

AUSMATS

ISSUE 3
OCTOBER 2021



RITCHIE TAYLOR REVISITS
THE MATCH OF HIS CAREER

PLUS
CHERRY STEPHENS
WRESTLE RADIO AUSTRALIA
JAKE HURDLE PHOTOGRAPHY
NEWS, EVENT REPORTS,
AND MUCH MORE!

CHARLI EVANS

**THE VIOLENCE ARTIST TAKES US
BACK THROUGH THE UPS AND DOWNS
OF A BITTERSWEET YEAR-AND-A-HALF**

Photo: Jake
Hurdle Photography

IN THE NEWS: PWI 500, DOUBLE RETIREMENT, MIKEY NICHOLLS AND MORE

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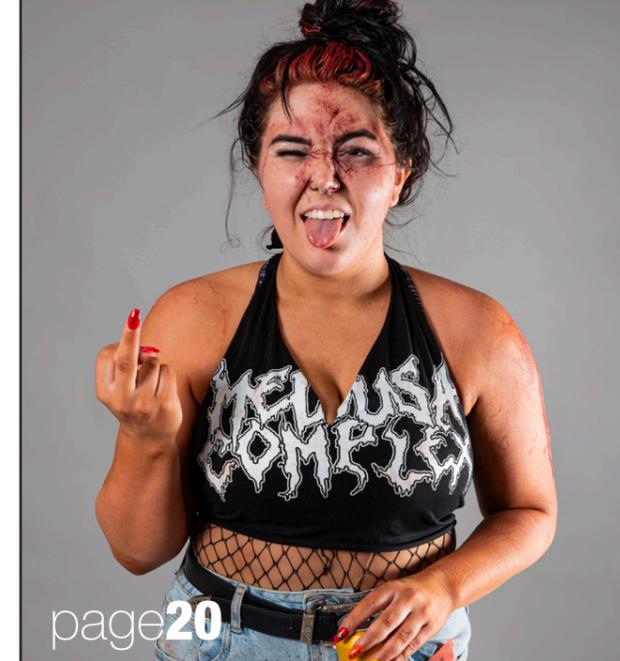
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12 pages of coverage from events across the country over the last two months.

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Dates for the diary. And it's great to be able to say there's a fair few!



Just a brief one from me this week. I've done enough waffling in the next 50-odd pages!

It can be tricky to write about wrestling when there's a limited amount of it going on.

Although obviously it's nothing on the difficulties facing wrestlers and promotions in certain parts of the country. There are, however, things to take heart from.

It's been heartening to hear from Charli Evans, whose given Covid-19 the finger and made the absolute best of bad situation during these last 18 months. So too has it been heartening to see promotions in WA, SA, Queensland and Tassie surviving and thriving, even being joined by both fresh and familiar faces of late.

And with the locked down states' restrictions starting to loosen, things can surely only get better.

I'll stop there because I don't want to jinx it. Suffice to say there's plenty more good stuff going on across the industry and I hope to have done it justice and captured that in this latest issue. As always, a big thank you for checking out the mag, and please don't be shy to get in touch with feedback or comments.

editor's note

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Once again AUSWRES is indebted to, and hugely appreciative of, the generosity and efforts of those who helped make this issue possible.

Special thanks: Charli Evans, Ritchie Taylor, Cherry Stephens, Andrew Carter, Kay Gee, Jake Hurdle, Todd Eastman, New Photography Studios, Shotweiler, Digital Beard Photography, Keith Mitchell Photography, Pix Photography, Pro Wrestling Illustrated, Ite Lemalu, Libnan Ayoub, Dave Meltzer, Greg Oliver.



AUSWRES acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of this nation and their connections to the land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to the past, present and emerging Elders of this nation and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

PWI 500

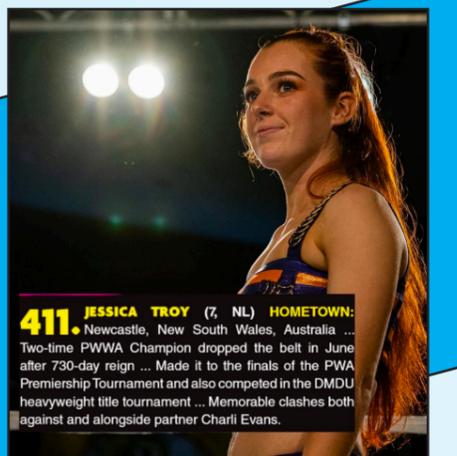


Photo: PWI, New Photography Studios

411. JESSICA TROY (7, NL) HOMETOWN: Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia ... Two-time PWWA Champion dropped the belt in June after 730-day reign ... Made it to the finals of the PWA Premiership Tournament and also competed in the DMDU heavyweight title tournament ... Memorable clashes both against and alongside partner Charli Evans.

IN A telling sign of the strides being made by this country's wrestling industry, there were more Australian names on this year's PWI 500 than in any of the list's previous 31 editions.

Published by Pro Wrestling Illustrated (PWI), the PWI 500 has provided a kayfabe ranking of pro wrestlers across the world every year since 1991. And this year's list featured 14 representatives from Australia in total, topping the eight from last year which was a joint-record high at the time.

Of those 14 names, more than half wrestled exclusively on these shores during PWI's evaluation period, which ran from the start of July last year through to the end of June 2021.

Bronson Reed was the highest ranked Aussie at #73, while Adam Brooks was the top-ranked domestic name in 210th. And Charli Evans and Jessica Troy made history by becoming the first Australian females to chart on the list, landing at #291 and #411 respectively.

The PWI 500 is widely regarded as the most prominent kayfabe ranking of pro wrestlers from all across the globe. It is based largely on objective factors like win-loss records and championship reigns, rather than subjective judgments like match quality or work rate.

Congratulations to everyone featured on the list. Here's a full rundown of the Aussies who charted:

BRONSON REED, #73

Becomes the second Australian in history to break the top 100 (after Buddy Murphy charted at #33 in 2019). Won the NXT North American title but was inexplicably released just five weeks later.

ADAM BROOKS, #210

Carried the top title in Melbourne City Wrestling (MCW) for the full evaluation period, retaining

against Robbie Eagles, Danny Psycho and Slex. Also challenged for the Adelaide Championship Wrestling (ACW) Evolve title and the Riot City Wrestling (RCW) tag belts.

CHARLI EVANS, #291

A finalist in Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU)'s Heavyweight title tournament, Charli also faced Jessica Troy for the PWWA title and won nine points in the 2020 Pro Wrestling Australia (PWA) Premiership. It's unclear if winning the custody of Robert the Plant helped her ranking at all.

RITCHIE TAYLOR, #316

Achieved the crowning moment of his career by winning a 16-person tournament to be crowned inaugural DMDU Heavyweight Champion. Also competed for MCW Intercommonwealth gold, the Adrenaline Pro Wrestling Championship and the Wrestlerock title.

CAVEMAN UGG, #348

A semi-finalist in the DMDU tourney, Caveman Ugg also held both the PWA title and MCW Intercommonwealth gold for more than nine months of the evaluation period. He's since been in contention for the MCW world title, too.

RICKY SOUTH, #377

Ended Caveman Ugg's two-and-a-half years as PWA Champion to claim the gold in March 2021. Also held the Future Wrestling Australia title until the same month and challenged for the Professional Championship Wrestling title.

SLAPJACK, #378

Graduated to the WWE main roster where the former Shane Thorne was repackaged as a member of

Retribution. Faced Bobby Lashley for the US title at Hell in a Cell in October.

ROYCE CHAMBERS, #387

A busy year saw Royce Chambers in contention for the Battle Championship Wrestling, Wrestlerock and DMDU titles as well as RCW tag gold - although his tag title shot was delayed due to Covid-19.

MURPHY, #401

Teamed and then feuded with Seth Rollins in WWE in late 2020, but three televised matches in 2021 and his subsequent release see him slip to his lowest ranking in seven years.

ROBBIE EAGLES, #407

Would no doubt rank higher if his IWGP Junior Heavyweight title win had fallen inside the evaluation period. Domestically he challenged for multiple titles in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

JESSICA TROY, #411

Was PWWA Champion for a whopping 348 days of the 365-day period on which the rankings are based. Challenged for the Newy Pro Middleweight belt and won nine points in the PWA Premiership.

MATT HAYTER, #416

Dominated in Adelaide, holding the RCW title and the ACW Heavyweight Championship for the full evaluation period, although he's since lost the RCW title to Havok.

GRAYSON WALLER, #439

Featured for PWA and twice challenged for the International Wrestling Australia Heavyweight title



Photo: PWI, Digital Beard Photography

316. RITCHIE TAYLOR (13, NL) BIRTH-PLACE: Melbourne, Victoria ... Veteran talent has been lighting it up in Australian rings, winning championships in multiple promotions ... Inaugural Deathmatch Downunder heavyweight champion won the title after beating Charli Evans in

as Matty Wahlberg, before being signed by WWE in March. Has since made his debuts on both 205 Live and NXT.

HARTLEY JACKSON, #449

Won the 2020 Fire Festival for Pro Wrestling Zero1 in Japan after amassing 18 points to qualify for the final. This is the veteran's first appearance on the list since 2016, and the 11th ranking of his 22-year career to date.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I love the PWI 500. Yes, it's a kayfabe list, but it's steeped in history and tradition and provides a level of recognition and exposure that some entrants may otherwise not get. It's also a bit of fun, if nothing else.

As ever, there are some questions raised. There's a notable absence of Western Australian talent, not least of all Mikey Nicholls, who has been on a long unbeaten run for Explosive Pro Wrestling. And it feels wrong not to see Slex featured somewhere, especially after he won the BCW Heavyweight title back in April.

That being said, I used to write all-time ranking pieces in a previous life and I appreciate how everyone can interpret them differently, not to mention how time-consuming they are - and I never got anywhere near to ranking 500 entrants. So it's hard to have any major qualms or criticisms.

Personally I think the biggest takeaway from this year is the evidence that Aussie wrestling really is starting to get noticed and gain the recognition it deserves.

The 14 Australian entrants is a new record, smashing the previous record of eight. During the 2010s, there was an average of six names from these shores on the list each year. In the 2000s the average was just one. And from 2004 to 2008, no Aussies were listed at all.

Not that this is an indictment of the talent. Given that it's a kayfabe list based largely on wins and losses and their significance, if anything it shows that domestic promotions are now being viewed on par with others around the world. Suddenly winning titles in Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide is being acknowledged on a global scale. So much so that of the 14 Australians to feature on this year's list, eight wrestled exclusively in this country during the evaluation period.

Match quality in AusWres in recent years has rarely been in question. And now the promotions are rightfully being viewed in a similar vein.

Seems the rest of the world is finally starting to catch on.

ROAR TALENT

There's a new herd of young lions at the Fale Dojo in New Zealand, including one or two familiar faces for Australian wrestling fans...

AUSTRALIAN independent wrestling was well-represented in the latest intake of young lions at New Zealand's famed Fale Dojo.

The training centre welcomed a bumper class of 14 trainees for its second intake of 2021, which was formally announced in August and featured six Australian amongst the ranks - some of which are returning to resume their training, with others enrolling for the first time.

The trainees will live together while completing a rigorous training regimen. A film crew will also be following them, shooting for an upcoming series about life in the Fale Dojo.

Founder of the Dojo, Toks Fale, says he has been impressed with the trainees' efforts so far. Speaking to the school's media relations manager, Ite Lemalu,



From left: Tim Hayden, Sebastian Matters, Warren Thomas Walters, Mitch Ryder.
Photo: Michael Richards, WWGFX

he said: "The trainees have gotten stuck into it and have really proved that no matter all the troubles, they can still push through the adversities they face."

"There has been a lot of progress in this short time," he added, "and I'm looking forward to seeing how they pull through the adversities of this intake."

The Australian contingent includes Andrew Villalobos, who wrestles as Darius Vega in New South Wales, and Jake Taylor, known largely for his work with Professional Championship Wrestling (PCW) in Victoria, as well as Queensland quartet Sebastian Matters, Warren Thomas Walters, Tim Hayden and Mitch Ryder.

ANDREW VILLALOBOS

VILLALOBOS, who has wrestled under his real name and as Dario Vega since 2018, returns to the Dojo for a fourth time.

He was the first Australian to enrol at the facility when he arrived in 2018, eventually advancing to the New Japan Pro-Wrestling (NJPW) Dojo in Tokyo for further training.

That led to him making his debut for the Japanese company during the Southern Showdown event in Melbourne in June 2019. Brief stints back in the Fale Dojo followed in the coming years before his latest return in 2021.

Villalobos' seniority has seen him take on the role of Senior Lion, taking on leadership responsibilities within the group and, as a remedial massage therapist, runs fitness sessions in the Dojo.

JAKE TAYLOR

TAYLOR is another who is returning to the Dojo, having first arrived in mid-to-late 2019 for both the June and September intakes. And he's another who went on to train in the NJPW Dojo after his first foray

in New Zealand.

He returned to his homeland in 2020 and, unable to head back to the NZ Dojo due to coronavirus restrictions, featured for PCW before going on to make his Deathmatch Downunder debut earlier this year in the promotion's Heavyweight title tournament. Like Andrews Villalobos, he returns to the Dojo as a Senior Lion.

WARREN THOMAS WALTERS

HE MAY be a newcomer to the Fale Dojo, but Warren Thomas Walters is no stranger to world class wrestling schools from other corners of the globe.

The Brisbane native has previous experience with Japan's Wrestle-1 International Wrestling Camp, where Australian legend Hartley Jackson currently coaches, as well as the Westside Xtreme Wrestling Academy in Germany.

He also brings plenty of life experience, as the Dojo's oldest lion at 35 years of age. However, a shoulder injury and the prospect of having to undergo surgery put his future at the Dojo in doubt.

He was unable to wrestle on the Dojo Exhibition show which took place in August.

SEBASTIAN MATTERS

FANS of Queensland wrestling will no doubt be familiar with Sebastian Matters, who is a former Australian Wrestling Alliance (AWA) Openweight Champion in his home state.

The name may also ring a bell with fans from further afield after he made his debut for Riot City Wrestling, in Adelaide, earlier this year.

