



PROGRAM OF  
AFRICAN  
STUDIES  
- NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY -

## ***THE WRESTLING TRADITION IN AFRICA: FROM THE DISTANT PAST, ITS WIDESPREAD PRESENCE TODAY AND THE CHALLENGES IT FACES IN THE FUTURE***

David CURBY EdD (USA) Director of INWR

*Wrestling's Universality Since the Dawn of Mankind*

Josef Blaiz NONGA (Cameroon)

*BESUA – THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL WRESTLING STYLE FROM THE LITTORAL  
REGION OF CAMEROON*

Joseph Rashidi SALUMU (DR Congo)

*KABUBU AND SOCIETAL ISSUES, WRESTLING IN AFRICAN SPORTS AND CULTURE.*



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF WRESTLING RESEARCHERS (INWR)

ADVANCING OUR SPORT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

FAIRE PROGRESSER NOTRE SPORT PAR LA CONNAISSANCE

ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ НАШЕГО СПОРТА ЧЕРЕЗ ЗНАНИЕ

# **Wrestling 101: WRESTLING'S UNIVERSALITY SINCE THE DAWN OF MANKIND**

**David CURBY EdD (USA)**

Director of INWR

Secretary of UWW Scientific Commission

Director of Beat the Streets-Chicago

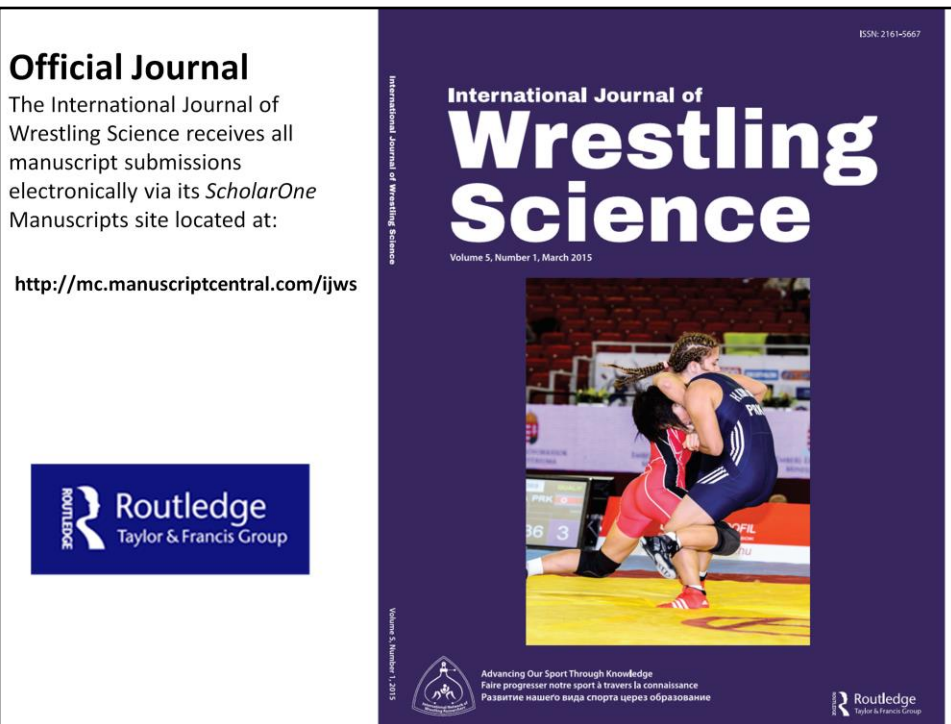


## WHAT IS THE INWR?



The International Network of Wrestling Researchers (INWR) seeks to facilitate the development of wrestling around the world by drawing all wrestling sport science professionals together, in a manner that through our international and intercultural cooperation we are empowered to support the development of wrestling with our research and educational programs.

The INWR is an international organization of over 400 members in 80 countries, dedicated to the study and promotion of wrestling, and is open to all interested scholars, sport scientists, sport medicine personnel and wrestling professionals.

