UPI

TOKYO - A former sumo stable master and three wrestlers were indicted in the 2007 fatal hazing of a 17-year-old junior wrestler, Japanese prosecutors said Friday. Sumo coach Junichi Yamamoto, 58, and wrestlers Yuichiro Izuko, 25; Masakazu Kimura, 24; and Masanori Fujii, 22, are charged with causing injuries that resulted in the death of Takashi Saito, Kyodo news reported. Yamamoto was fired as master of the Tokitsukaze stable and the three other defendants are members of the wrestling group, Kyodo said. Investigators say Fujii has admitted to the hazing. Yamamoto denied having any role in the death, blaming it on the wrestlers, Kyodo said. Police said they believed three other wrestlers were involved in the attacks, but they have not been charged. The four defendants are suspected of beating Saito with metal bats and wooden sticks, as well as forcing him into excessive sparring sessions on June 25-26, at the group's lodging facilities in Inuyama before a tournament in Nagoya. Police said Saito was hazed because he had briefly left the wrestling stable.

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