Matters first arrived in the Fale Dojo in September 2018 before spending the next few years reinforcing his reputation with the likes of Venom Pro Wrestling and Pro Wrestling League.

During that time he worked closely with Tim Hayden and Mitch Ryder, speaking highly of the Dojo and ultimately bringing them back with him for this latest stint in New Zealand.

TIM HAYDEN

UNLIKE Sebastian Matters, Hayden arrives in New Zealand to experience Dojo life for the first time. But much like his fellow Queenslander, he's been busy working throughout his home state over the last few years.

Featuring for Impact Pro Wrestling Australia (IPW) and Queensland Wrestling Alliance (QWA), amongst others, Hayden is in fact a former IPW Tag Team Champion and has worked outside the state too for the likes of Tasmanian Championship Wrestling.

He featured at the Dojo Exhibition show in August, but found himself tasting defeat at the hands of New Zealand-born Samoan Richard Mulu.

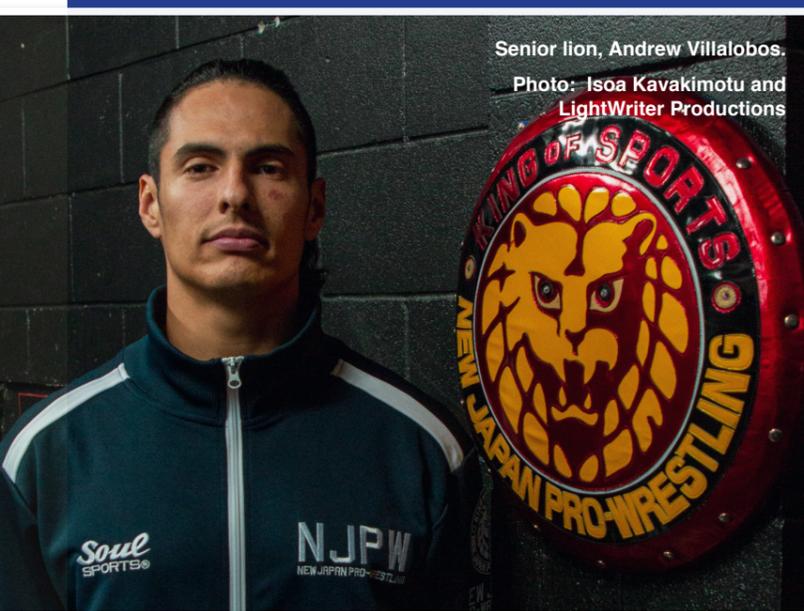
MITCH RYDER

RYDER completes the Queensland quartet and, like Tim Hayden, arrives at the Dojo off the back of Sebastian Matters' recommendation.

He too has called the likes of VPW, IPW, PWL home, as well as Pro Wrestling Power in the state's north and Pro Wrestling Australia south of the border in NSW. He was in Generation Next Level, teaming with Cedric Brave before his partner's retirement.

Ryder was another to feature on the Dojo Exhibition show, losing to Matters but earning a standing ovation from the audience for his efforts.

Special thanks to Ite Lemalu for information on the Fale Dojo's current and previous intakes. You can read more at www.itelemaluwritings.com.



Senior lion, Andrew Villalobos.
Photo: Isoa Kavakimotu and LightWriter Productions



Senior lion, Jake Taylor.
Photo: Isoa Kavakimotu and LightWriter Productions

VALE

DOMINIC DENUCCI

1932-2021

ONE of the biggest names in Australian wrestling history and a cornerstone of the country's golden era has died at the age of 89.

Dominic DeNucci, a headliner in Jim Barnett's World Championship Wrestling (WCW) Australia during its 1960s heyday, passed away on August 11. A cause of death was not initially made public but his daughter, Danielle, has since revealed that her father's heart had failed.

DeNucci, born in Italy in 1923, is best known in North America for runs with the National Wrestling Alliance, World Wrestling Alliance, Big Time Wrestling and the World Wide Wrestling Federation (WWWF), often featuring as an ally of the legendary Bruno Sammartino. He was also later known for training the likes of Mick Foley and Shane Douglas.

In Australia, though, he was the star of a generation. Barnett booked DeNucci as his top babyface and the Italian-American would go on to become one of the most decorated performers and strongest drawcards in the promotion's history.

DeNucci featured prominently during the early years of WCW. Upon being brought in by Barnett, he was immediately put in a program with Killer Kowalski, with the pair main eventing the promotion's inaugural show on October 23, 1964, at Sydney Stadium.

The following week, he defeated Kowalski in Melbourne's Festival Hall to capture the International Wrestling Alliance (IWA) World Heavyweight Championship - an accolade he would go on to win twice more in the coming months, defeating Ray Stevens on both occasions.

A fourth run with the belt in 1966 proved his lengthiest yet, while he would go on to win the title twice more in 1970 - although those reigns came after the promotion had split from the IWA

sanctioning body and instead joined the NWA.

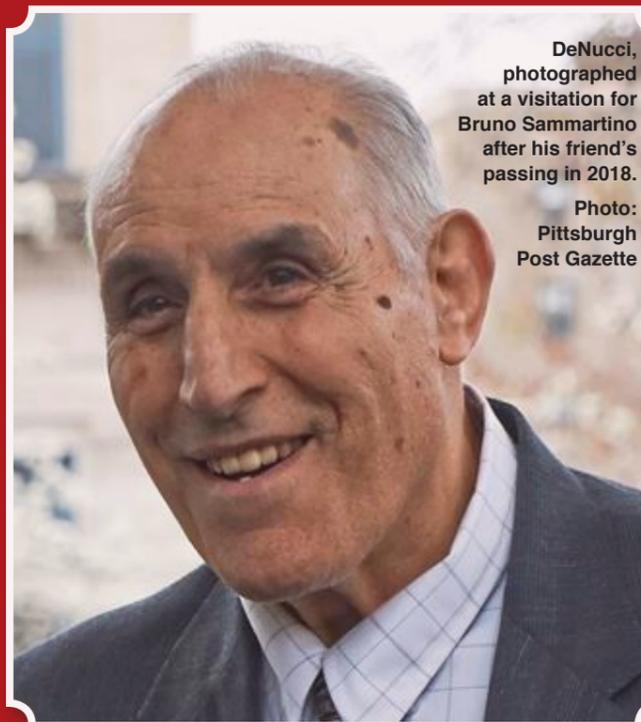
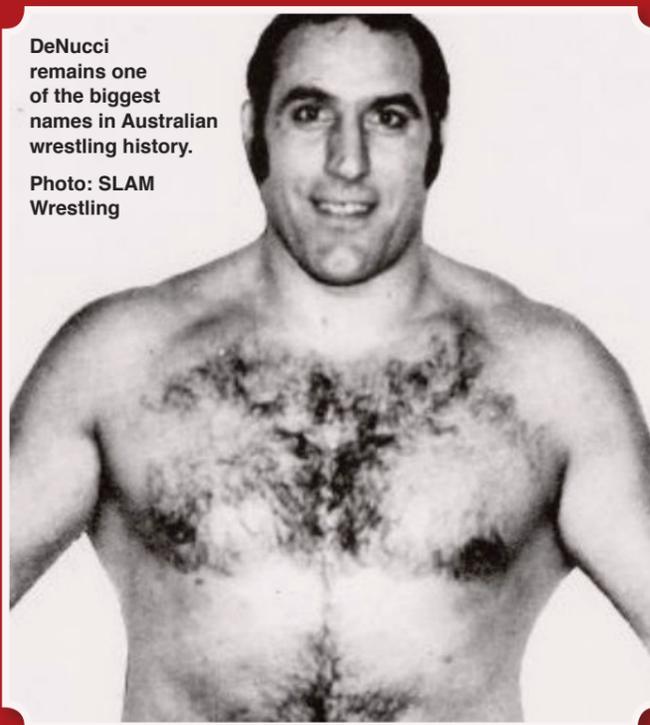
He also enjoyed success as a tag team wrestler, winning multiple IWA Tag Team Championships with Mark Lewin, Antonio Pugliese - later known stateside as Tony Parisi - and Mario Milano.

As well as the championship accomplishments, and perhaps a more significant hallmark of his legacy, was DeNucci's success in the box office.

Dave Meltzer, founder of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter (WON), has reported that the promotion was averaging 9,000 paid fans a week at Sydney

DeNucci remains one of the biggest names in Australian wrestling history.

Photo: SLAM Wrestling



DeNucci, photographed at a visitation for Bruno Sammartino after his friend's passing in 2018.

Photo: Pittsburgh Post Gazette

Stadium during the DeNucci years. And it was making its top babyface amongst the highest-paid wrestlers in the world at the time, earning him the kind of money that "nobody except perhaps the world champions like Lou Thesz and Bruno Sammartino made in the United States".

Part of his success is widely attributed to his universal appeal. While later stars like Milano and Spyros Arion were big with Italian and Greek audiences in particular, DeNucci was said to be welcomed by fans across the board in a wide range of markets.

He would eventually move on from the promotion in 1970 and returned to the States, going on to feature for the WWWF - the forerunner to the World Wrestling Federation - where he captured the International Tag Team Championships with Sammartino and later helped to establish a rising talent named Hulk Hogan in the early 1980s.

He wrestled intermittently after 1985 and went on to train wrestlers at his home, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in 2012 was inducted into the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame.

In 2020 he underwent surgery for a heart issue, after which he was cared for by his daughter and her husband, who lived nearby. They would visit everyday but on Tuesday, August 9, he became unwell. He was taken to hospital and died two days later. "It was his heart that failed," she told the WON.

Special thanks to Dave Meltzer of the WON and Greg Oliver of Slam Wrestling for details on parts of DeNucci's life and career.

CAREER HIGHS

OCT 23, 1964 Main events the promotion's first stadium show, headlining against Killer Kowalski in front of 6,000 fans at Sydney Stadium.

OCT 31, 1964 Wins the International Wrestling Alliance (IWA) World Heavyweight Championship for the first time, beating Killer Kowalski via DQ.

NOV 7, 1964 Back-to-back wins over Kowalski via disqualification pave the way for WCW's first-ever No DQ match. DeNucci wins to cement his position as champion at Melbourne's Festival Hall.

NOV 18, 1964 Competing in the promotion's first-ever tag team match, siding with Dale Lewis to defeat Killer Kowalski and Buddy Austin in a two-out-of-three-falls match in Sydney.

FEB 19, 1965 After dropping the belt to Ray Stevens in January, DeNucci gets his rematch after two non-title wins over the champ, eventually regaining the title with a victory at Sydney Stadium. This makes him the first-ever two-time IWA World Heavyweight Champion.

MAR 29, 1965 Having lost the title again to Stevens in Festival Hall, Brisbane, at the start of the month, DeNucci becomes a three-time champion, regaining the gold from Stevens just 19 days later in Newcastle NSW.

SEP 1966 Faces Bulldog Brower in the promotion's first-ever No Holds Barred match.

FEB 12, 1966 After returning to the US at the end of 1965, DeNucci returns at the turn of the new year and doesn't take long to win a fourth IWA World Heavyweight Championship, beating his old rival Killer Kowalski. This reign lasts 111 days, a tenure that isn't beaten until Mario Milano's 119-days in mid-to-late 1969.

APR 1966 Defeats Pampero Firpo in WCW's first Loser Leaves Town match.

JUL 17, 1968 Wins the IWA World Tag Team titles alongside Mario Milano for a third time, then a joint record for a single team in WCW Australia.

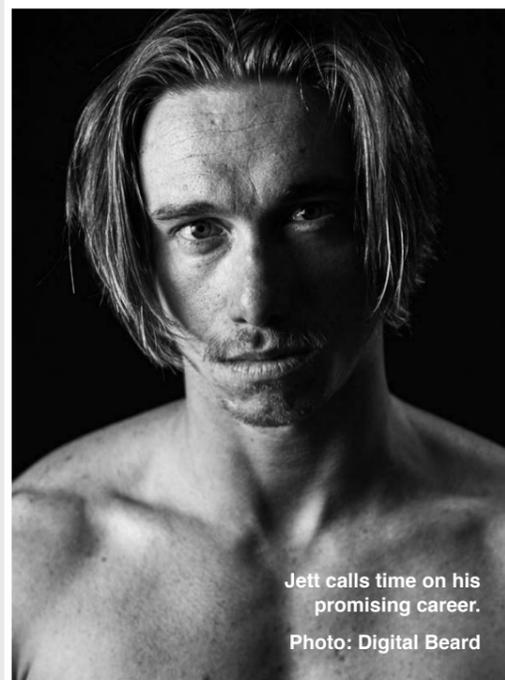
Special thanks to Libnan Ayoub and his DVD documentary, Over the Top Rope, chronicling the story of World Championship Wrestling Australia between 1964 and 1978. Find out more or purchase your copy via www.overthetoprobe.com.au.

JETT SET TO CALL TIME ON CAREER

A string of injuries, and their impact on his career prospects outside of professional wrestling, have forced the high-flyer to call it a day.

JETT Rouka has made what he describes as the 'hardest decision' of his life and announced his retirement from pro wrestling due to the impact of recent injuries.

Rouka revealed the news back in August in a statement shared on his Facebook page. He explained that he would soon be undergoing hand surgery which would leave him with a limited range of motion in his fingers and require him to re-learn how to write.



Jett calls time on his promising career.
Photo: Digital Beard

The South African-born star is an aspiring teacher and says that any activity that jeopardises that ambition "must be put to an immediate stop". He also cites the need for a further facial surgery as well as spinal trauma suffered earlier in the year as factors behind his decision.

Rouka, who has wrestled extensively across Australia over the last five years, also noted frustration after Covid-19 ruined what looked set to be the first year he would be involved in a major storyline. But ultimately his underlying message was one of gratitude.

Signing off the statement, he wrote: "To the fans, thank you for cheering or booing me - without you, there is no Jett Rouka. To the friends I've made along the way - I wish you all the best for whatever the future might hold for you.

"To Aiden and Tyson - thank you for believing in me, pushing me to the limits and allowing me to experience what true friendship means through a common love of theatrical fighting.

"Without you two I never would've given wrestling a chance and would've robbed myself of the best five years of my life. I love you both."

Rouka retires in his 20s having made his debut for New Age Wrestling, in Albion VIC, in 2016. He would go on to wrestle for promotions across Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania, while also spending a brief time in Canada.

