

Wrestling Observer Newsletter

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This isn't going to be pretty and I almost don't know where to start.

We'll start by taking a left on Dishonesty Avenue and talk about the art of false advertising. There is movement in the Florida legislature to regulate pro wrestling. There are many aspects that have been discussed in regards to the regulation, including mandatory steroid testing of wrestlers. Anyway, this past Tuesday night, World Championship Wrestling had a television taping in Tallahassee. Since kids were let in free, this was the biggest live crowd (6,500) for a WCW event in several months. Did the fans leave happy? Well, consider this. Ric Flair, Barry Windham and Lex Luger were all advertised. None of them appeared on the card. No announcement was made to the fans before, during or after the event regarding their non-appearance. Obviously with no announcement, there were no offers of refunds. While the television the previous Saturday and Sunday did say that Flair was stripped of the title, at no time did it come off like it was anything but a pro wrestling angle. No mention was made that Flair wasn't going to appear on house shows he had been advertised to appear on. Windham was injured the previous night. Those things happen. Luger didn't appear because since they were going to turn him heel and he was going to win the title, he realistically couldn't appear on television. So they decided there was no point in him making the show. That all makes sense. But he never should have been advertised if that was the case. One of the legislators was in Tallahassee for the card. For that reason alone, since both WCW and WWF hate outside regulation of their product, at least for that night, if those running the company had any brains, they would have at least played it straight. But, no. False advertising is so ingrained in that company that they no longer even realize that it's dishonest, and also, technically, illegal. Let's just say the legislature has a lot more evidence that pro wrestling in Florida should have outside regulation. A few nights later, the World Wrestling Federation was in Tampa. On that show, Jim Duggan, Typhoon and LOD Hawk no-showed. Duggan and Typhoon were sent to Milwaukee to replace injured wrestlers Jake Roberts and Mr. Perfect, while Hawk is still injured. Flair, Windham and Luger were more important to WCW than Duggan, Typhoon and Hawk are to WWF. But WWF made an announcement about the no-shows (without giving an honest reason, of course) before the show and offered refunds. Of course, once you've gone to the building, paid for parking, etc., almost nobody will ever ask for a refund. Would WWF have done the same thing if the state wasn't considering regulation? No. The next day, at the "Wrestlefest" show in St. Louis, which had four no-shows, an announcement was made about the no-shows, but no refunds were offered. But at least the WWF understood the situation, while WCW was, well, WCW, and that says it all. On July 26, both the WWF and WCW are in this area, with WWF at the Cow Palace in San Francisco and WCW at the Oakland Coliseum Arena. On July 15, on WCW's local television show, they were plugging a line-up that included Ric Flair, Scott Steiner, Missy Hyatt and Paul E. Dangerously, none of whom are going to appear. Of course they did have the phrase in the ad, card subject the change, but I don't think that phrase includes giving the company the right to falsely advertise talent that they know full well will not be appearing. They've had two weeks to change the advertisement but it obviously wasn't important to them to make the effort. After all, they're only charging \$20 for tickets in this market coming after the previous show in the market they charged \$25 and then had eight no-shows. To make matters worse, in the P.N. News squash, Tony Schiavone overdubbed the commentary to plug the local show. I don't know when this voice-over was done, but it was after July 1 since Schiavone acknowledged Flair being stripped of the title while doing the localized commentary. Schiavone talked about the eight-man tag (which Flair was to appear) and said that given the situation, he didn't know if Flair was going to be there. Well, actually, he

did. But he still plugged Scott Steiner, who was injured on June 14, and Hyatt and Dangerously, even though the decision was made to end their program on July 14 prior to his doing the voice-over. Even if the contract negotiations went down differently with Ric Flair and if the company had put on a good pay-per-view show on Sunday, this is outright false advertising. After the company has already destroyed its house show business by continuing to operate in this manner, whomever is responsible for continuing this policy should be fired. It's way past the point of making excuses for people. The front office needs a complete overhaul, starting at the top, anyway, based on a lot more than this and I don't even have to waste the space to say why.

Let's take a quick right to Steroid Boulevard, which is a long and winding road to be sure.

We've actually got so many different stories that offshoot this subject. There is the aftermath of the trial of Dr. George Zahorian III. There is the story of ex-NFL star Lyle Alzado. Maybe the most fascinating story of them all is just looking at the way the mainstream media is handling the entire situation. Then there is the Titan Sports response. The WCW lack of response. And then there is the real story itself.

The steroid problem in pro wrestling today is no worse than it was two years ago, or two months ago for that matter. Two years ago, nobody in the mainstream media said a word. But the point covered in columns Friday by Phil Mushnick in the *New York Post*, Rob Lipsyte of the *New York Times* and Saturday by Bernie Miklasz in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, that wrestling stars are being marketed as superheroes primarily to an audience of young children put the story in yet a new light. The superheroes are using a drug that has become almost epidemic among high schoolers. When the Zahorian trial was taking place, very few in the media covered it closely. It was dismissed, mainly because it involved wrestling, a business that sportswriters usually dismiss because of its predetermined nature, thus don't understand the first thing about it, nor want to acknowledge it even exists. Now if Hulk Hogan had been involved in the trial, since it involved a celebrity, that would have been another story. So the trial took place. Zahorian was convicted. But then, Titan Sports' worst nightmares were realized. It wasn't when Zahorian testified he sold steroids to every Tom, Dick and Harry in the promotion every time the tour hit Western Pennsylvania or even when Zahorian admitted he was formerly the supplier for the Hulk. The nightmare was caused by all of these things, what appears to have been a work. Lyle Alzado. Alzado does have an inoperable brain tumor. He may very well die from it. Alzado said he got the tumor because of all his years of steroid use and his Human Growth Hormone use when he was attempting to make a comeback with the Raiders. Alzado has been on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* in the now-famous "I lied" issue, on network TV with Mrs. Schwarzenegger, Maria Shriver, in quite an irony to admit his steroid use and claim it caused the disease that may kill him. Arsenio and everyone else followed suit. Steroids are a hot story. And lo and behold, there was just a steroid trial in which several wrestlers, mainly in the WWF, were fingered as users, which could be easily tied in. Steroids are funny. The medical profession lost most of its credibility with athletes when for years it claimed that steroids were of no benefit in gaining size, strength or muscularity when anyone who had ever used them or been in a gym watching guys go on and off cycles knew that was horse manure. In this case, the journalism profession--well, not the entire profession, but those who jumped on the story and tied Alzado's cancer and possible death to steroids, also have lost credibility with those who have followed the story closely. Lipsyte's piece in the *Times* was excellent, particularly the quotes from Dr. Gary Wadler of the Cornell University Medical College, who

authored a book on drugs in sports and was also an expert government witness in the Zahorian case. Wadler said: "For starters, the news coverage was based on a false premise. There is zero correlation between brain tumors and steroids. The result was a media feeding frenzy and it wasn't responsible. I've talked to everyone and his brother in the field, scientists, endocrinologists and no one sees any evidence of relationship between his story and his cancer, other than the very real concern we all have about AIDS-related lymphomas, particularly when needles may have been shared, or bottles containing chemicals may have been shared."

Without a doubt, if it wasn't for Alzado's claim, which he may truly believe but there is no evidence that it's true, then the pro wrestling steroid story may have died before the mainstream media picked up that the WWF is primarily marketed to young children. Of course, if it wasn't for Hulk Hogan's attorneys handiwork, the irresponsible frenzy regarding Alzado would not have been needed to catch the media's attention, so maybe in the scorecard of what's really right, we should call it a wash.

Titan made the decision to announce steroid testing early last week along with the decision to get Hulk Hogan to confess to Arsenio Hall that he previously used steroids but never again. It had to happen, once the "I lied" issue of Sports Illustrated hit the stand, combined with stories that had already ran in the Times and Post. Sponsors, particularly those aiming at kids, were in a panic, not over the hypocrisy, because anyone who understands the first thing about freakish physiques knew it was there from the start. Hypocrisy means nothing when it comes to making money. The panic was over exactly what Titan was having a nightmare over--not that it had a steroid problem, but that it had a p.r. problem that companies associated with Titan feared could be spread to them.

But Friday, Lipsyte's column in the Times, entitled "The Cancer in Football and Pro Wrestling" came out. All the nightmares were right there in a nutshell in one small package: "The Hulkster, more of an American hero than Alzado, never appeared at Zahorian's trial, although the defendant said he sold him steroids and helped him kick the drug. The judge squashed a subpoena compelling Hogan to testify and dropped the charge against Zahorian that pertained to Hogan because of 'private and personal matters that should be protected.' Other than the wrestling industry, it was not clear what needed to be protected. The estimated 250,000 to 500,000 high school students currently using steroids were not among those needing to be protected."

On the same day, Mushnick had an interview with Bruno Sammartino, with the sub-head saying, "I despise WWF for promoting muscle freaks on killer drugs to our kids--it's insane." The worst was yet to come in the form of a major story and side-bar by Jeff Gordon in the St. Louis paper on Sunday, the morning of the WWF's "Wrestlefest" spectacular at Busch Stadium. Gordon's lead set the tone: "By stressing muscle size and definition over old-fashioned grappling skill, the major promoter of professional wrestling may have encouraged rampant abuse of anabolic steroids and human growth hormones." The story then tied together previous stories from around the country, including the WWF's announcement of steroid testing, followed by my own comment on the announcement: "When we see all of these guys lose 30 pounds, then we'll know they are serious. If they continue to promote the best physiques as their top wrestlers, then we'll know they are not serious. They will be rewarding cheating at the same time they're testing." But the strongest quotes came from Sammartino, when talking about Hogan: "Here is a guy who is, to me, the phoniest guy in the history of the sport. Here is a guy who talks about saying your prayers--I doubt if he's ever even seen the inside of a church--and eating your vitamins. We all know what kind of vitamins he's been on."

Miklasz wrote a commentary the day before, saying, "I was going to attend the big wrestling extravaganza to be held Sunday night at Busch Stadium and then write a cute column about it. Forget about it. There's nothing funny about a cynical organization that blatantly markets steroid-enhanced false idols to impressionable children. . . Nothing humorous about that. Nothing humorous about pro wrestling. These guys are phonies, down to their fake bodies and their sales pitch to youngsters."

