

WRESTLING TORCH

EDITOR/PUBLISHER: WADE D. KELLER - 12 MARCH 1992 - ISSUE 164

WEEKLY

PATTERSON AND GARVIN RESIGN FROM WWF MEDIA PRESSURE BUILDS AS WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION FACES MORE TROUBLES

By Wade Keller
Editor/Publisher

Pat Patterson, booker for the WWF, and Terry Garvin, one of Patterson's assistants, resigned from the WWF on Monday, Mar. 2. They resigned amid reports of sexual misconduct involving minors and, according to the WWF, fear that when their homosexual lifestyle became widely known, they would be given no chance to refute charges made against them and be presumed guilty by the public.

Patterson has been vice president in charge of booking for the WWF since the mid-80s and before that headlined WWF shows in Madison Square Garden against Bob Backlund. While Patterson was considered one of the most influential men in professional wrestling over the last decade, WWF owner Vince McMahon probably had more to do with the booking of the WWF than Patterson. McMahon told the *Wrestling Observer* that Patterson and Garvin would not be replaced, but instead he and J.J. Dillon would pick up their duties.

Terry Garvin's name, not the same Terry Garvin as the GWF wrestler, was recently brought up by former pro wrestler Barry Orton on "Wrestling Insiders" on the Sports & Entertainment Network. Orton said that in 1978 before either he or Garvin were associated with the WWF, Garvin made sexual passes at him on a six hour road trip through Texas.

Phil Mushnick wrote two columns for the *New York Post* which involved claims concerning the WWF, first on Feb. 26 and the second on Feb. 28.

The WWF responded with a press-release stating the charges were unsubstantiated and the WWF and Titan Sports does not "tolerate illegal or improper behavior by any of our employees at any time" and that they will "take responsible action regarding any legitimate claims filed through lawful channels."

More articles are planned concerning the WWF including an article by Irv Muchnick, possibly the WWF's least favorite writer, in *People Magazine* next week, plus the *L.A. Times*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and possibly the *San Diego Union*. The feature on steroids on 20/20 is set to air this Friday.

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

-PEOPLE MAGAZINE TO PUBLISH ARTICLE BY IRV MUCHNICK ON WWF SCANDALS

-L.A. TIMES ARTICLE SET TO RUN WEDNESDAY REVEALING PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED BACKGROUND ON HOGAN

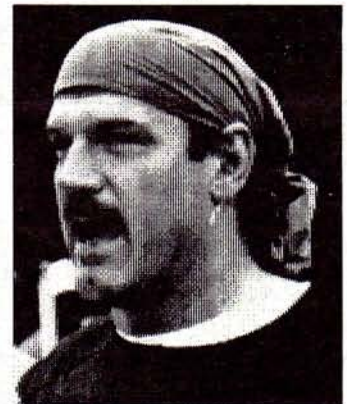
-"PATRIOT" DEL WILKES DEPARTS TO WWF, GILBERT SAYS TERRY FUNK MAY ENTER GWF

-MICK KARCH'S "SATURDAY NIGHT AT RINGSIDE" CANCELLED AFTER 200 WEEKS ON TV23 IN MINNESOTA

"TORCH TALK"

JESSE "THE BODY" VENTURA...

Jesse "The Body" Ventura, regarded as one of the most valuable announcers ever in professional wrestling, called his first complete event for World Championship Wrestling last week at SuperBrawl II. Ventura, formerly with the WWF as a color commentator, disappeared from the pro wrestling scene for over one year and started pro football announcing and color commentary on "Grudge Match", a syndicated action-entertainment program. His return to WCW is considered a boost to the image of WCW. He soon will be joining Tony Schiavone on WCW's syndicated program, "World Wide Wrestling" and regain the large national exposure that he had with the WWF. The following is part one in a series of "Torch Talks" with Ventura. This segment is a partial transcript of his Jan. 19 appearance on KFAN's "Pro Wrestling Focus" including caller questions.



JESSE VENTURA

Wade Keller: How did you originally get involved in pro wrestling?

Jesse Ventura: I originally got involved, of course, way back when there were roughly 26 territories. I got started with the Kansas City promotion which had Pat O'Connor and Bob Geigel and Guss Garris. I guess I'm dating myself. That was 1975. I had my first match in Wichita, Kansas against Omar Atlas.

Keller: What was it that interested you in pro wrestling?

Ventura: Well, after getting out of the service after spending four years in the military, I had hopes of playing pro football, but I figured I had to go to college first. I guess I got a little disenchanting with football. My mind probably wasn't... coming out of four years in the military, football is pretty militaristic. So, mentally, I really wasn't ready to play professional football. Then I met an ex-pro wrestler who mentioned to me, "Did you ever think of getting into pro wrestling?" Pro wrestling always appealed to me because of its individuality and the creativity of it. I was able to create Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

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DRUGS/continued from page 1

There have also been rumors of Hulk Hogan quitting the WWF, which, according to all indications are not true. The rumors are rising from what McMahon told the *Wrestling Observer* last week.

"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," wrote *Observer* editor, Dave Meltzer.

Meanwhile, according to the *New York Post*, a lawsuit will be filed soon by one of two former ring attendants who have accused members of the WWF of sexual harassment when they were minors.

The *San Diego Union* story by Jeff Savage was expected to have run already, but the newspaper chose to not print the story. As of press time, the future of Savage's story was in limbo.

KFAN-VENTURA WAR OF WORDS

St. Paul, Minn.: Jesse Ventura, who broadcast Minnesota Viking's pro football games last year on KFAN SportsRadio as part of a three-person announcing team, may not have his contract renewed for next season.

In the Mar. 6 *Minneapolis StarTribune*, sports radio/TV columnist Jon Roe reported a war of words between KFAN and Ventura stemming from Ventura's recent return to pro wrestling commentary.

"Mick Anselmo (KFAN general manager) made the statement that we thought Jesse was done with wrestling, and if there was a complaint about last year, it was how could we have an ex-wrestler doing the games?" said Gregg Swedberg, KFAN operations director. Swedberg

also said the station did not think Ventura would have enough time to do the Vikings with the "hefty commitment he's made (to WCW)."

"I'm only working about 50 days a year for WCW and not on any weekends, either," Ventura told the *StarTribune*. "I was doing wrestling when I was doing Tampa Bay football two years ago and that didn't bother the people in Tampa Bay. They knew I came from wrestling when they hired me at KFAN. I love doing football, but if they're going to make me pick, I'm picking the WCW."

Ventura's two-year WCW contract is believed to be well into the six-figure range per year. Roe concluded, "Ventura would have to work 25 football seasons to make what he will haul in for one year's work with WCW."

SNR OFF-THE-AIR AFTER 200 SHOWS

Minneapolis, Minn.: Upon arriving at the TV23 studios to tape his 200th show on Thursday, Mar. 5, Mick Karch was informed this would be his last week of hosting "Saturday Night at Ringside".



MICK KARCH

SNR was a two-and-a-half hour wrestling block featuring WCW World Wide Wrestling, GWF Major League Wrestling, and a half hour of locally based interviews and features hosted by Karch which wrapped-around the two syndicated programs. SNR was the prime source of promoting PWA and other independent events in the Twin Cities area.

KTMA TV23 was recently sold and the new owners are interested in featuring "family-oriented programming" only and apparently did not believe SNR fit that category.

NEWS & ANALYSIS

By Wade Keller and Torch Correspondents

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Stamford, Conn: "Subject to change" has never taken on greater meaning for any Wrestlemania than this one. The partial line-up

currently stands as follows: **Ric Flair** defending the WWF Title against **Randy Savage**, **Hulk Hogan** vs. **Sid Justice**, **L.R.S. & Ted DiBiase** defending the WWF Tag Team Titles against the **Natural Disasters**, **Roddy Piper** defending the Intercontinental Title against former champion **Bret Hart**, **Undertaker** vs. **Jake Roberts**, **Shawn Michaels** vs. **Tito Santana**, **Owen Hart** vs. **Skinner**, **Tatanka** vs. **Rick Martel**, and **British Bulldog** vs. **The Berzerker**. The HoosierDome sales are under 30,000 at this point.

In one of his best interviews ever, Flair revealed poolside photos of himself and **Elizabeth** on this week's television programs claiming they were taken years ago. Flair called Elizabeth "used merchandise" after a brilliant build-up to the revelation of photos during an interview in his locker room. The interview concluded with **Mr. Perfect** asking Flair, "Was she a whoo?" and Flair said, "No, she was a WHOOOO!"

The WWF, at this point, plans to bring the **Legion of Doom** back after **Wrestlemania**. References to **Hawk** and **Animal** were plentiful on this weekend's television, whereas two weeks ago, their names were avoided. Hawk is currently serving a suspension from the WWF while **Animal** has been given six weeks off.

The *New York Times* ran an article on Mar. 3 about a proposal made by Stamford's mayor to hold a WWF event at Stamford High School in August to help raise money to keep the town's library open. Several neighbors argued against the fund raiser because its proposed location was in the outdoor stadium which is supposed to be used exclusively for athletic events. "(W)e feel this is against everything that education stands for," said one resident. "Professional wrestling, which is an oxymoron to begin with, is not a sport. It's strictly an entertainment. An entertainment of the lowest order."

