FUJI & TANAKA...AND THE IMPERIAL WIZARD

FRED CURRY: Action Is His Mark

TONY MARINO: "I'll Stay On Top"

CURTIS & GRAHAM: Once Enemies, Now Friends Wrestling's Biggest Night

The Sheik Has A Long Way To Go
By Bobo Brazil
Mr. Fuji and Pro. Tanaka are a colorful tag team. Before their matches each performs a Japanese ceremony. Tanaka tosses salt to empty ring corners. Mr. Fuji does a brief karate ceremony with his hands. Both are adept in the arts of Karate, Jujitsu and Judo. They use these maneuvers expertly in their matches to gain their victories.

Under the guidance of the master, the Grand Wizard, the path to the title was brief. Mr. Fuji and Prof. Tanaka won the title the second time they wrestled for it.
"Take it from me, the greatest wrestling manager in wrestling history, I have the ultimate tag team combination in all of wrestling, the WWWF World Tag Team Champions, Mr. Fuji and Prof. Toru Tanaka!" This from the lips of The Grand Wizard. The wrestling manager who claims he has a computer-like brain.

"I have never managed a tag team like Mr. Fuji and Prof. Tanaka ever. They are the perfect duo. I once managed Handsome Johnny Barend and Magnificent Maurice to a world title over a decade ago but they were quite a different tag team. I made great stars out of them. Tanaka and Mr. Fuji are great stars already but I will bring them to even greater heights. When you have great stars to work with I cannot help but succeed."

It is quite an interesting story on how The Grand Wizard managed to get Mr. Fuji and Prof. Toru Tanaka together as a tag team. Originally The Grand Wizard had signed Mr. Fuji to a contract while Fuji was appearing in Texas several months earlier. The Grand Wizard was still managing Stan Stasiak and Handsome Jim Valiant at the time, but Stasiak was running out his contract and Jim Valiant accepted an offer to appear in Japan at the start of the summer. The Grand Wizard knew he would be looking for new talent soon and searched until he came upon Mr. Fuji.

The Grand Wizard felt bad about parting with Handsome Jim Valiant, "I made Jim Valiant what he is today. I molded him into a top wrestling star. He wanted to go to Japan and other areas, so I wished him the very best and like a mother hen sent him into the world to seek

Story and Photos by Frank Amato

The Grand Wizard is most proud of his champions. It does not bother him one bit that the fans dislike them.
The Grand Wizard was afraid Prof. Tanaka would take Mr. Fuji away from him when Tanaka first proposed Fuji for a tag team partner.

his fortune. My door will always be open to Handsome Jim Valiant."

Mr. Fuji's first several appearances caused a stir as he mowed down opponent after opponent. He used his vast knowledge of karate to chop down his opponents. The fans were awed when he used his Japanese sleeper to gain some victories. It was during these bouts that Prof. Tanaka looked on in keen interest. It looked at first that Tanaka had the look of jealousy towards this other oriental wrestler. It was not the case. He had this sudden thought of having Mr. Fuji as his regular tag team partner to go after the tag title. When Tanaka approached both The Grand Wizard and Mr. Fuji, he was rebuffed.

The Grand Wizard explained, "At first I thought that Tanaka wanted to take Fuji away from me. I told Fuji to have nothing whatever to do with Tanaka. Then one night while Mr. Fuji was winning another bout as he always does, Tanaka came to me explaining that he wanted Mr. Fuji as a tag partner and would be willing to join us with me as his manager. It was all up to Mr. Fuji. He was ecstatic with the idea."

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The tall lean but well-muscled body looked the same as it did ten years ago. The black hair once straight is now a crewcut, slightly tinged with gray. The familiar smile and easy going manner is still the same. Don Curtis has not changed much since he teamed with his very close friend Mark Lewin back in the late fifties and early sixties. They are considered one of the greatest tag teams ever.

Instead of the old Madison Square Garden it is now the new Madison Square Garden where Don was appearing, teaming with Eddie Graham—The same Eddie Graham of the riotous Graham Brothers who had the blazing feud with Don & Mark Lewin. This was Don’s third straight appearance at the new garden. His first appearance he defeated Mike Paidousis. The second time he beat Smasher Sloan.

Don felt good to be back wrestling in New York. “This new Garden is tremendous. It’s sure great to be back. The last time I wrestled in New York, was ten years ago when I teamed with Mark Lewin against,
Don Curtis has been a pro grappler since the very late forties. He had a very successful career before joining up with an ex-opponent of his, Eddie Graham, who has this to say about Don: "He is a great partner. For several years we have teamed up off and on. I know I can rely on Don in any bout."

Instead of the old Madison Square Garden, it was the new one where Curtis was appearing with Eddie Graham, the same Eddie Graham of the riotous Graham Brothers who had the blazing feud with Don and Mark Lewin. Don felt good to be back in New York, "The last time I wrestled here was ten years ago," he says.

Eddie Graham:
Now Friends

I believe. Skull Murphy and Brute Bernard."

Don has been a pro grappler since the very late forties. Born and raised in Buffalo, New York, Don had his first pro match there. After several months Don received an offer to wrestle in Europe and the Far East. So Don pulled up stakes. He became an immediate success wherever he wrestled. In New Zealand the fans took him to their hearts and made him a favorite son. In those early years Don used the name Don Beitleman. So successful was Don that he spent several years touring foreign countries.

Finally Don grew homesick and returned to the States. The next couple of years Don made his pres-
ence felt in every area he appeared in. While appearing along the east coast and doing quite well, Don met a young wrestler who was making appearances with his brother Don. It was Mark Lewin. Don and Mark took a liking to each other and decided to try teaming up. It was the start of a fabulous career for both and the beginning of a legend in wrestling that is still talked about. Don and Mark worked so well together that they looked as if they were together for years. They used scientific holds, coupled with flying aerial maneuvers to capture the fancy of the fans. So successful were they as a team they quickly became top contenders for the U.S. Tag Team Championship, then held by Dr. Jerry and Eddie Graham.
also top contenders for the World Tag Team Championship held by Antonine Rocca and Miguel Perez.

By now it was the late fifties and Don and Mark were the darlings of the fans, and two of the most popular wrestlers in the business. For months they chased Jerry and Eddie Graham and finally in an explosive battle, like all the others, captured the U. S. belts. The feud was at fever pitch by this time with no end in sight. Whenever these two teams wrestled each other all war was declared. Months past and on TV in Washington, D.C., Don and Mark defended their belts against Jerry and Eddie. The action, to say the least, was fast, furious and vicious. Jerry and Eddie captured the first fall by double teaming Mark. In the second fall Don and Mark took the fall by double teaming Eddie. They hung him upside down in their own corner and proceeded kicking and punching Eddie until he was gushing blood. His face was masked in the gore. Jerry and Bobby Davis their manager worked furiously to patch up Eddie, bandaging his head. The Grahams captured the third and deciding fall and the belts when Don bouncing off the ropes had pepper thrown in his eyes by Davis. Don, blinded, was an easy victim for Eddie and Jerry.

The feud did not end there. Other bouts between these two tag teams took place but Eddie and Jerry managed to hold on to the belts. While this big feud was still raging, Don and Mark tried unsuccessfully to win the World Tag Team Title from Rocca and Perez. By now it was the early sixties and Don and Mark were still a top tag team and breaking records in every arena. Don looks back, “These Grahams were great. As great as they were, they were just as vicious. They rank without a doubt as the toughest, meanest tag team I’ve ever been in.
with. Perhaps the greatest tag team ever. I think Mark and I were better but fans could argue about this for nights on end."

In the early sixties Don and Mark grew disgruntled. They felt either tag team championship could have been theirs if they were more rough and meaner. So they decided to change their style. They became the complete opposite of what they were. Now a villainous tag team, they appeared with black capes and canes. They used the very same tactics that made the Grahams so famous. The fans were shocked but they were quite successful. In the following months they failed to win the tag team championships so they reverted back to their original style.

