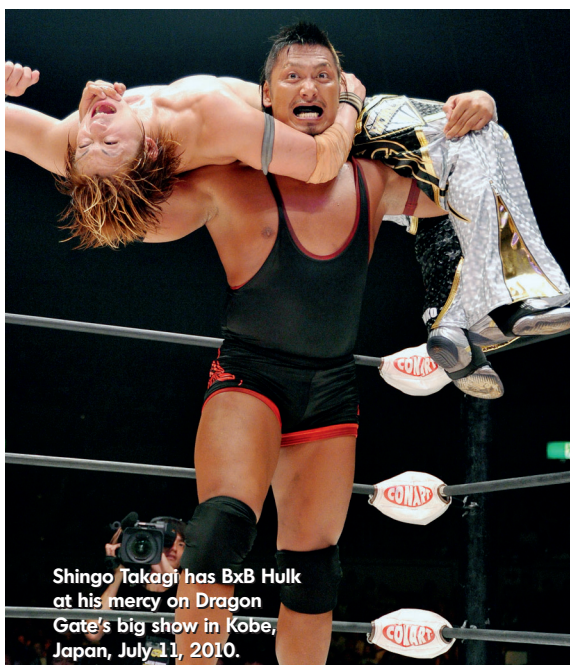


# THE PS 50

For the seventeenth year, *Power Slam* presents *The PS 50*, the list of the best-performing wrestlers in the industry. As ever, rankings in *The PS 50* are based on grapplers' in-ring showings over a 12-month period (December 1, 2009 to November 30, 2010). Here's the 50 and what they did . . .

**1 KURT ANGLE (TNA; LAST YEAR PLACED: 9)** Turmoil- and scandal-free year outside the ring enabled the 42-year-old to concentrate on wrestling rather than personal crises and legal matters . . . Wrapped up TNA's 2009 pay-per-view season with a win over Desmond Wolfe in a Three Degrees Of Pain series at Final Resolution . . . Loss to AJ Styles was the best thing on the January 4 *iMPACT!* special . . . Feud with Mr. Anderson started slow in February, but ended with an almighty bang in an awesome Cage match, won by Angle, at Lockdown on April 18 . . . Starting at the bottom, worked his way up TNA's short-lived top ten rankings over the summer . . . Beat Kazarian in the hottest match at the June 13 Slammiversary event . . . Scrap with Jeff Hardy at No Surrender on September 5 was so stunning that even the inexplicable no-contest finish couldn't ruin it . . . Failed to win the vacant World title at Bound For Glory, after which he was supposed to leave TNA but, in true TNA fashion, reneged on his promise . . . Despite the stupid or contradictory situations in which he finds himself in the shambles that is TNA, the five-star ring general remains a beacon of professionalism.



Shingo Takagi has BxB Hulk at his mercy on Dragon Gate's big show in Kobe, Japan, July 11, 2010.

**2 DAVEY RICHARDS (INDEPENDENT; LAST YEAR PLACED: 4)** Lost the Full Impact Pro title to Masaaki Mochizuki on December 6, then regained it in a blinding match on DGUSA's January 23 show . . . Beat aerial ace Kota Ibushi in a full-on EVOLVE top-liner on January 16 . . . Split from EVOLVE and DGUSA and was stripped of the FIP title after a dispute with Gabe Sapolsky in late January . . . Won the Pro Wrestling Guerrilla title from Kenny Omega on February 27 . . . Lost a fantastic bout to American Wolves partner Eddie Edwards in the final of ROH's Television title tournament in March . . . Made his New Japan debut on May 8 . . . Placed joint-second in Block A of New Japan's Best Of The Super Junior tournament in which he had action-packed outings with Prince Devitt, Jushin Liger, Kota Ibushi and others . . . Impressed NJPW officials so much that he was chosen to put Koji Kanemoto over in Kanemoto's 20th anniversary match on September 26 . . . Forfeited the PWG title in September due to his NJPW commitments . . . With Rocky Romero, lost the November 13 final of the Super J Tag League to Gedo and Jado . . . Challenges Roderick Strong for the ROH title at Final Battle on December 18 . . . As good as 2010 has been, 2011 promises to be even better.

