

Sports

Students Watch the Greatest Show on Earth

On March 31, 1985, 22,000 people packed into Madison Square Garden while over a million more watched closed-circuit television in order to see "Wrestlemania". This professional wrestling event featured "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and Paul "Mr. Wonderful" Orndorff versus professional wrestling's most popular star, Hulk Hogan and his partner, Mr. T.

Charlotte Memorial Stadium's the "Great American Bash" pulled 25,000 fans, and Texas Stadium had 43,000 whooping it up in Irving, Texas.

While people across the country crowd into arenas to watch this high-energy event, Chapel Hill students share in their own viewing of the wrestling craze. In their dorm rooms late at night students equipped with late night snacks, pizza, and sodas watch their own wrestling favorites throw each other around in the ring.

"It allows me to release some of my aggression as I watch these guys beat up on each other," said Ray Andrews, a freshman business major from San Diego, California.

In the past three years, wrestling has experienced a boom in popularity. Wrestlers are now doing records, talk shows and even have their pictures on bubble gum cards.

The wrestling business not only reaps profits from these sales, but tickets to wrestling events are sometimes rather expensive.

Fans who attended the "The Great American Bash" paid as much as \$50 for a ticket to see the show.

Why the popularity? Many fans say wrestling allows them to watch great athletes perform, see an entertaining show and release much of their anxiety in the course of an hour or two. It's also fun to watch.

"Wrestling is very funny if you just

watch it," said Scott Jones, a freshman journalism major from Wilson, NC. "But don't take it seriously," he advised.

Wrestling also presents some very interesting situations throughout the course of the show. Russians Ivan and Nikita Koloff beat up in Magnum T.A., the dashing, young American, who just happened to be the U.S. Heavyweight champion. After months of fierce battles between Nikita and Magnum, the "Russian Nightmare" defeats Magnum for the title. Although Nikita had once tried to hang Magnum with a chain, he had gained so much respect for him during their matches that he decided to join Magnum's best friend the "American Dream" Dusty Rhodes, and fight the bad guys, even at the disapproval of the Kremlin.

Tully Blanchard, one of the "Four Horsemen," once had a valet whom he named "Baby Doll". She always interfered in Tully's matches to help him win. Finally Dusty Rhodes got angry and slapped "Baby Doll", although his mother advised him not to hit a lady.

These types of stories are enough to put "Dynasty" out of business.

The final attribute of pro wrestling has to be that it has divided its wrestlers into good guys and villains so that fans find it easy to become involved in the matches.

Particularly Hardin Watkins, who claims that "Although everyone claims they can beat Hulk Hogan, down deep we know he is always going to win."

Although some people get too involved in the events. In New York two teenage boys were ordered by the courts not to watch wrestling anymore because they got so personally involved until they were beating up on each other and their mother.

Professional wrestling is now more popular than it has been in the past 30 years. It gets network and cable television



coverage as the fans clamor for more. The ratings are extremely high and a promoter can fill almost any arena in the country at will.

Wrestlers are doing television appearances, music videos, and they even have a Saturday morning cartoon.

Eventually the wrestling craze will die down as the fickle American public finds something new to marvel over. But until it does, fans can enjoy wrestling, as long as they don't try what they see on TV.

By Charles Will

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- The quote, "Life for me ain't been no crystal," is taken from what poem?
- What was the first predominantly black-owned firm to be seated on

- the American Stock Exchange?
- Who was the first black college graduate?

Answers:

- 1963 March on Washington
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- "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes
- Johnson Products Company, Inc.
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