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WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Airplane spin | 21. Face rake | 41. Leg lock |
| 2. Arm drag | 22. Fireman's carry ram | 42. Leg sweep |
| 3. Arm lock | 23. Flying body press | 43. Manager interference |
| 4. Asian spike | 24. Flying clothesline | 44. Monkey flip |
| 5. Atomic drop | 25. Flying drop kick | 45. Overhead toss |
| 6. Bear hug | 26. Flying elbow drop | 46. Pole ram |
| 7. Bite | 27. Flying head butt | 47. Reverse chin lock |
| 8. Body slam | 28. Flying mare | 48. Rolling scissors |
| 9. Body tackle | 29. Forearm smash | 49. Rope burn |
| 10. Bulldog | 30. Foreign object | 50. Russian sickle |
| 11. Chicken wing | 31. Full nelson | 51. Savate kick |
| 12. Choke slam | 32. Giant swing | 52. Scissors grip |
| 13. Claw | 33. Grapevine | 53. Shoulder breaker |
| 14. Clothesline | 34. Hair pull | 54. Slingshot |
| 15. Cross body block | 35. Hammer lock | 55. Snap mare |
| 16. Double axehandle | 36. Head lock | 56. Step-over toe hold |
| 17. Drop kick | 37. Head stomp | 57. Suplex |
| 18. Eagle split | 38. Hip roll | 58. Surfboard |
| 19. Elbow smash | 39. Irish whip | 59. Turnbuckle smash |
| 20. Eye gouge | 40. Knee drop | 60. Wrist lock |

SET-UP HOLDS

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 61. Abdominal stretch | 71. Cradle | 81. Power bomb |
| 62. Avalanche | 72. Crucifix | 82. Power slam |
| 63. Backbreaker | 73. DDT | 83. Scorpion deathlock |
| 64. Backroll press | 74. Figure four | 84. Sleeper |
| 65. Belly to belly | 75. Flying leg drop | 85. Slingshot suplex |
| 66. Big splash | 76. Gourd buster | 86. Spine buster |
| 67. Boston crab | 77. Hurricanrana | 87. Stunner |
| 68. Brain buster | 78. Moonsault | 88. Sunset flip |
| 69. Camel clutch | 79. Neckbreaker | 89. Superplex |
| 70. Cobra clutch | 80. Piledriver | 90. Texas cloverleaf |

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WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____
6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.

FROM the DESK OF...

FAR BE IT from me to tell Vince McMahon how to run his business. He's a billionaire; I'm a thousandaire. But I have something VMac will never have: a column in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. And I get to do with it as I please.

I don't like the message McMahon sent during the first-quarter conference call with investors, not even a little bit. Vince put forth the notion that WWE would very seriously consider accepting bids from outside parties to stream WWE's top annual events (which are still referred to as pay-per-views for lack of a more accurate word). There are, he insists, several major companies willing to pony up to get their hands on WWE's valuable content, and he is duty-bound as the Chairman of the Board to investigate how such an arrangement would affect the company's bottom line.

The ramifications of such a move could reinvigorate WWE's quickly declining stock price, especially when the concept produces speculation from one business insider that this could eventually lead to the sale of WWE to no less a force than Amazon. Unless this is Vince McMahon's end game, I see such a move as seriously detrimental to the long-term health of the company.

Before we even look too far into the future, I'll allow myself to speculate a bit and say that this proposed business model could have cost WWE its highly talented co-presidents. George Barrios and Michelle Wilson, by McMahon's own assessment, were brilliant businesspeople who were instrumental in raising the company's corporate profile for more than a decade. The mere fact that they were named co-presidents tells you all you need to know about how highly McMahon valued them. Vince fired them both on the same day in January. As WWE stock plummeted 20 percent on this news, McMahon assured us that the move did not "reflect a change in our strategy."

Then why, Mr. McMahon, did you offer this drastic change of strategy at the investors' call? And why did you say that the firings were "based on a different view of execution over areas of focus"? Might Barrios and Wilson have been of one accord and approached their boss together with their feelings that their boss was wrong? Maybe they politely put their careers on the line to drive the point home and Vince not-so-politely called their bluff with, "Youuuu're fiiiiired!"

I have no inside information to back my conjecture, but to me, the timing of all this would be too coincidental to not at least be partly true.

The WWE Network was a major risk that completely re-shaped the company "strategy" that McMahon referenced. It could have been a disaster; give McMahon credit for taking the risk. It turned out to be a success, though perhaps not as much so as Barrios and Wilson had projected. Vince was getting antsy. The WWE stock price—and accordingly, the value of the company—was waning even before the firings and Vince's public announcement of his radical new plan. He's not one to sit back and accept the appearance that his company was in decline, even while revenue was at a record level, thanks mainly to the new TV deals.

He's willing to take the drastic step of stripping the Network of its most important asset, this coming on the heels of the Network losing its second-biggest asset, NXT's weekly TV show, to the USA Network. If the Network's subscription count is already falling, what will become of it in the future if WrestleMania, SummerSlam, Survivor Series, and The Royal Rumble are no longer part of the offering?

If Barrios and Wilson posed that question to their boss, I'm in complete agreement. The WWE Network's slump has more to do with product failures than the model itself. If anyone knows that such things run in cycles, McMahon should. He has a good thing in the WWE Network. He had a good thing in the Barrios/Wilson tandem. He's showing signs of desperation—and that's what has really spooked investors.

Stu Saks
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Dana Brooke

Six years into her career, Dana Brooke's Wikipedia bio still doesn't include any wrestling championships. In the talent-laden WWE women's ranks, that's certainly nothing to be embarrassed about. Dana is strong and talented and still only 31, so there's plenty of time for that bio to fill up. As you will read beginning on page 28, tragic life circumstances have only added to the drive she's had in abundance her whole life.

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So much has happened in AJ Styles' career over the past 10 years that, until reminded, it was hard for him to recall just what was going on at the start of the decade. He's a man who sets goals and finds a way to achieve them. Looking back is something of a wasted exercise. This special interview is in honor of AJ being voted Wrestler of the Decade, however, so he really had no choice.
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- 28 "TOMORROW IS NEVER PROMISED": HOW WWE SAVED DANA BROOKE'S LIFE**
Dana Brooke doesn't even want to contemplate what her life would have been like in 2017 after her boyfriend, Dallas McCarver, suddenly died from a heart attack had she not had the support of her family and, especially, her female companions in WWE. She discusses that time in her life with *PWI* for the first time.
- 32 25 UNDER 25: THE YOUNG WRESTLERS WHO WILL LEAD THE SPORT INTO THE FUTURE**
At a time when some of the biggest names in the sport are well into their 40s, it's nice to know that there is an abundance of talented wrestlers who have not even reached 25. These young stars should be performing at a high level when we reach the next decade—and perhaps the one after that!
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BEFORE the BELL

COMPILED BY MIKE BESSLER

UNDER THE BLACK HAT

For a guy who has spent tens of thousands of hours talking into microphones, Jim Ross still has a lot to say. That's good news for wrestling fans because when it comes to spinning yarns and shooting straight, Good Ol' J.R. is in a class all by himself. In 2017, the storied announcer published *Slobberknocker: My Life In Wrestling*, which covered his humblest of beginnings and early exploits in the wrestling business. His new book, *Under The Black Hat: My Life In The WWE And Beyond*, shares the subsequent steps of J.R.'s journey, from the Monday Night War to his present work in AEW.

Especially heartfelt and poignant are J.R.'s accounts of his longtime friendship with "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, a relationship that endured the rigors of a cutthroat business and culminated with Austin inducting Ross into the WWE Hall of Fame. Also addressed by Ross is the lingering question of how he felt being publicly humiliated by Vince McMahon again and again through the course of his time in WWE. The short answer is that he understandably didn't care for it at all, but J.R. adds depth to the discussion, framing some cringeworthy incidents and angles with insight and context.

It's been a long and winding road for Jim Ross, and somewhere along the way, he has attained the status of living legend in the eyes of his peers and his audience. But the tone of *Under The Black Hat* remains unmistakably human and down-to-earth, and nowhere is this more evident than in Ross' reminiscences of his late wife, Jan. It is apparent through J.R.'s recollections and ruminations that Jan played an integral role in his personal and professional development over the course of their many years together, and for that, wrestling fans owe Jan Ross a monumental debt of gratitude.

Under The Black Hat is exactly the caliber of work that fans have come to expect from professional wrestling's consummate professional. Absorbing and entertaining, the book is essential reading for

casual fans and seasoned enthusiasts alike. We give it 4½ out of five suplexes.



TALKIN' TRASH

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related items you've been talking about lately and our gut reaction to each:

10. Tessa Blanchard's historic win over Sami Callihan is overshadowed by controversy on social media.

In an effort to curtail damage to her public image, Blanchard retained the services of Jim Cornette's lawyer Stephen P. New, who promptly filed a \$7-trillion lawsuit against Al Gore for inventing the Internet.

9. AEW lands a deal for an additional night of television on TNT.

To accommodate the additional two hours of programming per week, TNT will now show only 27 episodes per day of *NCIS: New Orleans*.

8. Sammy Guevara "invades" The Royal Rumble in a toy tank.

While the stunt didn't make a lot of waves at the Rumble, Guevara later used the plastic war toy to seize control of a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant and reinstall the Beach Bowzers Band as a puppet regime.

7. Alex Riley speaks publicly about having backstage friction with John Cena in years past.

When asked to respond, Cena explained that he would have to find time in between dating beautiful women, starring in feature films, and learning Mandarin Chinese to try and remember who in the hell Alex Riley is.

6. James Storm and Eli Drake capture the NWA tag titles by defeating The Rock 'n' Roll Express.

Although they were disheartened to drop the straps, Rick Morton and Robert Gibson remain confident that if they're patient for another 20 years, they'll eventually hold the NWA title yet again.

5. The Briscoe brothers re-sign with Ring of Honor.

Addressing his decision to stay with ROH, Mark Briscoe explained that he didn't want to run the risk of ending up working at a place that offers a decent dental plan.

4. Fans of Smackdown complain after a stomach-turning segment in which King Corbin is covered in dog food.

Company brass explained that the spot was actually a soft roll-out of their new plant-based pet snacks, "WWEats."

3. PCO wins Ring of Honor's top title.

Remaining consistent with his bizarre and extreme persona, PCO will require all prospective contenders to eat an entire car battery in order to earn a shot at his title.

2. After his emotional return to WWE, Edge is savagely attacked by Randy Orton.

In Orton's defense, he saw Edge as his only serious competition for the lead role in the next WWE direct-to-video movie *The Condemned Marine 7: Dust-Up At Myrtle Beach*.

1. Drew McIntyre eliminates Brock Lesnar before going on to win The Royal Rumble.

Still reeling from the shocking upset, a despondent Lesnar went to a tattoo parlor the following day and had his "3MB" tat covered up with a picture of Pickle Rick.



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WE HEARD THAT!

"We'll always be professional. I don't see it as a problem at all for me personally. I know it's not a problem for her, and it was always about her. People always go up to me and ask how you're feeling about this. I go, 'Why are you asking me? You should ask her. She's the one that was supposed to kiss him. I'm not kissing the guy.'"

—RUSEV, discussing what it's like to see his wife, Lana, kissing Bobby Lashley, from an interview with *Reel Talker*

"Working with AEW is brought up to me almost daily. The NWA is open to working with anyone. There are a number of wrestlers outside the WWE that are viewed as elite-level guys, so it's only a matter of time before the audience starts demand-

ing the main-event matches they want to see. We want to give the fans the matches they want to see, these super fights."

—NICK ALDIS to *Sports Illustrated* on the matter of future collaborations between NWA and other promotions

"The pie is big enough for everybody. You have your NXT, you have your AEW, you have your Ring of Honor—there's plenty of pie to go around. But I do feel that Ring of Honor is stronger than it's ever been with the locker room that we have and with the talent that we have. In 2020, I think that Ring of Honor is going to be fine with what we've got."

—"VINCENT" MARSEGLIA, describing the current state of Ring of Honor, on episode #132 of *The PWI Podcast*.

ONE TO WATCH: CHRISTIAN CASANOVA

Some folks check the *PWI* rankings when they want to know who the best in the business is today; Christian Casanova just looks in the mirror. As wrestling's self-described "Top Talent," 25-year-old Casanova has been making waves in promotions in New England and on the East Coast for the past several years, showing fans and opponents that he can live up to his own hype.

Casanova's journey into wrestling began six years ago when he attended a pro wrestling "fantasy camp" with a friend. The camp was put on by New England Pro Wrestling Academy, which counts the likes of Tommaso Ciampa and Sasha Banks as alumni. He learned some basics in the ring during the brief experience, ultimately catching the eye of trainer Johnny Vegas.

"At the end of the camp, Johnny said, 'Hey man, I think you have a lot of potential,'" Christian recalled. "It lit a fire under me."

Casanova enrolled at New England Pro Wrestling Academy a short time later, learning his newfound craft from veteran trainer Brian Fury. He debuted with Massachusetts-based Chaotic Wrestling in 2014 and began running the ropes at regional promotions shortly thereafter.

At 5'10" and 180 pounds, Casanova can easily hang with fellow cruiserweights, but he also prides himself on defying traditional categories. His technique is fast-paced and replete with technical grappling and dazzling, high-impact finishers, including "Dirty Diana," a headscissors/bulldog combo with a name inspired by the Michael Jackson tune of the same name. His uncanny style melds skill and athletic ability with craftiness and the determination to win matches by any means necessary.

Growing up, Casanova was a dedicated fan of WWE's Attitude Era, thrilled by the exploits of grapplers like Eddie Guerrero, Edge, and The Undertaker. But while such legends were influential during his formative years, Casanova is committed to developing a unique style as an in-ring performer.

"I don't aspire to be like anyone else," Casanova said. "I want to be myself."

While developing his skills and prowess, Casanova has squared off against

some top stars of wrestling, including Jon Moxley and Rey Mysterio, and he has logged wins over the likes of Brody King, Tony Deppen, and Alex Zayne. In 2019, Casanova scored some of his biggest victories to date, winning Chaotic Wrestling's heavyweight title on two occasions, defeating J.T. Dunn in March and Anthony Greene in August. He came out on top in Beyond Wrestling's eight-man Tournament for Tomorrow, defeating Richard Holliday in the final round.

Casanova continues finding new audiences and grander stages through his recent debuts in EVOLVE and Ring of Honor, but he remains confident that his stock will continue to rise as he looks towards new opportunities in the world's biggest and best promotions.

"I believe in divine timing where everything that is meant to happen will happen when the time is exactly right," he said. "So now, it's just about staying focused and consistent. The payoff is right around the corner. I have no doubts at all."



PHOTO BY HARRY AARON

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: **VIVA VAN**

A relative newcomer to the wrestling business, 28-year-old Viva Van has already come to regard the sport as an important part of who she is, much like her cultural identity as a Vietnamese-American. Although she was born in the United States, both of her parents are from Vietnam and her father currently lives in the Saigon area. It was thus a watershed moment for Van when she discovered a budding subculture of professional wrestling in her parents' homeland.

While doing some online research last year, Van found a documentary entitled *The First Wrestlers*, which profiles the Saigon Pro Wrestling Club in Vietnam. Inspired and intrigued, she reached out to the club's founder, Huỳnh "Rocky" Hùng and introduced herself. To her surprise, Rocky and his friends were already familiar with Viva, as they followed the reigning Arizona Wrestling Federation Women's champ's home promotion, Santino Brothers Wrestling Academy, on YouTube.

"I sent Rocky my highlight reel and told him I'd love to come and visit someday," Van recalled. "I also said, 'If you ever need help, I'm here for you guys.'"

A short time later, Hùng reached out to Van and asked if she might help his group raise funds to purchase a proper wrestling ring. As depicted in *The First Wrestlers*, Hùng and his peers sometimes train in an old boxing ring, but they typically work on a two-inch thick wrestling mat, launching high-risk maneuvers from tables.

Van agreed to help by setting up a GoFundMe campaign and plugging the effort to her tens of thousands of followers on Instagram and Twitter. She also enlisted the aid of her friend Sumie Sakai, who helped to promote the endeavor. The campaign was launched in early-January 2020 and in the space of just a few weeks, the fundraiser reached its goal of \$2,200 in donations, which will cover the cost of welding together a 16 by 16 wrestling ring from scratch.

For Van, the effort to grow the sport of pro wrestling is intensely personal, both as a person of Vietnamese heritage and as a woman.

"In my culture, there's no such thing as women wrestlers or intergender wrestling,"

she explained. "It's just men wrestling men. I want to show that women can do the same things that men can do."

While the construction of Saigon Pro's first-ever regulation ring is an important step in the evolution of wrestling in that country, there remains much work ahead for the future stars of Vietnam. Fortunately, Viva Van is committed to bringing their efforts to the attention of fans worldwide.

"I want people to know about Vietnamese pro wrestling," Viva proclaimed. "Japan has done so much and now China is doing a lot, too. But Vietnam also has a lot of love and passion for wrestling." □



PHOTO BY JIM LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

RINGSIDE

WITH HARRY BURKETT

MARTY SCURLL WAS definitely going to join his Elite buddies in AEW. But, wait, he showed up in the NWA to re-ignite his rivalry with **Nick Aldis**. Staying in Ring of Honor? Not a chance.

It was a surprise when Ring of Honor announced that Scurll, the biggest star remaining on its roster, had been signed to a multi-year contract. Terms of the deal weren't disclosed, but the situation was reminiscent of **Matt Taven's** negotiations last fall. Just when it seemed inevitable that Taven would be checking in at the WWE Performance Center, it was announced the former ROH champion would be staying after all.

The boldest statement in ROH's press release was that Scurll would become the company's head booker. While the question of who held the pencil was once a deep, dark secret in pro wrestling, anyone with access to the Internet can find out the identity of the booker in any promotion these days—but it's still a job status that isn't widely announced, especially if held by an active wrestler.

Perhaps ROH executives felt that such a dramatic disclosure was necessary to grab the attention of fans who have strayed to AEW. Yet it may box Scurll into a no-win situation.

The greatest benefit of signing the charismatic Scurll to a

multi-year contract was promoting "The Villain" as ROH's long-term top star, perhaps moving away from the **Jay Lethal** era. But if Scurll is the one making those decisions, he'll be accused of helping himself and his friends. If, on the other hand, Scurll is a selfless booker who focuses on elevating other stars, he will be depriving himself of a well-deserved main-event run that would be good for business.

The first major event of Scurll's tenure was ROH Free Enterprise, a free show held on Sunday afternoon, February 9, at the UMBC Center on the campus of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Although the event was free of charge, there were still pockets of empty seats in the upper level.

It's widely known that Scurll is friends with Nick Aldis outside the ring, and Scurll has revived the working relationship with the NWA that had gone dormant after last year's Crockett Cup. First Scurll appeared unexpectedly on *NWA Powerrr* to challenge Aldis for the NWA championship. Then Aldis agreed to show up at Free Enterprise, where he teamed with **Rush** to take on Scurll and Ring of Honor champion **PCO**. Rush abandoned Aldis after an argument, Scurll followed up by snapping Aldis' fingers, and PCO choke-slammed Aldis for the clean pinfall.

Free Enterprise was a success from several standpoints. The free event, and the extensive fan interaction before and after the card, promoted goodwill and attracted many people who aren't traditional ROH followers. PCO's pinfall over Aldis set up an ROH champion vs. NWA champion main event at Supercard of Honor. Finally, it continued laying the groundwork for a possible Aldis-Scurll rematch at this year's Crockett Cup.

PHOTO BY ZIA HILTEY/RING OF HONOR



The relationship between new Ring of Honor booker Marty Scurll and NWA champion Nick Aldis could lead to partial or full joint promotions in the future. Scurll is getting the better of this action at ROH's Free Enterprise.



The Rhodes Brothers pose with their PWI Match of the Year plaques after a presentation by Tony Schiavone (above). PWI's Kevin McElvaney awards the Rookie of the Year plaque to Brian Pillman Jr. as Alicia Atout looks on (below).



Ring of Honor was crucial to the **Billy Corgan**-led NWA resurgence in the early going, in terms of talent-sharing and production. Now the NWA can return the favor, by giving ROH some exposure through NWA *Powerrr* and its PPV streaming events.

Take Hard Times, held at the GPB Studios in Atlanta, for example. The working relationship helped both sides, as Aldis defended the NWA title against ROH star **Flip Gordon** at the

event. The main theme of Hard Times was the crowning of a new NWA TV champion, and the show had echoes of **Dusty Rhodes** throughout. **Ricky Starks** emerged victorious, defeating **Matt Cross**, **Tim Storm**, and **Trevor Murdoch** en route to winning the iconic red-and-silver strap. Participants had earned their way into the tournament through qualifying matches with a 6:05 time limit.

Starks' euphoria was short-lived, however. Despite a successful

title defense against **Zicky Dice** the following day during tapings for NWA *Powerrr*, he lost the belt to Dice in a rematch the day after that.

In other notable matches at Hard Times, **Scott Steiner** beat National champion **Aron Stevens** by disqualification, **Thunder Rosa** defeated **Allysin Kay** for the Women's title, and **Eli Drake** and **James Storm** won the tag team title in a match also involving **The Wild Cards** and defending champs **The Rock 'n' Roll Express**.

Switching gears from old school to sports entertainment, how about those **Bella Twins**? Brie and Nikki have been all over, including on *Entertainment Tonight* and *Access Hollywood*, because they're both expecting! Brie's husband is **Daniel Bryan**, and Nikki's fiancé is dancer **Artem Chigvintsev**. It's amazing how Nikki's former relationship with **John Cena**, and their double exposure on *Total Divas* and *Total Bellas*, has transformed Brie and Nikki into mainstream celebrities. Go, girls!

What's the status of **Taynara Conti**? The judo and jiu-jitsu expert refused to participate in a women's battle royal on the January 15 episode of *NXT*. **Bianca Belair** won the battle royal to earn a shot at Women's champion **Rhea Ripley** at TakeOver: Portland. *The Wrestling Observer* reported Conti was on her way out of the company altogether, although she remains under contract and is still being listed as a "WWE NXT Superstar" in her Instagram bio.

In other contract updates, former Impact star **Killer Kross** will be reporting to the WWE Performance Center, and Australian standout **Adam Brooks** has signed with Ring of Honor. **Brody King** of **Villain Enterprises** has renewed with ROH.



Ted DiBiase Jr. and Brett DiBiase join Ted DiBiase, at their dad's 2010 WWE Hall of Fame induction. Brett was arrested in February for his alleged involvement in an embezzlement scheme in Mississippi.

No matter what you think about intergender wrestling, it was impossible not to get caught up in **Tessa Blanchard's** recent Impact title win over **Sami Callihan**. It was the end of a long, grinding campaign for Blanchard, who put in such a heroic effort at last year's Slammiversary, and worked hard for this moment at the appropriately titled Hard to Kill pay-per-view. The match was epic, with Blanchard executing two Canadian Destroyers and a Buzzsaw DDT to pin Callihan at 23:50. Kudos to both combatants for delivering this historic moment. (See feature story on page 24.)

Did you catch the AEW segment in which **Tony Schiavone** presented PWI Match of the Year plaques to **Cody** and **Dustin Rhodes**? The Rhodes brothers were clearly touched by the honor bestowed by you, the readers of our magazine. Cody said their match at Double or Nothing was the fruition of his vision, that the company had become "what I thought AEW would look like," surrounded by friends past and present and delivering quality wrestling.

There was a similar moment at Philadelphia's 2300 Arena, where Contributing Writer **Kevin McElvaney** presented **Brian Pillman Jr.** with the Rookie of the Year Award at Major League Wrestling's Fightland event. Pillman was genuinely touched by the honor, and he ended up having a good night, with a big win over **Jimmy Havoc** in their first-ever encounter. Congratulations, Brian!

Former WWE developmental wrestler **Brett DiBiase**, son of **Ted DiBiase Sr.**, has been caught up in one of the biggest embezzlement cases in Mississippi history, according to *The New York Times*. **John Davis**, the executive director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, was one of six people, including DiBiase, charged with misdirecting state funds. Davis is also accused of using some of the money for personal purposes, and using welfare funds to pay DiBiase for anti-drug classes he never taught while he was, in fact, being treated for opioid addiction at a pricey rehabilitation center in Malibu, California.

Staying on the crime beat, former WWE and WCW star **Bryan Clark** (also known as **Adam Bomb** and **Wrath**), has pleaded not guilty to drug charges in Arizona, including conspiracy, illegal control of enterprise, transporting or selling narcotics, drug possession, and possessing a weapon during a drug offense, according to Arizona Central. An attorney for the 55-year-old Clark says his client "has been targeted because of his notoriety and acquaintances."

Another former WCW star, **Van Hammer** (real name **Mark Hildreth**), was charged with felony hit and run and DUI after allegedly hitting a five-year-old boy on his bike while driving 23 miles an hour over the speed limit in Boynton Beach, Florida. Prosecutors say that the 52-year-old Hammer has a prior DUI on his record. The boy was in stable condition at press time.

We have many deaths to report since last issue. Journeyman wrestler **Randy Colley** passed away on December 14 at age 69, a week after undergoing amputation of his right leg above the knee. He wrestled throughout the territories under several identities, including **The Nightmare**, **Deadeye Dick**, **Randy the Mountaineer**, and **Assassin #2**, but he's most famous as **Moondog Rex** of **The Moondogs**, the former WWF tag team champions managed by **Capt. Lou Albano**. His other claim to fame was as the original **Demolition Smash**.

Izzy Slapawitz (Jeff Smith) was a wrestler and manager whose prime notoriety occurred in the late-1970s and early-'80s in several major territories and outlaw promotions, particularly in the South. He died of cardiac arrest during surgery at age 71. The leader of the Slapawitz Syndicate guided the careers of **Bob Orton Jr.**, **Barry Orton**, **Boris Malenko**, **Crusher Broomfield** (One Man Gang),



Pampero Firpo, whose name was taken from boxing legend Luis Firpo and whose persona inspired Randy Savage, passed away at age 89.

James Harris (Kamala), The Mongolian Stomper, and Randy Savage, among many others.

The great **Pampero Firpo** passed away at age 89 in Campbell, California. Trained by **Rudy Dusek**, Firpo debuted in 1953 and wrestled under several monikers, including **Ivan the Terrible** and **The Missing Link** until boxing legend **Jack Dempsey** suggested the name “Firpo” after one of his opponents of Argentine descent. The hardcore brawler feuded with **Bobo Brazil** and **The Sheik** in Detroit and headlined against WWWF champion **Pedro Morales** in New York and Philadelphia.

Other notable deaths include Southeastern wrestler **Charlie Cook**, who upset **Dory Funk Jr.** to win the Florida State title in 1981 and earn that year’s *PWI* Most Improved Wrestler of the Year

Award; **Kazuo Sakurada**, who enjoyed successful stints as **Mr. Sakurada** in Stampede Wrestling and **Kendo Nagasaki** in Florida (age 71); CMLL star **Mr. Niebla**, who often teamed with **Negro Casas** and incorporated comedy into his in-ring style (age 46); **La Parka II**, who suffered a spinal injury in a bout against Rush last October (age 54); Canadian wrestler **Bobby Kay**, who was the real-life brother of **Rudy Kay, The Beast**, and **Leo Burke** (age 70); Puerto Rican star **Hercules Ayala**, whose exploits included defeating Randy Savage for the WWC North American title and battling NWA World champion **Ric Flair** (age 70); and **Justice Pain**, the real-life brother of **Nick Gage** who was a CZW fixture in the early-2000s (age 41).

That’s all for now. Save a ringside seat for me. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

ROH’S BIG PROBLEM

Ring of Honor’s primary challenge continues to be television exposure. While *Ring Of Honor Wrestling* airs on Sinclair Broadcasting stations across the U.S., it isn’t destination viewing at a certain time at a certain place. That hurts ROH’s ability to be a story-telling promotion. ROH should take a cue from the NWA and drop a series on YouTube at a specific time each week. On Tuesdays at 7:05 p.m. perhaps?

NO RECLINER FOR STEINER

It was a thrill to see Scott Steiner—even at 57 years of age—step into the ring with National champion Aron Stevens at Hard Times. People forget that “Big Poppa Pump” was an incredibly hot attraction in the late-1990s and early-2000s, and there was real enthusiasm for his ascension to the WCW World title. While that was a little too late for WCW, Steiner’s legendary status is secure.

ANOTHER ONE FOR THE TROPHY CASE

It must be pointed out that not every *PWI* Award winner has received a plaque, but perhaps one day Stu Saks will share some of the political intrigue and drama that has been involved with simply getting these awards to our winners. Why couldn’t certain wrestlers be photographed with the plaques? Why is one of Randy Savage’s plaques still in the archive room in our office? The tales he could tell!

FROM MOUNTAINEER TO MOONDOG

Longtime readers know how much I appreciate the journeyman wrestlers of old, men who changed gimmicks with each new territory. Randy Colley epitomized that wrestler. The young man who debuted as “Jack Dalton” of The Dalton Brothers in Panama City, Florida, in 1970, would go on to wrestle as a member of Demolition during the height of the ’80s boom. What a story!

QUICK COUNT

BY AL CASTLE

WORD IS THAT WWE unsuccessfully tried to secure an Emmy nomination last year in the category of "Outstanding Structured Reality Program." Maybe it was barking up the wrong tree altogether, and should have tried for an Academy Award instead. After all, if a seven-hour long WrestleMania doesn't qualify as a "sweeping epic," nothing does.

For your consideration, it's the annual Oscar-inspired edition of "Quick Count."

THE IRISHMAN

For weeks, WWE hyped the return of Sheamus with videos in which he vowed to "ravage everything and everyone" in his way. And so, surely, big things were in store for "The Celtic Warrior" when he returned from an eight-month hiatus, right?

Think again, fella.

Rather than jump right into the main event mix on Smackdown, Sheamus targeted the talented, but underutilized, Shorty G. What's more, rather than "ravage" the former Chad Gable, Sheamus eked out a win against him in an evenly contested, 13-minute bout on the Royal Rumble Kickoff show. Hardly the actions of a returning conqueror.

Even though he spent most of the last four years competing in the tag team division, Sheamus is no slouch. This is WWE's opportunity to redefine what Sheamus

can mean to the company and remind us of what he once did, as a four-time world champion and former Royal Rumble winner.

Sheamus could be a difference-maker on the Smackdown brand. But it will take more than just the luck of the Irish to get him there.

THE TWO POPES

For 14 years now, Elijah Burke has been a talented wrestler in search of the right fit. In the newly relaunched NWA, he may finally have found it.

When he arrived in WWE in 2006, the smooth-talking Burke showed tremendous charisma but lacked the size and skill to compete at a high level. As a ringside commentator on *Impact*, the rebranded "D'Angelo Dinero" got to show off his gift of gab, but was doing so on a failing product.

Now back as "The Pope" in the NWA, Burke has found a buzz-worthy promotion with a rabid fan base that loves nothing more than a good wrestling promo.

NWA Powerrr's retro studio setting is tailor-made for the likes of



Sheamus clubs away at Shorty G during a match on the Kickoff of The Royal Rumble. Once he completely sheds the ring rust, Sheamus should once again be a major player in WWE.

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO



Bianca Belair and Alexa Bliss play tug o' war with Bianca's braid. The 5'1" Bliss made three eliminations in her 26:34 of action in the Women's Royal Rumble, but was eventually taken out by Belair.

Burke, who turns 42 this year. Like the NWA itself, Burke is suddenly more relevant now than he's been in ages.

JOKER

I wouldn't be surprised to see R-Truth one day being the recipient of *PWI's* prestigious Stanley Weston Award for lifetime achievement. For, while he's never won a major world title or headlined a *WrestleMania*, R-Truth has done something even harder: He's kept wrestling fans laughing.