In the midst of all this, Basil DeVito, Jr. came out with a press release Friday morning stating:

As a responsible leader in family sports/entertainment, the World Wrestling Federation has had the most comprehensive and enforced drug program in all of professional sports. Now, the WWF program will be expanded to include the most comprehensive steroid policy as well. After consultation with independent, outside experts, a program for steroid testing, education and rehabilitation will be implemented.

Basil V. DeVito, Jr., WWF's Senior Vice President Marketing says: "The WWF has always stood for positive, family-oriented entertainment. This innovative policy will insure that our athletes adhere to the highest standards in order to preserve their place as worthy role models throughout the world."

When pressed on Monday, regarding the false statement about the WWF having the "most comprehensive and enforced drug program in all of professional sports," DeVito took the blame for a bad release, saying it was his unfortunate choice of words. When Vince McMahon himself broke into Prime-Time Wrestling to respond to the p.r. problem by avoiding acknowledging the problem, he slightly changed the wording: "...it must come as no surprise to you that the WWF has one of the most comprehensive drug testing, education and rehabilitation programs in all of sports." McMahon went on to say, "In short, the standards of excellence the athletes in the WWF live by will become the standard bearer for all professional sports for years to come. That why, when you see this symbol (points to a WWF logo), you can be assured of drug-free sports entertainment that you and your entire family can be proud of."

In an AP story, DeVito said the testing was not a result of the Zahorian trial (and it wasn't, it was an attempt to quell what had turned into a p.r. problem). "As we look at it, our policy covers cocaine and other substances. There is no problem evident with these substances in the WWF. There have been statements and stories of problems with steroids. We don't believe they're true, but we can't prove they're not, so we've created a policy that will stand up to public scrutiny."

But clearly, for the first time publicly, the pressure had gotten to McMahon, who wrote a story of his own in Sunday's Times, which was more an illusory history lesson of his family, trying to claim his grandfather was responsible for the original rise of pro wrestling, his father came up with the idea of putting wrestling on television, he did, well, largely what he really did and that his son would follow in their footsteps. McMahon led off with this: "It's no fun picking up the paper in the morning to read about your company in the most unflattering terms. The kneejerk reaction is to blame the messenger and attack the reports implying that the World Wrestling Federation lacks regard for its athletes and its fans, or worse still, promotes the use of anabolic steroids. Yet as much as I resent the innuendo, unsubstantiated charges and absence of objective reporting, I recognize that these aren't the issues. The only issue is just what is the WWF and what do we stand for."

While this was going on, WCW was in a lucky position. All they were being held accountable by regional media is for their stupidity in losing their best wrestler, rather than it being written that they were marketing steroid freaks as idols to children. The steroid problem is worse in the WWF to be sure, but WCW is hardly drug-free professional athletics. The only WCW official to address the problem was Jim Ross, both on his talk show and also on his 900 number report in which he stressed the immediate need for counseling, subsequent steroid testing, and a promise needing to be made to all the wrestlers that no matter how their physique changes if they get off steroids, that it won't affect their earning power. He said that steroids were not a problem exclusive to Titan Sports, but are a problem in every wrestling organization. But while all this was going on in the world around them, the head honchos at WCW were oblivious. While it would be innuendo to even insinuate that Lex Luger uses steroids, making the 13th best worker in a company that has maybe 10 good workers the world champion and the company's highest paid wrestler based purely on the fact he's got the best physique in the company encourages steroid abuse by everyone else. Whomever made the decision to give Luger the strap at this point in time is encouraging steroid abuse from his employees. I'd say it's also sending a bad message to teenagers that follow the promotion, but actually WCW sends a much more valuable message to its fans. It sends them a business lesson they can retain for later life--What happens when people who know nothing about a business try and run a business.

On Tuesday morning, Titan Sports held a press conference at Donald Trump's Plaza Hotel in New York in which McMahon made himself available to the media for questions. Before questioning began, McMahon said that he experimented with decadurabolin that he purchased from Zahorian three-and-a-half to four years ago for a short time. He said that at any time he would allow himself to be tested for steroids or any other drug by anyone in the room provided they agree to print the results in their newspaper. He said he thought the trial was one of the best things to ever happen because know they are going to set up a steroid program that will be the standard for all of pro sports. Then he opened himself up for questioning.

The first question asked was from John Arezzi, asking if the WWF will change the way it decides which wrestlers to push being that the tests can be beaten as Lyle Alzado and others have proven with masking drugs and HGH. McMahon said that the WWF doesn't push wrestlers based on size and that the WWF doesn't push wrestlers. The public decides based on personality and charisma.

Arezzi's story is most interesting. On Monday it was well-known that the wrestling media was barred from the press conference. When Arezzi requested information on Monday, he was told there wasn't a conference and later was not given clearance to attend. George Napolitano and Roy London received similar treatment. Alex Marvez didn't have any phone calls returned. Ironically, Basil DeVito did call and invite Irv Muchnick (who lives in Northern California, thus he knew couldn't accept the invite). Later in the conference Arezzi asked McMahon why the wrestling media was banned and McMahon said he wasn't aware that it was. Steve Plenamenta quickly jumped in and said, "Not one of them made a call to our office." Arezzi knew that was a lie, being that he was one of them (he managed to attend by using a reporter from a different radio station's press card after using that reporter and his station's name when making his second request to Titan) and brought up the names of London and Marvez when Plenamenta insisted that nobody had called. Plenamenta again insisted that neither called the office. Marvez said he called numerous times on Monday. For the record, I was never contacted officially, nor did I ever contact Titan officially regarding the press conference. At that point, Plenamenta's assistant, Melissa Meltzar (no relation) came up to Arezzi and said, "We spend a lot of money with your station (the station Arezzi's press card was from, not the station he has the radio show on) on advertising and this is not a way to continue our relationship."

McMahon was sketchy on details of when the program would be implemented, who would be doing it or actual details of the program. He said that that would be determined after consulting with experts. He said the steroid problem wasn't as serious as what has been stated. When asked if he felt the media had been unfair, he responded said that the media had taken the word of individuals who haven't been credible and by doing so was somewhat irresponsible. He also said that the bodybuilders would be subject to the same tests as the wrestlers. As the Mr. Olympia contest proved last year, even the heaviest steroid users can pass a steroid test, either through masking or switching to HGH in the final few weeks so the oil and water-based steroids are cleansed from the system. McMahon also said that "Our wrestlers have always been accessible to the media through normal channels" which is an outright lie. McMahon said he doesn't know of any of his wrestlers who have suffered health problems because of steroids. I guess Superstar Graham was such an insignificant character in the wrestling business that his name just slipped Vince's mind. When asked if he had ever encouraged anyone to get bigger to either get a job or a better push (something that I can off-hand recall at least a half-dozen wrestlers telling me personally after meetings with either McMahon or Pat Patterson) he answered a different question. He also didn't answer when asked why this procedure hadn't been done before the trial. He did say that they were going to start testing for steroids anyway, but the trial and subsequent publicity sped up the timetable. McMahon told *Entertainment Tonight* that he felt there was no pressure on his wrestlers to have a certain physique. He said the pressure on the wrestlers was to perform well, large or small, it didn't matter. When first asked, McMahon beat around the bush when asked if names of those who fail the test will be released, but when ET asked, he said, "At the appropriate time there's no question, the names should be released."

Short and sweet, and hopefully we can get this subject behind us. If Vince McMahon is serious about cleaning up his company, we should all consider the past a history lesson and put it all behind us. In fact, we should applaud him for it because so much of his marketing is based on physical appearance, and re-educating the public from a successful formula is a pain in the butt. Ditto with WCW, if it addresses the issue now, and I would think that if it doesn't, the parent company will inevitably force the issue on them when it becomes a Turner Broadcasting p.r. problem, and it's already getting there. The past is over and done with. Nothing can be done to change it. But a lot can be learned from it. The answer isn't steroid testing, although it is a positive step if it's combined with a lessening demand on unnatural physiques for the big money spots. The tests can be easily beaten. There are masking drugs. Human Growth Hormone can't be tested for. Testing without a change in the criteria of who makes the big money is strictly a p.r. move. But it'll still eventually come out in the wash. If the business isn't cleaned up, there will be future major health problems and/or future busts. At the very least, the physiques won't change and the New York media will recognize it as a con. When the cat gets out of the bag the second time, after Vince has declared his sport drug-free, he can no longer quell the story by saying he's testing, because he will have cried Wolf. Unlike in the past, the New York media wasn't forgiving to the WWF this time. Pro wrestling will continue to exist and fans will continue to purchase tickets, steroids or not, because for the most part, they don't care. But sponsors run like hell from scandals and bad publicity, and Titan Sports is far too big a company to survive just on live wrestling gates alone. I've talked with several employees since the announcement of testing. Non-wrestlers have insisted that the company is going to clean up because they recognize that they have to. The boys, on the other hand, don't know for sure, but not one I spoke with believed it was possible. Being fair to Vince McMahon, legitimately, it will be impossible to completely rid the WWF of steroids. The NFL hasn't been able to do it. Track and Field hasn't been, either. It would be completely unfair to expect him to do so. I'm not even sure that should be the goal. The goal should simply be that those who continue to use the drugs aren't rewarded for their efforts nor pushed as idols to children. Those that don't want to use steroids aren't forced into it to keep up with the pack or encouraged to gain weight to get a better spot in the line-up. It's a matter of who gets pushed and how the fans are educated. It's not trying to create a witch-hunt atmosphere and hand out a few scapegoats, as proof of a real policy. Am I skeptical? Very much so. At the press conference the important questions were avoided. The truth wasn't told. The wrestling media and even those in mainstream media who have covered the story closely like Marvez had their phone calls avoided for reasons we can only speculate. McMahon said the figures quoted for those who use steroids were greatly exaggerated, however Zahorian himself testified that he dispensed drugs to 15 to 20 wrestlers per show. If we average that to 17.5, and say that an average Titan house show contains 20 wrestlers, that's 87.5 percent just from one doctor alone not to mention others who may have their own sources. But the WWF is in a position where it is now being held accountable by the general media. The whole ball game has changed.

On Sunday night, WCW had its first chance to prove it could survive without Ric Flair. By the end of the Great American Bash, a show Ric Flair could not have saved, the only thing proven was that Flair was worth far more to the company than it ever realized.

