

Men and Women in Tights

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Un article très complet sur WWF Attitude.

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By Gary Mollohan

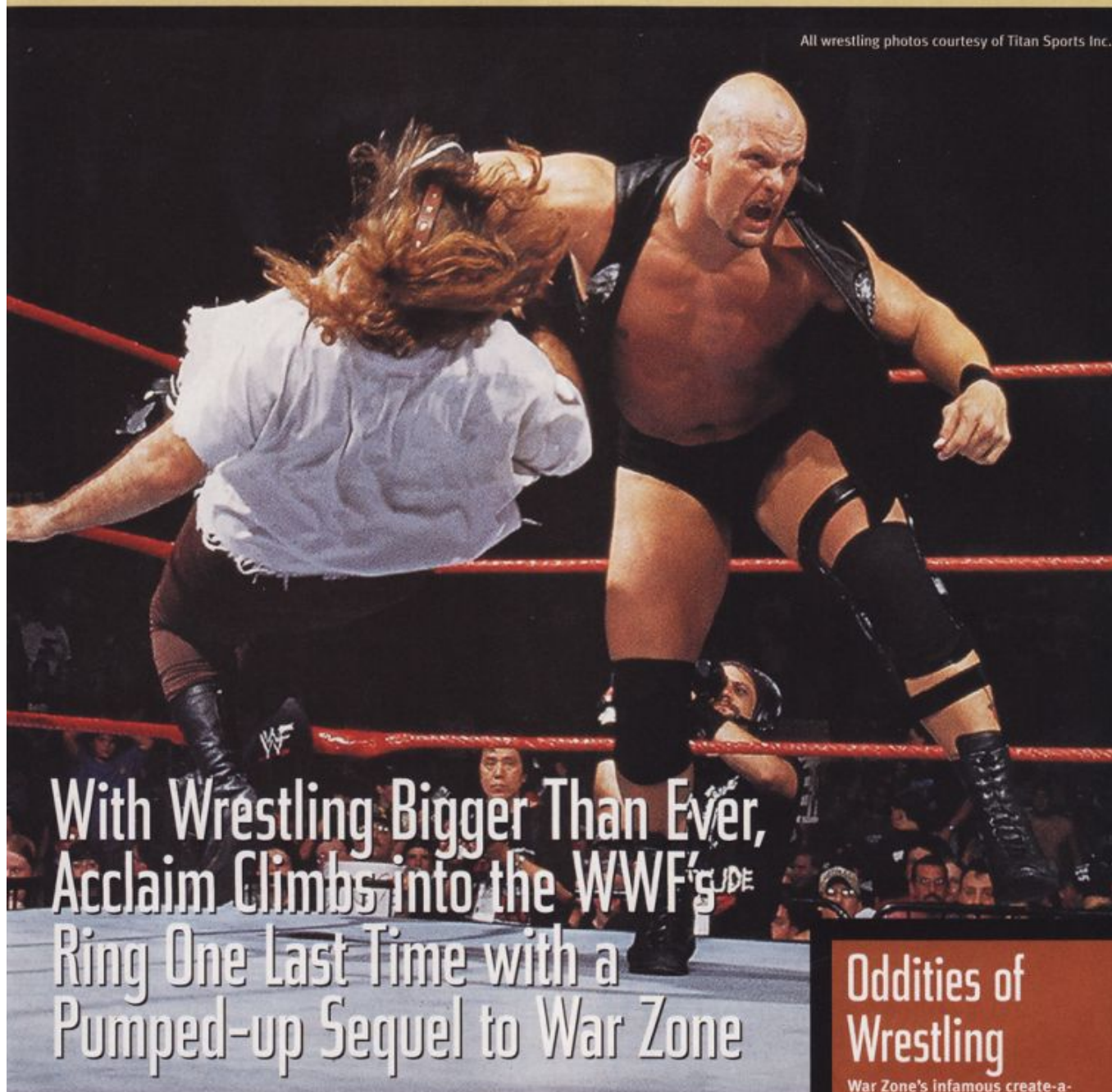
MEN

AND WOMEN

IN TIGHTS



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With Wrestling Bigger Than Ever, Acclaim Climbs into the WWF's Ring One Last Time with a Pumped-up Sequel to War Zone