Comedy is one of the hardest art forms to master, and that's especially so in Vince McMahon's WWE, where humor usually involves a toilet. But the 48-year-old Ron Killings continues to earn chuckles from even the most jaded wrestling fans, including through his follies as a 34-time (and counting) "24-7, 48-7, 7-Eleven, I-95 South, European TV champion."

Never were Truth's absurdist comedic chops on display more than when he declared he was entering the Royal Rumble match, only to quickly un-declare upon learning Brock Lesnar would be in it too. "I don't want Brock to take me to Sioux Falls City," R-Truth explained.

Even Brock cracked up at that one.

MARRIAGE STORY

When Lana and Rusev vowed to stay true to each other "in good times and in bad," they probably weren't counting on just how bad WWE's creative direction for them would be.

Yes, it's the job of any wrestling performer to try to make the best out of any material that they're given, but nobody could have blamed "The Bulgarian Brute" or the "Ravishing Russian" if they refused to go along with the tawdry storyline that made a mockery of their marriage while having Lana repeatedly get hot-and-heavy with Bobby Lashley on air.

"It's just show business," you might say. Try telling that to Kevin Sullivan, Matt Hardy, Steve McMichael and countless other wrestlers whose real-life relationships were strained by reckless writers.

So a word of advice to married wrestlers: The next time a wrestling booker pitches an angle involving your wife in the arms of another man, think twice before saying, "I do."

LITTLE WOMEN

Trying to keep from being tossed over the top rope in The

Royal Rumble can be daunting for any WWE wrestler, but it has to be considerably more so when you can barely reach the top rope yourself.

Such was the case when 5'1" Alexa Bliss and 4'11" Zelina Vega competed in the 2020 women's Royal Rumble match. And yet, both women more than held their own.

Vega lasted a respectable 10 minutes and Bliss, who drew the dreaded number one, lasted nearly 27 minutes and eliminated three other contestants—the third-most in the match.

Maybe down the line, WWE officials will institute a separate weight division for its smaller women, just as they did for the men's cruiserweights. Until then, Vega and Bliss will continue to give girls someone to look up to, even as they look up to most of their opponents.

JOJO RABBIT

Rambling Rabbit isn't the only adorable creature that has stuck by Bray Wyatt's side through thick and thin.

While the Universal champion has been busy over the past year terrifying fans and opponents alike as the freakish "Fiend," Wyatt's real-life spouse, WWE ring announcer Joseann "JoJo" Offerman, has proven herself a warrior back at the homefront.

JoJo endured an especially trying pregnancy before giving birth to her and Wyatt's first child, Knash, prematurely last May. While Wyatt returned to the road with WWE last summer, JoJo faced an even tougher challenge back home as a first-time mom.

Word is that JoJo may soon return to WWE alongside her horrifying hubby. And if WWE ever observes "Take Your Child To Work Day," little Knash will have no shortage of stuffed animals to play with. □

WIN, LOSE, or DRAW

BY HARRY BURKETT

AFTER ROCKY JOHNSON'S death on January 15, his son, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson posted a touching tribute on Instagram. It was the most powerful son-to-father tribute I've ever read. In only a couple of paragraphs, The Rock conveyed some complex emotions, recalling the young boy who hero-worshipped his dad, alluding to a sometimes-complicated relationship, and, finally, offering the mature perspective of a son who had taken the full measure of his father—flaws and all—and came to regard him with love and respect.

"I love you," wrote Dwayne. "You broke color barriers, became a ring legend, and trailblazed your way through this world. I was the boy sitting in the seats, watching and adoring you, my hero from afar. The boy you raised to always be proud of our cultures and proud of who and what I am. The boy you raised with the toughest of love. The intense work. The hard hand. The adoring boy who wanted to know only your best qualities. Who then grew to become a man realizing you had other deep complex sides that needed to be held and understood. Son to father. Man to man. That's when my adoration turned to respect. And my empathy turned to gratitude. Grateful that you gave me life. Grateful that you gave me life's

invaluable lessons."

Dwayne went on to say his father had been ripped away without warning, "gone in an instant and no coming back." Johnson died suddenly at his home in Lutz, Florida, from a pulmonary embolism, caused by a blood clot that had traveled from his leg. He was 75. I was surprised by Johnson's death. I had seen him at '80s Wrestling Con in Freehold, New Jersey, in April 2019. I remember watching him leave the building, pulling his suitcase behind him, alongside Samu Anoa'i. He wasn't exactly doing the Ali Shuffle, but was in better health than the younger Samu, who is still

battling liver cancer.

Like The Rock, I wouldn't have imagined his time was growing near.

I'm glad Dwayne referred to Rocky as a trailblazer who broke color barriers. While Johnson isn't mentioned in the same sentence as Sailor Art Thomas and Bobo Brazil, he came along in the next generation, carrying the ball far down the field during the 1960s and '70s. Johnson didn't make ethnicity part of his act. Despite his flamboyant boxing moves and high-energy razzle-dazzle, he conveyed a "don't mess with me" attitude to the audience, a message he no doubt got across to promoters and fellow wrestlers.

He had to be a hard man in a hard business, made harder still because he was black.

His career on the road—and some of his own choices—made his life difficult. For a six-year period in the 1970s, Johnson maintained a household with his first wife and children, and also had to support his new love, Ata Maivia, and their son Dwayne. In his autobiography, *Soulman*, Johnson revealed that supporting two families made him penniless, and he survived on bologna,



The love of the Johnson household (including Oscar the Poodle!) helped mold Dwayne into the man we would all come to know. Despite the fact that his dad was away so much, Dwayne idolized Rocky Johnson and wanted to be like him.



Rocky takes The Miami Mauler off his feet in 1971 in Los Angeles with one of the highest and most powerful dropkicks the sport has ever seen. The Rock's style was quite different, but both men were driven to be the best for their family and fans.

cheese, and beer while on the road. Johnson finally divorced his first wife, Una, and married Ata a few days later in 1978.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-'80s, Johnson forged a highly successful career, even if his bank account didn't always agree. He was so over in Los Angeles that he was able to take on the hated Fred Blassie as a tag team partner and make him a hero overnight. He won Jerry Lawler's crown in Memphis. He was the first black Georgia State champion. In fact, he won titles in every major NWA territory, and battled World champions Terry Funk and Harley Race. He formed "The Soul Patrol" with Tony Atlas and defeated The Samoans to become the first black WWF tag team champions in 1983. To this day, it's remembered as one of the WWF's most memorable TV moments.

All this raises the question: If Johnson weren't the father of a WWE megastar and Hollywood's top performer, would his life be garnering this much appreciation today?

Absolutely not. No, his death wouldn't have made *Entertainment*

Tonight or CNN. I don't even think WWE would have given him a 10-bell salute. The final statements on his life would have been under the "Finishes" tab on the Cauliflower Alley Club website and a mention in "Ringside."

The Rock's fame forced the media to pay attention to his father's life and career, which deserve to be celebrated. "The Soulman" had an amazing number of championships and main-event matches over two decades, all on his own terms. He overcame the color barrier through sheer commitment and talent.

Johnson's greatest legacy lives through his son. He raised Dwayne with love and a firm hand. It must have worked. Not only has Dwayne enjoyed unparalleled success in both the wrestling and film industries, but he also is universally regarded as the consummate gentleman. One way or another, that's a tribute to his parents.

And let's remember that Rocky gave Dwayne the gift of pro wrestling, the launch pad for his current success. He tried to talk Dwayne

out of a wrestling career, but relented when his son—despite a degree from the University of Miami and a year in the Canadian Football League—returned home to his parents' Tampa apartment with only \$7 in his pocket and disillusion in his mind. Johnson put his son through tough-love training, and, by 1996, Dwayne was in the WWF.

Dwayne benefited from his heritage—from both the Johnson and Maivia branches of the family tree—but, fortunately, that didn't interfere with his own identity in the business. Johnson and Maivia probably commanded more respect within the industry than with the broad audience of wrestling fans. So no one was traumatized when he shed his "Rocky Maivia" persona to become simply "The Rock."

It certainly wasn't that easy for David Sammartino, Greg Gagne, or David Flair. Their fathers were so famous that it was impossible for them to escape their shadow. Yet many sons of not-quite-as-famous performers have thrived, such as Randy Orton, Barry Windham, Bret and Owen Hart, Randy Savage, and Dory Funk Jr. and Terry Funk.

And, of course, there's Charlotte Flair. There isn't quite the same parallel between fathers and daughters, so Charlotte has benefited from the connection with her dad. And it just so happens that Charlotte is so darn good that she compares favorably to her father, even if he's considered the greatest of all-time.

I'm sure all of these second- and third-generation stars could provide some fascinating insights into their relationships with their famous fathers. But I don't think anyone will ever put it as succinctly and eloquently as The Rock.

Rocky Johnson couldn't have received a better tribute—or been more deserving of it. □

HOTSEAT

AN INCISIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE SPORT'S TOP STARS

AJ STYLES WENT into 2010 as a world champion and, pound-for-pound, one of the very best wrestlers in the world. And, although the scenery changed a few times, he wore those distinctions throughout much of the next 10 years.

And so it was no surprise when **Pro Wrestling Illustrated** readers chose “The Phenomenal One” as the Wrestler of the Decade. It capped off a long list of accolades accumulated by Styles over the past 10 years, including: a number-one ranking in the “**PWI** 500,” a **PWI** Match of the Year award, two Wrestler of the Year awards, and a combined five world/heavyweight title reigns in three major promotions: TNA, New Japan, and WWE.

But simply tallying Styles’ world title reigns doesn’t do justice to what he accomplished throughout the 2010s. Randomly pick out a photo of Styles from any time during the decade, and there’s a good chance he’ll be wearing a championship belt in it. During seven of the 10 calendar years between 2010 and 2019, Styles held a major promotion’s top championship.

More than technical ability, speed, or strength, that accomplishment speaks to the one trait that Styles, himself, said made him the Wrestler of the Decade: consistency. Year in and year out, fans and promoters alike could count on Styles showing up and, more than likely, having the best match on the card. No matter what company he was working for, Styles always gave his best. And it doesn’t get much better than AJ Styles’ best.

At the start of a new decade, and his 23rd year in the sport, Styles looked back on the past 10 years of his career, and ahead to where he might be 10 years from now in this exclusive interview with Senior Writer Al Castle.

**AJ
STYLES**



The fact that Styles and TNA opponents like Robert Roode would go on to excel in WWE is proof in AJ's eyes that the talent was not responsible for the issues that plagued the Nashville-based company.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/TNA WRESTLING



Castle: Congratulations on being our Wrestler of the Decade. I remember the first time I talked to you for *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* was back in 2010 when you were the first TNA wrestler to rank number one in the “PWI 500.” What do you remember about where you were during the very beginning of the decade? And how are you different 10 years later?

Styles: I don’t remember exactly where I was at in 2010. I know I was at TNA. That’s about all I remember about what was going on then. As far as change goes, I think I’ve matured so much in this business and understood what really draws people into a match, rather than just the crazy things that I did, where you can get yourself hurt. The little things mean the most. And people don’t

realize these little things. They just know it was a good match. But it’s the little things that can take a great match and make it an unbelievable one.

Castle: One thing I remember from that interview with you back then—I think concussions were just beginning to really be a topic in wrestling—and I asked you about your style at the time. And I remember you saying something along the lines of, “I really don’t think about it now. I’ll deal with that later . . . My long-term health isn’t that big a concern.” Does that sound like where you were at 10 years ago? And how are you different from that perspective now?

Styles: I’ve got to tell you, that’s still kind of the same way I am. I’m still not worried about concussions. I go out there and I still try to give you 100 percent. Is it a little bit harder now? Yeah. I’m older. But my mentality is still the same. I’m going to go out there and bust my tail, do what I do, and try to put on a great match and not worry about getting injured or getting a concussion or something like that. My job is to entertain, and I’ve got to do that to the best of my ability, or I can’t live with myself. When you worry about getting hurt, when you worry about getting a concussion, that’s usually when you get one, because you’re going to hesitate.

Castle: The first several years of the decade you were still with TNA. I guess it would have been the second half of your run there. A lot of big names were coming in—Hulk Hogan, Eric Bischoff.

“I’ve been at the top of my game for 10 years and busting my tail for 10 years. So, at least I can say that. I never took it easy.”

Do you look back fondly on that early part of the decade and your involvement in TNA? Or is it something that kind of leaves a sour note with you?

Styles: Now that you reminded me, I had high hopes in 2010, when all that was going on. But it really led to the downfall. Instead of being TNA, they tried to be something that they weren't. And they didn't trust the people that got them to the game. And now those people are here in WWE with me. It just goes to show you that it didn't have anything to do with the talent. It had to do with the person who was calling all the shots—not just the shots, but all the shots. And they had no business doing something like that. It was definitely a different time back then, and a very frustrating one at that. A lot of people like to put that blame on Eric Bischoff. I would not put that blame on him. In fact, I enjoyed working with him, so I want to make that clear.

Castle: Moving into the middle part of the decade, you leave TNA and you go to a number of places. You go back to Ring of Honor, do some work there, have some terrific matches, go to

New Japan, win the IWGP title. That middle part of the decade, do you see it as really transformative? I think a lot of fans see it as having laid the foundation for what you did in the second half of the 2010s.

Styles: Yeah. There was a chip on my shoulder. I had a lot to prove, and I wanted to prove it in as many places as I could. So when I was wrestling for Ring of Honor, I was also doing independents. And when New Japan came together—and we had a great relationship—that chip was still on my shoulder. I had something to prove. I worked my tail off, and I enjoyed it. It was a great experience for me to push myself and see what else I could accomplish. It was a scary time at first because you didn't know what was going to happen. But I'm glad everything happened the way it did. I have no regrets.

Castle: These days, I think a lot of people look to guys like Cody Rhodes and some others as the people who proved that you could make it in the independents. But I think people forget that you did that first, years ahead of them. I remember

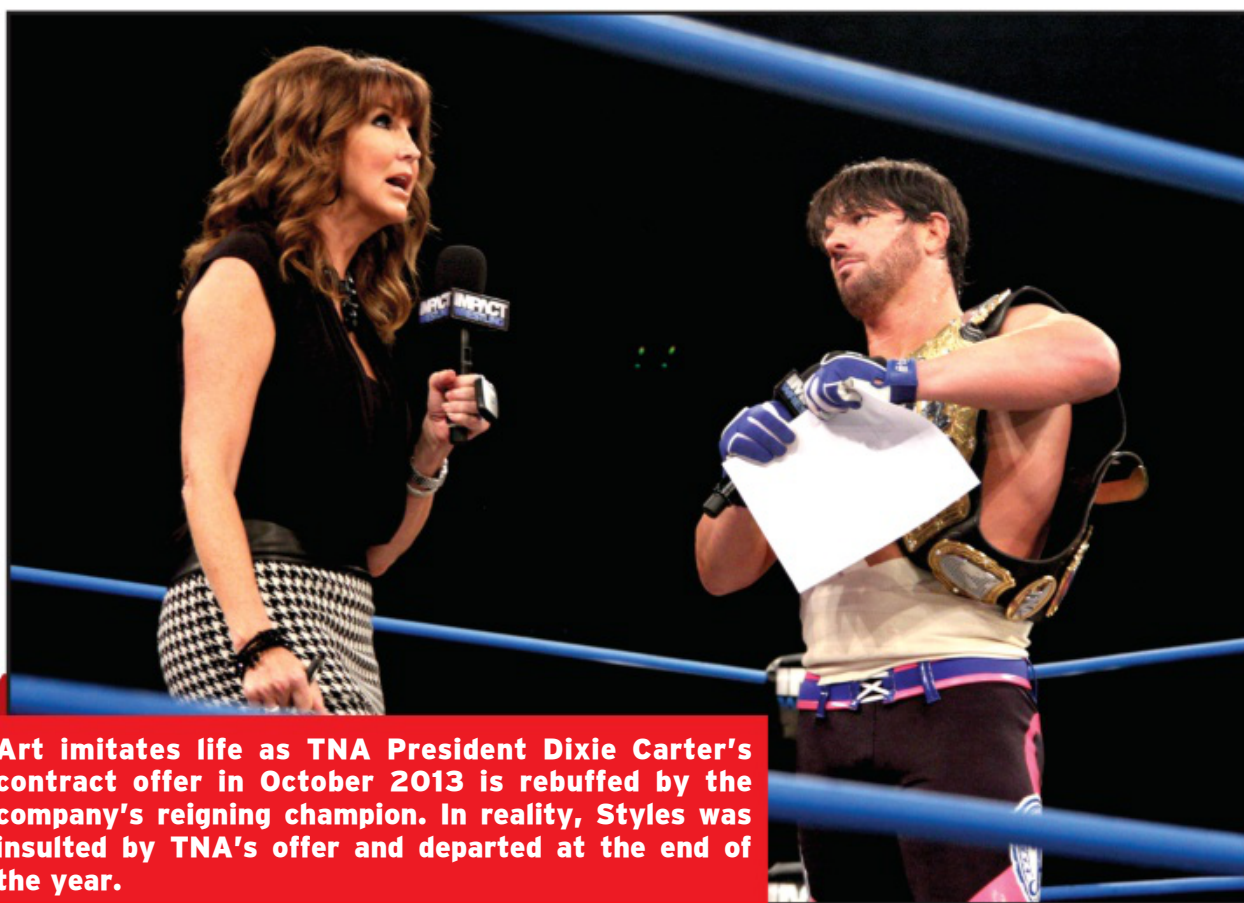
when you left TNA. Here's a guy who everybody thinks is one of the best in the world. Is he really just going to work some indy dates? How is he going to make a living? Was that scary for you—not being attached to a major promotion? I know it wasn't long before you were with New Japan, but there was some time there when you were just kind of floating.

Styles: I'll tell you what the biggest difference is between Cody and I. Cody has his wife that he has to support. At the time when I left TNA, I had three kids—and my wife, of course. And so, that's scary—when you don't know exactly where the money is going to come from and you've got people to take care of. You've got people depending on you. That's scary. I was afraid, but at the same time, I bet on myself. I thought that I was better than what they were offering me to stay at TNA. I didn't think it was right, what they had offered. In fact, I thought it was a little insulting because I worked so hard for that company. Basically, I was getting punished for their mistakes.

Castle: Was part of that fearing, or just believing, that WWE wasn't interested? You had obviously been on their radar for a long time. You joke about so many of the old TNA wrestlers being in WWE now, but the reality is that there was a long stretch there where it felt like WWE wouldn't touch anybody who was from TNA. So was that always the goal? Or, at some point, did you accept, "This is never going to happen."

Styles: Oh, I accepted that I would never see a WrestleMania. And I was okay with it. In fact, when TNA and I parted, when we left each other—when

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTHWORTH/TNA WRESTLING



Art imitates life as TNA President Dixie Carter's contract offer in October 2013 is rebuffed by the company's reigning champion. In reality, Styles was insulted by TNA's offer and departed at the end of the year.

Styles lost the IWGP title to Hiroshi Tanahashi in a 27-minute classic in Tokyo in October 2014. AJ traveled the world to prove he deserved to be a part of the conversation as to who was the best wrestler in the world.



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we got our divorce, if you will—I let WWE know and talked to someone and let them know that I didn't have a contract with them anymore. "It's over. It's done with." So they knew. And it seemed like there was a little bit of interest, but I guess not enough to follow through with. So that's when I went to Ring of Honor.

Castle: What was that like? Ring of Honor has run into some hard times, but they were riding high for a while, and I think you had a lot to do with helping put them back on the map. They were able to lay claim to someone who a lot of people at the time thought was one of the best in the world. Were you happy to go back there?

Styles: I was. I was also happy to go back there because I still had a lot of friends there, and they always treated me really well when I was there. I had so much respect for them, and that's still the same. I respect and love those guys in Ring of Honor and hope they continue to keep moving forward. You know, it's not easy in this business. But they've been around longer than TNA, or Impact Wrestling. Not many people realize that. So they've been through hard times before. And I don't know where they're at now, but I hope they're happy. Maybe they're not happy with where they are, but where they're going. But I enjoyed my time with Ring of Honor. There were a lot of great matches with guys I was able to get in the ring with.

Castle: Then, obviously, the second half of the decade was largely in WWE. Is it everything you dreamed it would be? Do you look back on the past four years as the most fulfilling of your career?

Styles: I would say so. It's different here, man. It's a beast. You don't realize how big this

WWE went all-in on Styles, forgoing the usual pathway through NXT and having him debut in the spotlight of the 2016 Royal Rumble. The crowd reaction reaffirmed the company's commitment to a man who was still very much in his prime after 18 years in the sport.



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After having resigned himself to the probability that he would never compete at WrestleMania, there Styles was, battling Chris Jericho in front of a record 101,763 fans at AT&T stadium at WM 32.

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company is and how powerful it is until you get here. It's all over the world. New Japan is mostly in Japan. Some of it is in the States. Maybe in England a little bit. AEW is in the States. Maybe a little bit in Japan, North America. But after that, it kind of fizzles out. WWE is so global, it's ridiculous. You can't comprehend how big it is. But it is everything that I thought it would be. And I'm happy to be here. I enjoy my time here. I feel like I've been here for years—more than just four.

Castle: There a reputation among a lot of great wrestlers, like yourself, that when you come to WWE, you have to kind of dumb it down some—that you don't get to put on the great performances or work the style that you did before you got here. But you've been able to have some of the best matches of your

career, if not the very best, in WWE, against all different kinds of wrestlers. You came right in working with Chris Jericho and John Cena and had these match-of-the-year, five-star matches. What was behind that? Is it just not the case that that exists, this reputation for WWE maybe holding back wrestlers from giving their all? Or was it just you being determined to give it your all?

Styles: I think, as I've gotten older I realized what's more important. You've got to sell. That means you can't do some crazy thing and come back like it never happened. I understand that there's a psychology that plays a huge part in what we do. That doesn't mean you can't do something cool. You've just got to make it make sense when you do it. And as far as dumbing it down, that may have been an

old-school thing that was said before. But these guys and girls can go. They can all go up here. Now, there may be some guys who haven't done the things that we've done on the independent scene, as far as moves and stuff like that, but that's just a matter of showing someone how to do it. So, I disagree with that nowadays. There are so many guys who have been on the indies. And, even from NXT to WWE, that psychology will change as you get older. But it makes sense to me that it changes. It's a different kind of audience from here to there. Again, I talk about little things. It's the little things that make the psychology work. And we can do whatever we want to do, as long as we tell you how it's supposed to be. I don't think that requires dumbing it down. I think it just means being smarter than the average worker or the average fan.

Castle: So you signed a new contract last year and I remember you saying on social media something to the effect that this would be your last contract, or at the very least, that you expected to finish your career in WWE. So, here, starting a new decade, now in your 40s, do you feel like you're kind of winding down?

Styles: I think it's one of these things where I really don't want to miss another game that one of my kids is playing in or an opportunity to spend time with my wife. There's a lot of that stuff happening. I've sacrificed a lot, and my family has as well, so that I can earn a living. The end goal, of course, is to retire and still be able to walk and run and do things with your kids and with your family. So, I'm just trying to find that happy medium where I'm not so banged up that I can't, but banged up enough that I know it's time to retire.

Castle: Do you think at the beginning of the next decade that you're still doing this? What are you doing in 2030?

Styles: In 2030? Wow. That means my daughter will be 15. What will I be doing? I hope that I'm watching whatever competition she's doing or game that she's playing—that I don't miss a thing. In 10 years, my son's going to be 24. Is he going to be getting married? There are all these kinds of things to look forward to. And I will not be in a ring competing, I can tell you that. No way.

Castle: Can you say that definitively? You see Triple H out there. You see the Undertaker—guys in their 50s.

Styles: I'm a different animal. I worry about when I can't be me anymore. I don't want to go to the point that people expect something that I just can't do anymore. I don't want to be that guy. They're expecting this guy, and I can't be that anymore. I don't want to do

that to them. The fans have been good to me for over a decade and I don't want to disappoint them. So, when that time comes, I'm just going to hang them up, and that will be the end of it.

Castle: Is there anything left for you to do this decade, if it is indeed your final decade in wrestling?

Styles: Sometimes you don't know what that next goal is or that next step is until you just kind of step on it and say, "Oh shoot, I think I want to do this." I'm not saying this, but sometimes it's like, "Oh, I think I want to act. I want to give that a shot." But I don't know what that is for me yet. I still want to be as good as I can be. I feel like I've accomplished a lot, but how big a star can I be here in the WWE? What can I do? So there are little things like that that I've got my eye on. We'll see where it leads.

Castle: Do you feel like the wrestler of the decade—like you

did have the best past 10 years of anybody in the business?

Styles: I'm sure there are many other people who did well. The only thing I can say is that I've been consistent for 10 years. I've been at the top of my game for 10 years and busting my tail for 10 years. So, at least I can say that. I never took it easy. Not a year off. From 2010 to 2020 I never was injured or had to take off. I was hurt, but not injured. I think maybe my longest time out was four weeks. I think I tore my hip labrum and that took me out a couple weeks. But that's the longest it's been.

Castle: The flip side of that is, has it worn on you? Could you have used a break? Are you feeling any burnout over not getting much of a break for 10 years?

Styles: I enjoy it. This is what I do. I feel like I need to earn that paycheck. I've got to be able to say that I earned it. It wasn't given to me. I earned that. □

Did AJ Styles belong in the "who's best" discussion? His Match of the Year victory over John Cena at SummerSlam 2016 made the answer a very definite "yes." Styles' runner-up for Wrestler of the Decade? John Cena.



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A full-page photograph of Tessa Blanchard, a professional wrestler, holding the Impact Wrestling World Championship belt. She is wearing a black and red wrestling singlet with a large diamond-shaped sequined patch on the chest and a silver studded vest. She has long dark hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a dark, textured grey.

HOW TESSA BLANCHARD TURNED PRESSURE INTO DIAMONDS & GOLD

Whether the feeling was real or imagined, Tessa Blanchard felt a burden to reach levels of greatness that her grandfather, father, and stepfather achieved. How did she deal with this pressure? By beating Sami Callihan and becoming the first woman to hold the top title in a major promotion.

TEXT BY JASON McVEIGH
PHOTOS BY BASIL MAHMUD/
IMPACT WRESTLING



HOW DOES A person deal with pressure? Not just any kind of pressure, but the pressure that comes with carrying the legacy of a name synonymous with greatness. The kind of pressure that comes with fulfilling the destiny that the man that raised you never got a chance to. The kind of pressure that comes when, at 24 years old, you find yourself as the face of not just an organization, but an entire movement. To know this kind of pressure is to know Tessa Blanchard.

The sun sinks below the Las Vegas skyline, and for the first time all day, the young woman with the dark hair and focused eyes can take a deep breath. The media scrum that has followed her since defeating Sami Callihan at Hard to Kill in January has been intense. Everywhere she goes people want to know how she feels about being the first woman in history to win a major promotion's heavyweight title. When posed the question, those focused eyes widen a little and a smile creeps in.

"It's so surreal for me still," Tessa says before trailing off. "When I first got into wrestling, I told myself that I wanted to make history: history that was unique to me, history that was unique to the business. And even though at the time I didn't really know what that was going to look like, I'm very happy with how it has unfolded."

As happy as she may be, however, the six-year journey that has taken Tessa Blanchard from trainee to champion has not been without its challenges, and when she talks about the late-night training sessions and 22-hour road trips she drove to work indy shows during her formative years in the ring, you get a sense that this is a woman who has never been afraid of hard work. And in talking about those early years, it is where we first hear her bring up the P word.



Blanchard kicks the spit out of Callihan, who makes the mistake of recklessly charging into his cornered challenger (above). Tessa knew she would have to launch attacks from unusual angles to help compensate for the champion's strength advantage (right).



"I have always put pressure on myself, ever since I was a little girl, whether it was in sports or in school, and when I started wrestling, that pressure intensified because then there was pressure to succeed and make my dad, my grandpa, and my stepdad proud of me and to also create my own legacy at the same time," said Tessa, referring in order to Tully Blanchard, Joe Blanchard, and Magnum TA. "I've always said that, sure, my surname might get me a foot in the door, but once I step between

those ropes, it doesn't do a thing for me. It's up to me to show I belong in there and that I can succeed on my own merits. So sure, there's pressure that comes along with that, but I use it to motivate me and make me a better athlete."

And right now, Impact Wrestling might not have a better all-around athlete. Tessa has wrestled everything from high-flying lucha libre-style matches to hardcore wars, and the bruises and scars that she carries are a testament to her willingness to fight anyone, anywhere. It is that attitude that saw her push intergender wrestling to the forefront of Impact.

"I know it's different. But I promise that if people give intergender wrestling a chance, they will see something amazing," Tessa says almost pleadingly. "And one of the coolest things to me is when people watch my matches and come away with a completely different outlook than they maybe had before. Intergender wrestling for me is so empowering, and I love showing that women can go out there and kill it against the men. I'm so grateful that Impact Wrestling gives its women the platform to do that."

Something else that platform has allowed Tessa Blanchard to do is



One question that Blanchard would have to answer is how she'd be able to recover from Callihan's hard blows (above). She was hurt several times throughout the bout (right), but always summoned the will to carry on.



touch people. Spend a day with her in any town, and at some point you are likely to find young girls nervously approaching the champion to tell her how her matches have inspired them in some way in their own lives.

“That makes me so happy,” Tessa explains, tears coming to her eyes. “I hear so many stories from young girls who tell me that I have in some way inspired or empowered them. To think that what I’m doing can have that kind of impact on someone is not something I take lightly. And it’s not just me, our whole Knockouts locker room is an inspiration. Gail Kim was fighting to create a women’s revolution long before that was even a phrase, and to play a part in that is cool. I will always be proud to be a part of that Knockouts locker room.”

Proud as she may be to be a Knockout, these days Blanchard’s main challengers come from the men’s locker room, and the eight-month war she waged against Sami Callihan and oVe is part of that journey, losses included. That journey may be the reason why she was able to finally overcome the odds at Hard to Kill and defeat Callihan, and in the process, shatter a glass ceiling that has existed in wrestling since wrestling has existed. With the history that she has made already at such a young age, the biggest question is: What’s next?

“People ask me that all the time,” Tessa says, looking across the hotel room to where her title belt sits. “When I won the Knockouts championship, they asked me what’s next? When I had the first-ever Intergender main event on a PPV, they asked me what’s next? When I won the World title, they asked me what’s next? And my answer is that there will always be something to work towards. I want to be a fighting champion; I want to wrestle the best and I want to beat the best. I want to be undeniable.”

Tomorrow morning there will be an early wake-up call with more media appearances scheduled, followed by a busy week of Impact wrestling TV



When Tessa turns thumbs down (above) and executes the Buzzsaw DTD (below), it is all over for Callihan. What a night for Blanchard and, indeed, the entire female gender!

tapings and, on the horizon, more title defenses. Such is the life of the face of a major promotion. There might even be more history to be made. These things all come with pressure—of course they do—but it’s nothing compared to the pressure that this third-generation star has placed on herself from a very young age.

So how does a person deal with pressure? Well, if you’re Tessa Blanchard, you take that pressure and you use it to make a diamond, and right now, she might be the brightest diamond in all of wrestling. □

“TOMORROW IS NEVER PROMISED”

HOW WWE SAVED DANA BROOKE'S LIFE



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANA BROOKE

Dana Brooke and Dallas McCarver were madly in love and enjoying life. When Dallas unexpectedly passed away after suffering a heart attack, Dana received the support she needed from her WWE family.

