

# Wrestling Observer Newsletter

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The real world sucks.

I'm not talking about people. Most people are just fine. It's there is something about those who have power. The most important thing for them is to maintain their power. That's what breeds backstabbing. And in their own twisted way, I'm sure anyone who has done anything illegal, immoral or fattening can come up with a convoluted explanation and defense as to why. But sometimes I wonder. Do those people ever look at themselves in the mirror in the morning? Well, of course they do, but they're probably too busy trying to come up with a convoluted explanation if they're caught, a logical excuse if they're accused, or a cover-up if they are suspicious that they're about to get nabbed. If getting caught doesn't appear imminent, they can always bury their heads in the sand or turn the blind eye and pretend, wink, wink, that they don't see what Ray Charles could see. With all that time having to think, maybe we can all understand why they don't have time to spend examining the reflection.

Last week and this week the steroid stories have and will break in the national media. It's hard to really say how big the story will turn out to be because much depends on testimony in the trial of Dr. George Zahorian, a Pennsylvania urologic surgeon and osteopath who is accused of being the steroid supplier to many pro wrestlers, bodybuilders and assorted other muscleheads. Perhaps more depends on who testifies, rather than what is testified about.

In what was obviously a strange work to divert attention from the defendant, defense attorney William Costopoulos leaked the "secret" names of the five wrestlers Zahorian was indicted on charges of selling steroids to. One of those names was Hulk Hogan.

Charges that the pro wrestling industry has a serious steroid problem is news. Not big news. It isn't that nobody cares about pro wrestling, because TV ratings prove otherwise, but that nobody respects those involved with it. It's something like the strippers analogy from two weeks back. Most people don't respect Hulk Hogan, either, although there are also many that worship the character. But he's a big celebrity. Big enough that when his name was publicly linked to the case, the story suddenly made the front page of USA Today on Thursday, made the ABC Evening News, New York Times, Entertainment Tonight, and was carried by television stations, newspapers and radio stations, large and small, throughout the country.

So Thursday was panic day at Titan Sports. Steve Plenamenta, the company's press liaison, was out of the office Thursday. Nobody's phone calls were returned, and apparently that included such heavy hitters as Ted Koppel and Peter Jennings. All that was released was a three paragraph statement from Basil DeVito, the vice president of marketing and promotions, that read:

The WWF feels victimized by the tactics and statements of defense attorney William C. Costopoulos in utilizing the media in a "bait and switch" defense.

Dr. George T. Zahorian III, the former Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission appointed doctor, is on trial; not the WWF, or any WWF wrestlers. Neither the WWF, nor any of its wrestlers or associates has been charged with any illegality. We stand by our philosophy of wholesome family entertainment and the positive example we set for the youth of America.

To insure the safety and well-being of our performers, fans and

employees, in June 1987, the WWF adopted a drug policy prohibiting the use of controlled substances in connection with any of its professional activities.

Without a doubt Costopoulos was guilty of using the media to switch the focus from Zahorian to the WWF. But while the WWF is not on trial, Costopolous practically indicted the company with the statement in the New York Times, "I can tell you that the use of steroids is not limited to these wrestlers but that they are used throughout the WWF. The demands are heavy that they use them from the WWF. They either use them or they don't participate." All fancy wording aside and despite its objective, taking the focus from Zahorian and to the WWF, (with the exception of someone like Earthquake or Andre the Giant), the statement is basically the truth. And it is a truth applicable to the story. Rather than simply acknowledge the truth and either have the guts (ha) to defend the position, or to acknowledge the truth and do something to rectify it by pushing something other than physique, we get corporate mumbo-jumbo designed as "damage control."

If Zahorian is convicted of selling steroids to the wrestlers and other assorted muscleheads, his own convoluted defense appears to be that since the wrestlers had to take them or lose their jobs and the bodybuilders and powerlifters had to take them to be competitive, they were going to get drugs anyway so they might as well have got them from a doctor. Indeed, Costopoulos, in addition to pointing the blame on the WWF during the trial, was also going to challenge the constitutionality of the recently passed law which banned physicians writing prescriptions or selling steroids for anything other than the treatment of disease.

"The positive example we set for the youth of America."

An example is being set. I wouldn't call it a positive example. But I would call it a realistic corporate example. Never acknowledge a problem. It simply doesn't exist if you don't acknowledge it. Then when it's brought out, instead of addressing it and rectifying it, it's time for avoidance. When avoidance becomes an embarrassment, then it's time for damage control. Damage control consists of releasing a statement that isn't an outright lie, but is mainly distortions trying to give the press and public the wrong idea rather than facing the issue. For example, the drug policy acknowledged in the release had nothing whatsoever to do with the story. The drug the company tests for is cocaine. The story was about steroids. Talk about a "bait and switch" defense, you couldn't ask for a better example.

But some of the media went for it. How are they supposed to know the misleading conclusions the statement was designed to give both the media, and ultimately, the reader, viewer or listener at home?

At the same time, Hulk Hogan, the recipient of all this negative publicity, was pulled from his weekend dates in Albany, Toledo, Columbus, Ohio and Niagara Falls. The reason given was a neck injury. The neck injury was legitimate, said to be torn ligaments, and Hogan out of the ring had been wearing a neck brace more than a week earlier. He had made all of his dates up to that point. The truth in this case, was that he really had a neck injury, but he was pulled from the dates because of the negative publicity. Again the corporate release wasn't a lie, it was simply meant to present a misleading conclusion to both the media, and ultimately, the reader, view or listener at home.

Before we go on with this story, let's take a left turn to Hulksville. We have to put on our fantasy glasses when we enter this town. All of a sudden, we've got a story with marquee value because it

involves a celebrity. Let's quote from an article by myself that isn't appearing in the current issue of Sports Illustrated:

Hulk Hogan has been the franchise of the WWF, a wrestling company that exploded on the national scene in 1984 and has turned into a \$125 million per year marketing and merchandising machine. He's been marketed, particularly to young kids, as the ultimate role model--what society wants its sports heroes to be, but somehow reality creeps in and real athletes have trouble living up to expectations of perfection. His wrestling stardom has led to starring roles in movies "No Holds Barred" and "Suburban Commando." By being cloaked in the flag, wearing a cross to the ring and exploding into the arena to the beat of a rock song called "Real American," he's become not only the most popular pro wrestler in history, but he ranks right with Michael and Magic as one of the most popular athletes in the country. That is, if Hulk Hogan is to be classified as an athlete.

But wrestling exists in a world of fantasy. In reality, there is no such person as Hulk Hogan, who fights for what's right, almost never loses, loves God, country and flag. Those are all simply marketing ploys to sell merchandise like bandannas and t-shirts. Behind the illusions created in the WWF offices in Stamford, Ct. and airing weekly on syndicated and cable television, there is only Terry Bollea. Terry Bollea is a 6-foot-5 1/2, 295-pound tanned bodybuilder from Tampa, Fla. with receding blond hair. Terry Bollea, 37, is neither a hero, nor a villain. Terry Bollea has devoted countless hours to the Make-a-wish foundation so that many kids could get their dying wish of meeting with Hulk Hogan. Terry Bollea also allowed his Hulk Hogan character to callously exploit the Persian Gulf War by filming promotional spots with soldiers at military bases just days after the war broke out to try and push ticket sales for his WrestleMania match against a supposed Iraqi sympathizer.

But there is one thing real about Hulk Hogan. He really is a symbol. He's a symbol of the world of pro wrestling. But more than that, a symbol of society. Pro wrestling is a highly manipulative, often outrageously entertaining spectacle in an environment which all too often specializes in poor taste. Today that world is polluted by the epidemic use of anabolic steroids. Former WWF champions "Superstar" Billy Graham and Bruno Sammartino have estimated that at least 95 percent of the WWF's wrestlers are "on the juice." Within the wrestling business, it is neither a secret, nor hard to explain, as to why. Steroids create the inflated physiques that make for larger-than-life fantasy characters. Physiques sell wrestling tickets, dolls, pillows, lunch boxes, posters ad infinitum. Even more, Hulk Hogan is a symbol of a society that is looking for an expertly-packaged fantasy hero rather than looking beneath the surface at reality.

"It's a miracle this hasn't come out before now," said Jerry "The King" Lawler, a 21-year mat veteran who is a local wrestling legend in Tennessee. "They (steroids) obviously a requirement for those (WWF) guys."