On July 8, WCW offered Flair a one-year contract for a figure said by semi-reliable sources to be \$750,000. According to several sources, the offer was more of a response by the TBS legal department because there was no grounds for his firing, particularly when the company had attempted to get him to change an existing contract for a new one for this year for roughly half as much money. Legally, WCW's actions had put TBS in a bad position since Flair had the existing contract. There has been talk this past week that WCW attempted to get Flair to renegotiate because it become known Flair wanted to open up a gym in Charlotte and needed guaranteed money coming in and couldn't afford to quit when WCW figured there was no other option for him to earn even the \$350,000 per year amount. Unless he's pushed like crazy in the WWF and gets the main event against Hulk Hogan in Wrestlemania, Flair couldn't earn anywhere near \$750,000 per year in the WWF. It's a figure approximately triple what the WWF's IC champion earns. He can't come anywhere close to that working indies. As you all know, Flair turned down the offer. There was no guarantee made on how he would be used.

There's almost a guarantee that he'd be used ineffectively, not because anyone had anything personal against him, just because, well, it goes without saying at this point.

As for the future, Flair will be in a holding pattern until about Sept. 1. At that point, it'll either be by the indie trail, possibly with some Japan thrown in, or more likely, the WWF.

"WE WANT FLAIR" GREAT AMERICAN BASH

Thumbs up	0 (00.0 percent)
Thumbs down	239 (99.2 percent)
In the middle	2 (00.8 percent)

BEST MATCH

Barry Windham vs. Lex Luger	70
Richard Morton vs. Robert Gibson	25
Rhodes & Pistols vs. Freebirds	21

WORST MATCH

Scaffold match	123
El Gigante vs. One Man Gang	24
Oz vs. Ron Simmons	22

Based on phone calls and fax messages to the Observer as of Monday afternoon. Margin of error: 0.8 percent. Actually, until listening to these messages during the day, I would have never believed it was statistically possible for so many people to hate a wrestling show.

1. Junkfood Dog pinned Black Bart in 10:00 in the opening dark match. The crowd didn't even watch this match and instead watched the pre-game show that aired on big screens in the building. DUD
2. Bobby Eaton & P.N. News (Paul Neu) defeated Terry Taylor & Steve Austin in a scaffold match in 6:00. Unannounced in pre-match hype, they had changed the scaffold match rules to allow winning by knocking the foe off the scaffold or by capturing the opponents' flag that was on their side of the scaffold. Next thing you know they'll change the rules of an "I Quit match" to be that the loser has to say I Quit on the mic or by finding him when they play hide-and-go-seek during the match. Or having a stretcher match end either by a guy going out on a stretcher or by whomever kicks the can--hey, that would have been a great idea for Sid vs. Gigante at SuperBrawl. This was among the worst matches in the history of pay-per-view television. The highlight of the match was Austin & Lady Blossom walking to the ring, with a decked-out Taylor without Ms. York behind them, looking like he was all dressed up for his prom and his date stood him up. Nothing happened at all. You have to give the guys guts for going up there. But what does it say for the booker when he takes two of the four best workers in the company, puts them in a match that guarantees not to make use of their talent and make no sense to boot. Negative 3 1/2 stars is what it says. Bobby captured the flag to win. The announcers didn't even know it was the finish, nor did any of the fans. Lady Blossom handed Austin a hair spray container and he sprayed both faces. Then they all climbed down and had a short brawl in the ring.

While they were taking down the scaffold, Jim Ross and Tony Schiavone opened the show. They mentioned the offer made earlier in the week to Flair (which was also announced to the live crowd before the show went on the air in order to quell what the company knew was going to be tons of "We Want Flair" chants, but the announcement brought the loudest chant of the night, but as the company hoped, it was off television).

3. Diamond Studd (Scott Hall) pinned Z-Man (Tom Zenk) in 6:59. Opened hot with Zenk diving over the top rope into the ring onto Studd. Dallas Page (minus his D-D-D-Diamond Dolls) pulled down the top rope and Zenk took a bump over. As Zenk went after Page, Studd attacked him from behind and Zenk took a great bump over the guard rail. The action moved pretty well but neither guy sold the others' punches well. Zenk had Studd pinned after a dropkick off the top rope when Page slapped Zenk. Zenk went after Page, Studd kneed him from behind and hit a back suplex for the win. *3/4
4. Ron Simmons pinned Oz (Kevin Nash) in 7:55. Jim Ross said both men could bench press 500 pounds. But in this match, neither could get one ounce worth of heat. Really bad match. Simmons won with a flying shoulderblock. That's the end of Oz, although now there is word that Kevin Nash will be kept around and given a new role. DUD

5. Richard Morton pinned Robert Gibson in 17:01. They started brawling on the ramp before the match started. Morton then stalled for several minutes. At the 4:00 mark, Morton went after Gibson's bad knee and basically worked on it the rest of the way. Robert sold the knee great. They did a two-minute plus figure four spot. Technically this match wasn't bad, but there was no heat and because of that it seemed to drag on. They were both brawling on the ramp again and each missed a dropkick. Alexandra York then distracted the ref as they both got in the ring and Morton took the computer and came off the top rope with it for the pin. *1/2

6. Dustin Rhodes & Young Pistols (Tracy Smothers & Steve Armstrong) beat Freebirds (Michael Hayes & Jimmy Garvin) & Brad Street (Brad Armstrong) in an elimination tag team match. These guys should have had a great match but it just didn't work. It was really bad early. It was hard to understand why given the talent involved (well, some of the talent involved). Steve Armstrong was pinned after a double DDT first in 13:49. Then Michael Hayes threw Tracy Smothers over the top rope in :15 to even the sides. Smothers was then pinned by a double DDT in 1:12. Rhodes pinned Garvin with a clothesline in :08. This left Rhodes and Brad. Dustin pinned him with a bulldog headlock in 1:46 and at the same time dropkicked Big Daddy Dink out of the ring when he tried to interfere. *1/4

7. Yellow Dog (Brian Pillman) beat Johnny B. Badd (Mark Merro) via DQ in 6:00. It was a very long six minutes, too. Badd does a great ring entrance (a line that appears at least once in each Observer) but he's nowhere near ready in the ring for what they're pushing him for. He did a great sunset flip off the top rope and clearly has potential but he's years from being ready in the ring. Dog hit a flying body press and had Badd pinned when Teddy Long interfered for the DQ. After the match Badd sucker punched Dog to the floor. 3/4*

At this point Eric Bishoff went to interview Missy Hyatt in her locker room. Bishoff looked like he was auditioning for the WWF with his 1960s used car salesman insincere overacting. Of course Missy was in the shower when Bishoff came in and Missy screamed and threw her shampoo at him.

8. Big Josh (Matt Borne) pinned Black Blood (Billy Haynes) in 5:39 in a lumberjack match. Nobody cared about either of these two but their work in the ring was solid and stiff. The lumberjacks outside brawled as well. Finish saw Blood about to hit Josh with the ax when Dustin Rhodes grabbed Borne's ax handle and hit Blood in the knee and Josh inside cradled him for the pin. That made four people that Dustin had single-handedly beaten this show. *3/4

9. El Gigante pinned One Man Gang in 6:09. Gigante came down to the ring with four midget wrestlers who ran around biting Gang in the butt and harassing Kevin Sullivan. This was really bad, although Gang did take a slam off the top rope which is pretty impressive considering his size. Gigante got the claw on Sullivan, who gave Gang powder. Before he could throw the powder, Gigante kicked his hand, the powder went in Gang's face and Gigante clotheslined Gang from behind for the pin. -1/2*

10. Nikita Koloff beat Sting in a chain match in 11:37. Some good pops for low blows. Both guys touched the first three corners and brawled for a while, then sprinted to hit the fourth corner with Nikita hitting it first. Sting gave Nikita a low blow with the chain after the match was over. **1/4

11. Lex Luger beat Barry Windham in 12:25 to win the WCW world heavyweight title in a cage match. You knew Barry was doomed when they spelled his name "Windam" on the graphic. This was a tough situation. Flair was the most over wrestler on the card, and this match featured mainly chants of "We Want Flair." Clearly, the people who came were there not to enjoy this match. The heat was on Luger and Windham to rise to the occasion and make them forget about Flair, at least while their match was going on. This shouldn't have been in a cage as it detracted from the match. It was a good match, but for what was needed in the situation, it was nowhere close. Windham had a bad knee and Luger's obsession with the number on his bathroom scale in the morning works against him in the ring. Windham worked as a babyface and Luger as a heel, but nobody picked up on it. Windham did some hot stuff, especially when one considers his size. Lots of near falls and good moves. Finish saw Harley Race and Mr. Hughes come to the ring. Windham was distracted by Hughes and Race told Luger to do it. Luger gave Windham a piledriver and pinned him. After the match, Luger left with Race and Hughes. Although nobody knew it, Luger did turn heel. I think Windham turned face, but I'm not even sure about that. And if he did, who is paying for that bounty on Yellow Dog's mask? Inquiring

minds want to know. ***

12. Missy Hyatt & Rick Steiner beat Arn Anderson & Paul E. Dangerously in a cage match. What happened here is that the Maryland State Athletic Commission has a rule prohibiting man vs. woman confrontations. Somebody made a huge mistake if that's the case. If the commission wasn't going to allow it, it had no business being advertised as such. If the company knew, well, we already know this is a dishonest company. If the company didn't know, then the commission is at fault considering the match had been advertised on television for weeks. Dick Murdoch & Dick Slater "kidnapped" Missy (now with black hair) before the match and carried her away. Poor Missy still had to take a bump because a fan went after Murdoch, and he dropped Missy on her head so he could take a pop at the fan. In the ring, Rick laid Arn out with a clothesline, then pinned Paul E. after a clothesline in 2:08. DUD

