

# Wrestling Observer Newsletter

March 9, 1992

World Wrestling Federation Vice President in charge of talent, Pat Patterson and booking assistant Terry Garvin resigned Monday amidst a scandal that could threaten the very future of the company.

Patterson, who is generally considered one of the six or seven most influential men in the pro wrestling business, along with Garvin, one of his long-time assistants, announced their resignations following allegations of sexual misconduct by two former ring attendants, an ex-front office employee and charges made a few weeks back on the Wrestling Insiders radio show by former preliminary wrestler Barry Orton.

The allegations of two former ring attendants, both of whom were underage at the time and one of which is planning to file a lawsuit within a few weeks according to an article in this past Wednesday's New York Post, were the first stories of this nature to actually make the mainstream news. WWF owner Vince McMahon was furious about the charges, particularly those made by Orton, because he felt that because of Patterson and Garvin's gay lifestyle, they would be unable to defend themselves against the charges even though both claimed they were innocent of any wrongdoing. McMahon said both felt by staying with the company it could have a severe negative impact on the company. Thus, according to McMahon, both men offered their resignations.

McMahon on Tuesday denied all of the charges against both Patterson and Garvin. He said that Garvin totally refuted the charge made by Orton and McMahon was upset at Orton and those in the media for bringing up an incident from 1978. He was also upset with charges by a former employee in regard to Patterson as ridiculous and claimed the employee, Murray Hodgkins, who he called a certifiable lunatic, was fired because he couldn't do his job properly. He noted that Patterson has been in the wrestling business for 30 years and in that time hadn't had any allegations brought against him and claimed the various sources complaining both in regards to Patterson and Garvin and also Hulk Hogan weren't credible.

McMahon did admit that Hogan didn't tell the complete truth on the Arsenio Hall show but denied he had anything to do with what Hogan said except he told Hogan to tell the truth. He said he was devastated when Hogan didn't tell the complete truth. McMahon was also critical of WCW Executive Vice President Kip Frey's new steroid policy and of the wrestling newsletters reaction to the policy saying the only valid policy is involuntary testing if one is serious about the subject. He also denied knowing about any new letter sent to employees last week as was reported in last week's Observer even though one part-time employee claimed he received a letter last Monday with a release form to sign making himself available for steroid and drug tests that was mailed the previous Friday. McMahon was also defensive of his own steroid testing program, which he claimed was far better than that of either the International Olympic Committee or the National Football League. He'll release his written policy to the media shortly, and, provided they dig themselves out of this current hole, he'll hold anabolic steroid symposiums with Dr. Mauro DiPasquale (who is generally considered the leading expert on beating steroid tests in the Western World) of Canada to educate the media to the subject. In addition, McMahon, after many false starts, implemented steroid testing to his World Bodybuilding Federation performers with a blood test taken a few days back (the WWF wrestlers didn't have blood tests taken and the procedure for the bodybuilders will be more stringent than that of the wrestlers) and urine tests to be taken sometime this week. According to other sources in bodybuilding, McMahon told the bodybuilders they would be tested five times between now and the 6/13 WWF championships in Long Beach and if the levels of steroids in the bodybuilders' systems didn't continually decline in every test than they would be suspended. McMahon said that he didn't think the current testing procedures used for the wrestlers were good enough, particularly when it came to the WWF competitors and said that everyone in the Long Beach contest will be off steroids in their final preparation phase. In a related development, the contract between McMahon's most highly publicized and highly-paid bodybuilder, Lou Ferrigno,

was severed on Friday. Ferrigno is claiming to still be with the WWF and simply taking time off to repair a hand injury which will result in him missing the WWF championships which were basically being promoted as a match-up between himself and last year's champion Gary Strydom. However, that isn't the case and sources close to the WWF said it was because Ferrigno balked at drug testing, a story McMahon didn't confirm. McMahon did say he expected Ferrigno to wind up with the rival Weider organization. McMahon admitted losing Ferrigno was a major marketing blow to the fledgling WWF.

Patterson, who came to work for the WWF in the late 1970s as a wrestler and upon his arrival, sold out Madison Square Garden four times in title matches against then-champion Bob Backlund, was considered one of the all-time great workers during his 24-year career. He was particularly well known in Northern California where he was the area's leading drawing card in the early 1970s. His tag team combination with Ray Stevens is one of the most famous duos in history, and perhaps with the exception of the Road Warriors, they were the only team to hold both the NWA and AWA world tag team titles during their career. Patterson was eventually moved into an office role after serving as a color commentator on television and becoming a part-time wrestler. After leaving the ring in 1985, he eventually took over as the second in command (behind McMahon) as far as talent and booking in the WWF after the firing of George Scott. Garvin, who was also an active wrestler during the 60s and 70s, part of a famous wrestling family with "brother" Ron and "brother" Jimmy (neither of whom he was actually related to) eventually held office positions with several promotions after retiring. He was working for Bob Geigel in Kansas City seven years ago when he made the move to the WWF.

The resignations came just a few days into what will almost certainly be the most critical period ever for the WWF. There have been several allegations of steroid and other drug use, sexual harassment and sexual abuse that will be breaking in several newspapers around the country and on the ABC television show 20/20 television over the next two weeks.

Most of the major creative and talent decisions all along have been made by McMahon, who for all real purposes was the booker even though most in wrestling referred to Patterson as such. But Patterson was clearly his second in command for years and heavily involved in all creative angles. The loss of Patterson and Garvin will be a void and most likely J.J. Dillon will become in charge of the administrative end of the talent coordination.

## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

1. JOHNNY B. BADD (203) 1,427
2. Lightning Kid (196) 1,365
3. Ishinriki (16) 492
4. Debbie Malenko (12) 289
5. Chaz Taylor (3) 185

Honorable Mention: Chris Candito 136, Rob Van Damme 108, J.T. Smith 89

## PREVIOUS WINNERS

- 1980 - Barry Windham
- 1981 - Brad Rheingans and Brad Armstrong (tied)
- 1982 - Steve Williams
- 1983 - Road Warriors
- 1984 - Tom Zenk and Keiichi Yamada (tied)
- 1985 - Jack Victory
- 1986 - Bam Bam Bigelow
- 1987 - Brian Pillman
- 1988 - Gary Albright
- 1989 - Dustin Rhodes
- 1990 - Steve Austin

## BEST PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER

1. JIM ROSS (258) 1,601
2. Tony Schiavone (59) 951
3. Vince McMahon (47) 662

4. Dr. Alfonso Morales (51) 537
5. Akira Fukuzawa (61) 339

Honorable Mention: Craig Johnson

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

- 1981 - Gordon Solie
- 1982 - Gordon Solie
- 1983 - Gordon Solie
- 1984 - Lance Russell
- 1985 - Lance Russell
- 1986 - Lance Russell
- 1987 - Lance Russell
- 1988 - Jim Ross
- 1989 - Jim Ross
- 1990 - Jim Ross

**WORST TELEVISION ANNOUNCER**

1. GORILLA MONSOON (255) 1,526
2. Herb Abrams (99) 843
3. Lord Alfred Hayes (29) 402
4. Vince McMahon (28) 401
5. Eric Bischoff (30) 362

Honorable Mention: Sean Mooney 234, Craig Johnson 189, Jim Ross 158, Michael St. John 154, Dusty Rhodes 88, Roddy Piper 80

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

- 1984 - Angelo Mosca
- 1985 - Gorilla Monsoon
- 1986 - David Crockett
- 1987 - David Crockett
- 1988 - David Crockett
- 1989 - Ed Whalen
- 1990 - Herb Abrams

**BEST MAJOR WRESTLING SHOW**

1. WCW WRESTLE WAR '91 2/24 PHOENIX 131
  2. New Japan/WCW Starrcade in Tokyo Dome 115
  3. 5/26 All Japan Women Tokyo 80
  4. WCW 11/18 Savannah Clash 55
  5. WWF Royal Rumble 1/16 Miami 41
- WCW SuperBrawl 5/19 St. Pete 41

Honorable Mention: 4/18 All Japan Tokyo Budokan Hall 38, WWF Summer Slam '91 8/27 New York 18, WWF Wrestlemania VII 3/26 Los Angeles 12, New Japan G1 tournament final 8/11 Tokyo 12, All Japan Women Wrestlemarinpiad 11/16 Kawasaki 11

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

- 1989 - NWA Baltimore Bash 7/23
- 1990 - U.S. and Japan Wrestling Summit 4/13 Tokyo

**WORST MAJOR WRESTLING SHOW**

1. WCW BALTIMORE BASH 7/14 331
2. WWF Survivor Series 11/27 Detroit 89
3. WWF Summer Slam '91 8/27 New York 34
4. WWF Wrestlemania VII 3/26 Los Angeles 18
5. WCW Fall Brawl Clash 9/5 13

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

- 1989 - WWF Wrestlemania V 4/2 Atlantic City
- 1990 - WCW Clash XIII 11/20 Jacksonville

**BEST WRESTLING MANEUVER**

1. MASAO ORIHARA'S MOONSAULT FROM TOP ROPE TO THE FLOOR 169
2. Jushin Liger's Frankenstein off top rope 152
3. Yoshihiro Asai's moonsault out of ring 107
4. Scott Steiner's Frankenstein 77
5. Jushin Liger's Asai moonsault 55

Honorable Mention: Bull Nakano's somersault legdrop off top rope 32, Jushin Liger's Liger flip dive out of the ring 31, Cactus Jack's elbow drop to the floor 25, Keiji Muto's moonsault 16, Kenta Kobashi's moonsault 15, Hiroshi Hase's Northern Lights suplex 14, Akira Hokuto's Northern Lights bomb 11, Monkey Magic Wakita's Monkey special 7