Hulk Hogan may be the symbol of the problem, and from early media coverage, may wind up as the scapegoat. It can be argued, if Hogan did purchase steroids, that he's deserving this treatment because of the obvious hypocrisy of someone who preaches about "training, saying your prayers and taking your vitamins" as his motto for "little Hulkamaniacs" when anyone who knows the reality of weight training and bodybuilding knows attaining a Hulkster-sized physique generally takes a more dangerous approach. But to turn Terry Bollea into a scapegoat would be missing the entire point. In a business that rewards massive physiques and turns a blind eye to how they got there, it is the decision of those in charge who create the environment. Most within wrestling point the accusing finger at Vincent K. McMahon, a bodybuilder himself and the genius behind the Titan Sports (parent company of the WWF) empire. But part of the blame has to go to the public that supports pro wrestling, since muscularity and popularity have gone hand-in-hand in recent years. But many believe that McMahon and other promoters, in promoting the most muscular wrestlers as invincible, re-educated wrestling fans away from dramatic conflict and to double bicep poses.

So on Thursday, Hulk Hogan got to be scapegoat for a day. It's hard to say if, in the big picture, that's was good or bad. For Hogan himself, on the surface, it was totally unfair. Hulk Hogan is not the bad

guy in this situation. Whether you like the Hulk Hogan character or dislike it, this isn't about a wrestling characterization, this is about Terry Bollea. It is the system that breeds men like Terry Bollea, Jim Hellwig and Larry Pfohl as champions that is the bad guy. But maybe one shouldn't be sympathetic toward Terry Bollea. He's managed to create an image that he's superman Hulk Hogan, a contrived role model, that's a lie. The lie may have been on the verge of being exposed.

On Friday, Judge William Caldwell ruled Hogan didn't have to honor the subpoena for him to testify in the trial. Hulk Hogan wouldn't have to testify, under oath, regarding the charges that Zahorian sold him steroids. Jerry McDevitt, Hogan's attorney, made a sealed motion requesting his client be excused from the proceedings. Caldwell ruled in his favor. The only reason given was that the judge felt it would interfere with Hogan's personal and professional life if he had to testify. In order to rescind the subpoena, Caldwell had to drop one of the 17 charges against Zahorian, selling steroids to pro wrestler John H. Doe (Terry Bollea).

You know what sucks. Everything about this. For all we know, there may have been a very valid reason for Terry Bollea to not have to testify. But the motion was sealed, so an attorney must have been worried that whatever persuasive argument he used, would reflect negatively on his client should anyone find out what it was. The judge's public reason should have at least been sealed as well, because to the outside it can only be interpreted that Hogan's personal and professional life are more important than trying a criminal count against a man indicted for selling him steroids. It shouldn't have been sealed because it may have reflected negatively on Hulk Hogan, but because one would think if one doesn't have a better reason than interference that something might cause to a person's personal and professional life, then there was no reason at all. Maybe Hulk Hogan's name should have never been associated with this case in the first place. But every one of us will always have doubts. According to a front page story in the Harrisburg, Penn. Patriot-News, Hogan was excused simply because McDevitt "argued that having to admit to steroid use would damage his public image." For McDevitt's part, he released a statement minutes after the judges' ruling:

For the past several days, I have declined to respond to repeated media inquiries regarding the injection of my client, Hulk Hogan, into a pending criminal trial of a Harrisburg physician, Dr. George Zahorian, by those affiliated with the case. During that period, systematic attempts were made to aggrandize the trial by capitalizing on the good name and reputation of my client.

Hulk Hogan did nothing illegal and is not charged with any illegality. This case is not about Hulk Hogan and his good name should never have been besmirched by this case. Hulk Hogan has no place in this trial and will not appear there. Instead, the focal point of the trial will now return to its proper place--the alleged illegal activities of a physician.

But the wire services, which ran stories tying Hogan to the Zahorian case, never ran a story about Hogan being removed from the case. To my knowledge, the only newspapers who reported on Hogan being removed on Saturday were the Miami Herald and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. USA Today reported it on Monday. Despite whatever speculation we may have about why Hogan was removed, and for that matter, given what on the surface seems like the worst reason of all for removal, simply that he's a celebrity and admitting taking steroids would show him publicly as a hypocrite and may hurt his ability to use his name to merchandise items like vitamins, one would think the story removing him from the case should be played up equally as big as the story that he was involved in the first place. For the wrestling character named Hulk Hogan, the less written about him in conjunction with the case, even his removal from testifying in such case, the better.

Since part of the SI article dealt with what would be the effect of testimony in this trial, the biggest speculation regarded not Hogan's drawing power to wrestling fans, because virtually everyone acknowledges that as long as their are competent heels to be battled, people will pay money and cheer Hogan on to beating them, but among sponsors. That meant having to check with sponsors. This leads us once again to the world of public relations, which in this case leads us to more people whose jobs it is to play denial, avoidance and subject changing. At

Ralston-Purina, when asked about the pending Hulk Hogan cereal, I was told that "we have not released anything that says we are doing a wrestling cereal." Of course, I've read it in several trade journals already. "But we did not release that information." So, you're not releasing a Hulk Hogan cereal. "I didn't say that, I just said we haven't released that information and I can't comment on information we haven't released." Okay, so if you were to be releasing a cereal, hypothetically of course, and the person it was named after was named in newspapers all over the country yesterday as an alleged purchaser of steroids, an illegal drug, which by the quirks of law at the time of the purchase were illegal to be sold at the time, but not to be purchased, but now are also illegal to be purchased and used, would it effect your plans? "I've got to get back with you on that one." Hasboro was similar, although it took a lot less time to get to the last sentence. In their case on Friday morning, they were still in the corporate pretend mode, pretending that they hadn't heard a word about this and I had to pretend to read a front page story to them for the first time that everyone had already read no doubt six dozen times already the day before. The president of the company that does the Hulk Hogan vitamins, Barry Ross, called John Arezzi, furiously, on his radio show Sunday morning screaming about how Hogan's name had no business being used in the story and bringing up his work with Make-a-wish, which is relevant to the point that the real life Terry Bollea is not a villain, but is completely irrelevant to this issue.

On Thursday night, Basil DeVito of Titan Sports called, basically to reiterate the three paragraph press release he sent out to the media earlier in the day. He also said he'd make himself available for any comments regarding the article, and also made clear this was an exclusive, he wasn't going to directly talk to anyone else regarding this matter.

The interview, of course, was an exercise in playing the game of illusion, rather than dealing with reality. I almost had to feel sorry for the guy. It's almost like a few months back when the war broke out and the WWF made Sgt. Slaughter the champion. DeVito and Steve Plenamenta took heat from all concerned for being the messengers. Their job, in this case, was to beat around the bush, avoid the issue, try and change the issue, and basically do everything they accused Costopolous of this past week. The real story in that case was, there is simply no level we won't stoop to to make money. It's not illegal. Titan Sports is hardly the only company in this world with that attitude. Nor is it the only company that won't admit to it when pressed on an issue of war exploitation vs. attempted profits. They aren't the only company in wrestling with that attitude regarding poor taste vs. box office. But the P.R. world teaches that direct honesty is the absolute worst policy, so you make rationalizations and statements that don't apply to the question, or just avoid the issue. In this story, the reality is this. Yeah, most of our guys use steroids. We push the guys with the most muscles. We don't tell them to do it so if we ever face a rough situation, we can pretend we don't know about it and be able to justify to ourselves that we didn't lie. And it works just as long as we don't have enough time in the morning to see the reflection in the mirror and think.