I really don't know what else can be said. I'm not sure it was the worst PPV show in company history, although for quality of matches, it surely was. They have gone way too far in the wrong direction. To WCW's credit, they knew and were worried about a protest scene because of all the unhappiness regarding how the Flair situation was handled. Nevertheless, they didn't try to confiscate banners going into the building (it was Dusty's call and Dusty said to let the people have their fun). It did seem that every time the "We Want Flair" chant would get going, the audio man would turn down the crowd audio. The chant occurred throughout the show but was never acknowledged on the broadcast. There were a decent number of "We Want Flair" signs, but not a tremendous amount, a few of which showed up on camera but generally they'd switch the shot in a hurry. One sign was said to have been ripped up by security, saying something negative about The Dream himself. The show drew 7,000 fans--about 5,500 paid. The gate was \$99,000 which is the highest gate for a WCW event since last year's Bash with Flair vs. Sting. A great number expected Flair to do a run-in during the main event. In fact, except for those who read the newspapers that covered the story or newsletters, most fans think this Flair contract problem is just a wrestling angle since that's how it has been presented. Jim Ross was very ill but there was no evidence of that watching the show. The reason there was such a long delay before the Windham-Luger match is they were having trouble in the building getting the cage down. The commission made it clear before the show that there would be no blood allowed. From what I understand, that wasn't much of a problem because Jack Petrik was against blood being on the show as well. Of course, with a chain match followed by two cage matches, there are those who would be upset about that. Neither cage match had any reason to be a cage match. The lumberjack match had no reason to be a lumberjack match except it seems to have given Dusty Rhodes one more opportunity to put his son over. Was there anyone who didn't guess the way the elimination match was going to end when they first heard about it? I actually feel sorry for Dustin Rhodes. Considering his experience level, he's a very good worker. He has potential, down the road, to be what he's being pushed as today. But it really has gotten annoying to see him pushed so hard simply because his father is the booker. This show, and the state of the company, was and is at an all-time low. Every single thing people were afraid Dusty Rhodes would do to WCW has at least been attempted. With the exception of his attempts to put himself over as the big star via announcing and later the Bull Drop Inn, both nixed by Jim Herd, they've all been allowed.

At the same time, the WWF was presenting its biggest event non-PPV event of the year, "Wrestlefest '91" from Busch Stadium in St. Louis. The card was changed greatly because of four no-shows. LOD Hawk is still out with an injury, which the company knew about six weeks ago but still advertised him anyway. Mr. Perfect missed this weekend as well (he's missed three of the past four weekends) with a back injury. Jake Roberts is out of action with another injury to his bad neck (the one destroyed when Honkytonk Man hit him with the guitar and hurt him legit). The other MIA was Roddy Piper, who is doing a movie in Florida but has also decided to quit being an active wrestler. Piper is staying with the WWF as a television announcer, but he's through as a wrestler. The most interesting match announced, Ricky Steamboat vs. Bret Hart, never took place because of all the changes in the show. The show drew 19,000 fans (14,500 paid for a gate of \$190,000). With all the freebies, the number in the building was the largest crowd thus far this year in the United States. Given the state of the business right now, the show can't be considered a failure. But when I first heard about the show,

I had it pegged for drawing close to 20,000 paid, so can't call it a success either. From what I was told, the crowd was easy which made it a good show. Results saw: 1. Col. Mustafa pinned Jimmy Snuka (subbing for Jim Duggan who was moved up on the card); 2. The Dragon pinned Pat Tanaka; 3. Kerry Von Erich double count out with Warlord; 4. Bret Hart & Virgil beat Ted DiBiase & IRS when Hart pinned DiBiase; 5. British Bulldog beat Typhoon (If I was expecting Curt Hennig, I know I'd be happy with Typhoon as a sub) via count out; 6. LOD Animal & Big Bossman beat The Mountie & Brian Knobbs; 7. Jim Duggan (with Andre in the corner) pinned Earthquake; 8. Ultimate Warrior beat Undertaker in a coffin match. This was a blow-off type match. Warrior put him in the coffin, they shut the door and carried Undertaker to the dressing room; 9. Hulk Hogan pinned Sgt. Slaughter with Randy Savage as referee. Slaughter threw Savage out of the ring and Adnan threw powder in Hulk's eyes and Slaughter put him in the camel clutch. Savage then came off the top rope on Slaughter and put Hogan on top for the pin and the two celebrated in the ring together.

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EMLL: 7/12 at Arena Coliseo in Mexico City saw Tony Arce & Vulcano & Bestia Salvaje go to a double pin draw in the third fall against Oro & Plata & Platino in 18:52. Plata did Masao Orihara's moonsault off the top rope onto the floor. *1/2; Anibal & Ringo Mendoza & Canadian Vampire Casanova won 2/3 falls from Herodes & Masakre & MS 1 in 16:11; Chavo & Mando & Eddie Guerrero beat Cachorro Mendoza & Apollo Dantes & Javier Cruz in 16:40 ***1/2; Atlantis & Mano Negra & Mascara Sagrada beat Fuerza Guerrera & Pierroth Jr. & Gran Markus Jr. in 2/3 falls when Sagrada made Guerrera submit in the third fall in 18:25. . . Most of the guys on this show worked a double-shot that night as the TV card started at 8:30 p.m., and then they had an 11:30 p.m. show in Netzahualcoyotl and some of the guys actually did a triple shot because they also had a 5:30 p.m. card in Mexico City. . . All six of the Alvarado Brothers (Brazos, including the really fat Super Brazo) jumped from UWA to EMLL. . . Also heading in is Rey Misterio and Blue Panther. . . A correction from a few weeks back. The injury to Herodes was a work. Herodes took a bump on his head and cracked his skull and was said to be hospitalized. He's back doing an amnesia gimmick where he doesn't know who he is or what sport he's in. One week he shows up with boxing gloves on, another with a hockey stick, soccer ball, etc. . . Mogur did get hurt pretty bad doing a suicide dive while top heel Satanico is out of action with bad ribs. . . Conan and Mascarita Sagrada are doing an action movie in August. . . EMLL returns to Arena Mexico in 8/26 and will run every Friday and Sunday night there until 12/15. Salomon & Aaron Grundy, Canadian Vampire Casanova, The Cannibal Brothers and Nitron will all be back for that tour. . . Even though Casanova can't work at all, he's getting over pretty big, particularly with women, with his gimmick of really long hair.

UWA: 7/7 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw Dos Caras & Villano III & Gran Hamada beat Canek & The Killer & Pegasus Kid via DQ in the third fall. There was a unique spot in the third fall. Villano III and Pegasus Kid kept going for the others' mask. Finally, each removed the others' mask simultaneously, and in order to quickly hide their identity, each put on the others' mask so Pegasus wore a Villano mask and visa versa. Canek got Caras' mask for the DQ in the third fall. Also Fishman & Dr. Wagner Jr. & Negro Casas won 2/3 falls from Enrique Vera & Villano IV & V, El Signo & Black Power & Negro Navarro beat Kato Kung Lee II & Celestial & Villano I and prelims. . . Casas vs. Hijo Del Santo headlined 7/10 in Puebla plus Pegasus Kid & Canek & Fishman vs. Caras & Villano III & Hamada. . . 7/12 in Netzahualcoyotl had Caras & Vera & Hamada vs. Canek & Killer & Pegasus Kid. . . 7/14 at El Toreo

was headlined by Mil Mascaras & Caras vs. Canek & Killer. . . Kokina returned this week.

NEW JAPAN: The August line-ups were announced. . . 8/1 at Korakuen Hall has the first singles match in years of Keiji Muto vs. Jushin Liger. . . There will be a eight-man Round Robin heavyweight tournament to be held on 8/7 in Nagoya and 8/9-10-11 at Tokyo Sumo Hall. Group A consists of Tatsumi Fujinami, Muto, Big Van Vader and Scott Norton and Group B is Masa Chono, Riki Choshu, Bam Bam Bigelow and Shinya Hashimoto. The two men with the most wins within their group meet for the championship on 8/11 at Sumo Hall. . . 8/7 in Nagoya has Fujinami vs. Vader, Muto vs. Norton, Choshu vs. Chono, Hashimoto vs. Bigelow, El Gigante & Brian Pillman vs. Osamu Kido & Kengo Kimura and Liger & Shiro Koshinaka vs. Akira Nogami & Kuniaki Kobayashi. . . Nogami will be back full-time in August. . . 8/9 in Sumo Hall has Fujinami vs. Muto, Vader vs. Norton, Choshu vs. Bigelow, Hashimoto vs. Chono, Liger vs. Nogami for the junior heavyweight title, Gigante & Masa Saito vs. Kim Duk & Masanobu Kurisu. . . 8/10 in Sumo Hall has Fujinami vs. Norton, Muto vs. Vader, Choshu vs. Hashimoto, Chono vs. Bigelow, Gigante & Liger vs. Super Strong Machine & Norio Honaga and Pillman vs. Nogami. . . 8/11 in Sumo Hall has the finals, Liger vs. pillman, Gigante & Masa Saito vs. Black Cat & Kantaro Hoshino & Kobayashi and Nogami vs. Honaga. . . 7/6 television show headlined by Hashimoto & Choshu vs. Badnews Allen & Norton drew a 6.6 Video and 5.2 Neilsen rating which is so-so.

SWS: 7/12 in Koriyama drew 3,487 (these SWS attendance figures are generally heavily exaggerated and the shows are mainly freebies) as The Barbarian & Haku & Yoshiaki Yatsu beat Genichiro Tenryu & George & Shunji Takano, Naoki Sano & Samson Fuyuki beat Paul Diamond & Shinichi Nakano, Takashi Ishikawa & Tatsumi Kitahara beat Kabuki & Ishin Riki, Goro Tsurumi & Kendo Nagasaki beat Road Block & Fumihiko Niikura. . . Tenryu is trying to bring back Ashura Hara for a tag team match on 8/9 at the 17,000 seat Yokohama Arena against Yatsu & Haku. Tenryu & Hara were one of the best tag teams in wrestling in 1987-88 until Hara was fired by Giant Baba because of repeated gambling problems (I wonder if Baba is like the baseball commissioner and fires his wrestlers if they gamble on their own matches?). . . 7/10 in Yamagata drew 3,952 as Tenryu & Ishikawa & Sano beat Diamond & Haku & Yatsu, George Takano beat Barbarian via DQ for using a chair, Nagasaki & Nakano beat Shunji Takano & Road Block, Kenichi Oya & Ishin Riki & Kabuki beat Masao Orihara & Kitahara & Fuyuki. . . 7/9 in Sendai drew a reported full house of 5,500 as Haku & Yatsu beat Tenryu & George Takano when George did the job, Diamond pinned Sano, Barbarian pinned Shunji Takano, Ishikawa & Fuyuki & Kitahara beat Kabuki & Nakano & Riki and Nagasaki & Tsurumi beat Oya & Road Block.

