

Wrestling Observer Newsletter

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In the wake of a Tuesday afternoon press conference and a television appearance that night by Hulk Hogan on the Arsenio Hall show which was nothing short of fraudulent, there has been a lot of skepticism brought out regarding Titan Sports' announcement that it will soon be testing its wrestlers for use of anabolic steroids.

We shouldn't get sidetracked away from the real subject at hand by worrying about whether Vince McMahon was telling the truth when he said he only used one steroid (decadurabolin) at one time in his life, some three-and-a-half or four years ago. In the real scheme of things, it doesn't really matter whether McMahon used steroids before. While one can argue they give one an unfair competitive advantage in sports requiring explosive bursts of over or unnatural physical presence, I daresay they don't give anyone an unfair competitive advantage in running a wrestling company. My belief on this subject is if someone wants to use steroids, it's their decision so long as their decision doesn't affect others or their profession in a way that practically forces people who don't want to use them into becoming users simply to stay competitive, or in the case of this business, stay competitive looking. Unfortunately, all the double-talk aside, that is the case in pro wrestling. That is the prime reason why preventive measures are necessary.

We also shouldn't get sidetracked away from the subject by worrying about Hulk Hogan. Hulk Hogan is not the problem. Hulk Hogan is a symptom or a representation of the problem. If Hogan previously took steroids when they were blatantly encouraged by promoters because even before his WWF days because he was pushed harder than almost everyone because of his size, that doesn't make him a bad guy. At the same time, portraying himself as a role model to such a degree may allow him to be judged by a tougher standard. Even if you don't buy that, his actions of late have shown him to be both a liar and a hypocrite. Hogan put on a sorry performance on Arsenio. The idea in that situation must have been that honesty was the worst policy. But dishonesty wasn't such a hot policy, either. What surprised me most, was the reaction to Hogan's appearance within the wrestling business. The business, after all, is a work. However Hogan's saying that he only used steroids three times in his life, when he was champion in 1983 (for the record, he didn't even win the title until 1984), purely as rehabilitation for an arm injury (which he claimed without steroids the injury would have put him out of action for one year, yet Hogan didn't even miss so much as one match with an arm injury in either 1983 or 1984 nor was there any apparent muscle imbalance of one side being larger than the other which happens to lifters who have an injury to one side of the body) drew a vehement negative reaction from almost everyone I spoke with this past week within wrestling. Those in the gym considered it a sorry sham. In football and track lingo, when guys fail a steroid test, they generally invoke what is now known as "The Bosworth Defense," saying they only used the drug once "a long time ago" "to rehabilitate a knee/shoulder." Besides using the Bosworth Defense, Hogan has created a new category, the Hogan Defense, which consists of a guy fingered in court as a steroid user claiming innocence by saying he weighed 196 pounds when he was ten years old (think about how ridiculous that one is, especially those of you with kids who are around ten years old). Newspaper columnists around the country were dubious and critical of his performance. As far as those within wrestling, Bruno Sammartino said largely what you would expect him to say in an article that will appear later this week in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Jim Ross made an indirect remark on his 900 number on Saturday, while once again questioning why WCW doesn't have a steroid policy, bringing up the news of the past week in regards to steroids and again reiterating the problem isn't exclusive to the WWF but then added, "As for those guys who have gone on national television this week and said they only used steroids three times in their life for

medicinal purposes, they're lying and they're risking damaging their career beyond repair." But judging from Hogan's performance, he was desperately trying to save an image that he's obviously afraid is in some trouble and the gates for his matches tell the same story. The think tank must have believed that claiming to have never used steroids except for injury rehabilitation would be better for the image than telling the truth and apologizing. From the pure con-man position of trying to survive the present-day heat without worrying about the future, it was the right choice. Hogan would have taken a lot of heat over the short haul if he had told the truth. But in three weeks, the story would have been finished and he and the WWF would have fixed their so-called achilles heel, the steroid scandal. Instead, Hogan and the WWF are at the mercy of everyone who knows differently to not go public. Quite frankly, going on television with that performance, if it comes out that it was a lie, will be far more damaging over the long haul than having to testify at the Zahorian trial would have been, or telling the truth to Arsenio would have been.

The real issue is Titan Sports' attempt to clean up its steroid problem. When Tuesday was over, my skepticism was very high. It seemed McMahon had decided he needed to give the media a sacrificial lamb, so he consciously picked himself, who nobody buys dolls of or pays ticket money to see, in order to deflect the issue away from his leading meal ticket. However, there is one important point. Vince McMahon knows as well, if not better than anyone else, that his company will survive this story with little long-term damage, provided it only happens once. Having another major round of mainstream attention saying that the problem was just as serious as before, after he has declared his company drug free, would do major damage, particularly when it comes to outside merchandising which probably generates more income for Titan Sports than actually producing the live wrestling events.

Is the WWF serious about steroid testing? It has to be. That much, I'm convinced of. There is simply too much to lose to try and do a work in this situation. On Monday, the WWF interviewed representatives of Comprehensive Drug Testing in Los Angeles, which handled the drug testing in the 1984 Olympics, and currently handles testing for the National Basketball Association, the Continental Basketball Association and Major League Baseball. There was also scheduled to be an interview with Aegis Analytic Laboratories out of Nashville, which handles the National Football League drug testing. Titan Sports expects to receive proposals by about Aug. 1 from those companies and possibly two others before it will set up its program, which includes steroid education and rehabilitation. There are legal issues that need to be worked out as far as wrestlers' contracts, because all previous drug testing (for cocaine) was done in house and when this policy goes into effect, the testing for all drugs will be handled independently.

Is the WWF serious about ridding itself of its steroid problem? Certainly those in the public relations end hope it is. But the real answer to this question won't be known until and unless we see a change in the emphasis on having a muscular physique, education of the audience, and who is being pushed. If we see importance placed on getting to a certain bodyweight in muscular condition, and we see the continuing push on those who look like bodybuilders above those more talented, then whether or not testing is real is a moot point. Tests can be beaten. But if there is no economic benefit to beating the tests, it doesn't matter if they can be beaten. If there is an economic benefit, then they will be beaten sooner or later by everyone. But if there is no benefit attached to beating the test, then Titan Sports should be applauded for its procedure.

In this situation, it is unfair to expect of Vince McMahon and

the WWF something that is impossible. Completely ridding the WWF of steroids is impossible. Getting the problem under control is very possible. No other sport in which the demands include either a muscular physique or explosive bursts of strength or speed has been successful in ridding itself of steroids. The simple reason is because they work. However, pro wrestling does have an advantage over track or pro football if it wants to combat the problem. In pro wrestling, the promoters decide who to push, who wins, who loses, and how they wish to educate the fan. In track, the fastest guy or the guy who throws the object the farthest is going to win and you have to try and continually improve testing to eliminate guys using chemicals to gain a competitive advantage. In football, the best team is going to win. You don't have a booker trying to educate the fans (or in this case, perhaps simply just turning a blind eye to what the fans want and not educating them away from it, which still encourages steroid use) one way or push a certain body type as the ideal.

I spoke this morning with an expert on beating steroid tests. He was the adviser for many Olympic athletes, particularly track athletes, on how to best beat the testing. There are masking drugs. HGH is undetectable. There are new drugs, mainly from Europe, which are so new that there are no tests for them. At the last Mr. Olympia contest, all the contestants were tested for steroids (and five of them were disqualified because they weren't sophisticated enough in the art of beating the tests), all of them were on heavy steroids and most of them passed. Beating a scheduled test, such as in track and how it used to be in football until this season, was simple. You scale down before test day, flush the body out by drinking copious amounts of water, and switch to HGH in the last few weeks. One Observer reader who just got back from winning a silver medal in the U.S. Olympic Festival and spent time with the pentathletes told me this morning that they would come in with suitcases of masking drugs to beat the tests. A seemingly simple thing like drinking Alka-Seltzer can mask most drugs being tested for. Some athletes bring catheter tubes to beat the test. Others, and this has occurred in college football, bring clean urine with them to the testing and make the switch when nobody is looking. In pro football, starting with this season, before every game, eight players chosen at random will be tested. Because one is tested one week in no way changes his odds (roughly five-to-one) that he'll be tested the next week. Because the penalties are stiff enough (six game suspension without pay which is 37.5 percent of an annual salary which for an average player earning \$300,000 per year results in a loss of \$112,500 in annual salary) even the doctor I spoke with, who deals with many pro football players, said that the NFL has been cleaned up. By cleaned up, that hardly means completely clean, but the guys using industrial quantities of numerous drugs are at least toned down to reasonable levels. Of course, while football has its disadvantage over wrestling in that the coaches can't "educate the audience" by putting less muscular men over, it also has a major equalizer. Talent. In football, if you've got superior talent, you'll make it without steroids. Nobody makes these guys take off their shirts and says that if a guy's physique looks like Bobby Eaton's, he can start on the team, but he can't be marketed as a big star even if he's the best player in the league. That isn't the case in wrestling, which is why the problem is worse in wrestling than in any other major sport. Talent is not an equalizer. At least it isn't today.

