

= IWGP Heavyweight Championship ( IGF ) =

The IWGP Heavyweight Championship was a professional wrestling heavyweight championship owned by the Inoki Genome Federation ( IGF ) promotion . The title shares its name with New Japan Pro Wrestling 's ( NJPW ) IWGP Heavyweight Championship , from which it split due to a decision made by IGF and NJPW founder Antonio Inoki . " IWGP " is the abbreviation of NJPW 's fictional governing body , the International Wrestling Grand Prix .

During the title 's history , IGF recognized it as the official IWGP Heavyweight Championship , continuing the history of the title after an error made by NJPW in Inoki 's eyes . NJPW recognized the title as the IWGP 3rd Belt Championship , a championship that was merely represented by a previous version of the IWGP Heavyweight Championship 's title belt . The title was briefly used in the Total Nonstop Action Wrestling ( TNA ) promotion , which recognized it as the IWGP Heavyweight Championship .

As a professional wrestling championship , the title was won via a scripted ending to a match or awarded to a wrestler because of a storyline . The inaugural champion was Brock Lesnar , who was the reigning IWGP Heavyweight Champion before being stripped of the title due to issues with NJPW . IGF recognized him as the official IWGP Heavyweight Champion afterwards . All title changes occurred at IGF or NJPW @-@ promoted events . There were a total of three reigns among three wrestlers during the title 's brief history before being unified with the IWGP Heavyweight Championship .

= = History = =

On October 8 , 2005 , at New Japan Pro Wrestling 's ( NJPW ) Toukon Souzou New Chapter event in Tokyo , Japan , Brock Lesnar defeated Kazuyuki Fujita and Masahiro Chono in a Three Way match for the IWGP Heavyweight Championship . He held the title for 280 days , having three successful defenses , until he failed to show up for a scheduled title defense . NJPW thus stripped Lesnar of the championship on July 15 , 2006 . Lesnar cited visa issues along with NJPW owing him compensation for his reasons at failing to appear at the planned title defense . After this series of events , NJPW founder Antonio Inoki left NJPW and created a new promotion , the Inoki Genome Federation ( IGF ) . Inoki then recognized Lesnar as the IWGP Heavyweight Champion due to Lesnar never having lost the championship in a match and Lesnar still maintaining physical possession of the title belt . NJPW recognized Lesnar as the IWGP 3rd Belt Champion and not the IWGP Heavyweight Champion , maintaining their stance on having stripped him of the title in 2006 .

On June 29 , 2007 , IGF held its debut show with Lesnar defending the IWGP Heavyweight Championship against Kurt Angle in the main event . Angle defeated Lesnar to win the championship at the show with Angle going on to appear in the American Total Nonstop Action Wrestling ( TNA ) promotion with the physical title belt . TNA also referred to the title belt as the IWGP Heavyweight Championship in the same manner as the IGF , recognizing Angle as the official IWGP Heavyweight Champion . NJPW did not recognize Angle as the IWGP Heavyweight Champion , instead it viewed Angle as the second IWGP 3rd Belt Champion .

Angle went on to have two successful defenses as champion . His first defense came in TNA in a feud against Samoa Joe . Angle first appeared with the title belt in TNA on the July 5 , 2007 episode of TNA 's television program TNA Impact ! . The title belt became relevant to the storyline rivalry between Joe and Angle heading into TNA 's Hard Justice pay @-@ per @-@ view ( PPV ) event . Leading up to TNA 's Victory Road PPV event on July 15 , 2007 , TNA X Division Champion Joe and TNA World Heavyweight Champion Angle teamed together to face TNA World Tag Team Champions Team 3D ( Brother Devon and Brother Ray ) in a Tag Team match with the stipulation being whoever scored the pinfall or submission for their team won the championship of the person pinned or made to submit . Joe pinned Brother Ray in the bout , thus winning the World Tag Team Championship for himself and a partner of his choosing . Joe chose to hold the title alone and challenged Angle to a Winner Take All match at Hard Justice for the TNA World Heavyweight , TNA X Division , TNA World Tag Team , and the IWGP Heavyweight Championships on the July 19 2007

, episode of Impact ! . Angle accepted the match , with Joe and Angle facing at Hard Justice on August 12 , 2007 in Orlando , Florida for all of the titles . Angle defeated Joe at the event to win the TNA World Tag Team and TNA X Division Championships , while retaining the TNA World Heavyweight and IWGP Heavyweight Championships . Afterwards , TNA slowly faded out using the IWGP Heavyweight Championship with Angle going on to defend the title at IGF and NJPW promoted shows , with the title being referred to as both the IWGP Heavyweight Championship and the IWGP 3rd Belt Championship .

Angle 's second defense of the title was at NJPW 's Wrestle Kingdom II in Tokyo Dome event on January 4 , 2008 where he defeated former NJPW recognized IWGP Heavyweight Champion Yuji Nagata to retain the IWGP 3rd Belt Championship . Angle 's last defense was against then NJPW recognized IWGP Heavyweight Champion Shinsuke Nakamura in a unification match on February 17 , 2008 at NJPW 's Circuit 2008 New Japan ISM event where the winner would be the unified IWGP Heavyweight Champion . Angle lost the match , thus ending the existence of the IGF recognized IWGP Heavyweight Championship . IGF later introduced another title five years later with the IGF Championship on December 31 , 2013 .

= = Belt designs = =

The title design featured a black leather base with five gold plates spaced evenly apart , with the center plate being the largest . On the center plate the words " IWGP Heavyweight Champion " were featured alongside the caricature of an eagle or similar bird of prey .

= = Reigns = =

The inaugural champion was Brock Lesnar , as recognized by IGF as the official IWGP Heavyweight Champion . There were a total of three reigns among three wrestlers during the title 's brief history before being unified with the IWGP Heavyweight Championship .

= = = Title statistics = = =