

PRO WRESTLING  
**TORCH**  
W E E K L Y

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## RIC FLAIR LEAVES WCW

**BASH TO DECIDE NEW CHAMPION, FLAIR STRIPPED, FUTURE UNKNOWN**

Seven time NWA World Heavyweight Champion and until Monday afternoon, current holder of the WCW (NWA) World Heavyweight Title "Nature Boy" Ric Flair did not appear at the television tapings in Macon, Georgia Monday night July 1. WCW, trying to renegotiate Flair's contract beyond the current contract valid through June of 1992 at between \$700,000 and \$750,000 per year, asked Flair to accept approximately \$350,000 and \$250,000 over the next two years instead. Flair declined.

Meanwhile, word came from WCW that top WCW officials went to Turner Home Entertainment late last week to get permission to change the main event of the Bash PPV scheduled to feature Flair vs. Luger to a main event without Flair. Although THE apparently denied the request, Flair was still tentatively scheduled to lose the WCW Title Monday night at the TV tapings resulting in a Barry Windham defending against Lex Luger at the Bash. Ric Flair did not show

up for the Macon taping as Monday morning his lawyer was notified that Flair was fired, apparently due to not agreeing to the new contract extension. When Flair did not show up at the tapings, fans were told Flair and WCW had contractual problems, thus Flair left WCW and is stripped of the WCW Title. The top two contenders, Windham and Luger, will battle over the WCW World Title.

The WWF most likely will offer Flair a job, and if Flair accepts, it will appear to most fans that the WWF finally stole Ric Flair from WCW. In reality, they let him go as Sid Vicious was offered more money to stay in WCW and not jump to Titan, and Sid had never drawn WCW consistent money.

This loss of Ric Flair opens the door for a Barry Windham to become the top WCW heel and prove he is worthy of consistent main event status, although Lex Luger is the expected winner in the Bash main event. Flair's future is undetermined.

## ZAHORIAN GUILTY ON 12 COUNTS

**PIPER, MARTEL, BLAIR, SPIVEY ADMIT TO TAKING STEROIDS**

Guilty. Guilty on 12 counts was the jury's verdict after only three hours of deliberations Thursday afternoon. Dr. George T. Zahorian faces up to 44 years in prison and over \$3 million dollars in fines for selling steroids without just medical reason. Sentencing will take place in two months.

The trial in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania took only four days, but included revealing testimony from five wrestlers, the most revealing of which came from Billy Graham, who also created quite a stir with the press. Graham was called to testify on Thursday by the prosecuting attorney, and despite protests from Zahorian's attorney, William Costopoulos, Graham did take the stand and presented damaging testimony, which began with his sympathetic struggle to walk up to the stand.

Zahorian's defense was that wrestlers, who feel the need to take steroids to enhance job performance, should be able to get steroids from their doctor. As Costopoulos told the press Tuesday, "A doctor should have the right to prescribe and patients should have the right to use what they want for their careers." One of the advantages was that Zahorian claimed to sell only minimal doses. However, Graham testified at times he purchased months of supplies at once from Zahorian. Graham also refuted Zahorian's claim that no wrestlers ever suffered adverse affects from steroids he sold to them.

The impact this trial has on the public and professional wrestling depends largely upon the media's reaction to the events. Graham spoke candidly to the press after his testimony, including an extensive run-down of all of his ailments. When asked what steroids have done to him, Graham said, "They've ruined my life, they've ruined my wrestling career, they've made me a cripple. I'll never be a normal man again. I cannot have children, and that's a heavy price to pay, to not have a family." In regards to getting rid of steroids, Graham said, "The promoters can in fact get steroids out of pro wrestling. It's up to the promoters to do it."

When asked of his opinion of Hulk Hogan, and whether Hogan should apologize as the CBS Morning

Show said he should, Graham said "My opinion of Hulk Hogan is that he is one of the greatest athletes the world has ever seen. He is one of the greatest men the world has ever seen. He is one of my best friends. My personal opinion is that if indeed Hulk Hogan has taken steroids and it is proven, he owes the world an apology, especially the little kids who have idolized and adored him. He should be man enough to admit he made a mistake - if he took steroids."

Billy Graham is expected to hold a press conference within the next ten days, possibly concerning a lawsuit against Titan Sports, although at the press conference he denied any comment until his press conference.

During the trial, Costopoulos suggested Graham was involved in the trial simply for publicity reasons, based on his scheduled future press conference and openness with the media. Costopoulos asked him what he was going to say to the media, since Graham said he would not talk about the trial to the media, and Graham responded, "Do you really want me to tell you?" The whole courtroom broke into laughter because the judge shouted "No!"

While the media ate up Graham's candid answers to questions, they did not get any questions answered from Dan Spivey, Brian Blair, Rick Martel, and Roddy Piper. Although they did not say one word to the media outside of the courtroom, all four did admit to buying steroids from Zahorian between November 18, 1988 and March 27, 1990.

A teary-eyed Zahorian said with a cracking voice on the stand Wednesday that he met Hulk Hogan in 1984 and that he was a heavy steroid user at the time. He claimed that he got Hogan off steroids and that Hogan has not used steroid for two or three years.

The trial revealed that when the FBI raided Zahorian's office in March of 1990, Zahorian asked to go into his office to call his attorney. While the FBI waited outside, they heard papers being ripped. They found Zahorian ripping Federal Express receipts for orders for Roddy Piper, Mike Rotunda, and Lord Alfred Hayes.

In defense of Zahorian, there were around 30



character witnesses, including his wife who testified while sobbing that her husband was a great father and a good man.

The most interesting evidence introduced by the defense were three copies of *The Wrestler* magazine with photos of Zahorian standing next to Hulk Hogan, Bruno Sammartino, and Andre the Giant. Apparently to show he knows such fine people. Costopoulos allowed the photographers to take pictures of the photo of Zahorian with the wrestlers. Surely Hogan is not too thrilled that those pictures are circulating.

Without Hulk Hogan at the trial, the local news in Philadelphia still led their newscasts with coverage of the trial. There was extensive coverage in local papers also. The media coverage beyond that was far less than it would have been if Hogan's subpoena had not been dropped.

The main result of this trial may be that steroids are much more difficult to obtain considering the possible sentence and fines Zahorian faces. With the combination of this trial, the Lyle Alzado feature on NBC (see below), and Graham's upcoming press conference and probable lawsuit, the steroid problem in wrestling and sports in general is just beginning to be exposed to the general public and the accountability and ethics of wrestling promoters and choices made by wrestlers will begin to be examined closer with each passing month.

### LYLE ALZADO CONFESSES ON NBC

One year ago, Lyle Alzado at age 41 attempted to make a comeback in the NFL. The 41 year old hulk-like athlete was asked by Maria Shriver of NBC, "You know, a lot of people, when they see this piece, they'll see that you're 41, you're coming back, you're working out, you're standing here in the gym, you look the way you do - they're going to say, 'The guy's on steroids.'"

Lyle Alzado, so disgusted by such a suggestion, could hardly begin to speak. He said, "Oh, that's a joke. You know, that is such a joke. Just because an athlete is built well and he works hard and he trains hard, that doesn't necessarily mean he has to be on steroids. I'm clean, I've always been clean, and I'm going to stay clean."

Four months ago, two days after getting married Lyle Alzado was reportedly diagnosed with brain cancer, a rare form of lymphoma. Today, sickly and 60 pounds lighter, his attitude is different - more honest. Last Saturday he told Maria Shriver, "Not everything works all the time, and that bothers me. My personality is a lot different now, I'm a lot calmer now. You know, that massive guy I was before - I hate to admit this - but it was all phoney."

While it is not proven or agreed upon by doctors what caused his cancer or if his ailment even is cancer, Alzado claims it is due to steroid use. He said, "In my comeback attempt, I used a certain steroid that caused me to lower my immune system." When asked how long he was on steroids, Alzado said, "Most of my pro career, I played 16 years. It got me where I wanted, but it also got me very sick."

He blames his denial of steroid use last year on peer pressure. "At the time and at this time, I feel I will be in trouble for this. I lied because I was afraid. I was afraid of what would happen if I admitted (using steroids)." He said he "knew" 75 percent of his fellow players also used some form of "enhancement." *Sports Illustrated* is doing a cover story on Alzado this week, and whether his ailment is truly due to steroids or not, his message is still clear and effective.

But why come out and admit he was a "phoney?" Lyle explained, "I just hope this interview... will convince Junior High School and High School students that the can do without this stuff... My dreams now are different than they once were. Before I wanted to go to the Superbowl. Now it's different, it's a working man's dream, to have a nice car and a nice house, to live decently, to treat people decently." Lyle concluded with a smile on his face, "To live is more important than anything."

According to "Superstar" Graham, Bruno Sammartino, and many other observers of pro wrestling, living is secondary to being what is considered a success in pro wrestling. That is sad.

### GLOBAL TAKES OVER USWA'S TV

A special supplementary edition of *Pro Wrestling Torch* was mailed on November 20, 1990 with the

headline, "USWA & Kongi Buy USWA: Global Wrestling Federation Forms." Over seven months later, with a lot less than the originally publicized \$25 million dollar backing, the Global Wrestling Federation held its first two events in Dallas, Texas on Friday, June 28 and Saturday, June 29.

The Joe Pedicino led Global Wrestling Federation negotiated a deal finalized early last week to take over USWA's syndicated package, ESPN daily slots, and the Dallas-Ft. Worth Channel 27 Saturday night show. This reduces the Jerry Jarrett-lead United States Wrestling Association to strictly a Tennessee regional promotion with their only television show being taped out of the WMC studios.