More recently he was a part of the Mile High Club with Tyson Baxter and together the pair held the Adrenaline Pro Wrestling tag team titles from late 2018 until July of 2019.

AUSWRES wishes Jett the very best for the future.

SMASH MOUTH READY FOR ONE LAST HIT

Ritchie 'Smash Mouth' Taylor has also revealed plans to hang up his boots, but not before he goes to war one final time with one of his oldest friends.

RITCHIE Taylor has also announced plans to bow out of pro wrestling, and is set to wrestle one more match before calling time on his career.

Taylor, who was crowned the first Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU) Heavyweight Champion in May, cited a combination of factors, including hip problems and changes in his personal life, as drivers behind his decision to end his 12-year career. He went on to challenge Joel Bateman to one more match, after which he intends to step away from the ring for good.

Speaking in a video shared on social media, Taylor said: "There's been a lot of things happening in my life this year. I'm in the process of starting a new career, I have a baby on the way and I went for an MRI the other day because my hip's been playing up and it wasn't the greatest of news.

He continued: "I just came to the conclusion that I'm 31, I've had a good run, I've had a good time, but it's time for me to hang up the boots."

Taylor explained that despite having burned a few bridges during his younger days, Bateman had continued to support him "100 percent" and



Taylor plans to wrestle one more time before retiring.
Photo: MCW

believed in him when he hadn't believed in himself.

"What better way to go out then to have Smash Mouth versus the Smash Hit," Taylor added. "So Joel Bateman, would you please give me the honour of wrestling me in my last match? The ball's in your court, brother."

No date has been set for the match with Victoria still in lockdown, but Bateman responded positively to the challenge, writing on Twitter: "Watch this space. One more scrap, brother."

Taylor bows out after an extensive career, largely spent in his native Victoria. During his earlier days he featured heavily for New Age Wrestling, winning the promotion's tag titles alongside Zane Zodiac.

He later went on to become a singles star for the likes of Melbourne City Wrestling, Adrenaline Pro Wrestling (APW), Wrestlerock and, more recently, DMDU.

Taylor will retire as a former Wrestlerock Champion and the reigning APW and DMDU Heavyweight Champion, after winning a 16-person tournament to claim the DMDU belt in May.

Turn to page 30 for an in-depth look at Ritchie's favourite match, as told by the man himself.



Jett Rouka's latest injury has had an impact on his career outside of the ring.
Photo: Digital Beard

EPW champ Mikey Nicholls recently had surgery on a bicep tear.
Photo: Shotweiler



WRESTLE RAMPAGE

ONE of Australia's longest-running promotions has joined the Australian Wrestling Network.

Wrestle Rampage, which traces its roots back to 2006, joins a number of top Aussie promotions available on the service, which now has more than 920 hours of on demand wrestling content on offer.

The news was announced in August with the Adelaide promotion's entire library of on-demand content in the midst of being migrated over to the Network. *Ground Zero*, from 2007, went live this week with more to follow in the not too distant future. Go to awn.pivotshare.com for more.

GOLD CLASS WRESTLING

GOLD Class Wrestling (GCW) is no longer affiliated with the Australian brand of the Allied Independent Wrestling Federations (AIWF).

The AIWF had previously acted as the governing body for the Geelong-based promotion and often featured in storylines, including as recently as May when the AIWF voided GCW's defeat to Premier Pro Wrestling at a cross-brand show in Sunbury.

However the organisations will no longer be working alongside one another going forward.

A statement shared on the AIWF Australia Facebook page read: "A mutual decision has been reached between the AIWF and GCWrestling to part ways. Both the AIWF and GCW wish each other all the best on each of their future endeavours."

MIKEY NICHOLLS

EXPLOSIVE Pro Wrestling (EPW) is facing the prospect of running its 20th anniversary show without its Heavyweight Champion.

Mikey Nicholls, who has held the belt since late 2019, underwent surgery on a bicep that "was torn from the bone", per an announcement on the promotion's social media pages.

The injury is said to have been sustained in the early stages of his EPW title defence against Taylor King at *EPW: Ticket to Madness* on August 28.

The promotion says Nicholls has been keen to keep the severity of the injury private but will provide an update as soon as further information is available.

EXPLOSIVE PRO WRESTLING

THE field for this year's Explosive Pro Wrestling (EPW) Invitational Tournament has been locked in, with a line-up of quarterfinal matches announced.

Recognised names and rising stars are featured amongst the bracket, which begins at *EPW: Mighty Encounters* on October 16.

Adelaide-based Robby Heart is perhaps the most exciting inclusion. He will head out to Perth to renew hostilities with Damian Slater. The pair have extensive history wrestling both together and against one another for Wrestle Rampage in Adelaide, as well as occasional appearances as a tag team in Queensland and Melbourne, but their October 16 meeting will be their first in WA.

Relative newcomers find themselves pitted against some of the promotion's most seasoned names in the other three match-ups. Edith Night, Joel Hagan and Kaz Jordan will take on Marcius Pitt, Michael Moreleone and Gavin McGavin respectively.

This is the 20th instalment of the illustrious tournament, which is the longest running in all of Australia. Semifinal matches are expected to take place at *EPW: Reawakening XX* in November.

Kiel Steria was tournament's most recent winner, beating Tyler Jacobs at *Collision Course* in April before coming up short in his resultant EPW Championship match with Mikey Nicholls at July's *Hell or High Water*.

TRAILER THEFT

MAT Basso, of Riot City Wrestling, shared a plea for help after a trailer containing crowd control barriers was stolen in Adelaide last month.

The blue and silver trailer, rego YGA966, was taken from Kilkenny, next to Arndale Shopping Centre, sometime between 5pm on Sunday, September 19 and 2.45pm the following day.

It was carrying 20 crowd control barriers and has a 16ft cage around it. There was also a yellow lock on

the tow bar which may help identify it.

Police are aware and CCTV footage is being checked, but anyone who may have information that could help is urged to call police on 131444.

"Adelaide's a small place, and this is a big trailer," said Mat. "Someone has to know who's taken it."

LORD ANDY COYNE

THERE will be a new voice of Melbourne City Wrestling (MCW) when the promotion returns to action after lockdown.

Lord Andy Coyne, one of the most seasoned and respected commentators in Australia, will not be returning to his role behind the mic.

In a statement he noted that he came to the difficult after considering a number of factors, both personal and professional, adding: "Ultimately the new MCW is a very different promotion to what it once was, and sadly I feel that I'm just not the right fit for the current version of the promotion, and as such I've not been enjoying myself as I once did.

"I'm going to go spend the extra time being a rock and roll Dad, and try out a few new hobbies."

He also confirmed that he will continue to work with Deathmatch Downunder going forward.

Andy thanked the likes of Mikey Jay and Tommy Hellfire, who initially recruited him to MCW, as well as former colleagues Chris Fresh and Gino Gambino.

And *ANSURES* would like to thank Andy for his efforts and all the memories over the years. All the very best for the future, mate.

PRO WRESTLING AUSTRALIA

AUSSIE Open made history in September as they defended their Pro Wrestling Australia (PWA) Tag Team Championships on foreign soil for the first time.

Mark Davis and Kyle Fletcher put the belts on the line against RevPro British Tag Team Champions Connor Mills and Michael Oku at *RevPro: High Stakes 2021* at London's York Hall on September 19.

And the PWA stars were not only successful in defending their gold, but also captured the RevPro championships to continue an impressive 2021.

They won via pinfall in a match widely regarded as the best on the show, before joining forces with Will Ospreay's United Empire to close the evening.

Davis and Fletcher wrestled extensively here in Australia during the first six months of the year, both in singles and tag team action. The pair won the PWA tag titles from the Velocities in an absolute classic in May before heading back out to the UK where they currently remain.

ROYAL RUMBLE

Gavin McGavin, Edith Night, Taylor King and Michael Moreleone wrestled live on a segment on 9News as

part of the station's coverage of the 2021 Perth Royal Show.

The quartet were slugging it out in a tag team match as 9News' roving reporter Scherri-Lee Biggs filmed live from Claremont Showground, where Explosive Pro Wrestling (EPW) is amongst the festival's line-up of '101 free things to do'.

Brad West also delivered a brilliant promo on camera, hamming up the action and his character, while King nailed a timely pose for the tens of thousands of viewers watching at home.

The action was part of a marathon run of wrestling with EPW hosting multiple shows across the eight-day event. Fans turned out in force to catch four daily showings at 11am, 1.30pm, 3pm and 5pm from Saturday, September 25 through to the following weekend.

DEATHMATCH TOURNNEY

THE first-ever deathmatch tournament on Australian soil will also see the crowning of the inaugural Australian Deathmatch Champion.

Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU), which is hosting the eight-person tournament, revealed the news in an Instagram video alongside the caption, "prestige is not the only thing that awaits the winner".

The new Champion will be crowned at *Death Rules Everything Around Me*, which had initially been due to take place in August, only for a statewide lockdown to be announced in Victoria just over two weeks ahead of showtime.

A new date of Saturday, November 20, has since



Lord Andy Coyne has announced he will be stepping away from MCW.

Photo: Glass Cannon Media

been set, with the state planning to lift its lockdown on or around October 26 ahead of another slight easing of restrictions on or around November 5.

The field for the eight-person extravaganza was revealed before the original show. The contenders, listed in the order they were announced, include Callen Butcher, Mad Dog, Damian Rivers, Vixsin, Atlas C.C. Whittaker, York, Joel Bateman and FOX.

The show takes place at the Arrow on Swanston, in Melbourne VIC. Very limited tickets are still available. Go to www.eventbrite.com.au and search 'DMDU' to get yours now.

MELBOURNE CITY WRESTLING

MELBOURNE City Wrestling (MCW) has also revealed a new set of dates for events that were postponed due to Victoria's lockdown.

The inaugural *MCW: Fusion* show, a novel fan experience the promotion is launching, is now set to take place on Saturday, December 11, at the MCW HQ in Somerton VIC.

MCW: Fight to Survive is then set to be the promotion's first show of 2022 with a date of Saturday, January 15, pencilled in at the Thornbury Theatre.

Fusion, described as an intimate, limited capacity wrestling show with one-on-one fan experiences and Q&As, was set to take place in May, only to be postponed not once but twice due to separate lockdowns in Victoria.

Fight to Survive had been due to take place in October, where Team Slex vs. Team Rocky Menero was set to headline the show.

Tickets for the original *Fusion* date were refunded at after the original postponement, while tickets for the original *Fight to Survive* date will be carried over to the January show. To buy tickets for either show, go to www.eventbrite.com.au and search 'MCW'.

RIOT CITY WRESTLING

RIOT City Wrestling has officially moved into its "new, upgraded facility" after saying goodbye to its long-time headquarters in Adelaide's inner suburbs.

The promotion's new base can now be found in Gray Street, Kilkeny SA and its first show from the new venue is already in the books, with *Heavy is the Crown* taking place there on October 9.

RCW announced its departure from its former HQ, in Colgin Street, Hindmarsh SA, in September, moving on after five years with management explaining that an "unprecedented period of growth" meant it was time to expand to a larger venue.

The promotion revealed the news alongside a video, shared on social media, paying tribute to the hard work of everyone involved in making the time spent at RCW HQ so special.

An accompanying message read: "We turned a



warehouse in Hindmarsh into a place where everyone who shares a passion of the sport of professional wrestling could gather to see the best action in all of South Australian wrestling. We will never forget our time here."

WRESTLEROCK

THE organisers of Wrestlerock are hoping to host their next show in early 2022 after lockdowns forced two postponements.

Wrestlerock 32 had two dates in July and September pushed back due to separate lockdowns in the state of Victoria, but with restrictions set to ease in the coming weeks we might not be too far off of a Wrestlerock return.

A post shared on the promotion's Facebook page read: "We hope to be back in early 2022, and when we can safely run an event, we really hope you'll be there to join us at the Corner Hotel. In the mean time, stay safe! We miss you!"

Management also confirmed that all pre-orders for Wrestlerock 32 have been refunded. Stay posted with the promotion's social media pages for more information on a date and ticket sales.

PREHISTORIC PHILANTHROPIC

AUSTRALIAN wrestling's resident caveman has helped raised thousands of dollars for the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.

Caveman Ugg and his family and friends have raised more than \$7k for the charity, the leading organisation for brain cancer research, advocacy and awareness in Australia.

He has a close personal connection with the disease, revealing on social media that his little girl's biological father passed away from brain cancer two months before she was born. Ugg himself has raised more than \$1k and has pledged to donate all profits from merch sales made in October to the cause.

Go to walk4braincancer.com.au/virtual-2021/cavemanugg to donate, or check out Ugg's page at wrestlermerch.com.

THREE COUNT PRO WRESTLING

ONE of Queensland's premier training schools is hosting its own live event - or at least, it was planning to do so before Wacol's Most Wanted got involved...

Three Count Pro Wrestling have announced a date at craft beer venue the Shelter, Morningside, on Saturday, November 6.

In the promotional video announcing the news, the footage then cuts to their warehouse where the ring has apparently been stolen by Wacol's most dastardly tag team. It's then revealed that the boys went to the Shelter, put pen to paper and essentially hijacked the entire event.

It's a great angle and one that's well worth watching, even if you're not based in the area. Check out Three Count Pro Wrestling Academy on Facebook for more information.

FUTURE WRESTLING AUSTRALIA

NEW South Wales is starting to see its first live pro wrestling date added to the calendar after it's 100-plus day lockdown.

Future Wrestling Australia (FWA) announced on Monday, October 11 - the same day the region ended its shutdown - that *Resolution IV* will take place on Sunday, November 28.

The show was originally planned for June but was pushed back due to coronavirus restrictions. The new date takes place at the same venue, the Dural Country Club in Dural NSW.

Per ongoing restrictions, adult attendees must be double vaccinated, while under 16s must be accompanied by a fully vaxxed member of their family.

Go to <https://m.moshtix.com.au/v2/event/fwa-resolution-4/131864> for tickets.

TOMMY HELLFIRE

TOMMY Hellfire will be getting familiar with a different kind of ring in the coming months, amid reports that the Professional Championship Wrestling (PCW) star will be appearing on the next season of reality show *Married at First Sight*.