WWF Vice President Basil DeVito said they have another advantage over football. The NFL has 1,400 players to test. The WWF only has 60 or so. "The more we find out about this subject, the more we learn how difficult it is going to be to implement a fair and reasonable policy." Fair meaning that the wrestlers who are on steroids today need to be given a fair amount of time to get the drugs out of their system. Testing today would be completely unfair to the wrestlers. Oil-based steroids can take as long as six months to get out of ones system. Oral steroids can be taken to beat a test up to about ten days before test time, but it is recommended to insure beating the test to give them about 30 days and the last month before testing sees guys rely on new drugs and/or HGH. It should be four to six weeks before a timetable is set up regarding frequency of tests, if the tests will be random, when they'll start and all other decisions regarding the policy made. Testing of this nature is a fairly costly procedure so getting into this program is a significant step. And even with the grandiose claims about a policy that, as of today, doesn't even exist being superior to any other drug testing procedure in sports, the WWF does have a chance to eliminate the steroid problem in its business. Not eliminate steroids completely, because that is an unattainable goal, but eliminate the problem, which is abuse of steroids

being beneficial for a wrestler in terms of his push and income.

THE NOT-SO-GREAT AMERICAN BASH

Thumbs up: 19 (03.2 percent)
 Thumbs down: 564 (96.1 percent)
 In the middle: 4 (00.7 percent)

BEST MATCH POLL

Barry Windham vs. Lex Luger 143
 Rhodes & Pistols vs. Freebirds 35
 Richard Morton vs. Robert Gibson 34
 Sting vs. Nikita Koloff 19

WORST MATCH POLL

Scaffold match 209
 El Gigante vs. One Man Gang 49
 Oz vs. Ron Simmons 25

Based on phone calls and fax messages to the Observer as of Monday afternoon. Margin of error: Very little in this particular case.

There isn't much left to be said regarding the show. This was the single most negative response to any show in the history of this newsletter, and also the largest number of responses to any big-show poll. I'd rate it as the worst PPV event of all-time when everything is considered. Other shows at least had either a few good matches, a few good interviews, or at least in the case of those two Wrestlemanias from Trump Plaza that had very little of either, the booking at least made sense. Depending upon which source one chooses to believe, the buy rate for the show was between a 0.7 and a 1.0, with the most reliable figures being approximately 145,000 orders or a \$2.9 million gross, which would be about an 0.97 buy rate, which is slightly lower than SuperBrawl and one of the lowest, but not the lowest, in company history. The next show is the one where there is danger of a significant fall in the buy rate.

Got the complete line-up for Summer Slam on 8/26 at Madison Square Garden. As already being advertised on television, the main event will be the wedding of Randy Savage and Elizabeth (who have only been married about seven years to begin with). Also already advertised is Hulk Hogan & Ultimate Warrior vs. Sgt Slaughter & Col. Mustafa & General Adnan with Sid Justice as the referee (that match sounds worse every time I type it up), Mr. Perfect vs. Bret Hart for the Intercontinental title, Nasty Boys vs. Legion of Doom for the WWF tag team title, Ted DiBiase vs. Virgil for the Million Dollar belt, Big Bossman vs. The Mountie with the loser having to spend the night in the nearest jail and Bushwhackers with Andre the Giant in the corner against The Natural Disasters. The only matches yet to be announced are IRS vs. Greg Valentine and The Dragon & Kerry Von Erich & British Bulldog vs. Power & Glory & The Warlord with Koko Ware vs. Kato tentatively scheduled as the off-TV dark match (which if they let them work, would be the second best match on the card). This show doesn't have a prayer of doing anywhere near the buy rate of the previous two SS shows. If the wedding doesn't get over huge (and I expect that it will), then the buy rate will be a huge disappointment because there is little else on the show. The Hogan match will end a feud that is already dead, with the only possible interest being who is going to turn on who and the debut of Sid Justice.

An update on the situation in this market. The WWF and WCW are going head-to-head at the Cow Palace and Oakland Coliseum Arena respectively. As of Monday, the WWF advance was a poor 2,700 for a show headlined by Hogan-Slaughter Desert Storm match. The WCW advance was 1,700, which is a lot better than most of the crowds around the horn, but they do have the advantage of being in the key building in this market. This weekend in the advertising on the TV shows, WCW was still advertising Ric Flair, Scott Steiner, Paul E. Dangerously and Missy Hyatt, all of whom aren't going to be there. However, there was a change, in that when Tony Schiavone did a voice-over in one of the squashes, he gave a different card, listing Kevin Sullivan as replacing Flair in an eight-man tag team elimination match (which won't take place as Schiavone announced it since Luger is on the face side and he's a heel and Dusty only knows exactly what Windham's role is) and Rick Steiner teaming with a mystery partner and acknowledging Scott's injury. Hyatt and Dangerously were still being

advertised, however. The WWF isn't exactly angels since they were heavily pushing Roddy Piper as being there when he won't be.

Another death of a famous post-World War II "Japanese" wrestler to report. Charles Iwamoto, better known as Mr. Moto in the 50s and 60s and Charlie Moto in the 70s when he worked in the front office for the old Mike LeBelle wrestling promotion in Los Angeles, passed away on 7/6 in Los Angeles at the age of 71. The cause of death was a heart attack. Iwamoto was the first cousin of Duke Keomuka (Duke Tanaka), who passed away just days earlier in Las Vegas after heart surgery. The two were a famous tag team as Hawaiian born heels of Japanese ancestry after World War II. Muto used to book foreign talent for Japanese tours for the old JWA during the 1960s, and his greatest success came in 1963 when he teamed with Kim III (Kintaro Oki) to win the WWA version of the world tag team title from Red Bastien & Bearcat Wright.

This is the final issue of the current four-issue set. If you've got a (1) on your address label it means your subscription expires with this issue. Renewal rates are \$6 for four, \$12 for eight, \$24 for 16, \$36 for 24, \$48 for 36 up through \$60 for 40 issues within the United States and Canada. Rates for the rest of the world for weekly airmail delivery is \$9 for each set of four issues through \$90 for 40 issues. Copies of the 100-page Wrestling Observer Yearbook are still available to subscribers for \$12 within the U.S. and Canada and \$18 overseas. The address for all subscription or yearbook orders, along with any news items, clippings, results of arena shows, letters to the editor and any other correspondence is the Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

EMLL: 7/19 at Arena Coliseo in Mexico City saw heel midgets Jerrito Estrada & Piratita Morgan & Espectrito beat Octagoncito & Mascarita Sagrada & Aguilita Solitaria in two of three falls when a new midget ref called Mini-Davis (this group has a very famous heel ref named Gran Davis) tripped up Sagrada and then didn't call an obvious low blow by Morgan on Sagrada to win the final fall. ***1/4. This match was to set up a mask vs. hair match between Sagrada and Morgan down the road. Also Tony Arce & Vulcano (Los Destruyores) retained their Mexican tag team titles winning 2/3 falls from Plata & Platino (Los Metallicos) in 23:04. **, Apollo Dantes beat Javier Cruz via DQ ** and the main event saw Cien Caras & Mascara Ano 2000 & Universo 2000 win 2/3 falls from Rayo de Jalisco Jr. & Lizmark & Atlantis in a real good match ***1/4. This was the best Galavision show in several weeks. . . Baby Richard beat El Simbolo in a hair vs. hair match on 7/14 at Arena Coliseo. . . Lizmark beat Pierroth Jr. to keep his NWA world lightheavyweight title on 7/18 in Cuernavaca. . . El Egipcio kept his Mexican National heavyweight title beating Blue Demon Jr. on 7/18 in Puebla at the 38th anniversary of Arena Puebla show. . . Lizmark also kept his lightheavyweight title beating Brazo de Oro on 7/17 in Acapulco. . . 7/19 in Guanajuato was headlined by Octagon & Mascara Sagrada vs. Fuerza Guerrera & Emilio Charles Jr. while 7/20 in Acapulco the headline match was Lizmark & Anibal & Pirata Morgan vs. Los Brazos. . . The famous Twin Devils (identical twins who were headliners in Los Angeles in the late 1970s) teamed with Guerrera against Super Astro & Volador & Misterioso in Acapulco. . . This group moves to Arena Mexico on 8/23 for shows every Friday and Sunday night in Mexico City. . . La Fiera was fired for too many no-shows. . . Fabuloso Blondy, in an interview said that in the U.S., the main interest of the wrestlers is the occult worship of the body while in Mexico they worship the mask and the style of the work. . . Canadian Vampire Casanova is now the most popular wrestler in the promotion for reasons beyond my comprehension. He's 24 years old and from Montreal and his idol growing up was Rick Martel. He had only a few matches in Canada before coming to Mexico a few months back. . . Negro Casas is said to be joining Blue Panther, Anibal and Los Brazos as those who have jumped full-time to this group, but Yoshihiro Asai is said to have lost interest in jumping.