Snake-bit." That's how pro wrestler The Road Dogg, a.k.a. Brian James, describes tonight's World Wrestling Federation house show in South Bend, Ind. Nasty weather forced the event's cancelation twice before, and it's in jeopardy of being postponed yet again; less than 30 minutes before the opening bell, only two wrestlers—Mr. Dogg and riding partner Jeff Jarrett—have arrived. Most of the others are caught in a traffic snarl between the arena and Chicago's O'Hare

airport, which was stacked up all day due to—you guessed it—bad weather. "I'm supposed to go on last," says the amiable Road Dogg in a southern drawl, "I may go on in just a second."

Because it's a non-televised make-up show, many of the WWF's top stars, including the Undertaker, Mankind and "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, are not on tonight's card. Nevertheless, it's completely sold out. So are the month's remaining shows in Toronto; New York City; Providence, R.I.; Hartford, Conn.; and New Haven, N.J. "It's unbelievable," says veteran-referee-turned-road-manager Dave Hebner. "People drive a hundred miles just to see if they can get in the building."

Oddities of Wrestling

War Zone's infamous create-a-player mode is even more versatile in WWF Attitude. We put it to the test and built a bunch of wrestling-related oddballs. Do you recognize these guys?

OK, we'll start with an easy one. Before becoming Minnesota's buffest governor, he "body" slammed all comers in the WWF.





The above shots are from the PlayStation version. All other shots are from the N64.

Fortunately for Dave, tonight's show goes surprisingly smoothly. As the road-weary grapplers (many have been traveling for more than 12 hours) trickle into the arena, they're thrown into impromptu matches against friend and foe alike. The Road Dogg and tag-team partner "The Big Show" Paul Wight even prevail against Triple-H and The Rock in the main event. Their reward: a shower of crushed cups and warm beer from appreciative fans.

Lords of the ring...

It's a lot of beer, from a lot of fans, because, to put it mildly, wrestling is hot. How hot? On any given week, as many as



eight of the 10 most-watched programs on cable television are wrestling programs. The WWF's third compilation of ring music—the tunes that blare from loudspeakers as Stone Cold and posse make their elaborate entrances—has gone platinum. The April *Playboy* featuring lady grappler Sable on the cover has become the best-selling issue in the magazine's history. Two wrestling games, Acclaim's *WWF War Zone* and THQ's *WCW/nWo Revenge*, made it into the top-10 best-selling titles last year. And the recently held *Wrestlemania XV*, which was watched by more than a million home viewers, enjoyed the highest buy-rate of any previous WWF pay-per-view.

The obvious question: What is fueling the nation's current obsession with pro



wrestling?

Having finally shed any pretense of being a legitimate athletic contest, pro wrestling has become the loudest, rudest spectacle on television, with story lines that rival any prime-time soap opera. No longer unwitting dupes, wrestling fans now revel in the knowledge that wrestling is fake, going so far as chanting, "You f***ed up!" when in-ring miscommunication between the performers results in an awkward gaff.

The WWF—far more hip and urbane than its Southern cousin, World Championship Wrestling—has emerged as the unquestioned ratings champion. Although it temporarily fell behind when a number of its top stars, including crown jewel Hulk Hogan, defected to WCW, the WWF has regained any ground it may have lost to

Meticulously motion-captured intros—complete with blaring theme music and pyrotechnics—kick off each bout. Do you take a shine to Mankind? Take a gander at his sequence...



WRESTLING BY THE NUMBERS

He's Jesse "The Body" Ventura



In a recent report issued earlier this year, tabloid TV show *Inside Edition* and Indiana University monitored 50 episodes of *WWF Raw* between Jan. 18, 1998, and Feb. 1, 1999. Just how much crotch pointing and pee-pee talk can be crammed into a two-hour show? It's all in the report:

	Incidences
• Grabbing/pointing to someone's crotch (the D-X salute):	1,658
• The ol' one-finger salute (commonly associated with Steve Austin):	157
• Simulated sexual activity (well, aside from two big sweaty men in tights rolling around on a mat):	128
• Satanic activity:	47
• Simulated drug use:	42
• Talking about or appearing to urinate:	21
• Appearance of a character as a prostitute:	20
• Minutes of actual wrestling per two-hour show:	36

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Although they don't appear in the game, WWF wrestlers the Hardy Boys were used to generate motion data for WWF Attitude's 200 new moves. "They practically killed themselves," says project manager Vince Bracken. "We were there for a week, and by the end, they could barely move. They sold every single move, and that's important because what you get with motion capture is what you end up with. So, if they don't do it like it's real, it won't look real in the game."