Filming for the 2022 season of the Channel Nine reality show, a social experiment in which strangers are 'wed' and sample married life together, is underway and Hellfire has already shot his wedding scene, according to the Daily Mail Australia.

Filming is expected to be completed before the end of the year, with the new season set to air in early 2022.

CHARLIE MATTHEWS

ANOTHER PCW star, another reality TV appearance...

Charlie Matthews, known outside the ring as *Love Island's* Matthew Zukowski, appeared on Channel 7's *the Block* to help Josh and Luke - former *Love Island* stars themselves - install their new pool.

Charlie swore, drank coffee and negotiated the excavation of the boys' new pool in his brief cameo appearance.

You can watch the clip by going to www.9now.nine.com.au/the-block/videos/latest/love-islands-matt-zukowski-comes-to-help-the-twins.

JONAH ROCK

JONAH Rock, who more recently went by the name of Bronson Reed in WWE NXT, has started his own podcast after his release from the company.

Rock was shockingly let go back in August, just weeks after being the NXT North American Champion, but he's already making use of his time with the launch of his JONAHDROME podcast.

Topics from episodes produced so far include his release from WWE, backyard wrestling tales and a chat with Damian Slater.

The podcast is released via YouTube. Simply search 'JONAHDROME' to check it out.

RICKY THE WRESTLER

MAT Basso and his wife, Donna, have written a children's wrestling book.

Mat, who was diagnosed with Lymphoma in 2020, worked on the book during lengthy hospital stays fighting the disease. The book focuses on a regular kid's journey to wrestling stardom and is suitable for pre-schoolers and early primary students.

It's priced at \$15, with a \$25 bundle available that includes a Ricky the Wrestler mask. There's also an option to donate further funds to the cause.

Go to www.rickythewrestler.com to find out more, buy your copy or donate to the cause.

Here we go again...

Despite the obvious doom and gloom surrounding vast swathes of the still partially locked down world of Australian wrestling, there's hope. There's a new kid on the block in WA, a welcome return of a familiar face on the east coast and even rumblings of fresh start down in Victoria.

Groundhog day. Deja vu. Whatever you want to call it, the lockdowns, restrictions and seemingly infinite stream of daily pressers have made the last year feel rather repetitive.

Beyond the slog of lockdown life, though, something else is repeating itself, specifically in the world of pro wrestling. And hold the phone, stop the press, because it isn't all bad news.

Just as we saw Powerslam Wrestling, in Adelaide, and Deathmatch Downunder, in Melbourne, buck the trend and get off the ground amidst the backdrop of a pandemic in 2020, this year there are more groups defying the odds.

Shows resumed in areas of Queensland in August after a brief shutdown, and with that came the return of Pro Wrestling League for a first show in more than a year-and-a-half. Out west, meanwhile, the likes of Explosive Pro Wrestling, New Horizons Pro Wrestling and Southern Hemisphere Wrestling Alliance have gone from strength to strength in recent months, and they've now been joined by a new face in the form of Southern Territory Wrestling (STW), which hosted its debut show on the first weekend of October.

Not that it was a walk in the park to get there, though, as wrestler-turned-director of operations Andrew 'Shark' Carter tells us.

AW

ON OCTOBER 2, STW hosted its first-ever live show, *Border Wars*. But it shouldn't have.

The event wasn't even booked a few weeks ahead of showtime, and it was only because the long-awaited debut of Ambition Wrestling had fallen through that it even went ahead in the first place. Let's start from the top.

STW and Ambition are very closely intertwined. Sister companies, if you will. Both came to be after a production company approached Andrew after his 2019 retirement, floating the idea of a pro wrestling show to be distributed through Southeast Asia and Australia.

"Going into it, we were always going to have two brands," says Andrew. "Southern Territory was going to be the WA brand, and Ambition would be the pay-per-view touring brand."

The Ambition show, *Emergence*, set for October 2, had plenty of hype. It was taking place in the heart of Perth at ABC Studios, and a who's who of Aussie wrestling were booked. Adam Brooks, Slex, Mikey Nicholls, Kellyanne, Caveman Ugg and many more.

Of course, many of them were based out east. And as the day of the show approached, east coast lockdowns were making interstate travel impossible. Then when Nicholls went down with an injury, an already depleted card was left in tatters. Add in some unexpected venue restrictions that emerged - no pun intended - and suddenly the show was looking

impossible.

A statement was issued, refunds processed, and Ambition placed on the backburner.

WA talent, however, were still available. So too were wrestlers from neighbouring SA. And Andrew knew they would be launching STW in the coming months. Why not take the plunge a little earlier than planned?

"We had already organised everything.

We had people's flights booked, accommodation booked. With everything already locked in I thought, maybe this is the right time and we can pull it off and launch STW.

"It was a case of taking a gamble and seeing what we could do. So we just said, 'let's do it, let's make something happen.' And there was a lot of inspiration from the talent. They were really keen to wrestle still and wrestle different people, so there was a big push from them and their motivation and energy pushed us to do it."

That prompted a mad rush to find a venue at just two weeks' notice. The swanky ABC Studios plan was eventually replaced with a performing arts centre in a small suburb outside of Perth. Promo materials were put together, matches made and new tickets issued. Suddenly, they had a show.

"It was a big, mad team effort to not only book this show, but work on the flyers, match cards and social media graphics, we all came together and bonded and put a big show together and we got the launch of the promotions probably a couple of months earlier than planned, so it was all good!"

AW

A BIG part of the mantra at STW and Ambition is the importance of the collective. And it shows



The inaugural STW show went ahead on October 2.

Photo: Keith Mitchell Photography

in more ways than one.

The promotion has a match-making committee - none of whom is an active wrestler.

"It eliminates the politics," says Andrew.

And each member of that committee is responsible for a different aspect of the card.

"For example," he continues, "Elizabeth Hogan is focusing on the women's division and building that up, so she's out there talking to talent and trying to put matches together for that division, while I'm looking at the STW Championship picture, others are looking at stories for specific wrestlers, and then we all come together and put these ideas together. So it's not just one or two people saying, 'this is the show, this is what's happening.'

"I just feel like giving people more freedom and creativity with the product adds a lot more to it," he adds.

"There's so much passion and desire behind everything and there's a whole team of people, and that's what makes it so exciting to do what we're doing right now."

Looking back, there was another example of collectivity that enabled the October 2 show to go ahead. With east coast talent stranded, the promotion looked to Adelaide for suitable replacements.

"I reached out to Chris Basso [of Riot City

Wrestling]. He gave me a list of people. They were just really helpful, they made sure they didn't run any shows because we had something booked on that day as well - stuff that you'd never really hear about behind the scenes. They just really went above and beyond to help us out and help us put something together, so we're really appreciative of what those guys did."

Andrew admits it's a big departure from the days of old, where Australian wrestling was far more parochial.

"10-15 years ago you went to a school, and that was it - you just wrestled there. You didn't go anywhere else. You talked to someone else, you'd get heat.

"It was a completely different scene back then but I think now that people have worked overseas, they've got more experience and seen that's not how it works, I think that door has opened up a bit more and it went from wrestling at one school and being stuck there the rest of your life, to training there but also training elsewhere as well.

"It's just become a lot more open and you can see that the scene has definitely improved because of that."

And that openness could well be key to

helping the industry get back to its best when those eastern states are finally ready to stage shows again.

"I think everyone working together is going to be a huge thing for the whole scene in Australia itself," says Andrew. "Everyone's on the right path and I think if we just keep at it the scene can be something really special."

AW

THERE'S something defiant about starting a promotion in a pandemic. The same can be said for pushing ahead despite all those hurdles that presented along the way.

And just as STW was not alone when RCW helped it put together the *Border Wars* show, the promotion hasn't been alone in getting off the ground during a pandemic.

Over on the east coast, in Brisbane, one of the region's most popular promotions has made a resurgent comeback after well over a year and a half out of action.

Pro Wrestling League (PWL) hosted *Project: Revolution 3* on Saturday, October 9, and by all accounts the long-awaited return was - perhaps unsurprisingly - a big hit.

"Well done on the comeback," wrote one

fan on social media. "Great event, high energy. Nova's first match of the night set the tone right through [to the] main event with Punch Drunk Istria."

"Great work tonight guys!" and "Awesome show," wrote others.

Even down in Victoria, still in the throes of an umpteenth lockdown, there's a similar story showing signs of playing out. WarZone Wrestling Australia announced at the end of August that it was under new management, thanking the old regime for their contributions and adding: "We look forward to seeing you all when WarZone returns!"

It can only be a good thing that more places to work are popping up across the country, despite the widespread adversities being faced. And there are plenty of other positives in the scene right now if you look in the right places.

For one, Andrew's right in that we're living in a much more open world of professional wrestling. *STW: Border Wars* featured wrestlers that had performed in, by my count, a dozen different promotions across the country in this year alone, and PWL's event featured a similarly diverse pool of talent.

Also, the fact that recent lockdowns have been localised ones has also done us a big favour. Yes, they've still robbed many of us,

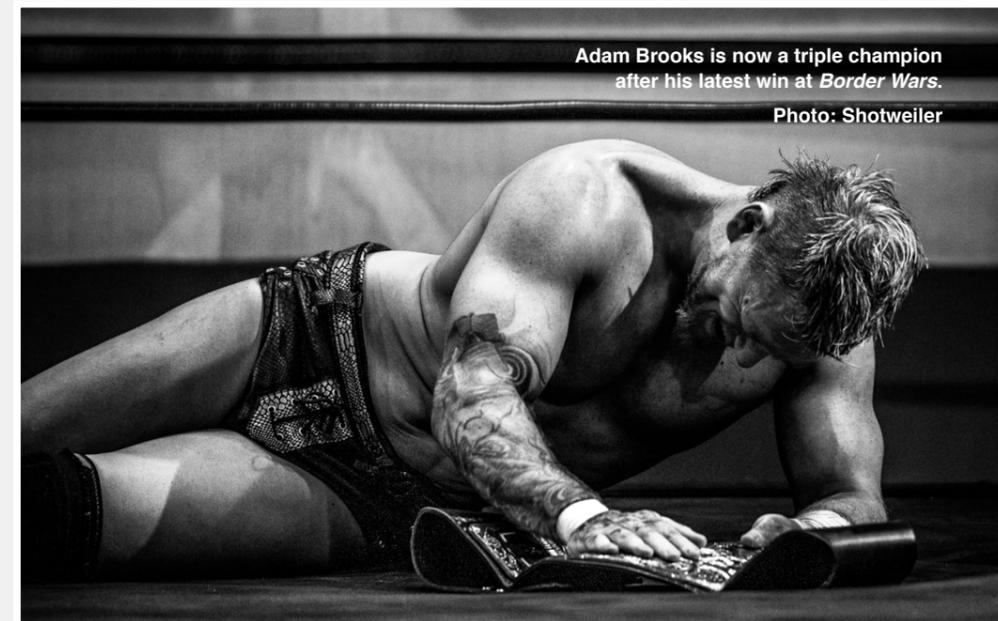
myself included, of the chance to be with loved ones, and in many ways left the country feeling more fragmented than ever. But speaking solely within the confines of professional wrestling, closing down in pockets has meant that the scene itself has never sat completely idle. Some wrestling has been better than no wrestling. And the belief is that there'll be a trickle down effect for the NSW and Victorian promotions when they do return to action.

When Adam Brooks walks back out onto a Melbourne City Wrestling stage, he'll do so as a triple champion, having won honours with STW and RCW. He'll have an even bigger target on his back and there's most likely going to be even more interest in seeing if anyone can get one up on this all-conquering belt collector.

The industry has shown itself to be very resilient in recent months. It's also shown that despite the distance and fragmentation, in some ways we're more connected than ever. With NSW and Victoria on the way back into the mix in the coming weeks and months, expect that to continue - and after months of talk of a possible boom period in wrestling, expect that talk to gain pace once again.

I guess it really is a case of *deja vu*.

AW



Adam Brooks is now a triple champion after his latest win at *Border Wars*.

Photo: Shotweiler



A hectic rush saw STW pull off *Border Wars* with just a couple of week's notice.

Photo: Keith Mitchell Photography

"I think everyone working together is going to be a huge thing for the whole scene in Australia."



Charli has not one but two special messages for the pandemic.

Photo: New Photography Studios

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS

The pandemic took the ball from her court, but the Violence Artist stole it right back and ran with it. Here she shares an insight into the ups and downs of a year-and-a-bit spent rolling with the punches and rolling through opponents.

CHARLI Evans has a track record of taking the world by storm. Since heading overseas in 2017 she's won championships in both the UK and Japan and faced a who's who of female talent with SHIMMER in the US. In the last 18 months, though, the Central Coast native has found herself spread across the globe in a rather different sense.

She's spent most of the last year-and-a-half locked down in Australia - and not for the first time - with most of her belongings still holed up in the UK where her previous life has been put on pause, while her boyfriend has been some 15,000km away in the States.

While many of us remain in lockdown, our world reduced to a 5km radius from our front door, Charli's has been blown wide open.

Not that hers is a tale of woe. Against this

backdrop of upheaval and uncertainty, the Pro Wrestling Australia (PWA) star has turned obstacles into opportunity. Returning to her homeland and its wrestling community provided her with the chance to reconnect with loved ones, to beat the hell out of loved ones, and to help improve a scene she remains fiercely proud of.

Any worries of a career stagnating have been well and truly silenced with a string of in-ring performances that only enhance her already stellar reputation, as she continues to make the best of a bad situation and prove you just can't keep a good thing down.

AW

IT WAS March of last year when things turned pear shaped for most of us. Charli was no

exception. Wrestling in the UK, she had just qualified for Fight Club Pro's Dream Tag Team Invitational (DTTI) with her tag partner Millie McKenzie. Having already tasted gold with Pro Wrestling: EVE, in London, and Sendai Girls, in Japan, hopes for the tournament were high. Covid-19, as ever, had other ideas.

With the pandemic escalating and borders closing, Charli was forced to make the tough decision to pull the plug and head home to Australia to be with family. In September, I asked if she still expected to be here a year-and-a-half down the track.

"Fuck no, all my belongings are still there," she said. "I left my room set up, I left sets of gear that Millie and I had made specifically for the DTTI tournament. It was a spur of the moment choice as they were closing the borders and stopping flights and I knew I had to make the choice to come home.

