

Wrestling Observer Newsletter

February 17, 1992

Just days after the Florida state legislature voted down the bill to implement steroid testing of pro wrestlers, World Championship Wrestling Executive Vice President Kip Frey announced the promotion would be announcing an anti-steroid policy within the next week. No details about the policy were available at press time but it will include wrestlers making public service anti-steroid promos on television. Hopefully Frey, who is a newcomer to the wrestling world, will realize the touchiness involved in this issue and not try to have wrestlers who have achieved the spotlight partially through the use of steroids (which covers a lot of ground) to then make statements that give one the impression they would never touch the stuff. Frey also said in comments for this coming Sunday's Miami Herald that WCW would be instituting a policy to post signs in front of arenas when advertised talent isn't going to appear.

The bill to regulate pro wrestling in the state of Florida, which would have included mandatory random steroid testing in all promotions that operate in the state, was voted down by an 8-1 margin by the state Committee on Regulated Industries this past Friday.

Even in defeat, the bill garnered a decent amount of media publicity throughout the state of Florida to the issue of steroid use and false advertising in pro wrestling. The bill's defeat, which was largely expected all along, can be attributed to many things. The most notable of them was a heavy lobbying effort by veteran Florida lobbyist James Tillman, hired by the World Wrestling Federation to torpedo the bill and a general lack of respect for the subject of pro wrestling by the committee. From the beginning, several legislators simply judged the merits of regulating pro wrestling on whether or not it was "real" or "fake" and once it was established as, in those parameters, "fake," there was a prevalent attitude that the subject therefore wasn't worthy of serious discussion.

Legislative analyst Janet Clark proposed the idea of regulating pro wrestling in a lengthy report prepared in October, which led to a committee meeting in early November which most heavily emphasized, in fact if anything overemphasized, the issue of anabolic steroid use in pro wrestling. The meeting secondarily covered the blatant false advertising of both the WWF and WCW. The meeting included testimony from former wrestler Bob Roop, myself and Marylou Gantner (mother of former wrestler Ed Gantner who committed suicide on December 31, 1990 which she blamed on his long-time steroid problem). The committee agreed after the November meeting to allow Don Hazelton, who headed the Florida State Athletic Commission (which governs professional boxing and kick boxing) to author a bill. Perhaps the most telling sign from my perspective about just how little is known about steroids within the general public, or perhaps better stated how much of a generation gap there is on the subject, was after the meeting speaking with Hazelton and a few of the legislators on the subject of steroids. One asked me whether or not I thought Lee Haney or Arnold Schwarzenegger had ever used steroids. The bill, as discussed here, had many problems because too much of the legislation proposed involved placing the standards imposed on pro boxing and kick boxing to pro wrestling. In many cases they aren't applicable since you can't apply standards of competitive sports to something that is best labeled as athletic entertainment.

It was clear that bill wouldn't pass, nor should it have, even though the bylaws in many ways were similar to antiquated and unapplicable laws in other states. Over the last two weeks before the scheduled hearing in which the bill would be voted on, many political maneuverings were going back-and-forth.

Clark re-wrote the bill as a "bare-bones" measure eliminating virtually everything discussed and criticized in these pages about the original amendments with the exception of what some would construe as needed measures regarding the two major issues discussed at the original meeting and the subject of blading. The new legislation would have:

*No longer required licensing of and licensing fees to be paid to the commission by ring officials. All wrestlers would have to be

licensed with the commission so that their names would be on file for the random anabolic steroid and street drug tests, however there would be no licensing or registration fee

*Promoters would be charged an annual fee for a promoter's license. If the promoter averaged more than 1,000 paying spectators per event in Florida over the previous year, his license fee would be \$1,000 (which would mean only WWF and WCW). All others wishing to promote would have to pay \$250 for a promoters license

*There would be a five percent tax on all live gates. The original bill included taxes not only on live gates, but also on gimmicks sold at live events and pay-per-view revenue from systems within the state

*14 days prior to every live show, the promotion would have to file an intended card with the commission which would be the same as the card being advertised either in newspaper/radio ads or on television. Any changes in the card would be required at the live event to be posted in front of the building before the show and specifically announced before the card begins. Announcements that refunds are being offered over the p.a. must be made at least twice during the show.

*The commission has a right to ask promoters to place a \$3,000 or greater performance bond to be used in case of skipping town without paying bills (due to the incident involving Herb Abrams' "Beach Brawl" show this past June)

*Blading was strictly prohibited with punishment being a \$5,000 fine for first instance and possible suspension of the promoter's license for repeated offenses

*Mandatory steroid testing. The promotions would be not only allowed to, but required to handle the testing themselves but must give the state an accounting of the drug tests. If there is evidence of falsifying tests, then the state has the right to take over the testing

The bill's only opposition came from wrestling promoters. The WWF, which at one point threatened to pull out of the state if the bill was passed, was the only one to pay a lobbyist to try and kill the bill. WCW in a meeting the previous week decided that they would also pull out of the state if the bill was passed with a threat being made to pull the 5/19 WrestleWar PPV show out of Jacksonville. WCW cited the five percent tax as the reason for pulling out although that seemed to be a "cover reason" since the world of public relations doesn't allow one to admit that the company realized many of its main event wrestlers couldn't pass unannounced random steroid tests and the risk it provided if tests were implemented by an outside body. Both the WWF and/or WCW regularly run shows in Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, and Oregon where the commission gate tax runs anywhere from six to 10 percent and some cities, when a city amusement tax is added in, live gates from both groups can be taxed up to 16 percent and neither group has pulled out of any of those cities or states.

There was talk over the past week of pulling the sales tax in order to eliminate the "cover reason" for opposition to the bill and put the onus on support or opposition into forcing the companies into a public pro-steroids vs. anti-steroids stance not through rhetoric but by their own actions. However, that idea was vetoed because it was felt it would have doomed the bill because the legislature wouldn't have spent time discussing or considering, let alone passing, a bill that didn't generate revenue for the state. There was also talk, mainly a last-ditch effort when it became obvious the bill wasn't going to pass, of trying to back-door the steroid legislation, writing it into another bill regarding gaming or pari-mutuals that would pass and the steroids in wrestling regulation would go into law that way. But those opposed forced the issue to be voted on Friday. As it was, one of the major reasons the bill was voted down was because some committee members felt the amount of revenue the state projected to net from regulating wrestling (about \$70,000 per year) wasn't enough to warrant spending time

discussing the issue. So rather than the actual merits of the bill being discussed and analyzed, it boiled down to a both a simple dollars and cents issue that the tax wouldn't create enough new revenue combined with an intense lobbying effort by one side on a subject in which there was no economic support group on the other side.

The bill was allotted 30 minutes of discussion time, taken up exclusively by Tillman. Alex Marvez of the Miami Herald (whose late June story on anabolic steroids in pro wrestling served at the catalyst for Clark's starting the ball rolling on regulating wrestling because of the alleged steroid problem) and Three Count Newsletter was there to speak for the bill. Former wrestler Superstar Billy Graham sent a videotape message to the committee with his thoughts on the anabolic steroid aspect of the bill and problems within the business. Because of the time limit, neither voice was heard. It should be pointed out that in the original hearing in November, two speakers opposing the bill, independent promoter Henry Rains (Suncoast Pro Wrestling) and Tillman weren't allowed to speak because of similar time restrictions.

While the bill isn't technically dead, as it can be brought up once again in the fall, it's extremely unlikely to get any farther given the margin of the defeat.

Tillman, speaking on behalf of the WWF, tried to present pro wrestling in the silliest terms possible since the real vs. fake issue seemed the most critical to most of the legislators. "Wrestling is not a professional sport. It's sports entertainment. It's no different than the circus or a Willie Nelson concert. Wrestlers come to town, get into their costume, paint up their faces. It's all choreographed. The outcome (of the matches) is generally well-known in advance (by the audience)." Tillman talked about wrestlers fighting each other with snakes, matches with dueling songs playing in the background as the wrestlers exchanged advantages and other silliness that even the WWF hasn't stretched the limits to yet, as the norm in today's wrestling fare. He called the WWF "a family owned business since the 1920s." In reality, the WWF, then called WWWF wasn't formed until 1963; Titan Sports wasn't even formed until 1982, although Vince McMahon Sr.'s Capital Wrestling Corporation dates back to the late 1950s when McMahon took over Toots Mondt's territory, and it wasn't until around 1983 when the business was wholly owned by the McMahon family when Vince Jr. bought out the minority ownership of Gorilla Monsoon, Phil Zacko and others. Tillman admitted the WWF was guilty of false advertising but said, "The WWF wants to stop that and I believe they will." He also said "The WWF doesn't allow its wrestlers to cut themselves," in reference to blading. While blading is quite rare in the WWF and has been for a few years, there are occasions such as the Marty Janetty/Shawn Michaels angle from last month or a half-dozen Hulk Hogan matches where it does take place under the auspices of the WWF. At one point, a legislator asked Tillman if it would be okay if they eliminated the gate tax and steroid legislation and just kept the false advertising and blading clauses and Tillman said, "No," and the attempt to pass an even more limited bill was withdrawn.

About steroids, Tillman said, "There's no doubt about the use of anabolic steroids in wrestling...Regulating wrestling is not going to solve the steroid problem until the state of Florida and the law enforcement agencies get serious about it. The WWF has a recognized drug testing program. They've had it since June 1987. Up until last summer, there was no valid way to test for steroids." In reality, the steroid testing procedure used by implementing gas chromatography and mass spectrometry (GC/MS) was first implemented in 1983 and little has changed with the procedure since. Drug gurus and steroid experts have had eight years experience in finding and exploiting the flaws in the system. Tillman also noted that some of the biggest abusers of steroids are the law enforcement officers themselves.