So poor Basil DeVito has to take the heat here. He admitted that the drug policy used in paragraph three of his press release didn't relate to steroids. Justification--steroids weren't controlled substances in June 1987 when testing began. In February 1990, steroids became a federally controlled substance. When asked whether they were being tested for since they became a controlled substance, DeVito said he couldn't answer that question. The question of whether, in light of this trial and the counts Zahorian is charged with that included selling steroids to three (soon to be two) WWF wrestlers and that (hardy har har) the WWF claims to test its bodybuilders for steroids, would the WWF consider testing as well (granted, steroid testing is all p.r. bullshit as well because anyone can beat the tests, the only real answer is no longer rewarding physiques and brainwashing fans in a new direction so in reality my question is as useless as whatever answer would be given) brought a similar "I can't answer that question response." When asked about specific comments regarding the story, DeVito said, "I feel it non-productive to respond to any comments made by competition." The reality of that is avoiding the issue, but let's waste our lives playing games. Granted, of those quoted in the story, Jerry Lawler is competition, even though publicly the company has claimed its competition is the NBA and the Ice Capades and not other wrestling organizations, particularly one hanging its existence by a thread at this moment. But there was one quote

from one of the WWF's employees, which said, "Steroids are an epidemic in the business because the physique is the selling point. Any wrestler who wants to get pushed in today's atmosphere has to have the (bodybuilder) look. If a guy like the Ultimate Warrior gets pushed, it sends a message loud and clear to all the wrestlers. If you're going to be successful today, those are the rules of the game. These are all decisions made by McMahon as to who he is going to push. He makes the choice." Of course DeVito, in the game, would never lower himself to responding to an anonymous quote. But in the reality, he knew it was a real quote, and that it was anonymous because if it was attributed, the person saying it would be fired on the spot for telling the truth. I expect some head hunting to take place over the quote. DeVito wouldn't respond to Terry Funk's quotes because even though he had worked for the WWF, he also had worked for opposition groups and was still an active wrestler for other promotions. When I brought up Billy Graham, who is certainly not a competitor, or for that matter, in the wrestling business or probably will ever be in the wrestling business again, his credibility was dismissed because he's a former employee. So here were the ground rules in reality. Nobody has any credibility if they had ever worked before with the WWF, had worked at anytime for someone other than the WWF, or is working for the WWF and wasn't willing to get fired on the spot from the WWF. That should cover everyone in the wrestling business. Vince McMahon should be proud of Basil DeVito.

So what does all this have to do with the world at large? In reality, with the exception of a few pro wrestlers who take steroids when they would rather not because they think they need them to keep their job, or take them in greater dosages than they would like to because they think (and in many cases are right) that it will make them more money, this isn't that big a story outside the wrestling world. But the principles from start to finish in every example simply mirror the games that journalists and corporations have to play before those of us at home read, watch or listen to stories that give us misleading conclusions, often about things that are very important in the real world. And that's what sucks.

The first day of the trial of Zahorian had virtually nothing in the way of revelations having to do with pro wrestlers. A jury was selected of 12 people, none of whom were wrestling fans. Prosecuting attorney Theodore Smith III gave his opening remarks, saying that the testimony about to be heard shouldn't be viewed as doctor-to-patient but as drug dealer-to-drug buyer. Zahorian, who according to the Harrisburg Patriot-News, destroyed records when doctors originally raided his office, is being tried on counts that could bring him up to 42 years in prison and \$3.5 million in fines. Costopolous passed on his opening remarks. The only witness called was William Dunn, a 350-pound powerlifter and one-time strength coach at the University of Virginia who in the early 1980s was named NCAA strength coach of the year. Dunn was caught in 1987 trying to fill forged prescriptions of steroids. He was charged with 14 counts of obtaining prescriptions by fraud and was facing 100 years in prison, so he turned government informant and had his 14 charges reduced to one, which he received five years probation for. Dunn provided steroids to football players he coached between 1978 and 1984 and was a heavy user himself, often-taking up to 25 doses per day which was 200 to 300 milligrams of daily injections. Over the past three years he has had wires placed on his body for taping a series of apparent drug purchases from Zahorian. Several tapes were played of different deals for the jury along with testimony of Dunn. The only wrestling reference was Dunn saying he became acquainted with Zahorian as a supplier from pro wrestler Steve Muslin (who was wrestling in the WWF at the time under the name Steve Travis, as tag team partner of the late Rick McGraw as "The Carolina Connection.")

On Tuesday, Dan Spivey, Roddy Piper, Brian Blair and Rick Martel one-by-one admitted they purchased steroids and other drugs from Zahorian.

Spivey testified that he purchased deca-durabolin (known in steroid lingo as deca for short), anavar, anadrol and testosterone from Zahorian between November 18, 1988 and March 27, 1990. He paid \$15 a bottle for deca and \$35 a bottle for testosterone. (On the black market, deca is going for \$22 to \$25 a bottle, test for \$40 to \$70 while Anavar, which is almost impossible to come by on the black market today, is going for \$100 a bottle) He'd call Zahorian's office and order the drugs directly from the doctor. Zahorian would fed-ex the drugs back. The

government had fed-ex receipts of ten different packages as evidence. Spivey also testified he purchased containers of 100 to 200 tablets of Valium and Halcion (known in wrestling as H-bombs) from Zahorian. He said that Zahorian took no medical history of him and never gave him a physical examination either before or during his steroid cycles. He paid for drugs from Zahorian but never paid anything for medical services. This was an important point as the prosecution was trying to paint Zahorian as a drug dealer while the defense was trying to get across Zahorian as a doctor prescribing medication. Spivey said that he first started taking steroids in 1985 while with the WWF and first met Zahorian in Allentown when he was the commission's physician in attendance at ringside. Zahorian supplied him steroids only for personal use. When asked if Spivey felt he needed the steroids to be a wrestler, he said, "Yes, I felt I did." When asked if he purchased the drugs from Zahorian because he was a doctor rather than from a black market source, Spivey replied, "Yes. I felt the black market was unsafe." Spivey said he felt he was only taking minimal doses, a typical eight week cycle consisting of four CC's of decadurabolin, two CC's of testosterone and six to ten anavar tablets per day (a cycle described as "moderate dosage" for a bodybuilder by someone familiar with steroid cycles). When asked if anyone gave him any advise on the size of the doses he said, "I advised myself."

Lawyers for Roddy Piper had worked feverishly on Monday trying to convince Caldwell to quash his subpoena, using the same reasoning that Hogan's was quashed. Caldwell turned down the motion. Piper, who said he first came in contact with Zahorian in 1980 or 1981 in Hershey, PA, said he purchased deca, anavar, winstrol V and stanazol from Zahorian. The prosecution had evidence of Piper calling Zahorian from Universal City in Los Angeles on March 23, 1990 and making an order from Zahorian. Piper testified he began purchasing steroids from Zahorian before 1988 and also purchased Halcion and vitamins from the doctor. He also received medical attention and drugs to combat stomach problems from Zahorian. When asked if Zahorian ever pushed drugs on Piper, like testosterone, Piper replied, "Yes." Piper looked very sad leaving the court room and on his way out, patted Zahorian on the back as one would do to console a friend who is in trouble.

Brian Blair testified he purchased anavar, deca and testosterone from Zahorian during the period in question. He would phone the doctor to make his orders and the drugs would be fed-exed to him at home. He'd buy approximately 10 to 15 bottles of deca at a time. Zahorian never examined him or took any medical history before prescribing the drugs. "I paid for the packages and he sent it," was how Blair described his relationship with Zahorian, who he first met in Allentown in 1984. He purchased steroids, vitamins and other drugs from Zahorian. Costopolous asked Blair if he went to Zahorian because he was a doctor and Blair responded, "yes," and when asked if he was afraid to get steroids on the street because they weren't safe, Blair also said, "yes."

Rick Martel said he first met Zahorian in 1981 in Allentown. He purchased deca, anavar and testosterone. When asked if Zahorian offered any advice when dispensing the drugs, Martel said, "He told me to take certain drugs for certain effects." He said Zahorian never took a medical history or examined him while on cycles, and that Zahorian never pushed any drugs on him.

Costopolous tried to portray Dunn as a man who would intimidate Zahorian if he didn't sell him steroids, although Dunn denied on the stand incidents of threatening the doctor that Costopolous would bring up. He said his client would accept any verdict the jury comes up with in regards to the testimony of the wrestlers, but tried to refute Dunn's credibility as a witness. Costopolous said their position is that the law should allow a doctor to prescribe medication for athletes because the athletes should have the right to get big and strong and enhance their performance.

"If a tree falls in an empty forest, does it make any noise?"

