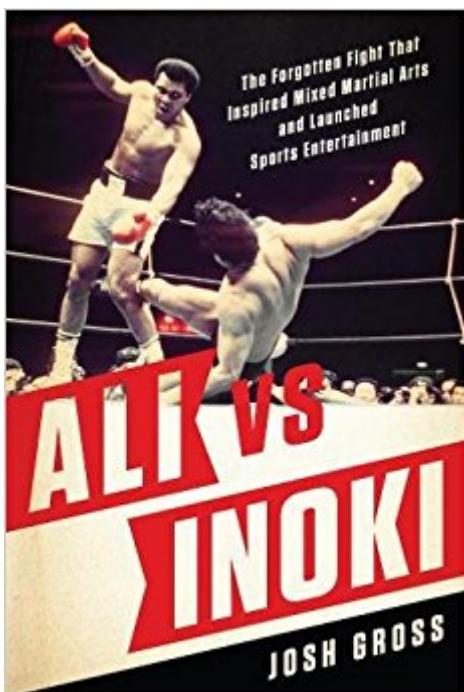


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# Ali Vs. Inoki: The Forgotten Fight That Inspired Mixed Martial Arts And Launched Sports Entertainment



## Synopsis

Named one of the "40 Best Books of 2016" by The New York Post &#147;Inoki can use his bare fists. He can use karate. This is serious. Thereâ&#x2019;s \$10 million involved. I wouldnâ&#x2019;t pull a fraud on the public. This is real. Thereâ&#x2019;s no plan. The blood. The holds. The pain. Everything is going to be real. Iâ&#x2019;m not here in this time of my life to come out with some phony action. I want you to know this is real."&#151;Muhammad Ali, June 14, 1976, The Tonight Show

On June 26, 1976, Muhammad Ali fought in a mixed-rules contest against iconic pro wrestling champion Antonio Inoki for the so-called &#147;martial arts championship of the world.â• 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 &#147;saveâ• Ali if the fight got out of hand were even concocted. In Ali vs. Inoki, author Josh Gross gets inside Aliâ&#x2019;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

&#147;It's only fitting the Josh Gross&#151;an early MMA adopter and as fine a writer/reporter as

the sport has gives us this dispatch of an original boxer-versus-grappler contest. Our only question: when's the movie coming out? L. Jon Wertheim, executive editor, Sports Illustrated "If you're interested in Muhammad Ali, the history of combat sports or pro wrestling, this book is a must-have in your collection." Denny Burkholder, features writer for CBS Sports

Josh Gross is considered a pioneer of mixed martial arts journalism. His reporting spans MMA's shift from an underground, counterculture free-for-all to a multibillion dollar industry regarded as one of the world's fastest growing sports today. During 15 years in the business, Gross can claim to be the only reporter who covered MMA full-time for Sports Illustrated and ESPN. Josh is known for investigative works, and he hosts a popular podcast, Gross Point Blank.

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 McMahons, 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.

As a longtime fan of both MMA and boxing (plus pro wrestling), I have been waiting to read this book since the day I first heard about it and it has not only lived up to the hype, but exceeded it in many ways. This book doesn't just do a good job with detailing what happened before and after the fight, but it also delves into great detail about the fight itself with round by round recaps. A must read for all sports fans.

If you are a MMA fan, then you have to read this book. This is where MMA started, an event which left people guessing what they had just witnessed. It might have not turned out as people wished, but its place in combat sports history is without question.

Great Book especially if you are a boxing or MMA fan

Josh Gross is awesome. Big fan all the way to the Beatdown days with TJ and the Shorty B theme song. As an author he is great.

Very good read that delves into the history of the events and what lead up to it. Excellent!

Great memories and behind the scene

Great read

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