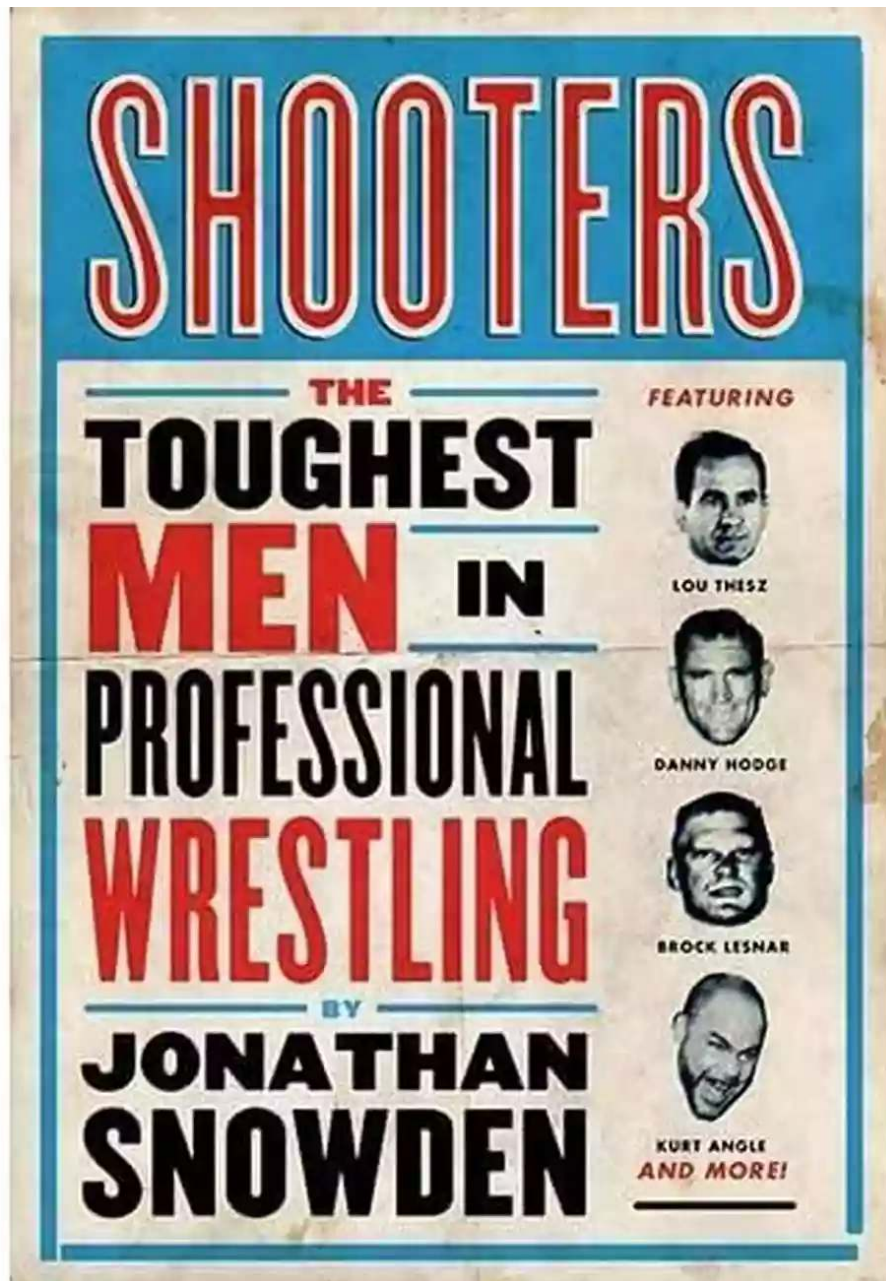


Shooters: The Toughest Men In Professional Wrestling

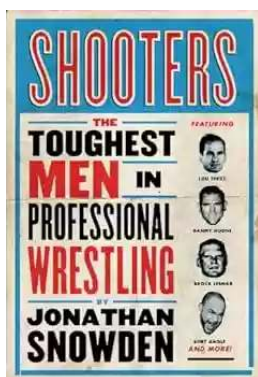


Professional wrestling is often perceived as an athletic exhibition, blending athleticism, showmanship, and storytelling. The storylines are carefully crafted, the moves are choreographed, and the outcomes are predetermined. However, amidst this larger-than-life spectacle, there exists a special breed of wrestlers

known as "shooters" - men who possess legitimate combat skills and excel in the art of catch-as-catch-can wrestling, a pure form of grappling.

The Origins of Shooters

The term "shooter" originated in the early days of professional wrestling, when the contests were still presented as legitimate athletic competitions. Shooters were wrestlers who had legitimate training in various combat sports, such as catch wrestling, Greco-Roman wrestling, judo, or mixed martial arts.



