



Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America

By Scott Beekman

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Despite its status as one of the oldest and most enduringly popular sports in history, wrestling has been pushed to the background of the current American sports scene. Most people today would have a hard time even considering wrestling (with some of its modern theatrics) in the same terms as track and field or boxing. But until the 1920s, wrestling stood as a legitimate professional sport in this country, and a widely practiced amateur one as well. Its past respectability may not have endured, but the advent of cable television in the 1980s offered the sport a renewed opportunity to play a determining role in American popular culture. This opportunity was not wasted, and wrestlers now assume places in politics and film at the highest levels. *Ringside*, the first work to fully examine the history of professional wrestling in this country, provides an illuminating and colorful account of all of the various athletes, entertainers, businessmen, and national outlooks that have determined wrestling's erratic route through American history.

This chronological work begins with a brief account of wrestling's global history, and then proceeds to investigate the sport's growth as a specifically American institution. Wrestling has continued to survive in the face of technological developments, scandals, public ridicule, and a lack of centralized control, and today this supremely adaptable entertainment form represents, in sum, an international industry capable of attracting enormous television and pay-per-view audiences, along with massive amounts of advertising and merchandizing revenue. *Ringside* focuses on the business of wrestling as well as on the performers and their in-ring antics, and offers readers a fully nuanced examination of the development of professional wrestling in America.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

The biggest question about pro wrestling is, Why, when it's one of the oldest and most consistently popular sports in history, does it maintain an unshakable reputation as marginal, disreputable, and sleazy? The book's author--a history professor and not a slavish fan of the sport--begins at the beginning, with a discussion of wrestling's worldwide history and appeal. Then he zeroes in on the U.S., with which pro wrestling has become inextricably linked. It's a story of sportsmanship, ego, celebrity, greed, and rivalry. It's just like any other sports story, in other words, and that's the book's central theme: for all its image problems, pro wrestling is, when you come right down to it, a sport like any other. An eye-opening reappraisal of a much-maligned sport, and (for wrestling fans) perhaps a much-needed vindication. *David Pitt*

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Review

"Beekman has written an excellent account of the history of professional wrestling from its origins in ancient civilizations to its current status as entertainment in the US. His meticulous research is evident in the copious documentation. He includes an insightful discussion of the business practices wrestlers and promoters have engaged in to preserve this pseudo-sport and make it one of the US's leading entertainment industries. Like Elliot Gorn's *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America*, Beekman's historical view of the rise of professional wrestling looks at how the sport mirrors blue-collar society. Readers may have difficulty--as this reviewer did--keeping track of the names of individuals, organizations, and cartels that pepper this history. The book includes a notes section and a lengthy bibliography. Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and above; general readers." - **Choice**

"Beekman sets out to generate some respect for professional wrestling by fully examining the history of the sport in the US. He untangles the myths and legends of professional wrestling without skimping on the entertaining stories and the larger-than-life personalities. He provides a brief account of wrestling's global history before investigating the sport as a specifically American institution, focusing on the business of wrestling as well as the performers and their antics." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"The book's author--a history professor and not a slavish fan of the sport--begins at the beginning, with a discussion of wrestling's worldwide history and appeal. Then he zeroes in on the U.S., with which pro wrestling has become inextricably linked. It's a story of sportsmanship, ego, celebrity, greed, and rivalry. It's just like any other sports story, in other words, and that's the book's central theme: for all its image problems, pro wrestling is, when you come right down to it, a sport like any other. An eye-opening reappraisal of a much-maligned sport, and (for wrestling fans) perhaps a much-needed vindication." - **Booklist**

"Beekman's book is thick with historical detail and archival evidence, which makes it a real resource for research into professional wrestling's enduring allure." - **TDR: The Drama Review**

Review

"This book is a wonderful ride through the bumpy, often murky world of professional wrestling. Scott Beekman has diligently researched the subject in order to take his readers on a tour of this much misunderstood form of sports entertainment. Though I have spent over 30 years studying the history of professional wrestling, I learned a great deal from this book. I highly recommend it to anyone who has any interest at all in the subject." (Mike Chapman, Executive Director, International Wrestling Institute and

Museum, Newton, Iowa)

Users Review

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David Hogan:

Hey guys, do you desire to find a new book you just read? Maybe the book with the subject *Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America* suitable to you? The book was written by well-known writer in this era. The book entitled *Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America* is a single of several books which everyone read now. That book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this review you will enter the new shape that you ever know before. The author explained their thought in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this publication. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world in this book.

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Playing with family within a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, thrilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition details. Even you love *Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America*, you may enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Catherine Kuntz:

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