M.L. Curly updated the **Ultimate Warrior** situation in the *Detroit News* on Mar 6. "The **Ultimate Warrior**, who has been conspicuously missing from the WWF ever since **SummerSlam '91**, stormed into **Jack Tunney's** office Wednesday and demanded an explanation from the beleaguered WWF president on how Jack could possibly grant **Macho Man** a title shot at Flair during **Wrestlemania VIII**. **Warrior** reminded **Tunney** that **Ultimate** pinned **Savage** cleanly at **Wrestlemania VII** in what was extensively advertised as a 'lifetime retirement match'. However, **Tunney** explained to a bewildered **Warrior** that according to WWF rules, the winner of a lifetime retirement match is permanently banned from wrestling at **Wrestlemania** ever again, but the loser of such a match receives a WWF Title shot a year later. Completely unable to understand **Tunney's** bizarre reasoning, **Warrior** lost his head and used a steel chair to break every window in **Tunney's** office, but this only caused **Tunney** to add two weeks to **Warrior's** lifetime suspension."

PRO WRESTLING TORCH

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Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly is published 52 times per year. Subscriptions are available at \$5.00 for 4 issues up to \$65.00 for 52 issues. Overseas subscriptions are available for U.S. Postal Money Orders in U.S. funds at \$8.00 per four issues up to \$104.00 per 52 issues. All material herein except where otherwise noted is copyright (c) Wade Keller 1992. All rights reserved. All columns represent the opinion of the noted author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of any other writers or the publisher. For advertising information, please write to address above. Please send all news, results, letters for publication, corrections, and guest features to the address listed above or call the Torch Phoneline.

BRIEFLY: Bearer will apparently still manage Undertaker, not Papa Shango... Rumors continue to surface that not only will Hogan be leaving the WWF after Wrestlemania, but also Roddy Piper and Randy Savage. Piper and Savage's impact were they to enter WCW, would be incredible...

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Atlanta, Ga.: WCW taped television at Centre Stage on Mar. 3. to air on 3/7 and 3/14. The 3/7 show opened with an altercation between **Sting** and the Dangerous Alliance. Then the **Freebirds** beat **Tracy Smothers & Thomas Rich**. **Richard Morton** beat **Brad Armstrong**. Pillman was doing color commentary at ringside and attacked Morton after the bout. Later, Pillman interrupted an interview with **Johnny B. Badd** to challenge Morton. Morton then arrived and Pillman shoved Badd out of the way to brawl with Morton. Badd slugged Pillman and Armstrong made the save setting up a tag match for the Main Event the next day.

After a squash victory, **Terry Taylor & Greg Valentine** did an interview which was interrupted by **Tom Zenk & Marcus Alexander Bagwell**. Bagwell was left lying on the floor. Zenk looked much bigger than a few weeks ago.

In a six-man, Anderson & Eaton & Zbyszko beat Pillman & Bagwell & Zenk when Eaton pinned Bagwell who was wearing a neck brace. The show closed with a great **Paul E. Dangerously** interview hyping the Omni show on Mar. 8.

Finally, **Steve Austin** hotshot **Van Hammer** and pinned him in a TV Title match. **Rick Rude** ran in and they double-teamed Hammer until **Sting** and **Rick Steamboat** made the save.

Next Saturday's show opens with a Dangerously interview that tops the one that aired last week. **Dustin Rhodes & Barry Windham** then defeated **Dallas Page & Rich** in a street fight rules match. Rhodes & Windham then challenged the Dangerous Alliance to a bunkhouse style bout.

Valentine beat Bagwell after which a four-way brawl erupted with Zenk and Taylor. Pillman beat Morton. **Scott Steiner** beat Austin by DQ when Eaton and Anderson ran in. Rick Steiner made the save and top rope bulldogged Anderson.

BRIEFLY: Badd has come to a contract agreement with WCW. A contract dispute was why he was pulled from SuperBrawl II... **Jesse Ventura's** first taping for World Wide will be on Mar. 20 in Topeka, Kans... Look for Austin to get a couple title shots in mid-April before **Van Vader** begins to get a series of title shots against Sting... Attendance for WCW has been improving consistently in many areas... The Feb. 29 edition of *Creative Loafing* put a halt to rumors they started about **Missy Hyatt** dating **Ted Turner** before Turner met up with **Jane Fonda**. "I didn't date him," said Hyatt. "In fact, I've only met him

once and that was to have a promotion picture taken. Ted's old enough to be my Dad"... **Steve Williams** appeared on the Ross Radio Hour Sunday and began working the angle that he and **Terry Gordy** do not want to work in the United States and would prefer to work in Japan always. This will be the case until May when they are allowed to work WCW according to their Japanese contract...

GLOBAL WRESTLING FEDERATION

Dallas, Tex.: The latest GWF tapings took place Friday, Mar. 6 at the Dallas Sportatorium GlobalDome. The first hour, set to air 3/21 in syndication and 3/24 on ESPN, opened with **Bull Pain** over **Brian Ferrar**. Ferrar had previously debuted as **Brian Hennig** due to his strong resemblance to **Curt Hennig**. Ferrar may have potential down the line. Then **Dark Patriot** pinned **Gary Young** after hitting him with a loaded mask. **California Connection, John Tatum & Rod Price**, defeated **Tug & Chaz Taylor**. **Black Bart** won by knockout over **Sam Houston** to retain his brass knucks title.

The second hour, set to air 3/28 as GWF Main Event and 4/1 on ESPN, opened with **Barry Horowitz** over **Chaz Taylor**. Bart then defeated **Tug Taylor** to retain the brass knuckles title. **Bill Irwin**, accompanied to ringside by "**Big**" **Bertha Young** who is Gary Young in drag, defeated **Pain** after Young kissed Pain on the lips.

Samantha and Young at ringside had the crowd laughing hysterically.

The third hour taped to air 3/28 as GWF Major League and 3/31 on ESPN opened with **The Viper** (Mike Davis) over Ferrar after a DDT. Video clips will introduce the new Viper character. **Steven Dane** then fought **Sam Houston** to a DDQ. **Terry Garvin** pinned **Horowitz** in a non-title match. **Garvin** pinned the **Dark Patriot**. **Garvin** was replacing no-show **Patriot, Del Wilkes**, and said he wanted to defend the Patriot's honor.

For this bout, **Bruce Prichard** was locked in a cage at ringside and **Eddie Gilbert** was the special referee. During the bout, Gilbert showed extreme bias in favor of **Garvin**. Finally Gilbert and **Dark Patriot** came to blows when senior referee **James Beard** came to the ring and replaced Gilbert. Beard then made the three count as **Garvin** covered **Patriot** and awarded **Garvin** the North American Title. **Prichard** was released from the cage and he, **Horowitz**, and **Big**

Bad John triple-teamed **Garvin**. **Gilbert** made the save.

After things calmed down, **Prichard** began arguing about the validity of the title change with **Joe Pedicino** and **Beard**, claiming that while he allowed **Garvin** to replace **Patriot**, **Patriot** was the only wrestler allowed to receive a title shot according to the contract. **Beard** contemplated his decision and then stripped **Garvin** of the belt, a move which **Garvin** agreed was right.

Finally, **Gilbert** pinned **Big Bad John** after hitting him with a chain in a poor conclusion to the event thanks to **John**. Attendance was up slightly to around 500 which is without as many camps as when they were drawing 1000 fans.

The line-up for Mar. 13 at the GlobalDome has **California Connection** vs. **Scott Putski & Gary Young**, **Dark Patriot** defending against **Terry Garvin**, and **Gilbert** vs. **Big Bad John** in a hair vs. hair falls count anywhere match.

BRIEFLY: **Eddie Gilbert**, GWF head booker, says negotiations are taking place to bring **Terry Funk** in for GWF dates and that it looks good...

UNITED STATES WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Memphis, Tenn.: Monday, Mar. 2 at the

mid-South Coliseum, the show opened with **Miss Texas** defeating the **Dirty White Girl** in a USWA Ladies Title match. Then, the **Fat Boys** defeated **Tony Falk & Jim Steele**, **Brian Christopher** retained the Texas Title by defeating **The Cobra**, **Tom Prichard** defeated **Dr. Death** on a reversed decision when **Nurse Kratchett** originally hit **Prichard** with her bedpan for the pin, **Eric Embry** defeated **Pat Tanaka** after hitting him with brass-knuckles broken off of the "bare-knuckles title", **Koko B. Ware** beat **Kimala** by countout when the **Moondogs**



"WILD" BILL IRWIN

interfered and beat on **Ware** and hit **Kimala** with a trash can, and the **Moondogs** beat **Jerry Lawler & Ware** when **Lawler** was pinned after **Richard Lee** threw red powder in his eyes. After the match, the **Dogs** beat on **Lawler** and **Ware** until **Kimala** turned babyface by making the save with a full-sized wooden door, the latest legal object in the USWA.

The live USWA show on WMC Saturday

morning opened with Christopher over **Brian Collins**. Death then beat **Ricky Hayes** after Nurse Kratchett hit Hayes with her bedpan. Every time the Nurse uses the pan, it makes a huge ringing noise which only a deaf referee would not hear, even if his back was turned. After the match, Nurse and Death did an interview bad-mouthing Miss Texas. Texas came out and was quickly held by Death as the Nurse hit her with the bedpan.

Ware then talked about the loss of his friend, **Tojo Yamamoto**. He also sang a little.

Lawler was fighting Falk when the Moondogs interfered and Kimala made the save. The Moondogs then executed the weekly dual murder of the week against **Don Kelley & Chris Frazier**. When the bell rang, the Moondogs brought in a chair and a trash can and beat on their opponents, scraping and bloodying their backs. Lawler and Kimala made the save. The highlight of the brawl saw Lawler in a sword-like fight with **Spot** as Spot swung a trash can and Lawler blocked it with a chair.

The woman who was taking notes last week was revealed to be **Lauren Davenport** who said the USWA only featured poor wrestlers and that she would be bringing in her own wrestlers soon. She is a copy of **Alexandra York** with a southern accent.

The show closed with a match full of missed moves between Prichard and Tanaka. After the referee was knocked down, Death attacked Prichard. Prichard then held Death as Texas hit Death with a trash can. The match was declared a draw.