By 1962 Don and Mark journeyed to Florida. There they became favorites and captured the Southern Tag Team Championship. After their loss of the title, they decided that perhaps they were growing stale as partners so they parted company. Thus one of the greatest tag teams ever combined came to an end. Don continued as a single and won the Florida State Title. Don had this to say about Mark, "I've never really found a partner to compare to Mark. What we had could never be the same with any other partner. There was that special magic between us."

In the years that followed Don stayed mainly in the Southern area. He makes his home there in Jacksonville, Florida. In the south Don teamed successfully with Cowboy Bob Ellis, Sam Steamboat, Joe Scarpa, Haystacks Calhoun, Kon- dike Bill and Eddie Graham. Yes, the same Eddie Graham of those feuding years. It happened in the mid-sixties that they first teamed up and still do today on occasion. Don smiled at this, "If a few years earlier someone had said to me that I would be teaming up with Eddie I would pay to have his head examined. Yet I did and we work very well together and to this day remain best of friends."

While in Florida and the southern area Don teamed with the above wrestlers against such villainous tag teams as: The Masked Medics, Kurt and Carl Von Brauner, The Von Stroheim Brothers, The Masked Assassins, Tarzan and Tim Tyler, Bob Orton and Boris Malenko. It was against the Von Brauners that Don received a serious back injury that kept him out of action for three months. Don also had some memorable matches against Bob Orton and Boris Malenko when they each held the Southern Heavyweight Championship.

During this time Don managed to get a chance to wrestle for the NWA World Heavyweight Cham-
Don: "Now we have the new breed of wrestlers. Like Sammartino, Morales, etc. These wrestling stars are much better than in my time. They are faster, more agile, smarter."
Don looks back and says: “Those Graham's were great. They rank without a doubt as the toughest, meanest tag team I've ever been in with.”

pionship. At that time the legendary Lou Thesz was the champion. Don came very close to whipping Thesz. After this bout Thesz paid Don the supreme compliment by stating that Don was one of the biggest threats for his title. Before Don could get a rematch Thesz lost his title to Gene Kiniski. Of Lou Thesz, Don says, “Lou Thesz has to rank as one of the all-time greats, if not the greatest. He was not fancy or anything like that. He went in to wrestle and he did just that. He held that title six different times. You could learn by just watching him.”

Don quickly points out that Lou Thesz is of the old school of wrestlers before the second World War. Others like that were Buddy Rogers and Whipper Billy Watson, plus wrestlers who came in just after that war, like Antonino Rocca, Verne Gagne, Killer Kowalski, and Fred

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THE SHEIK HAS A LONG WAY TO GO

By Bobo Brazil
It has been especially gratifying to me the way fans all over the country have greeted me as the U.S. Champion. Being a leading contender for the title, as I had been for a number of years, and being the champion is like being in two different worlds. I like being the U.S. Champion and the financial rewards that go with it. I love the popularity and the opportunities that have been presented to me. So much so, that nobody is going to take my title away now.

I know there is a long line of challengers waiting for the chance to wear my belt. That's expected. Once you're on top, everybody is shooting for you. They're all screaming that they deserve a title match. The most vociferous has been The Sheik through his mouthpiece Abdullah Farouk who everybody knows as The Weasel. It's only natural inasmuch as I defeated The Sheik and ended his long reign as champion.

I'll never forget that night. It was the greatest thrill in my career. I've been a professional wrestler for 18 years now but nothing ever gave me more satisfaction than beating The Sheik in a Texas Death Match before a capacity crowd in Detroit's Cobo Arena.

I won the title in a convincing manner, too. There was no doubt in anyone who saw the match who the undisputed winner was. I purposely left no room for doubt. As you know, a Texas Death Match is one of the most taxing bouts that any wrestler can experience. It's a test of both skill and stamina. Those two characteristics are the measure of a true champion and you can apply it to any sport.

We went at it for over 30 minutes. It had been a fairly even match but I was determined to beat the notorious Sheik once and for all. I had too many fans cheering for me to let them down. As much as I hated The Sheik, I kept telling myself all through the match not to lose control of my emotions. I had to stay alert and wait for an opening. Sooner or later, as crafty as he is, The Sheik would make a mistake and I wanted to take advantage of it.

Finally he did, and I seized the opportunity to move in close. I grabbed him across his back in a bear hug and delivered one of my special, a Coco Butt. That set him up for the kill. I delivered another Coco Butt and then another, in rapid fashion. I knew that I had him. The fans were on their feet yelling for the finish. I wouldn't let The Sheik fall. I kept my arms around him and dragged him to the center of the ring, just like a matador who makes a kill in the middle of the arena. I wanted all the fans to see the finish. I split The Sheik's forehead open with some more well placed Coco Butts and then let him drop to the canvas like a broken doll. He was out like a light and I was the new U.S. Champion.

I never saw a man bleed so much. He is one of the toughest wrestlers I ever faced. I must say I admired his courage. As the referee raised my hand in triumph, the crowd went wild. There was such a din in the arena that I couldn't hear anything. I never experienced anything like it before.
Brazil: "I'll wrestle The Sheik when the time comes, but now he just has to wait his chance. He's no better than the next guy and being the ex-champion doesn’t give him any special consideration."

To get on top you really have to scuffle. You have to scuffle hard, too. You just can’t look for a break. You have to make your own. No one is going to give you anything on a silver platter. I had a long, frustra-
ting time of chasing The Sheik in an effort to give me a title shot. Finally, promoter Francis Fleser got so much pressure from the fans demanding the match that he couldn’t put it off any longer despite The Sheik’s reluctance to give me the shot. Now, he’s going to wait as long or maybe even longer than I had to. The only way I’ll change my thinking is if the fans demand a return. I sort of feel that my title is theirs also, because I am their choice.

This belt belongs to the fans. I’m their representative. If anybody wants it, they are going to have one devil of a time trying to get it away from me. I’ll wrestle any legitimate challenger. However, I’m just sick and tired of hearing about The Sheik’s troubles through his loud-mouth manager, The Weasel. He is just going around making a lot of noise because he has no other way of causing trouble. That’s all he knows.

Farouk is going around claiming that I am avoiding The Sheik on purpose, that I have been hiding behind the National Wrestling Alliance. He is calling me a Cinderella champion, a paper lion, a real nothing. He has actually labeled me yellow and has bragged that I don’t deserve the belt. I shouldn’t even attempt to dignify his remarks because they are absurd and if he thinks the fans will believe him then he is dumber than I thought.

Well, my record speaks for itself and I’ll let it do my talking. You can check in any record book and it will reveal that since becoming champion I have defended my title against all rated contenders. That’s all I am expected to do and I have fulfilled my role as a champion in that regard.

Just recently Fleser approached me about a novel idea, a Tournament of Champions. He asked me if I would be willing to participate in a weekly event for eight straight weeks with challengers from all over the nation. I told him it sounded like a great idea and that I would gladly take on any challenger. At the money guarantees he offered me I couldn’t turn it down.

I mentioned to Fleser that it was the best thing he had done in a long time. Well, the fans must have

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He was back again. Periodically the dark haired, boyishly handsome wrestler would be off to far away places. He has a wanderlust for traveling to such places as Australia, Japan and Hawaii, to mention a few spots on the globe. Most times it has been to wrestle. Other times it has been just to get away and utilize the solitude to think about the future. This he finds satisfying.

Fred Curry has always been a thinker. He is one of the new breed of wrestlers. Not the big, brawling type. But a meticulous, scientific practitioner who is well built physically and an exciting performer who is extremely popular with fans everywhere. When Fred Curry is in the ring, there is always action. He is a veritable source of undiminished energy and is perhaps the most exciting wrestler on the circuit.