Before the vote, several representatives gave their views on the legislation. The lone supporter, Rep. Norman Ostarau, the committee chairman said: "The amendment regarding false advertising is an instant remedy. You don't have to go anywhere to sue anybody. You just have to ask for your money back. That's fair to the public. Regarding steroids, because of their (wrestlers) high visibility, they shouldn't have steroid use. We have heard testimony that wrestlers could not get off (steroids) because their federation said they had to keep up the

use to build up their muscles. That's the wrong image the state needs to show. This bill doesn't regulate the industry, it only regulates the abuses within the industry."

Rep. Sam Mitchell countered by saying, "I don't see a need at this stage of game for regulation. You're telling me we'll get \$142,000 in (from the gate tax) and we'll spend \$72,000 to add a commission member. We're spending a lot of time sitting around this table talking about an insignificant thing. Why do we want to regulate something that doesn't need regulation?" Rep. George Albright concurred, saying, "It's not much of a sport. I just think we should quit getting into every facet of people's lives. This is entertainment. It's out there for the little guy." Added Rep. Ron Silver, "Government has so many things to do right now and I think you have to prioritize somewhere. There were some good points brought up. Maybe at a different place at a different time we need to address it."

After the defeat, Hazelton said that, "The false advertising aspect is an important one. Steroids is an issue where Mr. Tillman is abundantly correct. It's all over the place. But they are incorrect when they say state's attorneys won't do anything about false advertising or anything else. They may not. But the state athletic commission does. We've gone to the mat with Don King and Bob Arum and we always win. We fine people and make them get in line. We're one of the most stringent states on boxing. We think we have the ability to do that as far as wrestling is concerned. Maybe not this year, but maybe down the road."

MOST OVERRATED

1. SID JUSTICE (121)991
2. Hulk Hogan (123)800
3. Van Hammer (60)571
4. Ultimate Warrior (29)356
5. El Gigante (25)214

Honorable Mention: Sting 198, Sgt. Slaughter 155, Lex Luger 148, P.N. News 127, Warlord 108, Oz 107, Roddy Piper 105, Dustin Rhodes 101

PREVIOUS WINNERS

- 1980 - Mr. Wrestling II
- 1981 - Pedro Morales
- 1982 - Pedro Morales
- 1983 - Bob Backlund
- 1984 - Big John Studd
- 1985 - Hulk Hogan
- 1986 - Hulk Hogan
- 1987 - Dusty Rhodes
- 1988 - Dusty Rhodes
- 1989 - Ultimate Warrior
- 1990 - Ultimate Warrior

JOHN MCADAM: I will concede that Dustin Rhodes is not a bad wrestler. But his interviews are terrible and he lacks in charisma. If WCW wanted to push a young lion, there were many more deserving with Brian Pillman coming immediately to mind. But which one got the tag team title and which one got the banana suit? There's no way Dustin deserves the treatment he got from his father and if you disagree, why don't you count how many jobs he did during 1991.

TERESA DEMARIE: When you consider he can't talk, wrestle and has no interesting facet of personality, you have to wonder why Sid Justice even has a job, let alone a major push and being a future world champion.

MYSTERY: It's hard to limit it to just three because there are too many, but Justice takes the cake for being mega-hyped by both major promotions while at the same time being just about the worst worker on each circuit.

ANDY THURSTON: Sid Justice, and some people actually like this stiff.

BOB CLOSSON: The fact that Sgt. Slaughter was a world champion this year makes him the winner.

MOST UNDERRATED

1. TERRENCE TAYLOR (129)905
2. Naoki Sano (27)439
3. Brian Pillman (47)413

4. Brad Armstrong (38)382
5. Bobby Eaton (33)381

Honorable Mention: Tsuyoshi Kikuchi 297, Ricky Steamboat 174, Cactus Jack 156, Jushin Liger 149, Owen Hart 128, Kenta Kobashi 125, Billy Black 112, Shawn Michaels 98, Pegasus Kid 83, Akira Nogami 81, Kato 80

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1980 - Iron Sheik
 1981 - Buzz Sawyer
 1982 - Adrian Adonis
 1983 - Dynamite Kid
 1984 - Brian Blair
 1985 - Bobby Eaton
 1986 - Bobby Eaton
 1987 - Brad Armstrong
 1988 - Tiger Mask (Mitsuharu Misawa)
 1989 - Dan Kroffat
 1990 - Bobby Eaton

JOHN MUSE: Underrated is when you're a top worker and you're putting over local wrestlers for no good reason. Underrated is Terry Taylor.

MICHAEL MCGOWEN: I feel sorry for Brad Armstrong. The Candy Man gimmick was corny, but it wasn't that bad. Fantasia was WCW's version of the Gobbledy Gooker, but at least it wrestled. I liked Bad Street because he got to wrestle as a heel, but Arachnaman has got to go. Armstrong must be cursed.

GABRIEL DAIGLE: Brian Pillman is so misused. He's the Rodney Dangerfield of WCW. He and Scott Steiner should be the young guys they build the franchise around, but instead they screw him over at every turn, give him a light heavyweight title in a poor excuse for a tournament and then make sure everyone knows the belt is worthless as he becomes a jobber on TV.

CHRIS ZAVISA: Tommy Rogers is one of this country's best wrestlers. It speaks volumes for the state of wrestling in this country that he never works in this country.

BILL STRONG: When Sid Vicious left WCW, he complained that he did more jobs than Tim Horner. He was wrong. The one who did more jobs was Terry Taylor.

BEST PROMOTION

1. ALL JAPAN (197)1,421
2. New Japan (106)1,261
3. All Japan Women (116)752
4. WWF (72)590
5. WCW (23)385

Honorable Mention: FMW 277, Tri-State Wrestling 255, Global Wrestling Federation 152, EMLL 117

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1983 - Jim Crockett Promotions
 1984 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1985 - All Japan Pro Wrestling
 1986 - Universal Wrestling Federation (U.S.)
 1987 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1988 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1989 - Universal Wrestling Federation (Japan)
 1990 - All Japan Pro Wrestling

EDDIE GOLDMAN: All Japan has the potential to be a major U.S. promotion if it wants to.

MYSTERY: All Japan women has always has shows filled with three-star plus matches with everyone putting out 100 percent in their match. When you watch their cards you know that there's nothing left to ask for.

BOBBY YATES: There isn't a promotion that can touch All Japan women. They have so much talent that even if they wanted to waste it, they couldn't.

PAUL HANLIN: A bad All Japan women's card is miles ahead of the beset show you'd see in the U.S.

DAN LENNARD: They may be the most predictable, but All Japan also puts on the best cards and matches in the world night after night.

BEST TELEVISION SHOW

1. ALL JAPAN (204)1,240
2. New Japan (54)884
3. WWF Superstars (76)679
4. WCW Saturday Night (64)662
5. WWF Prime Time (26)280

Honorable Mention: Global Supercard 201, USWA Memphis Wrestling 180, WCW Main Event 158, Galavision Lucha Libre 93, Portland Wrestling 80

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1983 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1984 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1985 - Mid South Wrestling
 1986 - UWF Wrestling (U.S.)
 1987 - CWA 90 Minute Memphis show
 1988 - New Japan Pro Wrestling
 1989 - All Japan Pro Wrestling
 1990 - All Japan Pro Wrestling

TERESA DEMARIE: When it comes to one hour of marketing mania on television, you can't beat Superstars of Wrestling. The matches generally suck, but they do throw you a bone during sweeps and the commentary with Randy Savage and Roddy Piper was entertaining enough to ignore the wrestling.

ANDY STOWELL: New Japan has exciting opens, interesting vignettes that you don't even have to understand Japanese to enjoy and great matches in hot arenas. The footage of Riki Choshu visiting kids in the hospital last summer was really touching without coming off the least big heavy-handed like a U.S. promotion would do. New Japan is always the first show I watch when tapes come in the mail.

EVAN SCHLESINGER: All Japan is pure Japanese style wrestling at its best. P-p-p-pro Wrestling News is a great segment and even though I can't understand a word of it, I still love it.

STEVE SIMS: All Japan Pro Wrestling tops a great year of Japanese wrestling on television. On a scale of 1-10, I'd give All Japan a 9.5 for the year.

MYSTERY: The WMC show in Memphis is the most fun to watch each week because you never know what's going to happen. Guys turn back-and-forth every week, new wrestlers are always coming and going and Eric Embry really cracks me up.

MATCH OF THE YEAR

1. STEINERS VS. HASE & SASAKI
 3-21 Tokyo (85)672
2. Bull Nakano vs. Akira Hokuto
 1-4 Tokyo (69)609
3. Flair-Zbyszko-Vicious-Windham vs. Steiners-Sting-Pillman
 WAR GAMES 2-24 Phoenix (56)558
4. Cactus Jack vs. Eddie Gilbert
 8-3 Philadelphia (75)522
5. Steiners vs. Sting & Lex Luger
 5-19 St. Petersburg (34)484

Honorable Mention: Arn Anderson & Larry Zbyszko vs. Ricky Steamboat & Dustin Rhodes 11-18 Savannah 342, Randy Savage vs. Ultimate Warrior 3-24 Los Angeles Wrestlemania 285, Mr. Perfect vs. Bret Hart 8-27 New York 240, Mitsuharu Misawa & Toshiaki Kawada & Kenta Kobashi vs. Jumbo Tsuruta & Akira Taue & Masa Fuchi 4-20 Tokyo 206, Jushin Liger vs. Hiroshi Hase 5-6 Tokyo 205, Keiji Muto vs. Masa Chono 8-11 Tokyo 174, Jushin Liger vs. Pegasus Kid 10-18 Hiroshima 165, Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Kenta Kobashi 5-24 Osaka 136, Hulk Hogan vs. Ric Flair 10-25 Oakland 123, Jushin Liger vs. Owen Hart 4-27 Okinawa 104, Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Toshiaki Kawada 10-24 Yokohama 97, Aja Kong & Bison Kimura vs. Esther Moreno & Manami Toyota 4-29 Tokyo 97, Ric Flair vs. Tatsumi Fujinami 3-21 Tokyo 94

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1980 - Bob Backlund vs. Ken Patera (New York)
 1981 - Pat Patterson vs. Sgt. Slaughter (4-21 New York)
 1982 - Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama) vs. Dynamite Kid (8-25 Tokyo)
 1983 - Ric Flair vs. Harley Race (11-24 Greensboro)
 1984 - Michael Hayes & Terry Gordy & Buddy Roberts vs. Kevin & Kerry & Mike Von Erich (7-4 Fort Worth)
 1985 - Tiger Mask (Mitsuharu Misawa) vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi (6-12 Tokyo)
 1986 - Ric Flair vs. Barry Windham (2-14 Orlando)
 1987 - Ricky Steamboat vs. Randy Savage (3-29 Pontiac)
 1988 - Ric Flair vs. Sting (3-27 Greensboro)
 1989 - Ric Flair vs. Ricky Steamboat (4-2 New Orleans)
 1990 - Jushin Liger vs. Naoki Sano (1-31 Osaka)

FRANK STROM: Steiners vs. Hiroshi Hase & Kensuke Sasaki from the Tokyo Dome was a dream match come true. Four of the best working up to their potential. The action never let up. I saw the unedited version from Japan it was amazing how many great moves WCW cut out of their American PPV version.