When this trial is over, if any changes are to begin to happen, and they probably won't, it depends more on how seriously the media treats this story. Unfortunately, the best thing for the health of wrestling may have been for Hulk Hogan's appearance to turn the trial into a media circus. Unfortunately, Hulk would have come off as an undeserved fall guy, just like Ben Johnson did. Today, it appears there are two men most

in danger of becoming undeserved fall guys. One is Roddy Piper, who is not the celebrity Hogan is, but is something of a crossover name. Just judging from the looks of things, Piper is hardly a major roidhead in comparison to most WWF wrestlers, but he's the biggest name among those testifying. The other guy with something to lose is Dan Spivey, who is the biggest name in Japan among the quartet. Nikkan Sports ran a story about Spivey being linked to the case on Wednesday. In addition, he's the only WCW wrestler involved in the case, and to serve the proper p.r. function of finding a scapegoat and pretending, wink, wink, to not see the real problem, his job may very well wind up in jeopardy. In the greater scheme of things for Terry Bollea, the person, maybe the judge made a fair ruling. But for the health of pro wrestling, what may have been a fair ruling for the individual wasn't for the business as a whole. ABC's Nightline dropped interest without the Hulk's marquee value. Sports Illustrated cooled off, but still had interest depending upon what happens at the trial. Most newspaper coverage of the story will be greatly diminished, although there will be significant coverage, particularly in Pennsylvania and also in the Miami Herald, because reporter Alex Marvez had been working on a steroids in wrestling story (which ran on Monday morning and was picked up by the Knight-Ridder wire services) since well before news of this trial even came to light. What will be most interesting is if the media coverage takes a sensationalistic approach (trying to turn "celebrity" Roddy Piper into a fall guy) or truly examines what's causing all this.

Marvez' story quoted Wahoo McDaniel as saying he first heard of Zahorian as a steroid supplier back in 1977. Bruno Sammartino, who said he laughed when he read Zahorian was only being tried for the years between 1988 and 1990, was quoted saying, "When I came back to the WWF as a television announcer in 1984, it was scary. I used to go to the men's room between television tapings and I'd see hundreds of hypodermic needles lying around. I'd say a minimum of 95 percent of the wrestlers today are using it." Wahoo McDaniel said that the majority of WCW guys "are steroid guys. Some take enough to kill a horse." Jim Herd countered by saying his company doesn't have a steroid problem. "We don't condone steroid abuse, but we don't condone drinking whiskey, either. You're talking about grown-ups and intelligent human beings. We don't test for steroids, but we would if we promoted amateur athletics."

It is expected that more sensationalistic stories will come out of the various supermarket tabloids over the next few days. One tabloid last week reprinted a 1982 photo of Hulk Hogan with nude women from "Oui" magazine and using it as an example of a contradiction between what Hogan's role is and what he really is. Of course, it was a total cheap shot except once again that in the way the WWF promotes him with a fabricated image and he's become such a celebrity from it, when reality contradicts it, there are going to be embarrassing moments. But in this case it's a total cheap shot to use a 1982 photo, but we're not exactly talking about publications with any kind of moral standards here, either. The National Enquirer was going to run an interview with Billy Graham that was done by John Arezzi on the Pro Wrestling Spotlight (and was reprinted in the Observer) one year ago. It was thought that another tabloid this week will try and tie the death of Rick McGraw to steroids.

WWF and WCW both have major decisions to be made this week. Unfortunately, those decisions won't be made for the health of their employees, but based on convenience. If the pressure gets too hot, something will be done. If pressure cools down, they can all pretend, wink, wink, that nothing ever happened. In the case of WCW, addressing this problem will no doubt come first. Turner Broadcasting wouldn't want its name associated with a steroid problem, so even if Jim Herd, Jim Barnett, Virgil Runnels and company choose to not see, the higher ups, who care far more about the TBS image than pro wrestling, may take the matter into their own hands and implement steroid testing. On Tuesday, several WCW wrestlers were expecting steroid testing within 90 days. As said previously, that is only a p.r. answer to the problem.

With the WWF, the situation is different, of course, and has suddenly become a lot more complicated. One person very close to several WWF officials said that when the story broke, many in the office were of the opinion that the company should work to eliminate steroids to avoid this scandal cropping up on a regular basis. Remember, even if the business survives this one, which it will, that doesn't preclude this from happening again, which it also will. The effect of each subsequent

story of this type will multiply the previous effect and after a few years, the general public and mainstream media, and not just a few people who follow wrestling closely, will laugh when Basil DeVito stands behind the company's policy of wholesome family entertainment and the positive example we set for the youth of America. But by then, it'll be way too late. The theory espoused was that if all the wrestlers got off steroids, they'd all shrink proportionally so the public wouldn't notice. The television and marketing is strong enough that they can still get the characters over. Hey, this business not only survived, but was flourishing a lot more than it is now before there were any steroids involved. But here's the catch. That's okay when you're talking pro wrestling, but it does nothing to help Titan Sports p.r. wise because is steroids are phased out of wrestling, it brings up the obvious contradiction if they aren't in bodybuilding. Wrestling can survive without steroids. Business may go down a little temporarily, but in the long run, its success or failure will be based on its marketing, television exposure and promoting. Bodybuilding can't survive as a spectator form of entertainment without steroids. You can't sell tickets to see a muscle show if the guys aren't on the juice, even if none of them are on, because the muscle fans can go to their local beach or gym and see more muscular physiques on non-competitors with no steroid rules to adhere to. The WBF's first motto when its formation was announced late last year, "Bodybuilding as it was meant to be," was certainly thought by all bodybuilders groupie's at Gold's Gyms around the country to mean, no steroid testing. If you can see a guy on the beach that looks more muscular than the so-called pros, nobody is going to pay \$50 a ticket to see a pro show. To address in something more than a p.r. manner this problem in wrestling, still leaves the company open for the same amount of criticism as being subliminal steroid pushers because of the bodybuilding. McMahon may not have that problem today. But just like this story, it's inevitable, like a ticking time bomb, that the company some day will have to deal with it.

There's only one real answer. Re-education of the audience. Testing is a public relations answer. Another work. But this is a business based on a work, so expect testing if the heat gets hot enough that the issue has to be addressed. The real solution. Pushing wrestlers based on physical ability, not physique. It won't work short run because the audience is educated in a different way. But if pro wrestling were to ever do something real, for the long run, not just for the health of the participants but for the long-term health of the business, it's time to just this once, avoid trying to work everyone and deal with the situation realistically.

This is the final issue of the current four-issue set. If your Observer subscription has a (1) on the address label, it means your subscription expires with this issue. Renewal rates remain \$6 for four issues, \$12 for eight, \$24 for 16, \$36 for 24, \$48 for 36 up through \$60 for 40 issues within the United States and Canada. Rates for airmail delivery outside of the U.S. and Canada is \$9 for each set of four issues through \$90 for 40 issues. There are still copies remaining of the 110-age Observer yearbook for \$14 for non-subscribers and \$12 for subscribers within the United States and Canada. Overseas rates are \$20 for non-subscribers and \$18 for subscribers. All renewals, yearbook orders, house show reports, news items, letters to the editor or any other correspondence should be sent to the Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

Fax messages can be sent after Noon Eastern time (9 a.m. Pacific) to the Observer at 408-378-6562.

#### **KNOCKSVILLE USA FINAL POLL RESULTS**

Thumbs up:	198 (44.1 percent)
Thumbs down:	174 (38.8 percent)
In the middle:	77 (17.1 percent)

#### **BEST MATCH POLL**

Steiners vs. Hase & Chono	224
Ric Flair vs. Bobby Eaton	42

#### **WORST MATCH POLL**

Oz vs. Johnny Rich	71
Diamond Studd vs. Tommy Rich	39
Steve Austin vs. Joey Maggs	36
Lex Luger vs. Great Muta	30