With his style and looks, Curry has established himself as a matinee idol. Originally from the east coast, Curry likes to operate out of the midwest, actually preferring Detroit as his favorite city. Which is just fine with Motor City fans ... especially the females. Curry is considered the most popular wrestler to appear in Cobo Arena over the past three years. It is one reason why Detroit has a special meaning for him and why he always looks forward to returning there after one of his long trips. Tonight just happened to be one of those times.

Detroit promoter Francis Fleser was one in particular who was enthusiastic about Curry's return. A veteran matchmaker who has brought unparalleled success to wrestling in Detroit, he is a keen judge of talent. He tabbed Curry for stardom when he first met him seven years ago.

"Fred has it all, looks, talent, excitement and popularity to be around for a long time," offered Fleser. "He's one of the most popular wrestlers that has appeared here through the years. Why, as soon as he leaves the area, I get hundreds of letters asking when is he coming back? Fans of all ages love him. That big crowd out there tonight turned out in part to welcome Fred back. They really dig him."

It was just the way it had been before Curry left. The big crowd was there and the ovation Curry received
echoed their sentiments. He was greeted with a thundering noise when he climbed into the ring. Wisely, Fleser pencilled in Curry’s match as a co-main event and the crowd waited with anticipation for his appearance.

Curry didn’t wait long to acknowledge their cheers. As soon as the bell sounded, he launched a devastating attack of flying drop kicks that stunned his opponent. The Executioner. In a lively match in which he set the pace, Curry left his opponent groggy and succeeded in pinning him in a little over 11 minutes. The win felt good.

“It sure feels great being back,” smiled Curry upon reaching his dressing room “Sometimes you never realize how much you miss a town until after you’ve been away for so many months. I wanted to win big out there, just for the fans. They gave me a great welcome back and I certainly appreciated all that cheering. It’s nice to know you’ve been missed, too. Nothing sounded better than that crowd. I only wished that I could have thanked them all personally. But I think I pleased them and that’s the best way to show them your feelings.

“I felt a bit anxious just before the bell rang. The loud noise had my adrenalin flowing. I couldn’t wait for the match to begin. You never can take the fans for granted. That’s the worst mistake any wrestler can make. You simply never know how the fans will react after you’ve been away. Sometimes they forget you and associate with other favorites. In this sport as long as you win and keep the fans happy, they’ll stay

Nobody on the circuit is as fast as Curry. At 29 he is young which greatly accounts for his speed. Against the bigger and heavier opponents that he often faces, it is his principle asset.
with you.

"That's why I was so concerned before the match. I was in my dressing room almost three hours before I was scheduled to wrestle. The long wait made me nervous, I guess. I did a lot of thinking and the more I thought, the more nervous I became. I had to do about 20 minutes of exercise to break the tension and stay loose. Once I got into the arena and heard those cheers, I was tremendously relieved. The noise was beautiful."

And so was Curry's performance.

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Fred Curry is one of the new breed of wrestlers—not the big, brawling type but a meticulous, scientific wrestler who is physically well built and an exciting and popular performer as well.

Promoter Francis Fleser: "Fred has it all—looks, talent, excitement and popularity to be around for a long time. He's one of the most popular wrestlers that has appeared here through the years."
TONY MARINO:

"I’ve Hit the Top and I Want to Stay!"

By John David

Tony Marino is all wrestler. Not only is his body powerful, but it is perhaps the best developed one on the circuit. Despite the fact that he won the title of Mr. America years ago, Marino, at the age of 35, hasn’t let time take its toll on his body. His pride and his skill have brought Marino to the stature of a main eventer and for Marino there is nothing else.

Despite his satisfaction with winning the Mr. America title, Marino was still frustrated. He wanted to pursue his first love—wrestling.
He looked like something out of Esquire. He had on red and white double knit checkered slacks with a matching shirt. It was a smart-looking ensemble, custom-made, and complete with medium length white glossy boots. His hair was modish, long and black, and impeccably styled. If it wasn't for the fact that he was a wrestler, he could easily have passed for a rock singer as he walked through the athlete's entrance in Detroit's spacious Cobo Arena.

But Tony Marino is all wrestler. Underneath his finery, is a powerfully built body. Not only powerful but perhaps the best developed one on the circuit. Despite the fact that he won the title of Mr. America years before, Marino hasn't let time erode his body. His muscles are supple and well defined. The passing years may have taken their toll on many others before him, but Marino, at the age of 35, still has too much pride to betray his body. His pride and his skill have brought him to the status of a main eventer and for Marino there is nothing else.

"I've worked too hard for too many years to get where I am," reasoned Marino. "Sure I take special care of my body. I still work out with weights every afternoon, no matter where I am. It's a sacrifice but well worth it. I shudder at the thought of allowing my muscles to get soft and my body to become flabby.

"I've seen it happen to others, a lot of them, I might add. It's sad, too. A wrestler, or an athlete for that matter, has to have pride in himself. Too often they hit the top and then begin to skid. I've hit the top and I want to stay there for a long time. As a wrestler goes, I am still young, what you would consider a seasoned campaigner. You know in this business, you need years and years of experience to really excel. Now that I am facing such a clever craftsman as The Sheik tonight, I need every bit of experience I have accumulated down through the years."

Marino has come a long way and is well aware of how hard it was for him at the beginning. He was born in the southern part of Italy, in a small town named Reggio Calabria. However, he was raised in the United States. When he was still a
baby, his mother brought him to Rochester, N.Y. where they joined her husband. Marino’s father, a stone mason, who had emigrated a year earlier and worked and saved enough money to bring his wife and child to the U.S.

Being strong and athletic, Marino easily became acclimated in sports. In high school, he competed in track, football and wrestling, excelling in each. However, any thoughts of furthering his education in college were quickly dispelled when he graduated, despite having a football scholarship. Marino’s father became ill and couldn’t work and Tony was faced with the responsibility of providing for the family. Although his dreams of college were quashed, Tony nevertheless accepted the role of wage earner without any animosity. He felt he owed it to his family. The quickest way to get a job and earn a big dollar was construction work. Because of his size, Marino didn’t have any difficulty in getting a job on a construction gang. The work was hard but the pay was good and it was all worth the effort.

But, Tony yearned to become a wrestler. It was his favorite sport in high school and he enjoyed watching the matches on television. He was frustrated in the sense that he couldn’t give up job security because of his family obligations. Nevertheless, he worked out his frustrations by turning to body-building in a local gym. This he did tirelessly six days a week.

It paid off even beyond Marino’s hopes, at least in such a short span of time. Within two years, Marino entered and won the national Junior Mr. America Title.

“At first I just wanted to work off my frustrations, you know attack the weights and produce a good sweat,” admitted Marino. “But the more I exercised with the weights, the more I like it. After a couple of months, I decided to set a goal and work toward the Junior Mr. America Title. It gave me something to shoot at, a goal so to speak. About a year later, I was ready for the contest and I won it the first time out which was quite satisfying.”

So Marino looked to bigger things. Having won the Junior Mr. America Title, he decided to enter the big one, the Mr. America Title the following year. It required even more dedication which nobody realized more than Marino. He worked harder than ever; entered the nationally known contest, and won! His beautifully developed body earned him additional honors. He earned the judges’ nod for best legs, best chest and most muscular body.

Despite the satisfaction Marino derived, and the courage and confidence he acquired, he still felt frustrated. Marino still wanted to pursue his first love, wrestling. He had

Marino has made three trips to Japan and hopes to make another one soon. He is quite popular in Japan where his fans have named him the “beautiful animal.”

Marino: “I was very nervous before my first match. But, like in football, after the first contact was made, I knew that wrestling was my sport.”
the knowledge of the sport and now the strength and the body to add to it. All he needed was the opportunity. It wasn’t the easiest thing to get. There aren’t too many openings for young, inexperienced wrestlers, no matter how good they look physically.