JOHN MUSE: The 4/20 Mitsuharu Misawa & Toshiaki Kawada & Kenta Kobashi vs. Jumbo Tsuruta & Akira Taue & Masa Fuchi match blew away every other great match this year. It was 52 minutes of non-stop action and great drama. This was the best match I've seen since The Flair-Steamboat New Orleans match.

MICHAEL MCGOWEN: The War Games from Phoenix was the most intense match I'd seen in ages. There was so much action that the camera could barely follow it.

GABRIEL DAIGLE: The War Games was over 20 minutes of non-stop action that reminded me of how great wrestling can be at its best.

CHRIS ZAVISA: The best matches since Flair vs. Steamboat have consistently been those matches involving Misawa and Tsuruta. Not a week went by without them having at least one four-star match somewhere in Japan. We were lucky enough to see many of them on television. The longest and the best of them was the 52-minute effort on 4/20 that had the fans chanting the names of the competitors and even the promoter long after the match and ended.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

1. SENSATIONAL SHERRI (135)1,104
2. Paul Bearer (134)960
3. Paul E. Dangerously (84)781
4. Bobby Heenan (48)540
5. Jim Cornette (40)515

Honorable Mention: Jimmy Hart 144, Theodore Long 143

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1983 - Jimmy Hart
 1984 - Jimmy Hart
 1985 - Jim Cornette
 1986 - Jim Cornette
 1987 - Jim Cornette
 1988 - Jim Cornette
 1989 - Jim Cornette
 1990 - Jim Cornette

MITCH NAKAGAWA: Paul Bearer because anything related to The Undertaker is a winner.

MYSTERY: Paul Bearer is part of the reason The Undertaker is so over and without him I doubt Undertaker would be a top draw.

MIKE OMANSKY: Jimmy Hart emerged as the WWF's best manager and he can make weak sells like Typhoon and Bravo into credible heels and add to already strong acts.

JEFF COHEN: Sherri's job was made easier by the fact she managed two extraordinary talents in Randy Savage and Ted DiBiase.

PAUL HANLIN: Paul Bearer might sound like Mickey Mouse on LSD but he was also beyond great. I never knew Percy Pringle had it in him.

 Hard news hit the world of pro wrestling this past week when

former pro wrestler "Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer died on Friday (2/7) at the age of 32. One of the greatest pure athletes in the business during the 1980s, Sawyer's career was mixed with acknowledgement by his peers as one of the best workers around but also well-known as a person whose inability to control excesses kept him from maintaining the superstardom level his physical talents gave him the potential to attain. It was a level that he did achieve early in his career before his 22nd birthday. Despite his smallish stature by pro wrestling standards, Sawyer was generally regarded as one of the toughest men in the profession. According to the Sacramento coroners office, Sawyer was found by his live-in girlfriend passed out in the front yard of his home in the capital city of California. She called 911 and he was rushed to Mercy San Juan Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Results of the autopsy were unavailable at press time but it is believed Sawyer died of a drug overdose.

Sawyer, born Bruce Woyan on June 14, 1959, grew up in St. Petersburg and was an outstanding high school wrestler. As a high school junior in 1976, he placed third in the nation in the junior (teenage) nationals in the 191.5 pound weight class. He broke into the wrestling business right out of high school and even as a rookie in Florida in 1979 (he captured several national rookie of the year awards) he wowed veteran wrestlers with his incredible physical gifts. In his youth, Sawyer was a compact powerhouse at 5-9 1/2 and 235 pounds built along the lines of Rick Steiner (who in many ways emulated Sawyer's ring style when Rick Steiner was a rookie and Sawyer was a main event heel in the old Mid South Wrestling promotion and Bill Watts put the two together often as a tag team so Steiner could learn to perfect a style to take advantage of his similar physical gifts). He combined that with leaping ability that belied his squatty dimensions, similar to Doug Furnas, and incredible mid-air agility. He invented and perfected a flying powerslam maneuver used nowadays by Kensuke Sasaki, but not even Sasaki could match the precision Sawyer had with the move in the early 1980s before injuries started taking their toll. Those physical talents combined with a Cactus Jack-like willingness to take psychotic bumps made him one of the country's wildest and best workers after just two years in the business.

Sawyer held tag team titles early in his career with partner Matt Borne (now Big Josh in WCW) in Oregon and the Carolinas and later in World Class. He made his biggest national name in the early 1980s in Georgia with a bloody feud with Tommy Rich. He was named by the Wrestling Observer as Most Underrated Wrestler in 1981 and Heel of the Year in 1982. His feud with Rich which came close to legendary proportions finished second in Feud of the Year for 1982. However injuries suffered from his reckless in-ring style combined with other personal demons kept him from reaching the top-ten in the world status of worker level he seemed destined to achieve. He was one of the original raids by Vince McMahon Jr. when the WWF expanded nationally in 1984, but he was also one of the first "raiders" to be fired. He bounced in and out of the business for the next several years, never lasting anywhere for any major length of time although he was a headliner and top heel for such major promotions as Bill Watts' Mid South Wrestling, World Class Championship Wrestling, World Championship Wrestling (when Ric Flair was booker) and had a few years as a regular headliner with New Japan Pro Wrestling. In all cases, his in-ring work was super, but he wound up being fired. He'd always resurface somewhere else a few months later minus even more hair and with another ten pounds of added bodyweight. But whenever and wherever he was rehired, when he got down to working, he stay with the best in any territory. He was a particular long-time favorite of many-time Atlanta booker Ole Anderson who gave him his first shot at superstardom. Sawyer hadn't worked for a major promotion regularly since he broke his wrist doing a splash off the top rope while working the Wrestle War PPV show in Greensboro on February 25, 1990 and was fired by Jim Herd a few weeks later. He worked a few California dates for WCW in early 1991, and got the biggest reaction on cards in Los Angeles and San Francisco despite being off television for nearly one year. By this time he appeared to weigh in the 280 range. While he still took great bumps, he had very limited stamina. His excesses aged him rapidly, because he easily looked ten years older than he really was. Sawyer, who along with younger brother Brett, now 31, who also wrestled during the 1980s, had been living in Sacramento for the past few years and had run a pro wrestling school. Buzz trained several men, most notable of them current WCW assistant booker Magnum T.A., to become wrestlers. The

coroner stated that he had severe alcohol and drug problems during the last years of his life.

In a major surprise, the Legion of Doom dropped the WWF tag team titles on Friday night (2/7) in Denver to Ted DiBiase & IRS (Mike Rotunda). While it was somewhat well known on the inside that there would be a title switch involving the two teams before Wrestlemania, the fact that it happened so abruptly appears to have been a last minute decision. There was no acknowledgement of it on the WWF weekend television shows including the Fox special. In fact, the DiBiase & IRS tag team had yet to debut on television. The weekend television shows were still building up future tag team title defenses by LOD against The Natural Disasters. As the story goes, while the LOD did know they were going to lose the belts at some point before Wrestlemania to DiBiase & IRS, none of the four knew the change was going to be that specific night or that they would even wrestle one another that night (LOD vs. Disasters and DiBiase & IRS vs. Big Bossman & Tito Santana were the scheduled bouts for the night) until 8 p.m. that night. Supposedly LOD had been promised there would be no cameras present for the switch (the WWF had a film crew tape the match although at press time we have no idea when or if it'll ever air--the WWF also taped the house show Bret Hart/Mountie title switch but it never aired on television) and some people were visibly unhappy about that being the case. It was the first chance the WWF had to get the belts off LOD since rumors started swirling everywhere of them being ready to jump back to WCW or possibly New Japan when their WWF contract expires in June. LOD, as the Road Warriors, received one of the most lucrative (at the time) contracts in pro wrestling history from Jim Crockett, a three-year deal (1988-90) for \$2,000 per appearance apiece and a guaranteed 250 live dates per year. They quit WCW halfway through the final year of the contract when Jim Herd offered them a reported \$156,000 apiece for 1991, which they felt insulted by. At the time, those in charge at WCW felt they were grossly overpaid. Judged by their drawing power at the time, there's no doubt that was the case, so WCW was more than happy to give them a release six months before expiration of the deal and allow them to join the WWF. While the WWF doesn't guarantee money so actual salaries are virtually impossible to accurately ascertain (unless you see someone's tax forms), there is no question LOD didn't make anywhere close to what they were earning with WCW when they hit "the big time." And it's hardly a secret that they have been among the most vocal in opposition to the WWF steroid testing policy. With Crockett, who gave them the original super contract, back in a power position in the WCW organization, let's just say there's a lot of smoke right now even if it may be premature to yell fire. Hawk had been out of action for a few weeks with a hip pointer and this was the duo's first match back together. Several WWF sources and those close to LOD insist that they aren't leaving the WWF and they haven't given notice. But I'd guess chances of them leaving aren't slim.