All the ring entrances, however, were performed by the game's designer, Tim Huntsman, who viewed tape of each wrestler before mimicking his walk and mannerisms. The look of the wrestlers themselves was achieved through standard photography. Close-up photos of every WWF star provided texture data for the artists. Bracken credits better photography for the improved look of Attitude's wrestlers.

Of course, all of the voices heard in Attitude were provided by the actual wrestlers, too. So, when you hear Stone Cold's trademark "Oh, hell yeah!" rest assured it's the real thing.



The image at right—a composite of wrestler parts—illustrates the sharper photography Iguana's artists used for Attitude's textures. It's also the creepiest photo we've ever run in EGM's history.



Ted Turner's upstart promotion, and then some. Thanks to its edgier content and the almost frightening popularity of Steve Austin, the Federation may have even surpassed its previous high-water mark—Wrestlemania III, in which Hulk Hogan defeated Andre the Giant in front of 90,000 ecstatic fans in Pontiac, Mich.'s Silver Dome.

The Road Dogg, as he does on a lot of subjects, offers his own explanation of wrestling's current resurgence: "We're

living in a Jerry Springer society. People want to see some sex. They want to see some violence, and our show definitely gives them both."

Twenty-year-old Chicago native D'Lo Brown, who gave up an accounting career "to wear spandex," offers another popular explanation: "My personal opinion is the fans have the ability to live vicariously through [pro wrestling]. I mean, how many people would love to tell their bosses, 'Screw you!?' Steve Austin does it every

Monday on TV."

Or maybe wrestling just appeals to guys because it's a guy's answer to the soap opera. "It's like a human comic book," 36-year-old wrestling vet Al Snow tells us. "Comics have running story lines,



This eccentric, possibly insane, Taxi star gained notoriety by wrestling only women. He even created his own title—the Inter-gender Wrestling Champion—and a belt to match.



IT'S A HARD-KNOCK LIFE

Wanna wrestle with the big boys? You better read this first...

Lured by the promise of instant fame and big money, scores of young men are flocking to wrestling schools like WCW's Power Plant in Atlanta, Ga., and the WWF's school in Stamford, Conn., in the hopes of becoming the next Goldberg or Stone Cold. Although prospective earning potential is undeniable—many newcomers command salaries as high as \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year—the life of a pro wrestler may not be all it's cracked up to be. Many wrestlers spend more than 300 days a year on the road, and injuries are not only likely, they're pretty much inevitable.

"Before I started with the WWF, I think I was on a plane maybe three times in my life," says Test, a.k.a. Andrew Martin, who joined the Federation less than a year ago. "Now three times in a day isn't rare." Previously, the 6-foot, 7-inch, 24-year-old earned a living bouncing in bars and providing security for rock acts like Motley Crüe. (To get to anyone he guarded, fans had to "pass the test," hence the nickname Test. Get it?) He was reportedly spotted by WWF owner Vince McMahon when the Crüe made an appearance at a WWF event, although it should be noted that wrestler biographies tend to be as reliable as a Chinese motorcycle.

"I've gotten 22 stitches, dislocated a shoulder, and tore a pectoral muscle during the eight months I've been here," adds Gangrel, another recent arrival at the WWF. The 30-year-old California

native—who has portrayed a blood-spewing vampire for the last eight years in wrestling arenas in Puerto Rico, Japan and the U.S.—also lost one of his trademark fangs after getting kicked in the mouth. The fang, which was permanently bonded in, took his own tooth with it.