Marino contacted noted upstate New York promoter Pedro Martinez in Buffalo. The veteran matchmaker liked what he saw in the good-looking, well-built prospect. All he asked Marino was if he was serious about pursuing a wrestling career. When the youngster satisfied him with his answer, then Martinez agreed to give him a start.

“Martinez was a former wrestler, and a good one at that, and he offered to personally train me,” disclosed Marino. “I’ll never forget the lesson he drove home. ‘So you want to be a wrestler,’ he said. Then he proceeded to drive his point home. He gave me beating after beating, but I didn’t get discouraged. ‘If you can take all that and keep coming back for more, then you must want to be a wrestler bad enough,’ Martinez said.”

So, Marino’s introduction to the world of wrestling began. As he said he would, Martinez trained the young hopeful for the next eight months. Marino thought he learned his lessons well. Now he wanted to test his skills in a ring. But Martinez told him he wasn’t quite ready yet to turn professional. Marino grew impatient and returned home to Rochester. After several telephone calls proved futile, he returned to Buffalo three days later.

“I was determined to have a showdown with Martinez,” remarked Marino. “Either he was going to let me wrestle or not. I had to know where I stood. However, his secretary wouldn’t let me in to see him. So, I stormed past her and busted through the door to Martinez’ office. I shocked him to say the least. But I was adamant.

“I don’t care if you are a big promoter, either I am going to wrestle or I am not. But I have to know. This waiting is killing me. If it’s no, then I’ll put the thought of becoming a wrestler out of my mind. But I have to know! All Martinez did was smile and told me to sit down and take it easy. The next thing he did was pick up the phone and place a long distance call to promoter Fred Kohler in Chicago. I didn’t know what was taking place.

“All I heard was Martinez end of the conversation. ‘He’s a good boy. He’s good-looking and has a great body and he’s willing. Okay, fine. How about October 1? Then he hung up and explained what the phone call was all about. What Martinez had done was to book me for my debut in Chicago’s Marigold Arena. I was quite surprised because I thought I would make my debut in Buffalo, where I had trained all those months. But Martinez explained that there would be too much local pressure on me in Buffalo and that it would be better if I wrestled out of town for awhile. So
By Georgiann Orsi (Fan Club Editor)

I'd better get right down to business. We have a lot of listings, so let's get to it. First don't forget to send your Fan Club listings, Newsletters, Photo Services and Bulletins to my home—Mrs. Georgiann Orsi—23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, New York 11102. If you require a personal answer to your letter, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. I do not answer mail without it.

I was sorry to hear that the BOSTON WRESTLING SCENE under the supervision of John Sinibaldi, Jr. has been disband. John writes that he doesn't have enough time to devote to it or enough correspondents.

Since Mike Medugno has reinstated the BRUNO SAMMARTINO FAN CLUB he has been revamped with mail. You may contact him at 11542. The dues are $3.00; the bulletin was great as usual. Look who helped! Me!

THE OFFICIAL OLYMPIA WRESTLING "STRANGLEHOLD". Brian A. Bukantis of P.O. Box 61, Fraser, Michigan 48026, editor of the old ARENA magazine now has devoted his time to STRANGLEHOLD a fantastic magazine. Send for your sample; only 50 cents.

Another fantastic bulletin is CARPENTER'S CORNER. The President, Rosie Macumber of 221 Jasper Drive, Security, Colo. 80911 is a very dear friend. Keep up the very fine work.

Friends of JIMMY VALIANT, contact President Marilea Niedzial, Berlin, Mass. 01503. Latest bulletin was Jimmy's tour in Japan.

I want to thank Kathy Szalewski of 1003 South 16th Street, Apt. II Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204, for enabling me to be part of the A.W.A.-W.F.I.A. Regional Conference. Her coverage of the events of all the happenings was really great. Her A.W.A. FAN CLUB bulletin gave a detailed description. Kathy has been getting many inquiries to her club. In order to save her some money on postage, these are the particulars if you wish to join. Dues have to be $4.00 in order to keep the club running well. You will receive a membership card, a beautiful 5x7 silk finish color photo of your favorite A.W.A. wrestler (please specify) and monthly bulletins will from time to time include color photos. Each bulletin will continue to have results from around the country, general information about the wrestlers, stories, poems, interviews, etc. Any advertising in the bulletins will cost 50 cents a month. Kathy will continue to exchange bulletins with fan clubs and publish their names at no cost. Please send a S.A.S.E. for an reply. This club has been active for one year. Kathy is also selling bumper stickers—"WRESTLING IS #1!" which sells for 50 cents—"I LOVE WRESTLING" buttons sell for 25 cents. Back issues of the bulletins are available for 50 cents. This is a very well run club, one that shouldn't be overlooked.

I want to thank Mrs. Dorothy Smith of 5517 Rustic Way, Louisville, Ky. 40210 for her monthly Bulletin on EDDIE MARLIN.

Miss Jean McEwan of 766 Pacific Highway, Marks Point, 2280, Australia President of the ROY HEFFERNAN F.C. is doing a fantastic job. I just received many newsletters with very interesting reading matter.

Always interesting reading—THE SAN FRANCISCO STAR WRESTLING NEWSLETTER sent to me by Joe Fernandez of 3844 Mission Street, Box 4, San Francisco, Calif. 94110. Single issues 40 cents. I want to thank Joe for all those really terrific magazines from Mexico and that wrestling jig-saw puzzle. I really enjoyed them immensely.

I just received word from Dave Burzynski of 8294 Olympia, Detroit, Michigan 48214, that he will no longer accept yearly membership to the MICHIGAN SCENE.

My weekly copies of N.W.A. championship wrestling still coming strong. I enjoy every issue. Individual copies are 50 cents. Championship wrestling—P.O. Box 4363, Shreveport, La. 71104.

I was speaking to my good friend Tom Roberts of P.G.W. (Professional Girl Wrestlers Fan Club) and he informs me that he has had to put a hold on his membership. He has been swamped with letters; membership has to be limited. The sixth issue was packed with news on the girls from U.S., Japan and Europe, also many photos. The dues are $3.50 a year for U.S. and Canada; rates outside North America are $6.00. Write to Tom Roberts—P.O. Box 945, Springfield, Mass. 01101.

Vivian Vachone is starring in a movie called RASSLIN' soon. If you are interested in joining a fan club for this beautiful and talented curved wrestler, contact the president, Brian Kaplan of 896 Jubilee Avenue, Winnipeg 13, Manitoba, Canada.

The "Lean Mean Machine" is the name for the bulletin of the club. The club is in the capable hands of Mick Karch, of 5621 Minnetonka Blvd. - 210, St. Louis Park, Minn. 55416, who puts out a very interesting and exciting bulletin. Samples are 50 cents each or yearly rate of $2.50. Nick should be very proud to have Mick at the helm. Mick's enthusiasm merits a lot of praise from this writer. A very energetic person.

I would like to thank Shari Ossowski of 6711 Crowley Street, Detroit, Michigan 48210, for the honorary membership to her fan club for THE BLACK JACKS (Lanza, Mulligan and Bobby Heenan) I received my membership card and patch and first bulletin. The patch is a black cowboy hat embroidered in white, BAD GUYS. The membership is $3.00 for which you will receive the above, plus pictures. I have received much mail on the Black
Fabulous Moolah:

All-Woman
All-Champ...
Anyone who follows women wrestling knows who Fabulous Moolah is. The world's female champion has dominated the distaff ranks for the past 10 years, thrilling audiences around the world with her tenacious skills. Her exploits have brought her fame and wealth. So much so, that she owns a large 52 acre complex in South Carolina where she likes to get away from the rigors of her profession and just plain relax. These exclusive WRESTLING WORLD photos present the two faces of Moolah, that of a champion and that of a woman.
Moolah enjoys horseback riding on her favorite horse Blue.
Moolah displays her championship belt.
Jacks, so come on fans, join their club. Give them some support. Thank you Shari for the permission slip.