Shooters: The Toughest Men in Professional Wrestling by Jonathan Snowden(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Back in the early 20th century, professional wrestling was quite different from what it is today. Shooters were relied upon to bring credibility to the sport, as they could legitimately beat their opponents in real fights. They were tough, skilled, and adept in mat-based grappling, making them a force to be reckoned with in the ring.

The Art of Catch-as-Catch-Can Wrestling

While most professional wrestling matches involve a certain level of cooperation between competitors, shooters bring a unique level of authenticity. Catch-as-catch-can wrestling, their preferred style, focuses on takedowns, joint locks, and mat-based submissions, emphasizing techniques that can be employed in real combat situations.

Shooters have an exceptional ability to blend their legitimate combat skills seamlessly with the scripted nature of professional wrestling. They can take control of a match, improvise moves, and make the action in the ring look convincing while ensuring the safety of their opponents.

Legendary Shooters in Professional Wrestling

Throughout the history of professional wrestling, there have been a number of legendary shooters who left a lasting impact on the industry. These men combined their legitimate combat skills with charismatic personalities to become true icons:

- **Frank Gotch:** An early 20th-century shooter who dominated professional wrestling with his catch wrestling skills. He held the World Heavyweight Championship for a record eight years.
- **Antonio Inoki:** A Japanese wrestler renowned for his strong style and shoot fighting abilities. He fought challenging opponents from different martial arts backgrounds, including Muhammad Ali in a mixed-rules match.
- **Brock Lesnar:** A former collegiate wrestler and UFC heavyweight champion, Lesnar transitioned into professional wrestling with a reputation for being a legitimate ass-kicker.

- Ken Shamrock: A practitioner of mixed martial arts and catch wrestling, Shamrock became one of the pioneers of the shoot-style wrestling movement in the 1990s.

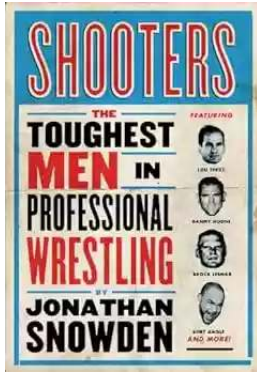
Modern Shooters and Their Impact

While the emphasis on shoot-style wrestling has diminished in recent years, there are still modern-day shooters who continue to make their mark in the industry. These men bring a unique aura of credibility and toughness to their performances:

- Minoru Suzuki: A Japanese wrestler known for his intense shoot-style matches. He seamlessly blends traditional wrestling with hard-hitting strikes and submissions.
- Tim Thatcher: Hailing from the United Kingdom, Thatcher has made a name for himself as a master of catch wrestling techniques, displaying his proficiency in technical wrestling.
- Josh Barnett: A former UFC heavyweight champion turned professional wrestler, Barnett possesses a lethal combination of catch wrestling and submission skills.

Shooters in professional wrestling serve as a reminder of the sport's rich history and its roots as a legitimate combat sport. Their presence adds an element of realism to the otherwise scripted nature of professional wrestling, making the audience question what is real and what is scripted.

While the industry continues to evolve, these tough men continue to captivate audiences with their impressive skills and unwavering toughness. The shooters are a breed apart, embodying the true essence of professional wrestling and the genuine toughness it demands.



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From William Muldoon to Brock Lesnar, this history covers those who have divided themselves as tough guys on the professional wrestling circuit and legitimate confrontations. From catch wrestling master Billy Robinson to the Japanese professional wrestler who gave birth to the global phenomenon that is modern mixed martial arts (MMA), this investigation travels from the shadowy carnival tent and the dingy training hall to the bright lights of the squared circle and the Las Vegas glitz of the octagon. Billy Riley's legendary Wigan Snake Pit and the rigorous UWF Dojo in Tokyo are explored, revealing the secret history of both professional wrestling and the rising sport of MMA. Squared circle icons Strangler Lewis and Lou Thesz and Olympic heroes Danny Hodge and Kurt Angle are also featured.



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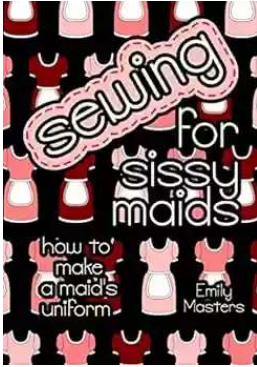
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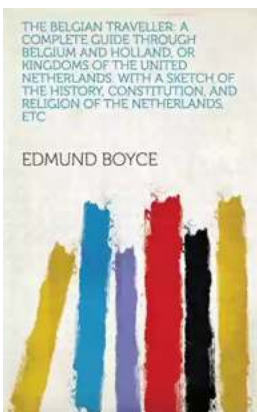
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