"I left in May and thought I would be back by the end of July. When this all kicked off I remember crying on the phone to Millie cause we had lost three bookings. Little did we know our whole 2020 calendar was about to disappear!"

She describes it as "one of the hardest

choices" she's ever had to make, but knows it was the right one and admits things have worked out well since then. From spending time with family and friends, to getting back in the ring in front of crowds and training a whole new group of students, moving home offered opportunities that weren't possible back in the UK.

And having learned from experiences overseas, she was able to come back home the very best version of herself - both as a person and a performer.

"I think when I left Australia in 2017, I was a shy, young girl who didn't have any idea of who she was as a wrestler. And I think moving overseas at a young age, traveling the world, meeting new people, training in different styles, finding who I was as a human being, wrestling the most incredible wrestlers in the world, going through the most horrible experiences but also experiencing the best times of my life helped me become a really confident, sure-of-myself performer.

"I came back and I know exactly what I offer and that I'm an asset to every company."

Certainly the homecoming hero has proven that true in the performances she's produced in Australian rings since.

AW

CHARLI'S first match back on home soil came at *PWA: Call to Arms* on August 8, 2020, at the promotion's Academy in Ingleburn NSW. Fittingly, she faced her long-time friend, Jessica Troy.

"If you go and watch that back, you'll see the smile on both our faces as soon as the bell rings," she recalls. "She is one of the best wrestlers in the world, she's the measuring stick when it comes to talent in this country, gender aside.

"I am so grateful every single time I get to wrestle Jess because we do create something magic. We have a connection in and out of the ring and I think regardless of if we're tagging, fighting, training or just bouncing ideas off each other, we are meant to do it together and we balance each other out. I love her."

From there she locked up with Troy again, this time in a three-way with soon-to-be-WWE-



A deathmatch with Joel Bateman is one of Charli's favourites since returning to Australia.

Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

bound Steph De Lander, while also taking on a whole host of new faces as a participant in the inaugural *PWA Premiership* tournament. She also returned to the place where it all began with Newy Pro for a match with one of her trainers, Adam Hoffman, before ticking off two biggies from the bucket list in the new year.

March 6. Melbourne. Her Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU) debut saw her take on Joel Bateman in a brutal Last Drinks Deathmatch. To the surprise of no-one, it was great.

Six nights later, she picked up where she'd left off with a No DQ match against Troy at *PWA: It Started Out With a Kiss* - delivering arguably the match of the night on what was arguably the show of the year so far.

"That show was such an emotional ride," she says, "and I am blessed to have had one of my best and favourite matches ever on it. My sister and her friends that aren't wrestling fans at all came to that show and by the end of the night they had cheered, laughed and cried and were absolutely hooked and that is honestly what it's all about."

The Bateman deathmatch was one that the pair had wanted for a long time. And the No DQ match with Troy marked the first time she had taken the lead in a match with that kind of stipulation. Having steadily built her reputation in the UK as a technical wrestler,

she's reminded people of the many strings in her bow by revisiting the world of hardcore wrestling which has long captured her imagination.

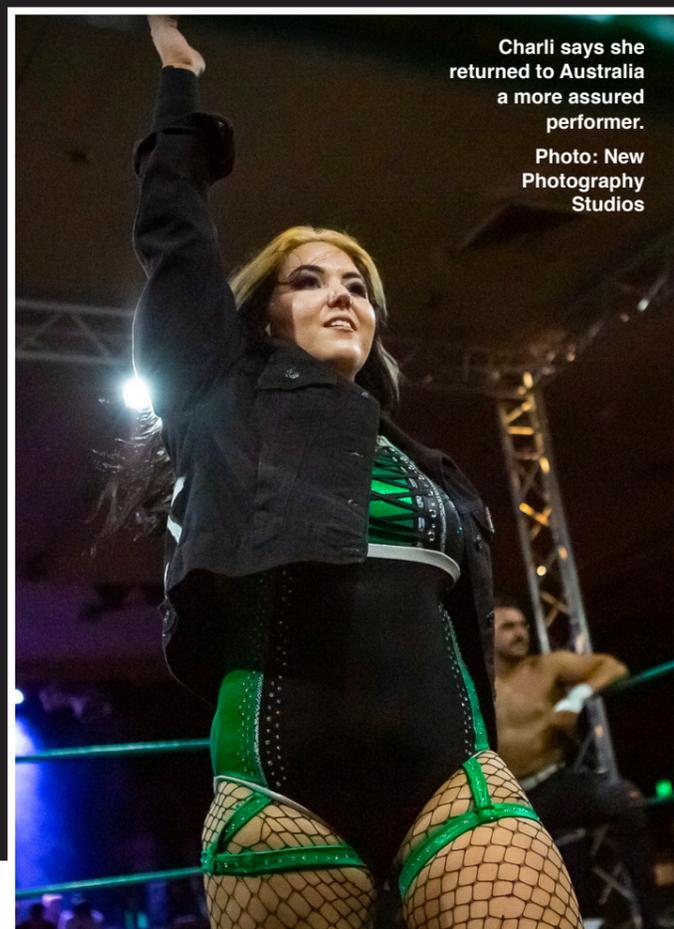
"I just really enjoy that genre of wrestling," she says. "I pride myself on being a wrestler that can compete at a high level in multiple styles. I have loved deathmatch wrestling for a long time and have such a respect and reverence for the art of deathmatch wrestling. I just want to enter all those matches with the utmost respect to that style and really love doing them, love watching them, love sharing those moments with others."

As 2021 rolled on, so too did Charli, and the marquee matches just kept on coming. In May she returned to DMDU for a tournament to crown the promotion's inaugural Heavyweight Champion.

This time, there were no deathmatches, but she left just as big an impression, beating Sammy Falcon, Tommy Knight and Royce Chambers on her way to the final where she narrowly lost an absolute classic to Ritchie Taylor, who has since announced he'll be retiring from the ring.

"I am extremely happy that he is going out on his own terms and can't thank him enough for everything," says Charli.

"Ritchie is a person that I had instant



Charli says she returned to Australia a more assured performer.

Photo: New Photography Studios

chemistry with both as a person and wrestler. We are very similar in and out of the ring. The first time we wrestled was in a little Mexican restaurant the day after my DMDU debut and we clicked instantly. I was all cut up from the night before but loved every second of wrestling him and I am really glad we got to share the finals together. It all just felt very right."

Charli describes the whole weekend as something of a coming out party for her. It says a lot when you consider what she's done in the business around the world already.

AW

CONSIDERING she wasn't even meant to be here, the former PWWA Champion has achieved a hell of a lot since coming home. And not just for herself.

As well as training new talent and facing off with up-and-comers, like Cherry Stephens, Kingsley and Aysha, she's also brought a fanbase of 20,000 Twitter followers with her. More on that later. It means she's been able to bring fresh eyes to the local product, give back to a scene she remains fiercely proud

of and offer more exposure to both emerging and existing names.

"I love Australia," she says, "I love my friends and family and I am incredibly proud of the scene here. I just hope I've been able to bring some new eyes to the talent we have here, like Jessica Troy, Ritchie Taylor, Mat Diamond, The Velocities, Sam Osborne, Kai Drake. They're all incredible wrestlers, all have a wide fan base. But if even one person was able to watch a show I was on that happened to make them a new fan of these people, or anyone else from PWA, Deathmatch Downunder, or Newy Pro, then I am extremely happy. Because while I did move overseas to better myself as a performer, to gain new experience and skills, I also left with the goal of bringing eyes to Australian professional wrestling."

It's a desire that Damian Slater also spoke of in issue #2 of *ANSWERS*, and something that Charli says she and many others have long prioritised.

"I feel like that's a universal feeling and goal that all Australian wrestlers have," she adds. "The #NowWeConquer hashtag isn't just a

hashtag. It's a movement that a lot of us hold very close to our hearts.

"Robbie Eagles is signed to New Japan Pro Wrestling and is the IWGP Jr Heavyweight Champion, Rhea Ripley is wrestling at WrestleMania, Grayson Waller has been signed to NXT. That isn't just a win for Robbie, Rhea and Grayson, it's a win for Australian wrestling as a whole and the pride we all feel when one of us succeeds is a feeling I haven't felt in any other scene I've been in."

Not that those departures have left Australian wrestling high and dry. Advances made in production values and a shared drive to continuously improve have Charli convinced that the industry remains in a great position to continue to reach new heights.

she says. "The levels of production on shows and promos are on another level from so many places thanks to guys like Video Boy Jax and Ben Anderson who make us all look like stars.

"We are all very hungry and motivated and work as a team to make the whole scene get elevated together which is a really cool thing to be a part of."

AW

IT HASN'T been all smiles and sunshines, of course. There's the obvious in that Charli has since spent more than 100 days in Sydney's strict lockdown, unable to go about normal life or perform in the ring.

In fact, there's been no wrestling in the city since June, prompting a bit of a lull in the scene in stark contrast to the highs of the prior months. Seeing that momentum build and come crashing to a halt once more - it made that latest lockdown hit different.

"Starting off the year with such a run of incredible shows and matches was obviously very exciting and gave me a lot of motivation but has made this lockdown a lot harder. Wrestling is my creative outlet, so to not be able to train in the ring and perform, and seemingly have no end in sight has been very difficult to deal with."

And to make matters worse for her, Twitter deemed it reasonable to ban her account of some 20,000 followers after misconstruing a

CHARLI'S FAVOURITE MATCHES

NO DQ MATCH, VS. JESSICA TROY

"It was really cool for me because it was the first time I had led someone in a match of that style, as previously I had been in there with people with a lot more experience than me. Everything just always feels magic with her, even if she stuck those skewers in my head harder than anyone ever has."

LAST DRINKS DEATHMATCH, VS JOEL BATEMAN

"That was a match that we had both wanted for so long. Joel is also one of my best friends in the whole world and I was really excited coming into a deathmatch feeling like we had built something cool before even starting. I really just wanted to prove myself in that style."

DEATHMATCH DOWNUNDER HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE TOURNAMENT FINAL, VS RITCHIE TAYLOR

"Again, it was a journey over that whole weekend and I feel like it was pure emotion. I loved what we created."

promo for abusive behaviour.

The setbacks had made Charli long for simpler things. "I just want to see my boyfriend," she says.

She also admits to being "terribly scared" the world will forget her - something that's hard to fathom when you look at her recent ring work. But things are starting to turn up.

First, Twitter saw sense at last and reinstated her account. Then at the start of October, she was able to get a flight to the US to be reunited with her boyfriend, going on to appear at a pair of Game Changer Wrestling shows across October 9-10. Now, she's taking bookings in the States, once again realising her international ambitions having achieved all she has in her homeland.

Speaking before her return, she said: "I am staying extremely motivated, working out, getting new gear and other things ready so as soon as we're open I'll be good to go."

Charli's ready, and I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say, so are we. You just wonder if the rest of the world knows what it's gotten itself into.



"I really believe Australia is the next place to blow up and get a lot of eyes on it."

Photo: New Photography Studios



Photo: FatController5352

WRESTLE RAMPAGE: MOMENT OF TRUTH May 21, 2021

A LOT of storylines have become long-term ones thank to Covid-19. But few have held our attention like the one playing out at Wrestle Rampage, as the RenegadeZ' war with the likes of AJ Istria, Tommy Knight, Robbie Heart and Rat Daddy continues to rage on.

Catch up with the latest twists and turns - for free - from Moment of Truth. Search 'Wrestle Rampage - Australia' on YouTube or go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF746l78Rpo



Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

PUNCH DRUNK ISTRIA VS. JESSICA TROY DMDU: The Juice is Worth the Squeeze May 21, 2021

SPEAKING of Istria, this one may have taken place back in May, but it's since been made available for free on YouTube. And it's an absolute gem of a match, which is no surprise really when you consider the two names involved.

Watch two of Australian wrestling's finest thrash it out in a straight up singles match from night one of *Deathmatch Downunder: The Juice is Worth the Squeeze*. Search 'Istria vs. Troy' on YouTube or go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hg2zAsmfvQ.

PREFECTS' PLAYGROUND BRAWL PWA Black Label: Back in Black February 12, 2021

ANOTHER match that took place earlier this year, but was only just made available on YouTube, is the brilliant Prefects' Playground Brawl, filmed by the super talented crew at PWA Productions and featuring Billy Preston, Jimmy Townsend and Cherry Stephens.

The link is www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-HCplMICK4. Just check it out for yourself. No words can do this masterpiece justice.



Gavin McGavin and Marcius Pitt teeter on the brink.
Photo: Pix Photography

EPW: TICKET TO MADNESS August 28, 2021

WHO doesn't love a good Rumble match? And who doesn't love a good Rumble match that's been made available on YouTube for free?

Explosive Pro Wrestling (EPW) is yet another promotion to very generously make an entire show readily available online. There's also an EPW title match between Mikey Nicholls and Taylor King, plus a couple of EPW Coastal Championship bouts and a pair of tag matches to boot.

Great value and once again, another top showing from the WA promotion. Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMtclU-oNYF0 to catch up with the show.

IN THEIR
own words

SMASH MOUTH

RITCHIE TAYLOR



It was the crowning victory of a decade-and-a-half career, and one that has taken on even more significance since.

Ritchie Taylor, the inaugural Deathmatch Downunder Heavyweight Champion, takes us back to that night that he captured the gold...

WHEN both of a match's participants cite it as some of the best work of their careers, you know you're onto a winner. Especially when those participants are named Ritchie Taylor and Charli Evans.

Their meeting to crown the first Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU) Heavyweight Champion back in May was a culmination of a two-day, 16-person tournament, widely regarded as one of the best things to happen in Australian wrestling this year.

Charli has described it as a "coming out party" for herself as a performer, and Ritchie remembers it similarly fondly.

"I think we gave everyone something special," he says. "It felt like a real main event. We had the duelling chants, the streamers, a 50-50 crowd. And then everything just went according to plan. The match went so smoothly, it just felt like we had created something special together."

As well as being a brilliant match, for Ritchie it was the crowning moment of a career that began as a backyard wrestler in the mid-2000s and has since been through all manner of ups and downs. It was a long road to the top, and fittingly the path through the tournament itself was just as tough.