Fans in Denver were told before the changed match by announcer Mel Phillips that Jack Tunney said The Natural Disasters will get no more tag team title shots so in order to give the fans a tag team title defense they were going to flip-flop the two tag team matches. The match lasted 11:49 with the finish coming with Hawk on the top rope about to give DiBiase a clothesline. Sensational Sherri (who won't be managing DiBiase & IRS as a team so I'm told and will strictly work as manager of Shawn Michaels who will be getting a big heel push) distracted referee Earl Hebner, while Earthquake and Typhoon rolled down the aisle. Typhoon hit Hawk with a chair and he fell into the ring and was pinned by DiBiase. While nobody seems to know this for sure, it's being widely speculated that LOD will work against the Disasters at Wrestlemania in some kind of gimmick street fight match while DiBiase & IRS will defend the belts against another babyface team, almost assuredly Sgt. Slaughter & Jim Duggan. At the house shows for the remainder of the weekend in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, the LOD came to the ring with the belts and still announced as champions and "retained" the titles against the Disasters, so officially the title won't change hands until they acknowledge it on television. In Sacramento on 2/10, Hawk missed the card without explanation or an announcement even though he was in the arena, but Animal came to the ring wearing the tag belt.

The WWF ran a Saturday Night Main Event on 2/8 on the FOX network after being bounced last summer by NBC. The show was below the quality overall of many of the late-night NBC specials. However most of the pre-Wrestlemania specials have

tended to be that way because there is so much emphasis on getting over a Wrestlemania-calibre angle that little time is left to much else. While they did try to get far too much over in 60 minutes. While the wrestling was neither good nor bad, the key elements in the show were top notch. The focus of the show was supposed to be, and turned out to be, the turn of Sid Justice. Forget about his workrate, as a character, he did the best job of his career in regard to facials and interviews in the middle stage of the storyline leading to the Hogan vs. Justice Wrestlemania main event. It's pretty clear that they are going to exploit the July 4, 1990 boating accident injuries suffered by Brutus Beefcake for all they're worth to hype Mania. Poor taste to be sure, but it's not exactly ground-breaking poor taste by pro wrestling standards as compared with last year. The show certainly leads you to expect Justice doing a major attack on Beefcake, causing Hogan (who they alluded to as giving Beefcake a life-saving blood transfusion after the boating accident during the interview the two did together which I'm almost certain isn't the case) to pull out of the match with Ric Flair to gain revenge for his long-time best friend. It's pretty much the closest thing to the "No Holds Barred" movie plot when you think about it since Sid Justice is the closest thing to Zeus (Tiny Lister on stilts), both in physique and wrestling ability (Lister had the closest racist advantage of being black; but Justice at least has a small amount of working ability). And the first PPV with Hogan vs. Zeus was a huge financial success (something like a 4.8 percent buy rate, a figure that this year's Mania won't come anywhere close to). Beefcake is the closest thing in wrestling to Hogan's brother. Everything on the rest of the show was so rushed that it couldn't have made an impact.

1. Roddy Piper beat The Mountie in 3:24 to keep the Intercontinental title. There was a ref bump at the 2:00 mark. Mountie gave Piper a piledriver and Jimmy Hart grabbed a drink from an official at ringside and gave it to Mountie who poured it on Piper. Mountie zapped Piper, but it had no effect. Piper threw Hart over the top rope (he took a better bump than most of the WWF wrestlers can), got the shock stick and zapped Mountie for the pin. When it was over, Piper pulled off the shirt he wrestled in and wore a wet-suit underneath it with the words "shock proof" written on it. Rushed but watchable. *1/4

Next up was new and improved Royal Rumble footage "as it was supposed to be." Well, visually nothing was different, but the commentary was new (although it was pretended to have been original) to more strongly push Hogan as the face and the soundtrack was completely different, adding in boos for everything Justice did, a "Hogan, Hogan" chant when the fans live were actually booing Hogan and big cheers for Hogan when the fans were booing him. That's what improved technology is there for, to make sure when the normally Pavlovian reaction isn't there, you erase the original and put it there. They showed a series of interviews with Sid slowly turning heel, an insincere apology, and then a Hogan & Sid interview where Sid walked out when Shawn Mooney talked with Hogan first.

2. Hogan & Justice beat Ric Flair & Undertaker in 11:09 via DQ. This was just a backdrop for the angle. Beefcake was at ringside to combat Mr. Perfect and Paul Bearer in the other corner. The story of the match is that Hogan twice saved Sid when he was in danger of being pinned, but Sid didn't save Hogan when caught in the figure four and Hogan had to reverse it himself. Sid had a heel smirk on his face the whole way and kept refusing to tag Hogan and finally walked out on him. As Beefcake tried to stop him, they put major heat on Beefcake's facial injuries. Beefcake made the save for Hogan, but ducked when they were about to clock him and Hogan knocked Flair & Undertaker out of the ring. Somewhere in there Flair knocked down the ref for the DQ. Justice did a very effective post-match promo. **1/4

3. Slaughter & Duggan beat Beverly Brothers in 2:37 when Slaughter hit Blake (Mike Enos) with the scroll and Duggan gave him a spear for the pin. Enos took two spin bumps. A better than average squash match. *

4. Randy Savage pinned Jake Roberts in 5:25 with an elbow drop off the top rope. Savage worked very hard here and it's the first time I've seen him look good in the ring since last year's Wrestlemania. This at least bodes well for Flair vs. Savage since Savage had looked like he'd lost his ability since his "retirement" and that maybe his match with Flair would be a

disappointment. But he's still got it, just doesn't show it very often (which means he surely will at Mania). After the match Roberts was hiding behind the curtain for a "Tune in next week" tease which will wind up with Undertaker turning. **3/4

Whether it's simply coincidence or something else, this was the first major deal where it appeared the WWF steroid policy was having some effect. With one obvious exception, nobody on the show at least appeared to be on steroids (a few might be on but you sure couldn't tell for certain by their appearance). In fact, there were noticeable physical changes in almost everyone. Piper has dropped a lot of weight in the past month or so, Mountie one can't tell because of his outfit, Hogan is so clearly way down in both size and muscle tone that it's confirmation of everything that has been written about him previously, Sid seems to be the exception to the rule, Flair looks the same as always, Undertaker's arms (the only bodypart exposed) are way smaller, Duggan was noticeably fatter (although that could just as easily have absolutely nothing to do with steroids), Slaughter looks the same, Beau Beverly started shrinking a lot back last summer when Vince first talked of steroid testing, Blake Beverly I've got no idea because he was only in enough to do spin bumps, Roberts' arms looked smaller than usual (although he hasn't had a steroid look to him anyway) and Savage has been smaller (and covered up) since last summer. From syndication, there appears to be differences in several others as well, but there are still a significant percentage that have that steroid look to this day and wink, wink, maybe we can buy one or two as being genetic freaks but there are still more than one or two. Still, the WWF has implemented a policy, no matter how much of a joke certain aspects seem to be and how many lies that have been told along the way, that has at least lowered the amount of steroids that some of the guys have used. So it has been effective in some cases short-term.

Here's the details on the arrest of Marty Janetty. Janetty, 32, was arrested at 2 a.m. on Jan. 25 after an incident at the Yucatan Liquor Stand (a Tampa night club). Janetty and a female companion, Angela Ialacci, 19, were trying to get in the club and Ialacci apparently tried to use a fake ID. When the police tried to arrest her, Janetty alleged got involved in the fray and "violently grabbed the officer." Janetty was arrested and he and Ialacci were both searched and officers found less than a gram of cocaine on both of them and a twist-tied bag on Janetty. Janetty was arrested on possession of cocaine, possession of drug paraphernalia and resisting arrest with force. Janetty was then indefinitely suspended by the WWF with the wrestlers being told that he was fired. So reports of Janetty failing a drug test appear to be inaccurate. However, Janetty did appear Sunday night in Japan for his SWS tour booked through the WWF, so either the suspension has already been lifted or some aspect of the suspension was a work on Janetty and the boys.

The Los Angeles Times will be interviewing Billy Graham for a story on anabolic steroids in wrestling on Thursday of this week. Because the Times is looking at giving the story from page play, if the story they run is similar to stories already printed in the New York Post, Miami Herald and Charleston Courier, it would be a devastating blow for those who had thought the story had already run its course. Big play by both The Times and the San Diego Union, which also has a major pro wrestling piece, probably within the next two weeks, focusing on steroids in wrestling, will lead to far more television and newspaper items on the subject nationwide. At last word, it appeared the San Diego story may have a lot more serious charges in other directions.