UWA: 7/14 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw Canek & The Killer beat Mil Mascaras & Dos Caras in the main event. The two teams were scheduled for a rematch on Sunday, although during the week they were reporting Caras as questionable because of injured ribs and that Fantasma would take his place in that case. . . 7/18 at Arena Pista Revolucion in Mexico City was headlined by Yoshihiro Asai & El Texano & Silver King vs. Rambo & El Indomito & Negro Navarro plus Villano III & Gran

Hamada & Fantasma vs. Fishman & El Signo & Dr. Wagner Jr. . . Same night in Toluca was headlined by Mascaras & Enrique Vera vs. Killer & Pegasus Kid. . . Kokina canceled his tour and will be returning now on 8/18. . . Super Muneco beat Espanto Jr. in a mask vs. hair match in Torreon. . . Perro Aguayo beat Colosso Colosetti on 6/26 in Monterrey in a hair vs. hair match. . . 7/19 in Netzahualcoyotl had Mascaras & Hamada vs. Pegasus Kid & Killer, Silver King & Texano & El Drago vs. Rambo & Wagner & Black Power. . . Villano III has a UWA world lightheavyweight title defense against Wagner on 7/23 in Pachuca. . . Lasser has a world lightweight title defense on 7/24 against Ramona Garcia. . . Wrestler Lobo Rubio is the father of Shu El Guerrero. . . Asai and Kendo recorded a record two weeks ago for release in Japan.

ALL JAPAN: A couple of title changes regarding the Asian tag team title this past week. First, Johnny Ace & Kenta Kobashi beat The Can-Am Express (Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas) to win the titles (not sure in which city) on 7/8, then Ace & Kobashi lost the titles on 7/18 at Tokyo's Korakuen Hall on the Bruiser Brody Memorial show to Joel Deaton & Billy Black. Black & Deaton defend them against Kroffat & Furnas on 7/26 in Matsudo, which may be another title change. . . At the Brody show, they were selling all sorts of Brody paraphernalia (photos, t-shirts, books, etc.) with all the proceeds going to a college scholarship fund for Geoffrey Goodish (Brody's son). They raised several thousand dollars. . . Naturally the card drew a sellout 2,100 to Korakuen Hall as Steve Williams & Terry Gordy & Rick Rude beat Jumbo Tsuruta & Akira Taue & Mighty Inoue, Stan Hansen & Danny Spivey beat Mitsuharu Misawa & Tsuyoshi Kikuchi, Black & Deaton beat Ace & Kobashi when Deaton pinned Ace, Toshiaki Kawada pinned Masa Fuchi, Giant Baba & Rusher Kimura beat Motoshi Okuma & Haruka Eigen, Kroffat & Furnas beat Isamu Teranishi & Yoshinari Ogawa and Joe & Dean Malenko beat Mitsuo Momota & Bobby Fulton. . . The other major show of the past week was 7/20 at the Yokohama Bunka Gym drawing 4,900 (building holds a little more than 6,000) as Tsuruta pinned Williams in 20:35 to retain the triple crown, Hansen & Spivey beat Misawa & Kobashi when Hansen made Kobashi submit to a half crab, Kawada beat Taue with the sleeper, Gordy pinned Ace, Black & Deaton beat Malenkos, Kroffat & Furnas beat Ogawa & Fulton, Baba & Kimura & Kikuchi beat Eigen & Okuma & Fuchi and Teranishi & Inoue beat Momota & The Destroyer. . . Destroyer & Momota have been teaming in several cities in opening matches which is significant because Destroyer was famous as the last wrestler to beat Rikidozan (the most famous wrestler in Japanese history) and Momota is Rikidozan's son. . . 7/19 in Soka drew a sellout 3,650 as Tsuruta & Taue & Inoue beat Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi in 23:43, Hansen & Spivey beat Ace & Rude when Hansen lariat-ed Rude, Gordy & Williams beat Malenkos, Black & Deaton beat Kroffat & Furnas, Baba & Kimura & Kobashi beat Eigen & Okuma & Fuchi, Ogawa pinned Fulton (it was Ogawa's first big win over a foreigner and considered a major upset) and Destroyer beat Teranishi. . . 7/21 in Shizuoka drew 2,600 as Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi beat Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa in 26:12, Gordy & Williams beat Ace & Kobashi, Hansen & Spivey beat Deaton & Black, Furnas & Kroffat beat Fulton & Momota. . . 7/16 in Matsuyama drew 1,700 as Tsuruta & Taue & Ogawa beat Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi, Gordy & Williams beat Deaton & Black, Hansen & Spivey beat Ace & Rude, Baba & Kimura & Kobashi beat Eigen & Okuma & Fuchi, Kroffat & Furnas beat Malenkos, Fulton pinned Teranishi and Destroyer beat Satoru Asako. . . 7/14 TV show headlined by Misawa & Kawada & Kikuchi vs. Gordy & Williams & Rude drew a 3.7 Video and 3.3 Neilsen rating

NEW JAPAN: This week's big show took place on 7/19 in Sapporo before a full house of 6,350 fans with Big Van Vader pinning Shinya Hashimoto in 18:34 of the main event, Riki Choshu & Tatsumi Fujinami beat Kim Duk & Masanobu Kurisu, Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki beat Great Muta (as a heel) & TNT when Sasaki pinned TNT, Bam Bam Bigelow beat Tiger Jeet Singh via DQ, Jushin Liger & Masa Chono beat Mad Bull Busters (Pit Bulldogs in U.S.), The Samoans (Samu & Kokina) beat Masa Saito & Black Cat and Kuniaki Kobayashi & Shiro Koshinaka beat Hiro Saito & Super Strong Machine. . . Most of the emphasis right now is promoting the early August tour. . . 7/20 in Hakodate drew 4,170 as The Samoans & Vader beat Chono & Muto & Choshu when Chono did the job in 8:44, Fujinami & Masa Saito beat TNT & Bigelow, Duk & Singh beat Hashimoto & Kengo Kimura, Hase & Sasaki beat Osamu Kido & Koshinaka, Masashi Aoyagi beat Kurisu via DQ and Norio Honaga & Machine & Tatsutoshi Goto & Hiro Saito bet Cat & Liger & Kobayashi & Kantaro Hoshino. . . 7/21 in Towada drew 2,620 as Saito & Fujinami & Hashimoto beat Mad Bull Busters & Vader,

Chono & Choshu beat TNT & Bigelow when Chono made TNT submit to the STF, Muto & Koshinaka beat Duk & Singh via DQ, Samoans beat Hase & Sasaki. . . 7/17 in Aomori drew a sellout 2,150 as Vader & Samoans beat Chono & Muto & Fujinami with Chono doing the job, Duk & Singh beat Kimura & Choshu, TNT & Bigelow beat Masa Saito & Hashimoto, Honaga & Goto & Machine & Hiro Saito beat Hoshino & Liger & Hase & Sasaki. . . 7/16 in Asahikawa drew a sellout 2,660 as TNT & Bigelow & Vader beat Muto & Chono & Hashimoto when Muto did the job after a double big splash by Vader & Bigelow, Samoans beat Choshu & Masa Saito when Kokina splashed Saito, Duk & Singh beat Fujinami & Koshinaka, Liger & Hase & Sasaki beat Hiro Saito & Goto & Machine, Kobayashi beat Kurisu via DQ and Kido & Kimura beat Mad Bull Busters. . . 7/13 in Abashiri drew 2,540 as Vader & Samoans beat Choshu & Fujinami & Muto when Choshu did a clean job, Chono beat Singh via DQ when Duk interfered, TNT & Bigelow beat Hashimoto & Kimura, Mad Bull Busters beat Koshinaka & Kobayashi, Duk & Kurisu beat Aoyagi & Hase and Saito & Goto & Machine beat Liger & Sasaki & Hoshino. . . 7/13 TV Show drew a 5.5 Video Research and 5.1 Nielsen rating, which is nothing special in the slot. . . 7/24 in Ueda has a two out of three fall 10-man tag team match with Choshu & Fujinami & Hashimoto & Chono & Muto vs. Samoans & Vader & Bigelow & TNT. . . 7/26 in Kanazawa has Choshu vs. Singh and Fujinami & Hashimoto vs. Vader & Bigelow while 7/29 in Morioka has Chono & Muto vs. Vader & Bigelow.