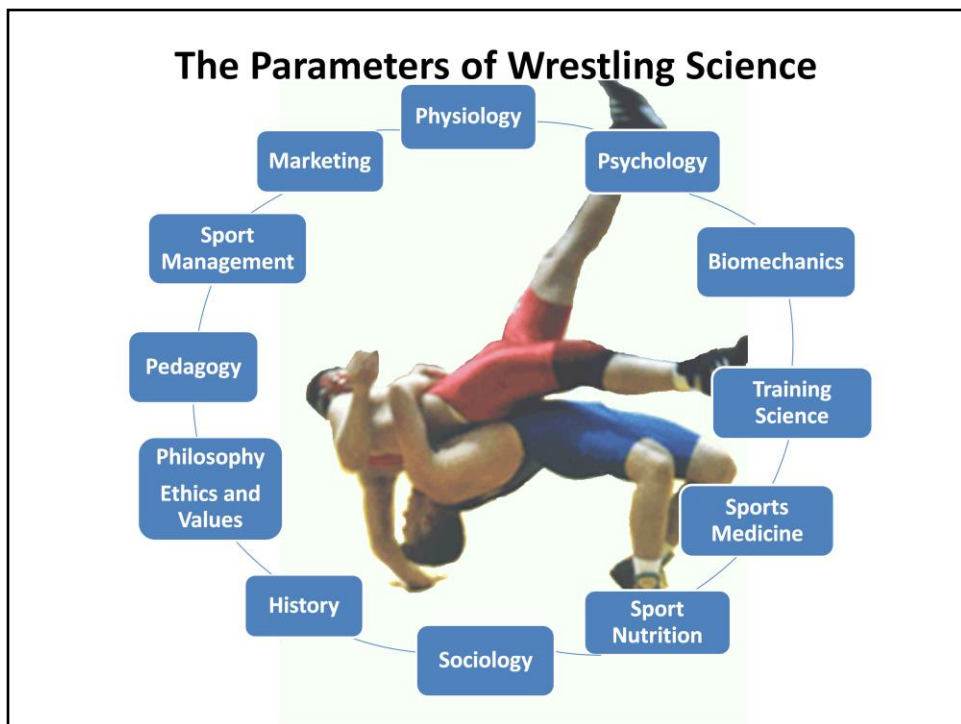


The official publication of INWR is the International Journal of Wrestling Science, the only journal dedicated to the study of the world's oldest sport.

The International Journal of Wrestling Science is a peer-reviewed journal for professionals working in in wrestling and wrestling sport science. Issues are published by Routledge twice a year. Topics include:

- training science
- physiology
- psychology
- sports medicine
- biomechanics
- nutrition
- pedagogy
- history
- sociology
- sports management

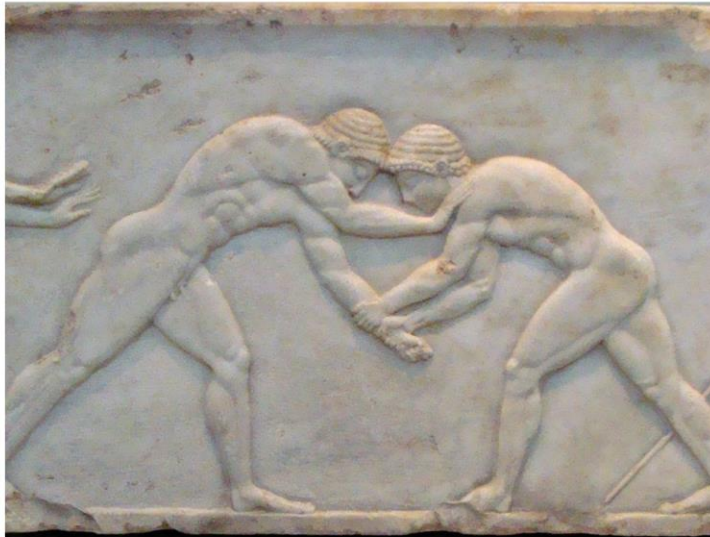
The International Journal of Wrestling Science regularly features: Original Papers, Review Articles, Technique Analysis, Scoring Analysis, Case Studies/Profiles and Letters.



What are the parameters of our work?

The study of wrestling includes the documentation of its HISTORY and development around the world. That is why we are here at Northwestern today!

