

Out of Darkness

The Story of Catch

Ruslan Pashayev

Part 10: The Snipe Inn

Gold Champion Challenge Cup of Lancashire 1862-1873

The Gold Championship Cup of Lancashire: The Snipe Inn and the Higginshaw Grounds



The Snipe Inn Championship at 6 score 3 pounds (8 stones 11 pounds) was established by the proprietor of the grounds Mr. Thomas Warren at Audenshaw, near Ashton-under-Lyne in August 1862.

The Champion Gold Cup worth 60 guineas (£63) was manufactured by a famous London jeweler and delivered to Lancashire as the trophy for the winner of the elimination tournament which was scheduled to be held on August 23rd 1862.

The conditions of the competition stipulated the winner had to defend his championship for 18 consecutive months to make the challenge trophy his own property. Championship matches were held exclusively at the Snipe Inn under the jurisdiction of Thomas Warren.

No title defence should be made for less than £25 a side and the holder had to defend his title within six weeks following the challenge. The winner was to receive £5 and the runner-up £2.

Only three of the men (the Schora Brothers and John Matley, all from Ashton) were allowed to compete. William Schora defeated Matley (15 minutes) and then his brother, Tom, in the great final (20 minutes) and thus became the first holder of the trophy. It was

the second great success of William Schora, in the 1861-1862 championship he was holder of the 9 stones Champion Wrestler Belt at the Copenhagen Grounds at Newton Heath.

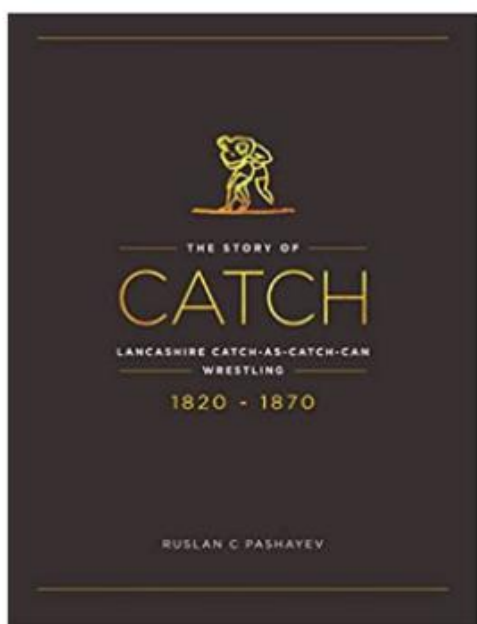
March 7th 1863 saw the great match between the two most famous champions, the holder of Snipe cup, William Schora, and his old "friend" and nemesis from Radcliffe, Lancashire – John Meadowcroft. With an attendance of 1,500 people Schora successfully defended his title winning the first and the third decisive falls, both in seven minutes (Meadowcroft won the second fall in twenty minutes).

On April 18th 1863, when the weather was reported as 'most beautiful,' another title defence took place. One thousand spectators witnessed Joe Acton of Ashton challenged Schora. The first fall was won by Schora after a long struggle for 54 minutes, the second round lasted 2 hours 45 minutes. When no falls were scored and both men were tired they withdrew from the ring. Schora kept the Cup, stakes were returned to wrestlers.

On June 13th, 1863, another great title defence, once more against Joseph Acton with 700 spectators present. Acton's greatest achievement was winning the Copenhagen Grounds 9 stones Champion Wrestler Belt in 1862. The match lasted over three hours and Schora proved to be the best again by 2 falls. (2 hours and 1 hour 15 minutes).

On July 25th 1863 William Schora and John Meadowcroft, holder of the 9 stones Champion Wrestler Belt at the Copenhagen Grounds met again, and again Schora was an easy winner (2-0, 35 minutes and 15 minutes).

In 1864 William Schora was still champion (there were no title defences for a long time, suggesting it was very hard to find a worthy opponent for Schora). Having successfully defended his title for the required eighteen months the Champion Gold Cup became his permanent property.



Buy From Amazon

The Story of Catch: The Story of Lancashire Catch-as-catch-can Wrestling.

FIRST FIFTY YEARS 1820-1870. by Ruslan C Pashayev

The Birth and Evolution of Catch-as-Catch-Can Pro-Wrestling in East Lancashire, England. "The Story of Catch" covers the most forgotten stages of Lancashire's Catch Wrestling history, including its origin, its fast growth and evolution during first fifty years of Catch, introduction of professionalism and its Golden Era, as well as introduction and popularization of it in the United States. This story has many heroes who affected Catch in its early stages and remained in history as true symbols of Lancashire Wrestling. But the whole story is dedicated to the memory of Adam Ridings of Bury, Lancs (1819-1894), who was also known under the nickname of "Dockum of Bury" a pioneer of Catch Wrestling, and the most prominent and popular wrestler of Lancashire in the 1840's-1850's. For anyone with a serious interest in history of professional wrestling "The Story of Catch" is a must.

Research mainly at [British Newspaper Archive](#).

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