OTHER JAPAN NOTES: Genichiro Tenryu was named officially as the president of the SWS on 7/19 replacing Hachiro Tanaka. . . Tanaka is start yet a third promotion, which would be the 12th promotion operating out of the Tokyo area headed up by Koji Kitao. Tanaka and their advisers are somehow convinced that since Kitao was such a major celebrity, he can draw wrestling fans in Tokyo but the gimmick of Kitao being a wrestler is long over. . . Tanaka is still puzzled how his 30-member strong SWS can't sell any tickets to shows in Tokyo while the four-member PWF (Pro Wrestling Fujiwara-Gumi) looks like it'll sellout NK Hall this week for the Fujiwara vs. Masaharu Funaki match. . . The reason UWFI is booking so many no-names from the Tennessee area is because the booker is Shinji Sasazaki, who is retired as a wrestler but is living in Tennessee and working in a Japanese restaurant. Interest is already dropping for UWFI because of no decent foreign names, weak main events and live cards that only last 90 minutes with tickets priced at \$57. . . Chris Champion is working for FMW as a Ninja Turtle. . . Reggie Bennett is getting over huge in Japan, more as a celebrity than as a wrestler. Bennett did a TV commercial for a drink called "Da-Dann" which is said to be an Amazon formula energy drink. So they brought in this Amazon woman to be in the ad, jumping out of the water and doing muscle poses and this past week she's been all over regular television talk shows, including this country's version of the Tonight show (Maeda and Fujinami were guests on the show on 7/10) and there are lots of stories on her in the various mainstream magazines and she's made the cover of several. Basically she's caught fire and all the advertising agencies are after her. . . SWS is bringing in Greg Valentine, Demolition and Haku for the September tour. . . SWS is running 8/9 at the 17,000 seat Yokohama Arena with Tenryu & Ashura Hara re-forming their tag team, either to face Yoshiaki Yatsu & Haku (most likely) or possibly the Road Warriors. Either way they'll need plenty of give-aways. The last show at Korakuen Hall (which had two four-star matches on top and no foreign talent and one has a lot to do with the other) drew a legit packed house of 2,297 in the building but only about half was paid. When they were in Sumo Hall in June, the paid attendance was really around 3,000 which is the lowest for any group at Sumo Hall in years. . . Akira Maeda will face former European judo champ Willie Wilhelm on 9/3. It's a rematch of the main event of the November 29, 1989 match at the Tokyo Dome which drew 60,000 fans and set what was then a record with a \$2.9 million gate. . . JWP has several August shows in Tokyo. 8/4 has Miss A & Scorpion vs. Shinobu Kandori & Harley Saito and Rumi Kazama & Mayumi Ozaki vs. Mami Kitamura & Devil Masami. . . 8/8 is the Anniversary card with A & Scorpion vs. Itsuki Yamazaki & Saito, Madusa vs. Masami, Lady X (Peggy Lee Leather) vs. Kitamura, Eagle Sawai & Pink Cadillac vs. Ozaki & Kazama. . . 8/11 has Madusa & Saito vs. Masami & Kazama, A vs. Handa, Lady X & Cadillac vs. Kitamura & Yamazaki. . . 8/30 has an LPWA title match with X vs. Sawai, Masami vs. Yamazaki, Kandori vs. Cadillac and the UWA junior title match with Scorpion defending against Cutie Suzuki. . . 7/14 at Korakuen Hall saw Saito beat Sawai to keep the UWA Intercontinental womens title, Kitamura beat Scorpion, Cadillac & Terri Power beat Kandori &

Yamazaki and Masami & Plum Mariko beat Dementia & Ozaki. . . 7/19 FMW in Sagami-hara drew 3,258 with Tarzan Goto & Horace Boulder & The Gladiator beating Kim Chu Hwan (Korean taekwon do guy) & Atsushi Onita & Sambo Asako in a street fight. . . All Japan women 7/19 in Takamori drew 1,600 as Aja Kong beat Esther Moreno and Bat Yoshinaga & Kyoko Inoue & Bull Nakano beat Etsuko Mita & Manami Toyoda & Suzuka Minami. . . 7/20 in Enam saw Goto & The Titan beat Onita & Chu Hwan in a street fight and Boulder & Hurricane Walker beat Asako & Fuji. . . 7/20 in Gunma drew 2,300 as Yumiko Hotta beat Esther Moreno and Nakano & Inoue & Debbie Malenko beat Kong & Bison Kimura & Kauro Ito. . . 7/20 JWP in Mumbatsu drew 1,326 as Saito & Kandori beat Masami & Miki Handa. . . 7/21 in Asahikawa drew 1,632 as Miss A beat Mayumi Ozaki and Masami & Saito beat Terri Power & Eagle Sawai.

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JAPAN TV RUNDOWN

6/30, ALL JAPAN WOMEN: 1. Suzuka Minami & Yumiko Hotta & Esther Moreno beat Debbie Malenko & Miori Kamiya & Mika Takahashi in 12:01. Typically fast-paced match which climaxed with all the near falls. Finish had Hotta pin Takahashi with a double arm suplex dropped into a power bomb. ***3/4; 2. Takako Inoue retained her Japanese women's title pinning Sake Hasegawa in 13:36 with a back suplex and pin. It wasn't that smooth at the beginning but they did a lot of nice suplexes toward the end of the match. **3/4; 3. Aja Kong & Bison Kimura beat Toshiyo Yamada & Manami Toyoda in 13:29 when Kong pinned Yamada after a splash off the middle rope. Super fast-paced match with one hot move after another from bell-to-bell. ****; 4. Bull Nakano & Kyoko Inoue beat Mariko Yoshida & Akira Hokuto in 15:31 when Nakano pinned Yoshida after a legdrop off the top rope. Yoshida is a little green compared to the other three but she didn't hurt the match at all. Inoue is the most improved wrestler over the past year that I've seen anywhere. ****

7/6, NEW JAPAN: 1. Kim Duk & Masanobu Kurisu beat Hiro Saito & Super Strong Machine when Duk pinned Saito after a tombstone piledriver in 10:15. Not much in the way of wrestling but Duk & Kurisu hammered their foes with brutal chair shots. After the match Tatsutoshi Goto and Norio Honaga did a run-in and destroyed Kurisu with a chair. **; 2. Keiji Muto & Masa Chono beat Demolition Ax & Canadian Giant in 9:31 when Muto pinned Ax with the moonsault. There was a lot of heat in this match for all the spots which made it an enjoyable match. The Giant is pretty bad, but he was in with such good workers that it was acceptable. **1/4; 3. Tatsumi Fujinami beat Brad Rheingans in 6:21 via submission with the dragon sleeper. Good wrestling, but nothing spectacular and kind of short. **1/4; 4. Riki Choshu & Shinya Hashimoto beat Badnews Allen & Scott Norton in 10:06 when Hashimoto pinned Allen with a mule kick. The match had a lot of heat and was better than it looked to be on paper. It turned into a good match with Norton mainly trying to work hot spots with Hashimoto to set up their singles match. **3/4

7/6, SWS: 1. Apollo Sugawara pinned Road Block with a schoolboy after a missed tackle by Road Block in 8:12. Road Block is pretty bad but he tries hard. *; 2. In the first match of an elimination tournament, Akira Katayama pinned Hiroshi Hatanaka with a german suplex in 11:17 in a hard-fought match. ***; 3. Kennichi Oya pinned Katayama with a back suplex in 6:22. **1/4; 4. Ishinriki pinned Oya in 4:17 with the Ishinriki suplex (similar to a back suplex) *1/4; 5. Kabuki pinned Ishinriki in 3:51 with a backslide. Fast start but the match was too short to build into anything. *1/2; 6. Kabuki pinned Fumihiko Niikura in 6:27 with a backslide. A fast open but too much time on the mat for such a short match. *1/2; 7. Kabuki pinned Tetsuya Yamanaka to win the tournament in 5:18 with a lariat. Kabuki gave the rookie, who showed a lot of promise, most of the match. Because of the size difference (Yamanaka is really skinny) the crowd didn't ever see Kabuki as being in jeopardy even though he was on defense throughout. *1/2; 8. Kendo Nagasaki & Goro Tsurumi & Shogun Wakamatsu beat Don Arakawa & George & Shunji Takano in 18:22 when Tsurumi pinned Arakawa with an elbow drop. Arakawa was beaten on most of the second half of the match. *; 9. Takashi Ishikawa & Tatsumi Kitahara beat Naoki Sano & Masao Orihara in 19:16. The first ten minutes of the match weren't much with Orihara mainly being pounded on. The last half of the match was super, however. Sano did a Liger-dive over the top rope with a full mid-air flip onto Kitahara. Orihara was then beaten on until past the 15 minute mark when he made the hot tag. Sano did one hot move and near fall after the other. Sano knocked Ishikawa out of the ring. Orihara then did a flying body press off the top rope onto the floor on Ishikawa who was halfway to the

other side of the ring. Sano then did a dive through the ropes on Ishikawa. Kitahara then did a dive over the ropes onto Sano. As they were all brawling, Orihara climbed the top rope and did the moonsault to the floor onto Ishikawa (this is the move of the year, and it better be this year because he's not going to have a long career doing this move in every match). The crowd naturally was going nuts at this point. Back in the ring, Orihara missed a dropkick off the top rope and Ishikawa made him submit to the scorpion deathlock. ****; 10. Genichiro Tenryu & Samson Fuyuki beat Yoshiaki Yatsu & Shinichi Nakano in 14:37. Tenryu was really fired up here and this was the best match since SWS was formed and equal to the quality of the matches Tenryu had when he was with All Japan. All four worked stiff with Nakano taking a real pounding. Yatsu gave both foes several very stiff chair shots, including busting Fuyuki open and he bled like crazy. Yatsu then attacked Akihiro Mikate, a young guy being trained by Tenryu, who was outside the ring, with a chair. Tenryu ended up pinning Nakano with a power bomb and after the match Mikate was brought into the ring by Tenryu to challenge Yatsu. Just a super main event which is what SWS has needed all along to change its negative image. ****1/4

