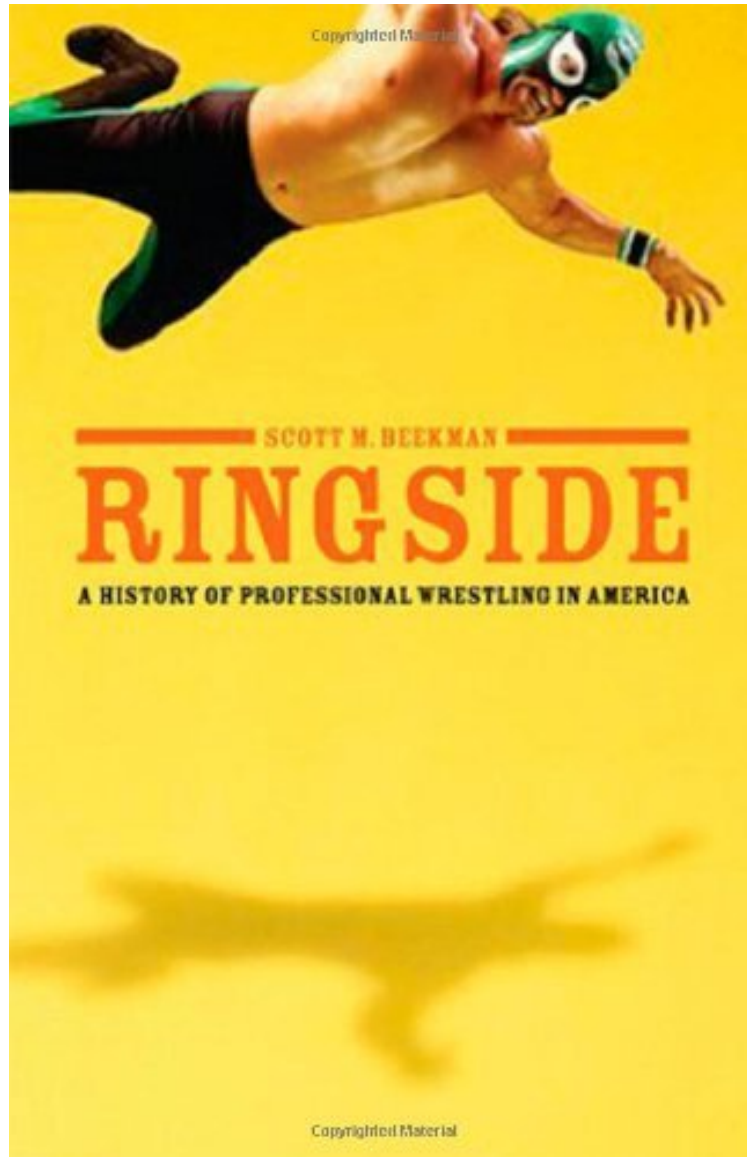


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Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America

Scott Beekman

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Scott Beekman : Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ringside: A History of Professional Wrestling in America:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An exhaustive history of pro wrestling in America By J.S. Hicks Scott Beekman was a subscriber to my pro wrestling history newsletter for years and corresponded (and credited me) in his book. Yet, it was I who learned from him. This book is one the best pro wrestling history books I have ever read. Tremendous in it's coverage of the pioneer era of wrestling (the days before Frank Gotch). Inside you will learn of the various styles and how they progressed and changed. The different masters of the styles and how they eventually

developed into what we today know as pro wrestling and MMA. Yes, the two genres have their roots in the pioneer days of wrestling. Frank Gotch and Farmer Burns had far more in common with Matt Hughes and Randy Couture than with Triple H or the Undertaker. However, in just a few short decades that all changed. The original sport of American pro wrestling evolved (or de-evolved!) from legitimate competition into farcical fantasy. Yet both sides of the tree grew into billion dollar businesses. Scott's book is a must have for any serious wrestling or MMA historian. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well Written and Informative By Christopher Thrasher Professor Beekman provides an excellent history of American wrestling in Ringside. He proceeds in roughly chronological fashion from prehistory to the present with a heavy emphasis on twentieth century America. The early chapters on the myriad of early wrestling styles such as catch, collar and elbow, and Cornish were particularly helpful for my research. More than a simple history of the matches, Ringside provides thoughtful analysis of the economics, symbolism, and technology of wrestling. The work's prose is easy to read and free of theoretical terms. Ringside is an excellent choice for scholars doing research as well as ordinary guys who just want to know more about wrestling. I only wish the book was longer. With only 146 pages of text the narrative seems a little rushed. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Information By Customer I've been a pro wrestling fan all of my life and this book contained great information. The author sure did do his homework for this book. CONS: My first gripe is that sometimes the author went on a sidebar on a wrestler or subject at a certain time then start the next paragraph 20 years earlier from where he was before or during the sidebar. That took some getting used to, but it shouldn't deter anyone from reading or buying the book. My other gripe is that the author seems to have it out for Vincent K. McMahon. He gives McMahon his due in getting to the top of the industry but only in a factual matter. The tone I inferred is that he has much disdain for V.K.M. I'm not saying Vince deserved praise necessarily, but I was expecting a factual history without much, if any, opinion. PROS: If you are more than a casual wrestling fan then you should read this book. There is a great amount of information on the early days of pro wrestling and an excellent chronology of how pro wrestling came to its current state. If you are looking at this books and these reviews then odds are you're a true fan and will have a lot of appreciation for the information in this book.

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.

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 Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "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 "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)