Dana Brooke thought she had lost everything when the love of her life passed away. Two years later, his memory has inspired Dana to pursue her WWE dream with a greater sense of purpose

TEXT BY HARRY BURKETT

DANA BROOKE WILL never forget August 21, 2017—the last time she would speak to her boyfriend, famed bodybuilder Dallas McCarver, who would pass away only a couple of hours later in their Florida home. It was the night after SummerSlam, and Brooke was away at *Monday Night Raw* at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York.

“We made a point to talk every Monday night,” recalled Brooke. “I’d ask, ‘How did I look on TV?’ And he’d say, ‘You’re beautiful.’ In our last conversation, he said he’d pick me up from the airport on Tuesday morning and that he’d call me before going to bed. And as usual, he said, ‘I love you.’”

“The lesson I’ve taken from this is simple: Tomorrow is never promised.”

Once upon a time, it seemed Dana and Dallas would share an abundance of tomorrows full of promise.

McCarver and Ashley Sebera, who would later become known as Dana Brooke in WWE, met through their work in physical conditioning. McCarver was a top-ranked bodybuilder who would compete in the Arnold Classic and place eighth in the 2016 Mr. Olympia competition, while Sebera earned her way into the Fitness International at the 2015 Arnold Sports Festival. McCarver was a few years younger than Sebera, and she thought of him as sort of a kid brother.

They supported each other and became good friends. McCarver shared many of his quirky dating stories, relating how difficult it was to explain to a girl why he couldn’t eat cake for dessert but would later go

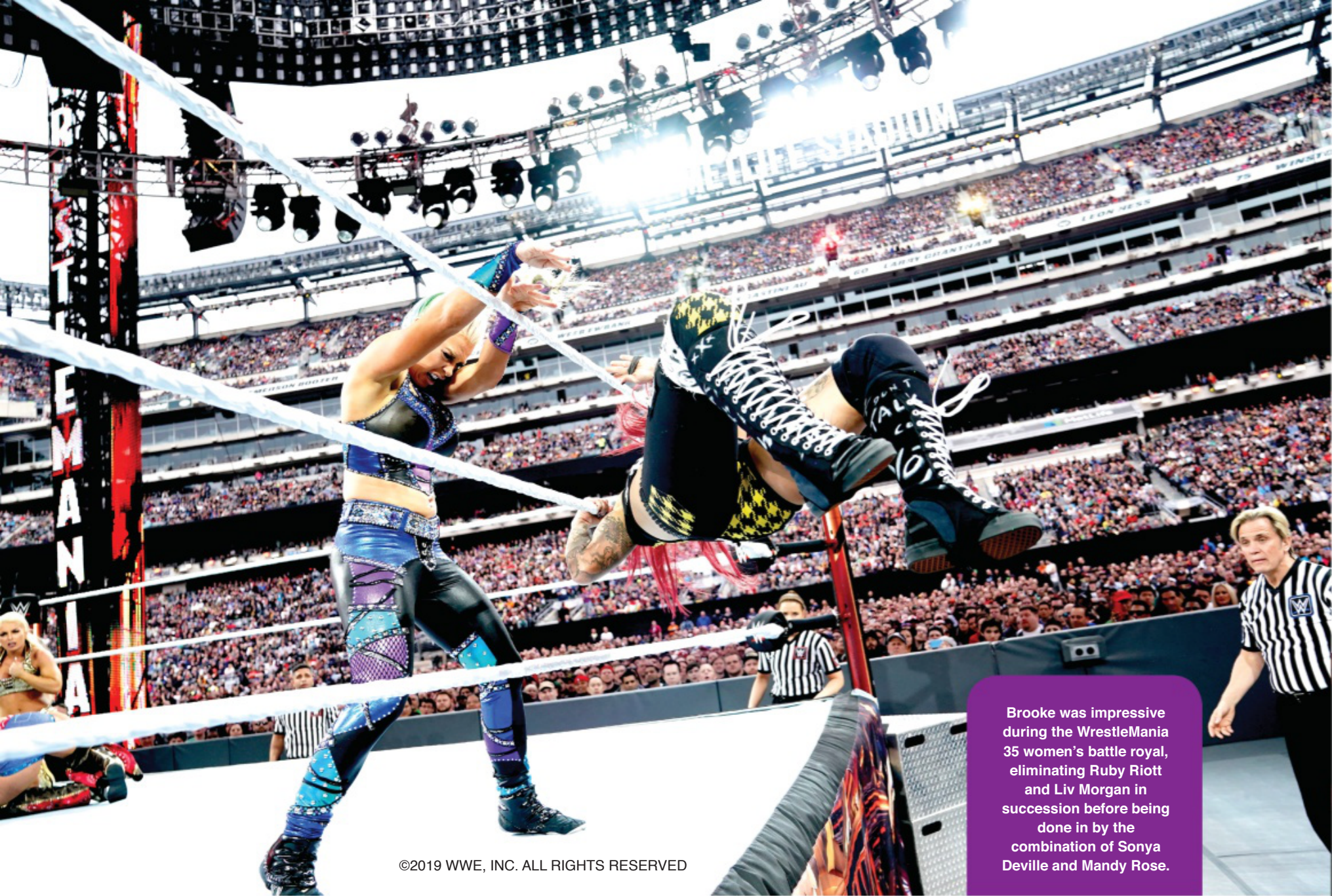


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Less than a week after her boyfriend's death, Brooke was back in the ring, beating Alicia Fox during a taping of *Main Event* (above). Dana leaned on her close friend Natalya (double-teaming Naomi, right), just as Natalya leaned on her after the passing of her dad, Jim Neidhart.



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Brooke was impressive during the WrestleMania 35 women's battle royal, eliminating Ruby Riott and Liv Morgan in succession before being done in by the combination of Sonya Deville and Mandy Rose.

out and eat a box full of donuts. They didn't understand his dietary needs, his exercise regimen, or the lifestyle of a man who had to travel the world to make a living.

Brooke, because of her fitness background and her blossoming WWE career, understood what McCarver was going through. She knew about the constant training necessary to be a wrestler, the challenge to find ways to work out while on the road, and the desire to hit the gym on her days off. Dana understood Dallas because they were so much alike.

"After a while, it was like, what are we doing? We shared so much in common and realized we should be together. He'd bring out this genuine side of me. I could just be Ashley. I'd always heard your partner should also be your best friend, someone who brings out your best qualities and loves your imperfections as well. He did that for me."

Brooke and McCarver both lived in Florida, but they were 200 miles apart. McCarver met up with Brooke after a *Raw* in Uniondale, New York, and persuaded her to leave Orlando and join him in Boca Raton.

"I was extremely nervous," said Brooke. "I wanted to live closer to the water. I'm so old-fashioned, though, I had never lived with a guy.

My parents raised me the right way. But I moved down there and fell in love with it. He set me up with all his connections: a private gym, a chiropractor, a massage therapist, places to get facials and vitamin treatments—everything. He was like a living angel to me."

They soon became known as a literal power couple, in the worlds of bodybuilding and wrestling. Brooke took the greatest pride in their interactions with children and their potential in being positive influences. "Children looked up to him as a larger-than-life character, and me as this superhero. This happened in our everyday life. It was such a good balance: He let me do my job, and I let him do his job. We had our arguments like anyone else. But I thought it was perfect. I couldn't see our story ending."

Of course, the story ended tragically when a friend found McCarver unresponsive just after midnight on August 22, 2017. The medical examiner's report concluded the 26-year-old had died from a heart attack, with use of steroid and non-steroid hormones as contributing factors. There was an outpouring of reactions from the bodybuilding world, where he had gained a reputation for his quick smile and never-give-up attitude.

Yet Brooke's instinct was not to go home and hide. She relied on all of her support systems: her family, Dallas' family, and her WWE family.

Brooke wasn't scheduled for any live events immediately after the August 21 *Raw*, so she had at least that brief period to deal with her grief and help the McCarver family make funeral arrangements. The next edition of *Raw* was set for the FedEx Forum in Memphis, and it just so happened that the McCarver family lives in Tennessee.

The WWE's powers-that-be—including Vince McMahon, Stephanie McMahon, and Triple H—encouraged Brooke to take off all the time she needed. Deep down, Brooke knew this was the moment she needed her WWE peers the most. Brooke insisted on being at the August 28 *Raw*,

and she even scored a pinfall win over Alicia Fox in a match taped for *WWE Main Event*. Her parents, as well as Dallas' mother and sister, were there to offer encouragement, along with all of her WWE family.

"The women's locker room is a sisterhood—and they knew Dallas, our love and our tiffs," said Brooke. "I remember driving with Emma, Tenille Dashwood, while I was dating Dallas and saying, 'I can't believe he did this or that ...' Most of all, they knew how much we loved each other. Two weeks after his passing, I went to pack up my stuff and Dallas' stuff, and I remember sitting next to the spot where he was found. I couldn't pick myself up. All that kept me going was WWE and the family we had created there. Bayley was texting me and Nattie [Neidhart] was texting me. Soon after that,

Nattie lost her father, and I felt like it was my turn to lend out a hand and try to reach out to her. It was hard for Nattie to even talk about it, just as I couldn't talk about it two years ago."

Brooke admits that she's only had two great passions: her love for Dallas and her love of the wrestling business. She's grateful that her WWE career allows her to live out Dallas' legacy, particularly through WWE's outreach events.

"Dallas didn't have an easy life growing up, and he serves as my inspiration during WWE's anti-bullying events, during the UNICEF Kid Power events, and I remember him being so proud of his grandfather being in the military. I think of that during Tribute to the Troops and all our veterans events. His death and after-passing has made me a better person and motivates me more than ever."

This is evident when Dana points to the sky during her ring entrances. She's channeling Dallas at that moment and embracing the life she now must live. □



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Brooke, aggressively attacking Bayley, is getting closer and closer to her goal of winning a WWE championship. Even after six years with the company, no one doubts that she has the talent and resolve to make it to the top.

2025

UNDER

THE YOUNG WRESTLERS WHO WILL LEAD THE SPORT INTO THE FUTURE

THERE MAY OR may not be a Luca Doncic, Ronald Acuna Jr., or Patrick Mahomes in this group, but there are pro wrestlers who have yet to reach the quarter-century mark that show the promise to lead their sport through this decade and beyond. In no particular order, we present the best of the youngest generation of potential wrestling superstars.

TEXT BY JAKE JOYCE

HIRAI KAWATO (23)

Deep in the heart of Mexico, Kawato is currently fulfilling his excursion duties within the world's oldest wrestling promotion, CMLL. A product of the NJPW Dojo, Kawato was quick to win the CMLL light-weight title, defeating Audaz in a match to win the vacant championship. Unfortunately, Kawato was forced to relinquish the title due to a knee injury, and upon his return would relinquish his hair per the stipulations of a match with Dulce Gardenia. NJPW fans long for his return to Japan.

PHOTO BY MIGUEL MUNOZ



WHEELER YUTA (23)

YUTA has been actively paying his dues in many of the top indies. Getting his start with Combat Zone Wrestling, YUTA has also spent time in Game Changer Wrestling, CHIKARA, EVOLVE, and MLW. His current stint in Beyond Wrestling has led to YUTA becoming quite the fan favorite.



PHOTO BY SCOTT FINKELSTEIN

Although YUTA is a CZW Dojo alumnus, a school known for creating death-match wrestlers, he has embraced a much more technical style, mirroring the classic junior heavyweight techniques of Japan.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW



MARKO STUNT (23)

Stunt has enjoyed sporadic success as a member of Jurassic Express, but just being on the AEW roster—at 5'2" and 120 pounds—is a big deal. Stunt has held gold in several popular companies, including his time spent as Southern Underground Pro Bonestorm champion. As a high-flyer, Stunt incorporates a rather unique lucha style, utilizing a plethora of different hurricanranas and top-rope armdrags to disorient his opponents, and then tangle them up for a flash pin.

MYRON REED (22)

The Louisville, Kentucky, native is the current MLW middleweight champion, having beaten veteran Teddy Hart for the title last September. Well traveled within the indy circuit, Reed has claimed tag team gold with independent wrestling veterans AR Fox and Sugar Dunkerton in AAW and IWA-MS, respectively. Always one to speak his mind, Reed is a member of the "Injustice" stable in MLW along with Kotto Brazil and Jordan Oliver.

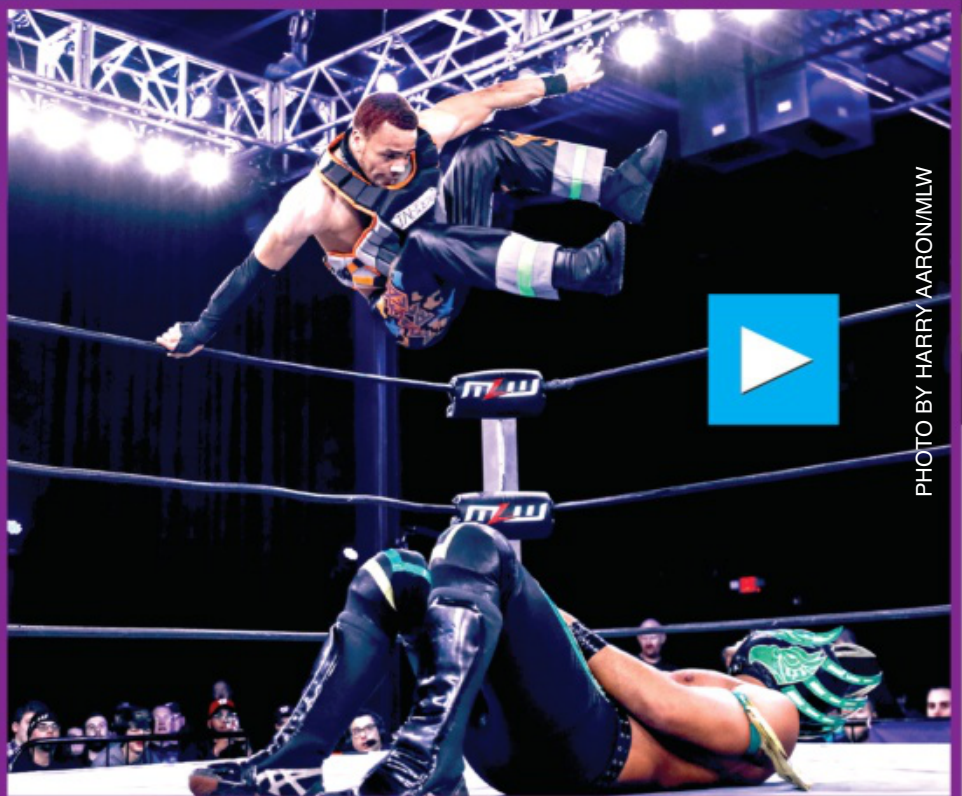


PHOTO BY HARRY AARON/MLW

PHOTO COURTESY OF CZW



JORDAN OLIVER (20)

A former CZW Wired champion, Oliver was merely three days shy of breaking the 429-day reign record, which is currently held by Drew Gulak. A graduate of the CZW Dojo, Oliver has utilized a high-flying move set, relying on his springboard cutter to finish off his opponents.

ISIAH KASSIDY (22)

One-half of the immensely popular Private Party, Kassidy has been fine-tuning his tag team technique throughout his four years in the sport. Along with his partner Marq Quen, Kassidy has held tag team gold in House of Glory and Game Changer Wrestling. The high-flyers upset The Lucha Bros. in the AEW tag team tournament before losing to SoCal Uncensored in the final.

PHOTO BY SCOTT LESH/AEW

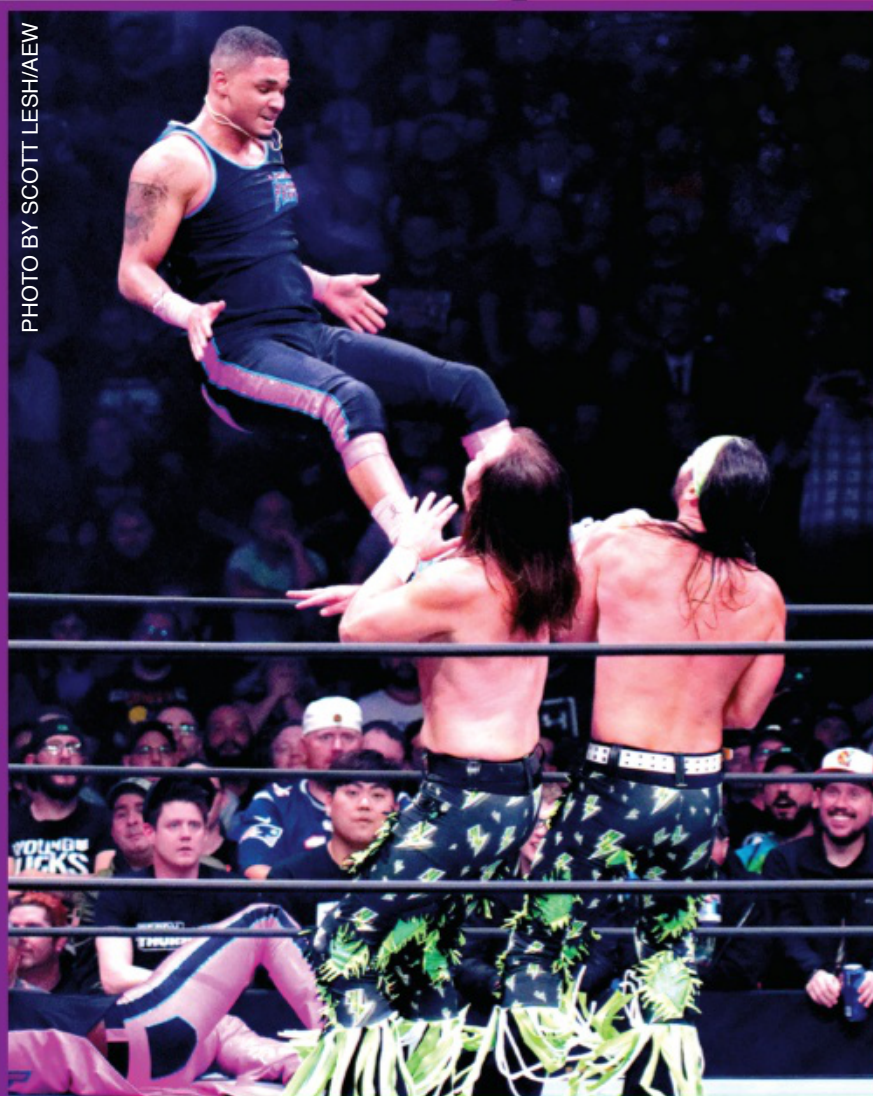


PHOTO COURTESY OF CZW



LEYLA HIRSCH (23)

With an impressive amateur background, Hirsch burst onto the professional scene back in 2017. Having trained at the Combat Zone Wrestling Dojo, Hirsch made her debut at the CZW Dojo Wars: Super Show 4. She had a very strong start to 2020, wrestling in Japan's STARDOM and becoming a staple in Massachusetts-based Beyond, teaming with Wheeler YUTA as "Legit Yoots."

SHOTA UMINO (22)

Affectionately dubbed "Shooter" by his mentor Jon Moxley, Umino has recently started his Young Lion excursion by shipping off to England, competing in Revolution Pro Wrestling. A graduate of the New Japan Dojo, Umino is the son of esteemed NJPW referee Red Shoes Umino. Having recently shed the Young Lion regalia of black trunks and boots, Umino has adopted a much more glamorous style, with some comparing him to a young Hiroshi Tanahashi.

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PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW



JAMIE HAYTER (24)

With a strong showing on an episode of AEW's *Dynamite*, Hayter was able to capture the attention of a broader American audience. A mainstay in Japan's STARDOM promotion, 2019 saw Hayter competing in the annual 5STAR Grand Prix tournament. Hayter captured the RevPro Undisputed British Women's championship and is currently the EVE International champion.

PHOTO BY SCOTT LESH/AEW



The son of late actor Luke Perry, Jungle Boy has spent an extensive amount of time working the American independent circuit. However, it has been his recent national television exposure through AEW that has turned him into a household name among wrestling fans. His career high was taking AEW World champion Chris Jericho to a 10-minute draw in a non-title match on *Dynamite*.

JUNGLE BOY (22)

PHOTO BY SCOTT LESH/AEW



KRIS STATLANDER (24)

Statlander had such an impressive 2019, she was named both IWTW Breakout Star of the Year and Independent Wrestler of the Year. On top of holding the IWTW Independent Wrestling championship, Statlander found herself taking home the AAW Women's championship at the end of December. Her 2020 only looks better, as Statlander now competes atop the women's division in All Elite Wrestling.

ACE AUSTIN (22)

When one thinks “magician-turned-wrestler,” it’s easy to quickly draw a comparison to the former WWF wrestler Phantasio. However, Austin has broken down this stereotype, proving to be more than a one-trick-pony. The current Impact X division champion, Austin has taken on all comers, even going as far to defend the title on the independent circuit.



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PHOTO BY ANDREA KELLAWAY/IMPACT WRESTLING

AUSTIN THEORY (22)

After dominating indy wrestling, the former WVN and EVOLVE champion was signed by WWE to wrestle for NXT. After a slow start, Theory turned the tide with an impressive 16:47 loss to then-North American champion Roderick Strong at Brooklyn’s Barclays Center. Nearing press time, he had beaten six different NXT opponents in succession.

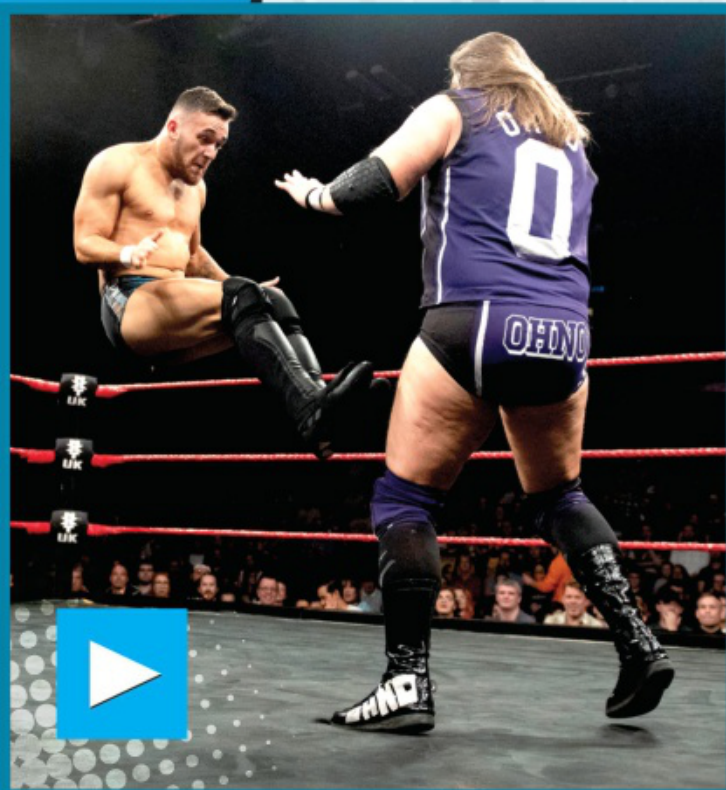
JORDYNNE GRACE (23)

Debuting in 2012, Grace has raced around the world and back, nabbing herself a PROGRESS Women’s championship reign in the process. No stranger to intergender matches, Grace holds the honor of being the only woman to hold the Black Label Pro heavyweight championship, beating “Filthy” Tom Lawlor back in 2018. Grace scored her biggest victory to date in January, beating Taya Valkyrie for the Impact Wrestling Knockouts title.



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

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A-KID (22)

Despite having one of the most un-Googleable names imaginable, the Spaniard has been tearing it up on the independent scene for nearly eight years. Scored a five-star match from the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter* back in 2018 with a win over Zack Sabre Jr., A-Kid became one of the hottest free agents in wrestling. This buzz would eventually grant him a contract with WWE, wrestling for their NXT U.K. brand.

New Zealand's Storm has made her mark all over the world, collecting accolades wherever she goes. Her devotion to the art of wrestling has led her to top women's gold in PROGRESS, STARDOM, wXw, and most recently, the NXT U.K. Women's championship. Splits her time between NXT and its U.K. equivalent. It would be no surprise to see the number 13-ranked wrestler in the *PWI* "Women's 100" competing for either of WWE Women's championships one day soon.



TONI STORM (24)

PHOTO BY SCOTT FINKELSTEIN



COLBY CORINO (23)

The son of "The King Of Old School," Steve Corino, Colby turned his life around after being arrested in 2016 for drug possession. Rededicating himself to his craft, resulting in a healthy career on the independent circuit. Competes in GCW, EVOLVE, and ROH. Corino's official record dates back to a tag match with his dad in 2001, which would have left him as the sole entry on a list consisting of "The Best Wrestlers Under Age Six."

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

DARBY ALLIN (23)

Making sacrifices to find success in professional wrestling is a trope as old as the sport itself. Allin's story follows the lore to a T. Living in his car, Allin began making waves in EVOLVE back in 2016, and continued to expand his resume on the indy scene, competing with Defy, PWG, MLW, and NEW, where he is the reigning heavyweight champion. AEW has brought the competitor to a national audience that fully appreciates his daredevil style.

PHOTO BY BRUNO SILVEIRA/RING OF HONOR



DRAGON LEE (24)

With over 700 matches already under his belt, Dragon Lee (also known as Ryu Lee in NJPW) has an impressive resume for someone so young. The 2014 *Wrestling Observer* Rookie of the Year is the current ROH TV champion. He has also held the IWGP junior heavyweight championship and both the CMLL welterweight and lightweight titles, the latter for 1,197 days.



PHOTO BY SCOTT LESH/AEW

Australia's Ripley recently became the only woman to have held both the NXT and the NXT U.K. Women's championships. The 5'8", 137-pounder adopted a more aggressive style for her second Mae Young Classic appearance. She established her presence by advancing to the semifinals and then put it all together, ending Shayna Baszler's 416-day NXT title reign in December. Her future is extremely bright.

RHEA RIPLEY (23)



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TYLER BATE (23)

When Bate first came to the attention of WWE fans back in 2017, it was hard for many to believe that the man they were watching compete was merely 19 years old, with five years of experience already! Bate would go on to become the first WWE U.K. champion, winning the title's initial tournament. Bate has recently been finding success with his Moustache Mountain partner Trent Seven as they currently hold the Fight Club: Pro tag title.



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD/IMPACT WRESTLING



TESSA BLANCHARD (24)

At Impact Wrestling's Hard To Kill, third-generation star Blanchard became the first woman to hold the top title of any major wrestling company, beating Sami Callihan to conclude a path to a dream that had been crafted several months prior. At the same time, she's been lauded for her unprecedented success, she's faced heavy criticism on social media from several of her peers for bullying and one claim of a racially motivated incident, which she vehemently denies.

KAITO KIYOMIYA (23)

Kiyomiya's GHC heavyweight title reign of 384 days that ended in December is eclipsed in NOAH history only by Kenta Kobashi, Takashi Sugiura, and Mitsuharu Misawa—not bad company for a four-year pro. During his reign, Kiyomiya held victories over Sugiura and Naomichi Marufuji. He won the Tokyo Sports Fighting Spirit award in 2018 and 2019—a strong indicator that he will be wearing championship gold again very soon.



PHOTO BY TABERCIL PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY SCOTT LESH/AEW



MJF (24)

Prior to his critically acclaimed run with AEW, Maxwell Jacob Friedman had a decorated past as an independent wrestler. On top of being a former CZW heavyweight champion, MJF was also the inaugural MLW middleweight champion. MJF is currently in possession of the Dynamite Diamond Ring, beating Hangman Page for the honor. It's only a matter of time until this success translates into an AEW championship run.

RIHO (23)

Debuting in 2006 at the age of (get this!) nine, Riho is truly a grizzled veteran. Trained by Emi Sakura at the Ice Ribbon dojo, Riho has held gold in promotions such as the Ice Ribbon and Gatoch Move. Riho overcame a huge size advantage to defeat Nyla Rose for the inaugural AEW Women's title last October, and among her title defenses was a victory over her teacher, Sakura, in November. She also continues to compete in her home country for STARDOM.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW



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THE TERRIFIC

2010s

HONORING THE BEST OF THE DECADE

SECTION COMPILED BY **HARRY BURKETT**

TEN YEARS AGO, we were talking about *Twilight*, BlackBerries, and Lady Gaga's "Poker Face." Now that the year 2020 is here, we'll take one final look at the decade that brought us Marvel Comics movies, Pokémon Go, and Billie Eilish's "Bad Guy."

What did the decade mean to professional wrestling? We entered another boon period by the end of the 2010s, thanks to online streaming giving fans access to wrestling from around the globe at low cost. Fans became familiar with the WWE Network, ROH Honor Club, *Impact Wrestling* on Twitch, and *NWA Powerrr* on YouTube. Instagram and Twitter were dominant, with wrestlers reaching out directly to their fans and stating exactly what was on their minds at any time. Sometimes that worked out, sometimes it didn't.

Enterprising wrestlers discovered they could enjoy lucrative careers outside WWE by harnessing social media for marketing, merchandising, and growing their brands. AJ Styles and The Young Bucks led the way, inspiring Cody Rhodes and helping to create the environment for All Elite Wrestling.

New Japan landed its own show on AXS-TV, co-promoted the G1 Supercard at Madison Square Garden with Ring of Honor, and established a United States championship, indicating how small the world had become in the 2010s.

WWE remained the powerhouse, leading not only wrestling, but also the entire media and entertainment industries in many areas. In addition to live events,

WWE dominated social media, cable television, and, as of 2019, network television, thanks to its billion-dollar deal with Fox. And WWE would boast three thriving brands by the late-2010s: Raw, Smackdown, and NXT.

The "Women's Evolution" was a huge part of the story, too. Female wrestlers permeated every aspect of the industry, including WWE, AEW, Impact Wrestling, Ring of Honor, and the independent scene. With *WOW: Women Of Wrestling*, they had their own program on AXS-TV. Women were also headlining pay-per-views, most notably WrestleMania 35.

In this special section, we recognize the talented superstars who made wrestling worth watching last decade. Back in the February 2020 issue, we asked our readers to vote for the best of the decade in eight categories. Past winners of the top prize, Wrestler of the Decade, include Ric Flair (1980s) and Triple H (2000s). Those awards were chosen by us; these were chosen by you.

Some of the results may surprise you, but, in the final analysis, all were well deserved. As you'll see from our awards, the 2010s was the decade of John Cena, Roman Reigns, Brock Lesnar, AJ Styles, Daniel Bryan, Cody Rhodes, The Young Bucks, CM Punk, The New Day, Charlotte Flair, Becky Lynch, Kenny Omega, and Kazuchika Okada.

We're already looking forward to our next "Decade In Review"—and hoping that hipster beards go out of style by 2030.

INSPIRATIONAL WRESTLER OF THE DECADE

DANIEL BRYAN'S THIRD attempt at WWE stardom occurred at SummerSlam 2010 when he was announced as a last-minute member of Team WWE in an elimination match against Team Nexus. By year's end, he had defeated arch-rival The Miz for his first title in WWE, the U.S. championship. The World heavyweight and WWE tag team titles were to follow.

By 2013, however, it was obvious there were no long-term plans for Bryan. Yet a groundswell of support from the WWE Universe wouldn't be denied. WWE was besieged by complaints on social media and the vocal support for Bryan at live events was deafening. Then-WWE champ John Cena made the save, handpicking Bryan as his opponent at that year's SummerSlam, where Bryan defeated Cena for his first WWE title.