Ray Kawasaki of 469 Ena Road #1112, Honolulu, Hawaii 96815 has sent me a sample copy of the HAWAIIAN HOTLINE. The bulletin will be monthly and samples are 40 cents each. Yearly membership is $3.20. The bulletins will be sent out on the last day of every month, and wants to bring some news from there into your homes.

If you are a RAMON TORRES fan, you will be interested in joining his club. Under the excellent supervision of George Shire, Jr. of P.O. Box 146, St. Paul Park, Minn. 55071. The dues are a mere $1.50 for six bi-monthly bulletins and an 8x10.

Don't forget to join the JOSE LOTHATIO FAN CLUB run by Joyce Wilkinson of 302 N.W. 9th Avenue, Apt. 2, Miami, Florida 33128. The dues are $2.00 a year for which you'll receive a membership card, 8x10 and bi-monthly bulletins called "THE RIDE OF MEXICO".

I received the permission slip for the AVENGER FAN CLUB run by Ed Bronson of 2744 Bells Ferry Road, Marietta, Georgia 30006. Dues are $2.00 for membership card, photos and monthly newsletters (Sample copy 30 cents).

I received a lovely letter from my dear friend Ken Taylor, publisher of LONE STAR WRESTLING. He did so well with it that he has expanded to bigger and better things. He has formed a partnership with the Dallas wrestling promotion, and Lone Star Wrestling has become WRESTLING GAZETTE, Texas' Finest Wrestling Publication (newspaper). If you liked Lone Star Wrestling, you'll love WRESTLING GAZETTE. Ken has also informed me of his new address, please make note of it: Ken Taylor, 642 West 16th Plano, Texas 75074. Subscription rates are $5.00 for 12 monthly issues in the U.S.A. and $6.00 elsewhere. Single copies are available for 50 cents.

ALOHA! bulletin sent to me by the DON MURACO FAN CLUB is excellent. It comes to you with a personal message in it from Don. Write to Bunny Conway of 1579 South 72nd Street, West Allis, Wisconsin 53221.

RED BASTIEN FAN CLUB bulletin. I just got another copy. Many pictures of Red posed and in action throughout. If you're a Bastien fan, this club is a MUST! Write to the president, Mathew Brager of 911 Bell Avenue, Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081.

Steven Silverstein of 4006 Demont Road, Sea Fab, N.Y. 11783, sent another copy of EAST COAST WRESTLING RESULTS which comes out monthly for only 35 cents.

I want to thank Peggy Green from 110 Charles Street, Havelock, North Carolina 28532, for the certificate of membership and 8x10 to her MISSOURI MAULER-BRUTE BERNARD FAN CLUB.

I am so pleased and happy to hear that Danny Schelberg of 124 Neptune Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11235 is doing so well since our ad for him in our magazines. Danny has informed me to pass the word along that there may be a delay in answering all you lovely people. So please be patient; he will get to you soon. In case you're a new reader to this column, Danny puts out a terrific bulletin called "IN THIS CORNER". Samples copies are only 50 cents. Try it, you'll like it.

Just received another copy of GEORGIA WRESTLING NEWS from Jerry L. Boyd of Route 2, Box 414, Griffin, Georgia, 30223. Samples, 50 cents.

Ron Finlay of Box 541, Pinawa, Manitoba, Canada is interested in obtaining pen pals who are fans of Wahoo McDaniel, Dusty Rhodes, Verne Gagne, Dean Ho, Fred Blassie, Ray Stevens and Billy Robinson.

Janet Marrone of 401 Oak Lane, Glendora, Pa. 19036, is interested in obtaining pen pals whose favorites are Bruno Sammartino, Pedro Morales, Chief Jay Strongbow and Sonny King.

Ron Farneski of 284 South Branch Road, Neshanic, N.J. 08853, would like to hear from fans who like theSpoiler, Juan Caruso, Lou Albano, King Curtis and Baron Scicluna.

Andrea Rossengard of 382 West Broadway, South Boston, Mass. 02127, has over 90 magazines for sale at a reasonable price; just send her a S.A.S.E.

Lil-Al's Wrestling Photo Service of P.O. Box 4, Port Allen, La. 70767, sent me his recent list. WOW! Send a large S.A.S.E. for yours today.

For excellent West Coast photos contact Dan Westbrook of 21834 Grace Avenue, #45, Carson, California 90745. How can I ever thank you enough for that terrific shot of John and Chris Tolos in living 8x10 color. They surely are the Golden Greeks.

My very good friend George Napolitano of 8838-16th Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234, is selling his professional photos of the Upstate N.Y. Detroit, Florida, and Southern state stars. Contact George for his list. He requires two eight cents stamps.

I want to thank James Reeves of P.O. Box 4529, Charleston, S.C. 29405, for sending me his photo list and samples. The black and white samples were two very good close-ups of Fabulous Moolah and Penny Banner (3/4x5). The black and white sell for 6 for $1.00. The two colored shots were excellent of Karl and Kurt von Steiger and Beppo Mongol and Buddy Colt. The color sell for 3 for $1.10 or 15 for $5.00 all 3/4x5 taken from the front row seat with a Zoom 90-230 lens. I'd list his photos as excellent.

John V. Murphy of 15 Bridge Road, Hornsby, AUSTRALIA 2077 would like to exchange correspondence with American males of any age group whose interest is WRESTLING.

I just received word that disabled veteran, Mr. Rudy Cernovsky, of 31-22 35th Street, Astoria, N.Y. 11106, is selling 1,000 return address labels with gold stripes printed to order for a mere $1.00 post paid.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—PEPPER GOMEZ FAN CLUB—Frank Cather-1184 Sherman Street, San Jose, California 95110.

Charles E. Poole, Jr. of 6006 Irving Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19139, would like pen pals from the United States and Japan to trade color photos of mat stars.

Well, that's about all the room I have for this issue; more to come in my next column. Don't forget to please send a s.a.s.e. to the above services to help lessen the cost of running their club or services. And please tell them Georgie sent you. Keep SMILING!!
WRESTLING'S BIGG

Despite a day long rain that didn't stop until early evening, east coast promoter Vince McMahon staged a spectacular match of super champions in the first outdoor match ever held in New York's Shea Stadium on September 30. The McMahon magic held although Mother Nature didn't cooperate. Some 22,508 aficionados paid $140,923.55, both new world records, and watched World Wide Wrestling Federation Pedro Morales and former champion Bruno Sammartino battle to a one hour and 16 minute draw.

Referee Dick Kroll ruled the match a draw when the bout reached the 11 P.M. curfew. In Kroll's judgment, it was an even match. He felt Morales had the edge in the early going and Sammartino in the latter stages.

When the match ended, Sammartino embraced Morales and raised the champion's hand. It was a truly professional gesture and the crowd recognized it.

It was unfortunate that it rained so steadily during the day. Veteran observers claimed the crowd would have been at least 35,000 people if it hadn't been for the weather.

Bruno Sammartino accompanied by his manager, Arnold Skaaland, drew 22,508 people to New York's Shea Stadium when he wrestled Pedro Morales. Pedro Morales battled former champion Bruno Sammartino to a one hour, 16 minute draw.
Referee Dick Knoll rules the match a draw when the bout reached the curfew. He felt Morales had the edge in the early going and Sammartino in the latter stages.
Sammartino tries to break the hold Morales has on his leg.

A powerful twist of the arm agonizes Morales.
Caught by the wrists, Morales is stopped for a moment.

Pedro grips Sammartino's head in his vise-like grip.