The line-up for Monday, Mar. 9 had Falk vs. Hayes, Texas vs. Kratchett, Christopher vs. Tony Williams, Southern Boys vs. **The Scorpions**, Prichard vs. Death in a bedpan on a pole match, Embry vs. Tanaka in a no-rules match, and Moondogs & Lee vs. Lawler & Ware & Kimala.

SMOKEY MOUNTAIN WRESTLING

Knoxville, Tenn.: The Feb. 28 TV program was hosted by **Bob Caudle & Dutch Mantell**. In the opener, **Hector Guerrero** defeated **Tommy Angel** with a rolling scissors.

Film was then shown of last week's main event between Mantell and "**Prime Time**" **Brian Lee**. Mantell did his version of play-by-play during the match, commenting about what a maniac Brian Lee is. Then he introduced his new bodyguard, **Carl Styles**.

In the second match, **Kill Kyle** won over **Rikki Nelson** when he rammed Nelson into his violin case he carried to ringside as **Mr. Ron Wright** had the referee distracted.

Bob Cunningham then presented **Tim Horner** with a certificate for his work with area juveniles.

In the third match, Lee defeated **Brad Anderson** with the cancellation. Styles, who was at ringside, jumped into the ring and a

stare-down led to a shoving match and then a brawl. Mantell then entered and it became a two-on-one situation. Lee gained the upper-hand and ran Mantell and Styles to the back.

The main event saw **The Fantastics, Bobby & Jackie Fulton**, meet **Ivan Koloff & Jimmy Golden**. It was a better match than one might imagine. Good out of ring brawling. Koloff's head was busted open as he was rammed into the ringpost.

Vladimir Koloff, who was said to have returned to Russia, entered with a boot and knocked out Jackie Fulton as Golden gained the pin on Jackie.

Caudle then interviewed Golden and the Koloffs. Bobby Fulton attacked the three and was soon joined by Jackie in a two-on-three situation. Horner then evened the brawl. The show went off the air as the brawl continued and everything that was not nailed down was being used as a weapon.

BRIEFLY: SMW airs in Chattanooga on Saturday mornings at 1 a.m., but according to all reviews so far from *Torch* readers, it is an excellent show and a throw-back to the regional territories of the past

REGIONAL NOTES:

Big Time Wrestling aired a TV show in the Columbus, Ohio market on Mar. 1 on WWAT TV53 hosted by **Frank Moskowitz** and Jackie Fulton. **Bob Holly** pinned **Joey Maggs** in the opener followed by an interview by the Fultons. **Terry Gordy** pinned **Tommy Angel** followed by an interview with Gordy. **Bob Armstrong** then banned **Ron Wright** from ringside unless he is managing a wrestler after video is shown of Wright's interference in the past. **Paul Orndorff** pinned **Barry Horowitz**. **Carl Styles** pinned **Brian Lee** after **Dutch Mantell** interfered.

Mondo Kleen lost the IWF Heavyweight Title to **Blackjack Mulligan** in Orlando, Fla. at the Fairgrounds in front of an estimated 200.

Championship Wrestling from Florida held an event at the Tampa Sportatorium on Mar. 8 in front of an estimated 200. Bobby Blaze beat **Rich Thames**, **Tommy Starr** beat "**Outlaw**" **Cody Wade** by DQ, **Frankie Reyes & Jim "The Animal" Cooper** beat **Big Sonny T & "Fabulous" Fritz**, **Chris "The Doctor" Proctor** beat **Surgeon General**, **Terminators** beat **Rob Von Dom & Coconut Man**, **Jerry "Lightning Foot" Flynn** beat **Jumbo Baretta** by DQ, and "**Big V**" **Vern Henderson** beat **Black Panther** to become the new CWF Intercontinental Champion.

The ICWA held an event at the Tampa Sportatorium on Mar. 5 in front of 200. **Allison Royalle** beat **Penelope Paradise**, **Jim Backlund** beat **Mike Incognito**, **Lou Perez & Allen Iron Eagle** beat **Terminators** by DQ, **Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart** powerslammed **Star Rider Rock** for the win, and "**Downtown**" **Denny Brown** beat **Mark Starr** by DQ. The main event

QUOTEBOOK

Ric Flair: "Elizabeth right now is experiencing sweaty palms, right Liz baby? Maybe she's experiencing that old-time feeling up and down her spine. Maybe she's finding it more and more difficult to look Randy in the eye... because she knows that Ric Flair is not only the greatest wrestler alive today. She knows Ric Flair is the greatest lover on the face of God's green earth. You know how she knows that?... (shows picture) You know what this means? It means, Randy Savage, Elizabeth was mine before she was yours. Whooo!... The bottom line is, the only reason that Elizabeth is at your side right now is that I dumped her. She's damaged goods, Randy. She's been mine... Look her in the eye, ask her, as you focus at *Wrestlemania VIII*. Remember, she was mine, pal, before she was yours. And Liz, I know you're dying to make the call. I know you got the number, so feel free, make the call, drop the dime. I'll be there 24 hours a day just like I always have been, honey."

Bobby Heenan: "Flair's got more photos of him and Elizabeth than Hugh Hefner has of all the bunnies."

Roddy Piper to Bret Hart: "I won it fair and square. You had a temperature. I've wrestled lots of times with a temperature. In fact, I wake up with a temperature."

Nurse Kratchett: "Miss Texas is just like the things that float around in this bed pan."

Bobby Heenan: "Well, one good thing about Liz and Randy. They haven't been married long so they don't have much property to divide up."

Mark Twain: "Good judgement comes from bad judgement."

Bobby Heenan: "Randy Savage will divorce her and she'll come crawling back to Ric."

Gorilla Monsoon on Sensational Sherri and Shawn Michaels: "If she was any closer to him, she would have been inside of him."

Jimmy Garvin: "It's like we're a disease and we don't feel like going nowhere."

Bobby Heenan on Santana: "His family was hurt by the stock market crash. Yeah, a pick-up truck ran over his dad's pig."

Jake Roberts: "Hitting the Undertaker with that chair was just a little foreplay, if you don't mind, you know."

Jake Roberts: "If the Winter Olympics had an event for clubbing seals, I would win the gold medal."

Jake Roberts: "I walk with Satan hand in hand, day by day, we've always been real close."

Gorilla Monsoon: "Seals don't hit back. The Undertaker will."

Jimmy Garvin: "There ain't a ladder somewhere we haven't climbed... drunk."

Jim Ross in response to Tony Schiavone: "I didn't know anyone styled and profiled in WCW anymore. I guess Vinnie Vegas is picking up those traits."

for Mar. 12 has **Kendall Windham vs. Kevin Sullivan**.

Next week all the details on the release of the 1991 *Torch* Yearbook with award results, year in review, and tons of articles. Enjoy the rest of this issue.

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Keller: *You seem like more of an individual than wanting to be on a team?*

Ventura: After four years in the service, I was tired of wearing uniforms. Football players all have to look alike, talk alike, and it's a very deep concept sport. Mentally, I wanted an individual sport in my life.

Keller: *You were one of the early wrestlers to break the uniform concept in wrestling. You were very outrageous with the feathers, ear rings, colored hair, and flamboyance. Would you say "Superstar" Billy Graham was one of your great influences?*

Ventura: Absolutely. In fact, it was Superstar Billy Graham, when I came home on leave in about 1973 and went to a match at the old Minneapolis Auditorium. That is when I saw Superstar Graham in the flesh and that is when I just looked at him and said, "I can do what he does." He was a big influence on how I conducted myself in the ring.

Keller: *It didn't take long before some people said you did Billy Graham better than he did.*

Ventura: There were a few people who said that. Billy might beg to differ.

Keller: *He might. He might not, too. I think he's a big fan of yours, also.*

Ventura: I think we mutually respect and like each other. We're still good friends today. Whenever I go out to Los Angeles, I stay a lot at Universal Studios for "Grudge Match" and Billy actually lives just a stone's throw from Universal. So I always pop over and visit Billy when I'm in L.A.

Keller: *Billy is having a lot of fun right now talking about the steroid controversy in wrestling.*

Ventura: I don't know if it's fun. I'm sure he'd rather talk about something else, but I guess it's something he probably needs to speak out on.

Caller: *In the last two weeks we've had Superstar Billy Graham and Dave Shults characterize Vince McMahon as the prime force behind steroids in pro wrestling. Both of the men characterized Hulk Hogan as a child abuser.*

Ventura: First of all, it's an opinion whether Hulk Hogan is a child abuser. As far as Vince McMahon being the catalyst behind steroids, maybe Vince changed wrestling a little, going to these huge muscle bodies which in turn can involve steroids. I can only speak for myself and my own experiences. Vince McMahon never told me to use steroids.

Keller: *If you had not used steroids, would you still have had a job as a wrestler?*

Ventura: I think so. I think at that point and

time I would have. Maybe today, I've been out of the ring since 1986. I can't answer for 1989. I tried and used steroids at one time, but I haven't used them since 1981 and I subsequently worked for Vince McMahon. As far as Hulk Hogan being a child abuser, I don't think Hulk is knowingly out there to abuse any child. I know Hulk Hogan and he's a pretty caring guy, but he did make a mistake in not coming clean. I came out years ago and did a poster for the Food and Drug Administration stating that I had tried steroids and they're not good for you and don't use them. I think the mistake Hulk made was he was given the opportunity to do good. He was given the opportunity to send a message to children to not use them, that they are a drug, and that they're a dangerous drug. Instead, he took the route of denial. I think that's the worst thing he did in this instance is denying that he had used them.