It didn't last. Within moments, The Authority engineered Randy Orton cashing in his Money in the Bank briefcase and pinning Bryan for the title. Similarly, when Bryan regained the belt from Orton at Night of Champions, The Authority claimed Bryan benefited from a fast count and stripped him of the title the following night. Finally, at WrestleMania 30, the "Yes Movement" reached its apex, as Bryan beat Batista and defending champ Orton for his third WWE title.

Untimely injuries stalled Bryan's momentum, and CTE concerns forced him to retire in February 2016. Bryan bided his time for two years, serving as Smackdown general manager. Then—quite unexpectedly—CTE specialists cleared Bryan to wrestle again. He used an uncharacteristic low blow to AJ Styles to score a fourth WWE title in late-2018, but a falling-out with Erick Rowan and a feud with Bray Wyatt made the "New" Daniel Bryan improve his attitude—and fans were again chanting "Yes!" heading into 2020.

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Bayley, Jerry Lawler, AJ Lee, Becky Lynch, Jon Moxley, Kat-suyori Shibata

34%

13%



PHOTO BY MATT ROBERTS

JOHN CENA

Through both his triumphs and adversities, Cena has made us proud. Remember how Cena returned from a torn triceps in only two months back in 2013? What about his work with Make-A-Wish and his commitment to the troops? Now he's remaining loyal to WWE while flourishing as a mainstream movie star. The wrestling world is blessed to have such an ambassador.

12%

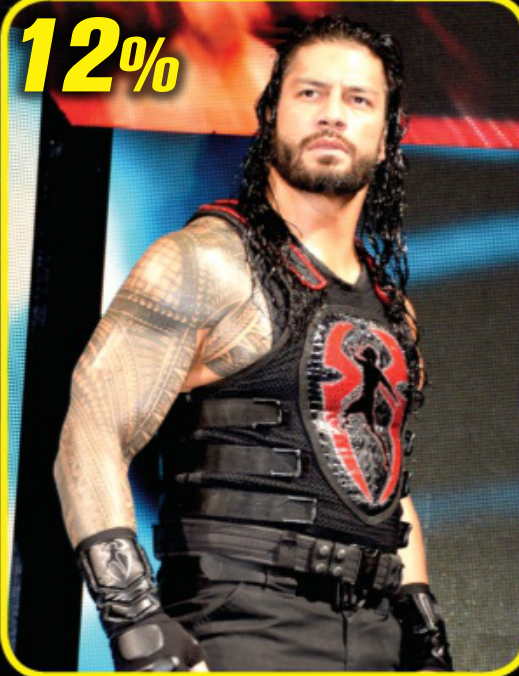


PHOTO BY STU SAKS

ROMAN REIGNS

As late as 2018, Reigns—a superstar often labeled as over-pushed and over-hyped—would have never been considered for Inspirational Wrestler of the Decade. But it was Reigns who reminded us of the fragility of life during his four-month hiatus from wrestling to battle leukemia. Since his gutsy return at WrestleMania 35, Reigns has inspired many fans to reconsider their hasty judgment of the "Big Dog."

7%

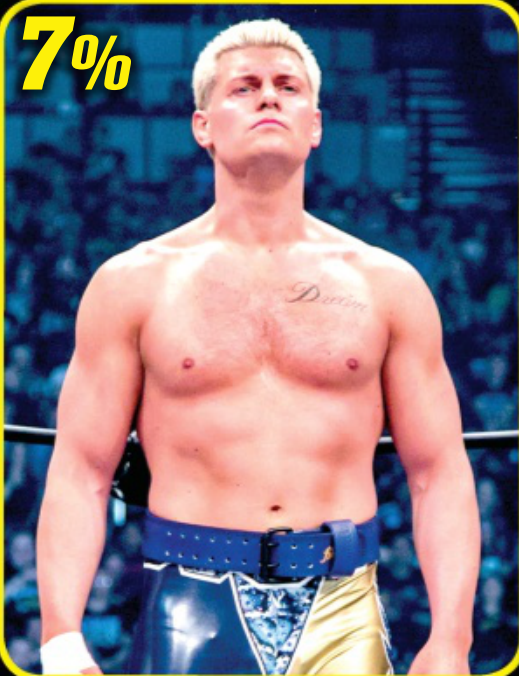


PHOTO BY JAMES MUSSELWHITE/AEW

CODY RHODES

Cody left the financial security of WWE in 2016—only months after the death of his father, Dusty Rhodes—and rebuilt his reputation through a list of top-notch opponents in Impact Wrestling, ROH, New Japan, and several other promotions. Fate united him with The Young Bucks, a collaboration that led to The Elite and AEW and an entirely new landscape. Cody proved one thing: A man who believes in himself can change the world.

PHOTO BY JOHN SMOLEK



INSPIRATIONAL WRESTLER
OF THE DECADE

**DANIEL
BRYAN**

34%

MOST POPULAR WRESTLER OF THE DECADE

THE 16-TIME WORLD champion didn't run away with this distinction; in fact, he edged out Daniel Bryan by only a few tenths of a percentage point. But consider this staggering fact: Cena has repeated as Most Popular Wrestler of the Decade, receiving the honor in the 2000s *and* the 2010s.

The most popular star over the past 20 years? Quite an achievement.

While the 2000s saw the rise and championship zenith of Cena, the 2010s saw more title reigns and Cena's gradual rise to legendary status, alongside Bruno Sammartino, Hulk Hogan, Steve Austin, and The Rock.

One can make the argument that the first part of the 21st century was the era of Cena.

Let's focus on the year 2012: Cena won his fourth Most Popular Wrestler of the Year award, surpassing Hulk Hogan's three Most Popular awards and tying Sting for the all-time record. Even then, however, we had to acknowledge the nearly 50-50 ratio of cheers to boos at live events—at a time when Cena remained a sell-out headliner and his merchandising sales dwarfed everyone else's.

The intensity of his popularity among the younger and female demographics, coupled with his boundless popularity beyond wrestling, fostered resentment among older, diehard fans. It wasn't an exact parallel to the anti-Roman Reigns phenomenon that would come later. Fans booed Reigns because they didn't think he deserved his mega-push. Fans booed Cena because they enjoyed doing so. Cena had nothing left to prove, and some wanted him to stop trying to prove it.

And the crowd reaction these days? It's more like, "Welcome home, John."

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: The Bullet Club, Becky Lynch, The New Day, Roman Reigns

40%

20%

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO



DANIEL BRYAN

The Washington State native's brand of popularity was different from Cena's. While Cena's approval derived from his charismatic superstar aura and his ability to deliver in big matches, Bryan was embraced as an underdog unfairly denied his rightful place in WWE. The scene at WrestleMania 30, where a stadium of fans were chanting "Yes!" in unison, indicated that Bryan—at his hottest—was more popular than Cena.

10%

PHOTO BY MARVIN ATWELL/RING OF HONOR

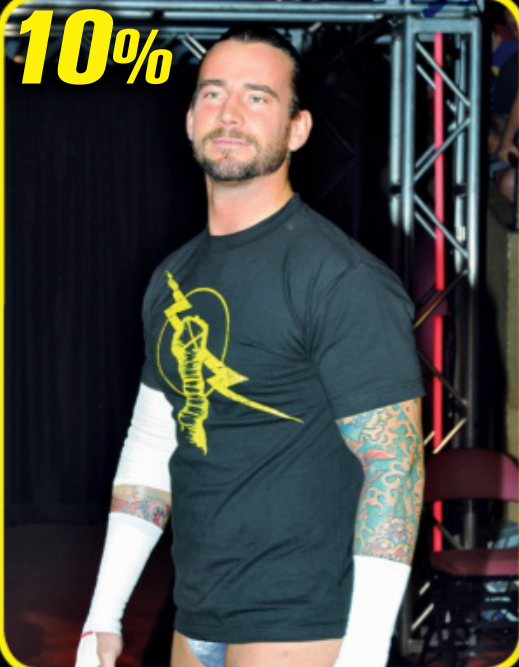


AJ STYLES

Styles won our Most Popular Wrestler of the Year awards in 2017 and 2018, coinciding with his dominant runs as WWE and U.S. champion on *Smackdown*. Styles was one of the industry's most popular stars while in TNA earlier in the decade, but that doesn't compare to his mainstream exposure after signing with WWE in 2016. AJ Styles on the cover of WWE 2K19? The gamer in AJ had to view that as a personal high.

10%

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO



CM PUNK

Punk shared the same story as Bryan and Styles: smaller stars with dynamic wrestling styles who excelled on the indy scene years before arriving in WWE. Highlights from the Punk era include his infamous "pipe-bomb" promo, his 434-day WWE title reign between 2011 and 2013, and his terrific matches with John Cena. Punk's determination to remain true to himself continues to be a major part of his appeal.



*MOST POPULAR WRESTLER
OF THE DECADE*

**JOHN
CENA**

20%

MOST HATED WRESTLER OF THE DECADE

FANS HAVE ARRIVED at a consensus about Brock Lesnar: They respect him as an athlete, but hate him as a champion. And unfortunately for the WWE Universe, Lesnar has been a champion for most of the past half-decade.

PWI recognized this phenomenon as early as 2014 when Lesnar graced the cover with this headline: “How To Win Wrestler Of The Year In 61:49.” But we were still embracing the “less is more” philosophy, commending Lesnar for securing the Wrestler of the Year Award with only four matches: steamrolling The Big Show at The Royal Rumble, ending The Undertaker’s streak at WrestleMania 30, humiliating John Cena with 15 consecutive suplexes en route to winning the WWE title at SummerSlam, and retaining against Cena at Night of Champions.

Consider Lesnar’s record-setting 504-day Universal title reign in 2017-18: Lesnar made only 17 title defenses, with nine of them occurring at unadvertised house shows. He took smug delight in doing as little as possible to remain champion.

The Raw brand has suffered most. With its ratings plummeting, Lesnar rarely appeared on WWE’s flagship program and never defended the Universal title on the show. Lesnar eventually dropped the red strap to Seth Rollins, but enhanced his villainy with his heinous attack on Rey Mysterio and son Dominik.

Raw gained a brief reprieve when Lesnar trounced Kofi Kingston for the WWE title in only eight seconds at the Fox premiere of *Smackdown*. But then, citing his desire to get his hands on Mysterio, Lesnar jumped back to Raw, where he would resume his reign as an absentee titleholder. How much longer will this continue?

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Alexa Bliss, Daniel Bryan, Shane McMahon, The Miz, Randy Orton, CM Punk, Triple H

29%

PHOTO BY THEO WARGO/NBC UNIVERSAL

13%



THE AUTHORITY

Not satisfied with guiding WWE behind the scenes, Stephanie McMahon and Triple H made themselves the stars of the show in the middle of the decade—to the dismay of many viewers. Triple H had been a fairly popular figure in early-2013, but his double-cross of Daniel Bryan at that year’s SummerSlam led to a multi-year tyranny. Their faction swelled to include Seth Rollins, Kane, Joey Mercury, and Jamie Noble.

PHOTO BY STU SAKS

8%



ROMAN REIGNS

When readers ask why we eliminated the “Most Popular” and “Most Hated” categories from our ratings pages, we give a two-word answer: Roman Reigns. He has never been a heel during his singles run in WWE, but nevertheless was quite hated during various points of the past decade. Our cautionary headline revealing our number one in the 2017 “PWI 500” said it all: “Half Of You Will Hate This! Roman Reigns is No. 1.”

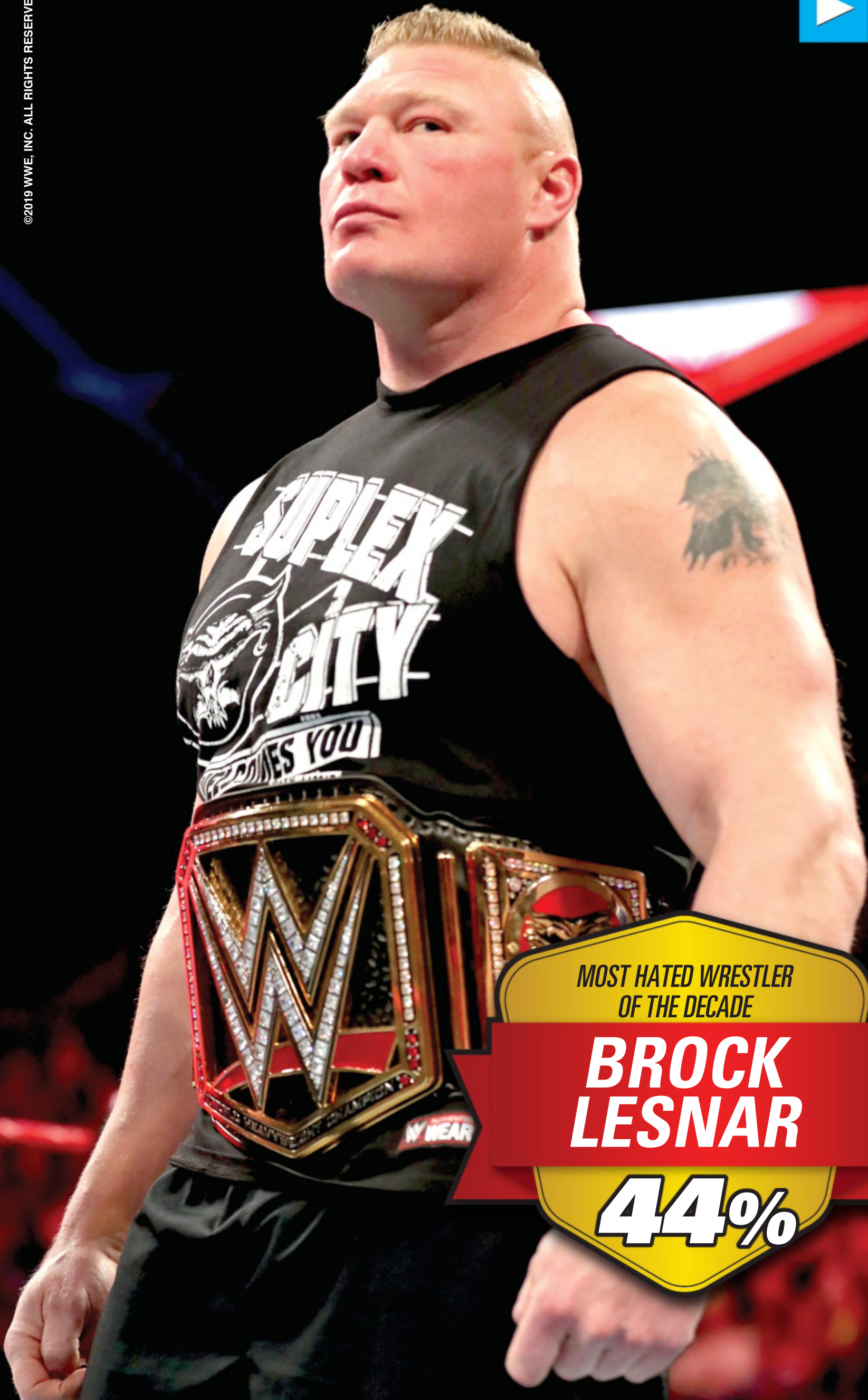
PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

6%



CHRIS JERICHO

Jericho lowered to new depths when he returned to WWE in 2011, mocking WWE champ CM Punk for having an alcoholic father and dousing him with alcohol after his matches. But now it’s Jericho who is enjoying “a little bit of the bubbly” as the arrogant and scheming AEW World champion. It’s been said the 49-year-old Jericho is now doing the greatest work of his career ... and we hate him for it.



*MOST HATED WRESTLER
OF THE DECADE*

**BROCK
LESNAR**

44%

FEUD OF THE DECADE

IN HIS FOURTH reign as IWGP champion, and as the undisputed star of New Japan, Kazuchika Okada was displeased with his mixed record at the 2016 G1 Climax tournament. Kenny Omega, the hot-rising *gaijin*, was the breakout story at the G1 Climax. Omega's victory earned him a shot at the IWGP belt at Wrestle Kingdom 11.

Only four days into 2017, we already had our Match of the Year. *Wrestling Observer* editor Dave Meltzer scored the encounter an unprecedented six stars, going beyond his usual five-star scale. The heavy striking, the incredible speed, the amazing endurance, and crisp execution of both athletes—against the backdrop of the Tokyo Dome—over the course of 46 minutes are what made this bout perhaps the greatest of all-time.

That is, until the rematch on June 11 at Osaka-jo Hall. Meltzer proclaimed the rematch for Okada's IWGP title to be even greater than the first, earning 6.25 stars. This time, Omega took the fight to Okada for an hour, resulting in the first 60-minute draw in New Japan in 12 years.

Okada performed much better at the 2017 G1 Climax ... until he met up with Omega on August 12. Omega finally defeated Okada, albeit in a non-title bout.

In the meantime, Okada was still making history, surpassing Shinya Hashimoto's 489-day record as IWGP champion on October 22 and making an unprecedented 12 successful title defenses overall.

But Okada met another date with history on June 9, once again at Osaka-jo Hall. It would be a two-out-of-three-falls bout with no time limit. Omega defeated Okada—two falls to one—at the 65-minute mark, stopping Okada's IWGP title reign at 720 days.

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Kurt Angle vs. Jeff Jarrett, Daniel Bryan vs. The Authority, Tommaso Ciampa vs. Johnny Gargano, Brock Lesnar vs. The Undertaker, The Miz vs. Daniel Bryan, Kazuchika Okada vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi, The Rock vs. John Cena

47%

13%



CHARLOTTE FLAIR vs. SASHA BANKS

Before Becky Lynch became her main rival, Charlotte Flair made history with Sasha Banks, bringing about the "Women's Evolution" in the 2010s. The rivalry started in 2014, over Charlotte's NXT Women's belt, and heated up a couple of years later when the two pioneers traded the Raw Women's title six times over a five-month period and then became the first women to headline a pay-per-view at Hell in a Cell 2016.

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12%



CM PUNK vs. JOHN CENA

Punk gave his infamous "pipe bomb" promo on June 27, 2011, decrying the hypocrisy in pro wrestling and a system that pushed corporate yes-men at the expense of others who had paid their dues. To Punk, who had emerged from the indy underground to gain a cult following in WWE, Cena personified the corporate athlete. It was a clash in philosophy and wrestling styles that resulted in the best matches of 2011—and some mutual respect.

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

10%



KEVIN OWENS vs. SAMI ZAYN

Kevin Steen vs. El Generico was ROH's most intense feud at the start of the decade, resulting in Generico putting up his mask against Steen's career. El Generico won the bout, and both men eventually made it to NXT. Even WWE acknowledged these echoes of the past when these two—as Owens and Zayn—resumed their feud in 2015-17. They proved the same chemistry that works on the indy scene also works on the big stage.

PHOTO BY GEORGE TAHINOS



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FEUD OF THE DECADE

KAZUCHIKA OKADA
vs.
KENNY OMEGA

18%

MATCH OF THE DECADE

UNDERTAKER-SHAWN Michaels II will be remembered as the greatest match of the 2010s, according to our readers. That's quite a testament to the excellence of this bout, considering it took place at the dawn of the decade. The "Heartbreak Kid" had lost Undertaker-Michaels I, which had occurred at WrestleMania 25, but demanded a rematch the following year ... and he put up his career to get it.

Undertaker and Michaels, the most consistent big-time players ever, could still go. It was a match of move and countermove: Undertaker thwarting Michaels' Sweet Chin Music with a chokeslam ... Michaels turning Undertaker's Hell's Gate into a near-fall.

Michaels missed as many superkicks as he landed. Undertaker used a Tombstone Piledriver to drop Michaels headfirst on the concrete floor to devastating effect. Michaels attempted a high-risk moonsault to Undertaker on the announce table, but Undertaker moved out of the way and Michaels was sent crashing. UT dragged HBK to the ring, where he flattened him with another chokeslam.

Then came a second Tombstone. Michaels wouldn't stay down. Undertaker finished him off with a third Tombstone at 23:59. Undertaker's WrestleMania undefeated streak went to 18-0. Michaels' 25-year career was over.

It was reminiscent of Michaels' win over Ric Flair at WrestleMania 24, when HBK essentially retired Flair, whose career was on the line. That match was about Flair, just as this match was about Michaels. And it vindicated Michaels' decision to embark on his amazing comeback in 2002: Undertaker-Michaels II marked the seventh consecutive time that HBK had been involved in *PWI's* Match of the Year.

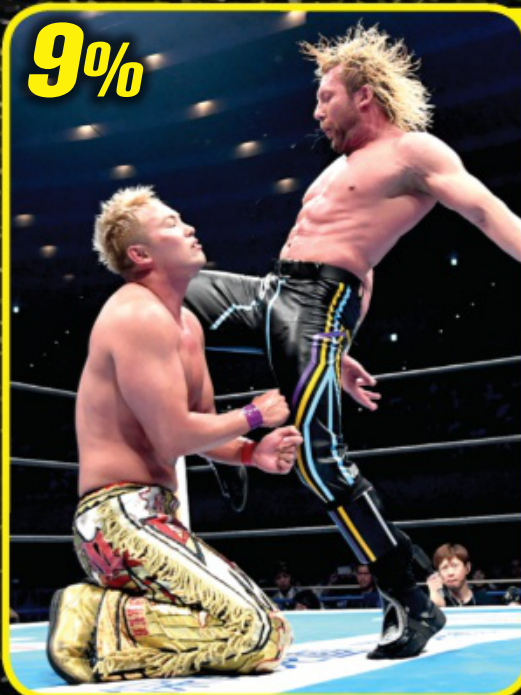
VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Undertaker vs. Triple H (04.01.12), The Rock vs. John Cena (04.01.12), Bayley vs. Sasha Banks (10.07.15), Kazuchika Okada vs. Kenny Omega (06.11.17), Johnny Gargano vs. Adam Cole (04.05.19), Kofi Kingston vs. Daniel Bryan (04.07.19), Lucha Bros. vs. Young Bucks (08.31.19)

57%

9%

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KENNY OMEGA vs. KAZUCHIKA OKADA
[06.09.18]

Okada had retained the IWGP title twice against Omega during the first half of 2017, but "The Cleaner" rebounded to defeat "The Rainmaker" at that year's G1 Climax. The fourth encounter was a two-out-of-three-falls bout at New Japan's Dominion event. Omega fell prey to a surprise cradle to lose the first fall, but used his One-Winged Angel to win the second and third falls ... and become IWGP champion at the 65-minute mark.

9%

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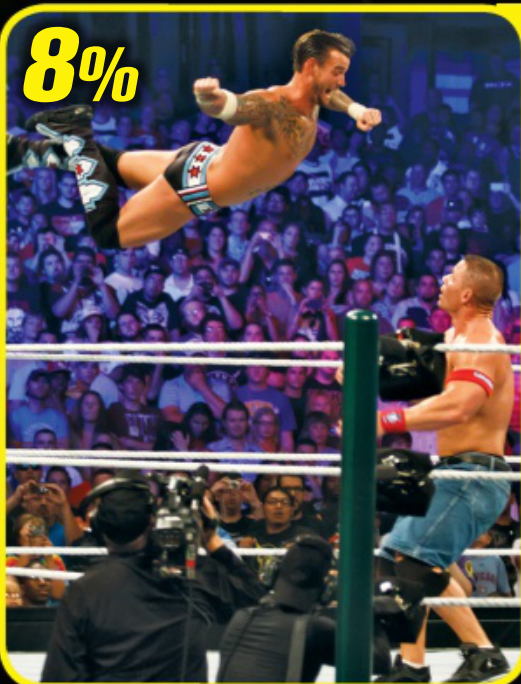


KAZUCHIKA OKADA vs. KENNY OMEGA
[01.04.17]

The Wrestle Kingdom 11 main event set the tone for the incredible series of bouts that would follow, and, for experts such as Dave Meltzer, redefined how great a wrestling match could be. Okada retained his belt in this encounter, now regarded as the peak of New Japan's 2010s renaissance. It forever changed the careers of both men, with Okada being ranked atop the "*PWI* 500" in 2017 and Omega earning the same honor in 2018.

8%

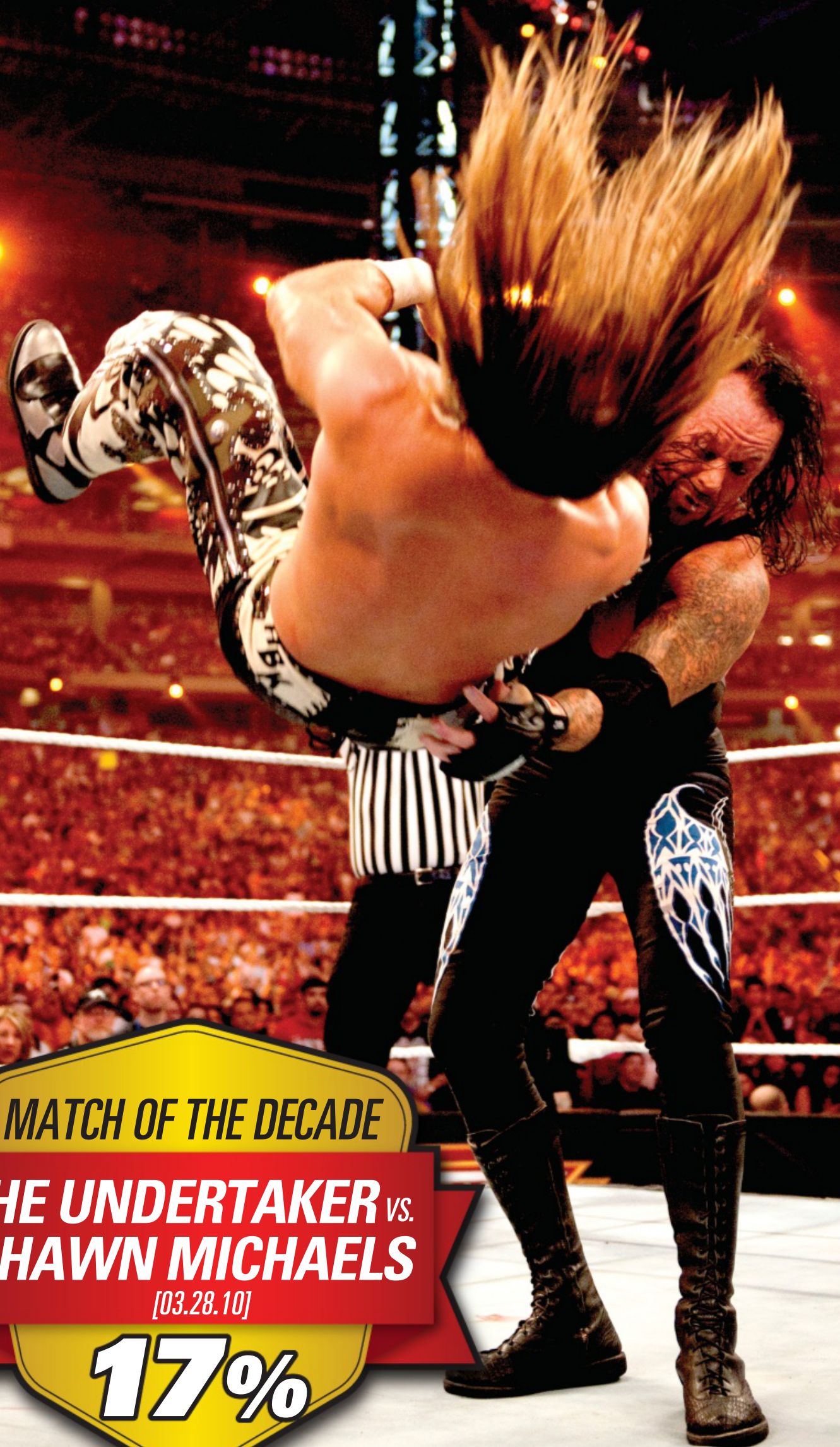
PHOTO BY JOHN SMOLEK



CM PUNK vs. JOHN CENA
[07.17.11]

Two weeks after his "pipe-bomb" promo, Punk promised to take Cena's WWE title and leave the company. The partisan crowd in Chicago was solidly behind Punk yet was in awe of Cena's high-powered offense. Cena refused an assist from Vince McMahon and John Laurinaitis, only to fall prey to Punk's Go To Sleep and lose the title. Punk left the Allstate Arena with the WWE belt, but eventually agreed to a rematch at SummerSlam.

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MATCH OF THE DECADE

**THE UNDERTAKER vs.
SHAWN MICHAELS**

[03.28.10]

17%

WOMAN OF THE DECADE

CHARLOTTE FLAIR WAS already on the path to greatness in 2014 when she captured the *PWI* Rookie of the Year Award—39 years after her father, Ric Flair, received the same honor. While not shying away from her rich family heritage, Charlotte opted not to use her father's famous surname when she began training at the WWE Performance Center in her mid-20s. Her background as a championship volleyball player and personal trainer didn't guarantee success as a pro wrestler.

Charlotte hit her stride in 2016 when she was in the midst of a 16-event undefeated streak on pay-per-view. In that year alone, she reigned as WWE Women's champion for over 300 days, was ranked number one in the "*PWI* Female 50," and ran away with the *PWI* Woman of the Year Award with a whopping 50 percent of the vote. She also demonstrated her dexterity as a performer, turning heel, initially with her father in her corner and later with Dana Brooke.

Her career has been one of firsts. She and Sasha Banks were the first women to headline a pay-per-view, at Hell in a Cell 2016. Her three-way match with Becky Lynch at Ronda Rousey at WrestleMania 35 was the first female main event in 'Mania history.

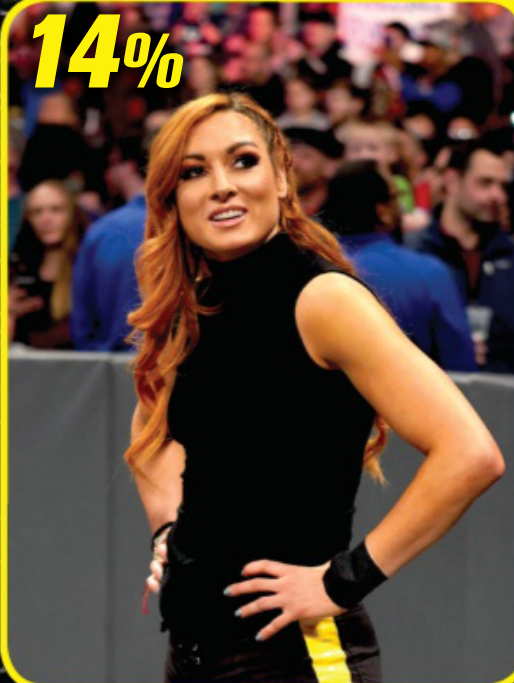
Many ballots selecting the 11-time women's champ indicated she should be in contention for Wrestler of the Decade. Thanks to Charlotte's exploits in the 2010s, there will probably be plenty of female candidates for the Wrestler of the Decade Award in 2030.

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Sara Amato, Asuka, Sasha Banks, Saraya Knight, Mercedes Martinez, Stephanie McMahon, Natalya, Paige, Ronda Rousey

35%

14%



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BECKY LYNCH

She ignited a movement with her "slap heard around the world" to the face of Charlotte Flair at SummerSlam 2017. What was meant to be a heel turn for Lynch turned out to be a moment when the fans seized control of her fate. Instead of turning on Lynch, they embraced her more aggressive attitude, forcing WWE Creative to go along for the ride. Winning the first female main event at WrestleMania has ensured her place in history.