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

- 1981 - Jimmy Snuka's superfly splash
- 1982 - Super Destroyer's superplex (Scott Irwin)
- 1983 - Jimmy Snuka's superfly splash
- 1984 - Davey Boy Smith's power clean combination with Dynamite Kid's dropkick off the top rope
- 1985 - Tiger Mask's dive with mid-air flip out of the ring (Mitsuharu Misawa)
- 1986 - Chavo Guerrero's moonsault bodyblock pin
- 1987 - Keiichi Yamada's shooting star press
- 1988 - Keiichi Yamada's shooting star press
- 1989 - Scott Steiner's Frankenstein
- 1990 - Scott Steiner's Frankenstein

**SUPERBRAWL II**

- Thumbs up 188 (89.5 percent)
- Thumbs down 2 (01.0 percent)
- In the middle 20 (09.5 percent)

**BEST MATCH POLL**

- Jushin Liger vs. Brian Pillman 175
- Rhodes & Windham vs. Austin & Zbyszko 14
- Rick Rude vs. Rick Steamboat 13

**WORST MATCH POLL**

- Vegas & Morton vs. Zenk & Hammer 101
- Sting vs. Lex Luger 37
- Terrence Taylor vs. Marcus Bagwell 10

*Based on phone calls and fax messages to the Observer as of Monday afternoon. It should be noted that because of a problem with the answering machine, all phone calls made from late Saturday night through 10 p.m. Pacific time on Sunday night failed to register on the tape. Anyone calling during that time period should phone once again before Monday morning for responses to be included as part of this poll. Margin of error: 100 percent.*

**LPWA SUPER LADIES SHOWDOWN**

- Thumbs up 51 (82.3 percent)
- Thumbs down 3 (04.8 percent)
- In the middle 8 (12.9 percent)

**BEST MATCH POLL**

- Harley Saito vs. Mizuki Endo 33
- Harley Saito vs. Eagle Sawai 7

**WORST MATCH POLL**

- Reggie Bennett vs. Denise Storm 22
- Susan Greene vs. Denise Storm 5

A few questions to ponder for the week before getting into the serious news. 1) Now that the Natural Disasters are babyfaces, does that mean Typhoon becomes Tugboat once again; 2) How come Lex Luger gained 20 pounds when he was getting ready to go from an organization with no steroid testing to an organization with the best steroid testing in the world?; 3) With Luger history in WCW, who exactly is Mr. Hughes the bodyguard for?

When I was in college, I had a professor who was considered one of the most influential people in the local city government. We were studying the make-up of city government and then one morning, the headline story in the local newspaper was about probably the best-known member of the city council being indicted for bribery from developers and assorted other misdeeds. Pretty much everyone in the class had either read or heard about it from that morning when we went into class and wondered how the professor would react to the news since the newspaper reported the charges in a manner where nobody really had any idea if they were true or not. The first thing he said, almost laughing, was, "I guess you all learned this morning how city government really operates." I had that same feeling Wednesday when I heard about Phil Mushnick's column on the back page of the New York Post with the bold headline, "WWF to face suit alleging child sex abuse." The story read as follows:

The World Wrestling Federation, already reeling from allegations of persistent steroid abuse among its biggest kiddie-TV stars, appears headed toward even greater scandal. According to several highly placed sources, a lawsuit will be filed soon alleging that male WWF administrative employees and executives sexually harassed and abused underage

teenage boys who were engaged as ring assistants in the mid and late 1980s.

The suit, which is expected to be filed early next month at a New York federal courthouse, will also, according to the sources, charge the WWF with transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of oral corruption as well as violating child-labor laws.

The plaintiff's tales of sexual misconduct by WWF employees, according to the sources, have been corroborated by another party, who claims to have been similarly abused while an underage teen in the employ of the WWF as a "ringboy" or gofer.

A WWF staffer, speaking yesterday from the organization's headquarters in Stamford, Conn., said the only authorized spokesman, Steve Planamenta, was unavailable for comment.

David (Dr. D) Shults, a former WWF star, may have provided credibility to allegations of sexual abuse within the WWF when he was quoted last month about the organization in an independent pro wrestling magazine, Pro Wrestling Torch.

"We're talking about some of the top executives' sexual habits, their sexual preferences, sexual abuse and harassment." Shults recently joined another ex-WWF'er, Superstar Billy Graham, in providing detailed claims of pervasive illegal drug use within the WWF, including steroid abuse by the WWF's marquee performer, Hulk Hogan.

On Friday, Mushnick ran another item related to the story as part of his column:

The World Wrestling Federation continues to take on water. This week's Village Voice reports that ex-WWF performer Barry "Barry O" Orton recently appeared on a radio show over KVEG in Las Vegas and said out loud what has been whispered about for years—that WWF male executives engage in sexual harassment via a casting couch for male wrestlers. Orton provided details of one such episode in which he claims to have been repeatedly subjected to the advances of a WWF exec.

Meanwhile, WWF performer Kerry Von Erich was arrested for drug possession, a lengthy WWF drug expose is expected in next week's Los Angeles Times, and a lawsuit alleging sexual abuse of underaged boys by WWF staffers is expected to be filed in New York Federal Court early next month. Furthermore, ABC's 20/20 has tentatively scheduled March 13 to air a piece that, in part, points to steroid abuse within the WWF.

All this comes after allegations from ex-WWF stars Superstar Billy Graham and David "Dr. D" Shults that the WWF is lousy with illegal drugs and sexual exploitation, and that they personally watched or helped kiddie hero Hulk Hogan inject steroids "hundreds of times." And those allegations arose following a trial in which a Pennsylvania doctor, George Zahorian, was convicted of distributing steroids to several WWF stars, including Rowdy Roddy Piper.

On Friday, the WWF responded with a press release aimed at Muchnick's stories:

The New York Post has published a story containing serious, yet unsubstantiated charges about the World Wrestling Federation (WWF). We want to categorically state that the WWF and its parent company, Titan Sports, do not and will not tolerate illegal or improper behavior by any of our employees at any time. We will take responsible action regarding any legitimate claims filed through lawful channels.

However, Titan Sports, Inc. and the WWF feel no obligation to respond to charges that cannot be reasonably substantiated. Further, our attorneys have advised us to urge all news media and others to consider the credibility and the motives of any accuser before irresponsibly making public reckless charges, which are not grounded in fact, and which may have been made with malicious intent.

Titan Sports is proud to have corporate policies that are at the leading edge of any existing in the entertainment and sports industries regarding drug use, employment practices, and employee behavior.

The lawyers in the lawsuit that Mushnick referred to in his column took depositions this past week from Barry Orton and Superstar Billy Graham and are working on other depositions. I didn't expect this story to break at least until the lawsuit was filed. One reporter at ABC television several weeks ago noted to me that many people in the New York media were aware of this impending story and were waiting to see who would break it first. In legal cases, we've also seen that two or three weeks in about to file a lawsuit time can stretch out a lot longer. When the lawsuit is filed, it becomes public record and anyone can read it and write about what is charged in graphic detail. What that means is anyone's guess. But we are about to enter three of the most interesting weeks in the history of this business. We've got the Los Angeles Times story on Hulk Hogan, which is expected to run within the next seven days, which will break the stories about Hogan that have both been in and some stories that have never been in these pages to the general public. We've got a four-part series in the San Diego Union-Tribune which will cover the same ground but not only on Hogan, but on the entire wrestling industry. The 20/20 piece, which is expected to be mild in comparison since the WWF is only a part of the steroid story, is only days away. The Washington Post has also started working on a piece.

If that's all there is, then it'll be an embarrassing two weeks for the WWF leading into the biggest show of the year. If it mushrooms from there, it's impossible to predict just what will happen. The big question is, where does this leave the wrestling business and the WWF in particular? Pro wrestling is a unique form of sports entertainment and that will probably work in its favor. But the potential, because it's pro wrestling, is that if it doesn't work in its favor, it will devastate the WWF and maybe the entire wrestling business. Imagine if all of these stories broke at the same time about a team in the NFL, or even the NHL. From lies and hypocrisy on the steroid issue, allegations of an organization rampant with street drugs, alleged homosexual harassment of wrestlers tied into promotion and earning power (this aspect has the most potential to be blown, pardon that word, completely out of proportion since this is one allegation I'm not convinced of) to allegations of attempted homosexual abuse on underage boys. What would the result be? The media pressure, if attempts at a cover-up were blown, and general public reaction would be so intense that it would probably be one of the biggest sports scandals of the decade. It would make point-shaving look like shoplifting. However, the league, whether it was the NFL or the NHL, would be ultimately spared by the press after it took its initial licks. The scapegoats would be the individuals caught and they'd be dead and buried, but not the industry. In wrestling, the odds are still better than 50-50 that no matter what happens, the mainstream media will ignore it because it's wrestling. In that case, there will be no devastating effects from all this other than possibly an embarrassing lawsuit and a few people losing their jobs or taking a publicity fall and scapegoats. But if the media jumps on this, and it's got enough sordid angles that it could easily mushroom from the Los Angeles and San Diego stories, then the WWF will be devastated. It won't be individuals, but the company and perhaps, sadly enough, even the entire industry that would take the heat. Even in a best-case scenario, the WWF is finished as an important name in kids' products said New Jersey licensing consultant Woody Brown in an article by Irv Muchnick in this week's Village Voice. That is a major chunk of income right there. Merchandising probably accounts for close to 50 percent of the company's revenue. If the media does seize the WWF as a cesspool of something or other and turns Vince McMahon into this year's Jim Bakker, and the similarities in some cases are scary, particularly if there is any truth to some of these new allegations, then sponsors will sprint faster than Ben Johnson on steroids out of this industry. As written here before, the key is television. It will take one hell of a lot of impact and pressure from the media for television to cancel WWF programming. As we've pointed out here a few times, it has happened before in recent television history (the most obvious case being the Morton Downey Jr. television show, and all Mort did was work his own angle with himself by pretending skinheads beat him up in an airport bathroom when he apparently really smashed his own face into a sink to draw sympathy but when it came out it was a work, he was history). But it's very unlikely and certainly the worst-case scenario, short of any criminal indictments. Without television, the house shows and pay-per-views won't draw and the business on the level we know it will be a small piece of the history of television junk pop culture, just like the Roller Derby of the early 1970s. With television, no matter how much bad ink this may get, the

house shows and pay-per-views will survive and probably won't be hurt that much (although if the Hogan name goes down in the process, the indirect effect on the WWF will be substantial, but the company will survive in its present form but maybe at a lower plateau).