## Ancient Greeks



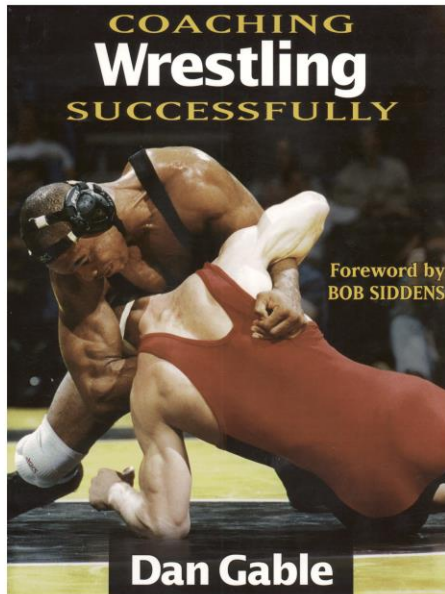
Wrestling was valued by the ancient Greeks. It held a prominent place in education and was included in the program of the Olympic Games beginning in 708 BC.

## Oldest Sport Sumerian Sculpture of Belt Wrestling



The oldest artifacts depicting wrestling are from ancient Sumeria. One is a bronze statuette, dated to around 2600 BC, found in 1938 at Khafaji, near Baghdad and now stored in the National Museum of Iraq. The other is the earliest representation of wrestlers occurs on a stela (detail shown here) from Badra, Iraq, now in the Iraq Museum. ca 2900 B.C.E.

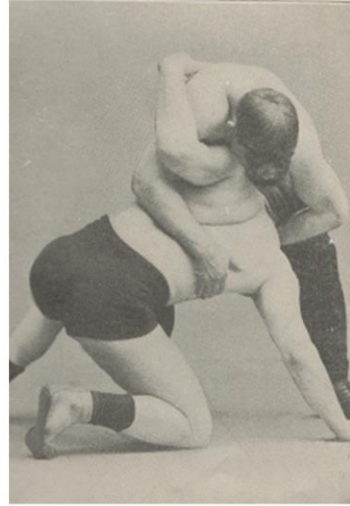
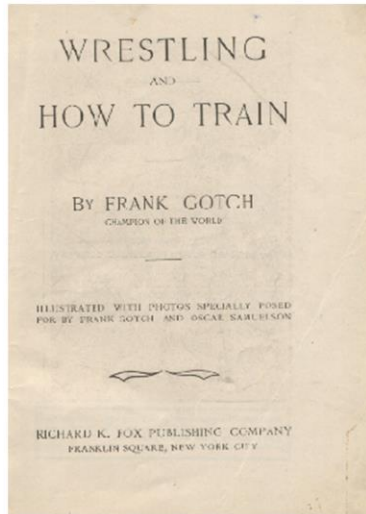
## Links to our Past



Throughout the history of our sport we see vivid examples of the common elements that link the past with the present. The cover of Dan Gable's book from 2000 shows Joe Williams applying the "crusher."