ALL JAPAN: The tour after this one takes place 8/17 to 9/7 including a 9/4 card at Budokan Hall. Appearing for the tour will be Stan Hansen, Danny Spivey, Abdullah the Butcher, Kimala #1 & #2, Dan Kroffat, Doug Furnas, Joe & Dean Malenko and The Black Hearts. . . The 7/7 television show headlined by the title change match with Spivey & Hansen losing the titles to Steve Williams & Terry Gordy drew a 3.1 Video and 4.7 Neilsen rating, which is very good for the time slot. . . Tour opened 7/6 in Yokosuka with the tag title change match which went 20:38, Mitsuharu Misawa & Toshiaki Kawada beat Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshinari Ogawa, Kroffat & Furnas beat The Fantastics (Tommy Rogers & Bobby Fulton) to keep the Asian tag titles in 14:37, Malenkos beat Tsuyoshi Kikuchi & Kenta Kobashi, Johnny Ace & Rick Rude beat Joel Deaton & Billy Black and Giant Baba & The Destroyer & Rusher Kimura beat Haruka Eigen & Motoshi Okuma & Masa Fuchi. . . 7/7 saw Hansen & Spivey beat Ace & Kobashi, Misawa & Kikuchi beat Tsuruta & Fuchi and Rude pinned Taue. . . Rogers was injured early in the tour and is out of action. It must be pretty serious because guys just don't miss shows, even with semi-serious injuries. . . They are running small towns on this tour with Baba getting the biggest reaction every night. . . 7/12 in Nishito drew a sellout 1,850 as Hansen & Spivey & Fulton beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa, Williams & Gordy beat Ace & Kobashi, Misawa & Kawada beat Deaton & Black, Furnas & Kroffat beat Malenkos, Rude pinned Teranishi, Destroyer beat Satoru Asako with the figure four and Baba & Kimura & Mighty Inoue beat Fuchi & Eigen & Okuma. . . 7/10 in Oita drew 2,050 as Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa in 27 minutes, Hansen & Spivey beat Ace & Rude with Rude doing the job for Hansen's lariat, Gordy & Williams beat Deaton & Black, Eigen & Okuma & Fuchi beat Baba & Kimura & Mitsuo Momota, Kobashi pinned Fulton and Kroffat & Furnas beat Malenkos. . . 7/13 in

Nobiyuoko drew 2,050 as Tsuruta & Taue & Fuchi beat Gordy & Williams & Rude when Tsuruta pinned Rude, Misawa & Kawada & Kobashi beat Hansen & Spivey & Fulton, Kroffat & Furnas beat Deaton & Black, Ace pinned Ogawa, Malenkos beat Kikuchi & Inoue. . . Rude isn't getting nearly the push I expected.

OTHER NEWS: All Japan women are in the midst of their Grand Prix tournament which ends on 8/18 at Korakuen Hall. . . 7/15 in Chino drew 1,500 with tournament matches having Aja Kong beat Yumiko Hotta and Mariko Yoshida beat Esther Moreno and main event saw Akira Hokuto keep the Pacific title beating Bat Yoshinaga. . . 7/10 in Akiyo drew 1,800 as Suzuka Minami pinned Takako Inoue and Aja Kong & Bison Kimura & Mika Takahashi beat Esther Moreno & Yoshida & Manami Toyota. . . 7/13 in Kanagawa drew 1,620 as Kyoko Inoue pinned Debbie Malenko and Cynthia Moreno & Kong & Kimura beat Hotta & Toshiyo Yamada & Toyota. . . The Universal tour will be 9/5 to 9/12 with Kendo, Ninja Turtles, Robin Hood, Lasser, Pantera II, El Signo, Black Power, Black Terry, Jose Luis Feliciano, Shu El Guerrero, Lobo Rubio, Ray Richard, Canelo Casas, El Felino, Ricky Boy and The Buccaneer. . . Opening night in Yokohama has Robin Hood & Lasser & Pantera II vs. Casas & Felino & Ricky Boy, Gran Hamada & Monkey Magic Wakita & Kendo vs. Signo & Power & Buccaneer and Asai & Ninja Turtles vs. Richard & Rubio & Guerrero & Feliciano & Terry. . . JWP opened 7/14 at Korakuen Hall with Harley Saito defending the UWA International title against Eagle Sawai, Itsuki Yamazaki & Shinobu Kandori vs. Pink Cadillac & Terri Power.

JAPANESE TV RUNDOWN

6/2 ALL JAPAN: 1. Abdullah the Butcher pinned Joel Deaton with an elbow drop. Both guys juiced. Only the finish aired, but it had lots of heat; 2. State Patrol beat Randy Rose & Mike Golden. Only finish aired; 3. Tsuruta pinned Kobashi in a match of the year candidate. Incredible near falls with great heat. Tsuruta won via pin with the back suplex ****3/4; 4. Misawa & Kawada beat Gordy & Williams. Misawa was worked over for a long period of time. Match had a lot of heat and went 25 minutes and kept the heat going. Finish was the big upset with Misawa pinning Williams after a Tiger-driver (double arm suplex into power bomb) ***1/2

6/16 ALL JAPAN: 1. Kroffat & Furnas beat Kobashi & Kikuchi. Only the last two minutes aired, which was a shame, because this was said in the mags to have been a super match. The heat was incredible and they did one hot move after another. Kroffat pinned Kikuchi, but it was a screwed up finish. The ref counted three even though Kikuchi kicked out and the guys continued to do hot moves with near falls since it wasn't supposed to be the finish until it was stopped. The wrestlers seemed really mad, even the winners, because they still had the hottest moves left to execute; 2. Williams pinned Kawada with a Northern Lights suplex in just over 20 minutes of a great match. ****; 3. Hansen & Spivey kept the world tag titles beating Tsuruta & Taue when Spivey pinned Taue after two DDT's **1/2

6/23 ALL JAPAN: 1. Baba & Kimura & Kobashi beat Eigen & Okuma & Fuchi. Now which one of these guys doesn't belong in this match? Total comedy match. At least the comedy wasn't bad. Kimura pinned Eigen with a bulldog headlock *; 2. Misawa & Kawada beat Hansen & Deaton when Misawa made Deaton submit to a facelock. ***1/4; 3. Gordy & Williams & Richard Slinger beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa. Fast-paced match with one hot move after another. Slinger and Ogawa are much smaller than the rest but they were good anyway. Gordy pinned Ogawa with a power bomb. ***3/4

6/30 ALL JAPAN: 1. Tsuruta & Taue beat Kobashi & Kikuchi. The match started out super but Kobashi appeared to have blown out his knee. Tsuruta kept working on the knee and eventually made him submit out of nowhere in a surprise finish. ***1/2; 2. Hansen & Spivey kept the tag titles beating Misawa & Kawada. Hansen threw Misawa all over the tables. The Americans worked over the Japanese's knees most of the way. Hansen ended up pinning Kawada with the lariat at the same time Spivey gave Misawa a DDT on the floor. ***1/2

6/22 NEW JAPAN: 1. Duk & Kurisu beat Hiro Saito & Tatsutoshi Goto. Lots of brawling with chairs so the match was better than it sounds. Saito & Goto took several solid chair shots to the head. Duk pinned Saito with a tombstone piledriver. ***; 2. Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki beat Pegasus Kid & Super Strong Machine. First 11 minutes were just so-so but then it turned into an excellent match with one hot move after another. The hottest new move was Hase doing the Steiners one better by giving Pegasus a belly-to-belly superplex while standing on the top rope. Hase pinned Pegasus with an inside cradle in 16:32. ***3/4; 3. Chono &

Choshu beat Brad Rheingans & Badnews Allen in 7:50. It was fast-paced and Rheingans looked real good while Allen didn't do much. Chono made Rheingans submit to the old Fuller leglock. **1/2; 4. Fujinami & Muto & Hashimoto beat Demolition Ax & Canadian Giant & Norton. The Giant was just pathetic. His partners weren't good either although Norton at least had good presence. Hashimoto pinned Ax with a DDT in 9:22. DUD

6/29 NEW JAPAN: 1. Liger & Koshinaka & Kobayashi beat Pegasus Kid & Goto & Honaga when Koshinaka pinned Goto with a german suplex in 10:37. Nothing outstanding here but still good. ***; 2. Machine & Hiro Saito beat Hase & Sasaki. Machine did a double-arm superplex which is a unique move. The guys were drenched in sweat as they were in a humid city and went 20 minutes. Hase was hit by Saito with a chair shot coming off the top rope behind the refs back and Machine pinned Hase with the Machine suplex. ***3/4; 3. Fujinami & Hashimoto & Muto beat Norton & Rheingans & Allen in 10:02 when Fujinami made Rheingans submit to the dragon sleeper. Rheingans and Muto worked great spots. ***; 4. Choshu & Chono beat Duk & Kurisu. Choshu pinned Kurisu with a superplex and two lariats. Match was so-so but there was a lot of heat because it was taped in Choshu's home town where he's a local legend. The post-match was strange. Machine, Goto & Saito attacked Kurisu, who was laid out from the lariats. Choshu made the save for Kurisu, but Chono then got up and started pounding on Kurisu with a chair. Hase & Sasaki then attacked Duk & Saito with chairs. **