Then there's the most painful ordeal of all: finding a viable ring persona. Witness the sad tale of 17-year ring veteran Al Snow. Al first entered the WWF years ago as Avatar, a masked wrestler with a twist: He revealed his true identity to the fans before and after every match. "That was a real marketing coup," says Snow. "People said, 'Hey, we already know who you are. Why are you putting the mask on?'" Then came Shinobi, "a masked wrestler who actually kept his identity secret." Next, Snow wrestled sans mask as Leif Cassidy, one half of the tag-team duo the New Rockers. Fans were unimpressed. According to Snow's bio, he was so

traumatized by his mistreatment at the hands of WWF owner Vince McMahon that he lost his sanity. Al now scrawls the words "help me" backward across his forehead and carries a mannequin head with him at all times. The 36-year-old grappler says his current in-ring persona is the closest to the real Al Snow. "It's me. I am actually a paranoid schizophrenic," he says with a lights-are-on-but-nobody's-home grin.

Having received a taste of the sport, newcomers like Test frequently express their admiration for veterans like Snow and Owen Hart. "I'm 24 years old, and my knees are hurting, my back is hurting. I'm constantly sore or injured. I have so much respect for these guys who've been doing it for 15 years. People don't realize what we are putting our bodies through. It's not something you can do for 30 years like an office job and retire healthy."

He's Andy Kaufman

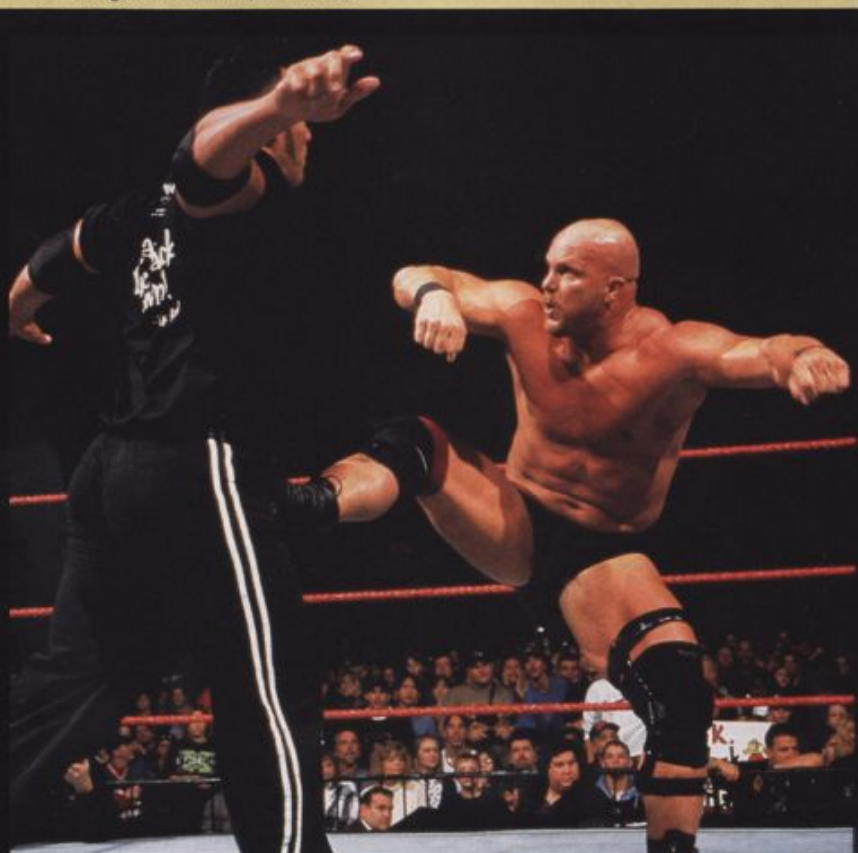


Photo by Michael Sexton

Designer Jeff Robinson (left), project manager Vince Bracken (middle) and designer Tim Huntsman are part of a large team at Iguana West, which has worked on Acclaim's wrestling games since the '80s.

characters that are developed. Each one has his own special traits and personality, nuances and they wear funny spandex tights. And they go into battle to decide good and evil. It's no different than in the ring."