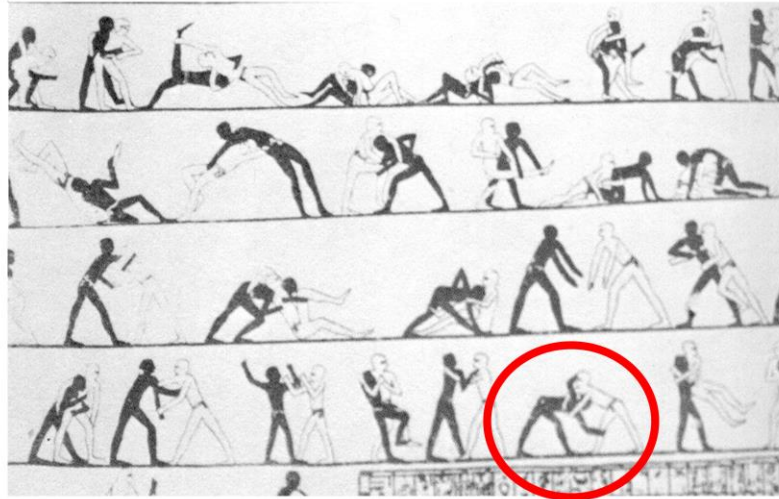


## Training Manual 1918



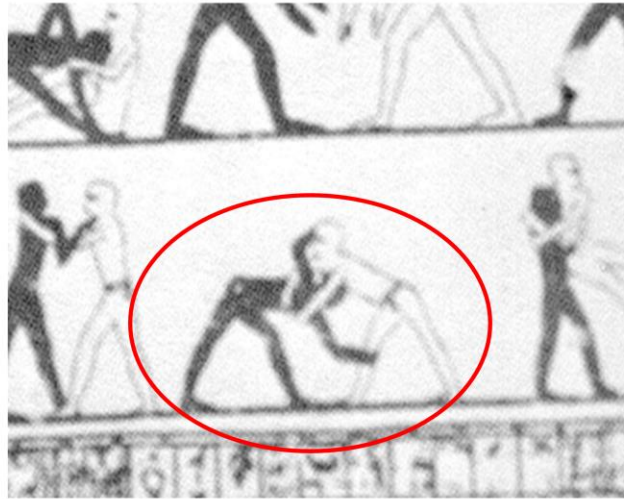
We see the same hold being applied on the cover of an instructional manual by Frank Gotch.

## The Oldest Sport Beni Hasan



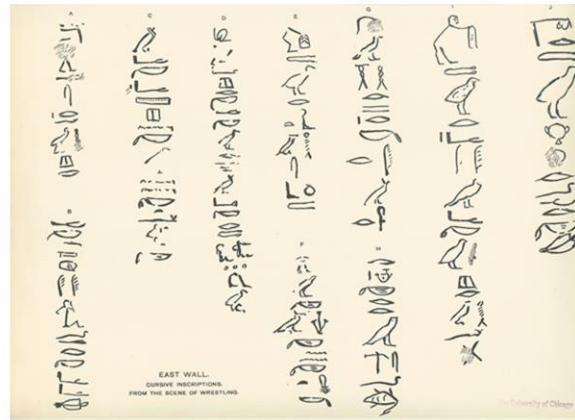
From the walls of the tombs from ancient Egypt in Beni Hasan, there are paintings illustrating over 200 holds.

## The Oldest Sport Beni Hasan



And we see a hold similar to the “crusher.” These were painted nearly 2,000 years B.C.!

## The Oldest Sport Beni Hasan



And we see a hold similar to the “crusher.” These were painted nearly 2,000 years B.C.!

## The Oldest Sport



Fragments of a wrestling instruction manual dated to the 2nd Century CE were discovered in Egypt in 1897. Although transcribed and translated many years ago, the handwritten text remains relatively obscure. It is the oldest known coaching manual for any sport and forms an important part of our worldwide wrestling heritage. This piece of papyrus is housed at Columbia University.

**Most countries or cultures have their own distinctive  
“Folkstyle or “Traditional” Wrestling”**



**We must document the rich history of folkstyle wrestling!**

There are many styles of wrestling which have been specifically developed throughout history around the world, and are a part of the folklore or culture of the region. Each of the continents that have indigenous populations have examples of these “folkstyles” of wrestling.

## Taiwanese Aborigines



Among the indigenous people of Taiwan we find traditional belt wrestling has survived. In the south-eastern tribes it is called Mapaparf in Bunun and Mariworiwos in Puyuma.

## Glima in Iceland



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Here we see a form of belt wrestling from Iceland.



## Mongolian BUHK

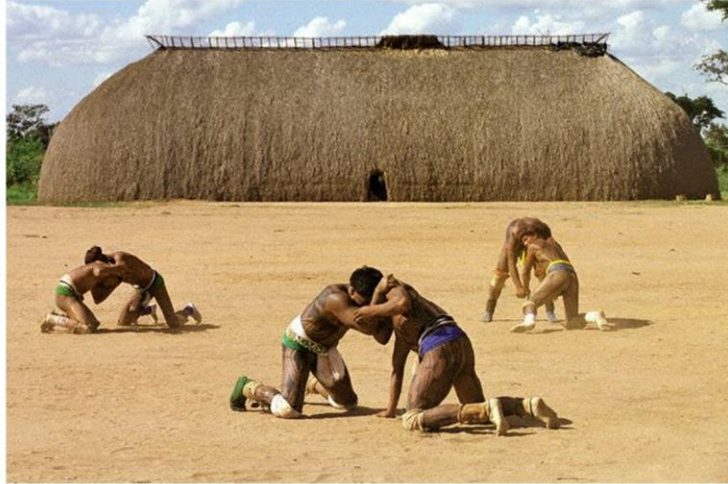


Naadam is the biggest event in the Mongolian calendar held on July 11 to 13, on the anniversary of the Mongolian revolution of 1921. Concerts, fairs and traditional sports like wrestling, archery and horse racing are held during the celebration. Since there are no weight divisions in Mongolian wrestling, larger men tend to have a distinct advantage.