Pedro immobilizes the powerful Sammartino.
ABDULLAH FAROUK:

"The biggest, bawdiest and dirtiest joke of the year 1972 has to be Bobo Brazil as UNITED STATES HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION. That just might be the joke of the century.

"Liar . . . Coward . . . Thief . . . those are strong, highly descriptive adjectives, but they accurately describe Bobo Brazil. Let us take these words in order. Brazil is an out and out congenital liar. He calls himself the United States Heavyweight Champion, and he knows deep inside what he laughingly calls a heart, that he is not, will never be and can never hope to deserve to be the United States Heavyweight Champion. That's why Brazil is a liar.

"Since that fateful night when Brazil, Fle ser, Layton and Company STOLE the championship belt from the great, exalted, Divine one, The Sheikh, since that night of robbery, Brazil has fought every single logical and illogical contender for the belt, everyone but one—that one being the only man in the world, the universe, the only man who is the true Champion—The Sheikh. He has avoided The Sheikh for the all too obvious reason that he KNOWS SHEIK WILL BEAT HIM the first time they meet. That's why Bobo Brazil is 200 percent coward. I will say this, being a coward is good for Brazil, with his shirt off—in the ring or at the beach—his being a devout coward is good—the YELLOW streak running down his back makes him look distinctive and it also lets the whole world know that he is the King of the Cowards and a SKUNK as well.

"Brazil didn't win the belt, he stole it, therefore he is a thief. Everytime Brazil wrestles now, or during the past year, as the champion, he takes all that money—money for the main event and money as the Champion—and THIS IS MONEY THAT BELONGS TO THE SHEIK AND TO ME! Brazil is stealing from Sheikh and me everytime he takes his payoff for a match. He is getting paid for being Champion and, in fact, he is not the Champion, Sheikh is Champion. Brazil is taking OUR money, he is taking what is rightly Sheikh's and mine—therefore Brazil is a thief!

"Put them all together—LIAR—COWARD—THIEF—and you have the perfect description of one low life crumb—Bobo Brazil. If I am wrong—sue me Brazil—it's all here in print—and I—Abdullah Farouk am saying it—saying it for yours truly and for the SHEIK. If I am wrong S-U-E—otherwise just keep quiet and let the world know what The Sheikh and I know—BRAZIL—YOU'ARE A LIAR, COWARD AND A THIEF!"

PAMPERO FIRPO:

"Every night it is the same thing, the sheep, the fans, they are all like animals, they come to the arenas with just one thought in their almost non-existent minds, to see me, The Eighth Wonder of the World, defeated. But every night they go home unhappy, while I, the great Firpo, am happy, because I win my matches and that makes them unhappy.

"Do you really think that it bothers me one little bit to hear all these people yelling at me? Do you think that it bothers me to hear thousands of people yelling for me to be defeated, for me to be beaten, for me to be destroyed? Let me tell you right here and now that all these characters, these fans are really helping me. The more they scream against me, the more it inspires me to go out and break an arm, to break a leg, maybe to dislocate a shoulder. And when they yell still louder, then I begin to sharpen up my tool, my beautiful, steel hard teeth, and then I can go into action and get some of my favorite drink, my opponent's blood. That is very good.

"You know something? It is an established fact that I am one of the most knowledgeable and completely brilliant men in the world today. Do you know what the fans are really doing when they yell against me? When they call for my defeat? When they ask for my destruction? I tell you, mister, they are secretly with me, they are cheering me deep down in their little, black hearts. Why they cheer me? Because they really love me. Every man in the audience secretly wishes that he possesses my great strength. While every woman secretly wishes that her husband or boyfriend looked and was as masculine as I am. To both me and women of all ages I am symbolic of everything that is manly, I am living proof of man's virility. Both men and women secretly envy and respect me. They know that I am the supreme symbol of mankind. So you see, with my great wisdom, I understand the workings of the small, immature minds of the wrestling public, I know that in spite of what they yell, in spite of the bad words they use against me, that in reality they LOVE me. But mister, I'll tell you something, I hate them, I hate them all, I hate them almost as much as I hate my opponents."
Never a Breath of Scandal

By John Vincent

Accurate national attendance figures are difficult to gather, but reliable estimates place wrestling’s yearly draw in the U.S. between 20 and 25 million fans. To command that kind of loyalty, wrestling must be giving its fans something genuine.

Early last summer in the shank of a muggy Saturday night, the box office manifest disclosed that 21,812 people were at that moment inside Madison Square Garden. They had gained entrance by paying as little as two dollars and as much as five dollars apiece to witness a sports happening of extremely attractive design.

At least they thought so, obviously, though in the minds of stuffy critics everywhere they were fools—easily led down the primrose path of deception. Well, what was this “sports happening” that would produce the largest crowd in Madison Square Garden’s entire history?

Since it was summer, it wasn’t the Knicks or the Rangers that had brought them there. Ali and Frazier had fought their particular “Battle of the Century” back in March. The circus had been struck some four weeks earlier—and was now on tour.

What it was, to get to the point, was a world’s heavyweight championship wrestling match, sanctioned by the World Wide Wrestling Federation, and involving Pedro Morales, Puerto Rican-born, handsome, and skilled, and Ivan Kolkoff, Russian-born, hairy-faced, and brute powerful.

A month earlier another 21,106 had crowded into the same arena, drum-shaped, multi-tiered, squatting over Pennsylvania Station, to see Bruno Sammartino, the incredible Italian, participate in his 52nd Madison Square Garden main event against this same Kolkoff.

But, this time, Sammartino lost, and with it went his belt. After 14:55 of a wild, foul-filled battle in which Kolkoff repeatedly used his fists, Sammartino went down under a dive from the corner ring posts by Kolkoff and was counted out.

This was an upset on a plane with the Jets beating the Colts in the Super Bowl.

Now, the significant point here is the size of the two crowds. Together, they totaled 42,918 paid admissions, and in addition to establishing three records, occurred within 30 days of each other.

To clarify:

The Morales-Kolkoff attendance was a Garden record for any event. The Sammartino-Kolkoff turnout
Ben Justice and The Stomper survey the competition.
was a Garden record for wrestling. The two-match total represented another all-time Garden mark.

What this proves is that wrestling continues to be one of the most popular sports and entertainment forms in the United States despite repeated and mainly original charges that it is rehearsed fakery.

These arose again last year, shortly before Sammartino’s eight-year reign ended. He appeared as a guest on a popular television talk show and one of the first questions asked by the host was about wrestling’s so-called dishonesty.

Bruno, as he has done in the ring so often, kept his cool. He gave the host, obviously seeking to use Bruno as comic relief, a straight, intelligent answer.

“I have never participated in any-

thing dishonest in my life,” the champion said.

He then traced his background from the small central Italian town of Pisa Cerato to his current status as one of Pittsburgh’s leading citizens, a contributor to youth programs, charities, and to his church. He went on to relate how he always tried to combine his business travels around the world with pleasure trips, including one which brought him a private audience with Pope Paul.

Impressed and somewhat subdued, the host began to take Sammartino seriously. The interview finished with Bruno clearly the winner. The audience loved him. So did the viewing public. It responded with an avalanche of mail, some of it critical of the host.

Thus, if Sammartino was believable, so was his profession. Besides, if the fakery charges were true, then why would more than 40,000 people pay out admission money in a low economic period to see two consecutive shows in New York within four weeks of each other? Remember, this doesn’t include the 9,000 people, by police estimates, who failed to get into the Morales-Kolkoff match or the 4,000 who found no room at the Kolkoff-Sammartino show.

“You can’t sell a fake product,” Vince McMahon, the Garden’s matchmaker and former head of WWWF, often explains. “The public just wouldn’t keep on buying it.”