Human comic book? Sure, we'll buy that. But you could just as easily call wrestling a live-action video game, too. You get the same gonzo story lines, the same over-the-top heroes and villains, the same lists of special moves. Heck, pro wrestling's like Street Fighter meets Final Fight meets lots and lots of spandex. Maybe that's why game publishers have always been keen on wrestling titles. They're the bread and butter for THQ, which recently secured the WWF license for the next 10 years. Electronic Arts, which just nabbed the WCW license, has gone so gaga over the pseudo sport that it built a wrestling ring in its massive Canadian HQ. But it is Acclaim



that was into pro wrestling even before wrestling reached its super-cool status. In fact, Acclaim has been building wrestling games since the '80s. And now, with its license with Titan Sports about to expire, Acclaim is readying one final WWF extravaganza, WWF Attitude.

Acclaim's last dance with the WWF...

Acclaim's WWF War Zone was an unmitigated success, outselling the likes of Tekken 3 and Metal Gear Solid last year. For the game's follow-up, WWF Attitude—due on the PlayStation June 3 and the N64 in July—Acclaim could have taken the easy way out. It could have simply updated the character roster, added a few new moves and called it a day, especially since the company had a limited amount of time to create a sequel before its licensing



agreement with the World Wrestling Federation expired.

According to Project Manager Vince Bracken of Iguana West, maker of both War Zone and Attitude, that was never an option. "Our goal was to make a game that was so good, it would [enjoy] a following regardless of [its] license."

Realizing expectations were even higher this time around, Vince and the rest of the development team listened to fan feedback for ideas on how to build on War Zone's success. While fans loved War Zone's create-a-wrestler option, many felt the limited number of textures made it difficult to make convincing

A former wrestling manager keen on sticking rubber bands in his beard, he had a brief stint playing Mario on Saturday-morning TV.



THE WRESTLERS OF WWF ATTITUDE

When asked if he was jazzed about his inclusion in WWF Attitude, veteran grappler Al Snow exclaimed, "Hell yeah I am! That's just another piece of my immortality. That's something they can never take away. That is me, just like the little action figure of me that just came out." Here are the 39 other wrestlers who share immortality along with Snow in Attitude:

Stone Cold Steve Austin
Paul Bearer
Steve Blackman
The Big Bossman
Bradshaw
D'Lo Brown
Christian
Brian Christopher
Chyna
Commissioner Slaughter
Dr. Death
Droz
Edge
Faarooq
Gangrel
Godfather
Goldust
Billy Gunn
Owen Hart
Mark Henry
Jacqueline
Jeff Jarrett
Kane
Kurrgan
Jerry Lawler
Mankind
Marc Mero
Shawn Michaels
Taka Michinoku
Mosh
The Road Dogg
The Rock
Sable
Ken Shamrock
Al Snow
Thrasher
Triple-H
The Undertaker
Val Venis
X-Pac



representations of their real-world favorites. With Attitude, "We've done a lot better job of trying to get more wrestler-type costumes in there so that people can make more [authentic]-looking guys," Vince says. "We've also added the ability to change not just the faces, but actual face pieces, so you can [select] different eyes, noses and mouths." Fans can even add type to wrestlers' T-shirts to create their own slogans or catch-phrases.

War Zone fans also expressed a desire to assign custom move sets to their creations instead of the entire move set of one of the featured wrestlers. After all, what's the point of creating your own guy if he still wrestles like somebody else? In Attitude, gamers can pick 27 unique moves for their custom wrestlers, from the simplest kicks and punches all the way up to their

finishing moves. What's more, they can even assign specific button sequences to make their favorite moves easier to perform.

An unintended side benefit of allowing custom move sets was that it forced the developers to rethink their approach to the featured wrestlers' moves. (A common complaint was that many of War Zone's most punishing moves were a bit too difficult to pull off.) "Adding edit moves sets forced us to be more consistent with the featured guys, too," Vince says. "We had to standardize things a little better, so button combinations are more predictable." The overall style of gameplay—Vince calls War Zone a "pseudo-fighter"—has been retained, however, because the developers feel it is more entertaining than the lock-up, or

He's Captain Lou Albano





Stone Cold Steve Austin



The Undertaker



Sable



Attention wrestlemaniacs. At no extra charge, we present these three bonus, extremely limited-series WWF superstar

cards. Clip 'em. Laminate 'em. Stare at 'em for inspiration while you're blasting your quads. Trade 'em with your pals until you

have all three. (OK, maybe all three are right here on this page, but trade 'em anyway. Hey, it's fun.)

grappling, style of combat seen in such wrestling titles as WCW/nWo Revenge.