Keller: *Do you think it's going to catch up with him?*

Ventura: I don't know. That's up to the public. The public forgives and forgets. Oli North's a hero now. Give me a break, you know (laughs). How the public reacts to someone, you don't have a barometer on it. But to call Hogan a child abuser is a bit strong.

Keller: *The justification on Graham's part there is just saying that Hulk Hogan portrays himself and the way he looks as the healthiest way to look and the only way to achieve that look is to take steroids, which are not only dangerous, but illegal.*

Ventura: They are now. One thing that has to be made very clear now, Wade, is that up until 1988, steroids were not illegal. You could basically go to any doctor and if he wanted to prescribe them to you, he could. It was only when in 1988 I think it was Senator Biden of Delaware that got a bill passed federally that made steroid use a felony or a controlled substance, the same as cocaine and other recreational drugs.

Keller: *There's no question that's an important point to bring up because a lot of the steroid use wasn't illegal until recently.*

Ventura: When I got them back in the early... I think another thing, didn't David Shults say that Verne Gagne would have never tolerated steroids? What a bunch of baloney that is. You can't tell me Verne Gagne didn't know he had people using steroids.

Keller: *And quite a bit of other things probably.*

Ventura: Who knows. I don't buy that one either. Remember one thing, the only thing promoters are concerned with is making money.

Keller: *What led to your departure from the WWF? I believe it had to do with a computer*

game?

Ventura: Well, it had to do with marketing. I don't want to get into a lot of it right now because I do have litigation pending with the WWF right now. So, as attorneys tell you, you don't want to talk a lot. But it was over a marketing thing. I was approached by Sega-Genesis about a possible deal of making a Jesse "The Body" wrestling video game. Well, I own the rights to my name and I own the licensing to my name, Jesse "The Body" Ventura. Basically Vince McMahon told me I could not do that. I said, "Why, I own the rights. It's not going to cost you anything. I'll make some money. We'll all be happy." And he basically gave me an ultimatum and said if I did it, my job was in jeopardy. And you don't do that to me, Wade. That's the worst thing you can do to me, challenge me and give me an ultimatum. I immediately made the Sega deal happen.

Keller: *Since then we haven't seen much of Jesse until "Grudge Match" debuted in syndication. Talk a little bit about that show.*

Ventura: Well, Grudge match is just a great concept from a producer named Rich Malcolm who, in fact, used to work for Turner Broadcasting and Turner Entertainment a few years ago. Rich had the concept and hired me to do it. Basically what we do is take average Joe Q. Citizen who has a grudge and we put them in the ring and let them do it in a very controlled, fun attitude where nobody really gets hurt too bad, yet they breathe hard and throw pies in each other's face. We had one guy as a matter of fact who after boxing came into his corner and threw up. Where do you get good TV like that where you can actually slow-mo it coming out of his mouth and then put it back in again. That's television at its best?

Keller: *Only on CNN when they're covering George Bush in Japan.*

Ventura: (laughs) Right. In fact, Grudge Match might be a good place to separate all of these presidential candidates. We'll stick 'em on Grudge Match and we'll eliminate them all and get it down to who'll run against who. But, that's how Grudge Match got started and it's doing just terrific. I'm excited about it and looking forward - we've got one full season in and I'm waiting to hear if it's picked up for another year, but I don't see why it won't be because the numbers are excellent and it's starting to develop a great following. I enjoy working with Steve Albert and Michael Buffer and John Tennes and all those people out at Universal. It's a good time and a fun show.

[In upcoming weeks Ventura speaks about his years in the wrestling ring. He has also agreed to an interview off-radio which hopefully will take place within a couple weeks including comments on his first few weeks in WCW and his reaction to the further scandalous revelations concerning the WWF.]

"RINGSIDE BEAT"

DIBIASE VS. SANTANA CONTINUES TO PUT FANS TO SLEEP

HOGAN PINNING FLAIR AROUND THE HORN

Note to Readers: In the last several weeks, the "Ringside Beat" department has been overwhelmed with reports from WWF events but very few, if any, WCW reports each week. If you are attending WCW cards, if possible please send in "Ringside Beat" reports to the *Torch* to better balance this feature. Thanks...

WWF promoted an event on Feb. 28 in Pittsburgh, Pa. at the Civic Center in front of an estimated 11,500. Andy Stowell filed the following report...

1) **Warlord** (Terry Szopinski) beat **Chris Walker** (Chris Walker). This actually wasn't bad and was the first time I watched Walker. He impressed me with some of his moves, including an incredible suicide plank from the top rope, where he jumps up and over (similar move the Tonga Kid did back in 1984). Match ended when Walker went up for a Frankenstein and Warlord caught him and dropped him down into a powerbomb. Crowd was up for this match, and Warlord got some genuine heat. [**]

2) **Big Bossman** (Ray Traylor) beat **Repoman** (Barry Darsow) with a sneak roll-up. Repo has the coolest entrance music of all time and his gimmick is way over. What makes it great is he stalls by sneaking around, but everyone is into him sneaking around. [1/2*]

3) **"El Matador" Tito Santana** (Merced Solis) beat **"Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase** (Ted DiBiase) in the disappointment match of the night. DiBiase is my all-time favorite and Santana is usually pretty good, but this match was bad. Mostly DiBiase working a sleeper hold on Santana. Match started hot, but they put the fans to sleep. [1/2*]

4) **Natural Disasters** (John Tenta & Fred Ottman) won by DQ over **"Hacksaw" Jim Duggan & Sgt. Slaughter** (Jim Duggan & Bob Remus). After the last match, I wasn't about to hang out for this one, so I went up to get tickets for the next card which unfortunately was cancelled. So I went to the bathroom, got a coke, checked out the score of the hockey game, and ambled back to my seat. This took about ten minutes and Earthquake was still holding the same resthold on Slaughter! Duggan got DQed for using the board. [DUD]

5) **J.W. Storm** (Jeff Warner) beat **Kato** (Thomas Boric). The crowd could not have cared less about this match. John Lanigan and I kept harassing Storm by yelling "Beetlejuice II" at him. The match consisted mostly of Kato demonstrating the chinlock hold while the crowd chanted for "Bo Ring" to make a run-in. [DUD]

6) **British Bulldog** (David Smith) beat **"The Model" Rick Martel** (Richard Vignault). We

serenaded Martel with the song, "I'm Too Sexy" ("I am too sexy for this ring, to sexy for this ring/ I am too sexy for this match, too sexy for this match"). Martel was pretty animated and was getting heat, but the Bulldog is a big goof who cannot do anything. Martel just quit trying and demonstrated the chinlock hold for the crowd. If I never see Bulldog again, I will not be disappointed. [*1/2]

7) **Hulk Hogan** (Terry Bollea) & **"Rowdy" Roddy Piper** (Roderick Toombs) beat **"Nature Boy" Ric Flair** (Richard Fliehr) & **Sid Justice** (Sid Eudy). Well, if there ever was a card that needed Ric Flair to save it, this was it. The heat for the introductions was incredible, like an airplane taking off. Justice was booed like crazy! We kids in my section were chanting "steroid freak" at Justice and we tried to start a "Squeegee Sid" chant. Piper and Flair started out trading chops and hiptosses. Hogan and Justice tagged in and actually worked pretty well together. Justice has great facial expressions. Piper tagged in and Justice immediately squashed him. Piper had his working shoes on, taking bumps and selling. Hogan finally tagged in and went to some hot moves with Flair. Hogan hit the legdrop, but Justice potatoed Hogan with Harvey Whippleman's black bag. Flair went for the cover, but Hogan rolled up Flair in the schoolboy for the pin. Crowd popped for the Real World Champion doing the job. [****]

Notes: Hogan looked a lot less muscular while Piper looked pretty cut. Justice took a bad bump and bled from the back.

WWF promoted an event on Feb. 19 in Utica, NY in front of an estimated 4400. Scott Cornish filed the following report...

1) **Repoman** pinned **Virgil** (Mike Jones) with his feet on the ropes. Basically an okay time-waster. [*3/4]

2) **Warlord** beat **Chris Walker** in 10:30. Walker did a couple things late in the match, including a beautiful crossbody block off the top rope to elevate this from negative stars. Harvey Whippleman was not at ringside. Even *he* has given up on Warlord. [DUD]

3) **Shawn Michaels** (Michael Hickenbottom) beat **Jim Powers** (James Manley). Pretty good match... a few too many restholds for these two guys, but great when they turned it on. Michaels is a natural in his new heel persona. Sensational Sherri was somewhat subdued at ringside, but after all, she is in love. [**]

Just before the next match, Dave Hebner gave ring announcer Mel Phillips a piece of paper and Mel said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I've just

been handed this message... Shawn Michaels has left the building..." I love this so much, I gave it one star; it was better than some matches.