7/7, ALL JAPAN: 1. Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas retained the Asian tag team titles beating The Fantastics (Tommy Rogers & Bobby Fulton). One hot move and a near fall after another back-and-forth. Both teams did some innovative maneuvers here, particularly Kroffat. Finally Furnas pinned Rogers with the Frankensteiner, actually doing the move better than Scott Steiner. ****; 2. Mitsuharu Misawa & Toshiaki Kawada beat Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshinari Ogawa. Ogawa took a ton of punishment since he's so much smaller than everyone else. Still, his offense was solid and the crowd popped for everything. It was another great match. Kawada had a bloody nose from Ogawa's kicks. Kawada got all fired up and destroyed Ogawa with a power bomb for the pin and kept kicking him after the match. ****; 3. Steve Williams & Terry Gordy regained the PWF world tag team titles beating Dan Spivey & Stan Hansen. This match went more than 20 minutes. It was slow paced because it went so long but the work was very stiff. Gordy took a real beating from Hansen's chair shots. Turned into an exciting match, although very different from the previous two. Gordy ended up pinning Spivey with a rolling reverse cradle. ***1/2

7/13, NEW JAPAN: 1. Mitsuhiro Matsunaga beat Masashi Aoyagi when the ref stopped the match as Aoyagi had Matsunaga in a judo armbar in 7:28. Both of these guys are martial arts guys and Matsunaga is actually a protege of Aoyagi and they started together with FMW. Very little heat. Matsunaga's offense didn't look convincing, and since he was on offense almost the entire match, that tells about the match. 1/2*; 2. Choshu & Fujinami beat Ax & Giant in 7:26 when Fujinami pinned Giant with a sunset flip. The best thing I can say about this is Giant is better today than Andre would be today, but this was pretty bad. 1/2*; 3. Norton pinned Hashimoto in 11:13 with a powerslam. This match should have had a lot of heat since they both have "tough-guy" reps with the fans and a unique presence. But it was a dull match most of the way since neither really have the ability to carry the other. *; 4. Muto & Chono beat Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki in 31:05. The last 11 minutes aired on television. This card was taped in a building that was about 100 degrees and humid and all four were very tired and drenched in sweat. It was slow-paced but had tons of hot moves, one right after the other. Hase did a Ray Stevens-style Bombs Away kneedrop but flew two-thirds of the way across the ring to deliver it. All four really gave it their all with hot moves and near falls. It ended with Hase on the top rope, Chono climbing up and giving him a Samoan drop off the middle rope and then Muto pinned Hase with the moonsault. ****1/4

USWA: 7/15 in Memphis saw Rob Zakowski beat Sabu, Bill Dundee beat Judge Dread, Dirty White Boy & Dirty White Girl beat Miss Texas & Tom Prichard via DQ when Eric Embry interfered and threw White Girl into the mud hole, Jeff Jarrett & Robert Fuller regained the USWA tag team titles beating The Bar Room Brawlers (Jeff Sword & Doug Vines), Eric Embry won a hair vs. hair handicap match beating referee Paul Nabors & Eddie Marlin so both Nabors & Marlin got their heads shaved and Jerry Lawler pinned Leatherface, who wasn't either Tex Sallinger (who is back in Florida) or Brian Lee. . . New to the area is Heartbreaker Randy Harris, who appears to be a rookie and Awesome Kong, managed by Reggie B. Fine, who was trained by Killer Brooks in Texas and is a 400+ pounder. Fine is using the telephone gimmick, which is at least original. . . 7/22 in Memphis has Randy Harris vs. Doug Gilbert (so I guess Gilbert is still around), Danny Davis vs. Brian Christopher for the lighthweight title, Prichard vs. Dundee for the Texas title, In a Bar

Room Brawl match for the USWA tag titles, Jarrett & Fuller defend against the Brawlers with a pool table, coke bottles and a broken piano brought into the ring, Dirty White Boy vs. Embry and Lawler defends the USWA title against Kong. . . On television Saturday, Dirty White Boy hit Embry over the head with a board early in the show. The Tv main event was supposed to be Embry & Prichard vs. White Boy & Davis, however Embry was "injured" by the board. So Chris Candito subbed and Embry kidnapped White Girl and White Boy chased him away, which left Davis in a two-on-one position and he was pinned. . . 7/21 in Jonesboro, AR saw Davis beat Candito, Jimmy Janetty beat J.T. Smith in a battle of Philadelphia indie wrestlers (Joel Goodhart organized a bus trip from Philadelphia), Prichard beat White Boy, Dundee beat Leatherface via forfeit when he didn't show up, Dundee no contest Davis when the Brawlers attacked both men, Jarrett & Fuller beat Brawlers and Lawler beat Embry via count out.

OREGON: They had another decent crowd on 7/20 because kids were let in free to see round two of the feud of the year between Sandy Barr and Al Madril. This time they wrestled in a blindfold match. Barr ended up getting ref C.W. Bergstrom in a stepover toe hold since he couldn't see and thought it was Madril. Bergstrom started selling the knee. While this was going on, Madril lifted up his blindfold, hit Barr with a foreign object, then as Bergstrom got up, Madril jumped over the top rope and Bergstrom thought Barr had thrown him over and called for a DQ. As Madril was gloating over the win in the Fiesta Garden, Barr came out and challenged Madril to a strap match with both guys blindfolded again which takes place next week. Barr had the line of the year when he said, "I want the match next week because I don't want to have to stay in shape more then one more week so I won't this over with." Also Jimmy Jack Funk drew with Mike Winner, Bart Sawyer beat The Grappler via DQ when Grappler won using tights by Bergstrom reversed the decision when Mike Miller told him what happened. After the match Grappler & Dirty White Boy (Bobby Blair) threw powder in Miller's eyes and beat on him. John Rambo beat White Boy in a terrible match, then in the main event, The Bruise Brothers kept the Northwest tag team titles going to a double count out with Demolition Crush & Steve Doll. . . 7/27 has Bruise Brothers vs. Doll & Crush in a cage match, Madril vs. Barr in the strap match blindfolded and Miller vs. Grappler.

GLOBAL: 7/19 at the Global Dome in Dallas drew 750 as Skip Young pinned Tug Taylor, Steve Simpson beat El Bandolero, Chris Walker pinned Sweet Daddy Falcone, Randy Rhodes beat Brian Adias via count out when Adias was arguing with manager Chris Love, Gary Young beat Bill Irwin via DQ, The Royal Family (Rip Morgan & Jack Victory) beat Terry Garvin & Steve Dane, Paul Bunyan (Canadian Giant) won a handicap match, Iceman King Parsons & The Hammer beat Billy Travis & Chris Germany, Pvt. Terry Daniels pinned Tom Burton, Big Bully Busick beat Chaz, Mike Davis & Kenny the Stinger beta Adias & Skip Young, Steve Simpson pinned John Tatum, Rhodes pinned Daniels when Love interfered, Bunyan won a handicap match and Walker beat Busich via DQ for using a foreign object. . . The promotion will be running its tournament for the GWF tag team titles this coming Friday and Saturday. Among the teams announced are Cactus Jack & Makhhan Singh, Jim Brunzell & Fire Cat (Brady Boone), Handsome Stranger (Fabian from Georgia All-Star Wrestling, real name Mark Baguel) & Chaz (son of Tug Taylor who is also a teeny bopper heartthrob type), Scotty The Body & Action Jackson, Walker & Simpson, Tatum & Rod Price, Royal Family, Steve Ray & Sonny Beach, Patriot & Daniels, Busich & Badnews Allen (Badnews Brown from WWF), Renegade Warriors (Mark & Chris Youngblood), Billy Black & Joel Deaton (who will have almost an impossible time making it because their last night in Japan is 7/26 and the first night of the tournament is 7/26 and even though those are different days, you can't get out of Japan until the next morning), Parsons & Hammer, Stan Lane & mystery partner managed by Jim Cornette plus "teams from Japan, Mexico, Cuba and Puerto Rico." . . . In order to up the attendance for the tournament, tickets for Friday night have been cut to \$5 with all refreshments cut to \$1, and tickets for Saturday night, if purchased at the same time as Friday, were just \$1.