**3 HIROSHI TANAHASHI (NJPW; LAST YEAR PLACED: 3)** Downed former WWE under-carder Tajiri in their feud-ending collision on December 5 . . . Beat NOAH's Go Shiozaki with his High Fly Flow frog splash in a 19:04 inter-promotional thriller at the Tokyo Dome on January 4 . . . Had some of his beloved hair cut off by Toru Yano and Masato Tanaka after his win over Yano on February 14 . . . Was upset by Yano at Wrestling Dontaku on May 3 in Fukuoka . . . Exacting revenge, beat Yano in a Hair vs. Hair match on NJPW's superb Dominion event on June 19 . . . In the Grade One Climax series in August, came back from losses to Karl Anderson and Prince Devitt to defeat Manabu Nakanishi, Yano and Togi Makabe to clinch a place in the final, where he fell to Satoshi Kojima in a scorching battle . . . Beat Tetsuya Naito in a highly competitive thriller on October 11 . . . Fourth consecutive top ten appearance for New Japan's leading box office attraction.

**4 PRINCE DEVITT (NJPW; LAST YEAR PLACED: 33)** Huge climber on *The PS 50* chart rose to the top of his division in a logical progression from 2009 . . . Runner-up to Naomichi Marufuji in the sterling two-night Super J-Cup 5th Stage tournament from December 22-23 . . . Lost to Marufuji again in an awe-inspiring IWGP title collision on January 30 . . . With Apollo 55 partner Ryusuke Taguchi, retained the IWGP junior heavyweight tag title against Gedo and Dick Togo on February 14 . . . Was sidelined by a meniscus tear in March-April . . . Returned to Japan for the Super J tag team tournament in May, prior to which Apollo 55 had vacated the IWGP junior tag title . . . Best Of The Super Junior runner-up in 2009 went one better in 2010 when he beat Kota Ibushi in a high-flying final on June 13 . . . Finally beat Marufuji for the IWGP gold in a killer 20:20 bout on June 19 . . . In his first defence on July 11, retained the belt against Atsushi Aoki in an exceptional Korakuen Hall main event . . . Replaced an injured Marufuji in the G1 Climax, and entered many stature-enhancing performances . . . Matches in October and November with Taguchi against Golden Lovers Kenny Omega and Kota Ibushi were outstanding.



Kurt Angle (here battling Mr. Anderson at TNA's Lockdown 2010 event): Bags the top spot for a record-equaling third time (Shawn Michaels is the only other wrestler to have been ranked number one three times in *The PS 50*).

**5 TAKASHI SUGIURA (NOAH; LAST YEAR PLACED: 11)** Stocky veteran began his first GHC heavyweight title reign when he beat Go Shiozaki in a fantastic match on December 6 . . . Bested New Japan's Hirooki Goto by stoppage in a hard-hitting battle at NJPW's January 4 Tokyo Dome supershow . . . Olympic-Slammed his way to victory over Togi Makabe, another New Japan wrestler, in a heated Budokan Hall main event on February 28 . . . Helped Jun Akiyama roll back the years in a superb Global League tournament match, won by Akiyama, on May 2 . . . Held onto the GHC title in a grand 15:49 battle with Global League winner Yoshihiro Takayama on July 10 . . . Linked arms with KENTA to defeat Go Shiozaki and Takeshi Morishima in a quality encounter on August 4 in Tokyo . . . Triumphant GHC defence against former champ Shiozaki on September 26 was amazing . . . Sugiura, NOAH's version of Kurt Angle, has been world-class throughout his reign, but his outstanding performances have not been sufficient to remedy NOAH's business woes.