As seen on TV...

While the developers were happy to accommodate the fans' wishes, they also had a wish list of their own. At the top was the ability to create your own pay-per-view event. In *Attitude*, fans can create their own eight-match pay-per-views, complete with a number of the WWF's most famous (or infamous) "gimmick" matches, including Cage, Weapons, Falls-Count-Anywhere, First Blood and I Quit. There's also a new



The Pay-Per-View edit mode even lets you customize your arena's appearance.

Lumberjack Match in which two grapplers compete in the ring, while two computer-controlled thugs patrol the arena floor, itching to pummel anybody unlucky enough to get tossed through the ropes.

Perhaps even more interesting is the game's new Career Mode, in which the player assumes the role of a WWF rookie trying to climb the ladder all the way to the heavyweight championship. Wrestling as one of *Attitude*'s 40 featured wrestlers (see sidebar) or as their own custom creations, players begin by competing in non-televised house shows. Eventually, you'll move on to televised shows, including *Shotgun Saturday Night* and *Sunday Night Heat*. Grudges, which occur when two or more wrestlers have the exact same ranking, are settled on *Monday Night Raw* as one-on-one, Triple Threat or War Matches, depending on the number of wrestlers involved in the dispute. Survive the televised events, and it's on to the pay-per-views—*In Your House*, *King of the Ring*, *Summer Slam*, *Survivor Series* and the *Royal Rumble*. Only the best of the best, however, will be able to compete for the championship belt at the "Super Bowl" of

sports entertainment, *Wrestlemania*.

If that weren't enough, Acclaim also added approximately 200 brand-new ways to lay the smack down on your friends, for a total of more than 400 moves in all, including behind tie-ups, two-on-one moves and counters that allow you to fake being stunned. According to Vince, a large number of the new moves can be accessed only when creating your own custom wrestlers. "We wanted to have moves sitting on the

This squeaky 80's pop girlie just wanted to have fun managing lady wrestler Wendy Richter at the first *Wrestlemania*.





EGM: What's the most essential item you take on the road?

Sable: Beauty case, because I always have to look my best.

EGM: If the WWF's planned chain of theme restaurants names a menu item after you, what would it be?

Sable: Sable Bomb Burger

EGM: Who's the least fun wrestler to travel with and why?

Sable: Not applicable since I travel with my husband, Marc Mero.

EGM: Why should players pick your character in WWF Attitude?

Sable: Because I'm the World Wrestling Federation's Women's Champion and all the women want to be me and all the men come to see me.

EGM: What would you do to players who beat up your character?

Sable: Drop a Sable Bomb on them.



EGM: What's the most essential item you take on the road?

Undertaker: Skull of an old Civil War soldier.

EGM: If the WWF's planned chain of theme restaurants names a menu item after you, what would it be?

Undertaker: Formaldehyde Cooler

EGM: Who's the least fun wrestler to travel with and why?

Undertaker: Kane, because he never talks.

EGM: Why should players pick your character in WWF Attitude?

Undertaker: Just like in real life, I'm going to kick everyone's ass.

EGM: What would you do to players who beat up your character in the game?

Undertaker: I will have their hearts for dinner.



EGM: What's the most essential item you take on the road?

Steve Austin: Sunglasses

EGM: If the WWF's planned chain of theme restaurants names a menu item after you, what would it be?

SA: Hell, I don't know.

EGM: Who's the least fun wrestler to travel with and why?

SA: I travel alone.

EGM: Why should players pick your character in WWF Attitude?

SA: 'Cause Stone Cold said so.

EGM: What would you do to players who beat up your character in the game?

SA: Tell them how lucky they are.

CD or in RAM that [the players] haven't even seen yet," providing additional incentive to fully explore the Custom Wrestler room.

Attitude boasts a number of cosmetic improvements, as well. Although composed of slightly fewer polygons than before, wrestler likenesses have been improved due to better texture maps. As Vince explains, "We had a professional photographer shoot all of the wrestlers [this time], and that eliminated all of the shadows we were getting as well as some of the problems with the wrestlers' necks, how some of them looked fatter in the chin than they should." It should be noted, however,

She's Cyndi Lauper



that the game does not use the N64's Expansion Pak, unlike Acclaim's recent Turok 2: Seeds of Evil and South Park.