9%

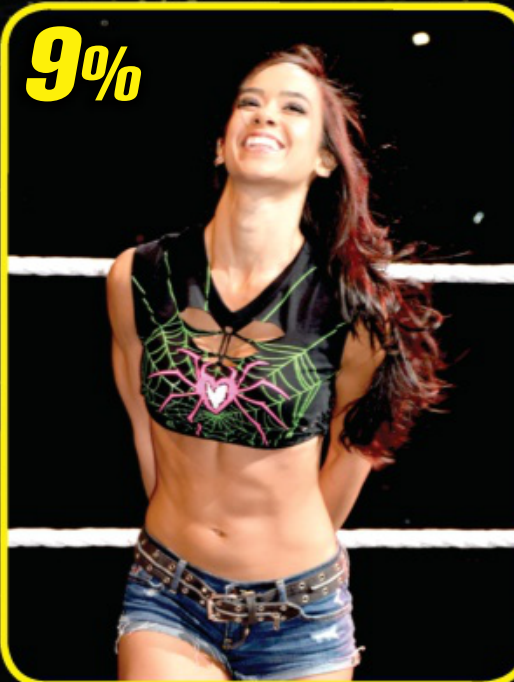


PHOTO BY STU SAKS

AJ LEE

Few performers have been as red-hot as AJ and left the sport so suddenly. The triangle involving the scheming but lovable AJ, Daniel Bryan, and CM Punk was the top WWE soap opera of the early-2010s. She enjoyed success inside the ring, too, with three Divas titles and three Woman of the Year awards. A nagging back injury and the departure of husband CM Punk from WWE led to her retirement in 2015.

9%



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/TNA

GAIL KIM

Although Kim had two successful stints in WWE, she somehow never fit in with the culture there, and TNA truly became her home after her return in 2011. With seven Knockouts titles and her 2016 induction into the TNA Hall of Fame, she'll likely be remembered as the greatest female wrestler in TNA history. She helped elevate Tessa Blanchard before her retirement in 2019 and is now a producer with Impact Wrestling.

PHOTO BY MIKE COPPOLA/NBC UNIVERSAL



WOMAN OF THE DECADE

**CHARLOTTE
FLAIR**

33%

TAG TEAM OF THE DECADE

BIG E, KOFI Kingston, and Xavier Woods were saddled with a gimmick that came straight out of the early-1990s, a gospel-inspired group that preached the power of positivity. Could such a concept work in the snide, clever-quip culture of the 2010s?

It didn't. Fans reacted with mockery or indifference. With Creative tweaking their act to make it almost self-parody (channeling the America-loving Rougeaus of the mid-1980s), The New Day performed gimmick jujitsu, with the WWE Universe clamoring for more.

The New Day cashed in this goodwill for championship gold. They defeated The Prime Time Players for the WWE tag team title in April 2015, but lost it back only one month later. When The New Day regained the belts at that year's SummerSlam, they didn't look back. Utilizing the Freebird rule, New Day surpassed Demolition's 28-year record of 478 days to become the longest-reigning tag team champions in WWE history.

The WWE tag team championship morphed into the Raw tag team championship in the 2016 brand extension. After The New Day went to Smackdown in 2017, they won five more titles, making them your "seven-time, seven-time world tag team champs."

And WWE felt their power. Reminiscent of The Fabulous Freebirds rallying behind Terry Gordy's push for the UWF title in 1986, Big E and Woods supported Kofi Kingston in his campaign for the WWE title in 2019. They became a genuine power bloc for six months in 2019, with E and Woods holding the Smackdown tag title while Kofi reigned as WWE champion.

With Woods out with an injury, Big E and Kingston rebounded from a title loss to The Revival to embark on their record-shattering seventh tag title reign on November 8.

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Karl Anderson & Luke Gallows, Matt & Jeff Hardy, Kazarian & Christopher Daniels, Jey & Jimmy Uso

34%

17%



COURTESY OF RING OF HONOR

THE YOUNG BUCKS

Once regarded as a brash and disrespectful duo in the ring and out, Nick and Matt Jackson struggled to find respect within the traditional confines of the business. Relying on their innovative high-flying offense and their cutting-edge marketing savvy, The Young Bucks dazzled audiences from Ring of Honor and New Japan and nearly every indy in between. Their entrepreneurial spirit inspired many, including Cody Rhodes.

13%



PHOTO BY BLAKE THOMAS/RING OF HONOR

THE BRISCOES

Jay and Mark Briscoe are the only performers to have remained with ROH since its 2002 inception, but that didn't stop The Briscoes from traveling the world—throughout U.S. indies and New Japan—to become the most respected duo in the business. Rejected in 2009 for "not being cosmetically pleasing," WWE went with the Usos—a clean-sneaks, PG-rated version of The Briscoes. That might be the greatest testament to their influence.

10%

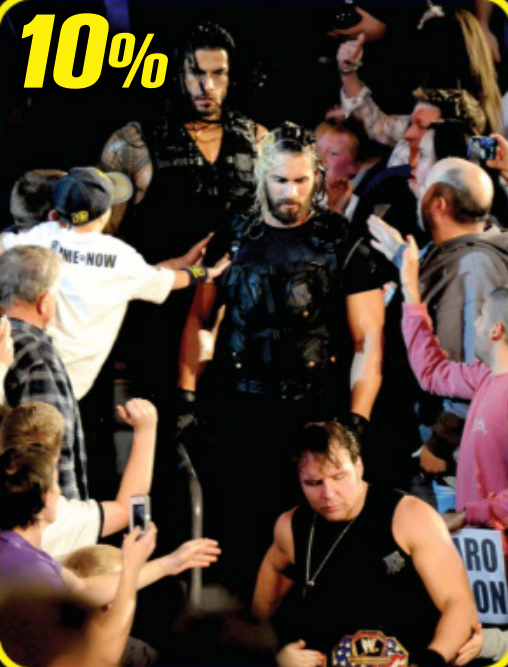


PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

THE SHIELD

Seth Rollins, Dean Ambrose, and Roman Reigns exploded in WWE in 2012, and, like other three-man teams, the question arose: Are they a tag team or a faction? The Shield was both, with Rollins and Reigns winning the WWE tag title in 2013 and The Shield collectively earning that year's *PWI* Tag Team of the Year Award. Rollins' 2014 betrayal of his brethren ended their prime run prematurely, but their impact is felt to this day.



TAG TEAM OF THE DECADE

THE NEW DAY

26%

WRESTLER OF THE DECADE

THE *PWI* STAFF always has its own internal debates: In this case, should the Wrestler of the Decade award go to John Cena, the megastar who largely defined the 2010s, or Brock Lesnar, the perennial champion with UFC credibility? Then there was AJ Styles, the workhorse who was dedicated solely to pro wrestling in the 2010s, dominating TNA, excelling in Ring of Honor and New Japan, and conquering WWE.

But it didn't matter what we thought. *PWI* readers spoke clearly, as AJ Styles earned 29 percent of the vote, doubling the amount received by the first runner-up.

Styles entered the decade as TNA World heavyweight champion, fending off challenges from Sting, Kurt Angle, Samoa Joe, Christopher Daniels, Desmond Wolfe, and Travis Tomko, reflecting the formidable TNA roster at the time. His enthusiasm for TNA faded as the company began to struggle, however. He returned with a "Lone Wolf" persona after a brief hiatus in 2013, but his contract negotiations collapsed at the end of the year.

Styles was wrestling's hottest free agent over the next two years, as he dominated New Japan as IWGP champion and leader of the Bullet Club, had a memorable clash with ROH champion Jay Lethal at Final Battle 2015, and toured indies around the world.

Then came WWE. A testament to WWE's faith, Styles bypassed NXT and debuted at the 2016 Royal Rumble to a huge reaction. Styles avoided the fate of past TNA and WCW stars and got a full-throttle push as he approached his 40th birthday, becoming synonymous with the Smackdown brand. His 371-day WWE title reign in 2017-18 was the eighth-longest in WWE history, tied with Randy Savage's 1988-89 reign.

Styles' performance in the 2010s was absolutely phenomenal.

VOTES FOR OTHERS

The top vote-getters that did not earn a runner-up spot are: Daniel Bryan, Chris Jericho, Kenny Omega, Randy Orton, CM Punk, Roman Reigns, Seth Rollins, Hiroshi Tanahashi

33%

14%



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BROCK LESNAR

Lesnar was so dominant in WWE, especially during the second half of the decade, that he made it look easy. With Lesnar, it's truly about quality and not the quantity. We'll never forget the moments: tossing John Cena around like a ragdoll at SummerSlam 2014 and steamrolling Kofi Kingston in eight seconds on *Smackdown*'s premiere on Fox, just to name a couple. Lesnar truly dominated the decade ... when he was around.

14%



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

JOHN CENA

If we had defined the decade as between the years of 2005 and 2015, Cena would have been the sure winner. But his in-ring career was winding down by mid-decade, and he suffered several key losses that elevated new stars. He tied Ric Flair's record of 16 world titles, making another run for the gold irresistible, so we expect at least one more great hurrah from "Big Match John" in the 2020s.

10%



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

KAZUCHIKA OKADA

While Okada wasn't part of our great internal debate, he was our pick for third runner-up, and our readers agreed. Okada did establish himself, however, as perhaps the greatest IWGP champion of all-time, with the longest title reign and the highest number of successful defenses. And, unlike the men who beat him out in this particular balloting, Okada could be even more dominant in the next decade.



WRESTLER
OF THE DECADE

AJ STYLES

29%

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/TNA

THE DECADE'S 100 TOP "PWI 500" FINISHERS

Our intent was to come up with the top 500 finishers of the past decade by averaging the rankings of those wrestlers included in a minimum of five "PWI 500" rankings during the past 10 years. What we discovered is that not even 400 wrestlers were eligible for inclusion based on the time requirement. Rather than skew the averages by lowering the requirement, we chose to present the top 100 instead. (Note: We listed active wrestlers according to their current names.)

RANK	NAME	YEARS RANKED	AVERAGE RANKING	RANK	NAME	YEARS RANKED	AVERAGE RANKING
1	John Cena	9	7.00	23	Cody Rhodes	10	46.60
2	AJ Styles	10	9.90	24	Austin Aries	10	46.90
3	Randy Orton	10	17.10	25	Kane	8	48.12
4	Seth Rollins	10	19.60	26	Roderick Strong	10	49.80
5	Hiroshi Tanahashi	10	20.30	27	Eddie Edwards	10	50.30
6	Kurt Angle	6	21.83	28	Jay Lethal	10	50.80
7	Daniel Bryan	8	22.75	29	Davey Richards	8	51.63
8	Shinsuke Nakamura	10	23.00	30	Finn Balor	10	52.00
9	Bobby Lashley	6	26.00	31	Cesaro	10	52.70
10	The Miz	10	28.60	32	Sami Zayn	10	55.90
11	Sheamus	10	29.70	33	Jay Briscoe	10	57.00
11	Samoa Joe	10	29.70	34	Wade Barrett	7	57.71
13	Kevin Owens	10	30.90	35	Kazuchika Okada	10	60.40
14	Alberto el Patron	9	31.33	36	Christopher Daniels	10	61.50
15	Robert Roode	10	31.70	37	Jon Moxley	10	65.90
16	Dolph Ziggler	10	32.20	38	Kushida	7	66.00
17	Chris Jericho	7	34.43	39	Matt Hardy	9	68.89
18	Jeff Hardy	10	37.10	40	John Morrison	8	69.62
19	Rob Van Dam	5	37.20	41	Nick Aldis	10	72.00
20	The Big Show	8	41.13	42	James Storm	9	72.11
21	Kofi Kingston	10	41.40	43	Rey Mysterio Jr.	8	73.50
22	Christian	5	44.00	44	Adam Pearce	5	76.60

RANK	NAME	YEARS RANKED	AVERAGE RANKING	RANK	NAME	YEARS RANKED	AVERAGE RANKING
45	D-Von Dudley	6	78.33	73	Matt Morgan	6	99.33
46	Frankie Kazarian	10	79.90	74	KENTA	8	100.50
47	Adam Cole	10	80.80	75	El Mesias	9	100.55
48	Kenny Omega	10	81.10	76	Hirooki Goto	10	102.40
49	Kyle O'Reilly	9	81.33	77	Michael Elgin	10	102.80
50	Tomohiro Ishii	6	83.17	78	Rey Fenix	6	102.83
51	Mark Briscoe	10	83.90	79	Bobby Fish	8	104.12
52	Drew McIntyre	10	84.20	80	Takeshi Morishima	5	105.80
53	Kento Miyahara	5	85.80	81	Jimmy Uso	10	106.60
54	Eric Young	9	86.11	82	Bray Wyatt	10	106.70
55	Matt Jackson	10	86.60	83	Andrade	10	107.00
56	Bully Ray	10	87.00	84	Sanada	6	107.60
57	Roman Reigns	9	87.89	85	Jey Uso	10	108.20
58	Nick Jackson	10	88.40	86	Katsuyori Shibata	5	108.40
59	Tetsuya Naito	10	88.70	87	Chris Sabin	7	108.57
60	Pentagon Jr.	6	89.50	88	Moose	5	109.40
61	Minoru Suzuki	10	90.00	89	Kenny King	10	110.00
62	PAC	10	92.10	90	Jake Hager	9	112.78
63	Tyson Kidd	6	92.67	91	Matt Sydal	8	113.25
64	Naomichi Marufuji	10	92.70	92	Alex Shelley	9	114.00
65	Baron Corbin	6	92.83	93	Rusev	8	114.37
66	Abyss	9	94.00	94	Johnny Gargano	10	114.40
66	Go Shiozaki	10	94.00	95	Rob Conway	5	115.40
68	Takashi Sugiura	10	96.20	96	Kota Ibushi	10	116.10
69	Mark Henry	8	97.75	97	Suwama	10	116.20
70	Tommaso Ciampa	9	97.78	98	Kassius Ohno	10	117.40
71	Karl Anderson	10	99.20	99	Brodie Lee	10	117.50
72	Zack Sabre Jr.	6	99.33	100	R-Truth	10	119.65

the BUSINESS PAGE

by HARRY BURKETT

WWE Network re-do? WWE CEO and Chairman Vince McMahon made a bombshell statement during his first-quarter conference call with investors, indicating WWE could sell off pay-per-view rights to other distributors of streaming content.

The bottom line: Next year's Royal Rumble, WrestleMania, SummerSlam, and Survivor Series may not be on the WWE Network, at least not for \$9.99.

McMahon was sending the signal that he's open to making a deal to sell off the rights for its major pay-per-views, potentially forcing current Network subscribers to purchase yet another subscription for those events.

Said McMahon, "We can continue on as we are now with an enhancement of a free tier and a more enhanced paid tier ... We also have an option—I mean, right now, there's no better time to exercise the selling of our rights to all the majors. And quite frankly, all the majors are really clamoring for our content. So that could be a significant increase, obviously, in terms of revenue."

The most prominent "major" is Amazon Prime, which costs \$9.99 per month. Amazon has already streamed the NFL on Thursdays and is searching for more live-event content—or

more. "We believe that such a licensing deal would put Amazon in the best spot to purchase all of WWE, whenever the family is ready to exit," analyst Laura Martin of Needham told CNBC, acknowledging a WWE acquisition could be appealing now that its stock price has dropped 40 percent since last year.

A viable alternative, however, is Peacock, NBC Universal's soon-to-launch streaming service.

WWE boasts a successful 35-year track record with NBC, and Bonnie Hammer, who currently oversees Universal Television and Universal Content Productions, worked effectively with WWE as the head of the USA Network. Besides re-boots of classic NBC series such as *Punky Brewster* and *Saved By The Bell*, Peacock will feature this year's Summer Olympic Games. And the price is relatively low: Peacock will be available to Comcast subscribers for only \$4.99 per month and \$9.99 per month for everyone else.

But will fans pay \$9.99 per month for the WWE Network plus another \$4.99 or \$9.99 to watch one of the Big Four pay-per-views? Could this lead to the Network's demise?

Subscriptions to the WWE Network fell below one million in the fourth quarter of 2019, not even close to WWE's long-held goal of three million. While the Network historically has



It was an active period of time for Vince McMahon, who fired WWE's co-presidents, declared the company open to offers from media outlets willing to pony up for major card content, and saw the debut of XFL v2.0.

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ballooned to about 1.5 million subscriptions in time for WrestleMania, McMahon obviously sees the success of Netflix, ESPN+, Disney+, and even CBS All Access and wants to replicate the Smackdown-Fox deal. Instead of chasing the dollars himself, McMahon will allow others to offer *him* big money.

“You’re Fired!” ... McMahon’s statement regarding the WWE Network came only one week after the ouster of WWE co-presidents George Barrios and Michelle Wilson. That was a jaw-dropping development, considering Barrios and Wilson were instrumental in launching the WWE Network, negotiating the *Smackdown*-Fox deal, and pursuing the company’s many international television agreements.

Barrios came on board as chief financial officer in 2008, and Wilson was hired as executive vice president for marketing in 2009. They were appointed co-presidents in February 2018.

Barrios and Wilson reportedly disagreed with



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNERMEDIA ENTERTAINMENT

WarnerMedia’s Kevin Reilly pleased AEW executives, talent, and fans by extending *Dynamite* through 2023 and adding a second AEW show to the TNT lineup.

McMahon about priorities and strategies, most likely the future of the Network. This proves *no one* is indispensable.

Frank Riddick, a 40-year corporate veteran, is the new interim CFO. Watch out, Frank!

WWE STOCKWATCH

[FOR THE PERIOD OF DECEMBER 9, 2019, TO FEBRUARY 7, 2020]

60-DAY HIGH: 67.53 on January 7

60-DAY LOW: 40.24 on February 6

52-WEEK HIGH: 100.45 on April 24, 2019

52-WEEK LOW: 40.24 on February 6, 2020

The double-departure of co-presidents George Barrios and Michelle Wilson—who were on par with Stephanie McMahon, Triple H, and Kevin Dunn in the corporate hierarchy—was the first blow of a one-two punch in early-2020. And it was the manner in which they left the company, with no warning, no transition, and no reassuring strategy for the future that caused WWE shares to plunge 18 percent to a two-year low of 48.88 upon the news.

And, although the XFL kicked off in February to better reviews than its first run 20 years ago, many analysts are concerned McMahon—who has invested a considerable amount of his own fortune into the eight-team football league—will be distracted by the venture.

Then came the second punch: the release of WWE’s first-quarter report. While revenues increased to an all-time high of \$322.8-million during the first quarter, and WWE’s revenues reached an all-time high of \$960.4-million for the year of 2019, those figures *still* didn’t meet Wall Street expectations. Shares dropped again, to 40.24.

With Barrios and Wilson gone, and with Vince at 74 years of age and potentially distracted, investors are uncertain about WWE’s future. Disappointing ratings for *Raw* on USA and *Smackdown* on Fox, as well as AEW *Dynamite*’s dominance of *NXT*, are indicators of problems ahead. And negotiations regarding television deals in the Middle East have proven difficult.

Even billion-dollar companies have their share of problems.

AEW here to stay ... AEW can make long-term plans, thanks to WarnerMedia renewing its contract for *Dynamite* through 2023—an incredible show of support for a program that’s been around since only last October!

WarnerMedia also plans to transfer the YouTube weekly series *AEW Dark* to TNT, though it may not air 52 weeks per year. “We’re going to embellish [*AEW Dark*] and put some additional material, kind of behind-the-scenes, kind of docu-follow stuff, if you will, about the athletes and the stories,” Turner President Kevin Reilly told *The Wrap*. “We think that’s going to end up being a really good, robust, different kind of show.”

Reilly’s enthusiasm about AEW has been palpable, including during his recent session at the Television Critics Association press tour. That’s good news for wrestling.

Could AEW use a couple of former WWE co-presidents?

TV BREAKDOWN

RAW [USA]

—VIEWERS IN MILLIONS

Analysis: The January 20 episode of *Raw*, airing just before The Royal Rumble, had a very strong first hour, with Seth Rollins establishing his new heel faction with the AOP and Buddy Murphy, and Andrade beating Rey Mysterio for the WWE U.S. title in a ladder match. Drew McIntyre winning the Rumble helped drive *Raw*'s numbers on January 27, as the red brand drew 2,400,000 viewers. The pre-taped December 23 episode, airing only two days before Christmas, was the lowest-rated *Raw* in three years. The main event featured then-U.S. champ Mysterio vs. Rollins. The Bobby Lashley-Lana wedding on December 30 drew the most viewers of the evaluation period (sorry to say!), with 2,440,000.

December 9: 2.15
December 16: 2.05
December 23: 1.84
December 30: 2.44
January 6: 2.39
January 13: 2.03
January 20: 2.38
January 27: 2.40
February 3: 2.17

DYNAMITE [TNT]

—VIEWERS IN MILLIONS

Analysis: *Dynamite* scored its highest number of viewers of the evaluation period—approximately 970,000—on New Year's Day, and high ratings on holidays are unusual. This episode saw The Elite stronger than ever, with a slimmed-down Cody (with Arn Anderson in his corner) defeating Darby Allin, and The Young Bucks teaming with Kenny Omega to defeat The Lucha Brothers and Pac in the main event. Issues with Hangman Page continued, however, as the unfolding storyline indicated he had a drinking problem. *Dynamite*'s "Bash At The Beach" episode aired on January 15, and the taped "Jericho Cruise" episode aboard the Norwegian Pearl aired the following week.

December 11: .78
December 18: .68
January 1: .97
January 8: .95
January 15: .94
January 22: .87
January 29: .83
February 5: .93

NXT [USA]

—VIEWERS IN MILLIONS

Analysis: After tying *Dynamite* with about 780,000 viewers apiece on December 11, *NXT* scored its first outright victory of the Wednesday Night War the following week, surpassing AEW by over 100,000 viewers. On December 18, Rhea Ripley defeated Shayna Baszler to end the second-longest *NXT* Women's title reign in history. *NXT*'s best number of the evaluation period—830,000 viewers—occurred on December 25, when *Dynamite* was pre-empted for TNT's *A Christmas Story* marathon. Despite *NXT*'s bump-up in mid-December, and appearances of stars such as Charlotte Flair, it hasn't regained that momentum, remaining at least 15 percent below *Dynamite*'s viewership most weeks.

December 11: .78
December 18: .80
December 25: .83
January 1: .55
January 8: .72
January 15: .70
January 22: .77
January 29: .71
February 5: .77

SMACKDOWN [FOX]

—VIEWERS IN MILLIONS

Analysis: *Smackdown*'s numbers were remarkably consistent throughout late-2019 and into February 2020, with its viewers ranging from 2,400,000 to 2,500,000 each week. The blue brand's numbers usually hovered around two million on the USA Network. No doubt Fox executives hoped *Smackdown* would draw more than three million viewers on broadcast TV. *Raw* actually approaches *Smackdown* in sheer numbers each week and had all the sizzle headed into WrestleMania season. Although Bray Wyatt is compelling, his Fiend persona is at risk of overexposure, as *Smackdown* limps along with Roman Reigns-King Corbin reruns and Otis courting Mandy Rose.

December 13: 2.33
December 20: 2.40
December 27: 2.44
January 3: 2.41
January 10: 2.50
January 17: 2.56
January 24: 2.45
January 31: 2.42
February 7: 2.55



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The “PWI Podcast” is available as a free subscription at Apple Podcasts or streaming at pwi-online.com

INDEPENDENT ROUNDUP

BY MIKE BESSLER

IT WAS A shocking scene when **Joe Zanolle** bought East Coast Championship Wrestling lock, stock, and barrel late last year, handing owner **Mike Tartaglia** a check in the center of the ring. But fans and fighters alike were encouraged at the notion that Zanolle might yet herald the storied promotion into a bright new future. On January 18, the ECWA held its first event under Zanolle's tutelage. **Greg Spitz** and **Teddy Fine**, known to Pro Wrestling World-1 fans as **The Marvelous Ones**, defeated **Kyle Christopher** and **Travis Lee** to become top contenders for the ECWA tag straps. Former ECWA champ **Chris Wyld** was also on hand, claiming a victory in singles competition with a tapout win over 300-pounder **L.A. Vin**. But it was **Eric Martin** who scored the most impressive win of the night, capturing ECWA's vacant Mid-Atlantic title in a triple-threat against **Killian McMurphy** and **Napalm Bomb**. In addition to winning the gold, Martin also received a berth in ECWA's annual Super 8 tournament, by order of Zanolle.

"Eric cut his teeth in ECWA and then went on to expand his horizons, traveling around the world and then coming back home to us," Zanolle said. "He has gained a lot of experience, but he is still young and has a good mentality along with an old-school flair that honors ECWA's legacy."

Aaron Epic's reign as IGNITE Wrestling champ ended just shy of the three-year mark when he fell to **Troy Hollywood** at that promotion's January 11 show in Vero Beach, Florida. While Hollywood established himself as a formidable rival early in the bout, his title aspirations almost met with an unfortunate end when Troy accidentally kayoed the ref with an errant superkick. Masked grappler **The Glitch** subsequently entered the ring to tip the scales in Epic's favor, but their plans were foiled by **Serpentico**, who entered the fray, taking out both Epic and The Glitch with a double-stunner. Hollywood then covered the champ for the win and was presented with the strap by Serpenticco, who subsequently issued his own challenge for the title.

East Coast standout **Kekoa** realized a dream on January 17, winning Maryland Championship Wrestling's top title for the first time. Kekoa, who has held top titles in Pennsylvania Premiere Wrestling, ECWA, and other promotions, met champ **Rhett Titus** and **Brandon Scott** in a triple-threat

contest for the strap at the MCW show in Joppa. Titus was eliminated first, leaving Kekoa and Scott to settle the score that lingered from their meeting last year at MCW's Shamrock Cup. Kekoa pinned Scott after connecting with two superkicks, a 5-0 slam, and a frog splash.



Eric Martin netted the vacant ECWA Mid-Atlantic title—and a spot in the 2020 Super 8 Tournament—with his triple-threat win over Killian McMurphy and Napalm Bomb.

PHOTO BY FRANK BORIS

DEFY Wrestling crowned new tag champs at that promotion's three-year anniversary show in Seattle, Washington, on January 31. Reigning champs **Josef Samael** and **Jacob Fatu, War Beast**, put their straps up in a triple-threat match against the teams of **Billy Pearl** and **Ricky Gibson** as well as former tag champions **Mike Santiago** and **Ethan HD**. Pearl and Gibson, who compete under the moniker **4 Minutes of Heat**, claimed the gold when Pearl rolled up Ethan HD for the three-count ... **Brian Pillman Jr.** made a noble attempt at landing Jacob Fatu's Major League Wrestling title on February 8, but a slew of interlopers made his already difficult task virtually impossible. Members of the **CONTRA Sentai Death Squad**, along with the likes of Josef Samael, **Jordan Oliver**, and **Kotto Brazil** all made appearances around the ring area in an effort to disrupt Pillman's title aspirations. They were met by **Davey Boy Smith Jr.** and the **Von Erich Brothers**, who tried in vain to restore order. But it was **Myron Reed** who had the most decisive impact on Pillman's run at the strap, nailing Brian with his MLW middleweight title belt and laying him out so that Fatu could get the pin and keep the championship ... **Max Heights** made his hometown of Colorado City, Texas, proud by winning the Lone Star Championship Tournament at the New Texas Pro Wrestling show on February 2. Heights beat **Nathan Brick** in a first-round ladder match, advancing to meet "**King**" **Rob Love** for the championship. Love, who defeated **Gino Medina** and **Jerome Daniels Griffey** in a first-round triple-threat match, ultimately fell to Heights via pinfall. After the bell, Heights hoisted the distinctive, star-shaped championship



Kekoa is the new MCW heavyweight champion following his three-way victory over champion Rhett Titus and Brandon Scott.

belt and celebrated in the ring with announcer **Steven Stellar**, who had supported Heights at ringside during the final round ... Arizona Wrestling Federation fans have a special place in their hearts for lady grappler **Bryn Thorne**, as they voted her AWF's Woman of the Year for 2019. But the honor didn't get her any special treatment from **Mystiq**, who defeated Thorne in a no-disqualification streetfight at the show in Peoria on January 18. By winning the bout, Mystiq became the top contender for that promotion's top women's strap, which is currently held by **Viva Van** ... Imperial Wrestling Entertainment honored its late ring announcer **Jason "Dudley Dawson" Lock** with a rowdy 20-man battle royal at the promotion's January 21 show in

Houghton Lake, Michigan. **Bill Blackwell**, who tips the scales at a whopping 450 pounds, was the last man standing after he tossed **Benjamin Brody** over the top rope. As the winner of the contest, Blackwell earned a future shot at any IWE title ... Although **Kaydee Knox** couldn't make it to Frankfort, Kentucky, for her scheduled bout against **Roni "Big Bang" Nicole**, she still saw action at Kentucky Elite Pro Wrestling's February 7 event, taking on **Reptik** in an intergender contest. Reptik, who was skeptical of the idea that Roni could go toe-to-toe with him, had to eat some crow (as well as some canvas) by the end of the match, going down for the count after suffering a thunderous spear and a Vader Bomb from his female foil. □

PHOTO BY MIKE ADAMS/MGC MEDIA LLC

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

BY KEVIN McELVANEY

FOR 29 YEARS, New Japan has presented wrestling at the Tokyo Dome on January 4. But, this year, the supersized Wrestle Kingdom card turned into a two-day event, with a second show on Sunday, January 5.

The main attractions of these two shows were the final matches of **Jushin Thunder Liger**. Liger, who is the only performer to date to appear on every “PWI 500” list, wrestled alongside rivals and allies, both old and new.

On the first show, Liger teamed with **Tiger Mask**, **Tatsumi Fujinami**, and **The Great Sasuke** in a losing effort against the team of **Naoki Sano**, **Shinjiro Otani**, **Tatsuhito Takaiwa**, and **Ryusuke Taguchi**.

The following day, Liger teamed with Sano to take on the younger pairing of **Hiromu Takahashi** and **Ryu (Dragon) Lee**—two wrestlers clearly indebted to the legendary high-flyer. Takahashi claimed the pinfall victory over Liger, who officially retired the following evening at New Japan’s annual New Year Dash event.

Wrestle Kingdom also boasted multiple defenses of NJPW’s top championships, with Day 2 culminating in a title versus title match. On Day 1, **Tetsuya Naito** defeated **Jay White** for the IWGP Intercontinental championship, while **Kazuchika Okada** successfully defended the IWGP World title against **Kota Ibushi**.

This set the stage for the main event of Wrestle Kingdom’s second

act, where Naito beat Okada in an all-out war. Naito survived everything “The Rainmaker” threw at him, and ultimately sealed the deal after connecting with his signature move, Destino, for a third time.

This was a bucket list affair for Naito, who’d declared his intention to wear the IWGP World and Intercontinental belts simultaneously. Unfortunately, he was attacked by **KENTA** mere moments after his hard-fought win.

Not content to let New Japan have all the glory, All Japan Pro Wrestling ran its annual back-to-back shows at Korakuen Hall on January 2 and 3. In the main event of the first card, **Shuji Ishikawa** and **Suwama** defeated **Ryoji Sai** and **Zeus** for the AJPW tag title.

The January 3 card was headlined by a successful defense of

the All Japan Triple Crown championship, with **Kento Miyahara** besting **Jake Lee**. Earlier on, **Susumu Yokosuka** overcame **Hikaru Sato** in the finals of a tournament to capture the vacant AJPW junior heavyweight title.

Also at Korakuen Hall, DDT hosted the finals of its annual D-Oh Grand Prix tournament, which took place between November 29 and December 28. In the end, it was **Masato Tanaka** who took home the honors, following a victory over Block A winner **Tetsuya Endo**.

In Mexico, AAA presented its yearly spectacular, Guerra de Titanes (War of the Titans), on December 14 in Ciudad Madero. While the event featured some notable dust-ups—including **Big Mami** defeating **Lady Maravilla**



Jushin Liger had some good moments (here, against Hiromu Takahashi) during the two nights of Wrestle Kingdom 14, but, like Kurt Angle at WrestleMania 35, did not enjoy that one special moment to share a victory with his fans.