This is the first issue of the current four-issue set. If you've got a (1) on your address label it means that your Observer subscription will expire in three more weeks. Renewal rates remain \$6 for four issues, \$12 for eight, \$24 for 16, \$36 for 24, \$48 for 32 up through \$60 for 40 issues within the United States and Canada. Rates for overseas airmail subscriptions are \$9 for each set of four issues up through \$90 for 40 issues. All subscription renewals, letters to the editor, news items, reports of live shows and any other correspondence related to this newsletter should be sent to The Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

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EMLL

The return to Arena Mexico in Mexico City on 1/31 drew almost 15,000 fans for the best show in a while as Los Brazos (Brazo de Oro & Brazo de Plata & El Brazo) won 2/3 falls from The Untouchables (Pierroth Jr. & Jaque Mate & Masakre) in 9:39 **3/4 (real good but rushed), Ultimate Dragon won a non-title match from CMLL middleweight champion Blue Panther in 12:49. This was a super match with lots of hot moves, Dragon was accompanied to ringside by Monachan and Mimachan aka Mariko Yoshida & Mima Shimoda from All Japan women who are now working full-time here. Even though Dragon is the face the fans cheered Panther more although both worked the match as babyfaces and third fall was super with all kinds of near falls and Dragon debuting the monkey special, a german suplex rolled into a reverse cradle, for the win which should set up a title match down the line. ****; Atlantis & Rayo de Jalisco Jr. & Salmon Grundy beat Cien Caras & Mascara Ano 2000 & Universo 2000 in 2/3 falls. Third fall finish saw Caras give Salmon Grundy a low blow behind the refs back, which brought out Aaron Grundy (Mike Shaw aka Norman the Lunatic) who behind the refs back gave a big splash onto both Caras and Mascara Ano 2000 *1/2 and main event saw Octagon retain the Mexican middleweight title going to a double disqualification with Fuerza Guerrera in 21:37. Finish saw Guerrera take a bump out of the ring. When Octagon took off for his dive Guerrera was facing the audience as they created a new move. Octagon dove through and caught Guerrera in a bulldog headlock into the front row of seats. Incredible. At this point both Cien Caras and Conan both interfered for the double DQ and brawled all over the place ***1/4. After the match Guerrera, during his interview called the decision a travesty and said that an Anabolic Warrior such as Conan (who doesn't look like an Anabolic Warrior at all anymore) should keep his nose out of his business.

Since the Galavision shows now air the Friday night cards on a nine-day delay rather than a two-day delay as before, those of you with dishes I do know that the show goes up sometime on Saturday (or eight days before air time in the United States).

It appears that Jose Luis Feliciano, Shu El Guerrero, Black Terry, Negro Navarro and Xochitl Hamada are ready to jump from UWA and that the long-rumored jump of UWA middleweight champion Negro Casas (generally considered the country's best worker) is imminent.

This Friday night's Arena Mexico card will probably be headlined by Bestia Salvaje vs. Huracan Sevilla in a hair vs. hair match.

Aaron Grundy is already over more in less than two weeks than Salomon Grundy and they may break them up and push Aaron with a new character.

Just as was the case in the U.S. a few years ago and still is today, there are a growing number of heel fans at both promotion's shows in Mexico City which is why so many of the faces get so roundly booed. Guerrera is super over with those fans in particular. Anyway, as is usually the case, they are the most hardcore and most organized so they sit near the TV mics and get the ringside seats in camera range which is way it's so noticeable on television even when they draw a huge house.

1/25 at Arena Pista Revolucion in Mexico City saw Guerrera beat Octagon via DQ when Octagon faked a non-existent low blow and heel ref El Gato Montini called it.

1/26 at Arena Coliseo in Mexico City saw Salomon & Aaron Grundy over Guerrera & Panther in the main event. Must look ridiculous with the two 400 pounders going against 155 pound Guerrera. Love Machine (Art Barr) is back and managing the Grundy Brothers.

Yoshida & Shimoda debuted on 2/2 at Arena Pista Revolucion teaming with Esther Moreno to lose to Martha Villalobos & Pantera Surena & Neftali. The main event on that show was a midgets hair vs. hair match with Jerrito Estrada beating Ringuito Mendoza via DQ when Estrada threw Mendoza into heel ref El Gato Montini and he DQ'd Mendoza who lost his hair.

The CMLL welterweight tournament started on 2/1 in Puebla.

The 2/7 Arena Mexico show (to air on Galavision Sunday) has Universo 2000 & Mascara Ano 2000 & Caras vs. Conan & Grundy Brothers, Pierroth Jr. & Nitron & Guerrero vs. Mascara Sagrada & Octagon & Canadian Vampire Casanova, Apollo Dantes & Love Machine & Sevilla vs. Salvaje & Kung Fu & Sangre Chicana and Zuleyma & Shimoda & Yoshida vs. Villalobos & Surena & Wendy.

Bull Raider is out of action with a broken ankle.

Tony Arce & Vulcano kept the Mexican tag team titles beating Oro & Plata on 2/5 in Tlalnepantla on the El Santo Memorial show in that city.

UWA

Canek's reign as UWA world heavyweight champion ended on 2/2 at El Toreo in Naucalpan when he lost two of three falls to many-time former champion Dos Caras in 27:00. Both men worked babyface style and Canek put the belt around Caras' waist after losing the match. Canek had held the title since 12/9/90 when he won it from Big Van Vader. The crowd was said to be disappointing for the title change card since it was one of the coldest days in the history of Mexico City (El Toreo is outdoors) and they had a bullfight that drew more than 60,000 fans and a soccer game that drew 55,000 fans going head-to-head with the card. Also Dr. Wagner Jr. & Canadian Tiger (Mike Lozansky) & Killer beat Enrique Vera & Solar & El Sicodelico when Killer pinned Vera to set up a UWA jr. heavyweight title match between the two on 2/9, Kokina & Fishman & Gigante Warrior (Butch Masters) beat Villano III & Tinieblas Jr. & Sr., Black Power & Negro Navarro & El Signo won a non-title match from UWA trios champs Los Villanos, Scorpio Jr. & Sr. & Kahos I beat Super Raton & Super Pinocchio & Tamba the Flying Elephant and opener saw Samurai (Osamu Matsuda) & Ninja Sasuke (Masa Michinoku) beat Momotaro (Monkey Magic Wakita) & Ricky Boy.

The 2/5 card at El Toreo in Naucalpan, which was the annual union benefit show (which means wrestlers from both groups combined) and also El Santo Memorial Night (El Santo died on 2/5/84 so that day is practically a national holiday in Mexico) drew more than 12,000 fans (best UWA crowd in a long time) as Conan (EMLL) & Dos Caras (UWA) & Perro Aguayo (EMLL) & Salmon Grundy (EMLL) won the main event beating Canek (UWA) & Los Brazos (EMLL) via DQ for a low blow by Brazo de Oro on Conan that may or may not have taken place. The match was interesting because the fans booed faces Conan & Grundy practically out of the building and cheered the heels, Canek particularly, like crazy. The fans were hot to see Canek vs. Conan because the two had a feud a few years back at El Toreo and every time Conan tagged in the fans would chant for Canek to tag in against him. Also Ulysses & The Untouchables (Pierroth Jr. & Jaque Mate & Masakre), all EMLL regulars, beat Silver King (UWA) & El Texano (UWA) & Anibal (EMLL) & Mascara Sagrada (EMLL) in what was said to have been an excellent match, plus Black Terry (UWA) & Baby Face (UWA) & Bestia Salvaje (EMLL) beat Blue Demon Jr. (EMLL) & Kato Kung Lee (EMLL) & Kendo Star (UWA), Zuleyma & Janet & Lola Gonzales beat Neftali & Pantera Surena & Martha Villalobos in a womens match and midgets Misteriocito & Angelito Azteca beat Piratita Morgan & MS 1/2.

A correction from last week, in the 1/22 Aguayo vs. El Hijo Del Santo match, Santo won via DQ and it wasn't for the title.

Promoter Carlos Maynes is negotiating to bring back Vader to eventually have a mask vs. mask showdown against either Caras and Canek.

Santo retained the UWA welterweight title on 1/30 in Mexico City beating Casandro.

Usual rivals Santo & Negro Casas teamed up to main event 2/4 in Pachuca against Jose Luis Feliciano & the returning El Espanto Jr.

Santo defended his title against Espanto Jr. on 2/9 in Netzahualcoyotl.

Kendo Star (Kendo in Japan) had a mask vs. mask match with El Mohicano II on 2/9 in San Lorenzo.

2/9 at El Toreo was headlined by Enrique Vera defending the UWA junior heavyweight title against The Killer plus Canek & Kokina & Gigante Warrior vs. Dos Caras & Tinieblas Jr. & Sr.,

Fishman & Samoan Swat Team vs. Silver King & Texano & Fantasma, Los Villanos vs. Negro Navarro & El Signo & Black Power in a non-title match and prelims.

NEW JAPAN

Still no word on the departure of the Blond Outlaws group and apparently there is something up regarding Tatsumi Fujinami as well. Fujinami is working this tour, but for some reason is going to sit out the next tour.

Norio Honaga of the Blond Outlaws, all of whom haven't worked this tour at all, came back for one match on 2/8 in Sapporo and dropped the IWGP junior heavyweight title to Jushin Liger in a title vs. title (WCW lighthweight) match.

3/1 at the Yokohama Arena besides the two old-timer matches listed last week (Seiji Sakaguchi & Shozo Kobayashi vs. Tiger Jeet Singh & Umanosuke Ueda and TV announcer Kotetsu Yamamoto & Kantaro Hoshino vs. Hiroyoshi Yamamoto & Black Cat) will have Antonio Inoki & Osamu Kido vs. Riki Choshu & Masa Saito, Keiji Muto & Hiroshi Hase defending the IWGP tag team titles against Big Van Vader & Bam Bam Bigelow (expect a title change), Masa Chono vs. Shinya Hashimoto, Shiro Koshinaka vs. Akira Nogami and Michiyoshi Ohara vs. Brian Blair.

Liger will miss the Yokohama show because he'll be on the plane back from SuperBrawl in Milwaukee. Vader will miss SuperBrawl because he'll be on a plane to Tokyo.

2/8 in Sapporo drew a sellout 6,500 as Akitoshi Saito (karate man who formerly worked with WING) knocked out Michiyoshi Ohara in a mixed match in 6:15 which was billed as a shoot, Choshu & Chono beat Bigelow & Rambo when Choshu pinned Rambo, Liger pinned Honaga to win the IWGP jr. title in 17:30, Hase & Muto kept the IWGP tag team titles beating Fujinami & Koshinaka in 20:03 when Hase pinned Koshinaka with the Northern Lights suplex, Scott Norton pinned Tony Halme, Nogami & Hashimoto beat Brad Armstrong & Pegasus Kid (Chris Benoit), Kengo Kimura & Saito beat Tony St. Clair & Kim Duk and Black Cat & Hoshino beat Kido & Hiroyoshi Yamamoto.