GLOBAL: The story of this weekend's shows in Dallas was The Lightning Kid (Sean Waltman). The Kid, who is about 170 pounds, was thought of by everyone in the building to be a jobber because of his lack of physique when he stepped into the ring for his first match in the lighthweight tournament Friday night. By the time he beat Jerry Lynn in the championship match finals, he was the most over wrestler on the show. . . 7/12 at the Global Dome drew 700. Among pre-tournament television taping matches, Bill Irwin beat Chris Germany, Makhan Singh & Rip Rogers beat Gary Young & Jeff Gaylord, Lightning Kid, Big Bully Busich and Adrian Street were put over and The Patriot (Del Wilkes) pinned John Tatum. In the first round of the lighthweight tournament, Chaz, Handsome Stranger, Lightning Kid, Rip Rogers, Steve Simpson all won over no-names, then Adrian Street beat Iceman King Parsons via DQ, Brain Adias and Mike Davis got wins. The next match was Jerry Lynn vs. Randy Rhodes, which is funny since Rhodes must weight 285 but Chris Love came out with an affidavit claiming Rhodes was 227 pounds and while Love and the ref were arguing whether or not it was legal, Lynn got Rhodes from behind in four seconds, then Terry Daniels, Terry Garvin and Tatum won. . . 7/13 at the Global Dome drew 550 as Young pinned Davis, Rasta the Voodoo Mon beat Chaz when Rasta cursed Chaz' throat and he started choking, Gaylord pinned Rhodes, Singh & Rip Rogers won a squash, Irwin pinned Skip Young and Tatum pinned Garvin. Second round of tournament saw Lightning beat Chaz, Handsome Stranger beat Rogers, Davis pinned Adias, Lynn pinned Daniels, Simpson beat Street, Lightning Kid pinned Stranger when Rasta came to ringside and cursed Stranger's stomach. Stranger was on the top rope ready to beat Kid, then grabbed his stomach, gagged, fell off the top rope to the mat and was pinned and finally Lynn beat Tatum via DQ. Kid beat Simpson in the semifinals and then beat Lynn after hitting him with a foreign object to win the title in the finals in the best match of either night. . . Highlight of the two nights was Kid, on the apron, leaping 17 feet onto the interview area and landing with a backward splash onto Lynn. . . Skip Young refused to put Kid over on Friday and was told to get dressed and go home, but he worked on Saturday. . . Buddy Landel no-showed on Friday night and did show on Saturday, but when he got there was told he was history. Hector Guerrero was originally going to work the tournament but when he found out he had to do a job on television in the semifinals while being eliminated, he refused. . . GWF has a show on 8/11 in Wichita, Kansas and 8/17 in Ada, OK. . . The tag team tournament will be 7/26 and 7/27 including The Renegade Warriors (Mark & Chris Youngblood), Johnny Ace & Jim Brunzell (it'll be exceedingly hard for Ace to make it back from Japan in time), Cactus Jack & Singh, Handsome Stranger & Chris Walker, Kendo Nagasaki & Rasta and Stan Lane & a mystery partner managed by Jim Cornette. . . 7/19 at the Global Dome has Skip Young vs. Tug Taylor, Steve Simpson vs. El Bandolero, Walker vs. Sweet Daddy Falcone, Adias vs. Rhodes, Gary Young vs. Bill Irwin, Garvin & Gaylord vs. Royal Family, Paul Bunyan in a handicap match, Parsons vs. Germany, Daniels vs. Tom Burton, Chaz & Skip Young vs. Davis & Kenny the Stinger, Gaylord vs. Tatum and Walker vs. Big Bully Busich. . . After seeing the first week's

shows on ESPN, here are a few comments. The Sportatorium has been fixed up and looks a lot nicer. There is a certain freshness about a new promotion, particularly bringing in some names that nobody had ever seen before. However, when it comes to the match quality on the shows I saw, it wasn't there. When you have good workers in the ring like Rip Rogers, doing the longer television matches makes for better television. But with guys like Chris Walker and Rasta the Voodoo Mon, it exposed what they weren't. The Rasta gimmick is completely stupid, by the way. He touches one of his body parts and then his opponent suddenly, through use of voodoo, gets an injury on the same part. The lack of talent with potential to be more than air waves filler seems to be a problem. Makhan Singh is a good heel and a very good interview. Rip Rogers is a very underrated worker. Buddy Landel is funny, but he's history. Chris Walker has one of the most incredible physiques in the business and shows potential, but he's not ready right now to be anything more than Lance Von Erich was in the same market. All the shows had Singh and Rogers continually talk about the big money man, "The Boss," as if his appearance will be a major shock. When it turns out to be Scandor Akbar, it'll be a tremendous let down. Akbar may be reliable and professional, but he's not a guy who can be the top manager and focal point for the top heel contingent anymore. What I did like was most of the matches were matches, not one high spot and a finish. I like Scott Hudson as an announcer and Craig Johnson comes across enthusiastic, but this storyline of being the U.S. contingent in this major international promotion is too transparent. Any fan watching will know that the wrestlers are not of the quality of WWF or WCW wrestlers. The ones with the most charisma and star qualities are guys who were only prelim wrestlers in WCW.

USWA: The 7/8 card in Memphis saw Brian Christopher beat Judge Dread, Rob Zakowski (who everyone who sees raves about) beat Chris Candito, Danny Davis beat Sabu (formerly Samu) via DQ, Bill Dundee beat Leatherface (Tex Sallinger) via DQ, Tom Prichard beat Tony Anthony, Dirty White Girl beat Miss Texas in a mud hole match when Prichard tried to interfere, but instead Anthony interfered and he and White Girl threw Texas into the mud to win, The Bar Room Brawlers (Doug Vines & Jeff Sword) won the USWA tag team titles beating Jeff Jarrett & Robert Fuller via DQ (they decided the belts can change on a DQ after ignoring that rule for the past six months) and Jerry Lawler beat Eric Embry in a lumberjack match when ref Paul Nabors stopped the match because Embry was bleeding badly. . . 7/10 in Evansville saw Davis draw with Zakowski for Davis' lighthweight title ***, Doug Gilbert beat Leatherface via DQ when Embry interfered *, Dundee beat Embry via DQ when Leatherface interfered **, Prichard & Texas DDQ Anthony & White Girl **** (guys were in the entire match) and in a cage match with the losing team having to split up, Fuller & Jarrett beat Sabu & Dread *3/4. . . Doug Gilbert, Ta-Gar and Candito all appear to be gone from the area. . . Even though Dread & Sabu lost matches in every city in which the losing team couldn't team up together anymore, they appeared on television as a team on 7/13 losing to Dundee & Anthony. . . On television, Embry confronted ref Nabors about his stopping the match. Nabors said he stopped the match because he was afraid for Embry's career. Embry was mad saying that Nabors didn't even like him so why should he care and tried to get Nabors to say he hated him. Nabors admitted not liking Embry but wouldn't say he hated him. Finally Embry said he'd get Nabors to hate him and decked him and started cutting his hair. Eddie Marlin came out and tried to drag Embry off by the hair and Embry taunted Marlin. It set up a match on 7/15 with Embry vs. Nabors & Marlin with Embry losing his hair and getting fired if he loses while Nabors & Marlin both losing their hair if they lose. . . The main event on the Monday show was Lawler vs. Leatherface. Lawler was being presented with a photo from Bob Smith of Pro Wrestling Illustrated and Leatherface used his chainsaw and destroy the photo and then went after the TV studio announcers desk before the chainsaw broke and it turned into one of those Memphis studio brawls. . . The rest of the Monday show is a mud hole match with Anthony & White Girl vs. Prichard & Texas with Davis as ref, a street fight for the USWA tag belts with Vines & Sword defending against Jarrett & Fuller, Dundee vs. Dread and Zakowski vs. Samu. . . 7/13 in Nashville saw Gilbert beat Dread, Zakowski beat Candito, Davis beat Sabu via DQ, Dundee beat Leatherface via DQ, White Girl beat Texas in a mud hole match and Lawler beat Embry via DQ in a lumberjack match.

OREGON: The 7/13 big show in Portland drew 1,000 fans, mainly to see Sandy Barr wrestle and the return of Mike Miller. The normal weekly crowd is about 400. Jimmy Jack Funk drew with C.W.

Bergstrom, the match with ref Sandy Barr (father of Jimmy Jack Funk and also former WCW wrestler The Juicer Art Barr) against Al Madril, who was blindfolded ended when both took a bump over the top. Barr was caught by his ankle upside down in the ropes. Madril took off his blindfold and hit Barr with a gimmick, but when they got back in the ring, Barr pinned him anyway. After the match Madril challenged Barr to a match, at anytime but next week because kids are free and Madril hates working the monthly kids free shows, where they would both be blindfolded. Madril then threw a pie in Barr's face. Barr accepted but only on the condition the match was next week. Larry Oliver faced Mike Winner and before the match, The Grappler and Dirty White Boy (Bobby Blair) asked Oliver to join the Wrecking Crew. Finally during the match, Grappler and White Boy attacked Winner as Oliver stood there, but Oliver then made the save for Winner to indicate he's not turning heel. Next came a singing contest with Grappler, who can sing a little bit, against Bart Sawyer, who can't sing a lick. Of course all the fans cheer Bart as the face anyway. After Sawyer won, Doug Masters attacked him and bodyslammed him through a table. Sawyer was then "injured" but had to wrestle Masters in a match where Masters put up \$500 if he lost (that he had won the previous week from Sawyer) and Sawyer would leave town if he lost. Masters got the pin with his feet on the ropes but ref C.W. Bergstrom reversed the decision when he found out, so Sawyer won and got back "his money." Main event was Miller teaming with Demolition Crush & Steve Doll against Bruise Brothers & Grappler. They got heat on Doll and teased Miller's hot tag the entire match. With the ref distracted, Grappler loaded his boot, but before he could use it, Miller got his 2x4 and hit Grappler with it for the pin. . . 7/20 in Portland had Madril vs. Barr in a blindfold match and Bruise Brothers defending the Northwest tag team titles against Doll & Crush.

