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## **Johnny Powers brings back American "catch wrestling" from the past with British rounds system**

Johnny Powers, the former 9 time pro wrestling champion and iconic sports and television producer, who was an active international pro wrestler in the era of Lou Thesz, Whipper Billy Watson and Antonio Inoki announced today his new television and live event series "The Wrestling Guild" in association with Vision Resource Group Inc. <http://www.vrg-world.com> . Powers was founder of the National Wrestling Federation, which in the 60's and early 70's was one of the four internationally recognized wrestling organizations. He was co-owner / founder of New York State based National Sports TV. In the 60's, Powers with Pedro Martinez, originated the global syndication of American pro wrestling films and videotapes with sales to Japan, Singapore, Philippines, Mexico and 23 other countries.

Powers feels there is a potential to bring back "old strong catch style wrestling"(tm) in a rounds format, as in boxing and extreme fighting contests, that was very popular in England in the fifties and sixties.

Catch wrestling is arguably the ancestor of modern grappling, professional wrestling, mixed martial arts and no-holds-barred competition. Catch wrestling's origins lie in a variety of styles, The term is sometimes used in a restricted sense to refer only to the style of professional wrestling as practiced in United States carnivals just before and after 1900. Under this stricter definition, "catch wrestling" is one of many styles of professional wrestling, specifically as practiced in carnivals and at public exhibitions from after the American Civil War until the Great Depression.

Later, when the British Lancashire wrestling style came to the US and was blended with the rough and tumble mentality, and betting got involved, the very aggressive American catch-as-catch-can style of wrestling emerged and created some of the most outstanding grapplers in the world. Much of today's MMA fighting concepts can be traced to these early "shooters." A shooter is a professional wrestler who has a background in straight up contest fighting, or otherwise has a reputation as a tough guy. Catch wrestling became immensely popular across both sides of the Atlantic, especially in the carnivals in the United States of America during the late 19th and early 20th century. The carnival's wrestlers challenged the locals as part of the carnival's "athletic show" and the locals had their chance to win a cash reward if they could defeat the carnival's strongman by a pin or a submission.

This eventually led to the carnival's wrestlers preparing for the worst kind of unarmed assault and aiming to end the wrestling match with any tough local

quickly and decisively (i.e. via submission). A "hook" was a technical submission which could end a match within seconds. As carnival wrestlers traveled, they met with a variety of people, learning and using techniques from various folk wrestling disciplines, many of which were accessible due to a huge influx of immigrants in the United States during this era.

Folk wrestling has a long pedigree in the United States, famous practitioners of such folk wrestling have included US Presidents George Washington (collar and elbow), Abraham Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt (who appointed catch wrestling champion Tom Jenkins to the position of Head Wrestling coach at the United States Military Academy).

"You never know what the wrestling fan will accept in this era, but I sense that it will be interesting to see if we find a market niche"

"With combat sports running the gambit from the McMahon sports entertainment style to extreme fighting MMA style, we want to see if there is a place for The Wrestling Guild. The Powers team has some wrestlers they are training in this fighting arts style."

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