Originally, as reported in the *Torch Supplement*, Global was supposed to be a governing body much like the old National Wrestling Alliance with territories in Memphis, Texas, Georgia, and Florida. Global has been scaled down to mainly a television promotion with weekly tapings in Dallas at the old Sportatorium.

### GLOBAL DOME NEW GWF HOME

In order to save money on travel and simplify the tapings, Pedicino has changed the name of the Dallas Sportatorium to the "Global Dome" and is going to hold all tapings at the Sportatorium. In order to avoid being tagged as a southern regional promotion, much like the USWA, on national television there will be no acknowledgment that they are in Dallas, Texas. That is an idea similar to what the Rollergames promoters did as they announced their shows as coming from the RollerDome, which in reality was just an old warehouse or gym.

The Sportatorium was renovated during the week preceding the debut taping. Steel barriers around ringside were added, the tin walls of the building were painted sleek black, and a stage was added to the wall which used to hold the USWA and World Class banners. The interview stage features a brilliant "Global Dome" neon sign. In order to further disguise the location and upgrade the television image for matches at the Sportatorium, the cameras have been moved to a higher level in a different part of the building so the matches look to be in a completely different building.

### TV CHAMPION CROWNED

Over two nights and twenty three matches in front of around 1000 fans each night, The Patriot defeated Buddy Landel in the twenty-third match to earn the rights to wear the first Global belt, the Television Championship. The Patriot is Del Wilkes under a mask known previously in the AWA as The Trooper. Patriot wears a red, white, and blue mask and tights. His finisher is a top rope shoulder block called "The Patriot Missile."

The first round of matches began with Billy Black, a young impressive high flyer, beating a slim Brian Adias with a small package. Then Randy Rhodes, a Dusty Rhodes look-a-like and former member of "Fire, Flame, and Torch" in Memphis, beat Sweet Daddy Falcone with the bulldog. The Patriot defeated Stan Lane with a roll-up after Lane and Cornette collided on the ring apron. After the bout, Cornette and Lane argued hinting at a break-up. "Wild" Bill Irwin returned to Texas and beat Fantasma, a legit Lucha Libre WWA wrestler, after Irwin used the whip. Those first four matches of the first round will be the debut program for Global on ESPN. "GWF SuperCard" will debut on ESPN on July 8 at 4:00 EDT.

The second hour and next four matches will air July 9 at the same time. Terry Garvin beat The Zebra Kid (Larry Dwyer), who broke his arm during the bout. Makhan Singh (Mike Shaw) beat Private Terry Daniels with a splash in the corner. Chris Walker beat Doug Somers with a moonsault. Rip Rogers beat The Hitman (David Sierra) with a small package.

The third hour to air July 10 began with Adrian Street beating Axel Rotten. Then Rasta the Voo Doo Mon beat Jeff Gaylord with a school boy in a poor match. "Big Bully" Busich beat Billy James. Buddy Landel beat Gary Young in one of the best matches of the night. Young came off the top rope with a crossbody block and Landel rolled over on top of Young and put his feet on the ropes for leverage.

The rest of the rounds took place Saturday night. The second round saw Black beat Rhodes, Patriot beat Irwin, Garvin lose to Singh, Walker beat Rogers, Street beat Mon, and Landel beat Busich. In the third round, Black beat Patriot, Walker beat Singh, and Landel beat Street.

That left three men to battle battle for the Global Television Title. The Patriot, Chris Walker, and Buddy Landel. Landel, due to a coin toss, got a bye. Landel, allowed to be at ringside for the Patriot-Walker bout, interfered, knocking Walker off the top rope. Patriot eventually pinned Walker, and a fresh Landel quickly jumped in the ring and took advantage of an exhausted Patriot. However, a comeback by Patriot ended with him pinning Landel and being crowned the TV Champion.

### SYNDICATED PACKAGE

If your market currently carries the USWA Challenge program, GWF's "Major League Wrestling" should replace that show on the weekend of July 13. Joe Pedicino is also planning on restarting production of "Pro Wrestling This Week" to package with "Major League Wrestling" to help expand the USWA's current syndicated package which is now at 153 stations in 109 markets.

The first hour of "Major League" was taped Friday night before the first round of the tournament. The first Global match ever, for trivia buffs, was Chris Walker pinning Sweet Daddy Falcone after a flying crossbody block. Then, Axel Rotten beat The Wildthing" with the "British Bomb," a second rope splash. Stan Lane beat Ray Evans with an enziguri. Brian Adias & Gary Young beat Doug Somers & Kenny the Stinger when Adias small packaged Stinger. The Patriot beat Buddy Landel with the patriot missile. And Adrian Street beat Rip Rogers when Makhan Singh interfered.

Singh originally showed up as Norman with Teddy Bear in hand. Then he announced that the old Norman was just a character he used in order to get back into the country legally and proceeded to rip apart the teddy bear and announce himself as Makhan Singh, spelled in the programs as Muchan Singh.

### FUTURE OF GLOBAL

Global's chances of surviving appear pretty strong. Their contract with ESPN demands five fresh hours per week to air every weekday afternoon at 4:00 EDT, which puts tremendous pressure on Global's production staff and Andrew Entertainment. The first night of tapings lasted well past Midnight, but by Saturday night, the matches went surprisingly smoothly and ended around 11:00 PM. By the end of the first taping, around half the fans had left, one of the reasons being the final bus route for those who bus to the matches leaves at 10:30 PM. The tickets were mainly give-aways as Global staff dropped off tickets at liquor stores and convenience stores a few days before the tapings.

The announcing duties for ESPN were handled by Craig Johnson and Scott Hudson while syndicated was handled by Joe Pedicino and Craig Johnson for the first hour and Hudson and Johnson the second hour. There was talk of Minnesota's Mick Karch being hired to help with announcing duties, but he is currently on a three week tour to Australia for Rob Russen's IWA promotion, so that was impossible at least this time around.

Next Friday night will be the first television taping for Channel 27 in Dallas with some new names. Then the following weekend, July 12 and 13, will feature the Light Heavyweight Title Tournament including Jerry Lynn and a masked Lightning Kid taped to air on ESPN on the 3rd and 4th week of Global's ESPN run. That should be some great television.

Scandar Akbar was helping run things in the dressing room and handled some booking duties. The overall match quality the first two nights was said to be much higher than what the USWA was promoting for the past several months. The show was said by several people involved in both shows to be run very professionally.

Over the last seven months, Joe Pedicino has acquired many skeptics, much of it likely deserved concerning the disappearance of Oli Oleami from the financing picture and claims of \$25 million backing and then claims that there never was \$25 million, per se. From that time, Pedicino has stayed relatively quiet, choosing his words carefully, and has come through with an impressive, albeit scaled down version of Global.

When asked in November by *The Torch* if there was room for a third promotion, Pedicino responded, "No, there's room for two. And I don't plan



on being the odd man out. I think there's room for two. The better guys are going to get the advertising dollars. And when I get through with this network, it will be the number two network."

There has been no public talk of pay-per-view ventures yet, although with ESPN exposure and a decent, and likely expanding syndicated network, pay-per-view seems like an eventual certainty. If Global's product is impressive, garnering quality ratings, it will be interesting to see whether Global could gain a weekend slot on ESPN replacing a tractor pull or other such regional event.

If nothing else, the start of another promotion gives fans a new promotion to cheer for or at least follow.

## NEWS & ANALYSIS

### WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Stamford, CT: Other than the steroid trial, Titan has been going about business as usual. The main hype on television is centered around the pending engagement of Randy Savage and Elizabeth. Last weekend on television Elizabeth summed up her opinion of Randy Savage: "No matter what, whether times have been good or bad, whether I was watching from the inside or outside, whether I was happy or sad, one thing has always been true, I just love that man." Randy has not yet proclaimed his love of Elizabeth, but he says next week he will let the world know of his intentions.

BRIEFLY: Kerry Von Erich missed all of his scheduled appearances this weekend, although why is not known... Neidhart continues to only say about ten words on each episode of Challenge, each one equally annoying. Neidhart does a good interview, but he was not made out to be a color commentator... Paul Roma's interviews have improved tremendously in intensity and charisma. In the meantime, Slick is mainly relegated to standing behind Power & Glory during interviews. Hercules, though, is out six weeks due to reportedly failing a drug test... Hulk Hogan was pulled from his dates last week due to an injured neck. Although he had been wrestling and wearing a neck brace the week before the trial news, the fear of testifying likely prompted the pull-out from his dates starting with June 24...

### WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Atlanta, GA: In just over one week "The Great American Bash" will occur. The original July 14 lineup for Baltimore featured Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger in a cage, Sting vs. Nikita Koloff in a chain match, Rick Steiner & Missy Hyatt & a replacement for the injured Scott Steiner vs. Paul E. Dangerously & Arn Anderson & Barry Windham in a cage, Steve Austin & Terrance Taylor vs. P.N. News & Bobby Eaton (one guess for who falls off the scaffold), One Man Gang vs. the bald El Gigante, Black Blood vs. Big Josh in a Lumberjack Match (i.e. ring surrounded by Josh's buddies), Yellow Dog (Brian Pillman) vs. Jonnie B. Badd, Freebirds vs. Dustin Rhodes & Young Pistols in an elimination bout, Diamond Stud vs. Tom Zenk, Ricky Morton vs. Robert Gibson, and Ron "Lost in the Shuffle" Simmons vs. Oz. Likely now the headliner will be Luger vs. Windham and the six-person match with Missy and Paul E. will be reduced to a four person tag without Windham or the injured Scott Steiner.

Scott Steiner underwent surgery for a torn bicep and the prognosis now estimates he will be out three to four months. Jim Ross announced on WCW Main Event that the Tag Title situation is being looked into by the Championship Committee. At this point, Rick Steiner will battle either Dick Slater or Dick Murdoch in singles competition as the WWF is doing with LOD vs. Nasty Boys after Hawks injury.

