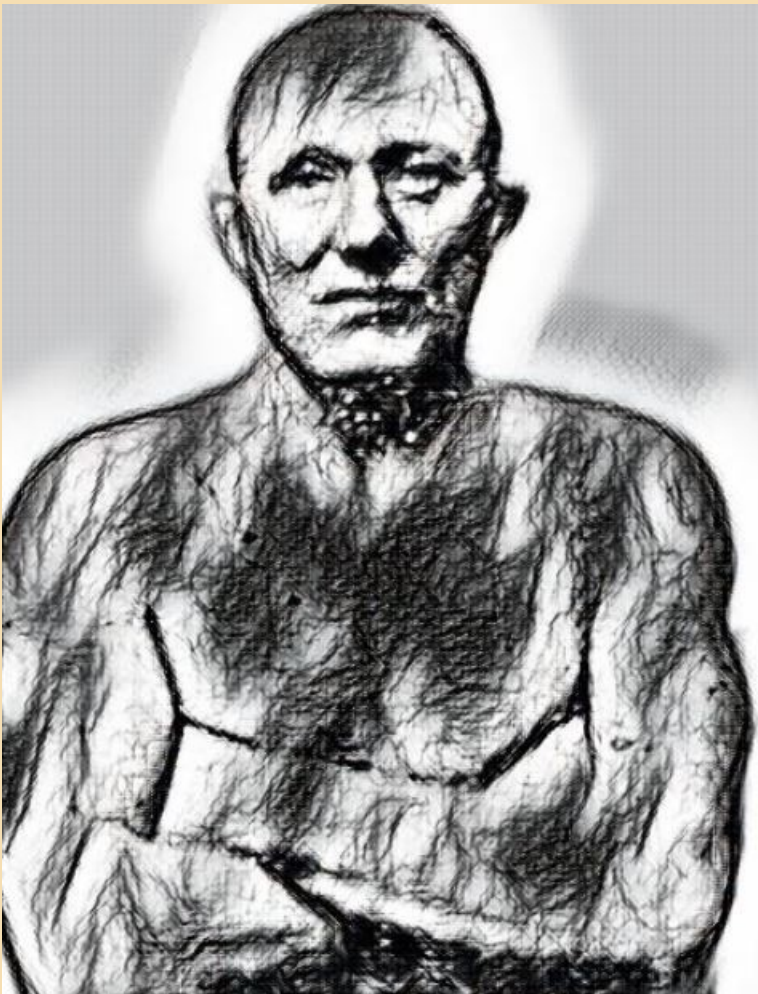


Ron Historyo's
Time Travel
to the

Wrestlers of the
Golden Age

Joe Carroll



Joe Carroll's achievements were unprecedented and what he did is so important in English wrestling history.

When I wrote the Jack Carroll (his nephew) article for Heritage I explained that Joe was the son of Irishman Patrick Carroll and his wife Ellen, and that the family had lived in a cellar dwelling at the back of Hindley Market Square. At least Joe escaped being a boy coal worker by working in the Mill at Hindley but eventually he did succumb to being a coal miner. Born circa 1868 in Hindley near Wigan.



In 1908 Joe won his last big trophy at the Alhambra. Greco Roman and other wrestling was dropped and this was the year that Lonsdale Trophies (right) were introduced. This was for catch Wrestling only and open to the world. The Lonsdale belt was introduced the following year in 1909.

1908 had been a great year for the Carroll's with Jack winning a similar cup at Light weight in the same competition. The whole thing run by Arthur Bettinson and William Bankier.

