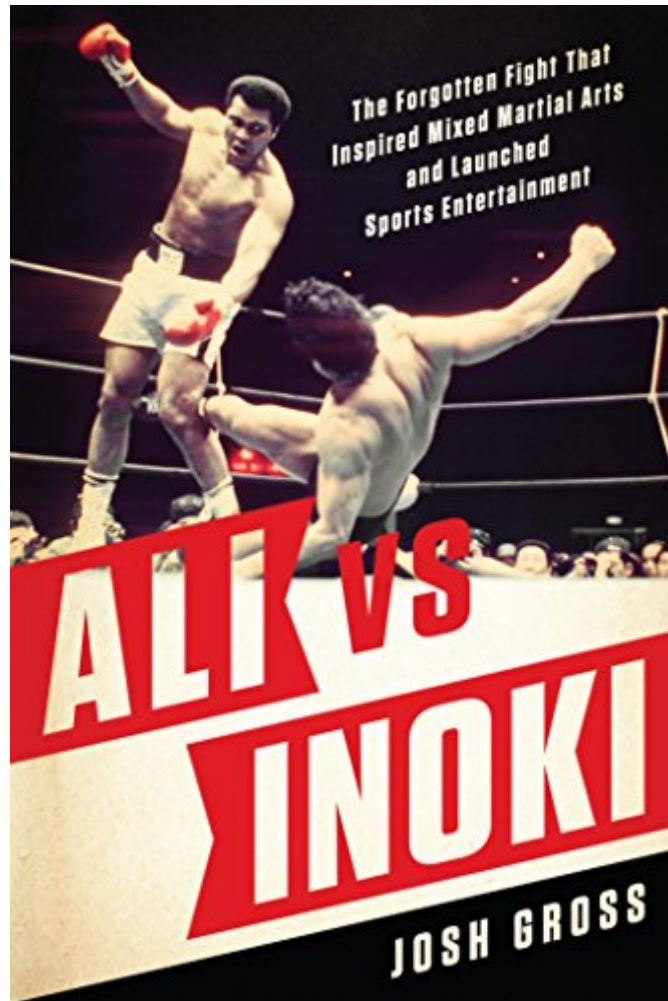


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# Ali Vs. Inoki: The Forgotten Fight That Inspired Mixed Martial Arts And Launched Sports Entertainment



## Synopsis

"Inoki can use his bare fists. He can use karate. This is serious. There's \$10 million involved. I wouldn't pull a fraud on the public. This is real. There's no plan. The blood. The holds. The pain. Everything is going to be real. I'm not here in this time of my life to come out with some phony action. I want you to know this is real."—Muhammad Ali, June 14, 1976, The Tonight Show

Muhammad Ali fought in a mixed-rules contest against iconic pro wrestling champion Antonio Inoki for the so-called "martial arts championship of the world." Broadcast from Tokyo to a potential audience of 1.4 billion in 34 countries, the spectacle foreshadowed and, in many ways, led to the rise of mixed martial arts as a major sport. The unique contest was controversial and panned by wrestling and boxing supporters alike, but the real action was behind the scenes. Egos, competing interests, and a general sense of apprehension over what would happen in the ring led to hodgepodge rules thrown together at the last minute. Bizarre plans to "save" Ali if the fight got out of hand were even concocted. In Ali vs. Inoki, author Josh Gross gets inside Ali's head leading up to the match by resurrecting pre-fight interviews. Gross also introduces us to Inoki, the most famous face in Japan who was instrumental in shaping modern mixed martial arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Josh Gross gives a great portrait on not only the Ali/Inoki fight, but the history of mixed rules fighting, Japanese professional wrestling, catch-as-catch-can wrestling, and of the two men involved in this very flawed yet historic matchup. I've personally loved this fight for years because of how bizarre it is. I was always convinced it was supposed to be a "work" (wrestling terminology for a fight with predetermined outcome), but as you watch it you can tell it was definitely not. Japanese professional wrestling and its roots in legitimate fight sports is a very interesting subject, one that is explored with good detail in the 280 page history lesson. If you're a fan of Ali, fighting, MMA, submission wrestling and its history on pro-wrestling. This is a very interesting read.

If you're interested in Ali, the history of combat sports in this country, the origins of Mixed Martial Arts or just want a fun read, this is for you. So many fascinating characters and of course the legend himself are covered in detail. Side stories about the prelude to the fight, the establishment of a worldwide pay per view event, the people around Ali and more. Gross does a great job weaving all the history of combat sports in the narrative of this fight. Ali was at the height of his powers and popularity when he agreed to take on the Japanese Wrestling Hero, Antonio Inoki. Needless to say, this event may have gone down as a footnote but this book really brings all the crazy characters to life.

Fun book, considerably better than the fight itself! Covers a ton more than just the titular event, with tons of great stories about people like Jhoon Rhee, Rikidozan, Gene Lebell, both Vince McMahaons, Classy Freddie Blassie, etc. Explains the motivations of all the parties involved, from the fighters to the promoters to the fans who paid to see it in arenas and movie theaters across the US. This is a great boxing book, a great wrestling book, and a great mixed martial arts book. Recommended to anyone who has even a passing interest in fight sports or pro wrestling.

I love this book for many reasons. For one thing it's a piece of history that is rarely talked about but maybe more importantly is that Gross writes it in a style that even a non MMA fan like me can relate to. It's really a reference book for future generations that, while based on the bizarre fight, is filled with so much more yet told (unlike so many sports based writing) in a charming, easily to understand, conversational voice. As many of us yearn for more stories about the Champ, most

have been told. This one has not and I'm glad to have stumbled upon it. I predict good things for this book and a bright future for its author. I'm looking forward to Gross' next book!

A fascinating blend of pro wrestling, boxing, and their relationship that led to the combat sport scene we have today.

Great Book especially if you are a boxing or MMA fan

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