HERE AND THERE: West Coast Championship Wrestling has a show on 7/27 in Hope, British Columbia with champ Moondog Moretti vs. Tim Flowers and Michelle Starr vs. Buddy Wayne in an I Quit match. . . Mike Lozansky from that part of the country is being considered for a major role with New Japan. . . Stan Lane and Jim Cornette worked for David Leehy on 7/6 in South Hill, VA teaming with Jeff Collett against The Cream Team, which won by DQ. . . Dan Reilly and Tom Burke's Wrestling radio show (WNNZ 640 AM Noon to 1 p.m. on

Saturday out of Springfield, MA) will have an interview this week with Bob Backlund. . . John Arezzi will be holding a Wrestling Fans Convention on 8/24 and 8/25 at The Quality Inn at LaGuardia Airport with Ric Flair, Lou Thesz, Bruno Sammartino, Buddy Rogers, Superstar Billy Graham, Fabulous Moolah, Rick Rude, Jim Cornette, Woman and Nikolai Volkoff appearing. For more info you can call Arezzi at 516-587-2861. . . Mark Rambo of France won the Catch Wrestling Association version of the world heavyweight title on 7/6 in Graz, Austria beating Big Van Vader in a match that went 40 minutes. Also Tony St. Clair won the Graz tournament beating David "Fit" Finlay, CWA tag team champions Miles Zrno of Yugoslavia and Franz Schumann of Austria beat Dynamite Smitt (Johnny Smith) & Joe Cruze, David Taylor beat Buffalo Peterson (Darryl Peterson) via DQ and Steve Wright retained his CWA middleweight title beating Ray Apollo from the United States (who worked as a South African at Starrcade). . . Windy City Wrestling drew 350 fans at DaVinci Manor in Chicago on 7/20 with The Dream Warriors beating The Untouchables in a cage match with Sam Decero as ref as the headline match. Steve Regal, Sonny Rogers, Ron Powers, Madd Maxx (Eli the Eliminator) and Ken Patera also appeared. . . Rob Russen's IWA ran shows at Sydney, Australia's Wonderland Park from 6/25 through 7/14. It had been five years since U.S. wrestlers had worked in Sydney with 71,000 fans attending the 30 different performances and much national media publicity. Among those on the tour were Paul Orndorff, Kimala, Jules Strongbow, Cousin Luke, Preston Steele, Terminator (Marc Laurinaitis), Master Blaster (Al Green), The Gladiator (Rick LeRibeus), Thunderfoots #1 & #2, Derrick Dukes and Larry Cameron. Matches billed as title matches had Steele (International champ) beating Strongbow on 6/25, Cameron (world champ) beat Luke on 6/25, Cameron beat Terminator 6/30, Orndorff beat Kimala via DQ on 6/30, Kimala beat Orndorff via DQ on 7/1, Thunderfoot #1 won the Int'l title from Steele on 7/1, Dukes beat Cameron non-title on 7/1, Orndorff beat Cameron via count out on 7/2, Orndorff beat Cameron via DQ on 7/3, The Thunderfoot won the IWA tag titles from Terminator & Master Blaster on 7/4, Cameron beat Steele on 7/4, Cameron beat Master Blaster on 7/6, Dukes beat Cameron via DQ on 7/7, Dukes beat Thunderfoot to win the Int'l title on 7/8, Blaster beat Cameron via DQ on 7/8, Strongbow beat Dukes for Int'l title on 7/9, Cameron beat Terminator on 7/9, Cameron beat Blaster on 7/12, Strongbow beat Gladiator on 7/12, Strongbow beat Dukes on 7/13, Blaster beat Strongbow via DQ on 7/13, Gladiator beat Cameron via count out on 7/13, Steele beat Strongbow to win Int'l title on 7/14, Cameron beat Blaster on 7/14 and Orndorff pinned Kimala on 7/14. . . Ron Garvin beat Brad Anderson on 7/13 in Wadesboro, GA. . . Herb Abrams ran a television taping 7/20 in Ft. Lauderdale drawing 300 fans (180 paid) with Brian Blair, Black Hearts, Orndorff, Steve Ray and Bob Orton as the top names. Orndorff and Orton walked out in the middle of the show when they still had TV matches scheduled. Manager Mr. Red attacked both Abrams and his booker Lenny Duke who both bled from the mouth. Johnny Ace, Danny Spivey, Cactus Jack and Sonny Beach all no-showed and are said to be heading to work for Joe Pedicino.

WWF: Hulk Hogan missed all his scheduled matches this weekend as he was pulled to work in Minneapolis as part of the Special Olympics. It's "image enhancement" time. . . Randy Savage replaced Hogan and pinned Sgt. Slaughter in Lexington and Louisville, while the card scheduled for 7/21 at the Omni in Atlanta was canceled because it had a miserable \$12,000 advance. . . Jim Neidhart is back on the road full-time replacing Jake Roberts (injured neck) and beating Earthquake everywhere. . . There has been talk that Quake has given his notice which may explain that result. . . LOD Hawk returned to action after being out two months with a herniated disc over the weekend, however Mr. Perfect is still out of action with a bad back. . . Perfect is supposed to take a few months off after Summer Slam to let his back heal up. . . Hogan is also taking time off after Summer Slam and won't return until late October because he's doing a movie. During the interim, WWF is only going to run one show per night headlined by Warrior vs. Undertaker (Undertaker, who is the group's hottest character, isn't even on the Summer Slam line-up) in either coffin matches or body bag matches. . . 7/12 in Winnipeg drew 5,500 as The Dragon (Ricky Steamboat) pinned Brooklyn Brawler, The Berserker pinned Jimmy Snuka, Bret Hart drew with IRS, Rockers beat Beverly Brothers (very good match), Animal pinned Brian Knobbs, Virgil pinned Ted DiBiase and Ultimate Warrior beat Undertaker via DQ (crowd was cheering 50-50 for both guys). . . The Mountie made his first Canadian appearance since the deal was struck with the Mounties on 7/21 in Toronto. He came out with shorts and a t-shirt on, billed simply as Jacques Rougeau. . . 7/21 in Toronto saw Warrior beat Undertaker in a

body bag match, Rockers & Virgil beat Orient Express & Mr. Fuji, LOD beat Nasty Boys via count out in a no DQ match, Rougeau pinned Bossman, IRS pinned Greg Valentine, Hart pinned Dino Bravo and Berserker pinned Ware. . . An update on the situation in this area with KTVU, Ch. 2. KTVU will continue to air shows of both WWF and WCW. The WWF Superstars show will remain on Saturday at 11 a.m. Wrestling Challenge will be added in August and World Wide Wrestling will remain but the station hasn't decided on time slots for either show. Most likely they'll be put in a two-hour block from 10 a.m. to Noon on Sunday. . . Prime Time Wrestling drew a 3.1 rating on 7/15 while All-American did a 2.3 on 7/14. . . The one show Hogan did appear on was 7/18 in Cleveland which went head-to-head with the WCW show in the same city. WWF drew 6,500 and \$80,000 while WCW drew around 800 and \$9,500. . . Ned Brady, who works for Eddie Mansfield in Florida, can no longer use the name Repo-Man. Apparently one of Brady's friends called J.J. Dillon with the Repo-Man idea and while the WWF didn't use the idea, they trademarked the idea and aren't allowing Brady to use it. . . Depending upon who you talk with this week, some wrestlers have been told by the office that the steroid testing will be legit and to get off the stuff immediately and others haven't been contacted yet. Some are unhappy about it, others feel differently. . . 7/19 at the Capital Centre in Landover, MD drew 6,500 as Berserker beat Ware, IRS beat Valentine, Bushwhackers & Virgil beat Orient Express & Fuji, Kerry Von Erich double count out with Warlord, Nasty Boys double count out with Rockers, Neidhart pinned Earthquake and Warrior beat Undertaker. . . 7/18 in Omaha drew 3,500 as Berserker beat Ware, Valentine beat Bravo, Hart beat Barbarian, Duggan beat Warlord, Neidhart beat Earthquake, LOD beat Nasty Boys via count out and Warrior beat Undertaker. . . 7/20 in Philadelphia at the Spectrum drew 10,000 as Bravo beat Ware, IRS beat Valentine, Hart beat Haku, LOD beat Nasty Boys via DQ, Bossman pinned Mountie, Rockers & Virgil beat Orient Express & Fuji and Warrior beat Undertaker via DQ. . . 7/20 in Lexington drew 4,800 as Von Erich double count out with Warlord, Neidhart pinned Earthquake, Berserker pinned Snuka, Duggan pinned Mustafa, Bushwhackers beat Power & Glory, British Bulldog beat Typhoon and Savage beat Slaughter in a Desert Storm match when Adnan threw in the towel. . . 7/20 in Louisville drew 3,700 as Warlord pinned Snuka, Duggan pinned Mustafa, Bulldog pinned Typhoon, Bushwhackers beat Power & Glory, Von Erich double count out with Berserker, Neidhart pinned Earthquake and Savage beat Slaughter via submission with the camel clutch in a Desert Storm match. . . Andre now needs two canes to walk to the ring.

