

WED UPDATE: RAW RATING, UFC 100 SPECIAL, 100 IN UK, UFC STATS, LAWLER UPDATE, HOGAN TALKS TNA, WWE

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Our lead story in today's issue of the Observer looks at the WWE mid-card shakeup, plans for the next WWE PPV, next week's Raw TV show, a look at the newcomers to WWE and how they are being viewed right now, as well as coverage of The Bash, with poll results, match-by-match coverage and star ratings.

We also have a look at changes in UFC policy that has made a lot of people unhappy and looks to cut into the income of fighters as well as the latest shot fired in the video game wars.

We've got a ton of stuff from the Raw tapings, including how the crowd was different, the reactions to different wrestlers, and where the angles are going.

We also have an updated look at Bobby Lashley, his fight with Bob Sapp, as well as the Ultimate Chaos PPV show.

The issue is available today for subscribers to the web site.

The Wrestling Observer ranges from 25,000 to 40,000 words covering pro wrestling and MMA all over the world.

Each issue has coverage and analysis of all the major news, plus every issue breaks major news stories before the Internet sites and has the most complete look at the business as a whole anywhere.

The Observer is now in its 27th year of being the leading insider pro wrestling publication in the world. The biggest and most influential names in the pro wrestling industry as well as the MMA industry, from bookers, to promoters to Hall of Fame wrestlers and fighters to the biggest current names, both on camera, and behind the scenes, along with

thousands of readers in all 50 states and 30 countries subscribe. Many have subscribed as long as 20 years or more straight. They get the most detailed and inside coverage of what is going on all over the world and an accuracy from having the most inside sources that can't be found on the web. Everyone from Wall Street to the major offices to the TV networks in U.S. and Japan turn to the Observer for what is going on in the business. If you are a new subscriber ordering 24 or more issues, you can get one free classic issue of your choice sent to you today. With a 40 issue subscription, you can get two free classic issues sent to you today. Just send your Visa or Master Card order with your name, address, phone number, Visa or Master Card number and an expiration date to dave@wrestlingobserver.com or you can order by faxing that information to 408-244-3402. You can also subscribe via paypal at www.paypal.com and using the dave@wrestlingobserver.com address or subscribe via check, cash or money order, as well as credit card, by mail, by sending to Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

We look at the match Lashley had to turn down scheduled for this summer with another former major pro wrestling star, Lashley's promo ability, Lashley's goals for the next year, as well as Tom Atencio's fighting and talking.

We also have a feature updating Lee Murray, as well as a detailed look at The Ultimate Fighter reality show, who watches the show, and how the audience has changed in every major demo since season one. We look at the TUF season and does that make it easier to sell PPV shows, paradoxes about the rating and who watches, as well as how rival coaches fighting on PPV after the season is helped by the show.

We've got an update on the condition of Gerald Brisco, more on Lilian Garcia leaving WWE and possible replacements, first word on Wrestlemania tickets and scalping, PPVs being dropped, TV show changes

We've also got a detailed look at the ratings, including segment-by-segment on Impact and Raw and lots more on the biggest Raw number in years. We also look at how USA's quarter was affected by the big Raw number, as well as an updated look at DVR's and their effect on ratings. We also look at how each segment on the commercial-free Raw did, including a few surprises as far as what was the highest rated segment, and what key segment actually lost viewership.

We also have our regular weekly features including results of the major league arena shows held around the world, as well as the major TV show reviews.

Also in this week's issue:

--What WWE wrestler named his son after what MMA champion

--Edge on ladder matches

--Discussion of drug testing, Jeff Hardy and Umaga

--Who HHH pushed as the company's best new stars

--Why Smackdown is so much better than Raw

--WWE vs. UFC on the web, where each one has the advantage over the other

--Several new WWE signings

--New WWE international tours

--New PPV names being discussed

--Best selling MMA and wrestling DVDs

--Developmental notes

--WWE house show note

--Wrestlers brought back to arena they headlined 50 years ago this week

--Former WWE developmental wrestlers heading to Mexico

--AAA video game news

--Update on a major show with both current WWE and TNA stars on the same show, as well as two recently fired WWE stars on the show