Credit has to be given to TBS for the continued streak of professional and unique commercials to preview upcoming pay-per-view events. The latest with P.N. News rapping about the Great American Bash is an attention-getter.

Television was taped in Anderson, Southern Carolina on June 18 in front of an estimated 4300 fans with kids let in free. Jackie Fulton was squashed by Jonnie B. Badd, Z-Man beat Rip Rogers, Freebirds beat Young Pistols in elimination bout, One Man Gang beat on a jobber unmercifully and Josh made the save. Then Gang and Sullivan doubled on Josh until Gigante

# GLOBAL CROWNS TV CHAMPION

## WCW'S DUPLICATE STING ANGLE REPEATED IN PORTLAND

made the save. Hardliners beat Sam Houston & Rick Ryder, Yellow Dog & Tom Zenk beat Steve Austin & Diamond Stud by DQ, Big Josh beat Gang via DQ and after the bout, Gang and Sullivan tried to cut Josh's hair, but Gigante made the save. Todd Champion returned and won a squash, looking better than last time in NWA, Morton beat on a jobber and Dustin made the save. Yellow Dog (Brian Pillman) fought Steve Austin to a 15 minute draw.

BRIEFLY: Dan Spivey was fired and WCW denies it had anything to do with Spivey's testimony in the Zahorian trial, and rather it was a contract dispute much like with Flair, although in this case a dispute over Spivey's availability given his Japan tours... Minnesotans recognize morning DJ Tom Bernard's voice on the WCW Stomp Trading Card commercials... The Desperadoes series continues and the reaction from *Torch* readers has been negative. The skits may be too long and more appropriate for home video at family get togethers or public access TV. It seems pretty nonsensical to have them talking about wanting to make it to WCW when each night they are appearing at house shows... September 28 is the latest date for WCW in the Twin Cities at the St. Paul Center. The WWF has taken off all summer and returns to the cross-town Target Center in Minneapolis on September 27. With the three-month layoff, not even a supposed strong new time for WCW in this market will be able to battle the WWF's return card...

### GLOBAL WRESTLING FEDERATION

Dallas, TX: Global returns to the Global Dome in Dallas, Texas on Friday, July 5 with Terry Garvin vs. Big Bully Busich, Sweet Daddy Falcone vs. The Patriot, Gary Young vs. Randy Rhodes, Buddy Landel vs. Brian Adias, Bill Irwin vs. Chris Walker, plus the debut of The Royal Family and a "7'8" 480 pound giant." This taping will air locally in Dallas on Channel 27 as the means to attract fans to the Global Dome.

BRIEFLY: At the first set of tapings, Scandar Akbar was helping run the locker room and handled some booking duties. Akbar most recently was booking in Puerto Rico for the WWC... With Eddie Gilbert quitting the USWA, Global is his most likely destination, possibly eventually becoming booker... July 26th and 27th will be the Global Tag Team Tournament for ESPN and August 9 and 10 will be the taping of the Global Heavyweight Title tournament... Friday night, the locker room was flooded with Texas independent wrestlers looking for work, including John Tatum and referee Tony Falk. All were cleared from the locker room before the start of the tapings if they were not hired...

### UNITED STATES WRESTLING ASSOC.

Memphis, TN: Monday, June 24 at the Pipkin Building, Doug Gilbert defeated Chris Candino, Rob Zakowski defeated Tex Salinger, Danny Davis beat Dong Chow Mang, in the mini-tournament Dundee beat Styles and Tagar won by default over the departed Eddie Gilbert and then Dundee beat Tagar to earn a shot at the Southern Title, Jarrett & Fuller beat Judge Dred & Samu when Tom Prichard threw fire on Fuller and a second referee reversed the resulting pinfall, and Dirty White Boy & Dirty White Girl defeated Tom Prichard & Miss Texas.

In the main event, Jerry Lawler fought Eric Embry to a double countout. After the decision, heels ran to the ring one at a time to try to pry Lawler off of Embry. Each time, the fans told Lawler of the approaching heel. First Chris Candino got kicked and piledriven, then Carl Styles, then Dong Chow Mang, and finally Leatherface. When Lawler kicked Leatherface, he jammed the chainsaw, so while Leatherface tried to restart the chainsaw, Lawler grabbed a chair and chased Leatherface back to the locker rooms.

On the live WMC show Saturday morning, Prichard fought Dirty White Boy in a six-man bout. Miss Texas was about to hand Prichard a chain, but Dirty White Boy attacked her. Prichard later handcuffed Dirty White Boy to the ringpost and then poured syrup and feathers on him. Dirty White Girl sat on the floor crying.

Also on the live show, Ta-Gar Lord of the

Volcano fought Jerry Lawler. Lawler gained the pinfall victory when Lawler moved out of the way of a charging Ta-Gar and then rolled him up for the pin. Afterward, Embry ran into the ring and Lawler quickly punched him and sent him over the top rope and back to the locker room.

Monday, July 1st's line-up for the Pipkin Building on the Memphis State Fair Grounds has Doug Gilbert vs. Chris Candino, Danny Davis vs. Rob Zakowski, Dundee vs. Ta-Gar, Dirty White Boy & Girl vs. Prichard & Miss Texas, Jarrett & Fuller vs. Judge Dred & Samu in a cage where the losing team must split, and Embry & Leatherface vs. Jerry Lawler & the return of Jackie Fargo. That should pop one house, but not necessarily.

safety in back.

On Al Madril's "Fiesta Garden," Madril swore revenge on the 13th. Then The Grappler made his first appearance on TV in many weeks and sported a clean face without make-up. Madril begged Grappler to sing for him. Grappler began to poorly sing "Your Cheatin' Heart" until Bart Sawyer came out howling and gagging himself. Grappler challenged Bart to a sing-off on the 13th and Bart accepted. Madril then returned to his singing and in a classic moment, Madril begged in the background for the director to cut and go to a break. Madril also asked Bart to sing solo, "Solo so no one can hear you."

### PORTLAND PRO WRESTLING

Portland, OR: In a remake of "Halloween Havoc 90's" main event, Mike Winters shaved his Buddy Landel hairstyle into a Bart Simpson/Sting like haircut which wrestler Bart Sawyer now sports. Then, in a match between two babyfaces, Jimmy Jack Funk and Bart Sawyer, Winters interfered. Funk moves as Bart came off the top rope and Bart subsequently hit referee Sandy Barr. While Sandy sold a knee injury, Sawyer fell out of the ring. Then Doug Masters ran to the ring with Sawyer's haircut and replica trunks and hit Sawyer with brass knuckles. As J.J. Funk tended to Sandy Barr, his real-life dad, Master hit Funk with knuckles from behind. Then Masters lain on his back and pulled the knocked out Funk over him. Barr made the three count and declared Sawyer the loser. Masters fled to the TV room while Funk regained consciousness and blamed the staggering Bart Sawyer who was outside the ring the whole time. The two friends argued as Masters asked announcer Don Coss, "Why are they fighting, I thought they were friends?"

Coss accused Masters of a plot and Masters said, "No, I just spent the day with Billy Idol and got a haircut like him." Funk and Sawyer argued until they saw Masters in the TV area looking like a duplicate Sawyer. They saw Masters, shook hands, and then Bart called Masters a fraud and said that all th emoney he claimed to have was a lie. Masters, to prove he really had no need for money, challenged Bart Sawyer to a match on the 13th where if he won, Bart had to give him \$500 dollars. However, if Masters lost, then Sawyer could bring a bunch of kids fresh from a mud puddle for a ride inside Masters's limo.

Next week, we will have an update on Ric Flair and WCW, plus the latest results of Global's third event in Dallas, and a report of my live attendance of the opening Bash at the Meadowslands on July 3, including a War Games without Flair. The features will include a column by Bruce Mitchell concerning homophobia in pro wrestling. Chris Zavisa's "Japanese Highspots" returns in two weeks, as will another "Torch Talk" interview. With the news of Ric Flair's departure from WCW, *Torch* will be sure he knows he is welcome to be the subject of a very special "Torch Talk" and hopes he accepts the offer.

Please read the flier enclosed with this issue concerning the Annual and contribute any features you can. The response to the reader features has been slow thus far.

I hope everyone reading *Torch* for the first time will return for many weeks to come. I hope next week I have time to breathe. This was one hell of a news week, but I have a feeling this is only the start of several weeks of big news weeks. Anyway, thanks to everyone for reading the *Torch*. Till' next week...



# FLAIR'S FINAL WCW RUN VS EL GIGANTE

## WCW DELIVERS ON ONE OF SEVEN MATCHES ADVERTISED AT HIGH SCHOOL

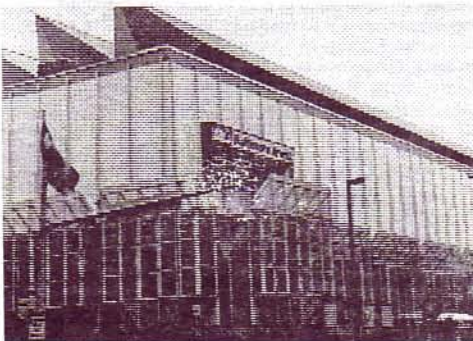
WCW promoted an event at Norwell High School in Bluffton, Indiana on June 20, 1991 in front of an estimated 500 fans. Patrick Jones filed the following report...