WCW: The first issue of the new WCW Magazine hits the newsstands on 8/6. . . Jim Ross spent six hours in the emergency room with kidney stones after the PPV show. . . James Oshust, who was the guy responsible for WCW getting into several buildings including the Arena in St. Louis and the Oakland Coliseum Arena, will be through at the end of August because his position is being eliminated. Jim Barnett is handling booking of the buildings. WCW didn't produce when given the chance. It's expected they won't be able to book another date at the Oakland Coliseum Arena after Friday (although they do have a date at the Kaiser Convention Center in Oakland in September). They are also said to be out of the Arena in St. Louis after the October date and out of the Charlotte Coliseum after the August date. . . No word on steroid testing although upper management has had talks about the subject. . . They had about a four-star match on World Wide this weekend with Yellow Dog & Bobby Eaton & Dustin Rhodes beating Barry Windham & Arn Anderson & Diamond Studd. . . Big Van Vader scheduled to return in October. . . Can anyone give me a logical explanation as to why the same upper management (Jim Herd in particular) is still in charge of this company? . . . 7/16 in Farmland, IN drew 960 as Johnny B. Badd pinned Mike Graham, Steve Austin pinned Eaton (best match on card), P.N. News beat One Man Gang via DQ, Young Pistols & JFD beat Richard Morton & Terrence Taylor & Thomas Rich and Yellow Dog & Sting beat The Hard Liners. . . Barry Windham missed a few mid-week dates resting up his injured ankle or knee. The match that aired on WCW on Saturday with Black Bart was where the injury took place and his leg caught the rope going over on a backdrop. He was back in action by the end of the week. . . Black Blood also missed a few more shots with his bad knee. . . NBC's George Michael Sports Machine, which is about the only outlet that gives this group any national coverage, aired an interview with Jim Herd on Sunday night after the Baltimore show (Flair declined the interview on advice from his lawyer, some expect a suit will be filed against WCW) where Herd said that nobody was sadder than he was to
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THE READERS PAGES

Curtis Breslaw of 768 Borebank St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 1G4 Canada is looking for VHS tapes of the first four seasons of Saturday Night Main Events (1985-88). He is also looking for black wrestling boots sizes 10 to 10 1/2. He also has tapes to trade. . . Gary Zimak of 4008 Fenwick Ln., Mt. Holly, NJ 08060 is looking for a regular supplier of the Memphis wrestling show and the All Japan Women's wrestling show. He can trade New Japan, All Japan, Lucha Libre, Pro Wrestling New York and tons of older tapes in exchange. . . Robert Hollowell of 1090 Michael Dr., Launenburg, IN 47025 is looking for photos of Missy Hyatt, Woman, Alexandra York, Elizabeth and Sherri Martel. . . Rob Feinstein of 865 Green Ridge Circle, Langhorne, PA 19053 has tapes for trade. . . Carlos Mata at 714-885-3390 is promoting benefit pro wrestling shows in Southern California for fund raisers.

RIC FLAIR

This ain't Kansas, toto, and this certainly ain't the NWA. Ric Flair is gone, and with him, gone is what was left of the legacy of the NWA. I hope Ric surprises me and avoids Titan, but even if that happens, may he have the best of luck and the best of paydays. After all, he'll put Hulk Hogan over in what would surely be the greatest match of the Hulkster's career. May Jim Herd and Dusty Rhodes follow the Yellow Brick Road to bankruptcy and end this folly once and for all. All the boys left at WCW, pay close attention to the respect loyalty derives from your company. Sting and Sid must have had the right attitude all along. I should have been shot to have been so optimistic when Rhodes was announced as new booker. Sure, anything was better than Ole Anderson, but as it turns out, it was like the doctor saying that your cancer is in remission only to later find out you've tested positive for HIV.

Greg Goode
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

I talked with Barry Norman (WCW p.r. rep) on the Ric Flair situation and his comments were unbelievable. He said it was a farce that the Charlotte Observer called for a boycott of WCW. He said that they should call for a boycott of the Charlotte Hornets because they cut his favorite player, Kelly Tripucka. Now that's comparing apples to apples. A more apt comparison would be this--if the Lakers said to Magic Johnson one month into the season, "Magic, you're still the best player on the team and one of the three best players in the league, but you're getting older and we want to nullify your contract that goes until the end of the season and re-sign you to a new contract for half the money and you'll make less than Vlade Divac is making." You don't think writers would talk about boycotting the Lakers because of this?

This wasn't the case of a prima donna refusing to live up to a deal that he agreed to. This is a company that came to its hardest working, most loyal athlete, who did more for that company than any other wrestler, and tried to humiliate him by asking him to take a pay cut on a deal they had already signed.

Norman said, "If Canseco was in his 40s and they came up to him and said, 'You can't do what you once could do, so we'll only give you \$1 million instead of \$3 million, all the fans would cheer.' First off, they might cheer now because the general public doesn't like Canseco, but they were asking Flair to take a cut on an existing deal. If the Rangers pulled the same stunt with Nolan Ryan, everyone would be outraged. Norman said that Ric Flair can't draw like Nolan Ryan and then changed the subject when I asked him who does WCW have that will draw as champion.

Mark Nulty
Atlanta, Georgia

I heard the news today about Ric Flair being fired and was stunned. To a vast number of fans, Ric Flair meant pro wrestling. I was sitting around at work thinking about this shabby treatment of a genuine legend and if I was employed by WCW, I would never feel like letting them be in control of my career. Egos aside, Ric Flair should have at least been allowed to bow out with grace.

This happened because pro wrestling has no sense of history. Wrestling is a shameless treadmill that considers its wrestlers as products

and not as people. I really feel that one of the reasons that wrestling promoters hate hardcore fans is because they admire and care about wrestlers as people. They worry about their health and working conditions. We constantly point to the risks of steroids. The promoters don't care. They want the wrestlers to pump themselves up with juice and abuse them until they have no usefulness, then discard them. This is a sad indictment of a profession. Ric Flair was the consummate pro wrestler and did everything in his power to put fans in the seats. I hope WCW is content with themselves and their direction. The days of glory are over. Grind those wrestlers up and spit them out. They don't even realize that a quality athlete can't be replaced by a group of mindless cardboard cartoon characters.

John Hitchcock
Greensboro, North Carolina

The WCW has finally done it. They have destroyed the 43-year legacy of the NWA and truly discouraged all of their fans. Business decision or not, the loss of Ric Flair will go down as one of the all-time blunders. In recent years Flair has not been used to his potential, but even amidst the screw-job endings and the lack of decent opponents, the man continued to shine.

Flair was WCW's best performer. Unlike the prima-donnas who avoided personal appearances or wouldn't do jobs when asked, Flair would appear every night and always make the match worth watching. The appreciation and rewards shown to him now are evident. He's without a job.

The scatter-gun technique Dusty Rhodes is now employing has left TBS viewers with a second-rate imitation of Titan Sports. The one positive aspect of this is the opportunity to see Flair on the independent circuit.

Rich Kraemer
Lavallette, New Jersey

On the 7/7 Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show, guest Mark Madden asked host John Arezzi how he was doing. Arezzi answered, "Good, considering the circumstances." What circumstances caused Arezzi to answer that way? Was it a major illness? The loss of a job? A serious family problem? Famine in Ethiopia? The AIDS epidemic? No, it was something far more important than any of those. It was Ric Flair leaving WCW. As a hardcore Rotisserie league owner, I know what it's like to overreact to relatively unimportant events. For Arezzi, for myself and for others who overemphasize the toy department side of life, I offer two words of advice. Get real.

Stephen Meyerson
Brooklyn, New York

DM: I don't recall Arezzi comparing Flair getting fired in importance to either the AIDS epidemic or famines, although the first letter in this week's issue can be taken that way. But on a pro wrestling news and talk show, which is what Arezzi was hosting, he was talking about what will be one of the three biggest news stories in his business during this year. It was not, in that context, a relatively unimportant event. And it was, in any context, the loss of a job. I would certainly rather have the people covering whatever beat they cover care about stories in their beat, particularly the biggest stories of the year, rather than not care and dismiss everything as unimportant because, after all, in the event of a nuclear war, everything else, including famines, AIDS or the loss of a job are unimportant.

Jim Herd should be ashamed of himself for drawing a salary from WCW for the past three years. He has made every possible mistake that could be made since the buy-out and he couldn't have done a better job of killing the promotion had he worked for Titan Sports. His negotiating expertise will ensure a steady supply of fresh talent for the WWF for years to come. Here's hoping everyone boycotts WCW and Herd and Rhodes find it difficult to fill high school gyms with this year's Starrcade.

Owen Byrne
Staten Island, New York

I would like to thank Dusty Rhodes and Jim Herd for saving me money. Since Ric Flair is gone, I will no longer have to spend money for blank video tapes to record WCW television shows. I will have lower electric bills because there will be less television viewing in my house. I no longer watch wrestling on TBS. This is no joke, by the way. As soon as I found out about Flair being fired, I quit watching. I have no idea what has gone on since. I don't care to know. I have also been spared buying a ticket to the 7/26 show in Oakland. No Flair, no reason to go. I've also saved gas money for the trip.

But I still have my old videotapes. I think I'll watch one of my favorite matches tonight. You know, the I Quit match starring Terry Funk and Ric Flair, two wrestlers that the boobs running the company let go. I got a brilliant idea. Maybe Jim Herd should watch the match. Then maybe he'll have some idea what real wrestlers look like.

Jeanette Crump
Fairfield, California

Shock? Outrage? What else can be said about the Ric Flair fiasco? All respect has gone out the window for them and it's pretty well the last nail in the proverbial coffin. At a time when they need to add credibility, this ranks up there with the worst moves in history. So they'll bring in the Fireman and the Garbage Picker and next the Unemployed Man, which is the role Herd should play.

Thinking it over, maybe Dusty wasn't let go by Vince. Maybe he was sent on a mission to mangle the organization. If that was the case, then the plan worked to a charm.

Guess this is the thanks people get for their years of dedicated service. So long, WCW. It's been fun. But watching you on television in the future will only bring too many sad memories of what you once were.

J. Paul Sutter
London, Ontario

Firing Ric Flair from WCW was the equivalent of cutting the heart out of a horse that already has three out of four legs broken, is blind in one eye and has a cataract in the other. In other words, this was the final blow to a promotion that was already suffering from many wounds.