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in a hair-vs.-hair match—the biggest news actually happened after the final bell rang. Following the main event trios bout, a new faction formed, featuring **Konnan**, **Rush**, **Killer Kross**, **L.A. Park**, and **La Bestia del Ring**.

The group took the name La Facción Ingobernable—a clear nod to CMLL Los Ingobernables (of which Rush was also a member). The very next day, Rush established an American version of the group in Ring of Honor, pairing up with Dragon Lee, **Kenny King**, and **Amy Rose**.

December 14 was also a big night for German wrestling. The country's leading promotion, Westside Xtreme Wrestling (WXW), held its 19th-anniversary show in Oberhausen. It was capped off with a four-way dance, where **Bobby Gunns** won the promotion's Unified title from champion **Timothy Thatcher** in a contest that also featured **David Starr** and **Ilja Dragunov**. This marks the second reign as champion for the self-professed "King Of Smoke Style."

On the women's wrestling front, **Mayu Iwatani** defeated AEW regular **Bea Priestley** for the World of Stardom title back on November 4 in Tokyo. Iwatani also represented Stardom in a special pre-show match on Day 1 of Wrestle Kingdom. Thanks to regular appearances for Women of Honor, she is fast becoming one of the biggest names globally in women's grappling.

On January 11, the increasingly influential Pro Wrestling Eve presented its flagship show, *Wrestle Queendom 3*. Emanating from London, the action featured British wrestling mainstays such as **Saraya Knight** and Pro Wrestling Eve champion **Rhia O'Reilly**, along with NXT U.K. talent including **Jinny** and **Killer Kelly**.

Notably, the show also included the debut of **Nor "Phoenix" Diana**, a Malaysian performer

Tetsuya Naito became the first man to simultaneously hold the IWGP Intercontinental and World titles when he defeated Jay White and Kazuchika Okada during the two nights of Wrestle Kingdom.



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who made headlines last year by becoming the first pro wrestler to compete in a hijab. In her debut for Pro Wrestling Eve, Diana picked up a win over **Zoe Lucas**.

On November 23, former WWE commentator **Hugo Savinovich** paid tribute to one of the greatest to ever step in the ring. "Fight Forever: Tribute To Bret Hart" brought talent from Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. to Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. During the show, "The Hitman" was honored with a special plaque. The main event saw **Rob Van Dam** defeat **Mil Muertes** in a falls-count-anywhere match.

Finally, British wrestling saw the end of an era, as PROGRESS co-founder and perennial M.C. **Jim Smallman** made his final appearance for the company on December 30. Smallman's final bow took place

at PROGRESS' 100th "Chapter" show, titled "Unboxing IV."

Since the promotion's launch, Smallman has served as the de facto face of PROGRESS, and he also played a major role in developing the NXT U.K. brand. Ahead of *Unboxing IV*, Smallman told British publication *The Daily Star*, "I am very proud of what we have achieved. I will always look back on it very fondly."

For its part, PROGRESS has soldiered on and continued to keep fans buzzing. When **Eddie Dennis** was forced to vacate the promotion's title due to injury on January 19, fan favorite **Cara Noir** stepped up. At the Chapter 101 event, cleverly called "Dalmatians," Noir won a four-way elimination bout (featuring **Ilja Dragunov**, **Kyle Fletcher**, and **Paul Robinson**) to become the new PROGRESS Unified champion. □

ARENA REPORTS

SPOTLIGHT CARD OF THE MONTH

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—MLW at the 2300 Arena: The Dynasty defeated Mance Warner & Logan Creed ... Jordan Oliver & Kotto Brazil beat Zenshi & Laredo Kid ... Davey Boy Smith pinned Erick Stevens ... Brian Pillman Jr. pinned Jimmy Havoc ... King Mo Lawal defeated Low Ki ... Douglas James beat Septimo Dragon by submission ... Open weight champion Alex Hammerstone pinned T-Hawk ... Mance Warner pinned Gino Medina ... Killer Kross beat Tom Lawlor by DQ ... Middleweight champion Myron Reed pinned Laredo Kid ... L.A. Park & Hijo del L.A. Park defeated Josef Samael & Simon Gotch in a lumberjack match ... El Lindaman pinned Zenshi ... Heavyweight champion Jacob Fatu defeated CIMA ... The Blue Meanie beat Richard Holliday by countout ... Davey Boy Smith Jr., Marshall Von Erich, Ross Von Erich, & Killer Kross beat Tom Lawlor, Simon Gotch, Seth Petruzelli, & Fred Yehi. (02-01-20)

—Spotlight photos by George Napolitano

ARIZONA

TUCSON—Rockstar Wrestling Alliance at the Rialto Theatre: Johnny Savoi pinned Kid Kolibri ... E.J. Sparks beat Roman Alexander by submission ... Chris Evans pinned Aguila ... Estrella Veloz beat Lucha Star by submission ... Clutch & Sugar Brown defeated El Dragon & Hijo del Impostor ... Lord Drako pinned Awesome Andy ... Red Miracle pinned Jayme Beachler II (02-01-20)

—Robert Murillo

CALIFORNIA

OAKLAND—WWE at the Oakland Arena: Universal champion Bray Wyatt defeated Daniel Bryan ... Ivar & Erik beat Luke Gallows & Karl Anderson ... Smackdown Women's champion Bayley defeated Lacey Evans ... Kevin Owens & Samoa Joe beat Akam & Rezar by DQ ... Drew McIntyre beat Seth Rollins ... Smackdown tag team champions Big E

& Kofi Kingston defeated Dash Wilder & Scott Dawson and John Morrison & The Miz in a triple-threat ... Raw Women's champion Becky Lynch defeated Asuka & Charlotte Flair in a triple-threat ... Roman Reigns beat King Corbin. (02-08-20)

—Vick Culter

LOS ANGELES—WWE Smackdown at the Staples Center: Lacey Evans & Dana Brooke beat Alexa Bliss & Nikki Cross ... Dash Wilder & Scott Dawson beat Kalisto & Gran Metalik ... Shorty G beat Dolph Ziggler by DQ ... Universal champion Bray Wyatt pinned Daniel Bryan ... Carmella defeated Mandy Rose ... Big E, Kofi Kingston, & Braun Strowman beat Sami Zayn, Cesaro, & Shinsuke Nakamura ... Roman Reigns beat King Corbin in a streetfight. (12-30-19)

—Brandon Langley

COLORADO

COLORADO SPRINGS—Colorado Springs Wrestling at the Corner Pocket: Captain Stevens pinned B-Mobile ... Aria Aurora pinned Reka Tehaka ... Big Guns pinned Curtis Cole ... 719 champion Javier Cruz

We encourage promoters and readers to e-mail results to:

PWIResults@yahoo.com

Please try to utilize the exact format you see in the "Arena Reports." Also, please distinguish between handicap matches and three- or four-way matches. And, when reporting the result of a handicap match, indicate the number of competitors and who was the last man eliminated. Finally, please note pinfall finishes. Following these guidelines will help us greatly and make it more likely that your report will be used.

pinned El Conde Federico ... Animal Sam pinned Arik Angel ... Hood Extreme pinned tag team champions Trainers Association for the title ... Heavyweight champion Delta Jr. beat Manny Lemons, Logan Austin, and William Cutting in a Fatal 4-Way. (01-18-20)

—Nathan Chacon

CONNECTICUT

WATERBURY—Northeast Wrestling at the Kennedy High School Gymnasium: NEW Live! champion Christian Casanova defeated Richard Holliday ... Chris Battle, Keith Youngblood, & Inzanely Rude beat D.L. Hurst, Brett Ryan Gosselin, & The Maine State Posse ... Wrecking Ball Legursky pinned Sledge ... Flip Gordon defeated Brian Pillman Jr. ... Jake Manning beat Daniel Evans ... Tama Tonga & Tanga Loa beat J.T. Dunn & Mike Verna ... Marty Scurll defeated Vincent by submission ... Dan Maff beat heavyweight champion Darby Allin by submission for the title ... Keith Youngblood won a 30-man rumble, last eliminating Richard Holliday. (01-25-20)

—Tim Walker



Davey Boy Smith Jr. cements his status as number-one contender to the MLW heavyweight title with a convincing win over the fast-rising Erick Stevens.

DELAWARE

NEW CASTLE—East Coast Wrestling Association at Asbury United Methodist Church: **Ricky Reyes** defeated **Marcus Waters** ... **Teddy Fine & Greg Spitz** beat **Kyle Christopher & Travis Lee** ... World-1 champion **Chris Rockwell** defeated **Jay D Luscious** ... **Eric Martin** beat **Napalm Bomb** and **Killian McMurphy** in a three-way for the vacant Mid-Atlantic championship ... **Chris Wylde** beat **LA Vin** by submission ... **Rey Calitri** defeated **Ricky Martinez** ... Heavyweight champion **Sam Shields** beat **Joey Ace** by DQ.
(01-18-20)

—Joe Zanolle

FLORIDA

ORLANDO—NXT at the Orlando Live Events: **Austin Theory** beat **Dexter Lumis** ... **Santana Garrett** beat **Samantha De Martin** ... **Oney Lorcan & Danny Burch** defeated **Rinku Singh & Saurav Gurjar** ... **Shotzi Blackheart & Bronson Reed** beat **Reina Gonzalez & Cameron Grimes** ... **Dio Maddin** defeated **Cal Bloom** ... **Jaxson Ryker** beat **Babatunde** ... **Jessi Kamea & MJ Jenkins** defeated **Briana Brandy & Rita Reis** by DQ ... **Angel Garza** defeated **Arturo Ruas** ... **Kona Reeves** beat **Shane Thorne** ... **Isaiah Scott & Kushida** beat **Mike Kanellis & Tony Nese** and **Shane Thorne & Kona Reeves**.
(02-01-20)

—Duane Long

CITRUS SPRINGS—WWE NXT: **Kayden Carter** beat **Deonna Purrazzo** ... **Denzel Dejournette** defeated **Aleksander** ... **Catalina Garcia, Rita Reis, & Mercedes Martinez** defeated **Jessi Kamea, Indi Hartwell, & Vanessa Borne** ... **Brendan Vink** beat **Mohammed** ... **Ridge Holland** defeated **Jake Atlas** ... **Bronson Reed** beat **Dorian Mak** ... **Tony Nese & Mike Kanellis** defeated **Shane Thorne & Daniel Vidot** ... **Reina Gonzalez** defeated **Santana Garrett** ... **Pete Dunne** defeated **Damian Priest**.
(01-31-20)

—Duane Long

MIAMI—New Japan Pro Wrestling at the Charles F. Dodge City Center: **TJP & Yuji Nagata** defeated **Misterioso & YOSHI-HASHI** ... **Satoshi Kojima** pinned **Alex Coughlin** ... **Toru Yano & Colt Cabana** beat **Ricky Morton & Robert Gibson** ... **Jeff Cobb** pinned **Ren Narita** ... **Lance Archer** pinned **Alex Zayne** ... IWGP tag team champions **Juice Robinson & David Finlay** beat **Chase Owens & Yujiro Takahashi** by DQ ... **Juice Robinson, David Finlay, Hiroshi Tanahashi, & Rocky Romero** defeated **Tama Tonga, Tanga Loa, Chase Owens, & Yujiro Takahashi**.
(01-30-20)

—Leonard Brand

FERN PARK—EVOLVE Wrestling 144 at the Orlando Live Events Center: **Joe Gacy** pinned **Denzel Dejournette** ... **Brendan Vink** pinned **Stephen Wolf** ... **Rik Bugez** pinned **Anthony Greene**



After receiving the PWI Rookie of the Year award, a pumped Brian Pillman Jr. scores a huge win over Jimmy Havoc, finishing the contest with an Air Pillman springboard clothesline.

... **Brandi Lauren** pinned **Avery Taylor** ... **Joaquin Wilde** pinned **Leon Ruff** ... **Adrian Alanis & Liam Grey** beat tag team champions **Davey Vega & Mat Fitchett** in a non-title match ... **Curt Stallion** defeated **Bobby Flaco, Donovan, Noah Clay, and Troy Hollywood** in a five-way ... **Anthony Gutierrez** pinned **Eddie Kingston** ... **Mansoor** pinned **AR Fox** ... Heavyweight champion **Josh Briggs** pinned **Dexter Lumis**.
(01-18-20)

—Leonard Brand

MELBOURNE—WWE NXT at Melbourne Auditorium: **Jaxson Ryker** defeated **Cal Bloom** ... **Catalina** beat **Marina Shafir** ... **Cameron Grimes** beat **Babatunde Aiyegbusi** ... **Mike Kanellis & Tony Nese** defeated **Mohamed Fahim & Nick Ogarelli** ... **Austin Theory** defeated **Dorian Mak** ... **Chelsea Green** beat **Kayden Carter** ... **Shane Thorne** beat **Daniel Vidot** ... **Kacy Catanzaro** beat **Vanessa Borne** ... **Keith Lee** defeated **Kona Reeves**.
(01-17-20)

—Duane Long

ORLANDO—I Believe in Wrestling at the Team Vision Dojo: **Sofia Castillo** pinned **Aaron Epic** ... **Jimmy Taylor** pinned **Djokovic Rabbit** ... **Kwame Nas** pinned **Caius Wolfe** ... **Ali Mohammed** pinned **Jake Shadows** ... **Chasyn Rance** pinned **Brian Atomic** ... **Jay Sky** pinned **Mike Reed** ... **Kiah Dream** pinned **Christian Mills** ... SCW Florida champion **Deon James** pinned **Josh Dawkins**.
(01-17-20)

—Al Haft

YBOR CITY—EVOLVE Wrestling 143 at The Orpheum: **Joe Gacy** pinned **Ric Bugez** ... **Indi Hartwell** pinned **Brandi Lauren** ... **Adrian Alanis** pinned **Denzel Dejournette** ... **Santana Garrett** pinned **Avery Taylor** ... **Dexter Lumis** pinned **Curt Stallion** ... **Leon Ruff** defeated

Ariel Dominguez, Liam Grey, and Stephen Wolf in a four-way ... **Brendan Vink** pinned **AR Fox** ... Tag team champions **Davey Vega & Mat Fitchett** beat **Eddie Kingston & Joe Gacy** ... **Anthony Greene** pinned heavyweight champion **Josh Briggs** in a non-title no-DQ match.
(01-17-20)

—Leonard Brand

FORT PIERCE—WWE NXT at Havert L. Fenn Center: **Santana Garrett** defeated **Vanessa Borne** ... **Dexter Lumis** defeated **Ric Bugez** ... **Rita Reis, Reina Gonzalez, & Shotzi Blackheart** beat **Deonna Purrazzo, Jessi Kamea, & Samantha De Martin** ... **Elliott Sexton** beat **Omari Palmer** ... **Killian Dain** defeated **Babatunde** ... **Saurav Gurjar & Rinku Singh** beat **Cal Bloom & Nick Ogarelli** ... **Io Shirai** beat **Catalina Garcia** ... **Austin Theory** defeated **Kona Reeves**.
(01-11-20)

—Duane Long

VENICE—WWE NXT at Venice Community Center: **Rik Bugez** defeated **Elliot Sexton** ... **Rinku Singh & Saurav Gurjar** beat **Cal Bloom & Nick Ogarelli** ... **Joaquin Wilde** defeated **Mohamed Fahim** ... **Briana Brandy & Reina Gonzalez** beat **Deonna Purrazzo & Indi Hartwell** ... **Mansoor** beat **Dexter Lumis** ... **Kona Reeves** defeated **Daniel Vidot** ... **Marina Shafir** defeated **Monique Jenkins** ... **Austin Theory** beat **Dorian Mak**.
(01-10-20)

—Duane Long

ORLANDO—I Believe in Wrestling at the Team Vision Dojo: **Aaron Epic** pinned **Sofia Castillo** ... **Jay Sky** pinned **Jake Shadows** ... **Amber Nova** pinned **Jimmy Taylor** ... **Chasyn Rance** pinned **Michael Dirienzo** ... Team Vision Dojo Rookie champion **Christian Mills** beat **Kiah Dream** by DQ ... AWA Florida tag



Former NCAA All-American wrestler and Bellator MMA champion King Mo Lawal has former MLW heavyweight king Low Ki in agony. A major brawl erupted between both fighters' cronies after Low Ki's corner tossed in the towel signaling surrender.

team champions **Kwame Nas & Josh Dawkins** beat **Carlos Gabriel & Andrew Merlin** ... SCW Florida heavyweight champion **Deon James** pinned **Caius Wolfe** in a no-DQ match ... Jay Sky won the 30-wrestler Dojo Rumble. (01-03-20)

—*Al Haft*

GEORGIA

ROYSTON—APW at The Royston Gym: **Dynamic Dexter** pinned **Josh Aeronson** ... **Stevie Ray Frost** beat **Corey Savior** ... **Scott Mayson** beat **Kyle Phillips** ... **Stryknyn** pinned **Young DC** ... **James Boulevard** beat Southern States champion **Jaxon Carter** by DQ. (01-17-20)

—*Brian Edens*

ATLANTA—ROH at Center Stage Theater: TV champion **Dragon Lee** pinned **Andrew Everett** ... **Angelina Love & Mandy Leon** defeated **Sumie Sakai & Nicole Savoy** ... **Dak Draper** pinned **Jason Cade** ... **Jonathan Gresham** defeated **Josh Woods** by countout ... **Jay & Mark Briscoe** beat **Jeff Cobb & Dan Maff** and **Tracy Williams & Mark Haskins** in a three-way ... **Bandido, Flamita, & Rey Horus** defeated six-man champions **Marty Scurll, Brody King, & Flip Gordon** for the title ... Heavyweight champion **PCO** beat **Rush** by DQ. (01-11-20)

—*Leonard Brand*

AUGUSTA—Livewire Wrestling at American Legion Post #63: **JC Walker** defeated **Karl Hager** ... **Shea Shea McGrady** defeated **Stevie Ray Frost** ... **Erik Thompson** beat **Rich Maxwell** ... **Tommy Vecs & Eddie Velasquez** defeated **Eddie Honcho & Scratch McKinley** ... **David Coleman** defeated

Darkness ... Heavyweight champion **Jeremy Cruz** beat **Willy D.**, **Big Game James**, **Adrian Davis**, and **Voodoo Jack** in a five-way. (01-04-20)

Billy Johnson

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO—AAW Wrestling at the Logan Square Auditorium: **Jordan Oliver** pinned **Jake Landers** ... **Fred Yehi** beat **ACH** by submission ... **Stephen Wolf**, **Ace Austin**, & **Clayton Gainz** defeated **Nate Webb**, **Air Wolf**, & **Angel Dorado** ... **AR Fox** pinned **Willie Mack** ... **Sami Callihan & Jake Crist** beat **Juventud Guerrera & Aramis** ... **Hyan & Savannah Stone** defeated **Jessicka Havok & Kimber Lee** ... **Killer Kross** pinned **Ace Perry** ... **Fred Yehi** pinned **Killer Kross** ... Heritage champion **Hakim Zane** pinned **Paco** ... Tag team champions **Davey Vega & Mat Fitchett** defeated **Jake Something & Curt Stallion**. (01-24-20)

—*Leonard Brand*

GRANITE CITY—Rampage Championship Wrestling at the Knights Of Columbus Hall: **Kenny White** defeated **Mark Morgan** ... **Johnny Imperium** beat **The Honky Tonk Kid** ... Tag team champions **Joker & Hawk Elliot** beat **Juan Sanchez & Skittles** ... **Damian Blackwell** pinned **Kurt Alexander** ... **Brandon Espinosa** defeated **Apocalypse** to win the vacant Wildcard title ... Heavyweight champion **Playboy Double H** vs. **Douglas O'Shea** vs. **Brian James** ended in a no-contest ... **Brian James**, **Kaos**, & **Riot** vs. **Playboy Double H**, **Douglas O'Shea**, & **Rick Ruby** ended in a double-DQ. (01-04-20)

—*Patrick Brandmeyer*

INDIANA

NORTH VERNON—Supreme Wrestling at Christ's Way Christian Church: **Van Martigan** pinned **Gaston LaRue** ... **Seth** pinned **Nic Noble** ... **Lillie Lockhart & Bailey McRoberts** defeated **Zannah & Jenna Storm** ... **Aaron Abbott** pinned junior heavyweight champion **JB Kidd** in a lumberjack match for the title ... **Chet Rippley** pinned **AMON** ... U.S. tag team champions **Big 'n' Tasty** beat **Chuck McRoberts & Cameron Saturn** by DQ ... Mid-America champion **Angus Barnett** pinned **Jason Kincaid** ... **Johnny Justice** beat **Eric Draven**, **Nic Noble**, and **Leon Elliot** in a four-way ... **Yukon Mike** pinned **Aaron Williams**. (01-17-20)

—*Jason Cohen*

WARSAW—Funkdafied Wrestling Federation at the City-County Athletic Complex: Cruiserweight champion **Nick Cutler** pinned **Matt O'Hare** ... **Russ Jones** pinned **Alexander S. Kirk** ... **Rod Street & Swat Team Member 399** defeated **RedRum & Damien Easterday** ... Hybrid champion **Celtic Nightmare** pinned **Poison Apollo** ... **Billy McGraw** won a battle royal ... **Idol Heinze** defeated **Simon Socrates** and **Jorge Bravo** in a three-way ... **Theo Storm & Isiah Moore** beat tag team champions **Fireball & Cletus Farmer** for the title ... **Lightning Bolt Johnson** pinned **Brutus Dylan** ... **Anthony Toatele** defeated heavyweight champion **Dru Skillz** by DQ. (01-11-20)

—*Leonard Brand*

IOWA

WALCOTT—SCWPro at the Walcott Coliseum: **Joeasa** defeated **Johnny Wisdom** ... **Matt Cage** defeated **Corn Boi** ... QC Cup champion **JT Energy** beat **Robin Steele** ... **JP Finger** defeated **James Thomas** ... Tag team champions **Mason Beck & Connor Braxton** defeated **Shane Hollister & Dante Leon** ... **Heather Reckless** beat **Blair Onyx** ... **Solomon Tupu** defeated **Chuck Brewster** ... **Solomon Tupu** defeated **Buck Brewster** ... **Travis Titan** beat **Xander Killen**. (02-08-20)

—*Alexander McCarthy*

KANSAS

TOPEKA—WWE Raw at Stormont Vail Events Center: Tag team champions **Ivar & Erik** beat **Luke Gallows & AJ Styles** and **Angelo Dawkins & Montez Ford** in a triple-threat ... **R-Truth** beat **Mojo Rawley** ... U.S. champion **Andrade** defeated **Cedric Alexander** ... **Natalya**, **Charlotte Flair**, and **Becky Lynch** beat **Sarah Logan**, **Asuka**, & **Kairi Sane** ... **Drew McIntyre** pinned **No Way Jose** ... **Aleister Black** beat **Buddy Murphy** by submission ... **Seth Rollins**, **Akam**, & **Rezar** defeated **Ricochet**, **Samoa Joe**, & **Kevin Owens**. (01-19-20)

—*Bill Worthington*

HOISINGTON—Kansas Wrestling Revolution at Hoisington City Auditorium:

Danimal defeated Explosivo ... Danny Burroughs beat Kenny Zombie Jones ... King beat Retro Randy ... Steven Cruze defeated Paul Puertorico by referee stoppage ... Liam Knox beat The Monster Havoc ... KJ Everly defeated Thrash ... CT Jones beat Kenny Zombie Jones ... Colt Killbane beat Danimal. (01-11-20)

—Scott Lee Clayton

KENTUCKY

PARIS—Prime Time Wrestling at the PTW Sportatorium: Ray Waddell pinned Stonewall ... Chris Majors pinned Henry Shaw ... Un4Seen Perez pinned Adam Slade ... Tony Evans pinned Willie Finesse ... Christopher Michael Lotus, Austin Tyler Morris, & Brandon Taggart beat Adam Swayze, Big Cuz, & Rex. (01-12-20)

—Dale Bass

CORBIN—WWE at The Corbin Arena: Braun Strowman, Big E, & Kofi Kingston defeated Shinsuke Nakamura, Dash Wilder, & Scott Dawson ... Asuka beat Charlotte Flair and Natalya in a triple-threat ... Kevin Owens, Samoa Joe, & Rey Mysterio Jr. defeated Rezar, Akam, & Andrade ... Universal champion Bray Wyatt defeated The Miz ... Rusev beat Bobby Lashley ... Randy Orton pinned AJ Styles ... Roman Reigns pinned King Corbin in a Loser-Eats-Dog Food” match. (01-12-20)

—Shannon O’Brien

LOUISIANA

SHREVEPORT—WWE NXT at Shreveport Municipal Auditorium: Tyler Bate beat Raul Mendoza ... Ilja Dragunov defeated Bronson Reed ... Reina Gonzalez defeated Kayden Carter ... Trent Seven pinned Cameron Grimes ... Cruiserweight champion Angel Garza beat Isaiah Scott ... Rhea Ripley & Mia Yim defeated Bianca Belair & Kay Lee Ray ... Keith Lee, Dominik Dijakovic, Matt Riddle, & Pete Dunne defeated Adam Cole, Roderick Strong, Bobby Fish, & Kyle O’Reilly. (01-24-20)

—Sarah Leone

LAFAYETTE—WWE Raw at Cajundome: Ivar & Erik beat Luke Gallows & AJ Styles ... Drew McIntyre pinned Cedric Alexander ... U.S. champion Andrade defeated Ricochet ... Natalya, Charlotte Flair, & Becky Lynch beat Sarah Logan, Asuka, & Kairi Sane ... Rusev & Liv Morgan defeated Bobby Lashley & Lana ... R-Truth beat Mojo Rawley ... Aleister Black beat Buddy Murphy by DQ ... Seth Rollins, Buddy Murphy, Akam, & Rezar defeated Aleister Black, Samoa Joe, Montez Ford, & Angelo Dawkins. (01-17-20)

—Sarah Leone

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE—Ring of Honor at the UMBC Arena: Mark Haskins defeated Alex Shelley by submission ... Vincent & Bateman defeated Dalton Castle & Joe Hendry ... Flip Gordon pinned

Slex ... Alex Zayne pinned Andrew Everett ... Jay & Mark Briscoe defeated Bandido & Flamita ... Flip Gordon won a battle royal ... Session Moth Martina pinned Sumie Sakai ... Jeff Cobb & Dan Maff defeated tag team champions Jay Lethal & Jonathan Gresham in a non-title match ... Brody King pinned Rey Horus ... PCO & Marty Scurll defeated Nick Aldis & Rush. (02-10-20)

—Leonard Brand

MICHIGAN

EAST JORDAN—Mr. Chainsaw Pro Wrestling at the Civic Center: Neil Gerard pinned Max Morrison ... Dickie Watts pinned Ashton Wagandha ... Jimmy Shalwin pinned Dan the Dad ... Atticus Cogar pinned Allie Kat ... Independent Wrestling TV champion Warhorse pinned Tommy Vendetta ... Tag team champions Jack Verville & Conrad Loucks defeated TJ Meyer & Jack Griffin ... Heavyweight champion Jumal Kyng pinned Jeff King. (02-08-20)

—Leonard Brand

WYANDOTTE—Pro Wrestling Live Holly Chagnon Benefit Show at Grizzly’s Bar & Grill: Dread King Logan pinned Ace Evans ... Sean Lawhorn defeated El Ridiculoso and Ric Caurdiea in a triple-threat ... TJ Meyer & Asmodeus beat Matt Hagen & Tyler Dean ... Alex Steele pinned Scotty Fraytown ... Mitch Hewitt won a battle royal ... Kevin Kalloway & Sean Tyler defeated Jimi & Jheras Grey ... Devil’s Right Hand pinned Adam Wick ... Chuck Stein pinned Peter B. Beautiful ... Aaron Orion, Tommy Vendetta, & Isiah Broner defeated Mongo, Willie Watts, & Heidi Katrina ... The DBA pinned Roughhouse Rob. (01-25-20)

—Leonard Brand

LANSING—Capital Pro Wrestling at The Fledge: Gary Dawson pinned Zak Ibiza ... Caleb Stills beat Dickie Watts by submission ... Mike Marvel & Mikey Miller defeated Jimi & Jheras Grey ... Mr. Main Event pinned Jeff King ... Matt Hagen pinned Jason Blasen ... Jack Verville pinned Conrad Loucks ... Caleb Stills & Georg Mack defeated Alex Cluckey & Mikey Mana ... CJ Otis beat LaDon Sanders by submission ... Billy Ray Daniels pinned Mr. One Night Only ... Josh Raymond pinned Dre Jacobs. (01-18-20)

—Leonard Brand

WYANDOTTE—Blue Collar Wrestling Alliance at The Copeland Center: Nick Braxton pinned

Michael T. Daniels ... Adam Wick pinned Ken Kash ... Mysterious Movado pinned Tanner Nix ... Dread King Logan defeated Eric Ely, Blake 182, KJ Crush, Christian Steele, and Patient #1 in a six-way ... Isiah Broner pinned Sean Lawhorn ... Elk pinned Asmodeus ... Bill Martel & Maserati Rick beat Gracefully Chosen ... Heavyweight champion Justin Mane pinned D-Ray 3000. (01-18-20)

—Leonard Brand

LINCOLN PARK—Horror Slam Wrestling at the B.V. Goodell VFW Post 552: Percy Drews & Kyle Bennett defeated The Phily Marino Experience ... Tanner Nix beat Nolan Edwards and Riley Rose in a three-way ... Chuck Stein & Matt Justice defeated Dread King Logan & Asmodeus ... Joseline Navarro pinned Divine Women’s champion Jody Threat for the title ... Malcolm Monroe III pinned TJ Meyer ... Peter B. Beautiful pinned Breyer Wellington ... Tag team champions Mitch Hewitt & Sean Lawhorn beat Kevin Kalloway & Sean Tyler ... Dread King Logan & Asmodeus defeated tag team champions Mitch Hewitt & Sean Lawhorn for the title ... Heavyweight champion Jeff King pinned John Wayne Murdoch ... Shlak defeated Eric Ryan and Eddie Only in a three-way. (01-17-20)

—Leonard Brand

CADILLAC—Universal Wrestling Enterprises at the Wexford County Civic Arena: Eric Freedom pinned Nick Green ... Yanni Giannos pinned Kris P. Bacon ... Jay Nova, Kavan O’Reilly, & Meathooks O’Bannon defeated Mike Idol, Jamie Race, & Trainwrecker ...



Douglas James continues to make the smooth transition from kickboxing and MMA to pro wrestling with a solid win over Septimo Dragon.