How will World Championship Wrestling fit into the picture and the rest of the wrestling industry? It's impossible to tell. In a worst-case scenario of WWF, it may adversely affect WCW merchandising as well. They won't take a direct hit in any of the scheduled pieces, but let's face it, while there is probably more steroid consumption in the WWF than in WCW, probably around 50 percent of WCW wrestlers are on the juice as well. If there is any impact on this business over the steroid issue, WCW may be treated nicer, but it won't be spared the criticism. And this criticism should hardly be limited to wrestling. When we're looking at this genre of entertainment aimed to generate merchandising, the new touring hit of the year, American Gladiators, probably has a great percentage of its athletes on steroids than either major wrestling group, and half the Gladiators are women. And remember, the WWF is pro wrestling to the vast majority. If the WWF goes down, maybe some sponsors will jump on the WCW bandwagon but more than likely they'll jump to Gladiators which won't carry the "negative wrestling stigma."

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A lot of people expected SuperBrawl on Saturday, 2/29 from Milwaukee to be the show of the year. While it was a virtual consensus that this was a good show, somehow expectations were so high that it didn't quite live up to the card of the year mark. Still, there was a legitimate match of the year contender on the show and most of the matches were good. The main event, in which Sting defeated Lex Luger to win the WCW championship for a second time, was a letdown for a PPV main event, let alone a major world title change match. Preliminary figures we've received as of Monday indicated a buy rate around 0.6, which if it holds up nationally has to be a terrible disappointment. While legitimately some of this can be blamed on the increase in price from \$19.95 to \$24.95, one can't blame a fall in purchases by almost half from Starrcade on that. Part of it has got to be attributed to the main event not garnering enough interest. Considering on paper this looked to be a great card and with the debut of Jesse Ventura thrown in, it says there is still a long way to go. Being one month before a Wrestlemania priced at \$29.95 could be attributed by some as a factor, but they've run PPV shows one month before Mania every year and always have done decent business. If the 0.6 holds up, that would be around a \$2.35 million total gross.

The live show from the Mecca Arena in Milwaukee drew a full house of 5,000 fans (4,000 paid for a \$67,000 house). What wasn't a disappointment was the opening match with Jushin Liger vs. Brian Pillman. This will certainly finish high in the match of the year balloting this year. In comparison with other match of the year calibre bouts I've seen live over the past three years, I'd rate it below the War Games last year from Phoenix, slightly better than the Steiners vs. Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki from the Tokyo Dome last year (which won match of the year in 1991), better than Bret Hart vs. Mr. Perfect from last year's Summer Slam and even slightly better than the Steiners vs. Sting & Lex Luger from St. Petersburg at last year's Wrestle War. It wasn't as good as the Suzuka Minami vs. Manami Toyota match I saw on an All Japan women's show in March of 1991 nor close to Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Mitsuharu Misawa match I saw in 1990 in Tokyo's Budokan Hall.

The atmosphere before the show was about the level of most PPV shows. There was a surprising amount of banners all over the building. The most were for Sting and Jesse Ventura (who got a huge reaction live coming in on a Harley), probably followed by the Steiners although there were many also for Jushin Liger and several for Brian Pillman, Cactus Jack, Rick Rude, Paul E. Dangerously and even a few for Terrence Taylor and Ric Flair. I'm not sure if it was the time (the show lasted from 5:30 p.m. to 8:47 p.m. local time), but the crowd clearly got tired and the heat wasn't what you would have expected for the so-called important matches. The decision to start the show off with a bang with Liger-Pillman sounded smart on paper because they wanted to do a blow-away show and it's best to start with a guaranteed blow-away match. However this was such a blow-away match that it really wasn't until five matches later that the crowd fully got into a match. The crowd seemed tired for Rude vs. Steamboat and while they reacted to Sting vs. Lex Luger, it was anti-climactic and really not a good match at

all. As world title change matches go, it would rank in the bottom tier. I didn't sense nearly as many people knowing in the crowd this was Luger's last hurrah with the company as one would think for something that has been such a poorly kept secret. It was nothing like last year in St. Pete when it was Sid Vicious' last match and it seemed everyone knew about it.

**A. Big Josh pinned Diamond Dallas Page in 7:38 with a butt drop off the top rope that his father Tough Josh made famous in the 1960s in Oregon.** Page's best spot was spitting into the crowd. 3/4\*

**1. Pillman pinned Liger in 16:58 to regain the WCW lightheavyweight title.** Pillman was legit working against doctor's orders because of a back injury. There were so many hot moves in this match that you couldn't even remember them all. But there were dives out of the ring, hot moves in the ring, unique submissions and all kinds of hot moves like power bombs, superplexes off the top rope, german suplexes and the like for near falls which popped the crowd like it was Japan. For the most part, the crowd cheered both men. There was a "USA, USA" chant when Liger had Pillman in the figure four, but almost immediately Liger did a somersault splash off the top rope to the floor which got the crowd chanting "Jushin, Jushin." I sensed there was a solid percentage of the crowd that wanted to boo Liger going in but couldn't. Anyway, describing it doesn't do it justice. If you didn't see it, get a videotape. Finish saw Liger miss a diving head-butt off the top rope and Pillman pin him with a Japanese rolling crotch hold. Liger handed Pillman the belt and both guys hugged after the match to a huge ovation and the crowd heavily cheered both men when they left the ring. \*\*\*\*3/4

**2. Marcus Alexander Bagwell pinned Terrence Taylor in 7:36.** Taylor was wearing a Ted DiBiase hand-me-down outfit. You had to pity these guys because there was no way to follow the previous match. Taylor carried Bagwell completely. Bagwell looked really gay, if that's the correct adjective, in that white outfit that was three sizes too small which is why the crowd booed him. Bagwell got lost going into the rolling reverse cradle and the pin was heavily booed and the place cheered when Taylor hit him with the five-arm after the match. \*1/2

**3. Ron Simmons pinned Cactus Jack with a cross bodyblock off the top rope turned into a powerslam in 6:33.** Cactus took a few frightening bumps, the first one being hanging himself in the ropes. He also did an elbow drop off the middle rope to the floor. After the match Abdullah the Butcher did a run-in to apparently attack Jack, but lo and behold he attacked Simmons instead and they doubled on Simmons until Junkfood Dog came out of the audience and head-butted a few security guards (who double as television jobbers) and made the save. You'd be shocked at the pop JFD got with the fans chanting his name. He's dropped 61 pounds, although when the starting point is 346, that means there's still about 15-20 left to go. \*\*1/2

**4. Tom Zenk & Van Hammer beat Vinnie Vegas & Richard Morton in 12:00 when Zenk pinned Morton with a sunset flip coming out of the corner.** Zenk was subbing for Johnny B. Badd who was embroiled in a contract dispute and pulled from the card at the last minute. Morton replaced Mr. Hughes with the cover reason being that it would make it a better match but actually Hughes was pulled from the show as punishment for some kind of non-drug related misdeed. It should have been okay with Zenk and Morton doing all the work and just letting the green boys in for quick power spots. Instead, Hammer and Vegas worked most of the match. At times it was surprisingly okay, but most of the time that wasn't the case. There were a few botched up spots and the brawling back and forth was terrible. After the match, Zenk and Vegas yelled at each other and it seemed like Zenk was issuing a challenge. I just hope it was for a one-on-one basketball game rather than a wrestling match. -1/2\*

**5. Barry Windham & Dustin Rhodes beat Larry Zbyszko & Steve Austin in 18:21.** This was a tremendous match with good brawling back-and-forth. Austin's timing is just incredible considering his experience. They got heat on Windham in the early portion, then heat on Rhodes later. Windham made the hot tag and came in and went for the superplex but Zbyszko shoved him off. Rhodes shoved Zbyszko off the top rope and Windham pinned him with a flying lariat. \*\*\*3/4

**6. Bobby Eaton & Arn Anderson retained the WCW tag team titles beating Rick & Scott Steiner via DQ with the dreaded Dusty finish in 20:00.** They announced that Paul E. Dangerously was banned from ringside during this match (to give him time to make a costume change). Eaton & Anderson sold the Steiners big moves for the first half of the match which consisted of power moves and slowdown tactics in between. There were a lot of good moves but it was slow-paced in spots and the consistency of crowd intensity wasn't what you'd expect. Rick came off the top rope to a knee in the groin and they started working on Rick but you didn't get a sense of a lot of sympathy. Scott came in but was cut off and thrown over the top rope behind the refs back. Rick made the hot tag and they went to the finish. Anderson threw white powder in a bag into Rick's eyes, and since he couldn't see, he gave ref Randy Anderson a belly-to-belly suplex. Scott gave Bobby a Frankensteiner and got a three count when a second ref came in. Finally head referee Nick Patrick came in and reversed the decision because Rick gave the ref a suplex. That finish wouldn't have been so bad if they hadn't done it on so many house shows (like almost every one) over the past two months. \*\*\*1/4

**7. Rick Rude pinned Rick Steamboat in 20:01 to retain the U.S. title.** Before the match, they aired several interview segments with Missy Hyatt (that appeared to be done live but were actually filmed a week earlier in Rock Hill, SC) where "The Ninja" chased Madusa away which one is supposed to figure led to Dangerously guard the door in a Ninja costume and come to the ring with Steamboat. This was a 70s style match. All the spots were perfect and there were some nice moves thrown in but kind of slow paced since they were going 20. Steamboat really turned it on at the end, with the finish coming when Paul E. the Ninja hit Steamboat twice with the phone and Rude pinned him. \*\*\*3/4

**8. Sting pinned Lex Luger in 13:01 to win the WCW title.** Luger was so huge he looked like a member of a different species. If it hadn't have been confirmed already, this officially confirmed Luger's joining the WWF. They spent the first two minutes pretending they were doing a silent movie by standing there and doing nothing. Then they started working and the near 300 pound Luger blew up within two minutes. The match was kept simple and it did have interest but was a long way from a classic title change match. Luger controlled the match pretty much playing superman, even not selling a Stinger splash. Sting did get Luger in the torture rack. Sting kicked out of Luger's piledriver. Finish came out of nowhere with Sting decking Harley Race and pinned Luger with a cross bodyblock. Luger and Sting shook hands and embraced after the match but on television they switched to a crowd shot so the folks at home didn't see it. \*1/2

**NOTES:** After the card, in a ballroom at the Mecca they did a worked press conference with Sting and it was interrupted by Dangerously and Rude. Rude threw a drink in Sting's face and the entire Dangerous Alliance attacked Sting until Nikita Koloff made the save for his face turn. This angle airs on television this coming Saturday. One of Rude's blows (I think it was Rude anyway) potatoed Sting's eye which was badly swollen the next day in Chicago.