--Update on debut of Dragon Gate in Philadelphia

--Hall of Famer says he will retire in a few weeks

--NOAH business post-Misawa

--Hall of Famer with 25th anniversary show coming soon

--TNA stars headline next New Japan show

--Affliction star doing major pro wrestling show a week after the next card

--How networks carrying MMA and pro wrestling are doing

--Famous wrestling arena about to be torn down

--Former Stampede wrestlers pass away

--Former wrestler and MMA fighter sentenced to life in prison

--Update on Brian Lawler

--Former wrestling headliner going on tour with the circus

--Wrestlers invited to the White House

--ECW nostalgia show notes

--24 man tournament coming

--Father of pop star fights pro wrestler turned gimmick celebrity

--Indie wrestler on VH-1 reality show

--ROH weekend notes

--TNA Victory "Road lineup

--Update on TNA video game license

--Update on Raven and Shane Douglas

--80s star now on TNA TV

--New TNA signing this past week

--Notes on upcoming TNA TV shows

--UFC 99 early buy rate trending patterns

--Live business for the last UFC show

--UFC stars nominated for major sports awards

--Lineup for next WEC show as well as 8/29 UFC show

--Notes on first issue of UFC magazine

--Update on business of WWE magazine

--Magazine listing of best UFC matches in history

--How UFC's magazine list differs from the list UFC gave Spike and who is obviously excluded

--Top UFC star sued over auto accident

--Update on Indiana regulating MMA

--Guida vs. Sanchez thoughts

--What happened with Limp Bizkit and UFC 100

--New title match signed

--More on rating for Joe Rogan special

--A few UFC cuts including a popular fighter

--Update on Jens Pulver

--Bas Rutten rips on Kimbo

--Lots of new UFC fights signed

--Update on CBS and MMA

--Strikeforce schedule for the rest of the year

--Boxing vs. MMA head-to-head on PPV

--ESPN looking at giving MMA more visibility

--Japanese MMA star sentenced to prison time

--Tito Ortiz talks his future

--College wrestling legend gets outwrestled and loses in UFC fight

New subscribers ordering 24 or 40 issues have to let us know what major story (ies) of the past 11 years you are most interested in and we'll send the issue with the best coverage of that story. We've got coverage of every major PPV event and world wide spectacular, every major star switching promotions, histories of companies like FMW, Rings and New Japan, retirement and obit issues of every major star who fits into those descriptions over the past 11 years, as well as our biggest issue every year, the annual awards issue, and our most controversial issue of every year, the Hall of Fame issue. Our most requested issues in our history are:

*November 17, 1997 (full details of everything leading to the most famous wrestling match finish of modern times at the Survivor Series plus a history of in-ring double-crosses)

*December 21, 1998 (the complete Vince McMahon-Bret Hart conversation right before the Survivor Series match so you'll know exactly what was said

--the conversation played in edited form both on the inaugural broadcast of Confidential as well as in Wrestling with Shadows, but everything that was said between the two about the match that was going to take place that same night)

*August 1, 1994 (the most detailed coverage anywhere of the Vince McMahon steroid trial, an issue praised in numerous newspaper article and Sex, Lies and Headlocks)

*March 26, 2001 (death of WCW and history of pro wrestling on the Turner networks)

*October 22, 2001 (why the adult audience has left pro wrestling in such great numbers and what needed to have been done to save them)

*July 8, 1991 (Ric Flair leaves WCW as world champion/Zahorian steroid trial)

*February 8, 1993 (the life and times of Andre the Giant)

*May 13, 2002 (the life story of the most incredible pro wrestling career ever, a look at Lou Thesz, in one of the largest issues of our history)

*January 27, 2003 (part one of the two-part series covering the career and life of The Sheik)

*February 3, 2003 (Part two on The Sheik including thoughts from people who worked with him and where he stands historically)

*March 24, 2003 (history of the WWWF title, inside behind the Sammartino, Backlund and Backlund era)

*April 21, 2003 (history of WWF continues with the expansion nationally, the death of the regional territories and the rise of Hulk Hogan)

*May 12, 2003 (The life and death of Elizabeth, and the rise of fall of Lex Luger)

*June 9, 2003 (Part 1 of history of WWF vs. WCW wars and what many say was the greatest year in U.S. wrestling; plus a look at Fred Blassie)

*June 16, 2003 (Freddie Blassie through the eyes of his biggest rivals and friends)

*July 28, 2003 (Part 2 of the history of the WWF vs. WCW war and the plans to make new superstars in the early 90s, what happened, and the night where the three biggest wrestling companies in the world combined for a joint show and what happened)

*August 25, 2003 (2003 Hall of Fame issue with huge profiles on the controversial career of Shawn Michaels, Chris Benoit as well as historical features on Earl Caddock and Francisco Flores)

