

CAN THE DREAM DO IT AGAIN?

by Jerry Prater

It was almost a year ago, August 21st, 1979, that Dusty Rhodes defeated Harley Race for the world heavyweight championship at the Tampa Armory.

Five days later, through a bizarre set of circumstances, Dusty lost the title back to Race. The rematch carried a special stipulation that the disqualification rule was waived, and Rhodes was disqualified. Of more significance was the fact that, before the match, Terry Funk jumped into the ring and went after Dusty. The Dream's arm was broken in the ensuing struggle, and it was at this disadvantage that he faced Harley Race.

On August 21st, 1979, Dusty Rhodes in effect exploded the myth that Harley Race had become unbeatable. It was a one fall, 60 minute time limit match, with no special stipulations, and Rhodes pinned the champ for the three count right in the middle of the ring.

Dusty spent much of the following year in an effort to regain the title which slipped through his fingers so suddenly after he had won it. Harley Race knew the threat posed by this rugged, determined Texas cowboy, and he wasn't anxious for another taste of defeat, but in the final analysis he had to face the challenge of the man who had beaten him.

An exceedingly clever wrestler, Race always managed to keep the belt when he went up against Dusty, even though he might not look very much like a champion in the process. Finally, in utter frustration, Rhodes denounced the National Wrestling Alliance and swore that he would never again wrestle Harley Race.

Apparently, this produced the results which were not forthcoming after earlier appeals. The NWA met in a closed-door session and decided to offer Rhodes a final chance at the champion, this time in a 2 out of 3 fall, no disqualification match.

Assigned to keep order in this unique contest was former NWA President Fritz Von Erich, a man who will not be pushed around by anyone. Fritz is still an active profes-



sional wrestler and has three sons in the sport as well. His name is synonymous with the dreaded "iron claw" hold.

Given this one final opportunity, and with it a set of circumstances which will close certain "loopholes" of which Harley Race has taken advantage in the past, Dusty Rhodes accepted the match. He accepted confidently, so much so that he voluntarily vacated his southern heavyweight championship.

And so it's all on the line tonight. Sportswriters have called it the "Last Tangle In Tampa," and indeed it does promise to ring the final bell, either in Harley Race's reign as world champion, or in Dusty Rhodes' quest for that title.

A match which would sell out Madison Square Garden by itself is tonight's confrontation between Bob Backlund and Don



DON MURACO
Florida heavyweight champion

Muraco for the WWF heavyweight championship. Bob won the WWF belt from the fabulous Superstar Billy Graham and has defended it against the best competition to be found in the populous northeastern section of the country.

Muraco is the Florida heavyweight champion and Sir Oliver Humperdink's choice of a candidate to represent the House of Humperdink in this effort to add a very important title to Sir Oliver's trophy case.

The world junior heavyweight title goes on the line tonight, with Britisher Les Thornton defending against Mike Graham. In what has been aptly called a "battle of the giants," Ernie "Big Cat" Ladd takes on 450 pound Andre the Giant. Mr. Florida meets the Super Destroyer with the stipulation that one mask must be removed. And seven top-ranked girl grapplers will vie for a \$10,000 battle royal jackpot.

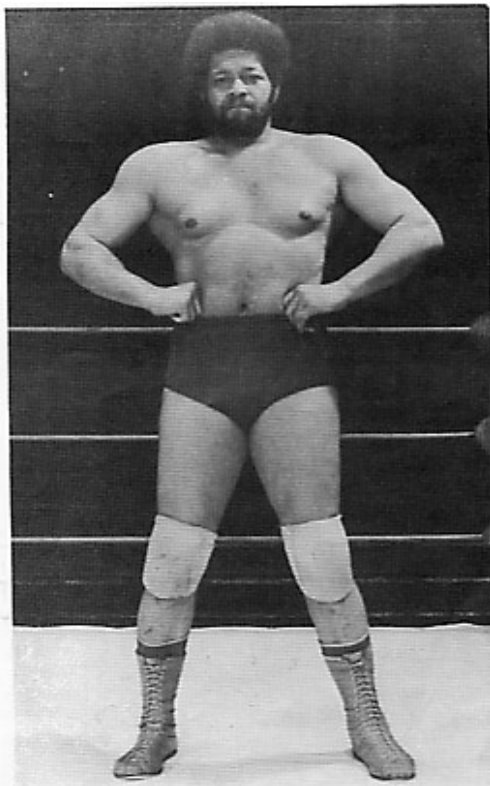


BOB BACKLUND
WWF heavyweight champion

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FRITZ VON ERICH
former NWA president



ERNIE "BIG CAT" LADD



ANDRE THE GIANT



WENDI RICHTER