2/5 in Otaru drew 2,510 as Choshu & Saito & Muto beat Armstrong & Rambo & Bigelow, Hashimoto & Chono beat Norton & St. Clair, Scorpio & Duk & Pegasus Kid beat Liger & Koshinaka & Fujinami when Kid pinned Liger, Halme pinned Kimura and Nogami & Kido beat Hase & Masashi Aoyagi.

2/4 in Hakodate drew a sellout 3,480 as Muto & Hashimoto & Choshu beat Rambo & Norton & Bigelow when Hashimoto pinned Rambo in 13:37, Hase & Chono beat Fujinami & Koshinaka, Halme pinned Duk, Kimura & Saito beat Armstrong & St. Clair, Liger & Nogami beat Scorpio & Pegasus Kid and Aoyagi & Kido beat Ohara & Hoshino.

OTHER JAPAN NOTES

Opening night of the SWS tour on 2/9 in Isezaki drew 2,950 as The Natural Powers (Yoshiaki Yatsu & King Haku) beat Takashi Ishikawa & Samson Fuyuki in 19:58 as part of the SWS tag team title tournament, in another tournament match Genichiro Tenryu & Ashura Hara beat Kendo Nagasaki & Kenichi Oya in 13:18, Naoki Sano retained the WWF/SWS jr. heavyweight title pinning Marty Janetty in 7:18 with a rolling cradle, George & Shunji Takano beat Shinichi Nakano & Tatsumi Kitahara in a tournament match, Ultimate Dragon & Kato Kung Lee beat Blue Panther & Emilio Charles Jr. when Lee pinned Charles, Davey Boy Smith & Kabuki beat Hercules & Goro Tsurumi and Masao Orihara pinned Hiroshi Hatanaka.

FMW has been packing them in this tour, as on 2/8 in Nagasaki they drew 4,825 as Atsushi Onita & Sambo Asako beat Big Titan & Horace Boulder in a street fight, Star Man (Billy Anderson) & Blond Bomber (Chris Kuniaki from New Jersey) beat Atsushi Onita & Mr. Gannosuke, Katsuji Ueda kept the AWA light heavyweight title beating The Shooter and Sabu pinned Ricky Fuji.

2/7 in Oita drew 3,565 as Titan & Sabu beat Onita & Asako, Shooter & Goto beat Bomber & Star Man and Boulder pinned Fuji.

2/6 in Yanagawa drew 2,246 as Onita & Asako & Shooter beat Star Man & Boulder & Titan in a street fight, Goto pinned Sabu, Fuji pinned Bomber.

2/5 in Kumamoto as part of two days in the same arena drew a sellout 4,572 as Onita & Goto beat Sabu & Titan in 12:13 to retain the WWA world martial arts tag team titles. Star Man & Boulder beat Fuji & Asako and Bomber beat Eiji Ezaki.

2/4 in Kumamoto drew a sellout 4,658 as Onita & Goto & Asako beat Sabu & Boulder & Titan in a barbed wire cage match street fight, Fuji pinned Bomber, Star Man pinned Gannosuke.

The WMA group folded basically before it ever got started.

Ishinriki is now working as a referee for SWS.

UWFI has a show this coming Saturday night at Tokyo's Korakuen Hall with Nobuhiko Takada & Kazuo Yamazaki vs. Tom Burton & Gary Albright on top, plus Pez Whatley vs. Kiyoshi Tamura and Yoji Anjyo & Yuki Miyato vs. Tatsuo Nakano & Mark Silver.

Giant Baba held a press conference to announce the signing of Jun Akiyama, an amateur wrestling champion, 22 years old. The fact that they held a press conference to announce he's going into pro wrestling means they have high hopes for him and he said that he wanted to debut against Stan Hansen.

The 2/1 New Japan television show which aired the Choshu vs. Fujinami match from the Tokyo Dome drew an 8.0 rating while All Japan's latest six-man tag war which went 44:53 (about 26:00 of it aired on television) Sunday night drew a 5.6 rating.

All Japan Women had a TV taping on 2/1 in Takasaki headlined by Bull Nakano going to a double disqualification with Aja Kong to set up their WWWA world title match on 4/25 at Wrestlemanripiad, Toshiyo Yamada & Kyoko Inoue beat Debbie Malenko & Sake Hasegawa, Takako Inoue beat Miori Kamiya to keep the Japanese title and Suzuka Minami & Yumiko Hotta & Manami Toyota beat Akira Hokuto & Bat Yoshinaga & Tomoko Watanabe.

Prelim woman wrestler Miyumi Yamamoto, who never made it big, announced her retirement.

PWF on 2/24 at Korakuen Hall has Masakatsu Funaki vs. Wayne Shamrock, Minoru Suzuki vs. Jerry Flynn, Yoshiaki Fujiwara vs. Yusuke Fuke and Kazuo Takahashi vs. Bart Vail.

They had a photo spread of Akira Maeda with martial arts movie star Jean Claude Van Damme for the Tokyo opening of "Double Impact." Funny to see Maeda just tower over Van Damme size-wise.

Among those who are scheduled to tour with All Japan later this year are The Patriot (Del Wilkes), Gary Young, John Tatum, Rod Price, Scott Anthony and The New Black Hearts (Tom Nash & Dave Johnson).

Universal announced for 3/13 at Korakuen Hall Dos Caras & Gran Hamada & El Hijo Del Santo vs. El Signo & El Texano & Negro Navarro (The Original Death Missionaries re-uniting), Silver King & Dr. Wagner Jr. vs. Kendo & Crush, Los Brazos vs. Rudy Reyna & May Flowers & Pimpinela Escarlata, Punish & Sangake Gantetsu vs. Lightning Kid & someone else. 3/14 at Korakuen Hall has Caras & Hamada & Gantetsu vs. Texano & Silver King & Crush, Punish vs. Lightning Kid, Santo & Brazo de Oro & Brazo de Plata vs. Wagner & Navarro & someone else and El Brazo & Kendo & Signo vs. Flowers & Reyna & Escarlata.

UWFI will have a big show on 3/17 in Nagoya with Bob Backlund, Albright, Billy Scott and Burton.

USWA

The return of Austin Idol the weekend before last picked business up the biggest its been in a long time with a \$15,000 house on 2/2 in Memphis (about 2,500 fans--normal houses of late have been around \$4,000) and a \$7,000 house on 2/1 in Nashville (normal has been about \$2,500).

Tom Prichard won the Southern title from Eric Embry on television on 2/8 in Memphis. Embry used a chain on Prichard when Tony Anthony interfered and hit Embry with a chain and put him on top for the pin.

They've got a new Moondog who looks to be about 6-5, 350 and is black called The Big Black Dog.

Embry beat up and bodyslammed Dirty White Girl on television again this week.

Moondogs tore up the suits of Jerry Lawler & Jeff Jarrett on television.

Bart Sawyer and Doug Masters are history.

Snowman (Eddie Lee Crawford) is running independent opposition in Brownsville and Jonesboro headlining shows against Tommy Lane.

Richard Lee has a "broken arm" from his match on 2/2 against Jarrett.

Wrestling returned to Monday night this week on 2/10 with Robert Fuller vs. Tony Falk, Prichard vs. Brian Christopher for the Texas heavyweight title, Embry vs. Anthony with the winner getting to handcuff the loser to the ropes and give him 10 lashes with a belt, Kimala vs. Koko Ware for the held up USWA title, a Battle Royal with four teams--Embry & C.J., Anthony & Dirty White Girl, Falk & Miss Jennifer and Prichard & Miss Texas plus Jarrett & Lawler & Idol vs. The Moondogs.

2/4 in Louisville saw Falk beat Sawyer, Prichard beat Masters, Christopher beat Falk via DQ, The all-girls Battle Royal ended without a winner when all the men interfered, Anthony beat Embry via DQ and Moondogs beat Lawler & Jarrett.

GLOBAL

The 2/7 show at the Dallas Sportatorium drew 950 fans (according to two sources this past week there have been a lot more free passes than have been indicated in this newsletter at these recent cards) to see: FIRST TELEVISION SHOW--Jerry Lynn pinned Billy Joe Travis in 4:00 in a light heavyweight title match; Eddie Gilbert pinned Barry Horowitz using the trunks in the first round of a one-night tournament to get a North American title match and after the match both men embraced; Scott Putski pinned Sam Houston when Bull Pain attacked Houston going to the ring and worked his leg over with a chair. The injured Houston was pinned by Putski; Black Bart pinned Rattlesnake; Terry Garvin pinned Pain when Houston came to ringside and tripped Pain who was attempting to suplex Garvin. Houston came to ringside because Samantha had interfered in the match and Scott Anthony pinned Gary Young after hitting him with a chain. SECOND TELEVISION SHOW--None of these bouts were in the tournament: Young & Putski beat Travis & Pain via a foreign object DQ, Horowitz managed by "The Expert" Bruce Prichard won the light heavyweight title from Lynn. Prichard held Lynn's leg during the three count. After the match the two continued to attack Lynn and Horowitz drove a chair into Lynn's ankle (which he legitimately injured in Japan a few weeks ago and he's going to undergo surgery which will keep him out of action for four to six months), Bruce Forcz beat Houston & Rattlesnake and Chaz Taylor pinned Mike Davis in a match where the winner could choose either his opponent or his opponent's tag partner to leave the GWF. Before the match Davis said that if he wins, than Tug Taylor (Chaz' dad) would have to leave. Chaz won and picked Tom Davis (Tom Burton) as having to leave, and he's history for now while Mike Davis will stay and get a new gimmick and be brought back in about a month; THIRD TELEVISION SHOW--Back to the tournament: Putski beat Bart via DQ when Rod Price (who didn't go on the Middle East tour with John Tatum, Bill Irwin and a few others after all) interfered, Garvin drew Anthony but Garvin advanced by winning the coin flip and Gilbert pinned Putski after hitting him with a gimmick. This left Gilbert vs. Garvin with the winner to get the title shot with Dark Patriot (Doug Gilbert). It was a total babyface match with it ended with a double knockout by rookie referee Sam Lowe (Gilbert's ex-manager in Memphis who will wind up as a heel ref using the name Sam Esposito). Ref James Beard then said the first man to his feet would get the title shot and Gilbert got up first. This left Dark Patriot vs. Gilbert in the brother vs. brother match for the North American title. A lot of the crowd had left by this point to catch the last bus home at 11 p.m.. Prichard interfered for the DQ and they beat on Eddie until Horowitz came in, but Horowitz then turned on Eddie as well and Anthony joined in and they pounded on Eddie who juiced (first blood since Global came to Dallas I believe) until Garvin tried to make the save by laying across Gilbert and they destroyed him until Joe Pedicino grabbed the mic and said if the heels didn't leave then both Horowitz and

Dark Patriot would be stripped of the titles. Prichard took out the bounty poster on Eddie and stuffed it in his mouth. Gilbert wound up doing a stretcher job.