Heavyweight champion **Mongo** pinned **Max Morrison** ... Yanni Giannos won a battle royal. (01-11-20)

—Leonard Brand

KALAMAZOO—Independence Pro Wrestling at the Y Bar & Bistro: **Zak Ibiza** pinned **Keith Crème** ... **Jaimy Coxxx** pinned **Jimmy Shalwin** ... **Dickie Watts** & **Heidi Katrina** beat **Ace Evans** & **CJ Anderson** ... **Roger Lanier** pinned **Breyer Wellington** ... **Felix Moreo** pinned **Derek Wolfe** ... **Jimi** & **Jheras Grey** defeated **Jack Price** & **Tommy Vendetta** and **Isiah Broner** & **Adam Wick** to win the tag team title ... Michiana heavyweight champion **Aaron Orion** defeated **Josh Raymond** in a ladder match. (01-11-20)

—Leonard Brand

MELVINDALE—Pro Wrestling All Stars at Play Atlantis: **TJ Meyer**

pinned **Tanner Nix** ... **Heidi Katrina** won a battle royal ... Horror Slam tag team champions **Mitch Hewitt** & **Sean Lawhorn** defeated **Dread King Logan** & **Peter B. Beautiful** by DQ ... Cruiserweight champion **Malcolm Monroe III** vs. Metro Pro Wrestling Heritage champion **Jason Page** ended in a draw ... Tag team champions **Mysterious Movado** & **Maltese Tiger** beat **Breyer Wellington** & **Zach Main** ... Cruisercore champion **El Ridiculoso** pinned **Atlas Hytower** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... Heavyweight champion **Kevin Kalloway** pinned **Chuck Stein** in a lumberjack match. (01-10-20)

—Leonard Brand

WARREN—Xtreme Intense Championship Wrestling at the Hot Rocks Sports Bar: **Mongo** vs. **Tommy Vendetta** ended in a double-countout ... **Kevin**

Kalloway pinned **Royce Carney III** ... **Mysterious Movado**, **Eric Ely**, & **Matt Hagen** defeated **Percy Drews**, **Driza-keo**, & **The Soultaker** ... Lightweight champion **Alex Weir** beat **El Ridiculoso** and **Jumal Kyng** in a three-way ... Proving Ground tag team champions **Jack Price** & **Adam Wick** defeated **Jason Page** & **Jaimy Coxxx** ... **Dre Jacobs** & **TJ Meyer** beat **Jackson Stone** & **Sean Tyler** ... **Mitch Hewitt** pinned **Sam Beale** ... **The DBA** & **Trey Miguel** defeated **Aaron Orion** & **Dickie Watts** ... U.S. champion **Kongo Kong** defeated **Dread King Logan** and **Isiah Broner** in a three-way. (01-05-20)

—Leonard Brand

FLINT—Pure Pro Wrestling at the Iceland Arena: **Jackson Striker** pinned **Mason Kelle** ... **Nick Xero** beat **Dylan Derringer**, **Jimi Grey**, **Jheras Grey**, and **The Great Nokken** in a four-way ... **Hannah Henderson** pinned **Ryan Bradford** ... **Father Time** pinned **Cobra TA** ... **Cody Manning**, **Mr. One Night Only**, & **Dylan Night** defeated **Ace Evans**, **Moe Evans**, & **Road Rash** ... **Tay Rizer** pinned **Kanecki** ... Cruiserweight champion **James Alexander** defeated **D-Ray 3000** and **Tay Rizer** in a three-way ... Michigan heavyweight champion **Samson Real** pinned **Asmodeus**. (01-04-20)

—Leonard Brand

MISSISSIPPI

RALEIGH—Battlezone Championship Wrestling at the Smith County AG Center: **Matt Havard** pinned **Brayden Paige** ... **Jesse Dalton** & **JD Jenkins** beat **Vladimir Koloff** & **Jaxon Slade** by DQ ... **Braxton Hunter** defeated **Rey Fury** and **Simon Phillips** in a three-way for the vacant junior heavyweight championship ... **Chris** & **Sean Black** beat **Joey Abel** & **Faroh of Phunk** ... **Xtian Blake** defeated Capital City heavyweight champion **Frankie Thomas** for the title. (02-01-20)

—Nikki Kent

JACKSON—WWE Raw at Mississippi State Fairgrounds: **Ivar** & **Erik** beat **Luke Gallows** & **AJ Styles** ... **R-Truth** beat **Mojo Rawley** ... U.S. champion **Andrade** defeated **Cedric Alexander** ... **Natalya**, **Charlotte Flair**, and **Becky Lynch** beat **Sarah Logan**, **Asuka**, & **Kairi Sane** ... **Drew McIntyre** pinned **No Way Jose** ... **Rusev** & **Liv Morgan** defeated **Bobby Lashley** & **Lana** ... **Aleister Black** beat **Buddy Murphy** by DQ ... **Seth Rollins**, **Buddy Murphy**, **Akam**, & **Rezar** defeated **Aleister Black**, **Samoa Joe**, **Montez Ford**, & **Angelo Dawkins**. (01-18-20)

—Mylos Washcovic

RALEIGH—Battlezone Championship Wrestling at the Smith County AG Center: Battlezone Tag Team Championship Tournament, Semifinals: **The Nightmare Jeremiah** & **Ursa Major** defeated **Jesse Dalton** & **JD Jenkins** ... **Joey Abel** & **Faroh of Phunk** beat **Monty Warbucks** & **Wes Warren** ... Final: **The Nightmare**



Alexander Hammerstone maneuvers T-Hawk into a Boston Crab before finishing him with a Nightmare Pendulum. Hammerstone won MLW's openweight title in a tournament final against Pillman on June 1 and has successfully defended it ever since.

Jeremiah & Ursa Major beat Joey Abel & Faroh of Phunk ... **Michael Parrish** beat **Brayden Paige** and **Xtian Blake** in a three-way ... **Colt Storm** pinned **Brandon Whatley** ... **Frankie Thomas** defeated **Maddux** by DQ.
(01-04-20)

—*Nikki Kent*

MISSOURI

BALLWIN—Dynamo Pro Wrestling at the Midwest Sports Hockey Complex: D-1 champion **Camaro Jackson** defeated heavyweight champion **Adrian Surge** in a non-title match ... **C.J. Shine** pinned **The Snitch** ... **Jimmi LaFleur** beat **Outtkast** ... Women's champion **Rahne Victoria** defeated **Hayley Shadows**.
(02-01-20)

—*Patrick Brandmeyer*

AFFTON—Glory Pro Wrestling at the Elks Lodge: Tag team champions **Idris Abraham** & **Joe Coleman** beat **Camaro Jackson** & **Kenny Alfonso** ... **Elayna Black** beat **Seishin** ... **Devon Monroe** beat **Barackus**, **Matt Kenway**, and **Pretty Boy Smooth** in a four-corners match ... *David Lee Memorial Tournament, Quarterfinals:* **Kevin Lee Davidson** defeated **Everett Connors** ... **Air Wolf** pinned **Mike Outlaw** ... **Paco Gonzalez** beat **Dan Adams** ... **Myron Reed** beat **Jake Lander** ... *Semifinals:* **Kevin Lee Davidson** pinned **Air Wolf** ... **Myron Reed** defeated **Paco Gonzalez** ... *Final:* **Kevin Lee Davidson** pinned **Myron Reed**.
(01-18-20)

—*Patrick Brandmeyer*

ST. LOUIS—Mid-Missouri Wrestling Alliance at the South Broadway Athletic Club: **Keith Smith Jr.** defeated **Garrett Shanks** ... **Brian James** pinned **The Big Texan** ... **J-Mal Swagg** beat **Freddie Fury** ... **Ricky Cruz** vs. **Damion Cortess** ended in a time-limit draw ... **Gary Jackson** defeated **Damian Blade** by DQ ... **Frankie D** pinned **Chris Kade** ... **Moondog Rover** beat **Rick Ruby**.
(01-11-20)

—*Patrick Brandmeyer*

SPRINGFIELD—WWE at JQH Arena: **Daniel Bryan** defeated **The Miz** ... Raw Women's champion **Becky Lynch** beat **Natalya** ... Raw tag team champions **Ivar** & **Erik** defeated **Karl Anderson** & **Luke Gallows** ... **Kevin Owens** beat **Seth Rollins** by DQ ... **Aleister Black** defeated **Buddy Murphy** ... Smackdown Women's champion **Bayley** beat **Lacey Evans** ... **Braun Strowman**, **Big E**, **Kofi Kingston**, & **Roman Reigns** beat **Scott Dawson**, **Dash Wilder**, **King Corbin**, & **Shinsuke Nakamura**.
(01-05-20)

—*Len Moran*

CAPE GIRARDEAU—WWE at Show Me Center: Raw Women's champion **Becky Lynch** beat **Natalya** ... Raw tag team champions **Ivar** & **Erik** defeated **Karl Anderson** & **Luke Gallows** ... **Kevin Owens** beat **Seth Rollins** ... **Aleister Black** defeated **Buddy Murphy** ... Universal champion **Bray Wyatt**

After attacking Mance Warner before he could shed his jacket, Gino Medina goes for a pin while grinding his elbow into Mance's face. Warner would fight back into the match and roll up Medina for the win.



beat **The Miz** and **Daniel Bryan** in a triple-threat ... Smackdown Women's champion **Bayley** beat **Lacey Evans** ... **Braun Strowman**, **Big E**, & **Kofi Kingston** beat **Scott Dawson**, **Dash Wilder**, & **King Corbin**.
(01-04-20)

—*Gregg Stallworth*

NEBRASKA

OMAHA—Now This Is Wrestling at the Beardmore Event Center: **Con Artist** pinned **Delorian** ... **The African Prince Ali** defeated **JC Slater** in a last-man-standing match ... **Seishin** pinned **Shayde** ... **Devin Thomas** pinned **Tim Boston** ... **Duke Cornell** defeated **Madman Fulton** by submission ... **Jessicka Havok** pinned **Marti Belle** ... Heavyweight champion **J Fowler** pinned **Matt Cross** ... The winner of the ladder match to the determine the number-one contender including **Brett Bishop**, **Justin D'Air**, **Kenny Alfonso**, **JT Energy**, **Darin Corbin** and **Valentina Loca** still needed to be determined.
(02-01-20)

—*Josie Schmidt*

NEW YORK

BUFFALO—WWE NXT at Buffalo Riverworks: **Matt Riddle** pinned **Shane Thorne** ... **Kayden Carter** & **Mia Yim** beat **Bianca Belair** & **Taynara** ... **Kushida** pinned **Arturo Ruas** ... **Steve Cutler** & **Wesley Blake** defeated **Bronson Reed** & **Denzel DeJournette** ... **Keith Lee** pinned **Cameron Grimes** ... **Raul Mendoza** pinned **Danny Burch** ... Women's champion **Rhea Ripley** pinned **Shayna Baszler** ... **Tommaso Ciampa** & **Dominic Dijakovic** defeated **Finn Balor** & **Damian Priest**.
(01-12-20)

—*Leonard Brand*

NORTH CAROLINA

GASTONIA—Premiere Wrestling Xperience at the National Guard Armory: **Karl Fredericks** pinned **Mason Myles** ... Innovative TV champion **Cam Carter**

beat **Nathan Cruz**, **Saieve Al Sabah**, and **Lucky Ali** in a Fatal 4-Way ... **Jason Cade**, **Caleb Konley**, & **Zane Riley** defeated **Jake Manning**, **Drew Adler**, & **Tracer X** ... *X16 Tournament, Quarterfinals:* **Corey Hollis** pinned **T.J. Boss** ... **Ethan Case** pinned **Ren Narita** ... **Harlem Bravado** pinned **Matt Sydal** ... **John Skyler** received a bye ... *Semifinals:* **Harlem Bravado** pinned **John Skyler** ... **Corey Hollis** pinned **Ethan Case** ... *Final:* **Harlem Bravado** pinned **Corey Hollis**.
(01-19-20)

—*Brett Wolverton*

HIGH POINT—Revolution Wrestling Authority at Southside Recreation Center: **Snooty Fox** pinned **Tre G** ... Cruiserweight champion **Cain Justice** defeated **Shane Martin** by submission ... **WrestleForce** heavyweight champion **Eric Darkstorm** vs. **Bozworth** ended in a time-limit draw ... **Ali Steele**, **L.A. Tank**, & **Michael Devine** beat **Sweet Dreamz**, **Deon Johnson**, & **The Black** ... **Caleb Konley** & **Zane Riley** defeated **John Skyler** & **Zuka King** ... Women's champion **Samantha Starr** pinned **Shara Se7en** ... **Jason Kincaid** beat **Mecha Mercenary** by submission ... Extreme champion **Damien Wayne** defeated **Cory Bush** and **Lee Valiant** in a triple-threat ... **Lance Archer** defeated heavyweight champion **Timothy Zbyszko** by DQ.
(01-13-20)

—*Brett Wolverton*

OHIO

LANCASTER—Premiere Wrestling Alliance at the School of Professional Wrestling: **Bjorn** beat **Randy Forrest** by countout ... U.S. champion **Kevin Cruik** beat **CRipton** ... Heavyweight champion **Tommy Forte** pinned **Jimmy Fahrenheit** ... **The U.S. Outlaw** beat **Joey Black** ... **Jeremy Rodriguez** pinned **Jordan Carlyle** ... **Morgan Taylor** defeated **LA Cordova** in a Tuxedo Match.
(01-18-20)

—*Tony Ashbrook*



Shortly before signing a developmental deal with WWE, Killer Kross unloads on former MLW champ Tom Lawlor. Kross was declared a DQ winner when Lawlor's Team Filthy interfered.

LIMA—WAR Wrestling at the Bradfield Community Center: **The Revolution** defeated **Jimmy Shane**, **Mysterious Movado**, & **Beastman** ... **Jason Page** pinned **Eric Ely** ... **Rayz** pinned **Jackson Stone** ... **Chris Hall** pinned **Papa Dingo** ... Women's champion **Paloma Starr** pinned **Nikki Victory** ... **Gino DeCapo** pinned **Brandon Day** ... **Zakk Spadez** pinned Respect champion **Aaron Williams** in a non-title match ... Heavyweight champion **Cody Jones** pinned **Mojo McQueen**. (01-11-20)

—Leonard Brand

DAYTON—WWE at Wright State University Nutter Center: **Braun Strowman**, **Big E**, & **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Shinsuke Nakamura**, **Dash Wilder**, & **Scott Dawson** ... **Kevin Owens** & **Samoa Joe** beat **Rezar** & **Akam** by DQ ... **Asuka** beat **Charlotte Flair** and **Natalya** in a triple-threat ... Universal champion **Bray Wyatt** defeated **The Miz** in a last-man-standing match ... **Randy Orton** pinned **AJ Styles** ... **Roman Reigns** pinned **King Corbin**. (01-11-20)

—Britt Maverick

WARREN—WWE NXT at Packard Music Hall: **Alex Shelley** & **Kushida** defeated **Steve Cutler** & **Wesley Blake** ... **Arturo Ruas** defeated **Denzel Dejournette** by submission ... **Cameron Grimes** pinned **Bronson Reed** ... **Keith Lee** pinned **Shane Thorne** ... **Danny Burch** pinned **Raul Mendoza** ... **Rhea Ripley**, **Mia Yim**, & **Kayden Carter** defeated **Shayna Baszler**, **Bianca Belair**, & **Taynara** ... **Tommaso Ciampa** & **Dominic Dijakovic** defeated **Finn Balor** & **Damian Priest**. (01-11-20)

—Leonard Brand

OKLAHOMA

TULSA—Wrestling for a Cause at The Wrestle Center: **Curt Gannon** defeated **Fuel** ... **Jon Cross** defeated **Muy Macho** ... **Paul Puertorico** & **Gemini 2nd** beat **Steven Cruze** & **Maddox Jones** ... **Dimitri Alexandrov** beat **Mr. Nasty** ... **Richie Adams** defeated **Reed** ... Hometown Heroes champion **Luke Langley** beat **DexStar Hardaway**. (02-01-20)

—Scott Lee Clayton

TULSA—Body Progression Wrestling at The Wrestle Centre: **Brandon Groom** defeated **Ray Martinez** ... **Samedi** & **Menace** beat **Bobby Dylan** & **Giganto** ... **Cody Burns** defeated **JJ Hefley** ... **Leslie Physical** defeated **Skylar Slice** ... **Cody Burns** beat **Jimmy Lorenzo** ... **Derek James** & **Tommy Dean** defeated **Sam Stackhouse** & **Brian Dixon**. (01-11-20)

—Scott Lee Clayton

PENNSYLVANIA

READING—Atomic Championship Wrestling & Rogue Women Warriors at Reverb Night Club: **Leo Sweet** beat **Brian Kiesel** ... **Sarin Fawst** vs. **Bobby Kruger** ended in a no-contest ... **Erica Leigh** beat **Megan Mason** ... **Bones** beat Tri-State champion **Scotty Jeffreys** in a bullrope match for the title ... **Vita Von Star** defeated **Avista Varlowe** ... **Breaux Keller**, **Mike Quackenbush**, & **Zero** beat **Ricky South**, **Tunku Amir**, & **Devantes** ... **Andy Header** beat **Johnny Moran** ... **Jack Hershey** defeated **Wisly Jaccinor** ... Rogue Women's champion **Layna Lennox** beat **Charlie Krue** and **Jenny Rose** in a triple-threat ... Heavyweight champion **Dame** defeated **Stockade**. (01-24-19)

—Jocelyn Valentin

PHILADELPHIA—Super Krazee Pro Wrestling at the Toll Man Joe's: Live champion **Ron Starr** beat **Dennis Reaper** ... **Delmonicus** beat **Billy Avery** & **Marcus Skyler** in a handicap match ... **Dirt Bag Dan** beat **Rebecca Payne** and **Devon Moore** in a hardcore triple-threat ... **Crazy Ivan** defeated **Jermaine** and **Dylan Mesh** in a triple-threat ... **TD 52** beat **Rob Killjoy** & **CPA** to win the vacant tag team title ... **Darien Hardway** beat **Big Rock** in a streetfight ... **Atlas Rivera** defeated Live champion **Ron Starr** for the title ... Heavyweight champion **BLK Jeez** beat **Azrieal** ... **Team New Moon** vs. **Team Super Krazee** ended in a no-contest ... U.S. champion **Breaker Morant** defeated **Mike Law**. (01-11-20)

—Jocelyn Valentin

PITTSBURGH—WWE NXT at The Stage AE: **Alex Shelley** & **Kushida** defeated **Steve Cutler** & **Wesley Blake** ... **Danny Burch** pinned **Raul Mendoza** ... **Mia Yim** & **Kayden Carter** beat **Bianca Belair** & **Taynara** ... **Arturo Ruas** defeated **Bronson Reed** by submission ... **Dominic Dijakovic** pinned **Shane Thorne** ... Women's champion **Rhea Ripley** pinned **Shayna Baszler** ... **Matt Riddle** & **Tommaso Ciampa** defeated **Finn Balor** & **Damian Priest**. (01-10-20)

—Leonard Brand

TENNESSEE

CHATTANOOGA—WWE Smackdown at McKenzie Arena: **Big E**, **Kofi Kingston**, & **Braun Strowman** beat **Sami Zayn**, **Cesaro**, & **Shinsuke Nakamura** ... **Mustafa Ali** defeated **Drew Gulak** ... **Sheamus** beat **Shorty G** ... Universal champion **Bray Wyatt** defeated **Daniel Bryan** ... **Otis** & **Tucker** beat **Dash Wilder** & **Scott Dawson** ... Women's champion **Bayley** beat **Lacey Evans** and **Alexa Bliss** in a triple-threat ... **The Usos** & **Roman Reigns** defeated **Dolph Ziggler**, **Robert Roode**, & **King Corbin**. (01-19-20)

—Brian Shelton

KNOXVILLE—WWE Smackdown at Knoxville Civic Coliseum: **Braun Strowman** beat Intercontinental champion **Shinsuke Nakamura** by DQ ... **Big E**, **Kofi Kingston**, & **Braun Strowman** beat **Sami Zayn**, **Cesaro**, & **Shinsuke Nakamura** ... **Mustafa Ali** defeated **Drew Gulak** ... **Sheamus** beat **Shorty G** ... Universal champion **Bray Wyatt** defeated **Daniel Bryan** ... **Otis** & **Tucker** beat **Dash Wilder** & **Scott Dawson** ... Women's champion **Bayley** beat **Lacey Evans** and **Alexa Bliss** in a triple-threat ... **The Usos** & **Roman Reigns** defeated **Dolph Ziggler**, **Robert Roode**, & **King Corbin**. (01-18-20)

—Brian Shelton

TEXAS

HOUSTON—WWE Royal Rumble at Minute Maid Park: **Sheamus** pinned **Shorty G** ... U.S. champion **Andrade** pinned **Humberto Carrillo** ... **Roman Reigns** pinned **King Corbin** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Charlotte**

Flair won the 30-woman Royal Rumble, last eliminating **Shayna Baszler** ... Smackdown Women's champion **Bayley** pinned **Lacey Evans** ... Universal champion **Bray Wyatt** pinned **Daniel Bryan** in a strap match ... Raw Women's champion **Becky Lynch** beat **Asuka** by submission ... **Drew McIntyre** won the 30-man Royal Rumble, last eliminating Roman Reigns. (01-26-20)

—George Napolitano

HOUSTON—NXT/NXT U.K. Worlds Collide at the Toyota Center: NXT U.K. champion **Kay Lee Ray** pinned **Mia Yim** ... **Finn Balor** pinned **Ilja Dragunov** ... **Jordan Devlin** beat NXT cruiserweight champion **Angel Garza**, **Isaiah Scott**, and **Travis Banks** in a Fatal 4-Way for the title ... **Johnny Gargano** & **Tommaso Ciampa** defeated **Tyler Bate** & **Trent Seven** ... NXT Women's champion **Rhea Ripley** pinned **Toni Storm** ... **Fabian Aichner**, **Alexander Wolfe**, **Marcel Barthel**, & **WALTER** beat **Adam Cole**, **Roderick Strong**, **Bobby Fish**, & **Kyle O'Reilly**. (01-25-20)

—George Napolitano

AUSTIN—Game Changer Wrestling at the Blue Genie: **Blake Christian** pinned **Gino Medina** ... **Chris Dickinson** pinned **Andy Dalton** ... **Alex Zayne** pinned **Chris Bey** ... **Masada** pinned **Shlak** ... **Matthew Justice** pinned **Jimmy Lloyd** ... **Nate Webb** pinned **Ricky Starks** ... **Rickey Shane Page** pinned **Mance Warner** ... **Nick Gage** defeated **Allie Kat** in a Texas Death Match. (01-18-20)

—Leonard Brand

CYPRESS—Texas All-Star Wrestling at the Cypress VFW Arena: **Ryan Russell** defeated **Tommy Bolton** ... **El Silencio** beat **Toine Toine** ... **Lucifer** beat **Christopher Lyons**, **Erik Crowley**, and **Pablo Cruz** in a Fatal 4-Way ... **SiniStar** beat **Johnny BadGate** ... Tag Team champions **The Great Ones** beat **Kenny Kalypso** & **Jay Davis** and **Estrella Galactica** & **Azteca Dorado** in a triple-threat elimination match ... **Vinnie Zukko** defeated **EJ Mata** ... **Yul the Giant** defeated **Jesse Logan** ... Cruiserweight champion **Nate Andrews** beat **Prince Alexander** and **Stevie Hendrix** in a triple-threat ... **WarMonger** vs. **Nate Slater** ended in a no-contest ... **Edgrin Stone** beat heavyweight champion **Steve De Marco** by DQ ... **Edgrin Stone** won the 25-man Cypress Rumble match. (01-18-20)

—Bradley Bennett

DALLAS—Impact Wrestling Hard to Kill at The Bomb Factory: **Ken Shamrock** defeated **Madman Fulton** by submission ... X division champion **Ace Austin** pinned **Trey Miguel** ... Knockouts champion **Taya Valkyrie** beat **ODB** and **Jordynne Grace** in a three-way ... **Brian Cage** vs. **Rob Van Dam** ended in a no-contest ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Daga** ... **Eddie Edwards** pinned **Michael Elgin** ... Tag team champions **Ethan Page** &

Josh Alexander defeated **Willie Mack** in a handicap match... **Moose** pinned **Rhino** ... **Tessa Blanchard** pinned heavyweight champion **Sami Callihan** for the title. (01-12-20)

—Leonard Brand

SAN ANTONIO—Impact Wrestling at Freetail Brewery: **Ace Austin** beat **Wentz** ... RCW Women's champion **Kiera Hogan** defeated **Christi Jaynes** ... RCW heavyweight champion **Fallah Bahh** beat **Kongo Kong** ... **Michael Elgin** defeated **Joey Ryan** ... **Rhino** beat **Mahabali Shera** by DQ ... **Rob Van Dam** beat **Eddie Edwards** ... **Ethan Page** & **Josh Alexander** defeated **Dez** & **Trey** ... **Taya Valkyrie** beat **Jordynne Grace** in a streetfight ... **Dave Crist**, **Jake Crist**, **Madman Fulton**, & **Sami Callihan** beat **Brian Cage**, **Rich Swann**, **Willie Mack**, & **Tessa Blanchard**. (01-11-20)

—Leonard Brand

WASHINGTON

SEATTLE—DEFY Wrestling at Washington Hall: Heavyweight champion **Schaff** defeated **Artemis Spencer** in a ladder match ... **Luchasaurus**, **Marko Stunt**, & **Super Panda** beat **CIMA**, **T-Hawk**, & **El Lindaman** ... **Killer Kross** defeated **King Khash** ... **Judas Icarus** beat **Jet Knight**, **Guillermo Rosas**, **Titus Alexander**, **Jaiden Morales**, **Big Ugly**, **Brian Cook**, **Kevin Cook**, **King Marcus Anderson**, and **Coyote Azteca** in a 10-man elimination match ... **Brody King** defeated **Cody Ch-**

hun ... **Sonico** beat **Travis William** ... **Billy Pearl** & **Ricky Gibson** defeated tag team champions **Josef Samael** & **Jacob Fatu** and **Mike Santiago** & **Ethan HD** in a triple-threat for the title. (01-31-20)

—Matt Farmer

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

MISSISSAUGA, ON—Rebelution Women's Wrestling at the Don Kolov Arena: **Alexia Nicole** pinned **Jessie Mack** ... **Kaitlin Diamond** & **Masha Slamovich** defeated **Addy Star** & **Jody Threat** ... **Brooklyn** pinned **Krystal Moon** ... **CC Star** beat **Bianca Carelli** by DQ ... **KC Spinelli** & **Rebel** beat **Amy Crimson** & **Allysin Kay**. (01-11-20)

—Justin Drysdale

ENGLAND

BLACKPOOL—WWE NXT U.K.: Take-Over at Empress Ballroom: **Eddie Dennis** pinned **Trent Seven** ... Women's champion **Kay Lee Ray** beat **Toni Storm** and **Piper Niven** in a triple-threat ... **Tyler Bate** pinned **Jordan Devlin** ... Tag team champions **Mark Coffey** & **Wolfgang** beat **Fabian Aichner** & **Marcel Barthel**, **Flash Morgan Webster** & **Mark Andrews**, and **James Drake** & **Zack Gibson** in a Fatal 4-Way ladder match ... Heavyweight champion **WALTER** beat **Joe Coffey** by submission. (01-12-20)

—Nigel Benson



Jacob Fatu has been the standard-bearer for MLW since beating Tom Lawlor for the heavyweight title last July. The veteran CIMA was no match for the son of former WWF star The Tonga Kid on this night.

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

Sum. 2003 (Special Edition): WWE at 40! (Digital only; visit pwi-online.com—Cover History)

Sept. 2003: Guardian Angle: The One Superstar WWE Couldn't Afford To Lose. Plus: The Hurricane, Sting, Kazarian-Sabin, Jeff Jarrett, Booker T.

Jan. 2004: All Fired Up! Can Kane Blaze A Trail To The Raw Title? Plus: John Cena, Samoa Joe, Flair-Goldberg, Christian, ugliest wrestlers.

Fall 2004: Women Of Wrestling. 164 pages of wrestling's hottest stars. (Digital format only.)

Feb. 2005: A Yes Man? No Way! Ric Flair's Secret Plan Will Ruin Triple-H! Plus: Y2J, The Naturals, Luther Reigns, WrestleMania 21 countdown.

March 2005: 2004—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2004 In Review, Achievement '05 awards, Unofficial/Official, phantastic photos of 2004, predictions for 2005.

April 2005: Batista: Can He Steal WrestleMania's Future From Orton? Plus: Jeff Hardy, Eugene, Undertaker, JBL.

June 2005: Our Challenge To John Cena: Dominate 2005 ... Or We Don't Want To See You! Plus: Steve Austin, Austin Aries, Big Show, AMW.

July 2005: Gold Strike! Cena & Batista Change The Face Of Wrestling! Plus: Kevin Nash, Chris Benoit, Heartbreakers, all-time WrestleMania roster, the state of the game.

Aug. 2005: Kurt Angle: The 10 Reasons He's The Best Ever. Plus: Edge, Alex Shelley, Christy Hemme, DDP, WWE Hall of Fame.

Fall 2005 (164-Page Special): Wrestling Yearbook. Insider scouting reports on 50 top stars.

Dec. 2005: Triple-H: Which "H" Fits? Hated? Hero? Hypocrite? Plus: Guerrero-Mysterio, Dixie Carter.

Feb. 2006: Losing Street Cred? The Time Is Now For Cena To Get Tough. Plus: Jerry Lawler, Eddie Guerrero, Austin-Hogan.

July 2006: WM 22: Magic Mania Moments! Plus: The State of the Game, Abyss & Mitchell, Davey Richards, Christian Cage.

Aug. 2006: Exclusive! Edge Comes Out Swinging! Plus: Brother Runt, Benoit & Lashley, Milano Collection AT.

Sept. 2006: The Triple-H Paradox: What He Needs He Cannot Keep. Plus: Mid-year report, Shawn Michaels, Rob Van Dam, Chris Daniels, SummerSlam's top 25 matches, ECW years—1992-2001.

Oct. 2006 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars.

Jan. 2007: Sudden Impact! Can Kurt Angle Do For TNA What Hulk Hogan Did For WCW? Plus: Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ECW, Big Show, Orton-Masters-Carlito-Nitro, Matches of the Year.

Feb. 2007: Hollywood Ending: Cena's

Pumped For A Year Of Wrestling Only! Also: Randy Orton, Hardcore Holly, Booker-Batista, Kurt Angle.

April 2007 (164-Page Special): Wrestling Annual. A month-by-month recap of 2006.

May 2007: The 2007 *PWI* Poll. Plus: Batista, AMW, CM Punk, Bam Bam Bigelow, Flair-Dykstra, Chris Sabin.

July 2007: 'Mania Madness: Exclusive WM 23 Coverage. Plus: The State of the Game, Samoa Joe, wrestling deaths, global wrestling.

Sum. 2007: The Match Vince Let Get Away ... And The Title He Wouldn't! Also: Hogan-Big Show, Team 3-D, WrestleMania 23 weekend, ECW.

Sept. 2007: Orton Pays The Price In The Ring ... And Earns The Fans' Respect. Plus: Mid-year report, Edge, MVP, Jay Lethal, Great Khali.

Oct. 2007 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars.

Nov. 2007: The *PWI* 500. Plus: John Cena, TNA, WWE draft, TNA analysis.

Dec. 2007: Triple-H Disses The Champ: "Cena's Disrespect Is A Sign Of Fear." Plus: Kurt & Karen Angle, McMahons-Hornswoggle, Batista-Khali, Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ECW, 90 minutes with Chris Jericho.

Jan. 2008 (164-Page Special): The Greats Of The Game. Relive the careers of: Triple-H, Kurt Angle, John Cena, Batista, Sting, Edge.

Feb. 2008: HBK: "If You Ask Me, I'm Younger Than Randy Orton." Plus: Kurt Angle, Nigel McGuinness, Gail Kim, Royal Rumble at 20, sleaziest sluts & slimeballs.

March 2008: 2007—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2007 In Review, Achievement 2007 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2007, predictions for 2008.

June 2008: Special Tribute To Ric Flair: His 25 Greatest Covers Of All-Time. Plus: Y2J-JBL, Christian Cage, NWA, Brock Lesnar, Vickie Guerrero, John Morrison.

July 2008 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars.

Aug. 2008: Was Shawn Wrong? Former World Champions Speak Loudly ... And Unanimously! Plus: Angle-Joe, Undertaker, CM Punk, Austin Aries, State of the Game.

Sept. 2008: Take It Like A Man, Orton! A Real Champion Knows How To Lose. Plus: Lance Cade, McChif, general managers, guide to independents, Mid-Year Report.