1) *Tommy Rich* fought *Larry Zbyszko* to a ten minute draw. Both guys had great tats and Larry Z is such a joy to listen to and watch. {\*\*}

2) *Oz* squashed *Jumpin' Joey Maggs*. Oz is embarrassing to watch, and not just because of the costume, but because of the punch, kick, and pose - his repertoire. {DUD}

3) *The Freebirds* defeated *The Young Pistols & Sam Houston*. There was a lot of stalling and "he pulled my hair," stuff at the beginning. Some was good, but overall disappointing. DDT by Bradstreet ended it. {\*\*}

## RINGSIDE BEAT EVENT COVERAGE



BALTIMORE ARENA

4) *One Man Gang* lost via DQ to *Ron Simmons*. Nice heat considering the participants. Sullivan was at ringside and his interference led to a DQ. Strange long post match chair chase brawl. {\*\*1/2}

5) *The Yellow Dog* pinned *Mike Graham*. Other than lasting too long, not bad. {\*\*}

6) *Yellow Dog & Ron Simmons* defeated *Mike Graham & Barry Windham*. Windham is just so good at everything. He even did the job in this one. Considering everything, a better match than it should have been. {\*\*\*}

NOTES: Needless to say, this was a real mess. They announced the Flair no-show before the match, then said El Gigante would face Windham. Fine, except he did not show either. The ring announcer said he was still on his way. Simmons had to do double duty. The show, except for Oz, was entertaining, but was not what was promoted. Only one match out of seven was as it was listed. I fail to understand why the WWF fears WCW which could not, sadly enough, sellout a high school gym.

WCW promoted an event at Public Hall in Cleveland, Ohio on June 9, 1991. Bob Stascak filed the following report...

1) *Z-Man* defeated *Mike Graham* in 8:40.

2) *Big Josh* defeated *The Aryans* in 6:49.

3) *Terrance Taylor & Larry Zbyszko* lost via DQ to *Dustin Rhodes & Richard Morton* in 9:56. Morton walked out at 8:49, came back to triple team on the faces, and Big Josh and Z-Man made the save.

4) *One Man Gang* beat *Sam Houston* in 8:21. Pee Wee Anderson then reversed the decision when OMG continued to destroy Houston. Gang and Sullivan were then "fined \$10,000." Gang chased ring announcer Gary Capeta.

*P.N. News* rapped for a short period of time, thank god. Some fans in the balcony had a sign that said, "Yo, P.N., you're a fat pig."

5) *Bobby Eaton* defeated *Arn Anderson* in 9:23 with a roll up, hand full of tights, and a fast count.

6) *The Steiners* defeated *The Freebirds, Hayes and Bradstreet*, in 12:57 when Scott gave Bradstreet the Frankensteiner.

7) *Nikita Koloff* fought *Lex Luger* to a double DQ of a U.S. Title match at 9:21.

8) *Barry Windham* beat *Brian Pillman* in a taped fist match in 6:29.

9) *El Gigante* won via DQ over *Ric Flair* in a WCW Title match. Barry Windham ran in at 7:42 to

cause the DQ.

NOTES: WCW returns here on July 18 with Sting vs. Nikita Koloff in a lights out Texas Death Match headlining and by sheer coincidence, the WWF is at the Coliseum the same night with a loaded card including a Hogan vs. Slaughter Desert Storm Match.

WCW held an event in front of a record low crowd at Chicago, Illinois's UIC Pavilion, an estimated 1300 fans including comps. Steve Sims filed the following report...

1) *Larry Zbyszko* pinned *Sam Houston* after a spinning neckbreaker in 6:31. {DUD}

2) *Oz* defeated *Joey Maggs* in 6:14 via pinfall after a spinning side suplex. {DUD}

3) *Rick Steiner & Tom Zenk* defeated the All-Japan World Tag Team Champions, *Dan Spivey & Stan Hansen* in 10:27 when Hansen backflipped Z-Man over the top rope via DQ. {\*\*1/2}

4) *Ron Simmons* beat *One Man Gang* via DQ at 12:01 when Kevin Sullivan entered the ring. {\*\*}

5) *Lex Luger* defeated *Nikita Koloff* in 11:01 of a Russian Chain Match. Luger was getting pounded on by Nikita, so Sting made the save. Nikita hung him over the ropes with the chain, and Sting acted pretty pissed off at how he was hung, thus missed most of his match, the next match... {\*\*}

6) *Arn Anderson & Barry Windham* won via countout over *Yellow Dog & Sting* in 12:27. Sting joined Dog at ringside at 5:00, tagged in at 9:12, pinned Arn at 9:27. They brawled outside the ring and Barry snuck back in and the ref awarded the heels the win and the fans were mad. {\*\*1/2}

7) *Ric Flair* beat *El Gigante* in 5:39 in the shortest Ric Flair main event in Chicago history. (\*1/2)

WWF held an event Monday, June 24 in Springfield, Massachusetts at the Civic Center in front of an estimated 1800 fans. Dan Reilly, host of WNNZ 640AM's new Wrestle Radio program filed the following report...

1) *The Berzerker* (John Nord) pinned *Superfly Snuka* in 8:15. I called it a "Battle of the Barkers." The guys merely went through the motions. Fooj the Stooj was in Nord's corner. {1/4\*}

2) *Jake "The Snake" Roberts* pinned *Earthquake* in 6:40. The match was quite poor but the crowd popped. Jake DDTed Quake which Tenta sold well. {1/2\*}

3) *LOD Animal* powerslammed and pinned *Paul Roma* in 5:15. A few decent moves by Animal but not much else. Both barely worked up a sweat. {\*}

4) *Col. Mustafa* defeated *Paul Roma* in surprisingly best match of the night. Douglas replaced Hacksaw Duggan and nobody seemed to care one way or the other about the change. Mustafa worked as hard as can be and honestly was not bad. True, Douglas carried him, but it was okay. Mustafa won with the loaded boot followed by a side suplex. {\*\*}

5) *Undertaker* defeated "*Rowdy*" *Roddy Piper* via countout at 5:10. This was an unusual match as it has not been the normal match-up around the horn, so it peaked my curiosity. The end game when Undertaker gave a piledriver to Piper on the cement floor as Paul Bearer distracted the ref, Morella. Undertaker actually rolled up the mat around the ring and did the piledriver on the hard cement floor directly in front of where I was sitting. Piper's head did not even come anywhere near the floor, but what happened was amazing. Piper laid on the floor for some 13 minutes as the medics, Drs. Garea and Goulet and legit ETM's tried giving him oxygen, putting on the cervical collar and placing him on the stretcher. It was a good sell job, but way too long. I swear 95 percent of the fans believed this. In fact, after the show, people told me Poper was taken from the arena in an ambulance. After thirteen minutes of this, we had a twenty-five minute intermission. {\*\*1/2}

6) *The Texas Tornado* battled *Warlord* to a double countout at 9:15. Kerry looked very spaced-out tonight, almost falling over the ringside barrier twice. Warlord looked so roided up it, it was scary. Poor effort. {1/4\*}

7) *Ted DiBiase* pinned *Virgil* in 8:50. Sherri tossed DiBiase a foreign object and he blasted Virgil for the three count. {1/2\*} -all for Sherri.

Notes: This was one of those hurry up and finish quickly shows. Two hours on the button, as usual...

WCW held an event on Friday, June 21 in Greensboro, North Carolina at the Coliseum in front of an estimated 1000 fans. "Front Row, Section D" was in attendance and Torch Cartoonist, John Hitchcock, filed the following report...

1) *Big Josh* pinned *Dutch Mantel*. {DUD}

2) *The Royal Family, Rip & Jacko*, lost via pinfall to *Junkyard Dog & Tom Zenk*. We had a sign for Jack: "The Jack, New Jersey Hearthrob, Sheepherder, Russian Assassin, Secret Agent, Royal Family Fan Club." Jack said we missed three. I hate being shown up! {1/2\*}

3) *Steve Austin* with *Lady Blossom* pinned *Tommy Angel*. Austin took a lot of hard bumps and was believable. He is a real talent. Blossom has talent, too. It makes me feel dumb voting for El Gigante for rookie of the year last year. {1/2\*}

4) *Mr. Hughes* squashed *Bobby Eaton* to a chorus of boos. I cannot believe how they build-up a guy as good as Eaton for six months as a top singles wrestler and in one month trash him. A shocker. {DUD}

5) *P.U. Nuisance* pinned *Angel of Death*. This match was brutal because it lasted about ten minutes. The Angel blew out his knee big time and had to be helped to the dressing room. I guess he will be on a scaffold next week. P.N. News has promise if he is pushed as a Boogie Woogie middle of the card act and only wrestle for 90 seconds. He has more potential for the WWF. {-\*\*}

6) *Dustin Rhodes* pinned *Black Bart*. This match was supposed to be a tag match with Dustin versus Richard Morton. Before they flipped the coin to decide who would wrestle Dustin, either Bart or Dead Eye Dick (Randy Cully), I knew we were the big losers. You know something is wrong when this match is third from the top. {DUD}

7) *Stan Hansen* pinned *Sting*. Thank god for this ray of sunlight. A lot of wild brawling and atomic knee drops on the outside ring table with both wrestlers taking turns. Nikita interfered with the chain to give Hansen the pin. Excellent match. We had two signs for Sting. They said "Sting Fan Club" and then we turned them over revealing, "Just Kidding." Sting liked it.

8) *Nikita Koloff* lost to *Lex Luger* in a Russian Chain Match. Chain matches really stink. Both guys tried to work as hard as they could considering Lex has a problem keeping the chain on his wrist. The finish had the Sting payback as he interfered to cost Nikita the match. {1/2\*}

Notes: It is really sad when Greensboro gets the "B" team. No Flair, Arn, Barry, or Rick Steiner. Maybe that is the reason for such low attendance. Then again, what is the excuse for the rest of the country?

WCW held an event at the Omni in Atlanta, Georgia in front of an estimated 2700 fans.. James Parker filed a report...