Assembly of participants before the beginning of competition.

## Huka Tribe in Brazil



Yawalapiti indians practice Huka Huka wrestling in the center of their village in the Alto Xingu area, in the lower Amazon, on May 11, 2002. A communal hut, which houses the head of a family, his children's families and grandchildren, can be seen in the background. Huka Huka freestyle wrestling is the main sport practiced by Xinguano tribes, although they are avid soccer fans. The Yawalipiti are one of 17 tribes living inside the Xingu Indigenous Park, a reserve created in 1961 roughly the size of Belgium, to protect the indians. The Yawalipiti are now a tribe of 180 people that half a century ago was threatened with extinction.

# HUKA HUKA in Brazil



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More wrestling in the Amazon basin.

## Turkish Oil Wrestling



Two pairs of oil wrestlers fight each other at the annual Kirkpinar wrestling festival. The wrestlers' bodies are coated thickly with oil, which makes them more difficult to grip and keeps competition fierce. Champions from eight weight divisions are rewarded with money and prizes.

## Cumberland Style from England



Two young men engage in a traditional form of Cumberland and Westmoreland wrestling unique to Cumbria, Great Britain. On taking hold the wrestlers stand up chest to chest, each placing his chin on his opponent's right shoulder and grasping him round the body, each placing his right arm above the left of his opponent. A wrestler refusing to take hold will be disqualified. When both men have got hold and are fairly on their guard, the Referee shall call "hold" and the wrestlers will commence, and, with the exception of kicking, the wrestlers are allowed to use every legitimate means to throw each other; to strike with the side of the foot shall not be regarded as kicking. If either party breaks his hold, that is loose his grip, though not on the ground, and the other still retains his hold, the one leaving shall be declared the loser. b. If either man touches the ground with one knee only or any other part of his body, though he may still retain his hold, he shall not be allowed to recover himself, but shall be deemed the loser. If both fall to the ground the man who is first down or falls under the other shall be the loser, but if they fall side by side or otherwise so that the officials cannot decide which was first on the ground, it shall be termed a dog fall, and shall be wrestled over again. c. The wrestlers shall compete in their stocking feet. The wearing of sweaters or pullovers is forbidden. The Referee shall disqualify any wrestler using unfair means after having been once cautioned. d. A fall is defined as touching the ground with any part of the person, the feet excepted. All competitions shall be decided by the best of three falls.

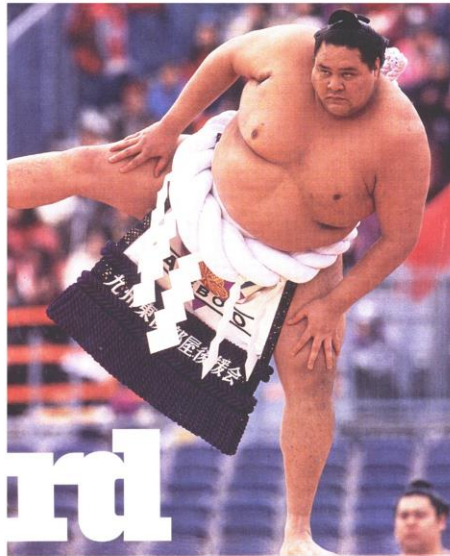


## Australian Aboriginies



Wrestling is practiced in Australia.

## Japanese Sumo



**Sumo** (相撲 *Sumō*) is a competition contact sport where two wrestlers called *rikishii* face off in a circular area. The sport is of Japanese origin and is surrounded by ceremony and ritual. The Japanese consider Sumo a *gendai budo*: a modern Japanese martial art, even though the sport has a history spanning many centuries.

The Sumo tradition is very ancient, and even today the sport includes many ritual elements, such as the use of salt for purification, from the days Sumo was used in the Shinto religion.

The winner of a Sumo bout is mainly determined by two rules:

- The first person to touch the ground with any part of his person other than the soles of his feet loses.

- The first person to touch the ground outside the ring loses.