**EMLL:** 6/21 was the final card on this run of shows at Arena Mexico in Mexico City before what appeared to be a packed house of 17,000 fans. For the climax of a major tour, this card (and tour as a whole) was pretty disappointing. Super Astro & Ringo Mendoza & Black Magic beat Jerry Estrada & MS1 & Masakre in 2/3 falls, highlighted by Astro running across the ring, jumping on the middle rope and springboarding over the top rope with a dive onto Estrada, who had to run in like a centerfielder trying to catch a bloop fly to catch Astro before he crashed onto the floor. \*1/4; Mascara Sagrada & Canadian Vampire Casanova & Atlantis beat Fabuloso Blondy & Nitron & Pierroth Jr. via DQ 1/2\*; Conan & Rayo de Jalisco Jr. & Sangre Chicana beat Perro Aguayo & Cien Caras & Mascara Ano 2000. The heels won the first fall, faces took the second via DQ and in the third fall the heels apparently won when Aguayo pinned Conan but the second ref reversed the decision because Cien Caras had given Conan a low blow right in front of heel ref Gran Davies, who counted the fall anyway but the second ref reversed it and awarded it to the faces via DQ \*1/4 and the main event saw Satanico beat Kato Kung Lee in a hair vs. hair match by submission in the third fall DUD. Satanico can have good matches with the right opponent, but Lee, a legendary name who has once a great performer looked too old to work a singles match and this was such a disappointing climax to a feud that has been building for so many weeks. . . 6/16 at Arena Coliseo saw Tony Arce & Vulcano beat Aguila Solitaria & Pantera II in 2/3 falls to keep the Mexican tag team titles in what was said to have been a sensational match, Ciclon Ramirez & Solar II & Rokambole beat Comando Ruso & Supremo I & II in 2/3 falls, Atlantis & Chavo Guerrero & Mogur beat Gran Sheik & Gran Markus Jr. & Fuerza Guerrera in 2/3 falls and prelims. . . Octagon and Atlantis have finished filming their first movie but they may be called back in August for re-shooting. . . It was announced that Conan's first challenger as CMLL world champion will be Angel Blanco Jr. . . Mascara Sagrada kept his Mexican lighthouseweight title beating Estrada on 6/19 in Acapulco. . . Gran Markus Sr. (Juan Chavarria), who was a headliner in Texas in the 1970s, has been hospitalized for the past six months with pancreatitis and has dropped 100 pounds of bodyweight. . . On TV, they did a video with Nitron and a few heel midgets roaming the streets of Mexico City as everyone gawked. The midgets all wore their masks around town. They ended up in a restaurant and Nitron wouldn't eat the food. . . Herodes was released from the hospital this past week. He suffered a cracked skull and broken ankle taking a bump out of the ring on television two weeks ago. . . Also on television they brought out awards for the five wrestlers who received the most fan mail for the first six months of the year, in order they were Octagon, Conan, Atlantis, Lizmark and Cien Caras (who is the lead heel, and waved and thanked the crowd for all his fan mail when he got his fifth place award). . . 6/23 at Arena Mexico saw Mascara Ano 2000 & Universo 2000 beat Mil Mascaras & El Sicodelico via DQ when Mascaras removed Universo's mask (stop the presses, Mil did the job in the second fall), Blue Demon Jr. & Atlantis & Black Magic beat MS1 & Masakre & Satanico in what was said to be the best match, Volador & Misterioso & Angel Azteca beat Supremos I & II & Bestia Salvaje and prelims.

**UWA:** 6/16 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw Canek keep his UWA world heavyweight title beating Buffalo Allen (Badnews Brown) in 2/3 falls with a cross bodyblock off the top rope in the third fall. Also Miguelito Perez & Hurricane Castillo Jr. & El Gigante Guerrero beat Dos Caras & Enrique Vera & Villano III in two straight falls. In the first fall, Castillo claimed he was given a low blow, which he wasn't, behind the refs back and the ref called for the DQ. In the second fall, Castillo gave Villano III a low blow behind the refs back and pinned him; Silver King & El Texano & Hijo Del Santo beat Fishman & Killer & Negro Casas in 2/3 falls in the best match on the card; El Signo & Negro Navarro & Black Power beat El Samurai (Osamu Matsuda) & Vincente Fernandez & Fantasma and in a womens match, Zuleyma & Xochitl Hamada beat Pantera Surena & Neftali. . . Blue Demon Jr. vacated his WWA world middleweight title. . . On 6/21 in Guanajuato, Santo defended the UWA world welterweight title against El Hijo Del Diablo and on the same night in Netzahualcoyotl, Villano III defended the world lighthouseweight title against El Signo. . . Baby Face's son is training to be a pro wrestler. His name is Ben Heref Jr. and will probably work as Baby Face Jr. . . 6/21 in Tijuana drew 3,500 a Super Muneco beat Popitekus in a mask vs. hair match \*\*\*\* with double juice plus Perez & Castillo & Gigante Guerrero beat Vera & Dos Caras & Ultraman 2000 \*\*\*, Mercenaries beat Villanos \*\*. . . 6/23 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw Dos Caras & Villano III & Vera beat Perez & Castillo & Gigante Guerrero in 2/3 falls, Santo & Solar I & Fantasma beat Negro Casas & Rambo & Blue Panther in 2/3 falls in the

best match on the card when Santo pinned Casas in the third fall. After the match the two made challenges for mask vs. hair and also title matches and it was agreed that they'd meet on 6/30 with Santo putting up his welterweight title against Casas' middleweight title. Also Canek & Fishman & Killer bet Texano & Silver King & Hamada in 2/3 falls, Fray Tormenta & Fernandez & Halcon 78 beat El Engendro & Baby Face & Black Power in 2/3 falls and Ricky Boy & Zeus beat Gran Apache I & Corsario Negro. . . Pegasus Kid returns on 7/6 as WWF world lighthweight champion and will defend the title against Villano V.

**ALL JAPAN:** Line-ups were announced for the major shows on the next tour. 7/6 in Yokosuka has Stan Hansen & Danny Spivey defending their world tag team titles against Steve Williams & Terry Gordy, Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas defend the Asian tag team titles against The Fantastics (Tommy Rogers & Bobby Fulton), Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshinari Ogawa vs. Mitsuharu Misawa & Toshiaki Kawada and Joe & Dean Malenko vs. Tsuyoshi Kikuchi & Kenta Kobashi. 7/7 in Osaka has Tsuruta & Masa Fuchi vs. Misawa & Kawada, Hansen & Spivey vs. Kobashi & Johnny Ace, Gordy & Williams vs. Pete Roberts & Joel Deaton and Malenkos vs. Fantastics. 7/8 in Osaka has Hansen & Spivey vs. Fantastics, Tsuruta & Akira Taue vs. Misawa & Kikuchi, Williams & Gordy vs. Malenkos and Ace & Kobashi vs. Kroffat & Furnas. 7/16 in Hiroshima has Williams & Gordy & Rick Rude vs. Hansen & Spivey & Roberts, Furnas & Kroffat vs. Malenkos, Fantastics vs. Deaton & Billy Black and Tsuruta & Fuchi vs. Kobashi & Kawada. 7/18 is the only show of this tour in Korakuen Hall in Tokyo (show is already sold out) with Misawa & Kobashi & Kikuchi vs. Hansen & Spivey & Roberts, Tsuruta vs. Ace, Kawada vs. Fuchi and Williams & Gordy vs. Fantastics. The biggest show of the tour will be 7/20 in Yokohama with Tsuruta defending the triple crown against Williams, Fuchi defending the junior heavyweight title against Roberts, Hansen & Spivey defending the tag team titles against Misawa & Kobashi, Kawada vs. Taue, Gordy vs. Ace and Malenkos vs. Deaton & Black. The tour ends on 7/24 in Kanazawa with a tag team title match with Hansen & Spivey vs. Tsuruta & Taue, Gordy & Williams vs. Misawa & Kawada, Kobashi vs. Furnas and Kroffat vs. Kikuchi. . . The 6/1 Budokan Hall show, which aired on 6/9 and 6/16, drew tremendous TV ratings both weeks.

**NEW JAPAN:** The new tour opened on 6/20 at Tokyo's Korakuen Hall before a sellout crowd of 2,000 as Keiji Muto & Shinya Hashimoto & Tatsumi Fujinami beat Demolition Ax (Bill Eadie) & The Canadian Giant (Greg Rollins) & Scott Norton when Hashimoto pinned Ax with a DDT. The Giant appeared to be much taller than Andre the Giant or Shohei Baba, billed at 7-5, and there are those who said he appeared in the ring to be taller than El Gigante who appeared at the Tokyo Dome and some newspapers reported that he was the tallest man ever to wrestle in Japan. Riki Choshu & Masa Chono beat Badnews Allen & Brad Rheingans, Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki beat Pegasus Kid & Super Strong Machine, Kim Duk & Masanobu Kurisu beat Hiro Saito & Tatsutoshi Goto, Masa Saito pinned Osamu Kido and Kengo Kimura & Kuniaki Kobayashi beat Jushin Liger & Shiro Koshinaka. . . 6/21 in Joetsu drew a sellout 3,920 as Allen & Rheingans & Norton beat Choshu & Hashimoto & Masa Saito when Saito was pinned by Norton, Machine & Goto upset Fujinami & Muto when Machine pinned Muto, Canadian Giant & Ax beat Kimura & Kido, Chono & Seiji Aoyagi beat Duk & Kurisu via DQ, Pegasus Kid & Hiro Saito & Norio Honaga beat Liger & Hase & Sasaki when Kid pinned Liger to help set up their mask vs. mask match next month. . . 6/23 in Kanagawa drew 2,510 as Norton & Rheingans & Allen beat Choshu & Kimura & Kido, Chono & Fujinami beat Duk & Kurisu via DQ in 27 seconds, Hashimoto & Masa Saito beat Canadian Giant & Ax, Pegasus Kid & Goto & Machine beat Liger & Muto & Black Cat and Hase & Sasaki beat Kobayashi & Koshinaka. . . Both Weekly Gong and Weekly Pro printed the legitimate results of the televised Clash of the Champions, including Muta doing a job for Luger in 3:45 with a powerslam, I guess because the tape of the match would eventually reach the hardcores in Japan. However, the result in St. Louis of the Muta & Stan Hansen vs. P.N. News & Sting match (Sting legit pinned Muta) was changed to Sting getting counted out of the ring. In Nashville on 6/13, they printed the legit result with Sting & Lex Luger over Muta & Arn Anderson. All the Steiners vs. Hase & Chono results were legit because it's okay for Hase to put Steiners over nightly in Japan. . . With Scott Steiner expected to be out of action for three to four months, no word on what they'll do about the IWGP tag team titles but it's expected they'll just keep the Steiners as champs until Scott recovers and they can return. . . The 6/12 Budokan Hall show (which wasn't a very good show, particularly considering it was Budokan) drew a 6.9 rating