*September 22, 2003 (Part 3 of the history of the WWF vs WCW war with the seeds that caused the collapse of the industry in the 90s, Zahorian trial, Gulf War controversy, Flair leaves WCW while holding world title and much more)

*October 27, 2003 (The fascinating life of Stu Hart plus the story of Road Warrior Hawk)

*January 19, 2004 (2003 Awards issue)

*February 2, 2004 (History of Toronto wrestling, Jack Tunney life story, Royal Rumble and Battle Royal history)

*February 23, 2004 (History of Guerrero family with Eddy's win over Brock Lesnar)

*March 1, 2004 (History of WWF continues with the period that brought the company down in early 1992, the mistakes, the real stories and how the business changed)

*March 8, 2004 (History of Wrestlemania, its greatest matches and best and worst shows as voted both by wrestlers and non-wrestlers and Wrestlemania history books)

*July 5, 2004 (A look behind the scenes and Ric Flair's book and his background with Eric Bischoff and Hulk Hogan)

*July 12, 2004 (A look at more on Ric Flair's book and his comments on Bruno Sammartino, Bret Hart and Mick Foley)

*August 16, 2004 (History of the Olympians in pro wrestling)

*August 23, 2004 (2004 Hall of Fame issue and biggest issue of the year with huge profiles on Kazushi Sakuraba, Undertaker, Bob Backlund, Masahiro Chono, Ultimo Dragon, Kurt Angle and Tarzan Lopez

--this counts

as one issue if you are asking for a free issue, but ordered separately, due to size, is \$6 in North America and \$7 overseas)

*October 4, 2004 (the life and times of Big Bossman; as well as details of the life and times of one of the most influential men world wide in pro wrestling history, Jim Barnett)

*November 15, 2004 (the full story of what happened between Kurt Angle and Daniel Puder, plus coverage of the most important week in the history of TNA)

*January 24, 2005 (2004 Awards issue, Rock and WWE part company)

*March 14, 2005 (the 50 biggest money players in the history of WWF and a look at their Hall of Fame)

*May 9, 2005 (the life and times of Chris Candido)

*June 20, 2005 (The full story behind Paul Heyman and the death of ECW, as well as coverage of One Night Stand, Hardcore Homecoming and behind the scenes of both shows)

*July 18, 2005 (death of Shinya Hashimoto and his records with a look at the fall of New Japan, the Matt Hardy angle, tons of WWE firings, Cornette firing in detail as well as problems of a WWE developmental territory in our biggest news issue of the year which is a double-sized issue and would be \$6 on its own and \$7 overseas)

*August 24, 2005 (2005 Hall of Fame issue with career profiles of Paul Heyman, HHH and Freebirds plus debut of MMA Hall of Fame)

*September 12, 2005 (History of Mid South Wrestling)

*October 10, 2005 (Life and Times of the Ultimate Warrior)

*November 21, 2005 (Life and Times of Eddy Guerrero and Crusher, double issue \$6 on its own and \$7 overseas)

*December 5, 2005 (The Eddy Guerrero special issue, double issue \$6 on its own, \$7 overseas)

*January 9, 2006 (The life and times of Superstar Billy Graham, plus New Year's Eve 2005 coverage)

*January 16, 2006 (2005 Awards double issue, \$6 or \$7 overseas)

*April 3, 2006 (Story of Ann Calvello and the history of Roller Derby

--many called this the best issue of the Observer ever)

*April 10, 2006 (Behind the scenes at the 2006 Wrestlemania/Hall of Fame week)

*July 24, 2006 (The History of the Von Erichs and World Class Championship Wrestling

--the most unreal story ever in wrestling)

*September 4, 2006 (The Rise and Fall of Kurt Angle; 2006 Hall of Fame inductions of Eddie Guerrero, Paul Bowser, Masakatsu Funaki, Aja Kong and Hiroshi Hase including tons of wrestling history around the world from the 20s through the 60s, the evolution of working to not working in Japan, and a look at Guerrero in hindsight, double issue \$6 or \$7 overseas)

*October 9, 2006 (A look back nine years later at the life and legacy of Brian Pillman with tons of inside information about what made him tick as his real objectives)

*November 15, 2006 (History of WCW part one, Eric Bischoff's book and how the industry was changed forever)

*November 20, 2006 (History of WCW part two, Why Jim Ross left WCW, How Bischoff changed the company, signing of Hulk Hogan, Beginning of Nitro, Jesse Ventura, Brian Pillman, Chris Jericho and signing Wrestlemania planned celebrity away)

*November 27, 2006 (History of WCW part three, When Bischoff challenged McMahon to fight; Truth and fiction around Bret Hart signing with WCW and why it didn't click)

