

# The WWF: The Power and The Glory

BY PHIL "THE DARTMOUTH DEMON" LEWIS

The WWF (World Wrestling Federation) has always been labelled as something for kids because the matches are "fixed". On the other hand, the number one force in sports

entertainment has a strong following that could possibly rival those so-called "real sports".

The majority of wrestling fans are typically men from 8-28 years old, but the older ones have a tendency to be "closet" fans. Tell anyone you are a WWF fan and the immediate response is "how can you watch that

stuff? It's not real!"

Last year, when the WWF was planning a visit to Halifax, they originally booked the Forum. However, due to the initial response, they changed the venue to the Metro Centre, and changed the show to a live televised one. The show sold out, and they are expected to return this year on March 7, just three weeks before Wrestlemania 14. Obviously, the WWF has a following to be reckoned with here in Halifax.

In response to the stigma that wrestling is for kids, I strongly recommend actually watching WWF RAW on any given week. During the past year, the show has been steered towards a more adult-oriented audience. One example of this is the current "storyline" involving Goldust. During telecasts, his wife would escort him to his matches with their young daughter Dakota, depicting a loving family scene.

Months later, RAW promoted what was supposed to be an in-depth interview with the couple. However, mid-way through the interview, Goldust turned to his wife, Marlana, and said that he was sick and tired of having to live his life to please her. Goldust then took off his wedding ring and said "you can take this ring and you can take Marlana (her T.V. name)

and shove it up your ass."

The performance was more emotional than *Titanic*, and to be honest, made me feel really uncomfortable. In recent weeks Goldust has appeared with a new female escort (leaving behind his real-life wife) and has developed a bizarre cross-dressing image to express himself.

However, this maturing of the professional wrestling world has come with a lot of negative side effects. WWF wrestlers have tended to end their contracts and switch sides to the competitor promoter, WCW. The latest big name to leave the WWF for WCW was their brightest shining star, Bret "The Hitman" Hart.

Not only their biggest attraction, Hart is also a Canadian. In the last year, the WWF had forced him into a storyline that depicted a war between Canada and the US that was similar to the movie *Canadian Bacon*, but on a much larger scale. Bret Hart noticed that the American fans seemed to no longer respect him since he was a "good guy".

Hart then went in front of a televised American show and said, "Did you ever notice how the US is shaped like a toilet bowl? Americans lack any family values, you can see it when they support a man like O.J. Simpson, and even in the T.V. shows they watch."

The televised war between Canada and the US was escalated to such a high degree, that when the Hart Foundation (Bret's family) appeared at American shows, they

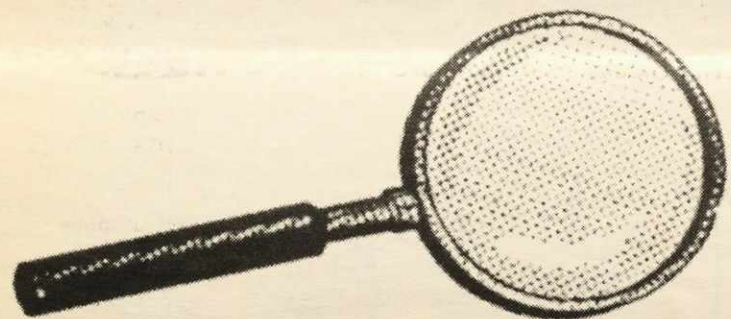
were sometimes pelted with cups of Coke, and quarters.

The war did not stop there, as other factions of the WWF were brought in to fight The Hart Foundation. One of these factions included The Nation of Domination, a group composed of black wrestlers. When the storyline proceeded to infer possible racism within the Hart Foundation, some of the wrestlers legitimately began to fear for their lives. They did not fear the opponents because, as we all know, the matches are fixed, but they began to fear the fans that took the WWF far too seriously.

The WWF is not a kid thing anymore. Rather, it has become something like a soap opera for men. It allows true competitors like Ken Shamrock and Dan Severn (formerly Ultimate Fighting champions) to do battle for better money, safer conditions, and bigger audiences.

I assure you that people who watch the WWF are already aware that the matches are fixed. On the other hand, the storylines created around them are able to draw more interest than any boxing match because we are able to know all the history between competitors, as well as see the after effects of the match the following week.

While some people can get out of hand, the majority of WWF fans are just expressing their interest in the art form. Modern wrestling is the art of depicting a good story while trying realistically to show a guy getting his head beaten with a metal chair.



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