4) **Bret Hart & The Bushwackers** (Robert Miller & Brian Wickens) defeated **Mountie** (Jacques Rougeau) & **Nasty Boys** (Jerry Sagonovich & Brian Knobbs) after all three babyfaces did a battering ram on the heels and Hart pinned Mountie. This ten minute match did not see the wrestlers lock up until three minutes in. Can you say "comedy"? Still, it was fast paced when Hart was in... or maybe it just seemed that way. [*1/2]

5) **Rick "The Model" Martel** pinned **J.W. Storm**, subbing for Texas Tornado in a long, long match which saw Martel do a lot of jumping jacks and precious little else. I wonder if they have plans for Storm, as they let him (a virtual unknown to this crowd) beat up on Martel after the pin. It could've been worse; Von Erich could've shown up. [neg. *]

6) **Undertaker** beat **British Bulldog** in a quickie match, using the same finish these two used when they fought on the last card in Utica back in November. Undertaker hit Bulldog with the Urn behind the ref's back. [*]

7) **Roddy Piper** won a steel cage match over **Ric Flair** in 16:00. Flair and Piper went at it as well as I have seen them do in their current feud. The crowd heat was just tremendous, especially when Roddy would make a near escape. Needless to say, this was a bloodless match, but they substituted a lot of flying spit from Piper and moonshots from both Piper and Flair. At about 10:00 they did the false finish where both wrestlers hit the floor on the opposite side of the cage at the same time and the ref ordered them back into the cage. Flair attacked Piper from behind on the way back in and from this point on they really cranked it up a few notches. At 13:30, the Model ran to ringside to slam the cage door on Piper's head. The match ended with both wrestlers hanging on outside the cage and Flair rammed Piper's head into the steel causing Piper to fall to the floor and win the match. Although this match was not promoted as a title match, a jubilant Roddy Piper left ringside with both belts held high and no follow-up announcement. The main event made this a very enjoyable card overall, but rather brief at just about two hours. [***1/2]

Notes: Jerry Saggs was laughing at the Bushwackers' antics. He must be easily amused... I hope I look as good as Ric Flair when I'm over 40. Who am I kidding? I don't look that good now...

Windy City Wrestling promoted an event on Feb. 22 in Chicago at the Vic Theaire in front of an estimated 400. Ron Dobratz filed the following report...

1) **Trevor Blanchard & "Hawkeye" Cody Hunter & "Sexy" Ace Steele** defeated **King Cobra & Richard Young & Firefighter Jim**. Jim gave Blanchard a powerslam, but referee

Mike Figueroa did not notice, preoccupied with the brawling from the other four contestants who became illegally involved. When Blanchard's valet, Baby Doll pounded the mat three times, Jim jumped up thinking he had won. Baby Doll tossed Trevor a cane. He slugged the firefighter in the back of the head with it and got the pin.

2) **K.C. Knight** eliminated **Captain Fantastic** to win a 16 man battle royal. Knight pushed out the super-heavyweights, Hurricane Smith and Frank "The Tank" Melson as they battled each other and then eliminated Fantastic.

3) **R. Valentino** pinned **Turbo**, then was roughed up afterwards by the Windy City Champion, Ron Powers. Powers's attack was apparently prompted by Valentino's snub of the three men who came to ringside to watch his bout. The man with the blond pony tail returned to ringside with Powers for the main event.

4) **Mike Anthony** defeated **Johnny Mercedes** to retain his Windy City Lightweight Championship. Mercedes was disqualified for throwing him out of the ring over the top rope.

5) **K.C. Knight** defeated **Iron Mike Sampson** by disqualification when Sampson used his chain. In the 1960s, I never tired of watching matches between Billy Goetz, a classic scientific wrestler, and the villainous Johnny Kace. I feel that way now about K.C. Knight and Iron Mike Sampson. They put on a fantastic match that was highlighted by Knight's bulldog headlock, catching Sampson's neck on the top rope while he leaped over the top rope to the floor, ala Randy Savage, and a dropkick K.C. threw to Sampson's upperbody with less than a foot separating the two wrestlers.

6) **Dream Warriors** retained their Windy City Tag Team Titles by defeating **The Untouchables**. It was announced that Buster had suffered a broken leg, so Captain Fantastic teamed with Ice and was pinned by Brood.

7) **Steve Regal & Ron Powers & Hurricane Smith** defeated **Bill Robinette & Franke Melson & Madd Maxx**. Robinette, known as Mr. Bill, is the huge ring announcer for WCW cards who was attacked and bloodied last year and Melson saved. Regal hit Mr. Bill on the back of the head with a cane and got the pin. The healthy half of the Untouchables, Ice, got involved in the post-bout brawl using a chair to pound Madd Maxx.

WWF promoted an event on Feb. 23 in Hartford, Conn. at the Civic Center in front of an estimated 5500. Joe Mason filed the following report...

1) **Skinner** defeated **"Jumping" Jim Brunzell** in a poor opener via pinfall at 11:20. There was absolutely no fan reaction to the announcement of Brunzell's name. When a black kid was yelling at Skinner, Skinner replied, "Come on over here and shine my shoes, boy!" A racist reply, but it still made me chuckle. [*1/2]

2) **Undertaker** pinned **British Bulldog** at 6:20 after undertaker clocked the Bulldog with the Urn. The Undertaker received a standing ovation due to the angle that was shown on television over the weekend where he prevented Jake Roberts from hitting Elizabeth with the chair. Bulldog was bleeding profusely from the nose due to a forearm shot by Undertaker. [***1/2]

3) **The Berserker** defeated **Hercules** with a powerslam at 6:30. At first, the crowd was not sure who to root for, then they sided solidly behind Herc. Not too much from either wrestler. [*3/4]

4) **The Nasty Boys** defeated **The Bushwackers** who were subbing for the supposedly injured Legion of Doom 13:20. The Nasties drew tremendous heat from the fans. A decent match with typical Bushwacker comedy. [**]

5) **Rick "The Model" Martel** pinned **Chris Walker** with a tug of the tights at 13:00. Again, a decent match with nothing special. [*3/4]

6) **Big Bossman** defeated **Repoman** as Repo was disqualified for using the tow rope at 9:20. Both wrestlers worked hard, especially Bossman, who deserves every bit of the push he has gotten. [***]

7) **Hulk Hogan & Roddy Piper** defeated **Ric Flair & Sid Justice** as Hogan pinned Flair at 15:05. As referee Dave Hebner entered the ring, a fan standing next to me yelled, "Get a real job". As far as I know, that comment wasn't directed at Hebner, but towards the guy who ties the tag ropes onto the turnbuckles. Hebner took offense to the comment and responded, and I quote, "Hey dipshit, I already got your money... (pauses for a second or two) You stupid piece of shit." The response stunned me as well as the fan standing next to me and he shut up with no snappy comeback. At first, I thought the Hulkster might get bombarded with boos due to reports I've read and even experienced at the Royal Rumble, plus during the intermission when the ring announcer announced Hogan's t-shirt everybody booed. But, to my surprise, he was overwhelmingly cheered along with Roddy Piper. Probably the best match of the evening. I was stunned when Hogan pinned Flair which in my opinion reduced Flair's status as an unbeatable champion to a b-type performer. Afterwards, Hogan and Piper flexed for the crowd who were going nuts. [***1/2]

Notes: During the Undertaker vs. Bulldog match, Civic Center security introduced a new rule stating you cannot rush the gate during the intros to the match or after the match, and if you do, you must stand four or five feet away from the gate... As opposed to announcing the Legion of Doom and Texas Tornado as no-shows, the ring announcer just reviewed the revised line-up without drawing attention to any changes. No offer of refunds was made...



"NASTY BOY" BRIAN KNOBBS

USWA promoted an event on Feb. 29 in Nashville, Tenn. at the Sports Arena in front of an estimated 350. Brian Berkon filed the following report...

1) **Miss Connie** lost to **Dirty White Girl** at 1:59 of a no-time limit mud match. Eric Embry came to the ring at 1:35 and held Dirty White Girl. Embry swung at Dirty White Girl who was being held by Connie, but when Girl ducked, Connie caught the blow and fell into the mud pit to lose the match.

2) **Eric Embry** beat **"Dirty White Boy"** **Tony Anthony** in a

scaffold match at 6:47. At 3:30 Embry bled from being hit with a chain. At 4:40, Embry threw powder at Anthony and missed. At 6:15, Embry pulled a belt from his tights. At 6:45, Anthony fell from the scaffold and landed on his right knee. Tom Prichard came to the ring and beat on Embry. Kimberly and Prichard helped Anthony back to the locker room.

3) **Brian Christopher** pinned **Kenny Kendall** at 12:28 with a legdrop off the top rope. Christopher was being really conceited in his interaction with fans, but some fans still cheered for him.

4) **Tom Prichard** pinned **"Iron Man" Jim Steele** with a roll-up at 9:09 to retain the Southern Title.

5) **Moondogs Spike & Spot & Black Dog** lost to **Jeff Jarrett & Jerry Lawler & Pat Tanaka** when Jarrett and Lawler covered Black Dog for the pin. This was an all-out Brawl. Spike was hitting everyone with manager Richard Lee's crutch. Spike piledrove Tanaka on the metal ring barrier which made its way to the ring.

"RINGSIDE BEAT"

FRONT ROW SEATS TO ARENA
SHOWS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY
Every Week in Pro Wrestling Torch

Chris Zavis's "Highspots"
WATCHING LIGHTNING STRIKE
LIGHTNING KID TALKS ABOUT HIS JAPAN TOURS

Irish-born John Ford was Hollywood's preeminent director in the 1930s and 40s. He gave the world such great masterpieces of cinema as "How Green Was My Valley", "The Grapes of Wrath", "The Informer", and "The Quiet Man".

Ford also made a whole slew of westerns starring a big lanky kid from Southern Cal by the name of Marion Morrison. Ford changed it to "John Wayne". Like many great directors, Ford could tell a captivating tale, had an artist's eye for cinematography, and was a master of pacing. But one of the qualities that elevated Ford to a perch above his peers was his feeling for the simple but uniquely uncommon character.

In several of his films there are small, almost quiet scenes in which a poorly educated but dirtwise farmer/soldier/cowboy would survey the environment and predict a powerful storm on the way. Nobody else could see it, but his companions knew his track record and soon everyone would be rounding up cattle, shuttering the house, or drawing the wagons in a circle. Sure enough, in the next scene the forces of nature are unleashed and certain disaster has been averted by uncommon foresight.

In sports and entertainment there are the

few who can spot the trends, scope out the future stars, and see the patterns forming long before most of us even have an inkling as to what is to come.