## American “Folkstyle”



American folkstyle is the form of wrestling used in high school and college competition. It is most similar to freestyle, yet stresses more control in order to score points. Exposure of the back to the mat is only scored when a wrestler has control of the opponent. This “near fall” position (shoulders at 45 degrees or less to the mat) must be held for at least 2 seconds for points to be awarded. Merely rolling and opponent through, such as in an international gut wrench, does not score points. Riding, or keeping your opponent on the mat is a part of the sport, and an escape is rewarded with a point. When controlling an opponent on the mat, the top wrestler cannot lock hands, unless there is a pin hold being applied. Scoring is as follows:

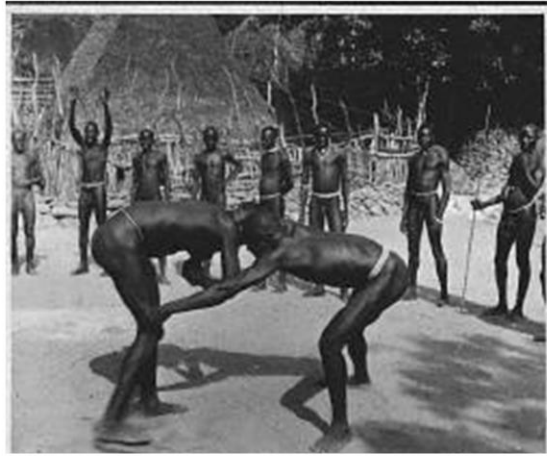
- 2 points for a takedown
- 1 point for an escape
- 2 points for a reversal
- 2 or 4 points for a near fall (2 points if shoulders are held towards the mat for 2-4 seconds,

## American “Folkstyle”

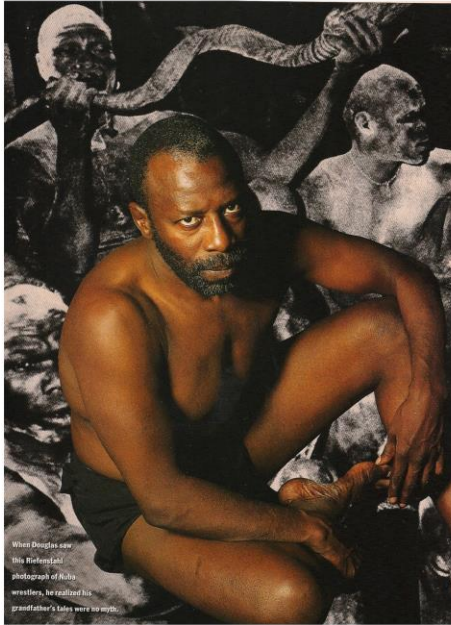


Northwestern University has a proud history of wrestling. Here is NCAA Champion Jason Tsirtsis.