*December 6, 2006 (details behind Pride's offers to sell promotion and Part four of History of WCW part four, Hogan-Goldberg match and why there was no rematch, WCW loses NBC network deal in 1999 and the real reasons the company fell apart)

*January 22, 2007 (2006 Awards issue, double issue \$7 on its own, \$8 overseas)

*February 14, 2007 (Life and Times of Bam Bam Bigelow)

*March 5, 2007 (WWE begins plans that will change the business)

*March 12, 2007 (Life and Times of Mike Awesome)

*March 19, 2007 (Life and Times of Ernie Ladd)

*April 4, 2007 (Life and Times of Badnews Allen Coage)

--which many are
calling one of the best issues in history)

*July 2, 2007 (Part one of the Benoit double murder-suicide)

*July 5, 2007 (Part two of the Benoit double murder-suicide)

*July 10, 2007 (Part three of the Benoit double murder-suicide)

*July 19, 2007 (Part four of the Benoit double murder-suicide)

*July 23, 2007 (Part five of Benoit double murder-suicide)

*July 25, 2007 (Part six of Benoit double murder-suicide)

*August 15, 2007 (The legend of the God of Japanese wrestling and his
influence on MMA, Karl Gotch)

*October 15 (2007 Hall of Fame double issue, \$7 on its own, \$8 overseas
including inductions of The Rock, Tom Packs and the original
Strangler Lewis)

*November 12, 2007 (Life and times of Fabulous Moolah and history of U.S.
women's wrestling) .

*December 31, 2007 (History of Ric Flair and the heyday of wrestling at
the Greensboro Coliseum)

*January 21, 2008 (2007 Awards issue, double issue \$7 on its own, \$8
overseas)

*March 17, 2008 (Life and times of Johnny Weaver)

*March 24, 2008 (Life and times of Gary Hart)

*April 10, 2008 (Farewell to Ric Flair; My thoughts, Shawn Michaels talks

of Flair's meaning to him; Hall of Fame; Wrestlemania double issue, \$7 on its own, \$8 overseas)

*August 11, 2008 (Ric Flair leaves WWE; Updated history of pro wrestlers and MMA fighters who went to the Olympics)

*September 8, 2008 (2008 Hall of Fame double issue, \$7 on its own, \$8 overseas; part one of Killer Kowalski bio)

*September 15, 2008 (Life and Times of Evan Tanner)

*September 22, 2008 (The amazing career of Killer Kowalski, one of our most in-depth bios)

You can also order any of these issues on their own for \$4 in North America or \$5 overseas.

Rates are:

For the United States, it is \$12 for 4 issues, \$29 for 12, \$55 for 24, \$91 for 40 and \$118 for 52. In Canada and Mexico, rates are \$13.50 for 4, \$33 for 12, \$61 for 24, \$101 for 40 and \$131 for 52. In Europe, you can get the fastest delivery and best rates by sending to moonsault@mediaplusint.com. For the rest of the world, rates are \$15.50 for 4, \$41 for 12, \$78 for 24, \$126 for 40 issues and \$163 for 52.

If you order by mail with a check, cash or money order (P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228), you can get \$1 off in every price range.

We now have available personally autographed copies of Tributes II, our latest book, as well as a DVD that comes with it talking more about the subjects in the book. The book covers the life stories of Lou Thesz, Wahoo McDaniel, Elizabeth, Fred Blassie, Road Warrior Hawk, Andre the Giant, Curt Hennig, Johnny Valentine, Davey Boy Smith, Terry Gordy, Owen Hart, Stu Hart, Gorilla Monsoon, The Sheik and Tim Woods. To get all of those biographies as back issues of the Observer would be a \$60 value today. This is a collection of some of the best Observer articles of the past several years in a hardcover, full-color format that is 239 pages. There is also a foreword by Bret Hart. The book price is \$12.95 plus \$3.50 for shipping costs in the U.S., \$10 for shipping costs to Canada and \$12 for shipping costs outside North America. You can order the book the same way you order the newsletter.

-- Raw Monday night was back to its usual 3.6 rating.

-- All we've heard since last night is about how badly people want to see Brock Lesnar vs. Frank Mir, stemming from the awesome UFC 100 Countdown show. If you have not seen it, [click here now](#). I'm predicting 1.5 million buys.

-- Despite claims of an announcement this past Monday, UFC 100 still doesn't have a broadcast home in the UK. We're getting down to the wire here.