Also in town for the show was Tsumi Fujinami, who apparently will be winning the NWA world heavyweight title when they have the tournament. Fujinami & Takayuki Iizuka are tentatively scheduled to wrestle Rick & Scott Steiner in a match to determine the No. 1 contenders for the IWGP tag team titles held by Bam Bam Bigelow & Big Van Vader on 5/17 at Wrestle War in Jacksonville in the semi-main event to the War Games which will pit Koloff & Sting & Steamboat & Rhodes & Windham vs. Dangerous Alliance. I don't believe Fujinami is the right choice, but he's got the seniority. He's nothing compared to what he once was, but he is a legitimate legend in this business, but he's hardly known in this country in comparison with Keiji Muto and isn't the calibre of worker these days as either Masa Chono or Hiroshi Hase.

Best estimate from here is about 50 percent of the guys on steroids. Since the guys got the letter in the mail on Saturday or Monday of last week, it's too soon to notice any changes as of yet but the next PPV should provide a good indication of how well voluntarily compliance works as a steroid policy works. But the guys who are on should show noticeable changes by early next month.

\*\*\*\*\*  
A few notes on Wrestlemania which is scheduled for 4/5 at the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis. The new issue of the WWF Magazine that will be released this week lists the matches already announced on television (Hogan vs. Justice, Flair vs. Savage, Piper vs. Hart) plus the Undertaker vs. Jake Roberts match that will probably be announced next week. The magazine confirmed the original plan which was to have Money Inc. (IRS & Ted DiBiase) defending the WWF tag team titles against Jim Duggan & Sgt. Slaughter and the Legion of Doom in a street fight against the Natural Disasters. With the suspension of Hawk of Legion of Doom, they were pulled from the Mania show and the Disasters were turned face and it'll now be IRS & DiBiase vs. Disasters for the tag team titles. The originally planned Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Janetty match will now be Michaels vs. Tito Santana. Also scheduled is Tatonka vs. Rick Martel and Big Bossman & British Bulldog & Virgil vs. Nasty Boys & The Mountie. The status of LOD in the WWF is currently still up in the air. McMahon had a meeting with Animal, who from most reports wants to stay with the company. Hawk has been wanting out for some time, but both men want to keep the tag team together. They haven't officially reached an agreement to return after Wrestlemania but the odds of it are much better this week than they were previously. \*\*\*\*\*

While away this past weekend, we also caught the WCW show at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago on 3/1. The show was scheduled for eight matches, but it turned out to only have six and the entire undercard consisted of scrambled eggs. There were no announcements about a change in the line-up before the show, refunds offered and all that jazz that we write about every week. Brian Pillman vs. Johnny B. Badd was switched to Pillman vs. Mike Graham because of Badd's contract dispute. Richard Morton vs. P.N. News simply didn't take place because News wasn't there, although it isn't like anyone missed it. Abdullah the Butcher vs. Cactus Jack didn't take place since Abdullah has turned back with Cactus the night before, although both were in the building. Vinnie Vegas no-showed so Cactus replaced him teaming with Mr. Hughes against Ron Simmons & Big Josh. The top three matches went on as scheduled, although there was a lot of confusion regarding the main event, a cage match with Sting vs. Rick Rude. The match was never announced as a title match nor a non-title match in the building and on television it wasn't advertised either way. When Rude won, most in the crowd believed the title had changed although there was no announcement made one way or the other and went home with that feeling. This is very similar to WWF house shows now with Roddy Piper vs. Ric Flair cage matches that Piper is winning and Piper even leaves with arena holding both belts although no announcement is made. Anyway, the UIC show drew about 2,700 fans and \$33,000.

**1. Taylor pinned Bagwell in 14:09 with a back suplex using the ropes for leverage.** A little bit better than their match the previous night. \*1/2

**2. Pillman pinned Mike Graham in 9:49 with a cross bodyblock off the top rope.** The local ref (Mike Figueroa, a commission ref) messed up the count to make the finish even worse. Pretty dull overall. After the match, Morton came out and challenged Pillman to a title match and Pillman agreed to give Morton the match on the spot. The bell rang (although there was no ref in the ring), they did one high spot and Morton walked out of the ring. DUD

**3. Simmons & Josh beat Cactus & Hughes in 2:19 when Simmons pinned Hughes with a powerslam.** Hughes landed wrong on the powerslam and his back went out and he couldn't move so he just laid there and was pinned even though the ref stopped the count even though Hughes didn't kick out since it wasn't supposed to be the finish. It became obvious quickly to the crowd that Hughes was really hurt and the crowd reaction was interesting because almost everyone understood there was no acting involved and responded accordingly. When Hughes was taken out on a stretcher, the crowd clapped politely at him and even the little kids realized it was a legit injury. By Monday it appeared that Hughes wasn't hurt that badly and he may even be in the ring again this week. DUD

**4. Windham pinned Zbyszko with an inside cradle in 6:59 in what was billed as a one fall death match.** Finish got a lot of heat and after the match Windham flipped Madusa over. \*\*1/4

**5. Steiners & Rhodes beat Anderson & Eaton & Austin in an elimination tag team match.** Steiners did most of their offensive moves on all three for the first ten minutes. Rhodes and Austin were both counted out at 14:30. Scott Steiner backdropped Eaton over the top rope for the DQ in 20:00. This left Rick with Anderson and Eaton and Rick pinned Bobby at 21:31 with a bulldog off the top rope and Anderson with a clothesline as he was coming off the top rope in 21:48. Real good. \*\*\*1/2

**6. Rude pinned Sting in a cage match in 12:35.** Sting came out first and gave a speech mocking Rude's speech about all the fat, out of shape sweatshops. Action was pretty good throughout. Rude came off the top rope twice and if nothing else, since he fell off the cage a few weeks back, shows he has a lot of guts. Finish saw Sting go after Paul E. Dangerously, who threw the phone into the ring and Rude used it on Sting and pinned him. \*\*\*1/4

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This is the final issue of the current four-issue set. If you've got a (1) on your address label it means that your Observer subscription expires with this issue. Renewal rates remain \$6 for four issues, \$12 for eight, \$24 for 16, \$36 for 24, \$48 for 32 up through \$60 for 40 issues within the United States, Canada and Mexico. Rates for any other foreign country is \$9 for each set of four issues, \$18 for eight, etc. up through \$90 for 40 issues. All subscription renewals, letters to the editor, reports of house shows, news items and any other correspondence related to this newsletter can be sent to the Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

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

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## **EMLL**

Fuerza Guerrera captured the CMLL welterweight tournament on 2/15 in Puebla beating El Khalifa (a local hero in Puebla) via submission in the finals. Khalifa had defeated America in the semifinals that night while Guerrera had defeated Felino. This sets up a title unification match with NWA welterweight champion Misterioso later in the year.

Mascarita Sagrada, to nobody's surprise, captured the first CMLL World Super-Mini (midget) championship beating Espectrito Jr. in the finals on 3/1 at Arena Mexico in Mexico City. In the semifinals on 2/23 in the same building, Sagrada defeated Aguilita Solitaria in a face match while Espectrito Jr. beat Octagoncito. Sagrada, generally considered the best midget worker of the past few decades, got a huge standing ovation in a pageantry-filled post-match celebration.

2/21 at Arena Mexico in Mexico City saw Super Astro & Blue Demon Jr. & El Filoso win 2/3 falls from Tony Arce & Vulcano & Rocco Valente \*\*, Apollo Dantes & Ultimate Dragon (Yoshihiro Asai) & Kato Kung Lee beat Javier Cruz & Bestia Salvaje & Blue Panther in 19:42 when Dantes pinned Panther in the third fall with a Northern Lights suplex \*\*3/4 (match was super when the workers Dantes, Dragon, Salvaje and Panther were in the ring but pretty bad when Lee was in), The New Infemales (Pirata Morgan & MS 1 & El Satánico) won two straight falls from The Untouchables (Jacque Mate & Masakre & Pierroth Jr.) when Masakre was pinned by Morgan in the second fall to set up their hair vs. hair match for 2/28 that airs on television this coming Sunday \*\*\*\* and Conan & Sangre Chicana went to a double disqualification with Perro Aguayo & Cien Caras \*\*\*. The story of the match was that Caras once again turned on Aguayo and Chicana and Caras both beat on a bloody Aguayo for three minutes before Conan made the save for Aguayo, his long-time enemy.

Rey Bucanero, the younger brother of Pirata Morgan, made his Mexico City debut on 2/11 at Arena Coliseo.

Octagon retained his Mexican Middleweight title on 2/12 in Acapulco going to a draw with Guerrera.

On 2/12 in Mexico City, Arce & Vulcano beat Canadian Vampire Casanova & El Hijo de Solitario with Casanova & Solitario not getting along.