when it aired on 6/15. The number was somewhat impressive since it went head-to-head with SWS on cable.

**OTHER JAPANESE NEWS:** Saw the SWS card from 6/7 at Tokyo Sumo Hall and it was a good show, with four matches being three-stars or better. It was tons better than any SWS show I've seen thus far, with only two matches out of eight being really bad and since one of them involved Tugboat, it almost doesn't count. . . WING, the new group started that is supposedly being financed by the WWC in Puerto Rico, held a press conference on Friday at the Prince Hotel in Tokyo. The president of the group is Kazuyoshi Osako, who was formerly the president of FMW with Mr. Pogo being introduced as the group's top star and Victor Quinones (part-owner of Capital Sports in Puerto Rico) as heading the office as well. They announced the group will debut on 8/7 at Korakuen Hall and its first tour will end on 8/17 also in Tokyo at a kids amusement park using Gypsy Joe (El Grande Pistolero in USWA), Great Fujo (no idea who), Billy Travis and a tag team called The Head Hunters on the first tour. They announced the Japanese wrestlers on the tour, but they just included Pogo and a few former FMW prelim wrestlers plus two young guys from a new sport in Japan called Submission Arts Wrestling. . . Meanwhile, FMW ran a big show on 6/21 in Sapporo before 4,205 fans with the main event scheduled as Pogo vs. Tarzan Goto in a barbed wire match. Sambo Asako subbed and lost to Goto in 9:27 of a bloodbath (what a surprise, huh?). In fact, the match was stopped because Asako was bleeding so badly. Atsushi Onita came in to check on Asako and the two brawled a bit to set up Goto back as a heel and a rival for Onita now that Pogo is out of the picture. Tokyo Sports reported Goto would leave FMW for WING, but those close to the situation tell me that Onita, Goto and Asako are the three who will definitely not leave FMW. Also on the show Onita beat Horace Boulder in 5:43 in a bullrope street fight, Ricky Fuji beat Mark Starr to keep the AWA lighthweight title and Gladiator beat Shooter plus Reggie Bennett appeared underneath. . . SWS has Korakuen Hall booked on 6/26 with Genichiro Tenryu & Samson Fuyuki vs. Yoshiaki Yatsu & Shinichi Nakano on top and Takashi Ishikawa & Tatsumi Kitahara vs. Ishin Riki & Naoki Sano. In an attempt to draw a legit sellout on the show, they've priced GA tickets at \$7, which is dirt cheap since the cheapest ticket at Korakuen for any group is normally \$22, except FMW which sells SRO tickets for \$18. . . All Japan women had a television taping on 6/18 in Sapporo with Aja Kong & Bison Kimura beating Bull Nakano & Kyoko Inoue in 2/3 falls which went approximately 30 minutes to keep their tag team titles. In the third fall, Aja pinned Bull to set up either a singles title match or a return hair vs. hair match between the two on 9/2 billed as a Survival match. The next two top matches had Akira Hokuto keep the Pacific title beating Toshiyo Yamada with a Northern Lights bomb and Manami Toyota & Mariko Yoshida & Takako Inoue beat Esther Moreno & Cynthia Moreno & Mika Takahashi. . . 6/20 in Asahikawa drew 1,600 as Toyota beat Takako Inoue and Nakano & Kyoko Inoue & Tomoko Watanabe beat Kong & Kimura & Takahashi. . . JWP drew 1,390 on 6/20 in Niigata with Harley Saito & Shinobu Kandori beating Devil Masami & Rumi Kazama in the main event. . . All Japan women will be starting a single elimination Grand Prix tournament on 7/7 which ends on 8/18 at Korakuen Hall to determine the No. 1 contender for Nakano's title. Both the semifinal matches and the final will take place at Korakuen. First round matches have Toyota vs. Mima Shimoda, Takako Inoue vs. Suzuka Minami, Yamada vs. Miori Kamiya, Kyoko Inoue vs. Debbie Malenko, Esther Moreno vs. Mariko Yoshida, Yumiko Hotta vs. Kong, Hokuto vs. Etsuko Mita and Takahashi vs. Kimura. They're bracketed so the winners of the first two matches listed meet each other, etc. down the line all the way to the finals.

**USWA:** The on-again, off-again deal to where Joe Pedicino will form his long talked about Global Wrestling Federation and take over ESPN is a done deal. Really. For sure. No doubt about it. Although there was one heck of a lot of doubt until late Monday afternoon. The deal was consummated on paper last week, as reported here. However, the undisclosed amount of money Pedicino was paying to get control of the ESPN contract and the USWA syndicated network wasn't scheduled to arrive and legally consummate the deal until the end of the week. Craig Johnson taped promos for the first set of television tapings for 6/28 and 6/29 at the Dallas Sportatorium that were supposed to air on television this past Saturday night which announced the names we mentioned here last week. According to one source close to all the proceedings, as of Friday afternoon, the money hadn't arrived and Andrews Entertainment got a little concerned. Pedicino claimed to have wired the money, but it wasn't deposited in the bank by closing time on