After facing Rochelle Rogue on night one, he took on JXT and Caveman Ugg on night two to earn the right to face Charli in the final. Logistically, that's a lot to prepare for, and Ritchie recalls feeling the pressure.

"We were both stressed about the match. We were trying to plan other matches and trying to talk to each other as well through all that, and trying not to get them confused with other matches, so there was a lot of pressure on us to deliver."

The physicality of wrestling three matches, and recovering from those matches, in a single night was no small feat either, something clear to see when Ritchie makes his entrance. Gone was the fervour of night one, when he'd run through the crowd and high-fived just about every set of hands in the building. Instead he walked through the curtain favouring his right side, clearly feeling the effects of the weekend.

"I'm old man, so it was pretty fucking difficult!" He says. "At that point my hip was

Ritchie and Charli test the waters in the opening moments.

Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography



giving me grief. It's been giving me grief for two years but it was really giving me grief going into those matches. But I thought I'd just push through it, walk it off. I'd just had that mentality ever since I was a kid. 'Walk it off, you'll be alright.' But it was really difficult.

"Even though my match with Josh [JXT] was one hit then the one-two-three, then I wrestled [Caveman] Ugg, and he's a big dude and he just beats the crap out of you and it takes it out of you to recover. Then I had to do the main with Charli who, fuck, is one of the best wrestlers in the world. So all the nerves, being exhausted, it just hit me. But we delivered, man. We delivered."

The match begins with the classic collar and elbow tie up. What follows is a clinic in technical wrestling. The first few minutes are marked by a feeling out process with the pair trading waistlocks, wristlocks, headlocks and hammerlocks, reversals and submission attempts. It's not only a great opening salvo, but one helps establish that the DMDU title, and the promotion itself, is about much more than the name suggests.

"I think when people first hear the name they just think it's going to be a whole heap of deathmatches, but we're there to prove that we're some of the best technical wrestlers, not even in Australia but in the whole world, and that's what we set out to prove.

"The company's not just about



Ritchie locks in the cloverleaf.

Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

deathmatches; it's about the best wrestling matches you can have. Whether that be deathmatches, hardcore matches, or just normal, technical wrestling matches or strong style or whatever. I think the company's just out there to prove that they have the best matches in all those aspects."

The technical stand-off eventually breaks down into a slugfest. After trading big forearm smashes, Ritchie dishes out some vicious chops, but it's not enough to keep Charli down and she's soon back up dealing out some of her own. She floors him in the corner and connects with two running boots and a rising knee, but Ritchie counters and knocks Charli out of the ring with a crunching elbow to the side of the head.

Jay Stevens, the referee, starts their count but stops when Ritchie breaks it by going after Charli. Andy Coyne, on commentary, makes a point that that's not the way either competitor wants to win this one. What's interesting is that when the action spills to the outside a second time - and Charli ends up taking a piledriver onto the stage - Ritchie returns to the ring and welcomes Jay's count.

He recalls: "We'd had a bit of a feeling out process and, fuck, she hits hard, man. She's one of the best in the world. So I'm thinking, god damn, if this is how I'm going to win, I've never really won a big title before or anything like that so for me it was like, whatever I can

do now to win, I'm going to do it.

"So that's when I headed back to the ring and said, 'just count her out.' But I should have known better, and she got back into the ring because she's tough as nails."

It goes against the trope of the fighting champion not wanting the count-out win, but again it helps establish the new championship and what it means to both competitors. It also puts Charli over; knowing what he's up against, he's now willing to take the win by whatever outcome necessary. The end is starting to outweigh the means.

Back in the ring, Ritchie gets a couple of near falls either side of a Death Valley Driver. But when he misses a spear into the corner, Charli has an opening. A knee strike into a swinging hangman neckbreaker and a beautiful fisherman's suplex draws another near fall, before Ritchie pulls out yet another reversal and locks in a Cloverleaf. Somehow Charli crawls to the ropes.

The match swings back into strong style territory as the pair trade strikes on their knees, ending with a brutal elbow smash from Ritchie, but still he can't get the pin. There's another awesome sequence as the pace dials up a notch; a rolling elbow, countered with a superkick, a ducked clothesline into a Saito Suplex and lariat for another near fall. We're reaching fever pitch.

It's at this point they go to the top rope and the commentary team signs off, inviting us to enjoy the match "as it should be witnessed" out of respect for both competitors and the grant final itself. It's an unexpected touch but one that only adds to the atmosphere.

"I didn't know that was going to happen," Ritchie admits. "But I watched it back when it came out - I'd never really seen that before either - and it was a really nice way to wrap it up and take in all the emotion and the energy in the room. You could really feel it coming through the screen. I think it really added a little bit extra to the match watching it back online."

Amazingly, Charli takes a huge brainbuster from the top rope but kicks out at one to a huge pop from the crowd. I'm not sure who's more disbelieving, them or Jay the official. Ritchie goes back to old reliable, the rolling

elbow, and another brainbuster to finally put his opponent down and get the one-to-three.

Naturally, the crowd are on their feet for a standing ovation. They know they've seen something special - in many ways the perfect main event match, encompassing an incredible range of styles, from the catch-as-catch-can opening, to the strong style strikes, the ringside brawling, the counters, reversals and fast-paced indie-style sequences.

"That's what we set out to do [the main event style]," says Ritchie. "And I think we did it. It's my best match I've ever done, my best work. And I'm just so glad I got to have that match before I stepped away from professional wrestling."

"We wanted to put on the best match we could, because we didn't know if we were ever going to do it again. And it's not going to happen now ever again. And we wanted to give the crowd something they could walk away with.

"But I think we did extraordinary, man. It's just something that will stay with me forever."

With the dust settling, Ritchie hugs Charli and bows out of respect before taking the mic to address the crowd. He thanks the fans for their support throughout the journey - and not just the one that played out during that memorale weekend.

"That was in reference to my whole career. It's been a rollercoaster ride, it really has.

"From wrestling in front of about three people - actually, no one, in a backyard, just a young dude living out his dream and having fun, to becoming a pro, going through my alcohol issues, quitting pro wrestling, coming back, starting from the bottom, having to build yourself all the way back up.

"I was always someone who was told, 'you're too fat', 'you're too out of shape', 'you're too small, you can't do this and you can't do that.' I just say whatever. A lot of things have been said about me over the years but I just brush that off and say I've got to do what I've got to do. And little bit by little bit, I just proved that I'm a good professional wrestler.

"I built myself up, got a name for myself, and then to win a big title like that for a new company that's got this huge momentum

behind it was something very special. Joel Bateman [part of DMDU management], if it wasn't for him and all his support throughout everything I don't think I'd still be around. So it was really special."

The match has since taken on an added significance with Ritchie announcing in August that he'll soon be retiring from pro wrestling. Calling it a day had been in the back of his mind for a few years, but on the night he won the title he didn't know it was going to come around so soon. It's something he's still coming to terms with.

"I still think it's a bit surreal. I don't think it's really hit me yet because there's been no shows and I haven't had the last match to wrap everything up. It feels like I'm losing a part of myself because wrestling's been in my world for so long.

"I started backyarding when I was 13 and now I'm 31. It just feels like I'm losing a little part of myself but I don't think it's really hit yet. I think the last match is when all the emotions will happen and there'll be lots of tears shed."

That last match, fittingly, will pit Ritchie against Bateman - Smash Mouth against the Smash Hit. It promises to be a brilliant send-off but whatever happens that night - or beyond it, for that matter - for the body of work he's built over the years and the performance he delivered in the tournament final, Ritchie rolls on with his head held high.



Who's got two thumbs and a Heavyweight title?

Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

WRA

WRESTLE RADIO AUSTRALIA

MICDROP



In issue #3 of *AUSWRPES*, Todd Eastman of *Wrestle Radio Australia* drops the mic to share the story of the pod's beginnings, tell us some of his highlights from over the years and his hopes for wrestling's future...

"BROOKSY called it the workers podcast," says Todd Eastman, the brains behind this country's longest running professional wrestling podcast, *Wrestle Radio Australia*.

It's fairly easy to see why. Podcaster is just one of the hats that Todd has donned in the world of wrestling. A decade ago he was training to be a wrestler before transitioning into his current role as a manager up in Queensland. Adam Brooks was actually the first wrestler he managed, back in the day. He's also done commentary and been a booker for Riot City Wrestling, in Adelaide, and been involved in the production side of things too.

"The business just fascinates me," he says. "And I thought if I can sit down and talk to all these people – it's really a bit of selfish thing in a way, because I'm almost doing a seminar every time I talk to somebody because I'm trying to learn things. But I like to think that that is what people that listen to the show are doing as well."

What isn't selfish is that you can check out these in-depth conversations for nothing every single week. A who's who of the Aussie scene from all over the country have been featured on the pod over the years, offering unique insights into this unique industry we've all come to know and love.

Wrestle Radio Australia traces its roots back to 2012 when Todd's former co-host and commentary partner, Josh Armour, asked him to do a segment for a new show he was starting. The following week, he found himself a permanent addition.

The podcast initially focussed on international wrestling before segueing to Aussie scene, but it didn't take long for the emphasis to switch. And similarly the format shifted to

place a greater focus on its interview segments.

"It started out that we'd talk all about all this wrestling, and then do a five minute interview. And then it ended up being all interview, and we'd talk wrestling for five minutes. Because we figured that's what people want – people want to get to know the wrestlers more than just listening to us."

Todd's main goal, like many others' in podcasting circles, is to elevate an Australian wrestling scene that he thinks is thoroughly underrated.

"I'll watch something from America," he says, "and I'll just think, 'Our guys shit all over this stuff, why aren't they being seen?' People are raving about this guy, and I don't know why when Jessica Troy is there wrestling in PWA, or when Davis Storm is out there doing his thing and no one talks about it, or Marcius Pitt – so many guys here."

"The whole ethos is pretty much the same as yours," he continues. "I just want as many people as possible to know there is really good Australian wrestling out there, and that they should get along to see it."

The podcast has now been going for nine years strong, although Todd admits it has sometimes been a struggle to maintain that longevity. Not least of all when his co-host, and best friend, passed away in 2019.

Josh, widely considered one of the good guys in Aussie wrestling, died after struggling with mental health issues. It's a topic that has since become a huge focus for both Todd and the podcast.

"I've had issues in the past," he explains. "Unfortunately we lost my co-host to mental health so that's when it became more real. He was one of my best mates and

it made me think, if it happens to him, if I suffer from it, there's got to be other people in wrestling that are going through the same thing."

Shortly after Josh's passing, Todd did a podcast focusing solely on mental health, in which he was joined by *Wolfdogg*, *Brodie Marshall* and *Gino Gambino*.

"They all were so brave to come on that show and talk about all the issues they've had. Because they didn't have to do that, they could have kept it all to themselves but they came on and they were very open about all that stuff. That's possibly the proudest thing I've done, the mental health episode. And it must have been fairly impactful because I know other podcasts had asked me if they could just play that podcast on their feed."

The loss of Josh hit Todd so hard that he almost ended the podcast there and then. However, it's since become something of a catalyst to carry on in his best friend's honour.

"When Josh passed there was a good moment there



where I was thinking of folding the show. He had stepped away [just before he passed] and I took over for a while and I thought he'd come back. But I didn't realise his struggles were as deep as what they were. Then that happened and I thought, 'well I can't fold it now.' As far as I'm concerned, I'm still running it until he gets back. Obviously he's not going to get back, but that's how I see it.

"Now everything I do for it is to promote the local brand and not let something that he worked so very hard for just go away."

The impact of Covid-19 has been another stumbling block. How do you discuss wrestling when large parts of the industry are at a standstill? Still, he's confident that wrestling will be able to pick up where it left off earlier this year and that his dream, of seeing major promotions in states all over Australia leveraging streaming services to provide regular content for fans, remains a not-too-distant reality.

"Everyone talks about having one fed, and have their touring shows on TV – but I say that will never work because of the way the country is. We don't have the population for that.

"What we do have is four or five really good promotions that each week can put on a show that you can go on FITE to watch. So one week it could be PWA, the next week you might pay to see RCW, the week after that you'd go and see an EPW show.

"My ultimate dream for Australian wrestling is that," he continues. "For every really good fed to have something on FITE where they could earn enough money to pump back into the business, make that business stronger, pay the guys a little bit extra, improve production and just really get the name of wrestling out there."

On that last point, at least, he's doing a pretty good job of that himself.

Check out the podcast for yourself if you haven't already by going to www.wrestleradioaustralia.libsyn.com.

best BITS

FAVOURITE GUESTS

"Any episode I've done with Jack Bonza, Adam Brooks, Davis Storm or Rocky Menero. Those are all guys that I could just have on rotation every month and I think you'd get a different show every time because they've just got so much depth of knowledge when it comes to wrestling."

MOST INTERESTING INSIGHTS

"With Bonza you get both sides – you get the wrestling side but you also get the business side. PWA being in the position they are, that did not happen by accident. And he's one of the driving forces behind it. That's someone that I love to pick the brain of. And Brooksy too, because he was one of the first guys I ever managed and is a really good friend. That's just like me catching up with a mate when we do a podcast together."

FAVOURITE EPISODE

"Definitely the mental health episode we did. First and foremost that is my favourite episode we've done, because of what it represented and how important I thought it was to get that out there."

RISING STAR

Three years ago, Cherry Stephens was a stranger to pro wrestling. Now she's one of the fastest rising stars at one of Australia's top promotions; a student of the game both in the ring and out of it. But she's only getting started...

Cherry's pro wrestling story isn't the most conventional. Despite having a background in both sports and drama, the business wasn't even on her radar until 2018 when her flatmate floated the idea of attending a try-out with Pro Wrestling Australia (PWA) in Sydney. She went along and hasn't looked back since.

"I did the try-out and they said, 'you're not too bad,' so I just kept going back," she recalls. "Until we got locked down, I'd been training four or five times a week for the last two years. Which was a big lifestyle change for me from before."

With a background in gymnastics and martial arts, the athlete in Cherry initially saw training as a personal challenge. The dedication she saw from others at PWA pushed her to take it to the next level, helping to foster what has become a real passion for the wider world of pro wrestling.