Perhaps inspired by WCW/nWo Revenge (Vince says everybody at Iguana "has a lot of respect for that game") the developers also chose to pump up Attitude's prematch drama with more elaborate ring entrances, complete with camera cuts and digitized versions of each wrestler's ring music. War Zone, in contrast, had computerized MIDI versions that, although recognizable, didn't get the blood pumping quite like the real thing. On the way to the ring, wrestlers even talk smack for the camera. A two-man announce team featuring Jerry "The King" Lawler and Shane McMahon (son of WWF owner Vince McMahon, Jr.) hog further audio space. "Audio-wise, we're super packed," Vince boasts. "We actually filled the PlayStation CD. We have 40 theme songs for the featured wrestlers plus approximately 33 custom songs [for custom wrestlers.] Plus, we have a few hours of Shane McMahon and Jerry Lawler ringside commentary on there [in addition to] all the crowd chants and stuff like that." Although Iguana used Acclaim's proprietary compression technology, the size of the N64 cartridge ballooned from 12 to 32 Megs.

Life after Stone Cold...

When asked whether or not he was sorry Acclaim lost the WWF license to THQ, Vince indicated that he was but quickly added that he's confident there will be life after "Stone Cold" for Iguana's second-generation wrestling engine. Just as fans of Rare's GoldenEye are eagerly awaiting the game's Bond-less follow-up, Perfect Dark, Vince hopes War zone fans will embrace subsequent Acclaim wrestling games—another game based on the workhorse War Zone engine has been announced for 2000—whether or not they have an official license. "Hopefully, gamers out there will [say], 'Hey, [Acclaim] made two good wrestling games in a row, so we're going to go with them on the next one, as well.'"



You want even weirder weapons? Yes, that is a bedpan in D-Lo's hand.

WHAT'S NEXT?

With wrestling hotter than ever and the licenses in new hands, you better believe more games are on the way.

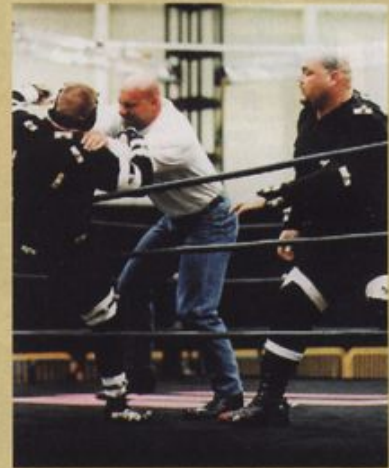
Now that the wrestling licenses have flip-flopped, where will your superstars of choice wind up? As reported earlier, THQ lost WCW but gained the WWF license and has at least three games in the works—one each for the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color. Although the names of the games haven't been announced, THQ did clue us in on the developers. The N64 WWF game—due this winter—is being developed by AKI Corp. and licensed from Asmik Ace Entertainment Inc., the same Japanese companies behind THQ's previous WCW vs. nWo World Tour and WCW vs. nWo Revenge. Natsume is developing the Game Boy Color game, which is also set for a winter release.

Equally promising is the news that Yuk's Co. Limited—the Japanese developers behind the enormously successful Toukon Retsuden series—is developing THQ's

PlayStation WWF game, which will release next spring to coincide with Wrestlemania 2000. THQ declined to comment on gameplay specifics, but it's a safe bet the PlayStation game will use the Toukon Retsuden 4 engine.

EA's WCW Mayhem—due this fall on the N64 and PlayStation—is much further along. Developed by Kodiak Interactive and with all of EA's resources behind it, the game will feature at least 60 WCW wrestlers, facial animations, four-player play and combat that spreads into the locker room and bowels of the arena. It will also offer a create-a-player mode.

Most notably, Mayhem will let you change alliances and affect the game's story line. After all, as senior producer Chuck Osieja says, "Wrestling is just as much about what happens in the ring as it is with what happens outside the ring."



Goldberg and the rest of the WCW crew have already gone through the motions of motion capturing for EA's Mayhem.