Friday. Those close to the Jarrett side thought this was another example of Pedicino as a fraud and that this situation would end up exactly like the Pedicino deal to purchase the USWA late last year did, with a deal being completed and when it came time for the money to change hands, there was no money. The USWA wrestlers came to the Sportatorium that night on the assumption it was their final night in town. When they left on the bus to go back to Memphis, most were of the opinion that was the last night. However, since no money had come, a "back-up" USWA line-up was made for the next Friday show. No card was announced for the next Friday in the building. On television Saturday night, Andrews pulled Pedicino's promo from the show and the only announcement made was that there would be wrestling on Friday night at the Sportatorium and to call the Sportatorium hotline for the card, but on the screen there was a trailer that said not to call the hotline until 10 a.m. on Monday. The idea was that if Pedicino had wired the money after the banks closed on Friday, the money would be in the bank at 9 a.m. and the card would be put on the hotline. At 10 a.m., the hotline message gave the USWA line-up for Friday night. Jarrett was telling people not to believe anything in the newsletters about his losing either ESPN, his syndication or the Dallas market. Lo and behold, Pedicino, in the flesh, arrived in Dallas on Monday with the money, and that night word leaked out that everything, down to the last detail, was done. But it wasn't until Tuesday afternoon when the hotline message was changed to announce the debut of the Global Wrestling Federation on both Friday and Saturday night. No matches were announced but announced were 18 matches per night with 30 wrestlers and the start of the TV title tournament. The only names announced were Jim Cornette, Stan Lane, Trooper, Makhan Singh (Mike Shaw), Buddy Landel, Rip Rogers and Big Bully Busich, although local wrestlers Gary Young and Terry Garvin have also been confirmed as appearing and Scandor Akbar is expected to be involved with the group as well. We've also heard that Cactus Jack and the Wet'n'Wild tag team (Steve Ray & Sonny Beach) are expected to come in and Pedicino will be starting or doing a junior heavyweight tournament on the second weekend in July with Lightning Kid and Jerry Lynn from Minnesota. . . Anyone who purchases a ticket for Friday night will get a free ticket for Saturday night. On a weekly basis, this has one major flaw. The only local television Global will have in the market airs Saturday nights at 7 p.m.-- which is the same starting time as is currently scheduled for the Saturday night cards. In other words, their TV is going head-to-head with a live show. Pedicino is spending this week renovating the Sportatorium, tripling the in-ring lighting, setting up a stage and commentary area and air conditioning the dressing rooms. Ironically, it's the latter point that means the most to the local wrestlers, and not any excitement provided by the idea there's a new promoter in town. It is said that the ESPN shows that air the first week of July will be transition shows hosted by Johnson, and the shows that are taped this weekend will begin airing on ESPN on 7/8 with new shows airing Monday through Thursday afternoon. Johnson and Scott Hudson (who does a shockingly good job under any standards, particularly considering just how short a time he's been doing wrestling announcing) will do the ESPN and syndicated shows with talk of a third announcer involved, while Doyle King is expected to broadcast the local Dallas show. Pedicino tried to contact Bill Watts about being figurehead commissioner but was turned down, however Pedicino is still working on bringing Watts in to present the championship belt the night the tournament is completed. . . Jarrett's final show on 6/21 drew 470 fans as Robert Fuller beat The Master Blaster (the original Master Blaster is gone, the new one is Sweet Daddy Falcone) in a Texas death match, Danny Davis beat Chris Candito to keep the lighthweight title, Jeff Jarrett beat Eric Embry via DQ in a chain match when Ta-Gar and Tojo Yamamoto interfered. After the match Embry tried to hit Jarrett with a chain and he ducked and Embry hit Ta-Gar. Tojo started yelling at Embry for a few moments until Embry punched Tojo and Ta-Gar attacked Embry and Embry ran them both off and apologized to the fans in Dallas for everything that he's done. When Embry did this, everyone was of the opinion this was the final night in, and immediately after Embry turned face, he quickly went to the souvenir stand and began posing with fans for paid polaroids, so he actually turned face so he could pick up a last \$20 to \$30 in gimmick money before getting out of town for the last time. Also Gary Young beat Chico Torres, Tom Prichard DDQ Tony Anthony when Miss Texas (Sweet Georgia Brown) in high heels and a mini-skirt came off the top rope onto Anthony and Dirty White Girl made the save. . . 6/17 in Memphis drew nearly 1,000 as Doug Gilbert beat Tex Sallinger, Rob Zakowski beat Dom Cham Mang, Eddie Gilbert beat Carl Styles, Bill Dundee beat Ta-Gar, Davis beat Candito, Anthony DDQ Prichard with

the girls getting involved, Embry beat Pez Whatley via DQ, Jerry Lawler beat Leatherface to earn three minutes with Embry, which ended with Embry jumping Lawler at the bell and pounding on him until Lawler made the comeback with 30 seconds left and Embry ran off and Jarrett & Fuller beat Judge Dred (said to be not very good) & Samu (not the Samoan, said to be small but very fast) to keep the tag team titles. . . Lawler was scheduled to wrestle Embry on television 6/22. Embry came out on crutches claiming a sprained ankle and said Prichard would replace him. Guess what happened next. If you guessed when Lawler turned his back on Embry, Embry hit him with the crutch, which broke and started pounding on him, you're doing well. Finally Lawler pulls down the strap and Embry ran away and Lawler chased him all over the studio. Rob Zakowski then teamed with Davis to beat Dom Cham Mang & Candito. I'm told for a rookie that Zakowski is excellent. Anyway, Embry talked with Zakowski about joining the Texas group and Zakowski said that he wouldn't spit on Embry if he was on fire. So Embry jumped him and Lawler made the save but Eric ran off. Later in the show Embry started arguing with announcer Dave Brown when Dave told him to get out of the studio. Embry wouldn't leave so Eddie Marlin told him to get out. Embry attacked Marlin and ripped up his sports coat. He then threatened announcer Michael St. John, who sold it great, and as he hauled back to punch him, guess who came out. I'm not going to tell you if you haven't figured it out by now. Embry runs away again. Marlin then announces that Embry is fired and Lawler tells Marlin not to fire him because he wants his revenge so finally Marlin says that you'd better get your revenge in one match because I'm giving him one more match here and then he's gone. 6/27 in Memphis had Candito vs. Doug Gilbert, Zakowski vs. Tex Sallinger, Davis vs. Cham Mang for the lighthweight title, Prichard & Miss Texas vs. Anthony & Dirty White Girl, Jarrett & Fuller vs. Judge Dred & Samu with the losing team having to split up with the USWA tag titles up against the Western States tag titles that Dred & Samu are billed as holding, Eddie Gilbert vs. Ta-Gar and Dundee vs. Styles, with the winners then meeting of those two matches to determine the top contender for Embry's Southern title (but isn't this Embry's last night in?) and Lawler vs. Embry in a no DQ match. Dred and Samu are said to have been trained by Ed Farhat. . . 6/18 in Louisville saw Davis draw with Dred, Dundee beat Candito, Fuller & Jarrett beat Blaster & Sallinger, Gilberts beat Samu & Embry, Anthony DDQ Prichard when the girls interfered, Lawler beat Texas Ranger (Jeff Gaylord) and Jarrett beat Embry via DQ.

**OREGON:** The 6/22 show in Portland saw Mike Winner go to a draw with Doug Masters, then Al Madril came in street clothes and said he refused to wrestle since kids were allowed in free that night. Don Owen then told Madril that he'd fine him more money for not wrestling than he earns in a month of wrestling if he didn't wrestle. So ref Sandy Barr handcuffs Madril to him and drags him into the ring. His opponent, Larry Oliver, then clotheslines Madril and Barr counted the pin in something like 10 seconds. When Barr uncuffed Madril, Madril attacked Barr and handcuffed Barr to the ropes and punched and kicked him and then spit on him. Madril then started yelling at Owen saying he's going to knock his hearing aid out. Then Al said how he could beat Sandy Barr blindfolded, and guess what. They made the match for 7/13 because Barr said he needed three weeks to get in shape and wrestle. Steve Doll wrestled Don Bruise with the stipulations that if Doll won, he and Demolition Crush (Brian Adams) would get a tag title match, but if Don won, then next week he'd get a match for Doll's Northwest title. Doll won, and they set up a contract signing for the tag title match in the ring but the Bruise Brothers threw powder in Doll & Crush's eyes and beat them up. Then in a strange situation, Doug Masters wrestled C.W. Bergstrom with Jimmy Jack Funk doing commentary. After they had wrestle about 10 minutes, Bergstrom rolled out of the ring and Funk came into the ring and he started wrestling Masters and ended up beating him. . . They announced a big show on 7/13 at the Sports Arena and said they are bringing in a lot of big names for the show, but didn't mention any names.

**HERE AND THERE:** The Ladies International Wrestling Association had its convention last weekend in Las Vegas including the Golden Girls wrestling extravaganza before about 100 fans. It was mostly the retired older wrestlers against newcomers which included Fabulous Moolah, Betty Clarke, Johnnie Mae Young, Kitty Adams, Belle Starr and Donna Christantello wrestling and Gladys "Killem" Gillem as a manager. Young was said to have looked really good. Moolah was managed by Valerie Boesch, the widow of famous Houston wrestling promoter Paul Boesch. Also at the convention was Danny Hodge, who is the answer to a trivia question--Besides Hulk Hogan, who is the only pro wrestler ever