Toots Mondt, a former wrestling great and a McMahon aide, once write in a magazine article that
Takachi, a fair-fighting Japanese, tosses Back Gordon.
wrestling’s amazing success in America is based on the simple business premise of giving the public what it wants.

“If the fan comes to the arena for excitement,” he wrote, “then it is up to the sport to provide them with it. Generating excitement is the prime concern (then). The best way to do it is to supply the audience with constant action. This wrestling does.”

It wasn’t always this way. Back in the early days wrestling placed emphasis on defense.

And, the customers would be put to sleep while two heavyweights tied each other into knots in the ring.

“So, wrestling underwent a change,” Toots added. “A new era, called the catch-as-catch-can method, was spawned with the accent placed on offense.”

Then, the customers began to stay awake. More important, they kept coming back for more and more and more. The latest embellishment is the gimmick wrestler. Started by Gorgeous George, these have added much color and spice to an already exciting sport.

Accurate national attendance figures are difficult to gather, but reliable estimates place wrestling’s yearly draw in the United States at between 20,000,000 and 25,000,000 people. Major league baseball, operating on a 162-game schedule plus saturation coverage by the media—something wrestling does not get—managed just a shade over 29,000,000 admissions last year. Pro football, current No. 1 darling on the sports hit parade, will barely come within 8,000,000 of the wrestling estimate.

To command that kind of loyalty, wrestling must be giving its fans something genuine. The casualty lists of injured and maimed wrestlers provide unhappy corroborative evidence that they are. The active wrestler is rare who hasn’t at least once in his career been hospitalized with a major injury. Some two dozen have died of injuries or ailments directly traceable to their wrestling activities over the past ten years. In 1962 alone, eleven died.

On the day after Christmas in 1963 Georgous George himself was added to the list. At 48, his great heart just plain gave out. More than 10,000 mourners turned out for his funeral in Los Angeles where an of-
Von Stroheim and Ben Justice size each other up.

official day of mourning in his honor was observed. This, for a fake?
A sportswriter who attended George’s funeral—he was born George Wagner—shook his head in disbelief.

“All this for a wrestler?” he asked.

As a wrestler George Wagner was expert, tough, and very ordinary. When he coiffed his locks, dyed them blond, hired a “valet” to spray perfume and incense around the ring while George refuses to be “touched” by anyone, he became Gorgeous George. still an expert wrestler, still tough, but now a No. 1 box office draw.

He had become a star, mixing entertainment in with the sport itself. It is this point which misleads the detractors.

They confuse showmanship with dishonesty. They overlook, too, the fact that a great many wrestling matches are exhibitions. In these the better man usually wins or, as a magazine writer once put it, “avoids defeat.”

Dick The Bruiser, perhaps one of the ten toughest heavyweights active today, put it this way:

“I’m not going to let some unknown beat me. I’ve worked too hard to build my reputation into real earning power. The promoters know that. They also know that I’ll do anything reasonable to give them a good show, to send their fans home satisfied that they’ve got their money’s worth.”

Willie Gilzenberg, the veteran Newark, N.J., promoter, has been in both boxing and wrestling for more than 50 years. If you ask him which of the two sports is the most honest, he’ll tell you, “It ain’t boxing. Boxers complain too much. Wrestlers show up on time, don’t make excessive demands on the promoter, do their night’s work, take their pay and go home. What more can you ask?”

Well, in Australia a couple of years ago, they asked The Oklahoma Kid to work an extra heavy schedule of matches. Which he did, obligeingly, and he died of a heart attack one night in his sleep.

Just another casualty of the toughest, most demanding sport in the world—a fact Dan Parker, the deceased sports editor of the deceased New York Daily Mirror ruefully discovered. Dan hit upon the idea of forecasting the results of matches booked into New York through a “pipeline” friend he had acquired. His idea was to “expose” wrestling as a public service. Dan not only began to miss the mark in his “forecasts,” but he incurred the wrath of his readers.

McMahon, tall, redheaded and totally Irish, remembers Parker’s ploy well. Vince grew up in New York. His father was a captain of the security police in the old Garden on Eighth Avenue.

“What most all people overlook about wrestling,” Vince said, “is that it has a basic appeal that has never changed. They also overlook the fact that there has never been a breath of scandal in the sport, that it isn’t controlled by unsavory characters. All of us are tax paying businessmen—including the wrestlers. Does that sound much different from the owner of a pro football team or one of his players?”

It doesn’t. Does it? And, who’ll make the charge that those close NFL games, frequently won in the waning seconds, are crooked? Stand up and be counted or forever hold your peace.
THE DETROIT SCENE

There's always plenty of action at Detroit's Cobo Arena. The city is one of the hottest wrestling towns around. It's no wonder that they have shows twice a month. Wrestling World's photographer captured the action.

Johnny Valentine goes to the attack.
The Sheik tortures an agonized opponent.
Tiger Singh puts a crushing hold on his masked opponent.
WORLD WIDE RATINGS

NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION

Verne Gagne

CANADIAN CHAMPION

Gene Kiniski

UNITED STATES CHAMPION

Bobo Brazil

PACIFIC CHAMPION

Fred Blassie

1. The Sheik
2. Dory Funk Jr.
3. Ernie Ladd
4. Ray Stevens
5. Fred Curry
6. Johnny Valentine
7. The Destroyer
8. Killer Kowalski
9. Fritz Von Erich
10. Danny Hodge
11. Fred Curry
12. Bruno Sammartino
13. Gorilla Monsoon
14. Pampero Firpo
15. Mickel Scicluna
16. Cowboy Bill Watts
17. Red Bastien
18. Tex McKenzie
19. Pepper Gomez
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World Champion

TOP 30

20. Gene Kiniski
21. Bull Curry
22. Prince Curtis
23. Haystacks Calhooun
24. Cowboy Bob Ellis
25. Taru Tanaka
26. Chris Tolos
27. Igor
28. Hans Schmidt
29. Jess Ortega

PEDRO MORALES
He came back big, where it's all at for a main eventer. He had the big crowd applauding his moves which included a dazzling aerial display. Nobody on the circuit is as fast as Curry. At 29, he is young which greatly accounts for his speed. Against the bigger and heavier opponents that he often faces, it is his principal asset. The fact that he also has a vast amount of stamina accounts in reality why he is able to wear down his foes.

Curry's main method of attack is a lethal flying drop kick. Nobody executes this move with greater skill and quickness than Curry. He has astonishing spring in his powerful, well developed legs that sends him flying through the air like a missile. He can trigger more drop kicks in

Curry: "I knew I could make it if I could only get the chance. Finally I got my break. I knew that once I did, I would make the most of it. There was no way anybody would get me out."
rapid fire succession than an automatic weapon. This is the excitement that Curry produces. It leaves audiences literally breathless, sitting on the edge of their seats clamoring for more. It was what the fans paid to see and Curry gave them their money's worth.

The attack that Curry employs isn't just limited to a flying drop kick, although it is his favorite maneuver. He can shock his opponents just as easily with a flying head scissors, a most difficult move to execute, or a flying body block. His attack is patterned after a series of aerial maneuvers which are too quick to stop. By design, Curry has blue wings dotting his black boots.

Curry's style is in marked contrast to that of his father, the notorious Bull Curry, an ageless campaigner who has earned the reputation as one of the roughest brawlers in ring history. The first few years of his professional career, Fred labored under the shadow of his father's reputation. But that's all past now. Fred has taken his place on top, on his own ability.

"I couldn't escape being the son of a famous father like mine," explained Curry, "It was rough to follow in his footsteps, but I really didn't want to. He had his style and I had my own and that's the way it should be. But, people have a way of comparing. It was just natural. I guess. It made it all the more difficult for me. I had to prove to people everywhere that I could do it on my own. And, I think that I have. They don't compare us any more.