NSC Alhambra 1908 Finalists Results 12st Championship

First Round

Joe Carroll beat Sapper A. Cartwright (Royal Engineers)
Peter Gotz bye

Second Round

Joe Carroll beat Barney Shtitzer
Peter Gotz beat Giovanni Bartoletti

Third Round

Joe Carroll beat Bob Berry
Peter Gotz beat Lauritz Neilsen

Semifinals

Peter Gotz beat Henry Irslinger
Joe Carroll bye

FINAL

Joe Carroll beat Peter Gotz, 2-0

Prizes:

Joe Carroll - 50 GBP and The Champion Cup
Peter Gotz - 15 GBP
Henry Irslinger - 5GBP

In later years Carroll was one of the men chosen to give training to Bert Assirati and Carl Reginsky in the Lancashire style, a role that Billy Riley was to continue with his own Wigan gym.

In terms of Catch Wrestling history some earlier pioneers had gone to the USA before Joe Carroll ever did; men like Bibby, Acton and Cannon, but in those days Lancashire style was for Lancashire and tournaments were decided in Manchester.

1892 the championship of All England was at Manchester Free Trade Hall. Joe Carroll at Middle weight won a Gold medal. Effectively today this weight would be lightweight.

Below tournament details.

All England Championship 1892

Free Trade Hall, Manchester

1st Round.

Joe Carroll of Hindley beat J. Greenough (alias King)
J. Newton (Young Teapot) beat T. Parr of Dukinfield
J. Hesketh (Jumper Jack) of Wigan beat J. Smith of Dukinfield
T. Jones (Burgy Ben) of Aspull beat Mat McNicholls of Wigan

2nd Round

Joe Carroll beat Tom Jones
Joe Newton beat J. Hesketh

Final

Joe Carroll of Hindley beat Joe Newton of Ashton-under-Lyne



In the year 1899 a man came along to change the legitimacy Lancashire Wrestling.

He promoted lots of sports and introduced championship belts. But he wanted all types of Wrestling at a tournament in London's West End. Lancashire and Cumberland Wrestling was to be shown on an equal footing with other types and Lancashire wrestlers were offered train fares to compete at Kensal Rise.

The promoter of the Carnival was William T Ecclestone but he had another name that was unforgettable. He was known as "Jolly Jumbo" and was reputed to be the heaviest man in England.

Joe Carroll beat the other great Lancashire wrestler of that time, Tom Connors in the final.

Below are the initial pairings:

Middleweights: —

First bouts:

Tom Connors (Salford) def Thomas Graham (Carlisle)
Jack Smith (Stalybridge) def John Kits (Spennymoor)
Joe Carroll (Hindley) def J. Higgam (Salford)
W. Williams (Newington), gets a bye.

Second Round:

Carroll def Smith
Connors def Williams.

They had fought many times before as early as 1891 in Lancashire typically at Farnworth and Ince, usually drawing but Connors had been winner at least once.

The Jolly Jumbo Tournament had taken Catch wrestling from a parochial sport like Rugby league to National Level and in winning that Gold and Silver championship belt Joe Carroll takes a vital place in English Wrestling History.



On the left is a similar Jolly Jumbo Belt, but we think this one was for the Cumberland Style.

Before 1899 was finished Joe Carroll had lost to Jack Carkeek the American, at Hengler's Circus at Liverpool but won against him at the Free Trade Hall Manchester.

In 1902 Joe Carroll went to America and working backwards I find that there was still nothing different about wrestling. He arrived with the papers stating that he had never been beaten. Towards the end the papers said he had won over 100 matches and at his own weight he was unchallenged. I doubt both those claims, but I cannot prove it.

A further claim was that Joe's dad, Patrick, was champion Collar and Elbow wrestler of All England but I see nothing in the papers to back that up.

What it was all building up to though was a bout with Tom Jenkins, the "World Champion," and although Carroll did well he gave away twenty two pounds in bodyweight and Jenkins was too strong for him. The result at Madison Square Garden Concert Hall was 2-0.

In 1903 Fred A Lumley put Carroll and Connors together for the World Championship at 12 stones. The result was a draw and prize money shared.

Usually if Joe Carroll wrestled in England he carried the name of his hometown either Wigan or Hindley but any international events he carried his Irish heritage.