## **UWA**

3/1 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw Enrique Vera beat El Muerte (a star in Guatemala) in the main event of a hair vs. mask match. La Muerte, who was managed by lead heel manager

Andy Barrow, turned out to be Jose Sanchez Perez of Mexico. Vera bled buckets. In the co-feature, The Death Missionaries (El Signo & Black Power II & Negro Navarro) captured the UWA trios title from Los Villanos, Gran Hamada & Villano III & El Colosso beat Rambo & Negro Casas & The Killer, Silver King & El Texano & Fantasma beat The American Eagles (Tony Anthony & Danny Davis) & Dr. Wagner Jr. via DQ in the best match on the card, Scorpio & Scorpio Jr. & Canadian Tiger beat Katana & Halcon 78 & Celestial and Shu El Guerrero & Lobo Rubio & Hijo Del Diablo beat Lasser & Kendo & Marlin.

Hamada beat El Engendro in a hair vs. hair match on 2/29 in Cuernavaca.

Silver King & Texano kept the UWA tag team titles beating Negro Casas & El Espanto Jr. on 2/24 in Guanajuato.

Main event on 3/2 in Puebla was American Eagles & Casas vs. Dos Caras & Villano III & Colosso.

2/28 in Netzahualcoyotl with the main event having career vs. hair match with Tamba the Flying Elephant putting up his career and having to retire if he lost against Canadian Tiger (Mike Lozansky)'s hair.

## **ALL JAPAN**

The biggest show of the week was 2/27 in Matsumoto before a sellout 2,600 for television taping of the show that aired Sunday night. The gimmick was a four match series of singles matches with Jumbo Tsuruta's team of himself, Akira Taue, Masa Fuchi and Yoshinari Ogawa against Mitsuharu Misawa's team of himself, Toshiaki Kawada, Kenta Kobashi and Tsuyoshi Kikuchi. Misawa's squad ended up winning the first three matches to clinch the deal although Tsuruta captured the main event pinning Kobashi in 21:39 of a super match with his back suplex. Misawa made Taue submit to a facelock in 15:44, Kawada made Fuchi submit with a facelock in 14:24 (I guess you can see why the facelock is so over in All Japan right now) and Kikuchi pinned Ogawa. Also on the card, Steve Williams & Terry Gordy beat Stan Hansen & Johnny Ace in 22:44 when Gordy pinned Ace, Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas beat Dory Funk & Fire Cat (Brady Boone) when Cat did the honors, Giant Baba & Rusher Kimura beat Haruka Eigen & Motoshi Okuma, State Patrol (Buddy Lee Parker & James Earl Wright) upset Joe & Dean Malenko and Mighty Inoue & Masao Inoue & Isamu Teranishi beat Satoru Asako & Mitsuo Momota & Richard Slinger.

Last Sunday's television show headlined by Williams & Gordy & Slinger vs. Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa drew a 4.7 Video Research and 5.3 Neilsen rating.

All Japan announced its Championship Carnival singles tournament from 3/21 to 4/17 which will include all the top name Japanese wrestlers plus Hansen, Gordy, Williams, Abdullah the Butcher, Ace, Kroffat, Furnas, Billy Black, Joel Deaton, The Master Blaster (Al Greene) and the return of Dan Spivey.

2/29 in Okazaki drew 2,900 as Misawa & Kawada & Kobashi beat Williams & Gordy & Slinger in 22:02 when Kobashi pinned Slinger, Tsuruta & Taue beat Hansen & Wright, Baba & Funk & Andre the Giant beat Fuchi & Okuma & Eigen, Kroffat & Furnas beat Parker & Ace, Malenkos beat Ogawa & Inoue and Kikuchi pinned Fire Cat.

2/24 in Kuraicki drew 1,200 (smallest All Japan card in a long time) as Misawa & Kawada & Kobashi beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa in 21:06, Williams & Gordy & Slinger beat Hansen & Ace & Parker, Kroffat & Furnas beat Fire Cat & Wright, Baba & Funk & Kimura beat Okuma & Eigen & Fuchi, Inoue pinned Dean Malenko and Joe Malenko pinned Teranishi.

2/25 in Koga drew a sellout 1,900 as Misawa & Kawada & Kobashi beat Williams & Gordy & Slinger when Misawa pinned Slinger in 19:10, Hansen & Ace beat Tsuruta & Fuchi, Taue & Ogawa beat Furnas & Kroffat, Baba & Kimura beat Okuma & Eigen, Funk & Kikuchi beat State Patrol and Malenkos beat Inoue & Teranishi.

2/26 in Kisarazau drew 1,800 as Tsuruta & Taue & Fuchi beat Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi when Taue pinned Kikuchi in 25:37, Williams & Gordy & Slinger beat Wright & Ace & Hansen, Kroffat & Furnas beat Funk & Ogawa, Kobashi pinned Parker, Malenkos beat Inoue & Teranishi and Fire Cat pinned Asako.

3/1 in Higashi drew a sellout 3,300 as Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi upset Tsuruta & Taue & Fuchi when Kikuchi pinned Fuchi in 24:54, Hansen & Ace beat Furnas & Kroffat when Hansen lariatd Furnas, Andre & Inoue beat Gordy & Slinger when Andre pinned Slinger, Funk & Kobashi beat Fire Cat & Williams when Kobashi pinned Fire Cat, Baba & Kimura beat Okuma & Eigen, State Patrol beat Ogawa & Momota, Joe Malenko beat Teranishi and Dean Malenko pinned Asako.

## NEW JAPAN

The new tour opened on 3/1 at the Yokohama Arena before a sellout 18,000 fans paying in excess of \$1 million (ringside was \$156) for the New Japan 20th anniversary show. A lot of different things happened that drew the crowd including several old-timers matches and a tag team title change. Bam Bam Bigelow & Big Van Vader won the IWGP world tag team titles beating Hiroshi Hase & Keiji Muto when Vader splashed Muto for the pin in 24:18. The main event saw Riki Choshu & Kengo Kimura beat Antonio Inoki & Osamu Kido in 28:00 when Choshu pinned Kido with a lariat. Kimura got a rare main event as a sub for Masa Saito, who was hospitalized, while Kido got a main event which was announced well in advance as a sub for Tatsumi Fujinami, who was in Milwaukee for SuperBrawl. In other matches on the special card, Samurai (Osamu Matsuda) returned from Mexico and pinned Tiger Mask (Koji Kanemoto) in a super match. Kanemoto under the hood did a complete Satoru Sayama replica routine which got over huge to the long-time fans who remembered Sayama who was one of the country's biggest drawing cards as the original Tiger Mask (1981-83). Also retired wrestlers Seiji Sakaguchi & Shozo Kobayashi won via disqualification from Tiger Jeet Singh & Umanosuke Ueda (the top heel tag team in New Japan up until the mid 1980s), Kantaro Hoshino & Kotetsu Yamamoto (the television color commentator) went to a 10:00 draw with Black Cat & Hiroyoshi Yamamoto, Shinya Hashimoto pinned Masa Chono in 18:10 of a super match, Shiro Koshinaka pinned Akira Nogami, Brian Blair beat Michiyoshi Ohara (in his final match in Japan before he leaves for Europe for seasoning for a few years) and Osamu Nishimura pinned Satoshi Kojima.

Upcoming big shows have on 3/2, Bigelow & Vader vs. Choshu & Chono and Hase vs. Singh and a television taping on 3/9 has Bigelow & Vader defending the IWGP tag team titles against Chono & Hashimoto, Jushin Liger defending the IWGP junior heavyweight title against Mad Bull Buster Spike, Choshu & Takayuki Iizuka & Samurai vs. The returning Blond Outlaws and Koshinaka & Kuniaki Kobayashi vs. karate fighters Akitoshi Saito & Masashi Aoyagi.

3/11 at Tokyo's Korakuen Hall has Bigelow & Vader vs. Masa Saito & Hase, Nogami vs. a blond Outlaw to be announced, Samurai against another blond Outlaw, Hashimoto & Iizuka vs. two other blond Outlaws and Choshu & Chono & Muto vs. Vader & The Wild Samoans (Kokina & Samu).

For those of you planning trips to Japan, here are the major New Japan shows through January. 4/30 at Sumo Hall will be the finals of the junior heavyweight tournament, 5/17 is a big show at Osaka's Castle Hall (13,000 seats), 6/26 is Tokyo Budokan Hall (which may be the one-night tournament for the NWA title), 8/7, 10, 11, 12 is the second annual G1 tournament with opening night in Nagoya and the next three nights at Sumo Hall, 9/23 will be the return to Yokohama Arena, 11/22 and 11/23 are two more straight nights in Sumo Hall, 12/11 is Nagoya Rainbow Hall and 12/14 is a major show in Osaka while Starrcade '93 will be 1/4 at the Tokyo Dome and tickets go on sale on October 10th.

2/22 television headlined by Muto & Hase vs. Scott Norton & Brad Armstrong drew a 7.7 Video Research rating and a 6.2 Nielsen rating.

## OTHER JAPAN NOTES

The UWFI drew a sellout 2,600 to Tokyo's Korakuen Hall on 2/29 as Gary Albright pinned Masato Kakiyama in 2:28 in the main event to help build up the Albright vs. Nobuhiko Takada match which most figure will headline the 3/17 card in Nagoya. Takada beat Mark Fleming (protege of Lou Thesz) submit with an armlock, Kazuo Yamazaki beat Tom Burton, Yoji Anjyo beat Yuki Miyato, Kiyoshi Tamura beat Mark Silver and Tatsuo Nakano beat Pez Whatley.

All Japan women on 2/29 in Kamagaya drew 1,750 as Manami Toyota & Suzuka Minami & Sake Hasegawa won 2/3 falls from

Aja Kong & Miori Kamiya & Kauro Ito, Toshiyo Yamada pinned Debbie Malenko, Bull Nakano pinned Etsuko Mita and Kyoko Inoue & Yumiko Hotta beat Akira Hokuto & Tomoko Watanabe.

WING starts its new tour on 3/6 with the headline match on tour being Ivan Koloff vs. Mr. Pogo in a Russian chain match on 3/11. Also on tour are Miguelito Perez, Iceman (Ricky Santana), Vic Steamboat, Vladimir Koloff, Rip Rogers and The Head Hunters.

Onita announced an outdoor show at the Kawasaki Baseball Stadium (where he drew a sellout 33,000 fans last year) for 6/17.