1) *The Freebirds* beat *Tommy Rich & The Young Pistols* in 16:55. Rich sunset Badstreet and then Garvin DDTed Rich into a pin. Good opener. {\*\*}

2) *Z-Man* pinned *The Diamond Stud* in 11:25. After a ref bump, Z-Man small packaged Diamond Dallas Page after he tried to interfere, and the referee made the three count. {\*\*3/4}

3) *Richard Morton & Arn Anderson* lost to *Dustin Rhodes & Sam Houston* in 15:05 when Morton clotheslined Houston and AA pinned him. {\*\*}

4) *P.N. News* beat *Jonnie B. Badd* in 9:30 by DQ. {DUD}

5) "*Stunning*" *Steve Austin* fought *Bobby Eaton* to a draw in 20:00. Last minute was good. {\*\*3/4}

6) *Rick Steiner & Yellow Dog* beat *Stan Hansen & Barry Windham* in 7:08 with an Air Pillman on BW. Pillman revealed his face to the crowd when the referee was not looking. {\*\*1/4}

7) *Sting* Beat *Nikita Koloff* in a Death Match. Sting led falls 3 to 2. Nikita was counted out. Lame finish. {\*\*1/2}

8) *El Gigante & Lex Luger* beat *One Man Gang & Ric Flair* in a stretcher match. El did 3 Stooges Curly act. Terrible. No heat. {DUD}



**HARDCORE FANS**

This past week, I was re-reading an earlier issue of *TU Rasslin' Riot* and came across an article written by Dan Lark concerning "smart" fans and their relationship to the wrestling business. There were several valid points made about the behavior of some "smart" fans at ringside. I personally find it irritating when someone heckles a wrestler with personal "inside" information that has been published in the wrestling newsletters. Are these people trying to prove how "smart" they are by yelling this stuff? Most of the casual fans have no idea what this means, so who are they trying to impress? I would hope that most of us hardcores are on a higher level of the food chain than this.

**READER RHETORIC**

There were comments also made about the practice of rating matches. I have found the ratings are usually quite valid, especially concerning the in-ring action. When acquiring a tape, I base my choices on these ratings. Rating a match is a bit subjective, but based on objective points. Each of us enjoys different aspects of matches to different degrees, based on knowledge and tastes. Pro wrestling is a blend of comedy, drama, violence, and athletics, with each match containing these ingredients to varying degrees. Certain wrestlers' jobs are to be a comedy act, ala The Bushwackers. Others are to be no-nonsense tough guys like Stan Hansen or the late Bruiser Brody. Still, others are invincible heroes like Hulk Hogan. Maybe we should temper the ratings according to a wrestler's role, but most "smart" fans have been exposed to enough first-class matches from previous times and from Japan to form a basis for rating in-ring action. This should validate the practice of rating matches to a certain degree. Is it any less valid than rating movies or music?

Finally, second-guessing and criticism were, themselves, criticized. The newsletter editors and their readers are really the only ones in a position to offer viewpoints outside of the promotion, especially in this country. We hardcore fans are the ones who still regularly support wrestling. Sure, we can offer our opinion by not spending money on the various promotion's product, but how many of us are ready to abandon something we love to the degree that all of us do. If we do not keep an eye on the promoters, who will? Many casual fans I talk to would like to see the same changes in the presentation of wrestling that all of us would. Unfortunately, they do not have the access to information that we have. Perhaps we can affect some change in the business. A decade ago, we would not have been tolerated, but now we are at least acknowledged and some of our ideas are slipping through. This business has changed enormously in the last ten years and is due for some more. It just may "need" us as much as we "need" it.

MICHAEL MCGOWEN  
Jerseyville, IL

**CLASH XV: NO SURPRISE**

Regarding your comments regarding the June 12 Clash of Champions, I think you made several very good points. However, to call the show a fraud was inaccurate. All it was was big-time pro wrestling as it has become in the late eighties and early ninties.

Wrestling, at least the WWF and WCW brands of the "sport," no longer cares what the so-called hardcore fans think. After all, we are not the ones buying their plastic dolls and other useless junk. The "sport," if we can call it that, exists only for marketing purposes. Be it dolls, hot lines, commercial airtime, the next PPV, or whatever, wrestling is promoted by these folks only to sell something. And it sure as hell is not wrestling that they are selling. As long as the WWF is successful in pushing their crapola on the public, WCW will apparently follow along.

No longer will wrestlers be people; rather, they will be gimmicks. Big Josh, Oz, Sid Justice, P.N. News, Undertaker, The Savage-Liz B.S., et cetera. No longer will there be even the most threadbare logical reason for a feud. No longer will house shows have any meaning other than to promote products and upcoming PPV's. It is sad to say, but this is the junk that sells to the kids and the sometimes fans. After more than thirty years of watching wrestling, it is really

**BIG TWO CATER TO MONEY, NOT FANS  
PLUS, AN IDEA FOR WCW TO REALLY "GET THOSE JAPS"**

disappointing to see what has become of our sport in the new age.

But all is not lost. The hardcore fan can still have an impact on what the future of wrestling will be. By using our economic muscle - in the form of organized boycotts of PPVs, et cetera - and by letting our feelings be known through the newsletters, we can still have a voice. If the WWF or WCW want us to buy a PPV featuring a much overdone Flair-Luger match or the "Wedding" of Savage and Liz, boycott it. Follow that up with a letter to Jim Herd or Vince McMahon telling him why you did not buy the PPV.

RICHARD IRVINE  
St. Paul Park, MN

In regards to your "Below the Bottom Line" in issue #127, there was nothing fraudulent or unexpected about the time given for Flair vs. Eaton. Those who expected a thirty to forty-five minute match are paying attention to newsletters and ignoring realities of the wrestling industry. Millions of viewers are facing their televisions with remotes in their hands and perhaps thirty or forty programs to chose from. To maintain this prime time audience, the programmer must keep the viewer from being bored by constantly changing the scene. WCW must try to capture the casual fans; newsletter readers and other hardcores are only a small minority of the number of viewers needed to make the advertisers happy. In the 60's, Bob Dylan sang, "The Times They Are A Changing." In the 1990's pro wrestling, The Times They Have A Changed.

STEPHEN MEYERSON  
Brooklyn, NY

**WCW'S ULTIMATE REVENGE ON JAPAN**

Since TBS appears prejudice against the Japanese by treating them as if they were our enemy, I figure the ego baffleons could push their big stars and destroy my faith in the promotion even more.

On December 7th, the 50th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor, we could have: "Starrcade '91: Vengeance for America" at the D.C. Armory in America's capital city. The matches could be made to feature the invaders destroying the Americans in all but two matches: Tarzan Gotoh pins Big Josh, Saito & Machine pin Taylor & Morton, Osamu Kido beats Windham, Pillman beats Honega (by the way, that is the only win Pillman will get in WCW this year, and it is only fictional), Lyger pins Eaton, Choshy & Hashimoto beat Vader & Hansen, The Stiners lose to Fujinami & Kimura, and finally Flair & Sting & Luger & Dustin (of course) & Anderson unite to defeat the common foes, Chono & Hase & Sakaki & Saito & Mutoh in a.... "War Games" when Dustin ducks when the Japanese throw salt in his face. Oh, did I mention the only way the Japanese won any of their matches was with salt throwing?

BOBBY YATES  
Asheboro, NC

**FLAIR NEEDS A FINISHER**

Like many others, I get sick and tired of the continual screw job ending in WCW, especially seeing that the prime ones involve Ric Flair. For years, the man has been an absolute "zenith" worker, yet his repayment from the powers-that-be is to always almost emerge victorious by a stroke of luck or outside interference. Not only has this ebbed away at his credibility, but naturally enough when your "showpiece" or the "figurehead" of your promotion does not get clean wins, then the promotion will continually get lost or buried in the shuffle. In all these years, Flair has not had the reasonable and simple utilization of a finishing hold. Please don't mention his lame figure-four as a finisher, as it is most certainly not worthy of mention since everyone uses it, sometimes as a rest hold, and it has been killed because few ever submit to it.

The champion of the promotion must be seen having his hand raised periodically, which means a challenger has to fall prey to the former's signature hold. Well, this cannot happen in WCW as Flair does not have an impressive, definitive finisher.

It is and has been a disgrace for years. Hogan gets his hand raised clean in most defenses and his credibility on the surface is shy-high. Whereas Flair, for the reason I have mentioned, has his credibility teetering on the rock-bottom scale. WCW must

address the problem professionally and correct it soon.

On a lighter side, I noticed the mention of a couple of new holds utilized by the Japanese women in the matches. Those being the Northern Lights Powerbomb and the Somersaulting Legdrop as described by Dave Meltzer of the *Wrestling Observer*. For the sake of their fellow WCW members, I sure hope Scott and Rick Steiner do not hear about these moves.

GARRY COOPER  
Sydney, Australia

T.T.B. - RODNEY LEIGHTON of R.R. 3, Pugwash, N.S., BOK 1L0 publishes *Rod's Reflector*, what Rodney eventually would like to resemble a weekly version of J.D. McKay's old *Ringside Reflector*... TIM NOEL of 9305 Edson Rd, Richmond VA 23229 has a list of photos available... JODY BOYNS of 521 Pine St; Apt 304, Manchester NH 03104 publishes New England Wrestling Scene bi-weekly at \$15.00 for 26 issues... GARRY COOPER of 43 Windmill St, Miller Pt, Sydney 2000 NSW, Australia is interested in the boxing pay-per-view on June 28 with Tyson vs. Ruddock which he does not have access to in Australia... HOWARD BAUM of 333-09 Ives Dairy Road, N. Miami Beach, FL 33179 has 17 pictures of Denny Brown and Jeff James's valets available for \$22... JOHN AIREZZI of 136 N. Carl Ave, Sw. 125, Babylon, NY 11702 is offering a special deal on his monthly "Best of Pro Wrestling Spotlight" cassettes of \$10 for the June and July editions, featuring extensive coverage of the steroid trial, plus interviews with Cactus Jack, Terry Funk, Paul E. Dangerously, Fabulous Moolah, and Superstar Graham.