In early 1991 these seers were talking about a teenager who worked small independent cards in the frozen wilds of Minnesota. Sean Waltman, a.k.a. Lightning Kid, grabbed the attention of a perceptive few as a true wonderkid - a cannot miss star of the future.

I got my first look at him on videotape in a motel room in Philadelphia awaiting a Joel Goodhart card last August. Among those who watched those same tapes were Jim Cornette, Tommy Rogers, and Cactus Jack. All three were impressed. They commented on Kid's mastery of heel mannerisms. The tape showed Kid vs. Jerry Lynn from April and May of 1991. The scene was Ropers - a bar in Fridley, Minn. The matches were not great - at best they ranged from three to three-and-a-half stars, but what jumped out at you was the hell-bent-for-leather style of the young Lightning Kid.

Though not physically imposing at 6-1 and a thin 180 pounds, Kid soon established himself with the crowd as an arrogant, swaggering heel. Nobody will ever describe the kid as a "monster", but after a few minutes you totally forget that he has the physique of a basketball player and not the traditional pro wrestler.

Kid does a good job of controlling a crowd through a series of mannerisms and gestures developing instant heat. In the ring, he can fly with reckless abandon doing aerial moves that six footers are supposedly too tall for. Kid is a good worker who puts out to the limits of his ability. Many who see Kid ponder the question, "Just how good is he?"

Many who watch his bouts get swept away by the suicidal moves. There are not too many people in this country who can do those moves and execute them on a regular basis. Many concentrate so hard on those aerial moves that they ignore some of his obvious weaknesses. Kid is clearly not the second coming of Ric Flair or Lou Thesz.

Critics argue with opinions ranging from placing him on the level of the New Japan prelim boys to just cracking the top 75 list. But you can get past the lack of physical strength and the poor pacing in the middle of his longer bouts because of the flashes of brilliance and total desire that is evident in many of his moves. Just like those old John Ford characters, you can see big things on the horizon.

In November of 1991, Lightning Kid made his first tour of Japan working for the Mexican based Universal group. It was so successful that he was asked back for the January 1992 tour.

"Wally Yamaguchi came to Minnesota last fall and recruited Jerry Lynn and myself for Universal," Waltman says. "At the time I had hopes of working for New Japan. I had been trying to get in there but nothing was happening with it." Waltman relates how Bill Eadie was working with Masa Saito to use him in the New Japan junior division. There were several rumors that New Japan was interested in using him as a costumed foe of Jushin Liger. But those feelers were put out in August and nothing seemed to be happening so Waltman jumped at the Universal offer.

Kid's first tour of Japan opened at the mecca of professional wrestling - Korakuen Hall in Tokyo. It is generally accepted that the world's best professional wrestling is in Tokyo and the wrestlers save their best work for the hardcore fans that dominate the small, intimate hall that seats only about 2000.

Sean Waltman paints a picture of two vastly different aspects of Korakuen Hall. There is the Korakuen that hosts over 200 wrestling cards each year with every seat a good one, all close to the ring. The fans are the best in the world.

"The crowds at Korakuen are smart and can recognize a good worker or a guy who is the shits," Waltman says. "They are really wise and intense. They clap after a series of good moves or for a highspot they really like."

But the fans cannot go behind the curtain at Korakuen. What wrestlers see evokes different emotions.

"The locker rooms are all right, okay really, but a bit grungy," Waltman says. "There is the occasional cockroach running around the walls and floor. The bathrooms and the showers are really gross. It smells like an open sewer and the first time it hit me I almost got sick."

Before his first bout, Yamaguchi and Universal booker Shinma decided that Kid would be put over at the expense of Japanese wrestler Sakigake Gantetsu.

"They wanted fast bouts, three to five minutes long, where I just destroy this guy and give him very little - just one or two moves in return," Waltman says. "I felt bad about doing that, but did what I was told."

What resulted were quick openers, jam packed with top rope dives, leg lariats, tombstone piledrivers, and several broken table and dented chairs. In all five bouts, Kid defeated Gantetsu. On the tour's final night, Nov. 14 back at Korakuen Hall, Kid executed an amazing long distance leap off the top turnbuckle, flying over the ringpost, twisting in midair and landing with a combination of leg lariat and bodypress onto a standing Gantetsu several rows up the aisle. It was a move that rivals anything a young Tommy "Dynamite Kid" Billington did in his heyday.

"I liked being in Japan, but after a few days, it got old real fast," Waltman says. "I spent most days just walking around looking in shops and stores. I couldn't eat a lot of their food or drink their milk. Their beer is a lot stronger than ours

LIGHTNING KID IN JAPAN

First Tour:

11/7/91, Tokyo Korakuen Hall: vs. Sakigake Gantetsu, Kid wins by countout at 2:49.

11/8/91, Tokyo Korakuen Hall: vs. Gantetsu, Kid wins by countout at 2:38.

11/9/91, Maebashi: vs. Gantetsu, Kid wins by pinfall at 4:06.

11/11/91, Hakata Star Lane: vs. Gantetsu, Kid wins by countout at 1:42.

11/14/91, Tokyo Korakuen Hall: vs. Gantetsu, Kid wins by countout at 4:16.

Second Tour:

1/17/92, Tokyo Korakuen Hall: vs. Jerry Lynn, 15 minute time limit draw.

1/18/92, Kisarazu: Kid & Lynn vs. Bulldog KT & Gantetsu, Kid pins Gantetsu at 4:40.

1/19/92, Tokyo Korakuen Hall (afternoon show): Kid & Lynn & Wagner Jr. vs. Caras & King & Texano, Caras pins Wagner at 16:18.

1/19/92, Tokyo Korakuen Hall (evening show): Kid & Lynn vs. Bulldog KT & Cooly SZ, SZ pins Lynn at 4:45.

1/21/92, Shizuoka: vs. Lynn, Lynn wins by countout at 13:45.

1/22/92, Takaishi: Kid & Villano IV & V vs. Hamada & Caras & KT, KT pins Kid at 11:24.

1/23/92, Tokyo Korakuen Hall: Kid & Canelo Casas vs. KT & Gantetsu, KT pins Casas at 9:20.

and I got falling-down drunk one night and had to work the next night with my balance all shot and still had to do all the risky moves. The streets are twice as crowded as the busiest day at a State Fair. It takes forever to get anywhere. By the end of the tour I couldn't wait to get back home."

Shinma was so taken with Kid's work on the November tour that he was asked back for the January tour. He no longer worked quickie openers, but was placed in competitive bouts against many of the top names. Kid worked a 15 minute draw with Jerry Lynn at Korakuen Hall.

"We had to change our style from the U.S. bouts," Waltman says. "We did more flying moves in and outside the ring. Punches and kicks were laid in a lot harder and even the rest holds had to look fancy."

Kid worked a six-man tag against Dos Caras, El Texano, and Silver King. "The Cowboys are really impressive," Waltman says. "Their work is

realistic and stiff, not phony looking. One of them slapped me and broke my eardrum. In the locker room they put a lit cigarette in my ear and it sucked the air out. It helped a lot and I felt better."

Kid's ear has since healed.

One of the drawbacks of working for Universal is a very low travel budget. While the bigger promotions fly or take the bullet train to outlying cities, Universal makes do with a bus.

"One night we wrestled at Hakata Star Lanes," Waltman says. "It's a nice place with a bowling alley downstairs. But we had a grueling 16 hour bus trip from Tokyo to Hakata. You try to sleep, watch movies, anything to kill time. The plane trip to Japan is only 13 hours and here we are for 16 hours on this bus."

Wrestlers communicate in the ring by calling spots in something Kid refers to as "Wrestling English".

"Most guys can call words like powerslam or a Frankensteiner," Waltman says. "Some of the spots are called in Japanese or Mexican. A top rope dive is called a 'topikan-hiro' in Japanese, or a 'planchia' in Mexican."

Kid says all of the wrestlers gather in the arena for two hours before the 6:30 bell time. They stretch, do group exercises, and some work on acrobatics or tumbling. Kid does the exercises but refrains from the tumbling. "Before the bouts get started you get together with Yamaguchi or Shinma and your opponent and go over the match," Waltman says

Kid returns to Japan for the March Universal tour but will probably not work the June tour which is rumored to be a 23-day affair.

Kid is usually identified as a junior heavyweight since at 180 pounds he is rather light. However, the wrestlers he gets inspiration from are not the light-weight flyers but the more traditional heavyweights.

"I really admire and respect Terry Funk," says Waltman. "And in Japan there are so many great workers, but the one that has the best matches is Jumbo Tsuruta. I like to watch his matches and learn a lot from him. Those are the kind of bouts

I want to have. There is more to wrestling than just flying moves."

Once he becomes adept at the Lucha style, he hopes it will lead to regular tours of Mexico. Other North American wrestlers like Owen Hart, Chris Benoit, and Leon White have done this and helped make a name for themselves by being proficient in several ringstyles.

What the future holds in store for Waltman is an open question. The wrestling experts, much like those wise John Ford film characters, look into the distance and see big changes on the way. With Lightning Kid at only the tender age of 19, the future possibilities are unlimited. The rings of New Japan or World Championship Wrestling could well await his talents.

It is a sobering thought that at the age of 19 Ric Flair was a first-year college student whose sport was football. Flair would not step inside a wrestling ring for several more years. Kid already has four years of pro experience and the benefit of expert coaching by the Malenkos of Florida.

Sean Waltman, the Lightning Kid, is well on his way to stardom.

The Bento Box:

Correction: In the second installment of the Tokyo Dream Super Dream/Super Dream card, there was one entire line omitted in describing the competitors of the opening Jr. bout. As a result, we were introduced to a new wrestler, "Norio Kroffat". The actual line-up was suppose to be Jushin Liger, Negro Casas, Chris Benoit, Yoshinari Ogawa, and Norio Honaga against Dan Kroffat, Doug Furnas, Tommy Rogers, Bobby Fulton, and Owen Hart.

