

HANS SCHMIDT

Inducted by Butcher Vachon

Four years after the conclusion of the Second World War, Guy Larose started in the world of wrestling. Born in Joliette in the province of Quebec on February 7, 1925, he first worked under the name Guy Ross, in the state of Michigan and the rest of Canada. Following that he wrestled in some preliminaries in Montreal, but returned to the United States and in 1952, he adopted the persona that would make him known around the world, namely hated “German” Hans Schmidt

“I wrestled in Boston and the promoter there, Paul Bowser, who was of German descent, thought that I looked like a German and gave me the name Hans Schmidt,” explained Larose in an interview with SLAM Wrestling.

“Hans Schmidt was one of the major stars of the DuMont Network with Gorgeous George when wrestling began to be broadcast on TV,” said Gino Brito. A frequent foe in those early days of television was the handsome Verne Gagne.

“He was one of the best heels in the early 1950s during the period following World War II with his Nazi persona. He was one of the best-paid wrestlers at the time,” said Dave Meltzer of the *Wrestling Observer*. Schmidt drew big crowds and quickly became one of the major attractions of the world of wrestling. During the 20 years that followed, Schmidt wrestled in almost every North American territory, as well as Japan.

Even if he never won a world title, he participated in many NWA World championship matches. “The big names of history put aside, he participated in the largest number of championship matches in the largest number of territories, which proves that he was over in so many places,” said Meltzer. Schmidt challenged Lou Thesz, Whipper Billy Watson, Gene Kiniski, Pat O’Connor and Dory Funk Jr. for the NWA World title at various points.

Kiniski ranked him among the best ever: “He kept himself in great, great shape. He was a big, rugged, lean-boned guy with a brush cut. He had the persona of being a stormtrooper.”

Attendance-wise, in his heyday, he was among the top 10 of those who

drew the biggest crowds year after year. The period between 1953 and 1959 was very profitable for him as he main evented shows wherever he went. In Montreal, he participated in a main event against Edouard Carpentier that drew the biggest crowds of 1961 with more than 20,000 fans at the Delormier Stadium.

Opponents knew to watch for his big boots, which he laid in with a vengeance.

Starting from the mid-1960s when Johnny Rougeau took control over the Montreal territory, Schmidt wrestled more regularly in Quebec. He actually won the International title many times. Until his dying days he remain faithful to the Rougeau family with whom he had been in business with back in those days. The last link to a world he could not recognized anymore, he didn't want to have anything to do with wrestling at the end of his life.

He passed away on May 26, 2012.

— Bertrand Hébert