The Masakatsu Funaki vs. Roberto Duran match will be announced at a press conference in Miami on 3/19.

PWF on 2/24 at Korakuen Hall drew a sellout 2,300 as Funaki made Wayne Shamrock submit in 40:00, Minoru Suzuki made Jerry Flynn submit in 8:46, Yoshiaki Fujiwara beat Yusuke Fuke via the five knockdown rule in 15:58, Bart Vail beat Kazuo Takahashi and L. Kilauea beat Wellington Wilkins Jr.

## JAPANESE TELEVISION RUNDOWN

**2/22 NEW JAPAN:** 1. Liger pinned Pegasus Kid to retain both the IWGP jr. and WCW light heavyweight titles in 16:22 with a rolling crotch hold. Liger was selling his rib injury so Pegasus had to carry the match and looked great in doing so. Liger did the Asai-moonsault and kicked out of several moves off the top rope. \*\*\*3/4; 2. Kimura & Choshu & Saito beat Nogami & Chono & Hashimoto in 13:26 when Kimura pinned Nogami with a power bomb after Choshu hit Nogami with a lariat. All action good match. \*\*\*1/2; 3. Koshinaka & Kuniaki Kobayashi beat Akitoshi Saito & Tachigi (two karate fighters from Nagoya where this card was being taped). This mixed match only went 4:56 but was intense with a ton of heat. The crowd was on its feet the whole way and it pretty well was worked to look like a shoot. The karate guys from the stable that Saito & Tachigi came from were at ringside along with the New Japan prelim wrestlers and at one point both sides started fighting. Koshinaka made Tachigi submit with a dragon sleeper. \*\*3/4; 4. Muto & Hase kept the IWGP world tag titles beating Norton & Brad Armstrong in 22:37. Hase and Brad were great here. Brad sold a lot of the match and was finally pinned by Muto's moonsault. \*\*\*\*

**2/23 ALL JAPAN:** 1. Kawada & Kikuchi beat Kroffat & Furnas in 14:12 of a super match. Kawada made Kroffat submit with the Dragon sleeper in the finals. All sorts of great spots and near falls. A legit match of the year candidate. \*\*\*\*1/2; 2. Ace & Hansen beat Misawa & Kobashi when Hansen hit Kobashi with the lariat and Ace pinned him. After the match Hansen hit Misawa with two more lariats. \*\*\*3/4; 3. Williams & Gordy & Slinger beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa when Williams pinned Taue with the Oklahoma Stampede. Okay match but nowhere close to the level of the previous two matches. Slinger is really good but very small. \*\*1/2

## USWA

2/25 in Louisville saw Kenny Kendall pin Doug Masters, Koko Ware pinned Jim Steele, Pat Tanaka pinned Tony Falk, Brian Christopher beat Tom Prichard via DQ, Dirty White Girl beat Connie (Connie Cook, subbing for C.J., more on that later) in a mud match, Eric Embry beat Tony Anthony in a scaffold match, Jerry Lawler beat Black Dog via count out for throwing fire and Jeff Jarrett & Junkyard Dog beat Moondogs via DQ.

C.J., Embry's valet, left the tour last week and claimed sexual harassment on the part of Eric Embry and no word how this will all be settled.

A new tag team debuted call The Fat Boys, Meat and Potatoes. They were pretty green and will apparently feud with The Moondogs. A lady came out and took a seat at ringside and scouted this team and all the matches during the television show on Saturday.

King Cobra returned and will challenge Brian Christopher for the Texas title.

Embry got a swollen shut eye from a potato shot on Monday night from Tanaka to start a new feud. Embry KO'd Dirty White Girl after the match and she was carried out of the ring.

On television, Tanaka beat Falk and after the match White Girl attacked Miss Jennifer.

The 3/2 card at the Mid South Coliseum saw The Fat Boys vs. Falk & Jim Steele, Dirty White Girl vs. Miss Texas for the USWA ladies title, Christopher vs. Cobra for the Texas title, Prichard vs. Dr. Death (no idea who, managed by Nurse Kratchett) for the Southern title, Tanaka vs. Embry for the Bare Knuckles title held by Tanaka, Ware vs. Kimala for the USWA title and Moondogs vs. Lawler & Jarrett for the USWA tag team titles.

Dr. Death uses a proctologists glove as a gimmick while his Nurse uses a bed pan to KO the foes as a gimmick.

## GLOBAL

With the number of comps heavily reduced, the crowd on 2/28 at the Dallas Sportatorium was down to 500. For 3/23 on ESPN, Barry Horowitz pinned Ben Jordan when Bruce Prichard held his feet so Horowitz retained his GWF lighthweight title, Bull Pain & Black Bart beat Bill Irwin & Rattlesnake in a double bullrope match when Irwin was tied to the ropes and they double-teamed and pinned Rattlesnake and John Tatum & Rod Price beat Gary Young & Scott Putski to keep the GWF tag team titles when behind the refs back, Price hit Putski with one of the belts for the pin. For 3/25 on ESPN, Dark Patriot (Doug Gilbert) beat Terry Garvin via count out and Black Bart won a 10 man taped fist Battle Royal to become the first GWF Brass Knux champion. The final two were Bart and Irwin and Bart used the branding iron to get the title. For 3/30 on ESPN, Dark Patriot & Big Bad John beat Brian Ferrar & Mike Reid in a terrible match, Pain drew Irwin in a good match, Jordan beat Horowitz via DQ and Bart pinned Young using the branding iron. In the dark match main event, Eddie Gilbert & Garvin beat Dark Patriot & Big Bad John, Eddie pinned brother Doug after hitting him with a chain and after the match Eddie was attacked and bled buckets and Eddie did a stretcher job. They are doing dark matches in an attempt to perk up the house show attendance since previously all the matches eventually aired on television, and also to use juice since it's banned by ESPN.

3/6 at the Sportatorium has Fantasy (Billy Joe Travis & Steven Dane as a heel team) vs. Chaz & Tug Taylor, Horowitz vs. Garvin in a no DQ match, Pain vs. Irwin with Samantha at ringside to be countered by Big Bertha (Bill Irwin in drag), Bart vs. Sam Houston for the Brass Knux title, Dark Patriot vs. Patriot for the North American title with Gilbert as ref and Prichard in a cage and Gilbert vs. Big Bad John in a non-televvised barbed wire match.

Jeff Gaylord showed up Friday night looking for a job and apparently asked Gilbert why he hadn't hired him. Gilbert said because he didn't even know Gaylord was looking for a job and apparently told him that he had the next four weeks booked so he couldn't use him until then. Gaylord claimed that he had told Scandor Akbar weeks ago that he was looking for work and Gilbert said he hadn't heard about it. Apparently this didn't go as diplomatic as it sounds because Gaylord sucker-punched Gilbert and was pounding on him until brother Doug hit Gaylord in the head with a coke bottle and Gaylord left the building bleeding all over while Eddie had a puffed-out face from the punches that landed. Joe Pedicino apparently decided that Gaylord will never work for GWF in the future.

## HERE AND THERE

Blackjack Mulligan beat Mondo Kleen to become the champion for Eddie Mansfield's IWF on 2/28 in Orlando before 200 fans at the Fairgrounds. Kleen is now gone from the promotion. GWF is interested in Kleen.

2/29 in Caguas, Puerto Rico saw Cyclone Salvadorino beat Randy Rhodes, The Wild One beat Herb Gonzales, Rockin Rebel (from Pennsylvania) beat Atkie Malumba, La Lei bet Fidel Sierra via DQ, Invader #1 beat Ron Garvin via DQ, Miguelito Perez pinned Dick Slater, Carlitos Colon DDQ Dick Murdoch and The Heartbreakers beat Rex King & Ricky Santana.

2/28 in Yabacoa, PR saw Wild One & Rhodes beat Rebel & El Corsario, La Lei beat Malumba via DQ, Slater pinned Perez, Colon DCOR Ron Garvin, Salvadorino beat Sierra via DQ, Murdoch pinned Invader #1 and Heartbreakers beat King & Santana.

2/29 in Portland saw Bart Sawyer beat Ron Harris via DQ, John Rambo beat C.W. Bergstrom, Mike Winner beat Al Madril via DQ when Mike Miller interfered, Steve Doll beat Don Harris in an I Quit match and Brickhouse Brown & Sawyer & The Grappler beat Col. DeBeers & Buddy Rose & Miller via DQ on a reversed decision. . . The Fox Network television show "Over the Edge" is doing a special about a guy training at the Monster Factory preparing to make his wrestling debut. The wrestler's name is Ronald Oakes from Washington and he'll debut this coming weekend on Sharpe's shows 3/6 in Union, NJ and 3/7 in Woodbury, NJ and the show will air in April.

Speaking of Sharpe, he'll be holding Monster Factory try-outs at the Tampa Sportatorium on 4/5 which will include a taped-delay showing of Wrestlemania and buffet and drinks for the media.

LPWA is pretty well done in the United States with no future cards or tapings planned but will still attempt to syndicate the old tapes in Canada.

2/29 in Kaufman, TX for a Chris Love show drew 388 (kids were free) which included Bull Pain, Awesome Kong, Jeff Gaylord, Billy Travis, Terry Daniels, Steven Dane and the main event had Steve Simpson beat Rod Price.

Kevin Von Erich is running a show on 3/7 in Denton, TX with himself defending the WCCW title against The Arabian Sultan (Tony George managed by Scandor Akbar) and Chris Adams vs. Iceman King Parsons.

West Coast Championship Wrestling drew 200 fans on 2/14 in Chilliwack, BC with Buddy Wayne beating Michelle Starr in a coal miners glove match on top. Tim Flowers and Ole Olson also worked the show. Upcoming shows 3/12 in Surrey, BC and 3/27 in Aldergrove, BC.

South Atlantic Pro Wrestling drew 90 on 2/14 in Mars Hills, NC with Bambi beating Peggy Lee Leather \*\*, Helmut Hessler beat Patriot (Del Wilkes) \*\* and Patriot won a Battle Royal.