-- Denny Burkholder has a look at UFC stats [here](#). It's really interesting, including the knockout/TKO record that Chuck Liddell may set if he ever fights again.

-- Jerry Lawler did, in fact, announce today that he plans on running for Mayor again. His last failed bid was in 1999. There is a story on it [here](#)

-- WWE pulled Ricky Steamboat from the Dan Gable Wrestling Institute Hall of Fame ceremony this weekend, where he was to be inducted. That's nice.

-- Photos of Edge's Achilles tendon surgery are up [here](#)

-- The Sun newspaper is reporting that TNA senior referee Rudy Charles was fired.

-- There is an interview with Hulk Hogan up [here](#) where he talks about all sorts of things including TNA and WWE TV these days.

-- What did you think of Monday night's Raw?

Good 35.6%

Didn't see the show 22.2%

Average 17.2%

Excellent 11.5%

Poor 9.2%

Fair 4.2%

Who was UFC's all-time best heavyweight champion?

Randy Couture 58.9%

Brock Lesnar 11.6%

Ken Shamrock 10.6%

Bas Rutten 5.2%

Dan Severn 3.9%

Mark Coleman 2.8%

Tim Sylvia 2.3%

Josh Barnett 1.8%

Frank Mir 1%

Maurice Smith 1%

Andrei Arlovski 0.5%

Ricco Rodriguez 0.3%

Seriously, who voted for some of these people?

Who was UFC's all-time greatest light heavyweight champion

Chuck Liddell 57.1%

Tito Ortiz 13.3%

Frank Shamrock 10.7%

Randy Couture 8.6%

Quinton Jackson 4.3%

Lyoto Machida 2.3%

Vitor Belfort 1.7%

Rashad Evans 1.2%

Forrest Griffin 0.9%

-- Chris C wrote in with this: Just thought I'd send you a note with respect to the comment made by your Melbourne correspondent describing last night's show as "woeful." To say he was spot on would be an understatement. I have been to most touring wrestling shows which have come through Melbourne over the past 20 years and the show last night was nothing short of embarrassing considering the talent involved. There were approximately 14,000 in attendance and they were treated to kick / punch action and very little else. Since when did the RAW roster turn into the Big Show? Most wrestlers appeared to be going through the motions.....lazy, uninterested and all wishing they were somewhere else perhaps with the exception of Kofi Kingston, MVP and Mickie James. I will not be attending another WWE show as watching guys throwing pretend kicks and punches the whole night is something I can do with my friends when we fool around.

-- Daniel Short writes: IESB.net is reporting that Total Nonstop Action Wrestling will be making their presence felt at the San Diego Comic Con in San Diego, California. They are reporting that TNA is among the sponsors of the annual WRATH OF CON party to take place on the roof of the Hard Rock Cafe Friday, July 24 from 9pm to 1am. In addition, TNA will be setting up a six-sided ring and present wrestling action with Kurt Angle, Christopher Daniels, Suicide, and The Motor City Machine Guns currently announced as appearing. The party is not open to the public, but five Comic Con attendees will win a pair of tickets during the Masters of the Web panel on Thursday, July 23 from 3pm to 4pm. Tickets for Comic Con have been sold out for roughly two months.

-- Santino eliminated himself from a battle royal

-- Dave and I will be back later this afternoon/evening with a new edition of Wrestling Observer Radio, likely taking your phone calls. We'll also be doing our normal Thursday Figure Four Daily with Lance Storm this afternoon as I'll be leaving for Vegas tomorrow. I suspect, with the exception of Thursday since not much is going on, that we'll be doing audio updates of some sort pretty much every day we're there, including a major post-show report with Dave and I.

-- Speaking of Dave, he'll be a guest on this week's Inside MMA on HDNet. Show airs Friday.

-- Pierre Carl Ouellet has a new website up here

-- DREAMWAVE Wrestling Upcoming Dates: July 18th, Knights of Columbus in LaSalle, IL with The Honky Tonk Man. July 31st, Streator High School in Streator, IL with Jerry "The King" Lawler. August 1st, Knights of Columbus in LaSalle, IL with "The Million Dollar Man" Ted Dibiase

-- MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, Saturday July 11th 2009, Shamrock Cup 9, The New Green Room, 2401 North Point Blvd., Dundalk, MD

-- NYWC presents "112 to NYWC", Saturday July 11, 2009, Elks B P O E Lodge #2138, 1141 Route 112, Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776

-- XPW runs their ten-year anniversary show on August 22 2009 at the Arena, 6655 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90038. Tickets on sale tomorrow.