Oct. 2008: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Dec. 2008: Five-Way Faceoff: Raw vs. Smackdown vs. ECW vs. ROH. Plus: Michelle McCool, JBL, Shawn Michaels, Angle-Styles, Ric Flair.

Jan. 2009 (164-Page Special): The Greats Of The Game: Relive the careers of: The Undertaker, Randy Orton, Booker T, Shawn Mi-

chaels, Samoa Joe, Rey Mysterio Jr.

Feb. 2009: Annoying? Si ... Successful? Si ... But Is Santino A Worthy Champ? Plus: Sheik Abdul Bashir, TNA Wars, Hardys, Super 8, Bryan Danielson, second-generations stars vs. dads, 20 matches that changed wrestling.

March 2009: 2008—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2008 In Review, Achievement 2008 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2008, predictions for 2009.

June 2009: The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Hardy vs. Hardy, Christian, Team 3-D, Kelly Kelly, CZW, Shawn Michaels, greatest wrestlers never to win world title.

July 2009 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars.

Aug. 2009: Jacked Up! Old Pro, New Era For TNA. Plus: Batista, FCW prospects, MVP, Homicide, State of the Game.

Sept. 2009: Mid-Year Report. Plus: Angelina Love, MVP, Evan Bourne, *PWI*'s 30th anniversary.

Oct. 2009: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Dec. 2009: Five-Way Faceoff: Raw vs. Smackdown vs. ECW vs. ROH. Plus: ODB-Cody, Orton-Cena, American Wolves, Dolph Ziggler, anti-Americanism, Gabe Sapolsky.

Jan. 2010 (164-Page Special): The Greats Of The Game: Relive the careers of: Chris Jericho, AJ Styles, CM Punk, Team 3-D, Big Show, Kevin Nash.

Feb. 2010: Triple-H—Wrestler Of The Decade. Plus: The Decade In Review, Desmond Wolfe, Super 8, John Cena, Hulk Hogan, Capt. Lou by Paul Heyman.

March 2010: 2009—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2009 In Review, Achievement 2009 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2009.

July 2010 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars, plus Shawn Michaels' career grades.

Aug. 2010: The Bell Tolls For HBK: Team Coverage Of WrestleMania 26. Plus: Adam Pearce, Amazing Red, Briscoes, State of the Game.

Sept. 2010: Cena (2010), Kobashi (2010), Flair (1990), Race (1980)—Who Would Win The Battle Of The Decades? Plus: Vince McMahon, Jack Swagger, Abyss, Edge, collectibles, Mid-Year Report.

Oct. 2010: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Dec. 2010: Cena's Suicide Mission: There's No Winning And There's No Way Out! Plus: Danielson-Shingo, Kane-Undertaker, Hardcore Justice, Motor City Machine Guns, secondary titles, four-way faceoff.

Jan. 2011 (164-Page Special): The Greats Of The Game. Relive the careers of: Chris Jericho, AJ Styles, CM Punk, Team 3-D, Big Show, Kevin Nash.

Feb. 2011: John Cena vs. Randy Orton: *PWI*'s Special 50-Category Analysis. Plus: Daniel Bryan, Jeff Hardy, Phill Shatter, Big Show, ROH, CM Punk, What's Ahead in 2011?

March 2011: 2010—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2010 In Review, Achievement 2010 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2010.

June 2011: CM Punk: Is He Destined To Let History Destroy Him? Plus: The Hardys, Edge, Sheamus-Morrison, Winter, all-time WrestleMania roster, *PWI* Poll.

July 2011 (164-Page Special): Report Cards Of The Stars. *PWI* grades the sport's top 50 stars, plus Undertaker's career grades.

Aug. 2011: Rock vs. Cena: Can't "Bring It" Soon Enough! Plus: Sin Cara, Matt Morgan, WrestleMania 27, pay-per-view piracy, State of the Game.

Sept. 2011: Can Cena Stay On Top With Rock In His Head? Plus: Randy Savage, RVD-Hulk, Christian, Brie Bella, Super 8, Mid-Year Report.

Oct. 2011: *PWI* 500. (Digital format only)

Nov. 2011: Memo To Triple-H: Don't Fire Vince ... Avenge Him! Plus: Ezekiel Jackson, Madison Eagles, Brian Kendrick, ROH-Sinclair, "*PWI* Female 50."

Jan. 2012: What The H Is He Doing? Five Directions Hunter Can Take WWE. Plus: Kelly Kelly, Beer Money Inc., Jay Lethal, Hulk Hogan, Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ROH

Feb. 2012: What's Ahead In 2012 For Wrestling's Top Stars? Plus: Sting-Dixie-Hulk, John Laurinaitis, future stars, Cena vs. all-time greats, Davey Richards.

May 2012: Rock vs. Cena: Our 11-Page Report On The Match Of The Century. Plus: Austin Aries, R-Truth, TNA-OVW, WWE injuries, Report Cards.

July 2012: The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Hardy-Angle, Daniel Bryan, Raquel Diaz, Gunner, bounties.

Sept. 2012: What The Brock! How Lesnar Ruined His Own WWE Return. Plus: Kevin Steen, Beth Phoenix, Stanley Weston-WWE, streaks, Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ROH

Jan. 2013: The Anti-Punk: Why Sheamus Is So Comfortable In His Pale Skin: Plus: Antonio Cesaro, Miz, Magnus-Joe, the "*PWI* Female 50."

March 2013: 2012—The Year In Wrestling. (Digital format only)

May 2013: Finally! The WWE Title Has Come Back To The Rock: What To Expect From 'Mania And Beyond. Plus: All-Time WrestleMania show-stealers, Kevin Steen, Bully Ray, report cards.

July 2013: Redemption, Thy Name Is Cena. Plus: WrestleMania 29 Winners & Losers, WWE Hall of Fame, Jesse Sorensen, Matt Taven, Devon, *PWI* Poll.

Sept. 2013: Our Annual WWE vs. TNA vs. ROH Face-Offs. Plus: Ryback, Mark Henry, Curtis Axel, Chris Sabin, Briscoes, MITB.

Nov. 2013: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Jan. 2014: Daniel Bryan: The Fans Say "Yes"! Why Do The McMahons Say "No"? Plus: Cheerleader Melissa, Adam Cole, Punk-Heyman, Magnus, AJ Styles, "*PWI* Female 50."

March 2014: 2013—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2013 In Review, Achievement 2013 awards, Unofficial/Official awards.

May 2014: Exclusive Analysis: Ranking The Undertaker's Toughest WrestleMania Opponents. Plus: Randy Orton, Batista, WWE Network, TNA Hall of Fame, Report Cards.

July 2014: WrestleMania 30: The Real Winners & Losers. Plus: Ultimate Warrior, Adam Cole, Carter Family, Super 8, brothers, WWE HOF, *PWI* Poll.

Sept. 2014: Celebrate With Us As *PWI* Turns 35. Plus: AJ Styles, NXT, Eric Young, WWE vs. TNA vs. ROH. (Digital only)

Dec. 2014: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Feb. 2015: Unstoppable: Why Brock Le-

snar Will Remain Champ For As Long As He Likes. Plus: Cesaro, Jay Briscoe, Bobby Roode, Paige, the "*PWI* Female 50".

April 2015: 2014—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2014 In Review, Achievement 2014 awards, Unofficial/Official awards.

June 2015: Report Cards Of The Stars. Plus: Alberto el Patron, CM Punk, Bobby Lashley, Wrestle Kingdom 9, WrestleMania 1 vs. WrestleMania 31.

Aug. 2015: WrestleMania 31: The Real Winners & Losers. Plus: Johnny Mundo, Ethan Carter III, *PWI* Poll.

Oct. 2015: Exclusive Interview—Kevin Owens: "I'm Proud To Be Different." Plus: Dolph Ziggler, Drew Galloway, U.S. & I-C titles, ROH vs. New Japan, wrestling's rising stars.

Dec. 2015: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport.

Feb. 2016: Female 50. Plus: Nikki Bella, Jay Lethal, NXT, injustices.

April 2016: 2015—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2015 In Review, Achievement 2015 awards, Unofficial/Official awards.

June 2016: A(+J)! Our Report Cards For 100 Stars: Plus: New Japan, Roderick Strong, TNA, Rey Mysterio Jr., WresleMania memories.

Aug. 2016: WrestleMania 32: The Real Winners & Losers. Plus: Drew Galloway, WWE Hall of Fame, *PWI* Poll.

Oct. 2016: Seth Rollins' Exclusive "Hotseat" Interview. Plus: Young Bucks, Jax Dane, Jade, Napalm Bomb, WWE Hits & Misses.

Feb. 2017: A Bizarre New Universe: This Is Not Your Father-in-Law's WWE. Plus: Will Ospreay, Hotseat: Kenny Omega, Female 50.

Aug. 2017: WrestleMania 33: The Real Winners & Losers. Plus: 2017 *PWI* Poll, Hotseat:

Christopher Daniels.

Oct. 2017: WWE's Six-Million Dollar Man: Brock Lesnar Is Worth Every Penny. Plus: NXT, Silas Young, Tim Storm, Super 8, Moose, Hotseat: Bobby Roode.

Dec. 2017: *PWI* 500. Ranking the top 500 stars in the sport (Digital only.)

Feb. 2018: The Brains Behind The Braun: Strowman—A Monster 60-Minute Interview. Plus: Neville, Jinder Mahal, Dalton Castle, Female 50 (Digital only.)

June 2018: 2017 Report Cards. Plus: Austin Aries, Curt Hawkins, Raw 25th/Royal Rumble, Who has/hasn't compete at WrestleMania, Hotseat: Alexa Bliss

Aug. 2018: Ronda Rousey Comes Up Big ... But Is She Really The Big Loser? Plus: WrestleMania 34 Real Winners & Losers, WWE Hall of Fame, *PWI* Poll, Hotseat: Scott D'Amore & Don Callis

Feb. 2019: Hotseat—Ronda Rousey: "I'm Living A Dream; I Would Do This For Free." Plus: Women's 100, Cody Rhodes, Roman Reigns.

June 2019: Eco-Friendly? Yes ... Fan-Friendly? No Way! Is Daniel Bryan Destroying His Legacy? Plus: Jeff Cobb, AEW, Report Cards. Hotseat: Becky Lynch.

Aug. 2019: Kofi-Mania! The Biggest Winner Is ... All Of Us! Plus: WrestleMania Winners & Losers, *PWI* Poll, Hotseat: PCO

Feb. 2020: Our Annual Women's 100: Becky Lynch Cleans Up The Division. Plus: WWE vs. AEW, Hotseat: Chris Jericho.

April 2020: 2019—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2019 In Review, Achievement 2019 awards, Unofficial/Official awards.

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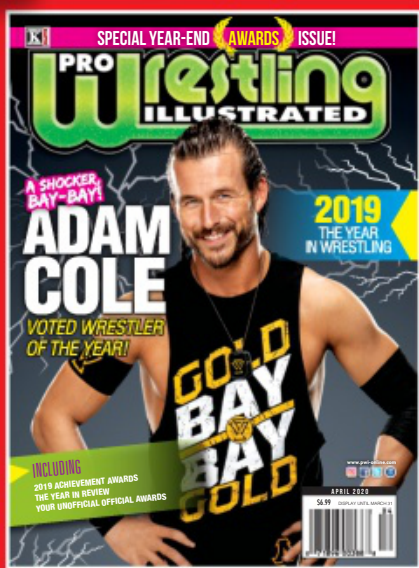
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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

For those of you complaining that Adam Cole, and not Chris Jericho, was named *PWI* Wrestler of the Year (April 2020), we ask you: Did you vote? This was the closest WOTY voting in 10 years. A few more votes for the AEW World champion would have put him over the top.

"Chris Jericho didn't wrestle a ton of matches, but what he accomplished for AEW helped change the entire business," wrote Sandy Meyers.

"Adam Cole was truly outstanding toward the end of the year," wrote Brian Mazer, "while Seth Rollins had a much better overall year. I wish the voters would have taken the whole year into account."

"It's obvious by most of the award-winners that *PWI* readers are WWE-centric," wrote Lanny Stoller, "so that makes Cody vs. Dustin Rhodes winning Match of the Year that much more impressive. I was there in Las Vegas and I actually saw people crying at the end."

"What does MJF have to do to earn Most Hated?" asked Laura Hedberg. "Come to think of it, I don't want to know!"

TESSA > BECKY

Okay, I can understand Becky Lynch beating out Tessa Blanchard in the Woman of the Year voting. Becky was The Man. But you know what? Tessa beat a man. Yes, she beat Sami Callihan fair and square to earn the Impact Wrestling heavyweight title in January. With all due respect to Becky Lynch, she has never done anything as incredible as that.

Tessa winning Woman of the Year for 2020 is a given. I'm not sure she won't win Wrestler of the Year!

JAMIE HOLSTEAD
Poughkeepsie, NY

WRONG ABOUT FIEND

I just finished reading your April 2020 issue and I have a small problem with the letter "Too Scary" that was sent by Nico Anselmo. I have to respectfully disagree with

her assessment of "The Fiend." True, kids do attend live events and watch on TV. And, true, The Fiend is utterly terrifying. However, that's something good that WWE has done over the past year.

Before he went to the Firefly Funhouse, Wyatt was lost and languishing in the middle of the show. Now, kids are cheering and yelling support when I sit next to them at live events when he appears. In other words, Nico is partially incorrect. Lots of kids are living in an age where they know the real Bray Wyatt of everyday life. They treat it like being afraid of the dark or monsters under the bed; they start off being scared until they realize that Bray's focus is on his opponents, not the fans. That lets them know that there really is nothing to be afraid of.



Tessa Blanchard is overcome by the moment after beating Sami Callihan for the Impact heavyweight title. Jamie Holstead feels this historic victory puts Tessa in a class above Becky Lynch.

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD/IMPACT WRESTLING



Edge goes on the attack against eventual winner Drew McIntyre during his surprise Royal Rumble return. Edge eliminated AJ Styles, Luke Gallows, and Randy Orton and is Marty Wicker's early frontrunner for Comeback of the Year.

Boycotting WWE isn't going to get rid of The Fiend. If Nico wants to sit out until The Fiend is gone, she'll be waiting a long while.

JUSTIN SHELUGA
Allentown, PA

NEW AWARD SUGGESTION

I wrote about this before in your magazine, after the year-end review issue came out, and I write to you about this again. I stated back in the day that Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels should not have won Match of the Year. I felt that it should have won Moment of the Year. The thing I remember most about that match is the end and everything it meant. I don't recall being on the edge of my seat enjoying every second of it.

This year the Match of the Year was correct, but I feel like Kofi Kingston winning the belt was so monumental that it needed to be honored somehow. His victory meant so much to so many people. Listening to Kingston and his fellow New Day members, it meant so much to be the first African-born

champion. His win meant the world to the people that go out and work their tail off year after year that just want some appreciation.

Kofi was the right man in the right spot at the right time. The positive nature of Kofi Kingston made his win mean more than just the match.

BRIAN D. WISEMAN
Louisville, KY

THE EDGE TO EDGE

Believe it or not, I'm already thinking ahead to next year's Achievement Awards. When Hiromu Takahashi came all the way back from a broken neck to win the IWGP junior heavyweight title from Will Ospreay at Wrestle Kingdom 14, I figured him to be a lock for Comeback Wrestler of the Year. He had been out since July 2018 and lost three tag team matches when he returned at the very end of 2019. To beat a man of Ospreay's caliber in his first singles match is a testament to Takahashi's greatness.

But then Edge came back at The Royal Rumble after an absence of

eight years and he lasted almost 24 minutes. A few gray hairs in his beard, but he looked like he was in the best shape of his life.

We have a long way to go in 2020, so we'll have to keep an eye on how these two do. Right now, though, I lean toward Edge.

MARTY WICKER
Beloit, WI

ALWAYS A WINNER

Steve Austin receiving the Stanley Weston Award for lifetime achievement was richly deserved. Long after the last match of his brilliant career, "Stone Cold" is still a treasure to the industry. The chit-chat style of his "Broken Skull" interviews get more information from major stars than even the most seasoned journalist could get.

His career meant so much to this young man growing up in Alabama. I am so grateful to this man and what he accomplished—and continues to accomplish.

BERNARD LAMONT
Troy, AL □

PWI OFFICIAL RATINGS

FOR PERIOD ENDED
FEBRUARY 10, 2020

TOP 10

- 1 BRAY WYATT**
286, Brooksville, FL
(1) WWE Universal champion
- 2 TETSUYA NAITO**
225, Tokyo, Japan
(-) IWGP World/Intercontinental champion
- 3 CHRIS JERICHO**
227, Winnipeg, MB
(2) AEW World champion
- 4 BROCK LESNAR**
286, Minneapolis, MN
(3) WWE heavyweight champion
- 5 DREW McINTYRE**
265, Ayr, Scotland
(-) No. 1 contender WWE heavyweight title
- 6 ADAM COLE**
210, Panama City, FL
(6) NXT heavyweight champion
- 7 JON MOXLEY**
224, Cincinnati, OH
(-) No. 1 contender AEW World title
- 8 BRAUN STROWMAN**
385, Sherrills Ford, NC
(-) WWE Intercontinental champion
- 9 NICK ALDIS**
242, King's Lynn, England
(9) NWA heavyweight champion
- 10 PCO**
300, Montreal, QC
(10) ROH heavyweight champion



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

DREW McINTYRE

TAG TEAMS

- 1 SETH ROLLINS & BUDDY MURPHY**
Combined weight: 454 pounds
(-) Raw tag team champions
- 2 KENNY OMEGA & ADAM PAGE**
Combined Weight: 442 pounds
(-) AEW World tag team champions
- 3 BIG E & KOFI KINGSTON**
Combined weight: 497 pounds
(3) Smackdown tag team champions
- 4 TAMA TONGA & TANGA LOA**
Combined weight: 429 pounds
(4) IWGP World tag team champions
- 5 ERIK & IVAR**
Combined weight: 552 pounds
(1) No. 1 contenders Raw tag team title
- 6 KYLE O'REILLY & BOBBY FISH**
Combined weight: 397 pounds
(5) NXT tag team champions
- 7 JAY LETHAL & JONATHAN GRESHAM**
Combined weight: 400 pounds
(6) ROH tag team champions
- 8 SUWAMA & SHUJI ISHIKAWA**
Combined weight: 552 pounds
(-) All Japan tag team champions
- 9 ELI DRAKE & JAMES STORM**
Combined weight: 464 pounds
(-) NWA tag team champions
- 10 ETHAN PAGE & JOSH ALEXANDER**
Combined weight: 480 pounds
(-) Impact Wrestling tag team champions

WWE RAW

WWE Champion:

BROCK LESNAR

(C) 286, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—DREW McINTYRE**
(10) 265, Ayr, Scotland
- 2—ANDRADE**
(-) 210, Gomez Palacio, Mex.
- 3—RICOCHET**
(7) 188, Paducah, KY
- 4—RANDY ORTON**
(2) 250, St. Louis, MO
- 5—KEVIN OWENS**
(9) 266, Marietta, GA
- 6—ALEISTER BLACK**
(8) 215, Amsterdam, Holland
- 7—SETH ROLLINS**
(3) 227, Davenport, IA
- 8—REY MYSTERIO JR.**
(1) 175, San Diego, CA
- 9—BOBBY LASHLEY**
(6) 273, Colorado Springs, CO
- 10—RUSEV**
(-) 304, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

SMACKDOWN

Universal Champion:

BRAY WYATT

(C) 286, Brooksville, FL

- 1—BRAUN STROWMAN**
(-) 385, Sherrills Ford, NC
- 2—ROMAN REIGNS**
(3) 265, Pensacola, FL
- 3—DANIEL BRYAN**
(4) 210, Aberdeen, WA
- 4—SHINSUKE NAKAMURA**
(1) 229, Tokyo, Japan
- 5—KING CORBIN**
(2) 275, Lenexa, KS
- 6—THE MIZ**
(5) 221, Hollywood, CA
- 7—SHEAMUS**
(-) 267, Dublin, Ireland
- 8—JOHN MORRISON**
(-) 215, Los Angeles, CA
- 9—MUSTAFA ALI**
(6) 182, Chicago, IL
- 10—DOLPH ZIGGLER**
(10) 218, Hollywood, FL

AEW

World Heavyweight Champion:

CHRIS JERICHO

(C) 227, Winnipeg, MB

- 1—JON MOXLEY**
(1) 224, Cincinnati, OH
- 2—CODY RHODES**
(3) 220, Atlanta, GA
- 3—PAC**
(4) 206, Newcastle, England
- 4—MJF**
(s) 216, Plainville, NY
- 5—KENNY OMEGA**
(2) 229, Winnipeg, MB
- 6—DARBY ALLIN**
(-) 180, Seattle, WA
- 7—ADAM PAGE**
(6) 214, Aaron's Creek, VA
- 8—KIP SABIAN**
(-) 183, Norfolk, England
- 9—SAMMY GUEVARA**
(10) 185, Houston, TX
- 10—JIMMY HAVOC**
(-) 196, Kent, England

IMPACT

Heavyweight Champion:

TESSA BLANCHARD

(7) 125, Charlotte, NC

- 1—SAMI CALLIHAN**
(C) 207, Bellefontaine, OH
- 2—MICHAEL ELGIN**
(1) 245, Toronto, ON
- 3—EDDIE EDWARDS**
(5) 214, Boston, MA
- 4—ACE AUSTIN**
(3) 190, Atlantic City, NJ
- 5—ROB VAN DAM**
(10) 235, Battle Creek, MI
- 6—KEN SHAMROCK**
(-) 210, Reno, NV
- 7—MOOSE**
(4) 295, Atlanta, GA
- 8—JOEY RYAN**
(6) 210, Hollywood, CA
- 9—WILLIE MACK**
(-) 280, Los Angeles, CA
- 10—TJP**
(-) 174, Los Angeles, CA

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or tag team. These ratings are compiled by a committee consisting of Stu Saks, Pat Laprade, Kris Zellner, Brian Yoder, Louie Dee, and STRIGGA (cagematch.net, purolove.com). The numbers in parentheses indicate a wrestler's position in that category last issue. Agate-sized ratings are supplied to *PWI* by promoters and can be e-mailed to us at pwireresults@yahoo.com (please put the word "ratings" in the subject line).

BIG WEST WRESTLING: CHAMPION—Ace Redmann Jr.; 1—Braydon Goss; 2—Chucky Lee Ray; 3—Danni Deeds; 4—Marty Sugar; 5—Camaro Cope; 6—Taylor King; 7—Michael More; 8—Davey Deals; 9—Draven Andrews; 10—Scarlett Black

DRAGON GATE: CHAMPION—Naruki Doi; 1—Susumu Yokosuka; 2—Kzy; 3—Kaito Ishida; 4—Genki Horiguchi; 5—Takashi Yoshida; 6—Yamato; 7—BxB Hulk; 8—Ben-K; 9—Dragon Dia; 10—Masaaki Mochizuki

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: CHAMPION—Sam Shields; 1—Eric Martin; 2—Joey Ace; 3—Chris Wylde; 4—Rey Calitri; 5—Chris Rockwell; 6—Jay D Luscious; 7—Mr. Ooh La La; 8—Kyle Christopher; 9—Travis Lee; 10—Napalm Bomb

ELITE PRO WRESTLING ALLIANCE: CHAMPION—Shane Malice; 1—The Patriot; 2—Jason Radatz; 3—Reggie Collins; 4—Cizzko; 5—Brandon Scott; 6—Rhyno; 7—Antony Atom; 8—Deuce Donatelli; 9—Bodie Williams; 10—The Barbarian

EVOLVE: CHAMPION—Josh Briggs; 1—Anthony Greene; 2—Brendan Vink; 3—AR Fox; 4—Joe Gacy; 5—Curt Stallion; 6—Anthony Gutierrez; 7—Eddie Kingston; 8—Leon Ruff; 9—JD Drake; 10—Harlem Bravado

FUTURE GREAT WRESTLING: CHAMPION—Mitch Magnus; 1—Sean Casey; 2—Amos; 3—Logan Blackheart; 4—Eric Fallen; 5—Dru Skillz; 6—Ryan Michaels; 7—Ryan Wylde; 8—Hooks; 9—Jay West; 10—Mark Magnum

MAJOR LEAGUE WRESTLING: CHAMPION—Jacob Fatu; 1—Davey Boy Smith Jr.; 2—Alex Hammerstone; 3—Low Ki; 4—LA Park; 5—Myron Reed; 6—Tom Lawlor; 7—Mance Warner; 8—Brian Pillman Jr.; 9—Gino Medina; 10—Jimmy Havoc

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE: CHAMPION—Nick Aldis; 1—Zicky Dice; 2—Ricky Starks; 3—Thom Latimer; 4—Tim Storm; 5—Mr. Anderson; 6—James Storm; 7—Trevor Murdoch; 8—Aron Stevens; 9—Scott Steiner; 10—Flip Gordon

NXT U.K.: CHAMPION—WALTER; 1—Tyler Bate; 2—Dave Mastiff; 3—Ilja Dragunov; 4—Joe Coffey; 5—Joseph Conners; 6—Trent Seven; 7—Eddie Dennis; 8—Ridge Holland; 9—Travis Banks; 10—Kassius Ohno

PRIME TIME PRO WRESTLING: CHAMPION—O'Shay Edwards; 1—EFFY; 2—Isaiah Frazier; 3—Trish Adora; 4—Breaux Keller; 5—Faye Jackson; 6—Mack Buckler; 7—Tasha Steelz; 8—Logan Laroux; 9—Ariela Nyx; 10—Victor Benjamin

RENEGADE WRESTLING ALLIANCE: CHAMPION—Daniel Eads; 1—J-Rocc; 2—Bronco McBride; 3—Bill Collier; 4—Rev. Ron Hunt; 5—Super Hentai; 6—Dennis Gregory; 7—Shane Andrews; 8—Crazy Steve; 9—Justin Idol; 10—JDL

SUPREME WRESTLING: CHAMPION—Eric Draven; 1—Angus Barnett; 2—Seth Geer; 3—Chuck McRoberts; 4—Aaron Abbott; 5—Johnny Justice; 6—Leon Elliott; 7—Cameron Saturn; 8—JB Kidd; 9—Lillie Lockhart; 10—Josh Lewis

ROH

Heavyweight Champion:
PCO
(C) 300, Montreal, QC
1—**DRAGON LEE**
(1) 165, Jalisco, Mexico
2—**JEFF COBB**
(2) 263, Honolulu, HI
3—**RUSH**
(3) 225, Jalisco, Mexico
4—**MARTY SCURLL**
(4) 185, Cambridge, England
5—**VINCENT**
(5) 189, Warwick, RI
6—**ALEX ZAYNE**
(-) 185, Lexington, KY
7—**SHANE TAYLOR**
(6) 356, San Antonio, TX
8—**KENNY KING**
(8) 230, Orlando, FL
9—**FLIP GORDON**
(10) 187, Kalispell, MT
10—**MARK HASKINS**
(9) 209, Faringdon, England

NXT

Champion:
ADAM COLE
(C) 210, Panama City, FL
1—**KEITH LEE**
(3) 320, Wichita Falls, TX
2—**TOMMASO CIAMPA**
(8) 201, Milwaukee, WI
3—**RODERICK STRONG**
(1) 200, Tampa, FL
4—**FINN BALOR**
(5) 190, Bray, Ireland
5—**MATT RIDDLE**
(2) 216, Las Vegas, NV
6—**JORDAN DEVLIN**
(-) 180, Bray, Ireland
7—**PETE DUNNE**
(10) 205, Birmingham, England
8—**ANGEL GARZA**
(6) 205, Monterrey, Mexico
9—**DOMINIK DIJAKOVIC**
(-) 270, Worcester, MA
10—**DAMIAN PRIEST**
(4) 251, New York, NY

NEW JAPAN

IWGP World Champion:
TETSUYA NAITO
(3) 225, Tokyo, Japan
1—**KENTA**
(4) 287, Soka, Japan
2—**SHINGO TAKAGI**
(-) 212, Yamanashi, Japan
3—**KAZUCHIKA OKADA**
(C) 236, Tokyo, Japan
4—**JAY WHITE**
(2) 198, Auckland, New Zealand
5—**HIROMU TAKAHASHI**
(-) 194, Tokyo, Japan
6—**JON MOXLEY**
(-) 224, Cincinnati, OH
7—**TOMOHIRO ISHII**
(9) 220, Kawasaki, Japan
8—**ZACK SABRE JR.**
(-) 187, London, England
9—**WILL OSPREAY**
(7) 190, Essex, England
10—**MINORU SUZUKI**
(-) 225, Yokohama, Japan

WOMEN

1—**TESSA BLANCHARD**
(5) 125, Charlotte, NC
2—**BECKY LYNCH**
(2) 135, Dublin, Ireland
Raw Women's champion
3—**CHARLOTTE FLAIR**
(9) 141, Charlotte, NC
4—**RHEA RIPLEY**
(1) 137, Adelaide, Australia
NXT Women's champion
5—**SHAYNA BASZLER**
(4) 136, Sioux Falls, SD
6—**BAYLEY**
(3) 119, San Jose, CA
Smackdown Women's champion
7—**RIHO**
(6) 99, Tokyo, Japan
AEW Women's champion
8—**BIANCA BELAIR**
(-) 155, Knoxville, TN
9—**KAY LEE RAY**
(-) 112, Johnstone, Scotland
NXT U.K. champion
10—**ASUKA**
(7) 137, Osaka, Japan

DRAWING BLOOD

BY JASON CONLAN

Kazuo Sakurada
KENDO NAGASAKI
1948-2020
Rest In Peace



I'LL BET, IF YOU WERE TO DO THE MATH, THAT BROCK LESNAR PROBABLY SPENT ALMOST AS MUCH TIME IN THE RING AT ROYAL RUMBLE, AS HE DID IN WWE RINGS GENERALLY, FOR THE ENTIRETY OF 2019...

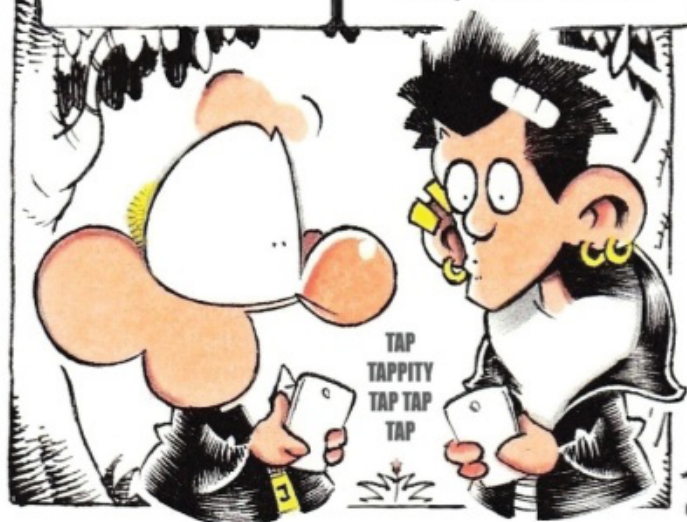
TO BE FAIR, HE PROBABLY SPENT MORE TIME IN THE **SHOWER** AT ROYAL RUMBLE, THAN THE RING-TIME HE HAD IN 2019 THOUGH!!



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mrjcomics.com

I'M NEVER A FAN OF WHEN PEOPLE JUST RANDOMLY DROP TITLES..

YEAH.. I THINK HARRY & MEGHAN SHOULD HAVE PUT OVER SOME OF THE YOUNGER TALENT ON THE WAY OUT TOO!!



TAP
TAPPITY
TAP TAP
TAP

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