**TORCH TOP TEN LIST**

From the home offices of Peter Shandorf of Minneapolis, Minnesota are the top ten new phone lines...

10) Luna Vachon: Swears at callers, 95 cents per minute.

9) Dr. Tom Prichard: Does celebrity wrestler impersonations, 25 cents per minute.

8) El Gigante: Says he "wants the belt," \$12.00 a minute, 10 minute minimum.

7) Verne Gagne's AWA Hotline: Says there is blockbuster news about the AWA ready to break at any moment and asks caller to hang on while "we put together the details." \$6.00 a minute.

6) John Tolos UWF Hotline: Praises Herb Abrams to the skies and criticizes Titan for running a circus. Says "Excuse me, I've got a call on the other line." Five minutes later caller hears a dial tone. \$2.50 per minute.

5) Kevin Sullivan: Uses mind control to get caller to stay on line for three months straight. Only 95 cents per minute.

4) Hulk Hogan: Denies prior knowledge that children's vitamins marketed under his name contain anabolic steroids. Denies veiled warning in longtime slogan, "eat your vitamins." \$14.95 a minute.

3) Virgil Runnels: Does top-ten all-time greatest list. As V.R., he disguises his voice and says Dusty Rhodes was the greatest. \$6.00 a minute, he pays the caller.

2) Bruno Sammartino - Says he was the greatest ever. Everyone under 30 believes it is Arnold Schwarzeneger's line. \$6 a minute, he pays.

1) Missy Hyatt's 800 Line: Discusses her career as a model, her clothes, the latest low-cut dresses in fashion, her latest hair style, et cetera.

[Torch Top Ten List] is a regular feature in which all readers are welcome to send in their version of a top ten list, be it humorous, political, serious, or otherwise.]



I have long been disturbed by the power Vincent K. McMahon holds in the wrestling business. But now I am even more disturbed by the power he holds in the real world.

Dr. George T. Zahorian being convicted does not bother me. If you do the crime, do the time.

Wrestlers killing themselves with steroids really does not bother me either, except for Superstar Graham, who did not know what he was getting into. I do not have much sympathy for suicides, especially the non-emotionally disturbed variety. If you want to knowingly injest and inject death, be my guest, just do not interfere with my day.

But Vince, displaying more magic than ever, being able to convince a federal judge to dismiss Hulk Hogan from testifying... THAT bothers me. A lot.

Do you realize what was involved in Hulk Hogan being dismissed from testifying on the witness stand? Counts against Zahorian involving Hogan were

## MARK MADDEN

"YOU MAY NOT LIKE IT..."

dropped. That is like someone accused of raping someone on a pinball machine, ala the movie "The Accused," being freed from responsibility because the judge decides that the Bally Pinball company's reputation is more important than convicting the rapist.

That is no exaggeration. It is exactly what happened, an exact parallel. Criminal charges against one man were dropped to protect the reputation of another man, and a phoney reputation at that. I mean, Ronald Reagan could not squash his subpoena for the Ollie North trial, but Vince squashed one for Hulk.

Judge William Caldwell said Hulk's privacy interests outweighed prosecution interests in convicting Hogan.

Wow!

Let the drug dealer walk, but just be sure the drug buyer can keep deceiving kids into thinking he became who he is because he said his prayers, trained hard, and took his vitamins. What is the good of one outrageous bastardization of justice when you can just as easily have two?

With the advent of the sanitized "don't hold up any signs for competing promotions, stay in your seats and behave yourself" doctrine that prevails at television tapings these days, and with many cities devoid of live wrestling, the incidents of fan violence in this sport are less frequent, or at least less publicized than ever. But it has not always been so calm.

My mind flashes back to some instances of mat-meyhem that have transpired over the years. There are enough examples from Minnesota that I am able to surpass the Chicago shooting and the Atlanta stabbing of Roddy Piper.

Rhodes & Dick Murdoch versus Nick Bockwinkel & Ray Stevens in Minneapolis in 1972. At the time, all four were heels. On this particular night, all were heels. The fans sided with Rhodes and

## MICK KARCH

"SUBMISSION"

Murdoch. As the bout approached conclusion, a wild-eyed fan burst to the ring area and tried to attack Nick Bockwinkel. At that point, "the fraternity of brotherhood" took over. Rhodes grabbed Bockwinkel and threw him onto the floor out of harm's way. Then Rhodes grabbed the fan, tossed him to the referee, the late Chuck Swenson, who in turn kicked the fan in the seat of the pants and tossed him over the top rope. He was being grabbed by an off-duty policeman when yet another spectator entered the fray, this time wielding a knife. He stabbed the cop, all hell broke loose, and a full-scale riot took place before order was restored. Bockwinkel, Stevens, Rhodes, and Murdoch all made it back to the locker room safely while the cop luckily only had superficial wounds as a result of the stabbing.

Another night, this time in St. Paul, Mad Dog Vachon was the crowd favorite in a match against Superstar Billy Graham. Graham, at the time, was the number one villain on the AWA scene. After Graham had scored a very controversial pinfall, Vachon left the

# MCMAHON'S POWER IS SCARY

## HOGAN GETTING OUT OF TESTIFYING IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE

How in heaven's name did Vince McMahon do it? Blackmail, bribery, just plain ol' - good god! - b-b-b-bullshit? Or something else beyond my imagination?

It really does not matter now. Vince was able to wield enough power to persuade a federal judge to dismiss Hulk Hogan from testifying. He was able to do a work on *Sports Illustrated*, a work that resulted in them writing a WWF glorifying piece of fiction that was beyond comprehension.

These are not marks in the stands we are talking about. These are not wrestlers who depend upon Vince for their paychecks. These are the most highly respected group of writers and editors in the country. I wonder about *Sports Illustrated's* reputation now.

A federal judge's integrity speaks for itself. I have always wondered about that, but never more so than now.

A lot of people blame the wrestlers for the steroid boom. Do you really think most of these guys would take the juice if they believed they could get away with not taking it? Maybe I am wrong, but I do not think so.

Some blame the fans for embracing the bigger is better philosophy. Wrestling fans, though, believe what they are educated to believe. Do not forget, Vince Senior promoted Bob Backlund as his champion during the start of the steroid boom. He played off the bigger is better philosophy to draw heat for Backlund and in turn, drew money with Backlund as champ.

Some blame the promoters for juice being on the loose. That is probably the truest of the theories. But look at Jerry Jarrett who has pushed steroid-free Jerry Lawler as an ordinary average guy hero for over a decade. Shohei Baba, leader of All-Japan, is to be commended, too. If All-Japan's Jumbo Tsuruta is on the juice, somebody should tell him it really is not working.

No. Blaming the promoters is not the answer.

But blaming THE promoter is. If any one man, group, or entity can be blamed for the steroid boom in professional wrestling, it is Vincent K. McMahon. Do not get me wrong. Vince is not the only man at fault. Jim Herd is not testing for steroids. He is just comparing using steroids to drinking whiskey. Vince McMahon made every promoter who has pushed steroids since possible. He is a self-perpetuating

monster with his success founded on his employees' diseased livers and withering joints. Others see Vince's success and try to reach it by standing on their own pile of battered bodies.

George T. Zahorian was not the drug pusher in this case. Vincent K. McMahon was, although presumably not legally liable.

I have talked to Titan wrestlers who say Vince has told them to gain a lot of weight in a short period of time. The word, "steroids," is never used, thus no legal liability, but the insinuation is there. As one wrestler frankly put it, "He doesn't care if you shove cryptonite up your ass, as long as you gain the weight. But he knows there's only one way to get there."

And Vince is not just pushing steroid-builds because he thinks it is the only way he can make money from wrestling. Vince is a genius when it comes to promoting wrestling. If he suddenly pushed workrate as the WWF's selling gimmick, he could get it over and make just as much money. But that is not Vince's way. And if it ain't Vince's way, it is no way.

Vince wants his wrestlers huge because, well, that is just the way he wants it. It is just another way for him to wield his power. Why does Vince degrade his wrestlers with demeaning gimmick upon gimmick? Why does Vince subject his wrestlers to long, long road trips? Because he can. Vince's decisions have never appeared to be about what is best for the company, and definitely not what is best for his employees. It has been about what he can get away with - and the more outrageous, the better. Work a major sports magazine? Work a federal judge?

What a zany guy. What a megalomaniac. What a madman. I believe Vince McMahon should have been the man convicted last week and, in about twenty years, when ex-WWF wrestlers are dropping like flies, you can add another charge to that list.

[Mark Madden of Pittsburgh, PA has been writing "You May Not Like It..." monthly since the April 4, 1991 issue of Pro Wrestling Torch. Mark, a 13 year veteran sports writer for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette graduated with a Journalism Major from Duquesne University, a school which has graduated no pro wrestlers. Mark Madden, while growing up, was forced by his Grandmother to watch Bruno Sammartino and he is grateful, really.]

## TWENTY YEARS OF FAN VIOLENCE

### BOCKWINKEL, HENNIG, AND ADONIS FACED GOOFBALL FANS

ring and was stalking Graham, first in the aisles leading to and from the ring, and then out into the hall leading to the locker room. Vachon was followed by a literal posse - a couple hundred fans who were chanting, "blood, blood, blood" as the Dog continued his pursuit of Graham. Graham had to defend himself by picking up a fifty pound bag of ice-melting salt and then toss it into the air, having it land at Vachon's feet. The bag popped open and at least slowed down the on-rushing mob until Graham was safely in the confines of the locker room.