"The commitment that I saw from the people at PWA, it kind of inspired me to work as hard as them because I saw how in just a couple of years' they'd grown from beginners to being really good wrestlers. And I thought if I have that discipline, then maybe I can get there as well."

"But also I got really interested in the history of wrestling. Because I never watched wrestling as a kid and most of the people training in the indie scene were really big wrestling fans growing up, so I got to have mature education. It's like I'm going back to college and starting from the beginning and watching all of the stories and storylines."

"There's so many years you can dive into, it's almost like a never-ending pool. I just find it so interesting."

On paper, Cherry might be the perfect wrestling trainee; a sports and performing arts background, a keen interest in pro wrestling history. And seeing her in the ring does nothing to dispel that theory.

Since debuting in 2019 she's made steady

"I have sheets and sheets of things that I still want to try and see what fits for me!"

progress, at first featuring mainly on PWA Academy shows before appearing for the likes of International Wrestling Australia in Sydney's southwest and Deathmatch Downunder in Melbourne. And in the last six months alone she's featured on every single PWA Black Label show.

One of her strengths is her understanding of her character and the conviction with which she plays it; an affably awkward trainee now branching out on her own, determined, earnest, and with more fire and fight than you might first expect. She's a natural babyface, something clear to see during her most recent PWA outing. After wrestling Charli Evans in the opener, she appeared at ringside for Will Keidis vs. Jimmy Townsend. She wasn't even in the match and yet the crowd were chanting her name.

Another asset is her humility and drive to improve. Despite notching up her first Rumble match, her first interstate appearance and wrestling more singles matches this year than any other, when I ask if she sees this as a breakout year she pauses. For a while.

"If I had to answer honestly," she says, "I would say it doesn't feel like it for me. I feel

like I've been proud of the matches I've had, and being able to have more singles matches and debut the new Cherry Stephens character, but I don't think there's been enough time to explore it.

"To me it's just the start of it and I have a lot more that I want to do. So hopefully when we get back, I can really work on the stuff that I want to improve."

"I have sheets and sheets of documents of things that I still want to try and see what fits for me!"

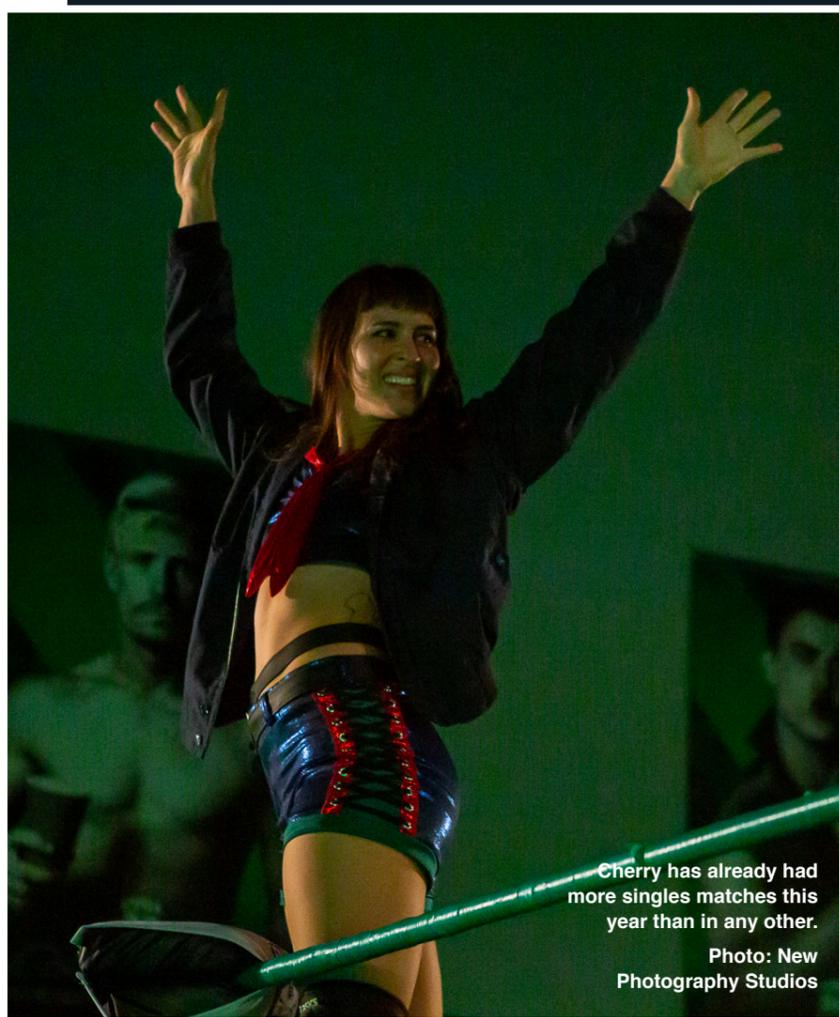
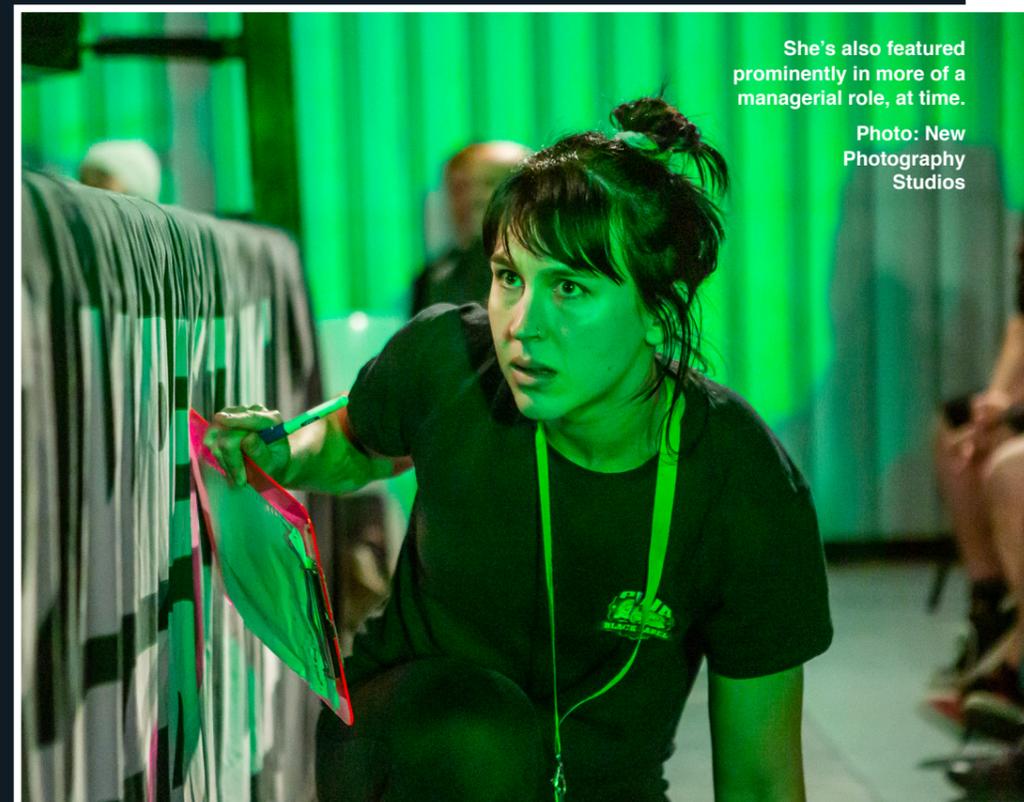
In PWA, she has good hands helping her find what fits. One of her biggest influences, Mick Moretti, is often involved in character workshops, while the promotion's champion, Ricky South, has also had a huge impact on her training, as have many of the women involved at the Sydney promotion.

"Character-wise I get really inspired by Mick Moretti," she continues. "I think he's the most incredible character wrestler I've ever seen because how he completely embodies his whole character, not just in his moves but in every single second that he comes out onto the stage."

"And from a training perspective, Ricky

She's also featured prominently in more of a managerial role, at time.

Photo: New Photography Studios



Cherry has already had more singles matches this year than in any other.

Photo: New Photography Studios

South. He's always at training, we're always trying new things together, always pushing each other, so he also really inspires me. Obviously, all of the girls are inspiring, particularly Madison Eagles. I've been lucky enough to train with her when she's at the Academy. But we all are pretty close knit and help each other."

One of those women, Steph De Lander, now a former colleague at PWA, actually namedropped her a few months ago in a Tweet about the women she tipped to be future stars. Again, though, Cherry isn't getting ahead of herself.

"I thought that was really kind of her to put me out there," she says, "but it also kind of gave me a kick up my butt to say, 'okay, well if people are saying these big things, then you've got to deliver big things.' So it is a bit of gas under the flame for me, but it was very nice of her to do that."

Speaking of kicks up butts, Cherry has stepped in the ring with Charli Evans on more than one occasion this year.

"I was terrified but she was awesome," she recalls. "She was so nice. And then she beat the shit out of me."

Cherry cites her first meeting with Charli, at

a PWA Academy showcase in February, as her favourite match of her career so far. That, and the second meeting at *PWA: Prize Bulls on Parade*, proved she could hang with the best in the ring, and showed a grittiness to go alongside the more comedic style she's showcased brilliantly in her storyline with the Prefects, Jimmy Townsend and William Preston.

"I got lucky with that one because I kind of coat-tailed on an existing and very emotional storyline," she says, humble as ever.

Either way, she added a new dimension to the group's antics during the latter part of their run, and was a part of the Prefects' Playground Brawl – the brilliant cinematic match and absolute triumph of pro wrestling comedy, production and creativity. That angle recently paved the way for her latest storyline; as Will Keidis' studious and under-appreciated intern on the Goober Report.

Since then her progress has been checked slightly by the latest Covid-19 outbreak in NSW. Not that it's stopped her from looking ahead. She's still vocal about travelling interstate as and when the opportunity arises, and singles out Edith Night, in Perth, and Lily Blaze, in Adelaide, as

two opponents she's keen to face. Closer to home, Moretti is also on that list.

"If someone wants to book me interstate, I'll be there. I just want to get as much experience I can in wrestling matches. I still haven't had that much experience in actual matches, I've trained a lot but the experience all comes from working in front of an audience and learning what works and what doesn't. I had a few bookings for Melbourne just before lockdown so if anything like that gets rescheduled, I'll definitely do that."

Most of all, though, she says it's the next wave of talent coming up that has her most excited for the future.

"We've got a lot of new trainees who started just before lockdown and in the time I've been at PWA, they've been the most consistent and hard-working intake. We've been doing character stuff and promo classes with them and they are really, really impressive.

"I'm really excited to see them appearing on Academy showcases and adding more colour to the PWA roster. Our roster is very colourful already with our top stars but I think they're a testament to how good the coaching is at PWA."

High praise, and that bar is equally high. Cherry would know. She helped set it herself.



Cherry's latest role is interning for Will Keidis on the Goober Report.

Photo: New Photography Studios



Cherry on Charli: "She was so nice. And then she beat the shit out of me."

Photo: New Photography Studios

RECOMMENDED VIEWING

VS. CHARLI EVANS, JUNE 13, 2021, PWA: PRIZE BULLS ON PARADE

Cherry cites her first match with Charli as her favourite, but both are great examples of her improving ring work. Despite the defeat, hanging with one of Australia's best like she did will do her burgeoning reputation no harm at all.

GOOBER REPORT, MAY 8, 2021, PWA: AUSSIE OPEN VS. VELOCITIES

Will Keidis' first-ever live edition of the Goober Report didn't quite go to plan when it was pretty much hijacked by chants for his earnest intern Cherry. Her antics throughout the segment helped make it a success and offer a great glimpse of her entertaining character work, and will make it oh so much sweeter when he gets the comeuppance he really deserves.

PREFECTS' PLAYGROUND BRAWL

Speaking of character work, do yourself a favour and check this out on YouTube. One of the most entertaining, albeit very left-field, pieces of wacky pro wrestling goodness you'll see from any promotion this year. Cherry doesn't feature throughout but plays an important role in helping this wonderful story reach its fun, fast and furious conclusion.

SHOOT

wrestling



Erika Reid catches Vixsin with the blue mist.
Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

Our series showcasing the creatives who capture those most memorable of moments in wrestling puts Jake Hurdle in the hotseat today.

The Deathmatch Downunder (DMDU) snapper spills the beans on his work, getting into the business and the art of deathmatch wrestling.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO PHOTOGRAPHY, AND HOW DID THAT TRANSLATE TO PRO WRESTLING?

"In high school I was doing a media course, we were just playing around with cameras and learning about them, and I really enjoyed it. So I went and bought one, played around with that for a few years, didn't really use it too much, stopped using it altogether. Then I found pro wrestling in Australia, and I was over the moon! I didn't know it existed here.

"I went to a New Age Wrestling (NAW) show, pretty sure it was *Hardcore Retribution 2017*, and their photographer had to leave halfway through the show. I was in the right place at the right time. My friend asked if I had my camera, and I did, and the rest is history."

WHAT GEAR DO YOU SHOOT WITH?

"Canon 6D Mark II, with a 24-70mm f2.8 lens. I also have a 16-35mm lens, which I use now and then but the 24-70mm is my workhorse."

WHAT DOES YOUR EDITING PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

"It's a big process. Since working with DMDU I've changed things a bit. I've been pushing myself to get them done as quick as I can. Previously I would take my time, go through them, but I've found it better for me to just get them done. I feel like the quicker that I can get them out, the quicker the wrestlers and the

promotion can put it out too, so it helps everyone and benefits everyone, not just myself.

WHEN YOU'RE PHOTOGRAPHING A SHOW, WHAT IN PARTICULAR ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

"I like to go for a bit of everything. I like to have an entrance shot for both competitors, have a posing shot for them, at least get two or three so that they can upload them. I like to cater for any person and anything that they might need.

"The way I shoot, I like to have the story told in my album. Kind of like a picture book."

YOU'VE BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH DEATHMATCH WRESTLING SHOWS OF LATE. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

"I'm quite close friends with Callen Butcher, one of the DMDU promoters. When they started to put together the company I approached him and said, 'hey, can I be your photographer?' And he's like, 'I was going to ask you anyway.' So that was awesome."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT COVERING THOSE KINDS OF MATCHES?

