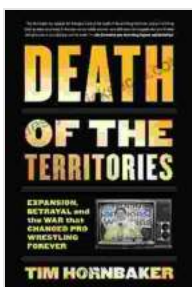


The Death of the Territories: Reshaping Professional Wrestling Landscape

The territorial system, once the bedrock of professional wrestling, has crumbled into oblivion, replaced by a centralized juggernaut. The once-fragmented landscape has been swallowed whole by a handful of behemoth corporations, leaving independent promotions struggling for survival. This seismic shift has irrevocably altered the wrestling industry, creating winners and losers alike.

The Golden Age of Territories

In the mid-20th century, professional wrestling was a patchwork of regional territories, each ruled by a local promoter. These promoters controlled everything from booking shows to training wrestlers, creating a unique and diverse wrestling scene. Territories often developed their own unique styles and characters, giving rise to legends such as Ric Flair, Dusty Rhodes, and The Undertaker.



Death of the Territories: Expansion, Betrayal and the War that Changed Pro Wrestling Forever by Tim Hornbaker

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Print length : 273 pages



The territorial system thrived in the pre-internet era, as fans relied on local newspapers and television stations for their wrestling fix. Promoters built loyal followings by catering to their specific tastes, creating an intimate connection between wrestlers and fans. However, the advent of cable television and the rise of the internet spelled the beginning of the end for the territories.

The Centralization of Power

In the 1980s, Ted Turner's TBS Superstation began broadcasting wrestling nationwide, breaking down the barriers between territories. This gave rise to the popularity of Hulk Hogan and the WWF (now WWE), which began to encroach on the established territories.

By the 1990s, the territorial system was all but dead. WWF and WCW (now defunct) had become the dominant forces in the industry, signing up the top wrestlers and producing televised shows that aired nationally. Independent promotions were left to compete for scraps, forced to rely on local talent and niche markets.

The Rise of WWE

In 2001, the WWF purchased its rival WCW, effectively creating a monopoly in the wrestling industry. WWE became the undisputed global leader, with its programming reaching over 900 million homes in 180 countries.

WWE's dominance has had a profound impact on the wrestling landscape. The company has centralized power, controlling everything from creative content to talent acquisition. Independent promotions have struggled to

compete with WWE's vast resources and star power, leading to a decline in diversity and innovation in the industry.

Impact on Wrestlers

The death of the territories has had a significant impact on wrestlers. In the territorial system, wrestlers had more opportunities to work in different regions and build their characters. They could also negotiate with multiple promoters, giving them more bargaining power.

Today, wrestlers are largely at the mercy of WWE or a handful of other large promotions. They have less creative control over their characters and are often forced to conform to the company's vision. This has led to a homogenization of wrestling, with many wrestlers lacking the unique personalities and storylines that characterized the territorial era.

Impact on Fans

The centralization of power in WWE has also had a negative impact on fans. With fewer options available, fans have become increasingly disillusioned with the product. WWE's repetitive storylines and over-reliance on scripted promos have alienated many longtime viewers.

Independent promotions have attempted to fill the void left by the territories, offering a more diverse and fan-centric experience. However, these promotions often lack the resources to compete with WWE, and they struggle to attract top talent.

The Future of Wrestling

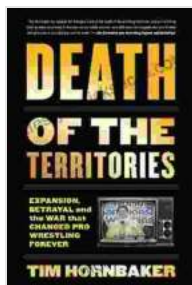
The future of professional wrestling is uncertain. WWE remains the dominant force, but its popularity has waned in recent years. Independent

promotions continue to fight for survival, but they face an uphill battle against the industry giant.

Some believe that the territorial system will never return, as the internet has made it easier for fans to access wrestling content from anywhere in the world. Others believe that the independent scene will continue to grow, providing an alternative to the mainstream product.

One thing is for certain: the death of the territories has changed the professional wrestling landscape forever. The industry has become more centralized and less diverse, and wrestlers and fans alike have felt the impact. While the future of wrestling is uncertain, it is clear that the territorial system will always be remembered as a golden age in the history of the sport.

The death of the territories has been a major turning point in the history of professional wrestling. The once-fragmented landscape has been replaced by a centralized juggernaut, leaving independent promotions struggling for survival. This seismic shift has created winners and losers alike, and the industry will likely continue to evolve in the years to come.



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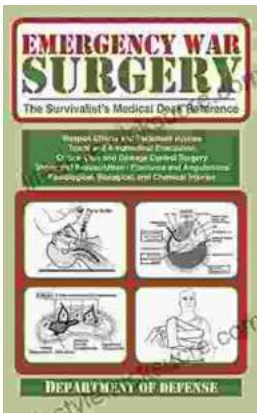
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