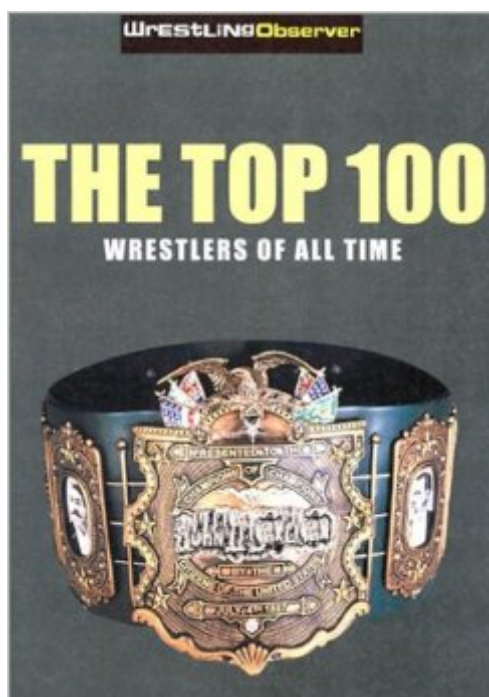


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Top 100 Pro Wrestlers Of All Time: Wrestling Observer's



Synopsis

Book by Molinaro, John F.

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Customer Reviews

One of the most popular oxymorons among wrestling fans is "wrestling history." Unlike baseball, football or other sports that trace their roots and superstars back to forgotten eras, wrestling writers, by and large, live in the eternal now, with wrestling history stretching as far back to when they first became interested in it. It's not that they have no interest in the past; they just cannot conceive of it. After all, it happened before they were born. And it is this mindset that dooms what otherwise is an excellent survey of wrestling, replete with photos from the library of Dr. Mike Lano, one of the sport's greatest photographers. Ric Flair the #1 wrestler of all time? Sorry, but given the standards of history, that honor goes to Lou Thesz. Thesz was not only heads and tails above Flair as a wrestler, but it was also Thesz who shaped the course of wrestling history when he became NWA champion and united wrestling promotions across the country, giving the NWA, and wrestling, a cache it had never before enjoyed. Without Thesz, it could well be argued that there would be no Flair, for without the iron hand of Thesz, there might not even be an NWA surviving into the 80's. The inclusion of Japanese wrestlers Rikidozan and Antonio Inoki to such lofty spots also shows the myopic bias of the editors. This is the fallacy of the Hardcore fan, who has been so steeped in Japanese wrestling lore so as to actually believe it. When Inoki bought the Cleveland-Buffalo based NWF in the mid-70s, he quickly put himself over as champ. He just as quickly put the promotion out of business in the U.S., for here he had the charisma of a toad. Try Strangler Lewis, the dominant

champion of the 20s and well into the 30s. It could be said of wrestling that it was fake, but no one called the Strangler a faker.

Here are excerpts from my Jan. 5, 2002, column in the (Charleston) Post and Courier: Toronto-based journalist John Molinaro takes a bold step in attempting to rank the greatest pro wrestlers in the history of the game in his new book, "Top 100 Pro Wrestlers of All Time." Unlike many of the "best" and "greatest" lists that spread like wildfire at the end of the millennium, Molinaro's compilation has blossomed into a well-written, thought-provoking work that's sure to spark spirited debate among wrestling fans for years to come. And that's a good thing. Like many similar lists, the Top 100 is not one with which everyone will agree. Any effort to rank athletes in any sports endeavor over such a long period of time is a risky proposition at best. But Molinaro, who at age 28 is already one of the top writers on the pro wrestling scene, covers all the bases in his study, giving a detailed, biographical account of each wrestler on the list. The rankings are not solely based on the opinions of Molinaro, who was a driving force behind Canada's SLAM! Wrestling site. The list was compiled by some of the industry's leading experts, along with the assistance of several mat historians. The book is further strengthened by Molinaro's inclusion of Dave Meltzer as a contributing editor. Meltzer, longtime editor of the authoritative Wrestling Observer newsletter and author of "Tributes: Remembering Some of the World's Greatest Wrestlers," lends his considerable expertise to the effort, explaining the selection process in great detail in the foreword of the book. Serving as a co-editor was radio broadcaster/writer Jeff Marek, founder and host of the world's longest-running wrestling radio talk show, The LAW (Live Audio Wrestling), based out of Toronto. The book's strong points are many.

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