HERE AND THERE: NWF has added dates on 7/18 in Fort Wayne, IN and 8/25 in Ottawa to the list in last week's Observer for the Sheik vs. Abdullah the Butcher main events. With that headliner, instead of the Hall of Fame Tour as the promoters are billing it, maybe a better name would be the Gillette Seniors Tour. The same troupe is headed to the United Kingdom for a tour from 8/14 to 9/1 headlined every night by The Sheik vs. Ivan Koloff in chain matches. . . Lyle Alzado was on Arsenio Hall this past Thursday for 35 minutes and said that anyone who says that steroids aren't rampant in pro wrestling are a bunch of liars and he said he knew because some of the guys got their steroids from the same source he did. . . 7/13 in Indian Rocks Beach, FL was a show that drew 300 and included Lanny Poffo beating Denny Brown and Angelo Poffo worked as well. . . Paul Jones and Frank Dusek were dumped as the top dogs of South Atlantic Pro Wrestling after a power play backfired and the new booker is Manny Fernandez. . . Lou Thesz is now the President of the Cauliflower Alley Club based in Southern California, replacing the late Mike Mazurki. Speaking of Thesz, a new glossy photo album book was just released in Japan by Koji Miyamoto called "The Greatest Wrestler of All-Time Lou Thesz: Volume II also featuring his mentor Ed "Strangler" Lewis. Volume I was released many years ago in Japan and is sold out. The book is a collection of photos of Strangler Lewis and Lou Thesz but the captions are in Japanese. However, there are pages and pages of U.S. program reprints of some of Thesz' big matches during his career which are in English. The 175-page book is available for \$35 from Thesz at P.O. Box 8686, Norfolk, VA 23503 and each order will be personally autographed by Lou. . . Both Herb Abrams and Joel Goodhart have told people they've got Ric Flair signed for future dates. Goodhart was talking in Baltimore that he's got Flair vs. Terry Funk in Philadelphia in September. I think it would be premature to say any of this is etched in stone, but what do I know. . . 6/29 in Wallingford, CT saw Nikolai Volkoff beat Honkytonk Man via DQ and D.C. Drake beat Larry Winters in a stretcher match after giving him two piledrivers on a car hood. . . Greg Price's Carolina Championship Wrestling had a show on 7/4 in Monroe, NC before 245 fans. It was supposed to be an outdoor show, but had to be moved indoors because of rain. Tommy Angel, The Mummy (Lee Ramsey) and Rikki Nelson worked prelims. Gene Anderson was a manager handcuffed to a local DJ who weighs 420 pounds. Lady X (Peggy Lee Leather) beat Bambi when Jim Cornette tripped Bambi, a guy called The American Soldier beat Ivan Koloff in a flag match DUD, Vince Tirelli beat Tommy Seabolt **, Jackie Fulton & Bambi (replacing Bobby whose "plane flight hadn't arrived"—since he had already left for Japan) beat Stan Lane & Cornette in 21:42 **, Manny Fernandez beat Chris Chavis in a first blood match and Chavis won a 25 person Battle Royal. . . Ole Anderson ran a show in Carrolton, GA headlined by Ole Anderson vs. Thunderbolt Patterson. You read that right, this isn't the 1981

Observer. . . A group called Mid Eastern Wrestling Federation has its first show on 8/2 in Odenton, MD with The Golden Phoenix, Cream Team and others. . . 7/10 at the Solano County Fair in Vallejo saw Jerry Monti put on a show before a packed house of 750 (part of the fair) which saw The Killer Tomato & Linda Dallas managed by Gerhardt Kaiser (a top manager for Roy Shire in the mid 70s doing a Nazi gimmick) lose via DQ against Delta Tiger Lillies tag team champs Candi Divine and Little Mo in a *** match. Main event saw Don Muraco beat Buddy Rose. Kaiser managed Rose. Pepper Gomez was the special ref. Match was **1/2 because of Rose's comedy. Rose looks to be about 380. Told Kaiser and San Jose radio DJ Dennis Erectus (whose radio act is pretty much taken from his days growing up watching heel managers on television) got incredible heat. Kaiser was in full nazi regalia and Erectus was given an arm band from him as a present. . . Tommy Wright, Abdullah Farouk Jr., Penelope Paradise and Bill Mulkey worked a show at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida on 7/4 before 2,500. . . A 7/4 festival in Lima, OH saw an estimated 2,600 see the wrestling show as Al Snow & Mike Kelly & Scott Stevens beat The Nightmares & Jim Lancaster.

WCW: Don't know what the real story in regards to the KTVU Sunday time slot in this area. WWF officials had been telling me that they had regained the slot from WCW effective 8/10 to air Wrestling Challenge, which doesn't air in this market. This past week I got word that WCW had signed a one-year deal with KTVU to keep the slot. The WWF insists they've got it, WCW says they've got it. Could be that WWF got Challenge back and WCW will keep World Wide, but that one will be moved to a new time slot. . . Barry Windham suffered a knee injury at the TV tapings 7/8 in Columbus, GA and was kept out until the PPV as a precautionary measure. . . The WCW offices have been flooded with calls regarding the Ric Flair situation. . . Taping on 7/8 in Columbus, GA drew a full house (about 5,500) with kids at \$3 and 7/9 in Tallahassee drew a full house (6,500) with kids free. The paid was 3,700. They started the U.S. title tournament in Tallahassee (and Luger hadn't even won the world title yet) with an elimination match as Johnny B. Badd beat Terry Taylor to become the No. 10 seed in the tournament with the left hook. He and Teddy Long are turning babyface and going to feud with Steve Austin over the TV title. I wonder if he'll now be called Johnny B. Good? They are going to lighten up the gay gimmick and go heavier into him doing a Muhammad Ali gimmick. . . Tommy Rich turned heel and joined the York Foundation in a TV match when Richard Morton was facing Junkfood Dog. Rich interfered to cause Dog to lose and left with Morton after a squash match. Mr. Hughes will no longer be with the York Foundation but instead become Lex Luger's bodyguard while Harley Race will be Luger's adviser. . . Ron Simmons is being groomed for title matches with Luger starting 8/25 at the Omni. . . The 10-man U.S. title tournament takes place on 8/25 at the Omni as well. . . The Freebirds, well, at least Hayes & Garvin, are going to be babyfaces as they're working a program against The Enforcers (Arn Anderson & Larry Zbyszko) for the U.S. tag team titles. . . Dutch Mantell and Dead Eye Dick (Randy Culey) haven't signed those \$300 per night contracts so the Desperados may be history once they fulfill the current house show dates. Black Bart, who did sign, has worked television in a jobber role with other partners. Well, those videos will go down in history as some of the best use of television time. . . WCW has banned all magazines except for the London group (Apter mags) and the Japanese from shooting at ringside, so last week's photo policy printed here has been amended again. The London group are working with WCW to do a newsstand magazine similar to the WWF magazine and the first issue hits the stand around 8/6. . . El Gigante faces One Man Gang on 8/25 at the Omni in a match where Gigante has to go back to Argentina if he loses and Gang has to shave his head if he loses. . . Young Pistols have worked some house shows in subtle heel roles. . . 7/12 in Charleston, WV drew 1,000 as Young Pistols beat Tommy Rich & Sam Houston, Big Josh pinned Black Blood, Terrence Taylor pinned JFD, Freebirds beat Desperados, Badd pinned Bobby Eaton, Yellow Dog pinned Arn Anderson, Dustin Rhodes beat Richard Morton via DQ, Tom Zenk beat Diamond Studd by pinning Dallas Page and Missy Hyatt & P.N. News beat One Man Gang & Paul E. Dangerously. . . According to Dr. Jim Andrews, who did the surgery on Scott Steiner's ripped bicep, it will be another four to six months before Steiner can return. . . TV ratings for the last weekend in June saw Main Event get a 2.6, WCW a 2.4 and Power Hour a 1.6 which are all decent, but still all trailing WWF ratings. On 7/6, WCW did a 2.2 for the show where they made the Flair announcement, which isn't so hot although it was July 4th weekend and Power Hour did a 1.4 and Main Event was pre-empted. Actually with Main Event pre-empted, the WCW

rating was pretty bad (when one show is pre-empted, generally the other does a better rating since it's the only afternoon show of the weekend). . . 7/11 in Columbia, SC drew 980 as Pistols beat Rich & Houston with Rich & Houston playing heels this time *1/2, Freebirds beat Desperados - *, Zenk beat Studd 1/2*, Taylor & Morton beat Rhodes & JFD when Hughes hit Dog with a chain *, Josh pinned Blood 1/2*, Yellow Dog beat Anderson **, Badd pinned Eaton DUD and Gigante beat Gang in a cage match -*. . . 7/13 in Greenville, SC drew 1,600 as Pistols beat Houston & JFD, Josh beat Blood, Morton beat Rich, Freebirds beat Desperados, Rhodes & JFD beat Austin & Taylor, Sting double count out Nikita Koloff, Luger pinned Studd and News & Hyatt beat Gang & Dangerously in a cage match. . . I don't know if Barry Windham has turned, will turn, or won't turn, but he's facing Luger at most of the house show main events in early August. . . 7/5 in Philadelphia drew 1,800 as Badd pinned Josh, Freebirds beat Desperados, Zenk beat Studd, Rhodes beat Morton via DQ, News & Hyatt beat Taylor & Dangerously, Eaton drew Austin, Windham pinned Yellow Dog, Hardliners beat Zenk & Rick Steiner via DQ, Gigante & Luger beat Anderson & Gang and Koloff beat Sting in a chain match. . . There was a huge article on Kevin Nash in his hometown paper about the Oz gimmick. According to the story, Nash is 6-9, 32 years old and was a high school basketball star in Trenton, MI and started for three years at the University of Tennessee before quitting the team as a senior. He wound up in the army, then playing European league basketball until around 1985 when he came home. He played "Shredder" in the latest Ninja Turtles movie.