2/14 at the Sportatorium has Dark Patriot vs. Gilbert, Bart vs. mystery wrestler (probably Bill Irwin) in a bullrope match, Pain vs. Houston, Samantha Pain vs. Rockin Robin in a lumberjack match, Tatum & Price vs. Chaz & Tug Taylor and Putski vs. Garvin.

Steven Dane & Travis will debut this week as a heel tag team called Fantasy.

2/21 looks to be tentatively Patriot (Del Wilkes) vs. Dark Patriot for the North American title and if Patriot wins he gets five minutes with Prichard, Gilbert vs. Big Bad John (formerly Body Snatcher) in a bounty match and if John wins then Eddie must crawl across the ring and kiss Prichard's feet and if Gilbert wins, Prichard must kiss his feet.

2/28 is Gilbert & Garvin vs. Anthony & Dark Patriot and a 10 man Battle Royal for the Brass Knucks championship.

The whole thing is being built up for a major show on 3/20 with Gilbert & Patriot vs. Dark Patriot & Anthony in a cage match.

HERE AND THERE

Dr. George Zahorian began his three-year sentence on 1/31 on the steroid and controlled substances convictions.

The wrestling radio show "Who's Slamming Who" is back on WPSC-FM in Wayne, NJ from 6 to 7 p.m. every Wednesday night.

Eddie Mansfield's IWF taped five shows on 2/1 at Universal Studios in Orlando. The Long Riders (Kip Winchester & Brett Cole) beat The Heartbreakers (Tim Parker & Big Till) to win the IWF tag team titles. Blackjack Mulligan was jumped in an interview by Mondo Kleen and juiced like crazy. Tony Mella suffered a bruised sternum in a tag team match against Thunder & Lightning. At first, since his heart was beating irregularly it was feared he had suffered a heart attack. I believe Mulligan is moving to Alabama and getting a regular job. Kendall Windham is still serving out his sentence on the counterfeit money conviction but is able to wrestle if he's back in prison by 9 p.m.

Buck Robley is starting up a group in Louisiana around New Orleans with Steve Williams, Terry Gordy, Paul Orndorff, Robert Gibson, Butch Reed, Buddy Landel and Bob Orton.

WIN on 2/7 in Baltimore drew 650 for the debut show. Scott Anthony was scheduled to wrestle Tom Brandi but Anthony sent a message he couldn't be there and while the fans were watching the tape, King Kaluha attacked Brandi. Neil Superior beat Rasta the Voodooon, Brick Bronsky & Doug Flex worked as a tag team called the Brat Pack and attacked a local radio announcer before Cream Team made the save and Lords of Darkness attacked Cream Team. Agent Orange beat Morgus the Maniac, Jeff Collett beat Sledge Hammer McGill, Nikolai Volkoff beat Honkytonk Man via DQ when Volkoff was hit with the guitar, Brandi beat Kaluha to win the Pacific title and Misty Blue beat Linda Dallas.

2/6 in Tampa saw Pat Tanaka beat Lou Perez, Jimmy Backlund beat Dean Malenko via submission, Kevin Sullivan double count out Kendall Windham and Terminators beat Jerry Flynn & Fire Cat (Brady Boone).

Lou Thesz is talking about bringing the UWFI from Japan to the U.S.

Rumor mill has it that Verne and Greg Gagne are looking at producing an amateur wrestling television show.

Muscle Mag International in its gossip column had a funny item saying that Vince McMahon was trying to get 60 Minutes to investigate the NPC (the amateur arm of Joe Weider's IFBB which is supposed to be a non-profit organization).

Tony Rumble quit IWCCW after an apparent dispute with the Savoldis.

Eddie Sharkey's PWA drew 1,600 at the Indian Center in Minneapolis on 2/8 to see Charlie Norris, Larry Cameron, Brad Rheingans, Lightning Kid and Derrick Dukes.

Bad news for Terry Funk as the TV show "Tequila and Bonetti" hasn't fared to well, as the 1/31 episode on CBS drew a 7.1 rating and 15 share which is 79th place out of 94 prime time shows and in third place among the four networks in the time slot.

The LPWA PPV show set for 2/23 is being advertised in cable guides around the country, but less than two weeks away and we don't even have a site. They're charging \$19.95 for the show which should be the final nail in the coffin because at that price there will be very few buyers.

Ultimate Warrior is doing a television commercial in the Carolinas for Slim Jim's beef jerky in his full gimmick. He still looks the same.

Chris Love is scheduled to run weekly Saturday night shows in Kaufman, TX using a lot of the Dallas area wrestlers that work for Global.

2/7 in Caguas, PR saw Bobby Davis beat El Exotico, Sasha beat Vanessa Dawn, El Bronco #1 beat Randy Rhodes, Carlitos Colon beat Fidel Sierra, Buddy Landel beat Road Block, Dick Slater drew with Invader #1 and The Heartbreakers beat Kevin Von Erich & Rex King.

2/7 in Portland, OR saw Col. DeBeers beat C.W. Bergstrom, Al Madril beat Mike Winner, Jesse Barr beat Buddy Rose via DQ, the tag team title match with Ron & Don Harris vs. The Grappler & Steve Doll ended in a double pin in the third fall with the belts now held up and Brickhouse Brown beat John Rambo in a nunchakus match.

Jesse Hernandez & Bob Bradley Sr's Western States Wrestling Association on 2/1 in San Bernardino drew 300 fans as Tim Patterson beat Louie Spicolli in 30:00 in a falls count anywhere in the building match.

John Studd is working with boxing promoter Don King out of the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas and looks to be getting involved in boxing management.

Ben Masters' Peach State Wrestling had a show on 2/7 in Cordele, GA with Ron Garvin vs. Landel, Ranger Ross vs. Mr. Atlanta, The Blazers (Ray Lloyd & R.D. Swain) vs. Dennis Gale & Steve Lawler, The Nightmare (Ted Allen) vs. Dale Lucas, Mike Golden vs. Terry Leyland and more.

2/8 in Clear Lake, CA drew 850 for a show which included Cheryl Russo, Dementia, Jerry Monti & Jim Gorman beat Luscious Luke & Moondog Moretti and Gerhardt Kaiser beat Earthquake Ferris via DQ. KOMÉ disc jockey Dennis Erectus managed Kaiser and Mike Lano did a heel ring doctor bit using the ring name Dr. Bernhardt S. Schwartz. Former Bay Area Big-Time Wrestling promoter Roy Shire attended the show which was said to have been the first live wrestling show Shire has attended in ten years.

Shire, Hank Renner (television announcer in the 1970s), Kinji Shibuya (Japanese heel from late 50s to mid-70s), Pepper Gomez (who still holds the Bay Area wrestling attendance record with a crowd of more than 17,000 at the Cow Palace for a match against Ray Stevens), Monti (long-time jobber who dates from the 1960s to still jobbing on WWF television tapings today) and Kaiser (heel manager in the mid-1970s) appeared on Lano's public access television show. Renner, 60, was in sad shape after two strokes and apparently hardly remembered a thing about his stint as host of Big Time Wrestling.

South Atlantic Pro Wrestling drew a reported 1,215 on 2/7 in Brookhaven, MS and 362 on 2/8 in Liberty, MS. Both shows were to be headlined by Helmut Hessler (SAPW champion) against Junkyard Dog. Dog made the first show and put Hessler over, but no-showed the second night and Hessler beat Rusty Riddle. SAPW has a television taping on 2/29 in Clover, SC with Wahoo McDaniel, The Patriot, Rob Van Damme (Rob Zakowski) and Neil Superior.

Jack Veneno continues to promote pro wrestling in the Dominican Republic under the NWA banner with the old NWA

logo on the shows. Veneno bills himself as NWA world light heavyweight champion. The only names that looked familiar on his cards were Hiroshi Hatanaka who works for SWS as a prelim boy in Japan and The Head Hunters who work Japan for WING.

Tom Reeder has a show 3/21 in Lewiston, ID with The Barbarian vs. Koko Ware and the rest of the guys are local workers from Southern California like Scott Baszo, Louie Spicolli, Frankie Valdez and Gary Key.

WWF

The bodybuilding syndicated television show which was scheduled to debut soon after the recent NATPE convention was put on hold because TV stations weren't interested. Production of the syndicated show has been delayed until early 1993, however they will have a bodybuilding show on the USA network on Saturday mornings before the June WBF championships in Long Beach. I don't believe Lex Luger will appear on that show, but instead debut in the 1993 WBF championships and then wrestle for the WWF after that. Luger is said to be training twice a day and doing all that other stuff in abundance that one associates with competing in bodybuilding contests. Luger was asked to be a guest on Jim Ross' radio show this past Sunday and apparently Luger never as a shoot returned any of Ross' calls and Ross made a point of mentioning it on the air.