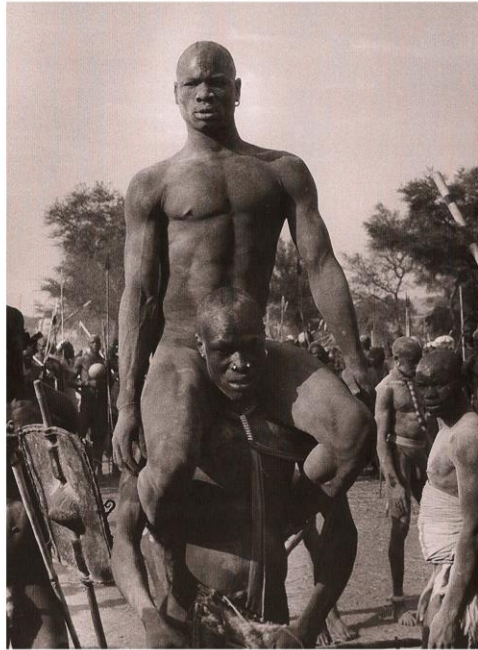
## Nubians from Sudan



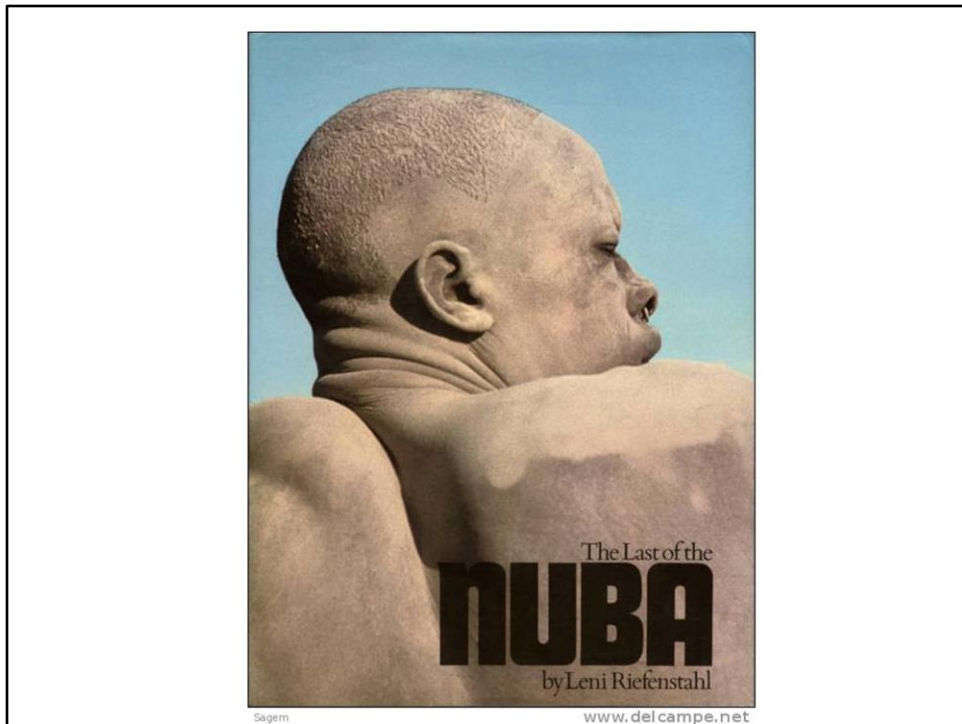
A thousand feet above the Bongoi river in the Lafit Mts, where Abyssinia, Kenya, Uganda and the Belgian Congo huddle round the southern tip of the Sudan, is Ilyeu village, home of the Latuko tribe. The Latukos are amongst the most primitive people in Africa today. Until 1863 they have never seen a white man and until very recently a Latuko was not reckoned a man until his spear had been wetted in human blood. British administration has stopped tribal wars which have now been replaced by spectacular hunts involving great courage and accuracy with the spear. Photo shows: In the village of Ilyeu the Latuko warriors often while away the time with wrestling contests. Here two contestants are being encouraged by a semi-circle of onlookers.



Hall of Fame Wrestler and Coach Bobby Douglas was featured in an article in Sports Illustrated in his exploration of his heritage from the Nuba.

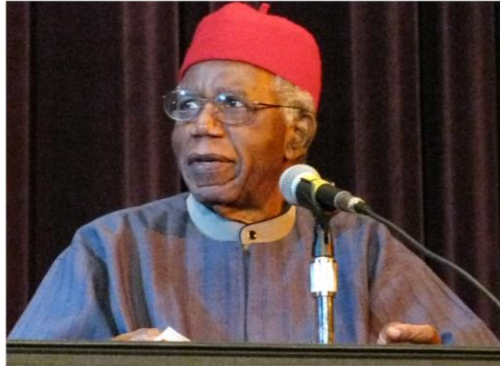
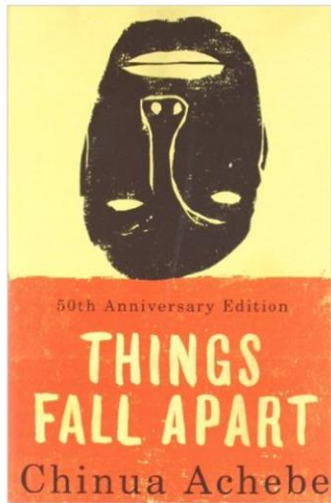


an



A book by the famous Leni Reifenstal captured the Nuba and their wrestling.

**Things Fall Apart by Nigerian author  
Chinua Achebe in 1958.**



Things Fall Apart is a post-colonial novel written by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe in 1958 where wrestling plays an important role.

## THE QUEST FOR THE PODIUM!



As we approach the Rio Games there has been a growth in representation from African countries.





*Борьба женщин на празднике ямарикума.*

There is a history of women participating in wrestling that extends around the world.



Wrestler Annabelle Ali of Cameroon was the nation's first woman flag bearer at the opening ceremony. Three other women wrestlers given this extraordinary honor are Kyoko Hamaguchi of Japan in 2004, Maria McQueen Dunn of Guam and Saori Yoshida of Japan, both in 2012.