I attended the 7/5 Great American Bash card at the Philadelphia Civic Center, and even before the card started, there were chants of "We Want Flair!" echoing throughout the building. When Gary Capetta came to open the card, they chanted "We Want Flair!" Between every match, "We Want Flair!"

Flair was the heart and the soul of the promotion. Whether they called it NWA or WCW, Flair was the champ. No matter who he was programmed against, Flair did his best to make the match entertaining. He could carry a block of wood to a good match (which does make a better opponent than El Gigante or JYD, because even a block of wood knows enough to fall down when it gets chopped).

I admit it's hard to remain objective when talking about this subject. But Flair gave everything he could and more to this company. He has put almost everyone over. He's always worked hard. What more did Herd want? Did they want him to surrender one of his kidneys also?

Craig Pendergast
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

WWF

I want to apologize for the letter you printed about the Rosati sisters. Although they love publicity and will do anything from being Oinkettes in bathing suits to burping Siamese twins and were probably thrilled at being mentioned in the Observer, my letter sounded as cruel to them as their idol Vince McMahon is to them. They are blinded by the lights and believe they are part of the WWF. I want to especially apologize to Christine Rosati. She doesn't deserve to be put down weekly. I only hope some day people could laugh with them and not at them.

Cheryl Vazquez
Poughquag, New York

I know a lot of the boys and I always wondered when you would print something that would make me write to this publication in

defense of someone. Well, the time has come and you may be surprised at what is bothering me. It's a "simple" letter that appeared in the 6/24 issue regarding the Rosati sisters. Cheryl Vazquez would have you believe that the Rosatis are so awed by Vince McMahon that they allow themselves to be made to look "ridiculous" and "have no lives" outside of wrestling. Then she mentions Jameson, as if to say the Rosatis are being taken advantage of by Vince McMahon because they aren't paid for what they do and Jameson is.

Jameson is a paid professional. The Rosatis are fans. They do what they do because they enjoy it. They are sincere in their love for this business and they are, so far, unsoiled by the trashier side of the business. To me, it is refreshing that there are still some "smart" fans out there who can go to wrestling simply for the enjoyment of it. Whatever perks Vince gives the Rosati sisters is out of appreciation for their loyalty and support. If they got paid for what they did, then it would all be just another work.

Name withheld by request

When Randy Savage proposed to Elizabeth, who answered, "Oh, yeaaa!" the fan reaction wasn't nearly that impressive, particularly considering Wrestlemania VII. I think Savage's commentary was responsible because when he came out, the fans didn't know whether to cheer or boo him. John Tolos did nothing with the Beverly Brothers. He was also a complete waste with Mr. Perfect. Overall it was the worst WWF television taping I've ever seen. I expected at least an angle or two. Anything. It was awful. That tag match at Summer Slam sounds like a real winner, right? And to think, I skipped my softball game to go to the show.

Scott James
Sacramento, California

DM: I know of one person who wouldn't have skipped his softball game to see the show.

Howard Brody was not fired from the UWF. After the disastrous show on 6/7 in Fort Lauderdale, where he was given no advertising budget and Herb Abrams didn't take out any television commercials to promote the card, Abrams asked Brody not to come to the pay-per-view show on 6/9. Abrams called him a few days after the show and asked him to promote the 7/20 television taping, but he refused, citing he didn't want to be related with that organization anymore.

In regards to Steve Planamenta's comments that I never called the WWF in regards to the press conference, that is a lie. I have called the WWF repeatedly to talk with Planamenta to confirm items. Steve hasn't called me back once since I wrote a negative column on the WWF's portrayal of the U.S./Iraq war.

I called the WWF on Tuesday and spoke to a secretary who said she had given Steve all of my messages. I called the WWF on July 19 to find out what the "normal channels" Vince McMahon referred to in his press conference were in regards to interviewing WWF wrestlers. A WWF spokesman, who shall remain nameless because the person might get yelled at, or worse, forced to watch taped matches of The Warlord for hours, said the channel was Steve Planamenta.

I have wanted to give the WWF a fair opportunity to defend itself against accusations of steroid abuse and to explain what the "most comprehensive drug testing policy in sports" is. Every attempt has been rebuffed. But to the WWF, this is irresponsible journalism.

Alex Marvez
Miami Herald

STEROIDS

Your reporting on the Zahorian case and related items have been damn interesting. While the Superstar Graham case and others enlightened me somewhat about the perils of steroid abuse, nothing reached inside of me and grabbed me by my guts the way the Maria Shriver segment on Lyle Alzado did. This guy I had watched kick ass on the football field every Sunday for 14 years ended up having little Maria have to help him walk out the door and down three steps. It was a slap in the face type of awakening to see this once feared monster transformed into nothing more than a helpless skeleton. Maybe his health problems aren't related to steroids. But I wonder if everyone who saw this piece or

Continued from page 7. see Ric Flair leave. I guess, if you compare him with Hogan, he's sincere. But they aired the finish of the Windham-Luger match where Luger won the title and TBS legal contacted them and told them they didn't want them airing anymore finishes. Can you imagine the equivalent in another sport? Major League Baseball telling them they can't air the final out of a World Series or Football telling them they can't air a replay of the touchdown that won the Super Bowl? Of course, if those companies did, they would get away with it but WCW, which gets no national publicity, now wants to pick-and-choose. To make it even sillier, the previous Wednesday on the local sportscast, Michael gave Lex Luger a five minute interview to plug the card. . . The 7/17 show in Dayton, OH drew about 820 paid. . . Ratings last weekend saw WCW on 7/13 do a 2.1, Main Event on the day of the PPV do a 1.9 and Power Hour do a 1.4, so all three were pretty bad. . . 7/19 in Charleston, WV drew 1,700 as El Gigante won a 20 man Battle Royal (highlight being when Rick Steiner, who wasn't in the Battle Royal, ran in and attacked Dallas Page who was (now you figure out why Page, Big Daddy Dink and Teddy Long were in a Battle Royal and Rick Steiner wasn't), and tore off all his clothes, leaving him with just a little bit of cloth to cover his crotch. Also Rhodes beat Morton, Anderson beat P.N. News via forfeit when News' bags were lost in transit, Freebirds beat Desperados, Zenk beat Studd by pinning Page, Badd beat Rich, Rick Steiner & Ron Simmons beat Hard Liners in a cage match, Austin beat Eaton (best match) and Yellow Dog pinned Taylor. . . 7/18 in Cleveland drew 800 as News & Yellow Dog beat Taylor & Austin, Gigante beat Gang, Sting beat Nikita Koloff via count out in a death match, Steiner & Zenk beat Hard Liners in a cage match, Lex Luger pinned Eaton (no crowd reaction at all, fans didn't know who was face or heel), Rhodes beat Morton and Badd beat JFD. . . 7/20 in Johnson City, TN drew 1,100 as Michael Hayes & Bad Street beat Black Bart & Dutch Mantell -*1/2, Badd pinned Rich 1/2*, Zenk pinned Studd (not Page in this case), DUD, Rhodes pinned Morton *1/2, Anderson pinned News DUD, Yellow Dog beat Windham via count out **, Austin pinned Eaton **, Gigante won a 20 man Battle Royal DUD and Steiner & Simmons beat Hard Liners in a cage match *1/2. . . No blood in any of the cage matches. . . No-shows advertised on

the house shows this week included Scott Steiner, Missy Hyatt, Paul E. Dangerously, Mr. Hughes, Oz and Deadeye Dick. . . The Missy-Dangerously thing was dropped because Jim Herd decided to pull the plug on it. While I don't disagree in that the build-up got out-of-hand at times, you don't build something up for six months, then pull the plug on it right as it's about to hit the house shows, particularly when it is being advertised and you aren't changing the advertising. . . The sad part about all of this is that most people don't even get mad about this, they just don't even care enough about the promotion where it makes a difference. . . 7/21 in Knoxville drew 1,200 as Freebirds beat Desperados, Zenk pinned Studd, Badd pinned Rich, Rhodes pinned Morton, Anderson pinned News, Yellow Dog beat Windham, Austin beat Eaton, Gigante won Battle Royal and Steiner & Simmons beat Hard Liners in a cage match. . . There were "We Want Flair" chants this week at some of the shows, but not at all of them, even though Flair was never advertised on these shows except probably for Cleveland. . . This week in California saw the 7/25 show in San Bernardino already be canceled because the advance as of the weekend was only 100 tickets. The San Diego for Wednesday advance was just over 200 tickets but that hasn't been canceled. The 7/23 show at the Forum in Los Angeles had an advance of around 1,000 tickets. . . The U.S. title tournament on 8/25 at the Omni in Atlanta will have Windham, Koloff, Sting, Eaton, Austin, Anderson, Rhodes, Yellow Dog, Studd, Zenk and Badd. . . The world tag team tournament is supposed to be decided on television in September. On TV this weekend will be Hard Liners vs. Freebirds, the following weekend has Enforcers (Anderson & Larry Zbyszko) vs. Young Pistols and the week after that has Josh & Gigante vs. Black Blood & One Man Gang.

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