WWF: There's an old saying that those of you who remember the Dudley Do-Right cartoons will recall, that the Mountie's always get their man. Well, after threatening to arrest Jacques Rougeau on charges of impersonating a Mountie, the Mounties and the WWF came up with an agreement that the heel character of The Mountie will no longer appear in Canadian arenas or on Canadian television. The character had been the subject of much newspaper publicity in Canada with the Mountie's first asking nicely for WWF to drop the character, the WWF agreeing to issue disclaimers on television before his matches and the RCMP saying it wasn't enough. Since the RCMP has no jurisdiction in the United States, it can't get the WWF to drop the character. What will be interesting is Summer Slam, since it airs on PPV in Canada and Mountie obviously is going to play his character. Yves Juteau, an RCMP spokesperson said that the two sides have reached an agreement where the character will be phased out. . . Sid Justice wasn't too thrilled when he got his contract with the same \$2,250 per year guarantee as everyone else and made some contact with WCW last week, but after considering everything, everything has been settled. . . The WBF has signed Lou Ferrigno to come out of retirement and compete in its muscle shows. Both groups had been involved in the biggest muscle bidding war in history to get Ferrigno, who hasn't competed since the 1975 Mr. Olympia (the subject of the movie "Pumping Iron") after trying to play Canadian Football and then getting a five-year run in the CBS-TV show "The Incredible Hulk." *Muscle Mag International* has a big feature on the WBF/IFBB promotional war with a long interview with the WBF's Tom Platz in its September issue. According to the story, with the big bodybuilding promotional war going on, Joe Weider came up with the idea to bring Ferrigno, whose return to competition would be the biggest thing in the muscle world, back for the 1992 Mr. Olympia contest in New York. This would give Ferrigno 18 months to train for his comeback. Ferrigno, at 6-5, 275, is the largest bodybuilder and next to Schwarzenegger, the most famous. McMahon realized the PR coup and also went after Ferrigno. Whichever group got him would basically be in the drivers' seat regardless of whomever else was signed, because the group that didn't get him had no way to compete with the news. According to the article, McMahon made a \$500,000 per year offer in March (keep in mind these figures are probably exaggerated). Weider matched the bid in a sense, offering \$250,000 per year in cash and \$250,000 per year in free advertising in the various Weider magazines for Ferrigno's Sportswear company. This made the Weider deal superior to Ferrigno because he had always wanted to win Mr. Olympia, plus the Weider deal gave Ferrigno rights to merchandise himself, unlike the WBF,

which assumes all merchandising rights (in the case of Ferrigno, those were rights he didn't want to give away because he's done some movie work, and the WBF contracts would mean the producers would have to go through Titan as his agent to get him). In mid-April, Ferrigno was about to make a deal to sign with the IFBB, and Weider's group was even talking about filming a movie documentary about him training for his 1992 comeback in New York. But before he signed, reportedly McMahon increased his offer to a guaranteed \$700,000 plus he waived all rights to control Ferrigno's merchandising. It was expected Ferrigno would sign the deal and the announcement would be made in May at the world's largest fitness fair in Germany where both the WBF and IFBB bodybuilders would be at. According to the story, Ferrigno was booked on a German-bound flight when Weider made an 11th hour move, ending in a handshake agreement to a deal that matched the WBF offer. Two weeks ago at a contest in Los Angeles, before the deal had actually been signed, Weider and Ferrigno were at a show and Weider made the announcement that Ferrigno had signed and would compete in the Olympia. The move clearly put Weider in the drivers' seat in the muscle wars, because none of the WBF guys could generate the mainstream publicity that Ferrigno could for Weider. But lo and behold, it all fell apart that night. Ferrigno was mad about something, apparently the announcement being made before the contracts were signed. He left the contest in Los Angeles unhappy. He tried to contact Weider early the next week and was told Weider was out of town, only to see him at the Terminator II opening the night he was told he was out of town. Ferrigno went to the WBF and the two sides inked the deal. McMahon is now the king of the muscle business. . . TV tapings on 7/8 in Calgary before 13,500 fans (10,000 paid) saw Biff Wellington get a try-out and do so-so. Ted DiBiase beat Jason Anderson, then after the cameras were turned off, said he could buy anyone in the dressing room and Sid Justice came out and clotheslined him over the top rope. The two met later in the night in a dark match (Sid's first actual WWF match) with Sid winning in no time flat with the power bomb. Only "competitive" matches saw Bret Hart beat IRS, Jake Roberts beat Earthquake, Bushwhackers & Big Bossman beat Mountie & Nasty Boys, Ultimate Warrior beat Undertaker via DQ and Hulk Hogan beat Sgt. Slaughter via submission with the camel clutch. . . TV taping 7/9 in Edmonton drew 8,500 (8,000 paid) with Wellington having a second try-out and looking decent, and winning with the tombstone, which should assure him not getting a job. Louie Spicoli also got to win a dark match and came out to entrance music. Just so you know what gets the pop, the guy or the music, Spicoli, since he was early in the show, got one of the biggest pops of the night. In fact, the biggest pop was for Greg Valentine's entrance music. Virgil beat Ted DiBiase with a cradle, Sid did his non-taped run-in on Warlord, Andre was in the corner on crutches for Bushwhacker squashes, They hinted at a Roberts vs. Undertaker match for Summer Slam or post-SS feud, Paul Roma worked as a single. The Mountie came out claiming to be Canada's greatest athlete, and ANGLE TIME, Dino Bravo came out with brown hair and decked him, turning babyface. Col. Mustafa beat British Bulldog when Slaughter held his legs and IRS double count out with Jim Duggan. Warrior & Hogan did a SS interview and Sid came out and said he'd be impartial. Berserker pinned Snuka, Roberts beat Typhoon via DQ when Quake interfered and Andre made the save, Warrior beat Undertaker via DQ and Hogan & Duggan beat Slaughter & Mustafa. . . The movie *Suburban Commando* has had its release date of late August moved back to October 11, of course having nothing to do with anything that has been in the newspapers. . . Mr. Perfect missed both tapings (and is still out of action today) due to a his back injury, Piper missed both because he's no longer wrestling and Winston no-showed as well. I wonder if he has to take the steroid test. Maybe they can test him instead of Davey Boy. . . TV ratings last week of June saw Prime Time do a 3.3 (best in a long time) and All-American a 2.7, first week of July saw the numbers at a 3.0 and 2.5 respectively, still better than average for the summer. . . 7/13 in Tampa drew 4,600 as Koko Ware pinned Tanaka, Animal beat Knobs, Valentine beat Mustafa via DQ, Rockers beat Power & Glory, Warlord double count out Von Erich, Bossman pinned Mountie and Hogan beat Slaughter in a Desert Storm match.

THE READERS PAGES

Jeff Rudd of P.O. Box 1124, Graham, NC 27253 is looking for a regular supplier of Japanese videotapes. . . Jerry Grey of 6315 Jennings Rd., Orlando, FL 32818 has a list of videotapes from around the United States including his own federation tapes. . . Robert Silva of 169 Cypress Av. #8C, Bronx, NY 10454 is looking for anyone with tapes of Bill Watts' shows at the Superdome and any pre-1986 Mid South Wrestling tapes. . . Danny DeAngelo of 1252 N. Clara Ave., Deland, FL 32720 is interested in trading tapes. He has tapes of WWF, WCW and Japan and is looking for old Saturday Night Main Event tapes and WWF shows from Boston and Madison Square Garden. . . Ken Utley of 807 N. Church St., McKinney, TX 75069 has a list of videotapes and back issues of the Wrestling Observer for trade. . . Dean Minervino of 48 Ginger Dr., Mt. Holly, NJ 08060 has assorted LJM/REMCO WWF and AWA action figures, thumb wrestlers, bendies, etc. for sale or trade. He needs AWA Mat Mania figures. . . Tom Wischmann of 13 Stevens Ln., Tabernacle, NJ 08088 is looking for tapes of 1988 NWA wrestling. . . Carolina Championship Wrestling at P.O. Box 541, Indian Trail, NC 28079 will send a free copy of its 7/4 program to anyone who sends a long SASE.

ZAHORIAN TRIAL

You did a great job on coverage of the Zahorian trial. Every wrestling mark should have been required to read it. Making the public realize the profession's problem is the only way to correct it. The steroid problem wasn't invented by wrestling people, and Terry Bollea isn't the only sports star who may have taken them. Making the public realize the profession's problem is the only way to correct it. Someone has to do something about the way the public perceives its athletes and it won't be the president, look at who he picked to head the Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Otherwise, if there were drug-free wrestlers, the marks would compare them unfavorably with the monsters they may see at the beach. This was the best work you've done so far this year. The Sgt. Slaughter stuff was something regarding personal taste. This was a story about breaking the law.

The other thing I want to comment on is the self-destruction of WCW. They destroyed their history and their name. They cheat their fans for a few extra bucks. They push no talents over genuine stars. They give away talent while the WWF keeps even their most burned out wrestlers from defecting. They start big angles and then forget about them. They do count-outs in no DQ matches. And then they wonder why people don't attend their events.

Steve Yohe
Alhambra, California

The highlight of the commentary on the last Madison Square Garden card had to be Gorilla Monsoon's stupid comments regarding how much Dino Bravo had "bulked up," etc. Wouldn't you think with the all local negative publicity brought on by the Zahorian trial that the shill-master would be aware of the real world and be careful NOT to make references that were steroid-related.

WRESTLING OBSERVER NEWSLETTER July 22, 1991
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At least I've figured out why Vince McMahon let Dusty Rhodes out of his contract so easily in January. Virgil completed Vince's goal of total destruction of the NWA by doing it from within. What a shame.

John Jance
Fresh Meadows, New York

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed your pro wrestling column in The National. You told the truth and didn't kiss up to anyone. The column was both informative and insightful and will be sorely missed.

As a former sportswriter and announcer for both boxing and wrestling in the Los Angeles area, I've always had an interest in both sports. Last week while traveling, I ran into Greg Valentine at the Atlanta Airport and we talked about a couple of old friends, Freddie Blassie and John Tolos, both of whom are working for the WWF.

As an announcer in the early 70s, I had an opportunity to watch Valentine and many others cut their teeth. I'm glad to see them making good money these days. Many who were in the business in previous years never fared as well. However, it greatly disturbs me about the obvious steroid abuse among today's athletes. Obviously the promoters are behind this and this abuse is both condoned and encouraged.

Michael Tasos
Lacombe, Louisiana

RIC FLAIR

Upon hearing that Ric Flair was no longer with WCW, I had mixed feelings. It was sad that possibly one of the greatest all-time pro wrestlers may have come to the end of his career. On the other hand, with the direction the company is headed and how he had been treated, I was glad to see him leave.

I have known Mr. Flair for more than 15 years and knew back in the mid-70s that I was watching a future champion and future legitimate legend of the sport. More important than his athletic ability is how he handled himself out of the ring. His parents may not have taught him anything about pro wrestling, but they did teach something more important. Manners and how to treat people with respect. He learned that lesson possibly better than he learned the craft of being a pro wrestler, if such a thing is possible.

World Championship Wrestling is at this point in time not intelligent enough to realize what they have lost. The true wrestling fans realize it and mourn the loss of possibly wrestling's greatest champion.

In closing, I wish Ric continued success in whatever he decides to do and tell him he has the support of his fans and his friends and most of all, he'll have the support of his family.

Jim McNerney
Midland, North Carolina

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