2/7 in Denver drew 4,500 as Warlord pinned Chris Walker (bad), Shawn Michaels pinned Jimmy Snuka (Michaels looked very good in carrying it to a fair match), The Mountie pinned Jim Brunzell, Big Bossman & Tito Santana beat Natural Disasters when Bossman pinned Quake (okay), Repo Man pinned Virgil with his feet on the ropes (negative stars), Ted DiBiase & IRS won the WWF tag team titles from Legion of Doom and Ric Flair beat Roddy Piper via DQ when Piper was caught using a chair after a ref bump that Flair had brought in the ring in a title vs. title match (great).

No matter how many rumors are swirling (and there are many right now), I still don't buy for a second Hulk Hogan quitting after Wrestlemania. Best tentative plan is for the Flair-Hogan match to take place at Summer Slam (8/31 at the Capital Centre in Landover, MD) but so much can happen between now and then that I wouldn't count on anything.

Prime Time Wrestling on 2/3 did a 3.0 rating (good) while All-American on 2/2 did a 2.1 (not so good).

Latest reports we're getting on the Royal Rumble PPV show is that it did a 1.8 percent buy rate, which would be the lowest of any WWF PPV show ever (with the exception of Tuesday in Texas with the six day lead time). Sounds low to me, but a 1.8 would mean 320,000 buys which would be approximately a \$7.4 million gross, of which Titan's share would be \$3.3 million.

Advance for Wrestlemania in Indianapolis is just in excess of 20,000 tickets.

2/9 in Las Vegas drew 4,000 as Warlord pinned Walker DUD, Michaels beat Silver Shadow (the guy who puts up the ring because Jimmy Snuka no-showed) **, Santana pinned DiBiase *1/2, Legion of Doom beat Natural Disasters via DQ *, Bossman pinned IRS *, Mountie pinned Brunzell *1/2, Repo Man pinned Virgil *1/2 and Flair beat Piper via DQ in a title vs. title match with the same ending where Piper is caught with the chair **1/2.

2/10 in Sacramento drew 5,400 for a card in which Hawk, DiBiase, Kerry Von Erich, Snuka and Michaels all didn't work as advertised. Michaels and Hawk were in the building but didn't work for reasons of which I haven't a clue. Von Erich missed the entire weekend which seems to be happening with more regularity of late. Snuka worked Denver and Los Angeles but missed the rest of the shots. No word on the others. No explanation was made to the crowd other than DiBiase wouldn't be there due to travel problems. Make-shift results (combined grades from several sources) saw Warlord pinned Walker 1/2*, Bossman & LOD Animal beat Disasters when Animal pinned Typhoon *3/4, Flair beat Piper via DQ (same finish, which was also the same finish the last time Flair wrestled Piper in Sacramento) ***, IRS pinned Brunzell *1/2, Repo Man pinned Virgil 1/2* and Santana pinned Mountie *1/2.

2/1 in Salt Lake City drew 6,200 and \$80,000 as Tatanka pinned Skinner 1/2*, British Bulldog pinned Berzker *1/2, LOD Animal pinned Earthquake **1/2, Flair beat Piper via DQ ****, Santana pinned DiBiase -****, IRS pinned Bossman 1/2*, and Beverly Brothers beat New Foundation *.

Give WWF credit for overtime work this weekend. They produced two sets of Superstars and Challenge shows over the weekend, one set for air dates on Saturday talking about the upcoming Saturday Night Main Event and another for Sunday with commentary and inserts talking mainly about what happened "last night." That's the difference between an organization committed to television perfection and one that just churns out television product.

The Winnipeg Sun had an article on 1/30 where Bob Molle, an offensive lineman with the Canadian Football League's Winnipeg Blue Bombers and a silver medalist in freestyle wrestling in the Olympics talked about pro wrestling. "They are charlatans and shams who couldn't wrestle their way out of a multiplication problem." Molle also estimated that 90 percent of the WWF's wrestlers couldn't pass a drug test. After saying that, knocking the wrestlers for having cosmetic beauty and saying the guys wouldn't be able to survive against him or any good amateur heavyweight aerobically he was then asked who the best athlete was among the wrestlers and guess who he picked--Hulk Hogan. The worst athlete he picked--Big Bossman. Kind of funny for a guy to talk about how muscles mean nothing when it comes to conditioning to then rank the big guys based on how their physique looks rather than their athletic ability, wouldn't you say? . . . Titan returns to Baltimore after nearly two years away on 4/25 in the Arena that has been home almost exclusively for WCW.

WCW

Lots of news regarding newcomers and contract dealings. The much-talked about negotiations between Kip Frey and Jesse Ventura during the middle of last week haven't resulted in a deal at press time. It wouldn't be surprising for a deal to have been struck by the time you read this, however. WCW is offering Ventura a two-year deal to work with Tony Schiavone on World Wide Wrestling in syndication plus do color on all the Clashes and PPV shows.

Missy Hyatt agreed to a new two-year contract.

Nikita Koloff was also inked this past week to return as a top singles babyface teaming with Sting and company against the Dangerous Alliance. Also expected to be headed in are Greg Valentine & Dick Slater as a heel tag team, tho Lord only knows why.

Scott Norton is supposed to be coming in as well, apparently as a babyface between Japan tours.

There is also talk of signing Big Van Vader up to an exclusive full-time deal and having him give up his international commitments and push him as one of the lead group of heels against Sting, but given his sweet Japan deal (estimated at \$200,000 per year for 12 weeks work), it'll take a major financial commitment one would think.

As for Terry Gordy & Steve Williams, they were in the office about two weeks back but no deal was reached although there is a lot of speculation about a feud with them and The Steiners down the road.

No talk whatsoever regarding Marty Janetty and/or Shane Douglas.

1/30 in Cleveland saw Richard Morton beat Johnny B. Badd, Big Josh pinned Tracy Smothers (mainly stalling), Diamond Dallas Page pinned Joey Maggs (horrible), Steiners beat Cactus Jack & Buddy Lee Parker (great), El Gigante double count out with Big Van Vader (bad), Dustin Rhodes & Ricky Steamboat beat Bobby Eaton & Larry Zbyszko (great) and Rick Rude beat Sting via DQ with the Dusty finish (great heat).

Steve Armstrong is back in action after missing a few weeks with a knee injury.

Madusa is out of action after a hernia operation after being injured on 2/2 in Philadelphia and is expected back in a few weeks.

After Wrestle War in Jacksonville on 5/19, the next PPV will be 6/27 out of Mobile, AL. There is also a Clash scheduled for late June and the Baltimore Bash will still be in mid-July so apparently there are plans for a series of major events that require three major shows in less than a month.

2/7 in Jacksonville drew 3,094 and \$27,000 (combined grades from two sources) as Taylor Made Man (Terry Taylor) beat Marcus Alexander Bagwell **, Badd pinned Morton *1/4, Ron Simmons pinned Page 3/4*, Steiners beat Young Pistols **1/4, Abdullah the Butcher pinned Cactus Jack *, Barry Windham pinned Zbyszko in a bullrope match * and Sting & Rhodes & Steamboat beat Rude & Eaton & Anderson in 18:00 of a cage match when Sting pinned Eaton ***1/2. Tickets for the PPV in Jacksonville go on sale first to the fans who attend the 4/5 card (head-to-head with Wrestlemania on PPV) live.

For those coming to Milwaukee for the PPV from out-of-town, there will be a show the next afternoon in Chicago (3/1) at 3 p.m. at the UIC Pavilion, which is just 90 miles away with Rude vs. Sting in a cage match, Abdullah vs. Cactus, Anderson & Eaton & Austin vs. Steiners & Rhodes in an elimination tag match, Windham vs. Zbyszko in a one fall death match (I've always thought those were contradictions in terms), Big Josh & Ron Simmons vs. Vinnie Vegas & the dreaded mystery partner, Pillman vs. Badd, News vs. Morton and Bagwell vs. Taylor.

The same top five matches will be in this area on 3/5 in Ford Ord, 3/6 at the Forum in Los Angeles and 3/7 at the Kaiser Convention Center in Oakland although I believe Rude-Sting out here will simply be no DQ.

Some talk of making Teddy Long (who is under contract but not doing anything) a color commentator.

WCW Main Event on 2/2 did a 2.6 rating, while WCW on 2/1 did a 2.4 (lower than it had been doing) while Power Hour did a 1.6.

Ventura caused a minor uproar on Cody Boyns' radio show on WALE in Providence two weeks back when the town of Fall River, MA was brought up and Ventura said it was one of the only places he'd ever been to that was worse than Viet Nam, which upset the mayor of Fall River who found out about it during the week.

El Gigante has returned home to Argentina because of his mother's funeral.

2/2 in Philadelphia drew 1,200 as Simmons pinned Parker *1/2, Taylor pinned Tom Zenk **1/4, Steiners beat Vegas & Page ***, Zbyszko pinned Bagwell **, Brian Pillman pinned Morton ***, Sting & Rhodes & Steamboat beat Rude & Eaton & Anderson **** and Abdullah beat Cactus in a bloody cage match ***3/4.

2/9 at the Omni in Atlanta drew 2,500 paid and \$26,000 (4,200 in the building with comps) as Thomas Rich pinned Maggs 1/4*, Taylor pinned Josh due to outside interference from Harley Race 1/2*, Mr. Hughes pinned P.N. News *, Badd pinned Morton *1/4, Steiners beat Young Pistols ***1/2, Windham pinned Zbyszko **, Sting & Rhodes & Steamboat beat Anderson & Eaton & Rude with Dusty Rhodes bullrope to Paul E. Dangerously when Sting pinned Eaton when Windham interfered and hit Eaton with the telephone. Zbyszko jumped Dusty Rhodes on the floor and Windham was at ringside making the save for Dusty *** and Abdullah beat Cactus in a cage match 1/2*.

Hughes' suspension was lifted because WCW couldn't substantiate the charges against him.

TV tapings on 2/10 in Dothan, AL drew 3,000 (no word on paid vs. paper) with no ground-breaking happenings.