The name of the San Antonio-based prelim wrestler killed in a bar altercation a few weeks back was Curtis Poe, not Curtis Towe as reported here.

Congrats to Jeff Zinger on his recent marriage.

Tony Condello's WFWA drew 275 fans on 2/25 in Winnipeg with Sudden Impact (Chris Jericho & Lance Storm), wrestlers named Pampero El Firpo and Red Bastien Jr. (no relation to either) and another wrestler named Gene Kiniski. A real big-time wrestler Nick Bockwinkel did the color while the biggest names appearing were Bulldog Bob Brown and Jerry Morrow.

Howard Brody's Ladies Major League Wrestling drew 716 paid on 2/28 in Immokalee, FL as A.J. Watson beat Big Bad Momma, Peggy Lee Leather beat Alison Royal, Luna Vachon beat Malia Hosaka, Bambi double count out with Pink Cadillac managed by Sir Oliver Humperdink, Wendi Richter beat Penelope Paradise via DQ and Cadillac won a 10-woman Battle Royal.

ICWA drew 220 on 2/27 in Tampa as Hercules Hernandez beat Greg Valentine via DQ, Jim Backlund beat Coconut Man via DQ to keep the lighthweight title, Hurricane Walker beat Tex Sallinger via DQ when Dan Spivey interfered, Spivey pinned Tommy Starr and Bambi pinned Peggy Lee Leather. Jim Neidhart debuts with this group next week and Denny Brown returns.

2/25 in Philadelphia at the Original Sports Bar saw J.T. Smith & D.C. Drake DDQ Larry Winters & Johnny Hot Body. Ivan Koloff did a job for Tony Stetson. Promoter Todd Gordon announced Kevin Sullivan, Eddie Gilbert, One Man Gang and Neidhart as coming in for future cards.

Gator B. Long has a show on 4/25 in Naples, FL headlined by Buggy McGraw and Lord Humongous and manager Abdullah Farouk Jr.

Wrestler Cowboy Woody Lee (Woody Coulter) had his home burn down on 2/28 in Lima, OH as a result of an electrical fire. None of his family was home at the time although his dog perished. Lee lost everything he owns and Motor City Wrestling at 313-795-9490 would like any indies in the Ohio and Michigan



area to contact them as he's looking for any bookings he can get.

## WCW

Johnny B. Badd is in the midst of a contract dispute with management. Several different versions have come our way, but apparently Badd and Kip Frey agreed to a contract for \$156,000 per year but it wasn't signed. Badd has claimed he wanted better injury benefits (the contract calls for a specific time period if the wrestler is out of action with an injury that the contracts don't cover him) while others say he asked for more money. Badd has negotiated with Titan. Badd did have a meeting on Monday with Frey to work things out, but he was pulled from the PPV show because of the dispute.

2/25 in Macon, GA drew 2,000 as Tom Zenk beat Diamond Dallas Page, Terrence Taylor pinned Van Hammer, Mr. Hughes beat Big Josh, Steiners beat Young Pistols (pretty good), Jushin Liger pinned Richard Morton (Liger's worst match of the tour which he was well aware of and was throwing things in the locker room because so many moves and the finish were missed), Barry Windham pinned Larry Zbyszko and in a cage match, Sting & Ricky Steamboat & Dustin Rhodes & Ron Simmons beat Rick Rude & Bobby Eaton & Arn Anderson & Steve Austin.

The next Clash will be mid-June in Charleston, SC.

World Championship Wrestling drew a 2.7 rating last week while Main Event did a 2.6 and Power Hour a 1.9.

Jesse Ventura's first World Wide Wrestling taping will be 3/20 in Topeka.

## WWF

Heading into the WWF full-time on the road are Brian Adams as Crush and Del Wilkes.

The television production in last weekend's Jake Roberts/Randy Savage/Elizabeth/Undertaker angle was incredible when you consider the scene in front of the curtain took place one day and the scene behind the curtain took place the next day.

Even though there is an explosion brewing behind the scenes, few people are aware of it and business has been excellent the past few weeks leading to Wrestlemania.

2/29 in Boston drew 10,000 fans and \$150,000 as Warlord pinned Chris Walker, Rick Martel drew British Bulldog, Tito Santana pinned Ted DiBiase, Natural Disasters beat Jim Duggan & Sgt. Slaughter via DQ, J.W. Storm pinned Kato, Big Bossman pinned Repo Man and Hulk Hogan & Roddy Piper beat Ric Flair & Sid Justice when Hogan pinned Flair.

2/24 in Hershey, PA saw Tatanka pin Kato, Shawn Michaels pinned Jim Powers, IRS pinned Virgil, Owen Hart pinned Beau Beverly, Santana pinned DiBiase, Natural Disasters beat Duggan & Slaughter via DQ, Bret Hart beat Mountie and Randy Savage pinned Jake Roberts in a cage match.

Former WWF wrestler Paul Roma, who appeared on the Wrestling Insiders this past Saturday night, makes his pro boxing debut this coming Friday. Roma said his weight has dropped from 250 in wrestling to 215 for boxing, 15 pounds of which he attributes to getting off steroids. He said he had no problems withdrawing from steroids even though others have and that he felt steroids were a necessary evil when working in the WWF. Roma said that in order to get a release from Titan Sports to keep his "Glory" nickname that he had to sign a deal that said he would give Titan Sports no negative publicity although he termed his stay there "six years of hell."

3/2 in Johnstown, PA drew 3,600 as British Bulldog pinned Martel \*1/2, Kato pinned Storm 1/2\*, Bossman pinned Repo Man \*1/2, Disasters beat Duggan & Slaughter via DQ 1/4\*, Warlord pinned Walker DUD, Santana pinned DiBiase \*\* and Piper beat Flair in a cage match \*\*.

2/28 in Pittsburgh drew 12,500 as Warlord pinned Walker, Bossman pinned Repo Man, Santana pinned DiBiase, Disasters beat Duggan & Slaughter via DQ, Storm pinned Kato, Bulldog pinned Martel, Hogan & Piper beat Flair & Justice when Hogan pinned Flair.

2/29 in Springfield, Ma drew 4,500 as Storm pin Kato 3/4\*, Martel pinned Bossman \*\*1/4, Santana pinned DiBiase \*3/4, Bulldog pinned Repo Man 1/4\*, Disasters beat Duggan & Slaughter via DQ \* and Piper beat Flair in a cage match \*\*\*. These cage matches have the finish where first both guys hit the ground simultaneously. Then they go back in the ring and one of the heels smashes the door on Piper's head but he recovers and gets down to the floor first.

2/21 in Worcester saw Martel beat Rex Armstrong, Skinner pin Jim Brunzell, Berzerker pinned Hercules, Bushwhackers beat Nasty Boys, Bossman beat Repo Man via DQ, Undertaker pinned Bulldog and Piper beat Flair in a cage match.

Demolition Ax (Bill Eadie) filed a suit against the WWF and McMahon for a share of profits because he claimed he came up with the Demolition persona. Among those Eadie's lawyer got depositions from were Earthquake, Big Bossman, Jesse Ventura, Jake Roberts, Jim Duggan, Randy Savage, Typhoon, Kato and IRS. . .The New York Times ran a piece on Tuesday morning when the mayor of Stamford, CT proposed a show to raise money for the public library at the local high school stadium. The WWF would provide the wrestlers at no charge for the show. But when residents of those who live near the stadium heard about the plan, they protested at a city council meeting last week and seem to have gotten the idea nixed. The show has been postponed until a new time and a new venue can be determined.

Expect the WWF to hire a high-powered p.r. firm to try and present a positive image in the wake of what will be coming out in the next two weeks.

## THE READERS PAGES

Rob Faught of 625 Wrexham Ave., Columbus, OH 43223 is looking for tapes of the Crockett Cup tag team tournaments.

Vinnie Riccardi of 33 Utica Rd., Edison, NJ 08820 is looking for tapes of Joel Goodhart shows and of Florida shows from the 1980s.

Chris Boddie of 613 University Ave. #006, Syracuse, NY 13210 is looking for tapes of TBS and World Wide Wrestling shows from 1985-87 and World Class from 1985-86.

Harvey Cobb of 2619 Ruffin Way, Norfolk, VA 23504 has wrestling tapes to trade.

Andy Vineberg of Box 237 Narrows Run Rd., Corapolis, PA 15108 is looking for the TNT episode with Randy Savage & Elizabeth, Haiti Kid and Iron Sheik and also for a tape of the 10/25 Hogan vs. Flair match from Oakland.

Joseph Carroll II of 7330 Rudderow Ave., Pennsauken, NJ 08109 has a list of concert and wrestling tapes for trade and is selling issues of the Wrestling Observer from 7/2/90 to the present.

Don Hernandez of 345 N. Melrose Dr. #E, Vista, CA 92083 is looking for any referee jobs and will go anywhere in the country on the shortest of notice. You can call him at 619-945-3094. He has nine years experience as a wrestler and was trained by the Harts in Canada.

Ahbdul Maldonado of 40-15 61st St #2B, Woodside, NY 11377 is looking for old WWWF, AWA and UWF tapes and will trade anything in his collection in exchange for them. He also gets EMLL tapes for anyone who is interested in trading for them.

Bobby Yates of 1971-D Lakeview Rd., Asheboro, NC 27203 is looking for the Japanese wrestlers telephone cards.

Lenis Sargent of 12 Spring St., Gainesville, GA 30501 is looking for a weekly supplier of USWA tapes from Memphis and can trade tapes from almost everywhere else in exchange. He's also looking for a tape of Jim Cornette's birthday party for his dog Fifi, the FMW tag team tournament and Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous episodes on Jesse Ventura and Jason Hervey and any other television shows involving wrestlers or wrestling.

Craig Reedy is publishing a newsletter called Wrestling Down Under at P.O. Box 988, Bayswater, Victoria 3153 AUSTRALIA for \$2 U.S. per issue and \$2.50 Australian currency.