to make the cover of Sports Illustrated? . . . John Arezzi is planning a wrestling convention on 8/24 and 8/25 in New York with Buddy Rogers, Superstar Billy Graham, Lou Thesz and Paul E. Dangerously as guests plus more to be announced. . . Eddy Mansfield is attempting to syndicate his show nationally. . . Dominic DeNucci beat Johnny Valiant on 6/22 in Elmwood City, PA before 500 fans in the main event. Nikolai Volkoff, who was to wrestle DeNucci, who must be in his late 50s at the very least, no-showed. . . 6/29 in New Castle, PA is headlined by Shane Douglas vs. Cactus Jack. Douglas, who is still under contract to the WWF, has to give the WWF office a percentage of his pay-off. . . Request TV has made a deal to do 90 minute Wrestling Classic PPV specials with a \$6.95 list price offered by the people who put out the Wrestling Classics videos the main. . . Thunderbolt Patterson wrestled on 6/22 in Rome, GA for Peach State Wrestling. . . Ron Garvin beat Stan Lane in the main event of an SAPW show on 6/22 in Rocky Mount, NC. . . A group called the NWF has a show booked on 8/2 at the Meadowlands Arena (legit) with The Sheik vs. Abdullah the Butcher, Wendi Richter vs. Candi Divine, Col. DeBeers vs. Cousin Luke, Sika the Samoan vs. Jules Strongbow and two other matches. That'll be as empty as the Meadowlands is when Paul E. and Jim Ross do those openings and the WPIX show. . . 6/1 at Juan Loubriel Stadium in Bayamon had Carlitos Colon vs. Polynesian Prince (one of the SST) in a barbed wire match, Invader #1 vs. Ron Garvin, TNT vs. King Kong, Giant Warrior (Butch Masters) vs. Dino Bravo (who now has dark hair), Miguelito Perez & Hurricane Castillo Jr. defending the Caribbean tag team titles against Galan Mendoza & Billy Travis with El Profe handcuffed to Monster Ripper, Super Medico #3 defending the Caribbean title against Dick Murdoch, Ricky Santana defending the WWC jr. title against Brad Anderson and Invader #4 & Mr. Ito (Umanosuke Ueda) vs. Action Jackson & Rod Price. . . A child in Richmond, VA started a fire that did \$15,000 in damages to his home when he copied a pro wrestling angle. The nine-year old set his teddy bear on fire on 6/9 after he watched a wrestling show that aired the day before in which a heel set a stuffed animal on fire. . . Jesse Ventura signed to be the radio color voice of the Minnesota Vikings for the upcoming season. Ventura had worked for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers the previous two years as a radio color man. . . Windy City Wrestling ran at the Hillside Mall in Hillside, IL with Ken Patera beating champ Ron Powers via DQ and Patera winning a Battle Royal. They run 6/29 at the Capital City Shopping Mall in Milwaukee with Jim Brunzell vs. Powers and Steve Regal vs. Ken Patera. . . Dory Funk Jr. was named figurehead commissioner of IWCCW. Watts was offered one spot, Funk another. Interesting. . . Tom Burke and Dan Reilly's wrestling talk show on WNNZ (640 AM) in Springfield, MA starts this Saturday at Noon. . . Special get well to reader Tom Boler who is recovering from an auto accident. . . Ricky Johnson is doing shows on 7/13 in Brook Falls, ONT, 7/20 in Barry's Bay, ONT and 7/21 in Picton, ONT.

WCW: In a story that was still up in the air as we are going to press, the future of Ric Flair in World Championship Wrestling is very much in doubt. According to four different company sources, on Monday, during contract negotiations between Jim Herd and Flair's attorney, Dennis Guthrie, Herd told Guthrie the company was giving Flair 30 days notice and rumors began that Flair's final day with the company would be either 7/14 in Baltimore or 7/22 in Los Angeles. To add insult to injury, the Los Angeles main event is scheduled as Flair & Paul E. Dangerously vs. Missy Hyatt & Lex Luger managed by Jason Hervey, which is almost the ultimate insult for Flair to involve him in that scenario and put him in the role of set-up man for a few comedy spots. As of Tuesday, Flair hadn't gotten notified by the office of his notice. Herd denied the story and said that the two sides are simply negotiating a contract extension, which from all accounts would require Flair to take a huge pay cut from his one-year contract estimated at guaranteeing him between \$700,000 and \$750,000 per year (which doesn't include additional income from his cut of merchandising revenue). Flair is actually still under contract to WCW through June 1, 1992. According to Herd, Flair has an escape clause in his contract that would allow him to quit provided he gave 30 days written notice. Herd said that WCW doesn't have a similar escape clause in the contract, which seems to mean the company can't legally give Flair notice without having to pay off the duration of the contract, although other sources say that there are loopholes to the company's benefit. . . . Danny Spivey has been fired with the reason given being his refusal to do a job for P.N. News on a road show this past week. The coincidental timing of this and his testimony in the Zahorian case seems too convenient. . . After undergoing surgery Monday night for a major bicep

tear, Dr. Jim Andrews said that he expected it would be three to four months before Scott Steiner could return. On the Jim Ross Report over the weekend on the 900 line, Ross reported that Steiner would be out of action for three months and that he expected a tournament would take place for the WCW tag team titles. I've heard some talk that Big Josh will team with Rick Steiner against The Hardlines (Dick Murdoch & Dick Slater) at house shows, or that Rick will wrestle one or the other in singles matches. . . After this month is over and the Bush tour begins, the promotion will cut back to one show per night. The September and October schedules are completed and although actual cities are confidential (for fear WWF will counter-book), they only have one show per night during those months and there is even talk about cutting out mid-week house shows. . . Angel of Death suffered torn ligaments when P.N. News accidentally splashed onto his knees rather than his chest and will be out of action four to six months. . . With the cutting back on house shows, fewer performers will be needed. The company is trying to get all the newcomers to sign contracts calling for a \$300 per show they work, rather than weekly guaranteed contracts as the existing stars have. The plan seems to be to phase out the higher-priced guys (with the exception of Sting, Luger, Steiners, etc.) and cut down on expenses by bringing in a crew of gimmick newcomers and cutting down the payroll. The actual contracts call for \$300 per show with a guarantee of 60 dates per year, which means they guarantee \$18,000 per year, a far cry from the six-figure plus guarantees the company had been offering. If this sounds minimal, remember that WWF contracts actually only guarantee \$750 per year (\$50 for no less than 15 television dates). If the contract is signed, the wrestler can't work for any other promotion for the one year period. In theory this means that if a wrestler is given 60 bookings in a two month period, the promotion can not book him for the next ten months and he can't work anywhere else. Now, let me say that there isn't the slightest bit of doubt in my mind that if that was the situation, that the company didn't want someone, they'd release them from the contract rather than make them starve, but that is how many of the wrestlers are interpreting the deal. The new clause in regards to injuries is that if a wrestler is injured, he gets paid \$300 for every date already listed on the booking sheets that he misses (which are now only made about a month in advance). There is nothing extra for PPV shows, which means that, in theory, if one of these newcomers gets hot and main events on PPV, they still get paid \$300 (the company may give them a bonus in that case, but by contract, that is what it reads). The wrestlers share of merchandising is three percent of the profits, which is the same cut that WWF wrestlers receive. Previous WCW wrestlers' contracts called for a much higher percentage of merchandising profits. Indeed, several WCW wrestlers were earning more money than heavier-pushed WWF wrestlers because the WCW share of merchandising revenue was so much of a better cut (one wrestler claimed it was 25 percent as opposed to three percent), but now they are the same and since WWF wrestlers naturally would sell more merchandise, that will be a thing of the past. . . Four more newcomers are headed in, called The American Patriots. They will be called The Fireman (Curtis Thompson), The Police Man (Bill Kazmaier), The Private (Todd Champion) and The Garbage Man (Pez Whatley). Supposedly TBS will have a cartoon show called The American Patriots as a cross-promotion tool. . . 6/19 in Battle Creek drew 500 as Larry Zbyszko pinned Sam Houston DUD, Oz pinned Joey Maggs \*\*, Brad Armstrong (as himself) beat One Man Gang via DQ when Gang pinned him but the ref reversed it when Gang kept splashing him after the match was over DUD, Tracy Smothers & Tommy Rich (Steve Armstrong had the flu) beat Michael Hayes & Jimmy Garvin \* and Ron Simmons & Yellow Dog (Brian Pillman) beat Ric Flair & Barry Windham when Dog pinned Windham \*\*1/2. Pillman lifts up his mask whenever the refs back is turned and shows it to Windham who goes berserk in these matches. . . 6/21 in Greensboro drew 1,000 as Josh pinned Dutch Mantell 1/2\*, Tom Zenk & JFD beat Royal Family DUD, Steve Austin pinned Tommy Angel \*, Mr. Hughes pinned Bobby Eaton in a total squash match \*\*, P.N. News beat Angel of Death in the match where Angel blew his knee out again DUD, Dustin Rhodes pinned Black Bart \*, Stan Hansen pinned Sting due to outside interference of Nikita Koloff \*\*\* and Lex Luger beat Koloff in a chain match when Sting interfered \*\*. . . The entire situation as it relates to this market is something worse than abominable. Several months back, WCW pulled a major coup in getting the WWF's Sunday television time on KTVU, Ch. 2, the top indie in the market which is almost like a mini-SuperStation on cable systems in Northern California and Nevada. Then, just a few months back, WCW secured a date at the Oakland Coliseum Arena, the area's top facility. As it turned out, WWF ran a date at the