Yet another night in Minneapolis, "Father Perfect" Larry Hennig was being followed by a screaming, raving fan after his match. The fan, three feet behind Hennig, followed him from the ring, down the aisle, down the hall, and all the way to the locker room, spewing profanities, ranting and raving the whole time. Finally he verbally assaulted Hennig and asked him if he wanted to fight. The security guards were incredulous, turned around, and asked the goofball if he was serious. He insisted that he was, so, apparently backing away from protocol, the security guards obliged, opened the locker room door, and shouted, "Larry, the guy wants to talk to you."

What followed was like a scene out of a Laurel and Hardy movie. Behind closed doors, it sounded like the dressing room was exploding. Banging, screaming, crashing, for all of about thirty seconds. Then there was silence. When the door opened, the fan had his nose splattered literally all over his face. He looked like raspberry jam from ear to ear. At that point, I asked one of the security guards what Hennig had done to that guy. "Nothing," the security officer told me. "The poor guy was getting Larry's autograph, then he tripped, and fell." He winked as three police officers in the vicinity who had witnessed the behind-the-scenes incident also winked and chuckled.

Then there was the time in Minneapolis when

"Adorable" Adrian Adonis was making his way back to the locker room after a bout. A spectator up in the elevated section threw a beer on Adonis. As soon as the beer hit Adonis square in the eyes, the fan tossed a wadded paper cup at Adrian hitting him squarely in the head. This time, Adonis pulled away from the police officers who were escorting him back to the locker room and began climbing up and over the barrier into the elevated section. Fans scattered like the parting of the Red Sea as Adonis made his way directly in front of the fan, cocked his fist, and was getting ready to unload before he was grabbed by the police officers and hauled to the locker room. All the time, Adonis was screaming, "Take your hands off of me, I'll kill him." When Adonis was finally back in the locker room, the police officers were heard saying, "That's the last time he will ever get an escort from us." Adrian appeared in the Twin Cities only once or twice more and fortunately there was no more fan violence.

All in all, certainly it is better there are no incidents of fan violence or mob scenes like there were in the 1970's and early 1980's, but yet - and this is going to sound bizarre - there is a part of me that longs for the old days when the poor guy who tried to run to the aid of the babyface was unceremoniously escorted from the building and missed the main event.

[Mick Karch, of Golden Valley, Minnesota, has been writing "Submission" monthly since the September 22, 1988 issue of Pro Wrestling Torch. Mick has hosted a Twin Cities wrestling block for over three years called "Saturday Night At Ringside," which features WCW World Wide and USWA Challenge plus thirty minutes of local features and interviews. Mick has announced for Windy City, West-Four, AWA on ESPN, the PWA, and the IWA on SportChannel America. Mick was President of the Nick Bockwinkel Fan Club from 1971 to 1987 and edited and published a bulletin semi-regularly for the club. Mick is currently on a three-week tour of Australia for Rob Russen's IWA wrestling.]



When some wrestling fans suggest the future of wrestling looks worse than ever, even venturing to say that within a few years Vince McMahon will be the only promoter and the WWF style of wrestling will be the only style of wrestling available for most fans, Cactus Jack is one significant reason to look forward to the next decade. In the following "Torch Talk" conducted by Wade Keller on May 31, 1991, Cactus talks about how he has grown as a pro wrestler from being perceived as a mid-card gimmick performer to a serious main eventer. This is the second of three installments from that interview. The first installment was published in issue #127.

## TORCH TALK IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW



**WADE KELLER:** You are most famous for your recent matches against Eddie Gilbert. Tell me about those?

**CACTUS JACK:** I didn't beg, but I mentioned to several people that I would be interested in wrestling Eddie on a regular basis in the NWA. I wanted to wrestle somebody who also took pride and wasn't willing to settle for having just a good match. I thought I needed somebody like Eddie to draw a great match out of me. I don't know if you have seen the last couple of tapes of me wrestling Eddie in Philadelphia - I'm going to go out on a limb and I don't want to sound cocky or arrogant, but I don't believe there is a better independent match in the country. And I don't believe there are that many better matches in the country, or the world for that matter, period. I was thinking about this, and I don't want to come off to your readers as thinking a lot of myself, but a lot of the time you get comfortable in a groove, but I knew if I dropped an elbow off the apron or if I did a clothesline over the ropes that people were going to like my stuff and that they were going to consider me a hard worker when in truth I considered myself lazy.

**KELLER:** Because you thought you were underachieving?

**CACTUS:** Right. For instance, when I was with Devastation Inc. in Texas, I think I settled into a comfortable groove as a second banana to Gary Young. Now Gary Young's a great wrestler, but that was never my goal to show people I was a main event guy. When I was with Kevin Sullivan - and we had some classic moments there - I don't think I ever appeared to anyone as main event material.

**KELLER:** You mentioned in a past interview that you were perceived by fans as more of a gimmick side-order as opposed to a main event calibre wrestler. Do you believe that has changed?

**CACTUS:** I really think that we are going to find out very soon. When I talked to you last summer, about fifty-one weeks ago to be exact, I said I left because I wasn't sure where my character was heading. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be looked at as a monster or a circus side-show. And I think at the same time, I was dropping elbows off the ring apron and having my head rammed into cement. At the same time, people were saying, "Yeah, I get a kick out of him." Now I don't think people say they kick out of me. I think to the people who don't know me, they're scared of me. And I think interview-wise, I've become comfortable with being Cactus Jack. It used to be guys would sit around doing interviews and say, "Awe, I feel kind of stupid doing this and trying to act like I'm mean when I don't really feel like being mean right now. Most of the time, I really felt the character; I didn't feel I was putting on an act. It felt I was expressing a feeling,

# A TALK WITH CACTUS JACK

## GROWTH PROCESS FROM A GIMMICK TO A RESPECTED MAIN EVENTER

drawing upon something already in me.

**KELLER:** A surreal painting, as Jim Cornette described you.

**CACTUS:** Right, right. Thank you. But since that time, I think I've really reached a turning point because Joel Goodhart can call me at eight in the morning for a show and wake me up and, boom, I really feel like me, like Cactus Jack. Sometimes when I'd get ready for a big match I'd think to myself, "I'm just fat Mickey Foley and I don't really belong out here." Now, I mean, Collett, my wife to be...

**KELLER:** Congratulations.

**CACTUS:** Thanks. She was looking at a match with me in the falls count anywhere match with Eddie Gilbert and she said, "Why aren't you walking around." I was just standing in the ring kneeling on one knee. I said, "Collett, my heart was pounding so fast, you know, I was nervous, but at the same time I had an image of what I was going to do in that match, and I did it. I'm a lot more comfortable with the idea of creating... I don't know if forcing emotions out of people is even possible in professional wrestling, but if I can do it, I'm gonna try to do it. Like I said about people being afraid of me. I know you did a write-up of the match where I ended up dropping an elbow on John Arezzi. You know, no one thought that was funny. I'm looking around and I'm not hearing the normal boos and cheers and pops. Then I looked at the tapes with John. It was the same reaction as at the Dallas Sportatorium with Terry Funk and Jerry Lawler. People were just standing around with their mouths kind of hanging open. I love the idea of a mother and a kid and her husband buying tickets thinking they're going to get a couple of chuckles and they either see a chair across the back or something they didn't expect to see and it's kind of disturbing to them. At this point I would rather disturb people than entertain them because I know that when I get back in the NWA or wherever I may go, it's not going to just be the casual fans anymore. People are going to get the chance to get in touch with what I'm doing. I really believe if I was given five weeks to do interviews, to talk and to get myself and my character out in the open, people would respond to it as a main event type of person.

**KELLER:** The feeling I get from people who talk about your matches is that you have definitely moved from a gimmick to a main event calibre performer with a style of someone like Stan Hansen who does whatever he wants whenever he wants.

**CACTUS:** I appreciate you saying that, especially drawing the comparison to Stan Hansen. I learned an awful lot from Hansen while I was in Japan and an awful lot from tapes of guys like Brody. I would look at their matches from Japan and I would say, wait a second, Brody's not taking backdrops on the concrete and he's not dropping elbows off the apron. So why are his matches so damn more intense than mine. And the reason was just the attitude. Like I said as hard as people thought I worked, I still did a lot of walking and talking, a lot of little laughing at the crowd. I will be honest with you, Wade, I heard a wrestler who has been around a long time who was talking like he had the answer to all the world's problems. He said, "The object of professional wrestling is to do just enough to get the job done, get by with the minimum, but don't give them any more." And I thought to myself, "Maybe that's why all the arenas are empty. I feel like a lot of people look at me like I'm a glorified stuntman and maybe that's not unmerited, maybe there's some truth in that. But I really feel that in the past year or the past two years, really, NWA time included, that I can have a good match with my eyes closed and not think about it. But let me talk about the difference with a guy like Eddie Gilbert. I wanted to call up Eddie and thank him for letting me have the best matches of my life.

I wrestled Eddie a few times in the NWA, but we were in a position as being in the first match on a card, once again, our job was to just work hard, have a good match, and get people into the card, but there's just not that attitude that we are going to show the people a match that they're going to be talking about. I remember being at that big fans convention in New York at the end of August and I was talking with my fiancée. As a side comment, it's really nice, pointing to

that comment in my last "Torch Talk" a year ago as an example - where I said that when I was in school when I saw girls, I wanted to drop elbows on them. I always thought that if a woman entered my life, it would really take away from my goal and my drive as a wrestler. And I happened to come across probably the one woman in the world that would make me wierder. For a while, I didn't know who was the gimmick in the family.