"It's quite natural that my father showed me what wrestling was all about while I was getting ready to turn professional eight years ago. I would have been foolish not to listen and learn from him. He's been one of the biggest stars in the game all these years. However, I didn't want to get into one of those like father, like son deals. And what's more, my father didn't want too either. The first lesson he taught me was that I shouldn't even entertain the thought of emulating him. That made it a lot easier for me and we got off to a great beginning.

"Yet, in the final analysis, it was up to me to win the fans over by myself. Not Bull Curry's son, but Fred Curry. Everyone has to have his own identity. That's why I made certain to develop my own distinct style. It was a lot of hard work but it was well worth it and personally quite satisfying to myself. There is no doubt that my father and I don't resemble each other.

"My father is quite proud of that fact, too. I never asked him for help. What's more, he never offered me any when it was time for me to turn pro. When I was ready, he turned me loose and said it was all up to me now. The teaching was over and don't expect me to open any doors for you, he emphasized. So, I was on my own right from the beginning. It was the best thing that could have happened. I wouldn't want to have gotten into the game riding on my father's reputation."

When Curry first turned pro eight years ago, he was much lighter than most. He compensated for it by his blinding speed. However, over the past couple of years, Curry, by design, undertook a weight-building program. He carefully added 26 pounds to his frame without one ounce of it around his mid-section. Instead, he concentrated on his legs, arms and chest. The extra poundage provided him with greater strength. More important, it wasn't done by sacrificing any of his great speed. Fact of the matter is, Curry is faster today than he has ever been.

"It's funny, but I was always too small it seemed when I was involved with athletics in college and shortly after I graduated," recalled Curry. "I played football in college and was hoping for a career in professional football. However, I never was drafted because the scouting report on me was that I was too small to play professional ball. I was disappointed that I never even got the chance.

"Then, after I decided to become a professional wrestler instead, the promoters offered me no encouragement. They said I was too small. I figured that here I go again. But I refused to get discouraged. I knew that I could make it in wrestling if I could only get the chance. Finally, I got my break. I knew that once I did, I would make the most of it. There was no way anybody would get me out."

Nobody did and nobody is about to. Fred Curry has made it big. He proved he wasn't too small.

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Don Curtis and Eddie Graham: Once Enemies, Now Friends
continued from page 20

Blassie. Don says, “These wrestlers are of the old school. Of another era. Just like myself. They are great in their own way. Now we have the new breed of wrestlers like Bruno Sammartino, Jack Brisco, Dory Funk Jr., Dick Murdoch, Dusty Rhodes, Fred Curry, Bobby Shane, Pedro Morales and Cowboy Bill Watts. These wrestling stars are much better than in my time. They are faster, more agile, smarter.”

Don smiled and then continued, “I remember when Bruno, Funk Jr. and Morales first started. Bruno has enormous strength. Perhaps the strongest wrestler there is. You know what he has accomplished. Dory Funk Jr.—I remember him as a boy. I saw him grow up. His father trained him. You know he would go far. Pedro Morales had that determination. Now he is a champion in his own right.”

It was at this point that Eddie Graham came over. He and Don were teamed this night against Dory Funk Sr. and Terry Funk. It promised to be a big bout. Eddie had this comment on Don. “Don has to be one of the greats. He has that easy-going style. Every move is calculated. I remember those years when Jerry and I went against him and Mark Lewin. Bloodier bouts were hard to find. I always respected Don, even back then. He is a great partner. For several years we have teamed up off and on. I know I can rely on Don in any bout. Like tonight. These Funks are tough. We know we will have our hands full.”

Eddie’s comments on Don: “I always respected Don, even back when Jerry and I went against him. He is a great partner. I know I can rely on him.”

Having their hands full was an understatement. Nearly from the outset Dory Sr. and son Terry started the rough-house action. They both gave Eddie a terrible going over on his left leg. Eddie was in torment with pain. Dory Sr. used his Spinning Toe Hold, normally a sub-
mission hold. Yet Eddie refused to submit. Later Don received the same treatment but held on. The Funks used such finishers like the Piledriver, Backbreaker, Kneecaps but Eddie and Don held on and came back swinging. The match turned into a real donnybrook. The action swayed from one team to the other. Eddie at one point had his famous Figure Four Legvine on Dory Sr. and nearly gave up but Terry kicked Eddie to break it up. Both teams were slugging away at each other when the curfew bell sounded to end the bout after nearly forty minutes of non-stop action.

The match turned out to be a classic. In their dressing room Eddie and Don looked pleased. They felt they could have won if the match had continued. “We took everything they had and had them confused. I’d like another crack at them. This time we’ll win.” Don said. Eddie smiled. “My partner said it all.”

Partners Don Curtis and Eddie Graham. Once enemies and now friends. Times do change—Many times for the better.

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A few nights later Mr. Fuji and I were in the ring and Tanaka entered. We had a brief talk and the alliance was made. The greatest tag team was formed that night.

Under the guidance of the master, The Grand Wizard, the path to the title was brief. Mr. Fuji and Prof. Tanaka captured the title the second time they wrestled for it. The Grand Wizard claims they won the title the first time “In late June my champions won the match but crybaby Strongbow and weeper Sonny King claimed salt was used. So the bout was ruled a draw. So I immediately demanded a rematch the following night and we won.”

Mr. Fuji comes from Osaka, Japan. He is six feet and a half inches tall and is 225 pounds. He has been wrestling professionally for ten years, getting his start in Japan. Mr. Fuji credits King Curtis Iaukea with...
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Mr. Fuji has met many heavyweight wrestling stars who have given him some tough battles but says Red Bastien, Wahoo McDaniel, Johnny Valentine and Lonnie Mayne have given him his toughest tests. Mr. Fuji's style has brought about the wrath of the fans as he was once stabbed in the abdomen a few years ago. In matches he has

Mr. Fuji: "When my manager informed me of the tag team alliance with Tanaka I was thrilled. The Grand Wizard said we would win the title and we did."

The Grand Wizard: "The fans know nothing about style and greatness. How could they? They go for big wrestling nothings like Sammartino and Morales."
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Mr. Fuji deemed it a great pleasure when he teamed with his friend King Curtis. He made fast friends with Prof. Toru Tanaka when they teamed in Texas. The fact that he would have nothing to do with Tanaka in the WWWF area was because of The Grand Wizard. "I was under contract to him as I am still and my manager told me to have nothing to do with anyone. Whatever The Grand Wizard says is law with me. When my manager informed me of the tag team alliance with Tanaka I was thrilled. The Grand Wizard said we would win the tag title and we did.

"Mr. Fuji had never had a manager before until The Grand Wizard. He promised me great things. I had heard of The Grand Wizard and knew he delivered his promises. Now Tanaka and I are champions. All because of The Grand Wizard. He is the greatest. I listen to his every word. Anyone who dislikes my manager must be insane."

Mr. Fuji and Prof. Toru Tanaka are a colorful tag team and make an awesome sight in the ring. Before their matches each performs a Japanese ceremony. Tanaka tosses salt to empty ring corners. Mr. Fuji does a brief karate ceremony with his hands. Then both bow to each other and to their manager. Both are adept at the art of Karate, Jujitsu and Judo. They use these maneuvers expertly in their matches, gaining them their victories.

The Grand Wizard is most proud of his champions. It does not bother him one bit that the fans dislike them. "The fans know nothing about style and greatness. How could they? They go for big nothings like Bruno Sammartino, Pedro Morales, Gorilla Monsoon, Sonny King and Chief Strongbow. What do the fans know about wrestling anyway? I'm most proud of my boys. They have proven themselves. The fans even dislike me. How dumb. That proves they know from nothing."

The Grand Wizard had these parting words. "Mr. Fuji and Prof. Toru Tanaka are the greatest. They do everything right and with me, the greatest manager in wrestling to guide them, we will go on forever and stay on top of the mountain. I have spoken."