World Championship at 12 stones

1st Round

Joe Carroll of Dublin beat A. Ingram of Edinburgh
Tom Connor of Manchester beat W. Jackson of Edinburgh

2nd Round

Joe Carroll beat J. Sutherland of Edinburgh
Tom Connor bye

Semi finals

Joe Carroll beat W. Bain of Glasgow
Tom Connor beat J. Bain of Glasgow

Final

Joe Carroll of Dublin drew Tom Connor of Manchester

A July 1904 big tournament was at Crystal Palace, this one put on by the National Wrestling Association and saw Carroll share the spoils in the final with Peter Bannan of Burnley. Job Shambley of Westhoughton placed third.

NWA 1904 11st International Championship Title.

**Status - Open To The World, Award - Gold Medal
Venue - Crystal Palace.**

1st Round

Joe Carroll beat A. Ahmedro
Peter Bannan of Burnley beat W. Fielding

2nd Round

Joe Carroll beat T. Reice of Liverpool
Peter Bannan beat Job Shambley

Final

Joe Carroll drew Peter Bannan
1st prize money divided between two champions

All these men met many times and in fact I will just mention at this stage that most of these men must have been great friends. One example I can give you is the wrestler Jack Smith of Stalybridge, I think later of Manchester. In the 1891 census a 22 year old Joe Carroll, Coal Miner from Hindley, and his 18 years old wife Sarah were staying the night with Jack Smith, age 28 born Ashton-under-Lyne and family, beerseller at King Street in Dukinfield.

In March 1904 they had what was sold as a grudge type match on account of the various opponents that they had both beaten. It was good old fashioned hype with both men believing they had a claim as champion. This was a huge event for The Oxford Music Hall. But in 1899 they had already done this bout at Stalybridge Baths.

Was it real? In 1912 at a match at Atherton FC between Jack Carroll and Job Shambley, Jack Carroll struck Smith who was the referee and was disqualified. Was it slapstick? Well if it was they went to great lengths because it went to court in Leigh and Carroll apologized and paid 40 shillings and costs. It is my suspicion that the Carrolls, Tom Rose, Shambley and Smith were promoting these shows in the Lancashire heartland after the popularity of the Music halls was dying down.

Also in 1909 Joe Carroll was probably the instigator of himself and nephew Jack going to America with Con O'Kelly. This story was told in the Jack Carroll write up.

1910 must have been a big disappointment for Carroll. At the Alhambra at Middle weight the 1908 winner Carroll was matched with the 1909 winner Frank Crozier. After 48 minutes Crozier won a close contest with a Half Nelson but still failed to get to the final won by Bob Berry beating Button Singh for the coveted Lonsdale belt. Another 1910 opponent at Leigh Hippodrome was Joe Osgood shown here sporting I think a Welter weight championship belt. It was a handicap match with Carroll having to throw Osgood twice with a time limit. Osgood won on account of only being thrown once.

But what I am illustrating is that if you have a title and belt you could get good work in the smaller Music Halls. A frustration for me is that in the case of both the Carrolls I am unsure what became of them Certainly up to the first world war they were in Hindley, but my difficulty is that they moved about, maybe some time in Manchester and other places.

To fill the gap between 1910 and 1930 where there did seem to be so little wrestling I have an example in 1914 of Carroll still boasting that title in 1914 at Glasgow. As late as 1915 Joe Carroll fought Councillor Peter Wright of Newport, a so called Welsh champion, at Caerphilly. Wright won in 18 minutes. This was however a charity event with the Proceeds to the Red Cross Hospital.

In Later years Joe Carroll was still about in wrestling circles, for example in 1931 Carl Reginsky was brought up from London to fight Billy Riley at Wigan. With George Relwyskow referee and Jack Carroll acting as Reginski's second. So, unfinished business on both Carroll's. Maybe one day we will find out what became of them.

Co Written and Researched by Ron Historyo and Ruslan Pashayev of USA.