Back to the fan convention, when I was scheduled to face Eddie, I was telling guys that they were going to get to see something really special, one of the matches of the year at Joel Goodhart's show in Septmeber. I had my goals set so high for that match because I was finally in a match with a guy I knew I could go all out with. And I ended up disappointing everybody, myself, Eddie, Abdullah the Butcher, everybody was a little disappointed with that match. I tried to figure out why and I found out through time - I mean, I was incredibly disappointed, I was down on the business; later that night I went out and wrestled Abdullah the Butcher and I kind of redeemed myself, having the kind of match I knew I could. And I tried to figure out why the match with Eddie was so disappointing. Eddie has just turned heel in Memphis and the people cheered me when I came out, so all of a sudden I was the good guy and I wrestled like every good guy and his brother I had ever seen. So I'm doing amdrags and working the leg until I finally realized people cheered me because they liked the things that I did. They weren't cheering me because I amdragged and worked legs. So that helped me a lot when I received cheers with the UWF or independent shows or whatever, but people were cheering because they appreciated the hard work and in order to maintain the cheers, I would do more of the same.

**KELLER:** You got to be on the next Goodhart card against Eddie unexpectedly, right?

Yeah. In fact, we weren't even supposed to be on the next Goodhart show, but Wahoo and Manny cancelled so Joel just kind of threw it in as a little filler where falls counted anywhere. I mean, since that match, I have been on every single Joel Goodhart spot show and Eddie and I have been transformed in to this hardcore item. I mean, we had that match - I hope some people have a chance to see it - which in my opinion was the best match I ever had. And I did thank Eddie for allowing me to have the best match I've ever had. Then we had the barbed wire, and I'm going in saying to myself that I was going to have the best barbed wire match ever. And when it was finished, the match wasn't as good as the match I had in my mind. Then I started thinking about it the day after and the day after that and I'm thinking, maybe that was the greatest barbed wire match ever... Maybe it was.

So I give Joel Goodhart a lot of credit for giving me the chance for the first time in my life to be in the main event of a major show, and that will be at Pennsylvania Hall at the Pennsylvania Civic Center on August 3rd. I would like to mention that match. To me, I've had a promoter get mad at me for wrestling too long and for using tables and chairs and things like that. But inside I know I've got this dedicated little following and when there's twenty people out there chanting "Cactus Jack" and have possibly driven a great distance to see that match, I don't want one person to say, "It wasn't worth the ride." So if a promoter is going to tell me to tone down what I do, I don't really want to work for him.

I mean, Ric Flair has never done the minimum to get the maximum. Bruiser Brody never gave the minimum to get the maximum. I don't believe that pulling the wool over the fans' eyes is the way to build houses.

## UPCOMING "TORCH TALKS"...

**CACTUS JACK:** Final Segment  
**"SUPERSTAR" GRAHAM:** On Steroids  
**PAUL ORNDORFF:** A Career of Thoughts  
**"NORMAN" MIKE SHAW:** On WCW Days  
**KARATE KID:** On Midget Wrestling  
**JIM CORNETTE:** Career Memories



When I heard the news, I believed it. One year ago or two years ago I would not have believed it. Now I do. Ric Flair has left WCW, formerly the NWA. He will not be back any time soon. The greatest professional wrestler in the sport today is without a job. It is a fact.

The sport has changed so much that Flair's departure does not surprise me, especially since Dusty Rhodes has revenge to gain for Flair's influence in his departure as booker back in 1988. How much was due to Dusty's influence versus Herd's influence and Flair's influence is unknown. One thing is for sure, this would not have happened two years ago.

## BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE

By: Wade Keller  
Editor/Publisher

Two years ago, even a Jim Herd-led WCW would have worked out a deal with Ric Flair. And one year ago, the given state of WCW made Ric Flair worth negotiating for. Today, that is not the case.

WCW made the decision to move away from the over-40 Ric Flair to a more muscular and young Lex Luger despite recent and upcoming steroid abuse publicity. July 14 would have been the end of the Ric Flair era - the second end, I should say.

The first Ric Flair era ended at the Great American Bash in Baltimore last year when Sting beat Ric Flair. Sting's acceptance speech resembled that of a lifetime acceptance into the judicial department. His lifelong tenure lasted until January where Ric Flair defeated Sting after Sting failed to be the answer to WCW's woes.

Lex Luger will not be the answer this time either, but this time, Ric Flair is not around the fall back on.

It was not Sting's fault WCW did not draw in the last half of 1990. It was not Ric Flair's fault WCW did not draw in the first half of 1990 or the first half of 1991. WCW does not know how to promote pro wrestling adequately enough to compete with the WWF. Jim Comette was right when he said WCW could not even draw if Hulk Hogan signed a lifetime contract with them.

First, it was Dusty's fault business was falling, then the booking committee's, then booker Ric Flair's fault, then the committee's, then Ole Anderson's, and since Dusty is back and doing worse than when he originally left over two years ago, there is only one explanation - Jim Herd, despite Herd's wishful belief it is Ric Flair's or Ole Anderson's or Jay Leno's or...

Jim Herd is a nice guy. Ric Flair is a nice guy. There are a lot of nice guys in this world, but just as I do not know how to operate on someone's heart, Jim Herd has shown he does not know how to turn WCW into a thriving competitor to the WWF. It is not that he

# RIC FLAIR LEAVES WCW

THE OFFICIAL END OF CLASSIC ERA AND HOPEFULLY THE START OF A NEW ONE

has not tried. He has done his best. He has learned a lot about a business he knew little to nothing about when he was hired. But the fact has become apparent that a Jim Herd-led WCW is not going to compete with the WWF in any area except pay-per-view on a minimal basis.

But before Jim Herd and Dusty Rhodes accept blame, Ric Flair will be the scapegoat. This time, they wanted the belt off of his waist and they wanted to cut his pay over one half and then reportedly to one-third the following year. Ric Flair could not accept that pay on principle. In reality, Ric Flair's proper place in pro wrestling is not working for WCW, not this version.

The last Clash proved it. Ric Flair and Bobby Eaton could have turned the building inside out with a classic 45 minute brawl, playing with the live crowd's and viewing audience's emotions. Friends would tell friends and one step would be taken in the Ric Flair direction - the direction of offering a competing product to the WWF's "lots of sizzle, little steak."

But when you cannot innovate, instead, you immitate. That appeared to be WCW's gimmick. Bring in gimmick performers with no concern for their ability to actually excite a crowd when they had already paid for their seats. They believed fans would return no matter how bored they were because the characters would be strong and compelling.

Instead, WCW came off as a cheap imitation of the WWF and no one came. Except for the most die-hard fans, everyone waited for the major leagues to come to town or quit watching wrestling all together. That resulted in Ric Flair being left with few quality opponents, less interview time, no innovative booking to keep his character fresh, and when given a good opponent and the chance to contribute to the ailing promotion, the match was cut to under 15 minutes in which three finishes needed to take place.

And after all of that, WCW feels little remorse at the loss of Ric Flair because he became expendable. If I throw my friend's 27 inch color TV set out a ten story window and it shatters, sure, I won't feel remorse if it is subsequently stolen, but it is my own damn fault it became worthless, and when my friend asks me to pay for it, I certainly would not have the gaul to say, "That TV is broken, it's worthless. I'll give you one-third of what it is worth." WCW threw Ric Flair out their proverbial ten story window and then they had the gaul to say he was no longer worth \$750,000 a year, only one-half or one-third.

He is not, under current management, worth anything. Neither is Hulk Hogan or Scott Steiner. WCW is on a course to continue losing money and Hogan's salary would only be that much greater of a loss. Ric Flair was the scapegoat for those in charge. But if WCW continues on their current path and still

are not drawing with Lex Luger as champion, then what do they blame? The weather?

Now Ric Flair, still the greatest wrestler in the world with many good years left, is without a job and the only money-making options are the WWF and Japan tours.

If Flair goes to the WWF, he will be called a "sell-out" by his hardest-core followers. In the WWF, he cannot win. Either he gets less of a push than he deserves and is not in main events, or he is in main events and loses to Hulk Hogan, who represents the entire opposite philosophy of Ric Flair, thus symbolically proving that Vince McMahon and Hulk Hogan are superior to Ric Flair and believable sport-like pro wrestling. The only scenario that would satisfy Flair followers would be Flair winning the WWF Title from either Hulk Hogan or in a tournament after Hogan retires. Then after a year or two, retires as WWF Champion, thus loses neither the WWF nor the WCW or NWA World Heavyweight Championships. He would be recognized forever as the greatest of this era, his deserved place.

Or, Ric Flair can take time off from full-time wrestling, spend time with his family and kids, and wrestle in Japan several times a year. Now that makes sense. His kids deserve Dad to be around. His wife deserves to have Ric around. And Japanese fans deserve to see Ric Flair close his career in their country drawing big houses for promoters who present wrestling in a sport-like respectable, realistic manner. Flair would make more than decent money, possibly more than the WWF would pay him, and he would have most of his time to do with what he wished.

Then again, WCW management could go through major changes, the current top group of brass could be replaced and the Ric Flair's and Jim Comette's and Terry Funk's and Chris Cruise's could return to the mainstream wrestling scene on TBS under new WCW management with fresh, ambitious, enthusiastic plans.

Watching Dusty Rhodes bury Ric Flair and poorly rehash angles from his old NWA and Florida days, watching Jim Herd spew whiskey-steroid analogies while ignoring his obvious responsibility, and watching Ric Flair leave his mainstay promotion is not fun.

Ric Flair leaving WCW was one more step to major changes in this sport. The formation of Joe Pedicibno's Global group is another exciting step to change. More changes are coming, because drawing under 1000 fans in 15,000 seat building is not worthy of motus-operandi.

And when Ric Flair and WCW mutually part ways, that proves the status-quo just uprooted and strapped on wheels and is gaining velocity.

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