Fear of Flying: On Jan. 8 in Osaka, Akira Katayama broke his neck after a daring top rope dive had him missing his targeted opponent and hitting the floor on his head. As of mid-February, Katayama still had no feeling in his legs. Just watching it on videotape is extremely painful. Next time you urge your favorite young flyer to leap from the overhead lights keep in mind how every time these type of moves are executed, the wrestlers are literally risking their health, career and quite possibly their lives.

Coming on Straight and Strong: Two SWS wrestlers have been more than impressive of late and are threatening to crack the Japan top ten. Naoki Sano and George Takano have been every bit as good as many of All Japan's and New Japan's big names. Recently, Takano attempted to duplicate Liger's amazing Shooting Star Press but came down on his head. One wrestler has told me that anybody over six feet could not do this move since your feet would hit the ropes or turnbuckle. Takano has tons of guts for even attempting this move.

New Japan Blows Smoke: Rumors of the departure of many of New Japan's top stars now appear to be a work leading up to some angle that sees Tatsumi Fujinami become an outlaw character. There is still a possibility that Inoki's men may join forces with the SWS at some future date. I know many want to see Asai go against Liger, but I hope they run the classic series of Liger against Sano again. The match that could steal the show would be Keiji Muto against George Takano. Till next time, go easy on the wasabi.

[Chris Zavisa of Plymouth, Mich. has been writing "Highspots" monthly since the February 28, 1991 issue of Torch Weekly. Zavisa, a full-time high school teacher, has intensely followed and studied Japanese wrestling since 1986. He has seen over ten years worth of Japanese television wrestling and knows more about Japanese wrestling than almost anyone in this country.]



LIGHTNING KID

**CHRIS ZAVISA
ERIC KROL
BRUCE MITCHELL
MARK MADDEN**
TORCH MONTHLY COLUMNISTS
WHAT MORE CAN A WRESTLING
FAN ASK FOR? (Good Matches?)

"READER RHETORIC"

SUPERBRAWL FEEDBACK

MITCHELL'S BLUEPRINT, TO SUCCESS OR NOT

TOP TEN REASONS TO VOTE CACTUS FOR PRES.

SHULTS "TORCH TALK"

I could not believe what David Shults claimed in "Torch Talk" in Torch #161. He claimed that WCW would not last if they weeded out all steroid use in the organization and pushed wrestlers based on their ability to wrestle rather than looking large. Shults claimed the fans would stop watching WCW and continue to watch the WWF because the WWF has larger wrestlers. Huh?! I do not see that in any way other than the unimportant fan who is just watching wrestling for a laugh. They would be watching the WWF and not WCW for that anyway.

A large portion of house show attendance is hardcore fans, moreso in WCW than the WWF. The hardcore fans prefer the smaller wrestlers who can wrestle and sell a show rather than 280

pounds of muscles roaming the ring. True, the attendance might go down slightly, but from the way I see it, the average wrestling fan does not care how large or monstrous a wrestler looks, just how well he wrestles and if he puts on an exciting show.

If WCW rids its organization of steroids, I feel the fans who watch WCW now will not stop watching it just because their wrestlers are smaller than the WWF's wrestlers. WCW would be able to fill that loss with high-quality wrestling that the fan could not see in the WWF.

PAUL SILVERSTEIN
Morgantown, W.Va.

RESPONSE TO MITCHELL'S "BLUEPRINT"

Dear Mr. Turner,

Being a serious fan of professional wrestling, I recommend that you read the current issue of *Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly* for the article entitled "WCW's Blueprint to Success" by Bruce Mitchell (*Torch* #162). I cannot emphasize strongly enough that Mr. Mitchell presents a thoughtful examination of where WCW can be steered if those in control of the promotion will work at it. I am of the opinion that the institution of the suggestions in the article would result in the long-term success of WCW in its competition with the WWF for the wrestling fan's dollar.

Please at least have one of your subordinates check out the article. I am sure that somebody in the organization has access to a copy. I am pleased with the recent improvements that have occurred in the product and can see no reason why there cannot be continued progress in your promotion. You have only to present a quality product to make it a profitable venture.

CONRAD S. RUBINKOWSKI
Springfield, Ill.

I am writing to comment on Bruce Mitchell's "Front Row, Section D" column in issue #162. I must say Mitchell's ideas are very well thought out and very innovative, but I disagree with his idea of WCW not conducting house shows for three months.

Your average intense mark looks at house show results rather than TV coverage in determining how talented a wrestler is. Let's assume WCW holds a PPV event during this three month period. Let us also assume Rick Steamboat is awarded the World Title bout on this show. In the weeks leading up to the event, Steamboat could beat three or four jobbers on TV. But, Van Hammer could also beat those

jobbers on the shows. So, in the eyes of the average viewer, Van Hammer is just as deserving of the shot as Steamboat. "House shows are important because the results of these cards are considered when rankings are compiled." Of course, we know that statement is not true, but your average fan doesn't know this.

Aside from the no-house show idea, I think WCW would be well advised to do some of Mitchell's suggestions. Because in my opinion, that's the kind of wrestling most fans would like to see.

J.D. SKYNYRD
Colorado Springs,

Bruce Mitchell transcribed an excellent dream in "WCW's Blueprint to Success". I disagree with two of his choices for firing, though. Johnny B. Badd is a constantly improving athlete and has charisma (despite being cartoonish). If his ring entrance is unacceptable to the new WCW regime, how about dropping the "Badd" gimmick and having him wrestle as Mark Merro?

I also think Curtis Hughes has the potential to be a great heel, though his offense needs improvement. Hughes takes great bumps for his size and could reach Bossman-level ability with a couple of stiff moves and a good finisher.

CLARK KENT
Chicago, Ill.

WCW STEROID POLICY

I must applaud WCW and Mr. Frye for creating an intelligent and enlightened steroid policy. This is as good as, if not better than, the drug policy of my employer. It is my hope that it succeeds above expectations.

Dave Scherer's letter concerning Eric Krol's first column summed up my feelings quite well, almost as if I had written it myself. Krol seems to have misunderstood why so many call for an adaptation of the Japanese presentation.

Finally, to Joe Grana's letter. I would like Joe to understand where Don Gene Smith is coming from (I hope Don does not mind me speaking for him to a degree). Those of us who grew up watching Sam Muchnick's promotion in St. Louis were educated differently than the rest of you. The only promotion existing today that is similar to the St. Louis Wrestling Club is All Japan Pro Wrestling and we judge what we see by that standard. Let me also add that a non-fan I know pointed out that maybe all wrestling fans are "idiots", and particularly those of us who know what's really going on and still spend money on it.

MICHAEL MCGOWEN
Jerseyville, Ill.

SUPERBRAWL

I am curious how people score "SuperBrawl II". Naturally assigning a number to show feelings about a wrestling card are subjective, but I have conflicting thoughts about how I

TORCH TOP TEN LIST

From the home offices of Rich Mohrland in N. St. Paul, Minn. come the top ten reasons Cactus Jack deserves your vote to be the next President of the United States of America...

- 10) Would replace lame, outdated "Hail to the Chief" music with Helter Skelter.
- 9) Would elbow drop each member of Congress on cement floor until they passed a balanced budget.
- 8) Promises to rename Super Tuesday Primaries - "Super Tuesday: The Lethal Primaries".
- 7) Could really impress foreign dignitaries at state dinners with the ol' spit-straight-up-in-the-air-and-catch-it-in-his-mouth trick.
- 6) Cannot pass up the chance to hear Abdullah tell J. Danforth Quayle: "You're no Jack Kennedy" during vice-presidential debates.
- 5) Does a better pig squeal than Patrick Buchanan.
- 4) Missing teeth would save tax-payer dollars when his immortal visage is carved into Mount Rushmore.
- 3) Enunciates more clearly than Paul Tsongas on interviews.
- 2) Would take some really great bumps falling out of Air Force One during evening news sound-bites.
- 1) Would have the Secret Service worked into a nervous frenzy by continually yelling "Bang! Bang!" at public appearances.

["Torch Top Ten List" is a blatant ripoff from the David Letterman Show. Nevertheless, don't hesitate to send in your versions of wrestling top ten lists.]

should score it.

The first number that comes to mind is "6", but how can a card that includes one of the year's best matches be scored so low? Actually, all of the first five matches were well above average for preliminary bouts, and the Windham & Rhodes vs. Austin & Zbyszko tag match was very good, and the first tag match was even better when Zenk and Morton were both in the ring. At times, Morton and Zenk were more spectacular than Liger and Pillman, but it was lost in a bout that included Hammer and Vegas or just not acknowledged because of how they are perceived.

SuperBrawl presents a real dilemma for people trying to do a conscientious job of scoring it. If the majority of matches on a card surpass one's realistic expectations, can it be an average show? Does it matter that it was their expectations that convinced them to buy the show?

I would not have been disappointed to see Scott Steiner pinned after taking Eaton's "Alabama Jam", Anderson's DDT, and a "rocket launcher", because that saved Ric Flair's title reign on innumerable occasions as a way to explain why the Steiners came away from their tag team title bout without the championship.

I was more disappointed than angry with the Luger vs. Sting match. Neither wrestler was concerned with the words "pride" and "workrate", and I will never forget how easily Sting pinned Luger, especially after watching Scott Steiner kick-out or roll a shoulder to prevent being pinned after absorbing much more punishment. Luger deserves the WWF.