Robert Costolo of 966 Hungerford Dr. #28B, Rockville, MD 20850 would like to hear from readers in Maryland, Virginia, D.C. area that are interested in attending live shows.

Slammers Wrestling Gym at P.O. Box 1602, Studio City, CA 91614 is selling Slammers Wrestling Federation tournament tapes for \$35 plus \$5 postage and handling.

## LPWA PPV SHOW

Since the time women's wrestling was legalized in California in the late 60s, I've hated it. I didn't respect the women as wrestlers or athletes and regarded women's wrestling as some sort of a sexual freak show. The best thing I ever said about a women's match was that it was short. So you can see I was prejudiced. The Jumping Bomb Angels in the WWF challenged my point of view and later I became interested in Mary the Duchess of Discipline (Bad Girl in LPWA) who stole a couple of Alex Knight independent shows in Los Angeles. After meeting Magnificent Mimi at the Cauliflower Alley dinner and watching some Japanese tapes, I developed a small interest. I ordered the LPWA PPV show due to the write-up in the Observer and to my surprise, I enjoyed it as much or more than any PPV show ever. I gave the show a huge thumbs up and would rate it as four stars. All the matches were great with nothing less than \*\*3/4. Great work, good heat, the Japanese girls, particularly Harley Saito lived up to their reputation and the Americans (Terri Power, Reggie Bennett, Denise Storm and Black Venus) seemed to be improving. The interviews were all realistic and believable and not just boring shouting into the mic. Denise Storm impressed me as a great subtle heel and the announcers were great. But the main reason I enjoyed it more than any PPV in memory was that at no point did they insult your intelligence. The newsletters should do a better job in promoting women's wrestling and the LPWA. The Americans are improving and need a place to work regularly. It's a shame that the two best woman wrestlers in the U.S. are in their prime now and working as managers.

Steve Yohe  
Alhambra, California

## MUCHNICK COLUMN

One would think Vince McMahon is now at wits end. I mean, he's still reeling from the steroid scandal that hasn't gone away and now he gets pulverized with a sex scandal. When you think about it, the scenario described is pretty sick. If it's true, then those involved should be called on the carpet and be held accountable for their actions. I hope McMahon has the brains not to lie and cover this up as was done in the steroid fiasco.

Joe Dante  
Union, New Jersey

I got a chance to hear you on Wrestling Insiders this weekend and I must say you are one of the best sports analysts I've heard in any sport. You have a great head for seeing the big picture and articulating your observations which is uncommonly refreshing in the world of wrestling.

It seems like we may be in the most important phase of wrestling history since 1984. Only in this case, the steroids, hard drugs and homosexual harassment stories may be completely devastating.

Have you talked with (name withheld by editor) about this issue. Apparently when he went for a try-out with the WWF he ran into the same experiences that Barry O was talking about. Maybe you should interview him privately and see if his stories match up with anyone else's.

While I have certain spiritual opinions about homosexuality in general, I'm not inclined to try to force my opinions on anyone else, especially in the wrestling world. But sexual harassment in any form is unfair and in certain cases, illegal. Whatever consenting adults do is one thing, but exchanging career promotion and contracts for sexual favors is quite another.

David Hart  
San Diego, California

## OVERSEAS

This is a letter for all the U.S. wrestlers that read the Observer. Please do not do business with a promoter in South Africa

named Mr. Shane aka Shane Jaipal. He is an Indian promoter that will leave you stranded without pay or in jail without any money. He will cancel your ticket home once you get there. Myself and Ron Starr were left out to dry and without any money, food, or shelter plus no tickets home. Don't do business with him.

Bobby Blaze  
Largo, Florida

## GOODHART

On Saturday 1/18, Joel Goodhart ceased all of his ties to the wrestling business. Being from the Philadelphia area, I know the disappointment this has left to the hardcore wrestling fans of the area. I think nobody can duplicate Goodhart's contributions to the sport of pro wrestling in this area with his radio show, luncheons, trips to major events, fan clubs and the best cards for real fans.

Bill Garrett  
Abington, Pennsylvania

In response to your article on Joel Goodhart, I'm responding with my own letter. I was one of the season ticket holders left empty handed when he went out of business. I found out from a friend who called me up that he closed up shop with no notice and no warning. I had tried to contact him several times and left several messages during the early part of January when I hadn't received my tickets to the 1/25 show and he never even had the courtesy to respond to my messages. The way he dealt with his customers was a disgrace. He owes all his former customers an accounting of where the money went and an apology.

Since Goodhart didn't have the decency to contact his customers and handled the whole matter in an unethical manner, I've failed complaints with the Better Business Bureau in Philadelphia and the Consumer Division of the Attorney General's Office in Philadelphia. I have also provided the U.S. Post Office in Philadelphia with information to see if it would be appropriate for them to launch an investigation relating to mail fraud since a product was sold through the mail and not delivered. I urge all others who have been gypped by him to do likewise by getting the number by calling Philadelphia information.

I might be out \$140 and maybe the complaints I've filed won't accomplish much other than to make me feel better, but if they force Goodhart to step forward and be honest with his former customers and the wrestling public, I'll be satisfied.

I applaud Goodhart's efforts in bringing top-name wrestling stars and great wrestling action to the Northeast as well as giving fans what they want to see. However, I can't condone his lack of honesty and the sneaky and underhanded way he dealt with his customers.

Deborah McWilliams  
Jersey City, New Jersey

## WCW

Kip Frey's initial moves have garnered virtually unanimous approval thus far. Most of the moves, however, are correct past stupidity or addressing neglected crises that marred the reign of Jim Herd. What is most important is how he, WCW and the Turner organization as a whole will respond to the issues raised by the EEOC's investigation of racial discrimination in WCW. This will show how Frey will respond to the thornier challenges that face him.

Although I don't know the specifics of the particular EEOC case filed, the harsh real facts are that pro wrestling has not in the main really broken the color barrier. Just look at the few black wrestlers featured in the big groups--The Bodyguard Virgil, The Bodyguard Mr. Hughes, The All-American Ron Simmons, Abdullah the Butcher and now Popa Shango. In 1962, Ebony Magazine did a feature on the top black wrestlers of the day including Bearcat Wright, Sailor Art Thomas, Bobo Brazil and Dory Dixon. Could you imagine a magazine such as that doing a piece like that today?

True, the answer doesn't lie in simply bringing back JYD or handing a world title belt to Ron Simmons to justify your case.

There must be a plan to recruit, train and develop quality black athletes for pro wrestling. While today's problem is partly a result of the short-sighted destruction of the territories that worked as a feeder system, it particularly manifests itself in the dearth of top black wrestlers. If Frey and WCW try to dodge this bullet by bringing in a few old-time black wrestlers as tokens, they are only shooting themselves in the foot. A bold new approach is needed, not that much different from the route taken by Branch Rickey. You also need black bookers who hopefully would be less likely to rehash stale 1960s stereotypes. It shouldn't be hard to figure out that this could result in not only more black fans attending house shows and buying PPV's, but also adding the exciting elements of black culture that have enlivened and reinvigorated every other start and area of entertainment. The fact that there still hasn't been a black world champion is just an example of this disgrace. If WCW is serious about overtaking WWF, than they should beat them to the punch on this issue fast.

*Eddie Goldman*  
*New York, New York*

I don't know if Sting is the right man on top for WCW. I agree he's the most over face in the promotion and the short-term thinking always says to put the most over guy on top and hope it'll sell tickets. There is also a symbolic importance in having Sting pin Luger if Luger winds up in the WWF as Hogan's successor.

The problem is Sting needs opponents who can sell tickets against him and WCW is very thin on lead heels. After Rude, there is nobody. While Austin has promise, he's not ready and the match-up won't draw. In theory they always can (and probably will) turn Windham but they run the risk of turning him into another Luger that nobody cared about. Eaton, Taylor and Anderson all have the ability, but due to the way the promotion has used all of them, they can't get over as main event draws.

On the other hand, the promotion is rich with faces they could put on top against a heel champion with Steamboat, Simmons, Windham, Rick and Scott Steiner and Pillman. At least one person in the company would put Dustin Rhodes in that category. And of course Sting heads up that group. WCW must fill out of the year with compelling or interesting main event match-ups to draw and keep an audience. A strong heel champ could work his way through these guys, perhaps dropping and regaining it from one of them somewhere along the way, leading to the inevitable match with Sting. There is talent to have great matches and good story lines. During that time, which could be stretched to the summer of 1993, the promotion could work on either acquiring or developing some new heels who would then be ready to go after Sting.

I think the failure of Sting as champion in 1990 and Luger in 1991 was that the promotion didn't think out what they were going to do once they put them over. After Sting got the title, his first and only feud was with The Black Scorpion. Fine idea, but they had no idea what they were doing all along and no idea who the next challenger would be and they ended up going back with Ric Flair, who they spent months trying to bury along the way. For Luger, they only had Ron Simmons to waste time until Sting. The public didn't buy that match. Luger-Rick Steiner looked good on paper and was set up well, but it did nothing to put the title over when they couldn't follow the undercard.

WCW needs to look beyond a few months and draft out a plan for all of 1992 and much of 1993. Who would best fit the bill long-term as champion? What are the possible attractive matches we can make with that champion? As I said, for a babyface, the only viable heel right now is Rude. All the other good heels are in the WWF. The best thing they could do is bring back Flair, but that's a moot point. After Flair, the best possibilities are Curt Hennig, Randy Savage and Ted DiBiase. Keiji Muto is a candidate and a terrific wrestler, but one fears WCW wouldn't have a clue how to make it work. While I don't know the choice WCW should make, I do have this feeling Sting doesn't have enough opponents to keep the title picture interesting through the end of 1992.

If I had to make the choice, I'd have Steamboat win the title from Luger in February, eventually drop the strap to Rude (Hennig or DiBiase would be preferable if you could get them) in May. The heel champion could run through all the babyfaces and tease everything for Sting sometime in 1993. Would it

work? I don't know. But what they've done in the past hasn't worked, either.

*John Williams*  
*Pasadena, California*