I am not so sure Rick Steamboat is not better-suited for the WWF either. Funny thing about perceptions. Morton has some fantastic bouts with his good friend, Ric Flair, and he is acknowledged as a great wrestler. I am not so sure Steamboat has worked any harder than Luger, since his last bout with Terry Funk. Rick Rude's matches with Sting and the Ultimate Warrior were as good as this one, even before the Horse-Rhodes finish.

It has been nearly two years since the "Capital Combat" main event was ruined when Ole Anderson showed that a "cage match" did not guarantee there would not be interference in a title match. I not only have not forgotten how the WCW promotion can cheapen a title match and make special stipulations meaningless, I have just had it reinforced with SuperBrawl II.

All the recent optimism I have gleaned from what I had read and seen about improvement and respect for fans quickly disappeared with the last three matches I watched on February 29. When I think about it, "6" might be too high.

RON DOBRATZ
Roscoe, Ill.

SuperBrawl was a great night of wrestling. Solid card from top to bottom. It gets a "9" from me. Liger vs. Pillman was everything I expected: high risk moves, very fast-paced. It

gets four and a half stars from me. It was the best match by far. Worst match was Hammer & Zenk vs. Vegas & Morton. When Frey reduced the number of matches to eight, he should have taken one out. Kevin Nash is a big stiff and Van Hammer is an Ultimate Warrior look-a-like. Nash could not wrestle out of his underwear, he is so bad. This match was a big time dud.

Sting vs. Luger could have been much better. The match ended too quickly. Promising start to it, lousy ending. Only two-and-a-half stars. Steamboat vs. Rude was very good. I gave that three-and-a-half stars. Eaton & Anderson vs. the Steiners was excellent, but the controversial ending took a star away from it, so I gave it three-and-a-half stars. Rhodes &

Windham vs. Zbyszko & Austin was the sleeper match of the night. Great action throughout, with Zbyszko getting pinned. Anderson has to be the hardest worker WCW has, in my opinion, dishing it out and taking his lumps. He does his job well all the time.

It was a pleasure to hear Ventura "tell it like it is" once again. I missed his wit and his heel cheering, but he announced great. Ventura gets my MVP for the night because he carried all those other moron announcers, especially Bishoff. I bet he cannot even spell Steiner. He knows squat about wrestling. But SuperBrawl was worth my time.

MARK BRYAN
Newport, R.I.

Fictional Excerpts of TV Shows Never to Air" by the Random Marc

"Making It In The WWF"

VINCE, PAT, BOBBY, ELIZABETH, AND SHERRI STAR IN COLISEUM VIDEO

"Mean Gene here with BIG news for you, fans. Thanks to your overwhelming response to "The Death of Hulkamania," exclusively on Coliseum Home Video, we at Titan Sports have taken a new look at our marketing strategy. You people don't want wrestling, you want the lowdown. You want dirt. You want sleeze. Now, I speak not only for myself here, but for Vince, Pat, Bobby the Brain, and the entire World Wrestling Federation organization: We stand ready to give it to you and so, with that in mind, and in our never ending quest to make a buck by pandering to your perverted tastes, no matter how it may disgust us, Coliseum proudly presents its first XXX rated adult video: "Making it in the WWF". You will see many of your favorite athletes making it here in the WWF. Making it with Pat, making it with Garvin, making it with Bobby the Brain, making it with Vince himself, and a short hetero-making-it segment with Sensational Sherri, the Fabulous Moolah, and the lovely Elizabeth. Now, fans, you can obtain a copy by..."

"Just hold on a minute, Mean Gene. This has gone far enough."

"Macho Man, I..."

"Now, I don't mind you impugning the character of most of those names you've mentioned, although I don't believe a word of it..."

"Well, Macho Man, there *is* this videotape. Exclusively on..."

"Oh yeah! The tape. Well, I've seen this so-called tape. Have *you* seen this tape, Gene Okerlund."

"Not really, Macho Man. But I'm sure it's great and I know every one's going to want one. By the way, kids, be sure you have your parents permission..."

"Yeah. Well, first of all, you can take the lovely Elizabeth's name off your list. I've been to see the people at Coliseum and I've been assured her name will no longer be associated with this project."

"How'd you do that?"

"I kind of made them an offer they couldn't refuse. yeah. Oh yeah."

"I think I kind of understand. But if they *did* have tapes of your lovely wife, that does suggest something, Macho Man. I hesitate to say this, but..."

"Well, you *should* hesitate to say it, Okerlund, but I see your point. Your problem, Okerlund, is that you're operating on incomplete information and are therefore drawing false conclusions."

"I don't understand."

"Explain it to him, Brain."

"Bobby Heenan. What are *you* doing here?"

"I'm like Chicken Man, Chrome Dome, I'm everywhere, I'm everywhere. Look, you and all those humanoid nine to five lifers watching this think you're going to see me and Patterson and Vince and Sherri and everyone. You think Jake's going to show you the *real* snake. Well, you've all been had, pal."

"What do you mean?"

"Look, me and Pat and everyone. We're real people. We have real families and real lives and no matter what a few disgruntled ex-employees might be saying, it's all smoke."

"Well, what about this tape, then, Brain? Exclusively on..."

"Oh yeah, tell him about the tape, Bobby the Brain."

"Cartoons, you nincompoop. Animation. There's one with Andre the Giant and..."

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph."

"No, Okerlund, they're not in it. Maybe Volume II."

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph."

["The Random Marc" of Denver, Co. semi-regularly contributes guest features in his own unique style. Marc has been contributing to Pro Wrestling Torch since the March 23, 1989 edition.]

SPECULATION TIME IS ALMOST OVER

THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING LIES IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

---BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE by Wade Keller---

Ric Flair is the WWF Champion, there is talk of Terry Funk entering the GWF and becoming the GWF Champion, and if a few things occur in the next few months, Randy Savage could be wearing the WCW Championship this year.

Times are so revolutionary in pro wrestling right now that it is almost ridiculous to speculate any further than Wrestlemania. But many people continue to talk about Lex Luger entering the WWF one year from now and challenging Hulk Hogan for the WWF Title. First of all, the WWF may not be around in one year, a statement that is getting stale, but truer every day. Second, if the WWF does survive it is because of two reasons, one of which will not allow Luger to be part of the WWF. Either the WWF will get serious about steroid testing and the elimination of pushes for wrestlers based on size or the media will fail miserably at their job and allow the WWF to make it through this accountability check without being held accountable. If the media does let the WWF off easy and forgets this story by March 31, then Luger will probably be challenging Hogan next year at Wrestlemania.

Meanwhile, as scandalous revelations continue to surface, there continues to be speculation that talent will leave the WWF before they are adversely affected by it. One of those names mentioned is Randy Savage. If Savage became available, certainly WCW should do everything in their power to get him. As valuable as Jesse Ventura is to WCW, he only helps WCW's image. Randy Savage would help WCW's image *and sell tickets*. Savage challenging Rick Rude for the WCW Title at Starrcade '92 is very plausible considering the current pro wrestling situation.

With the departure of "The Patriot" Del

Wilkes from the GWF (which again, just like the hiring of Chris Walker, brings to question how serious the WWF is about eliminating steroids from their promotion), that opens the door for another big name to enter. It not only opens the door, it leaves a larger gap than there already was for the GWF. The GWF has very little in the way of national talent. Terry Garvin can get cheered all he wants in the Sportatorium, but his popularity is even more isolated than Tom Harkin's. When the GWF airs in New York or Minneapolis, the GWF needs a strong name to draw people to the TV set each week. Eddie Gilbert is a strong name, but not strong enough to carry an entire promotion. That leaves the door open for Terry Funk. Funk vs. Gilbert, with either man playing the babyface or heel role, could quickly move into the number one spot for feud of the year, just as Cactus Jack vs. Eddie Gilbert did last year.

Now travel back in time to one year ago. Ric Flair was on the road to nowhere during his feud with El Gigante in WCW. Randy Savage was on his way to losing a lifetime retirement match to Ultimate Warrior in favor of color commentating. And Terry Funk was wandering around the USWA and other independents with retirement on his mind.

One year later, all three could be in different organizations as world champions.

Conservatively speaking, the WWF will remain in business, albeit their merchandising will be badly damaged and they will lose a few prime timeslots in favor of late-night timeslots. Savage and Piper will stay in the WWF and Ric Flair will defend his title for the rest of 1992 against Randy Savage, Sid Justice, Roddy Piper, and then lose it to Hulk Hogan at SummerSlam as the pattern of the last eight years continues.

Meanwhile, WCW will continue to basically tread water. Jesse Ventura will debut on World Wide Wrestling, but World Wide will still have inferior production values, inferior pacing, and be shot in dingy, half-filled buildings where angles don't make sense and three marquee matches are thrown at viewers every hour with no build-up and run-in finishes. The Steiners continue to remain undefeated in order to preserve invisibility and total lack of suspense in any of their matches. Wrestlers continue to ridiculously take steroids for no reason other than they lack the will power to seek professional help to get off of them or they naively believe there is nothing wrong with taking steroids.

And Global will continue to draw 500 fans weekly at their home base where a bunch of wrestlers of varying talent and little marquee value bust their butts as everyone outside of Texas yawns and Doug Gilbert vs. Bill Irwin is the top feud during the summer.

The more conservative view is more likely than the radical ideas at the beginning of this column, but that does not mean this will be a boring year. This week we can speculate on what might happen.

Next week, things start happening. The newspaper articles and TV shows and magazines begin publishing and airing their features on the WWF. The rest of the media either responds or doesn't respond. Vince proves how he handles pressure and if he is willing to admit mistakes and correct them. Kip Frey will show whether he is just a lot of talk or the David Stern of pro wrestling. And the GWF will show whether they are doomed to be nothing more than the USWA with a southern regional fan base.

The time for speculation is over as the next few days begin to map the future of this sport.

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