"Panels of glass and light tubes, I love them. Being able to capture them when they're at their full effect, seeing the glass shatter, it's amazing. Gets the adrenaline pumping.

"Deathmatches are a spectacle. They're

exciting and you don't know what's going to happen. In a normal wrestling match, you still have that question of 'what's going to happen?' but you know it's going to be conventional. It's not going to be something that makes you say, 'holy fuck!'"

ARE THERE ANY OTHER STYLES OF WRESTLING THAT YOU PARTICULARLY LIKE TO SHOOT?

"Well at the moment I'm just specifically working with DMDU. I'm open to working with other companies though. Slide into my DMs!

"I do like shooting cruiserweight wrestlers. Don't get me wrong, I like shooting heavyweights too but that type of style, it's fast paced and you have to be on your game to capture that. Because someone's going to do a high-risk move off the top rope and if you're even a second too late, you'll miss it. If you're not in the right position, you'll miss it."

...HAS THAT EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

"In some circumstances, yes [I've missed it]. But I feel like since I've started taking photos in wrestling I've learned to read matches better and know where I need to be. So I feel like I've almost learned wrestling psychology through my camera, if that makes sense."

DO WRESTLERS EVER CLUE YOU UP ON A SPOT TO EXPECT FROM THEIR MATCH?

"With the big spots, some people tell me. But there's been a few instances where I haven't been told. One time, when I was working for NAW, there was going to be a run-in straight away. I was standing there with my back to the entranceway and I didn't know someone was coming. They just started running and I only just moved at the last second and got out of the way. That was something..."

WHAT'S CHANGED MOST IN AUSTRALIAN WRESTLING SINCE YOU STARTED OUT?

"I feel like our exposure has definitely boosted. There's a lot of talent now working overseas and it's kind of changed the mindset of some people here. A lot of people want to do this as a career now, putting their energy and focus into that. It's not just half-assed."

"I also feel like the Speaking Out movement definitely changed a lot for Australian wrestling. The culture at a promotion like DMDU is exceptional. It's like no other locker room I've worked in. It shows the progres-

siveness of Australian wrestling, that it can be a safe space and not what it was. And something as simple as doing a Welcome to Country - which should be done at any event by any wrestling promotion."

WHICH OF YOUR PHOTOS WOULD YOU SAY YOU'RE MOST PROUD OF AND WHY?

"It's a toss up between two. In the main event of the first DMDU show, when Damian Rivers smashed the light tubes over Callen Butcher for the finish. That photo is probably my proudest photo in Deathmatch wrestling.

"There's another photo I took for Premier Pro, it was between Erika Reid and Vixsin. Erika Reid spat the mist at Vixsin and just the way I captured it, I've never captured it like that again. It was just perfect."

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM MATCH OR EVENT TO PHOTOGRAPH?

"My dream would be to take photos at Madison Square Garden."

DO YOU DABBLE IN ANY OTHER TYPES OF PHOTOGRAPHY OUTSIDE OF WRESTLING?

"I mainly just do the wrestling. I've tried to expand and do street photography and nature but the passion's not there. The art form of wrestling and capturing that art, there's nothing else like it."

TWITTER @jakehurdlephoto

INSTAGRAM @jakehurdlephotography

FACEBOOK Jake Hurdle Photography



One of Jake's favourite photos. Probably not one of Callen's, though.
Photo: Jake Hurdle Photography

KWE: 1-2-3 FIGHT!

Sunday, August 1

GRANT Linstrom retained his Kingdom world title in the first of Kingdom Wrestling Entertainment (KWE)'s new Lockdown Series of Covid-safe shows.

With restrictions in the Hunter region more lenient than much of NSW, KWE was one of a select few promotions in the state that were able to stage shows in early August, and so plans were announced for a series of smaller scale, not-for-profit shows to give back to its local community.

The first of those shows, *1-2-3 Fight*, was headlined by Linstrom's successful world championship defence over Tyler Gunn. The challenger might have felt he had the champ beat, but there was no one to count his pinfall attempt with guest referee Fergus Ferguson having been inadvertently taken out by a Linstrom spear.

Ring announcer Adam Belcher-Graham eventually hit the ring to make the count, only for Linstrom to kick out before going on to pin Gunn with a roll up to walk out with his title in tow.

So too did Dik Brutal leave as he arrived; with the National Championship Pro Wrestling title around his waist. He actually lost to the Buccaneer on the night, but with the decision coming via a disqualification the championship did not change hands.

Also in singles action were La Incida and Barry Blake, and D'Licious and Ferguson in a hardcore match. D'Licious later teamed with the Buccaneer to face Ferguson in a handicap match.

The evening's main event has been made available to watch on YouTube for free.

Search '1-2-3 Fight Main Event' to check it out.

POWERSLAM 10

Saturday, August 7

TYLER Daniels seemingly put himself in pole position to challenge for the Powerslam Championship - but not without controversy along the way.

Daniels defeated Redshaw at Powerslam 10 at the start of August, but the win only came after a disqualification which left the latter looking for answers and questioning whether the referee or even Powerslam management had been trying to screw him.

The pair, who occupy the top two of the promotion's heavyweight division rankings, now have one win apiece from their two

meetings, although Daniels' latest win solidified his position at the top of those standings.

There was similar drama in the aftermath of Kai Thorn's clash with Acid Haze. Following the match, Powerslam said it would be suspending Thorn for 30 days and fining him a total of \$750 for attacking Haze and later tossing the referee out of the ring.

A post on social media talked up Haze's alleged injuries and noted that Thorn's punt kick would now be considered an illegal manoeuvre.

Other matches on the card included Savannah Summers picking up a win over Izzy Shaw and getting retribution for her countout defeat at Powerslam 7, and Chase Magnum beating Twisted J.

Meanwhile, Vicious and Delicious, the team of Downunder and Jensen Hunt, gained their second tag team win on the bounce, this time beating Cadie Tre and Jonathan Corvidae.

PWSA: JUSTICE

Saturday, August 14

JIMMY C dealt out his own form of justice as he made a dramatic return to Pro Wrestling South Australia (PWSA) after a three-month absence.

The manager of the Var-City Villains had not been seen in a PWSA ring since a vicious attack by Jensen Hunt and Downunder at May's *Hardcoremania IX* show where his stablemates, Brandon Black and Cayden Cornell, had been cable tied to the ropes and forced to watch on as he was busted open with a crocodile bone.

But at *PWSA: Justice*, Jimmy got his revenge. Emerging near the end of a tag team Street Fight main event between Black and Cornell and the very men who took him out of action, he dished out some payback in the form of multiple steel chair shots to both Hunt and Downunder, popping the Adelaide crowd and allowing his buddies to swoop in for the pin.

The bloody Street Fight seemingly settles the score between these two teams after they had shared a win apiece in their previous two encounters.

Other tag matches on the night included Chase Magnum and Grayson Parker, competing as Team Kick Flip, against Colossus and Jonathan Corvidae, as well as Party Gy Ty and Redshaw versus Jake Viper and John E Radic. Redshaw had previously

defeated Radic at July's anniversary show and is set to take on Viper next at *Wargames* in September.

Also in action were Violet Blitz, Halo and Jill Skellington in a three-way, plus Twisted J vs. Ace Wilson, Reilly Right vs. Doc Kincaid, Brett Santorini vs. Michael Weaver and Cadie Tre vs. Acid Haze.

UPW: BRISBANE II

Saturday, August 14

NEW tag champs were crowned as United Pro Wrestling (UPW) returned to the Mansfield Tavern for its second show in the City of Brisbane in just over two months.

Big Business, represented by the team of Tommy Winslow and Vegas Starr, overcame the Showerman and Cluck, the Cluck 'n Duck Connection, to be crowned the new Tag Team Champions of the Sunshine Coast-based promotion - but only after taking out Showerman with a title belt to the back of the head.

And in the evening's main event, Moko Kai successfully retained his UPW Championship. He defeated former champion Matthew "the Gospel" Gabriel, who had been bidding to become the promotion's first-ever three-time holder of the title.

UPW regulars Yeet Stevens, Pogo, Kanji and Jesse Love were also booked on the show. Malibu also faced newcomer Buck Calloway in singles action, while Draven had been scheduled to defend his Featherweight Championship against Ricky Rembradt, only to get out of it by feigning an ankle injury.

That meeting was rescheduled for the *UPW: Caboolture XIV* show on Saturday, August 28.

QWA: GABRIEL VS. ASGUARD

Saturday, August 14

IN HIS bid to become Queensland Wrestling Alliance (QWA) Champion, Gabriel Zaya came up short. But in his bid to prove that the promotion's middleweights can hang with its very best, he was anything but a failure.

Tommy Asguard retained his QWA title and saw off the challenge of Zaya, but later admitted on social media that he had been 'pushed to the limit' by his opponent.

The challenger had been wrestling in his maiden heavyweight bout after cashing in his Middleweight Championship, which he only won back in July, for a shot at Asguard's belt.

SHWA: HIGH NOON

Cannington Showgrounds, Cannington WA

Saturday, August 7

TWO champions laid their recently won titles on the line for the first time at *Southern Hemisphere Wrestling Alliance (SHWA): High Noon* - but with two very different outcomes.

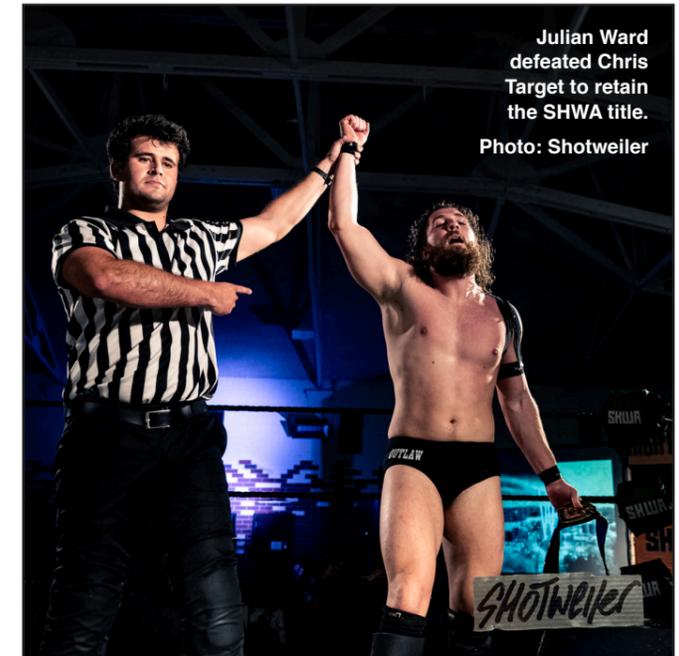
Julian Ward, who won the vacant SHWA title at July's *Mid-year Mayhem*, chalked up his first successful defence against number one contender Chris Target. But the Great George, who also tasted gold in July with his Pride Championship win, was toppled at the first hurdle by the veteran Jarrad Slate.

Slate, a two-time SHWA Champion, had taken to the ring at *High Noon* to vent his frustrations when George came out and issued a challenge in a bid to prove himself against one of the promotion's top names.

Slate agreed, providing the Pride title was on the line, and while George put up a good fight it wasn't enough to overcome the 14-year veteran. The victory means Slate is now a triple crown champion for the Perth-based promotion.

Ward, meanwhile, is at the other end of building his SHWA legacy, with July's championship win his first for the promotion. His reign rolls on after a win over Target, who had been named number one contender after winning the Midyear Mayhem Rumble match.

It looks like he has plenty of competition going forward. After his win over Target, a returning Axxton made his intentions clear in a post-match stand-off with the champion. Target also said in a backstage interview that the SHWA title very much



Julian Ward defeated Chris Target to retain the SHWA title.

Photo: Shotweiler

remains in his sights, while James Draker talked up his plans to walk, no pun intended, to the top of the company after finding himself a new associate to watch his back in the form of Blake Walker.

Speaking of Draker, he picked up a win over Callum Collins earlier in the show. There was also a big win for Stella Nyx in a 'Six-way Shootout' elimination match. Nyx headed into the match the underdog but outlasted Del Cano, Antonio Corrado, Faizal Keris, Felix Young and Mr Thompson, picking up the eliminations of both Thompson and finally Corrado to score the victory. That win was her first for the promotion outside of tag team action.

Other matches at *High Noon* included James Hartness vs. Dizzy Videll and Taylor King vs. Elijah Henry, while Jordan Bishop and Ryan Allan faced Dylan Black and the Hoarde. Although that wasn't the last we saw of either team on the night.

The two teams would hit the ring in the aftermath of Bruno Nitro and El Toro Blanco's victory over the Dux Brothers, with the Tag Team Champions Jules Canan and Ryan Rivers also making their presence felt.

The mass standoff ended with Bishop and Allan seemingly forming an alliance with Canan and Rivers - though they'll eventually have the latters' titles in the sights.

SHWA returns to action with its *Hallowed Eve* show on October 30 at Maddington Community Centre.



Jarrad Slate on his way to being crowned new SHWA Pride champ.

Photo: Shotweiler

Zaya did some great promo work for this one, and the videos shared on his Facebook page are well worth checking out if you haven't seen them already.

Outside of that main event clash, the war between Mad Dog Club (MDC) Australia and the Black Hand Gang wrangled on with the latter claiming the former's Tag Team Championships.

Trent O'Day, who turned his back on MDC in July, and his new partner Jason Storm defeated Australian Wolf and Seth Tylors to get their hands on the gold and end a year-long reign.

NHPW: GUARDIANS OF WRESTLING

Saturday, August 21

ROGAN Karguis put himself back on the right track after getting one over on the Future Legends at *New Horizon Pro Wrestling (NHPW): Guardians of Wrestling*.

Karguis, who lost his Art of Fighting Championship to the Legends' Lena Kross in July, bounced back with a big win over her stablemate, Rory Holmes, in a five-on-five elimination tag match main event the following month.

He and Holmes, the opposing team captains, were the final two men left in the match and it was the former who would ultimately score the pinfall after finding the target with his Forge Kick.

Completing Karguis' team were Julian Ward, Cannon Connors, Jebediah and Eddie Christopher, while Holmes had lined up alongside Jarrad Slate, Salem Sixx, James Draker and Johnny Hardway.

Earlier in the night, Kross had picked up a non-title victory in singles action against the Great George. She won via submission after locking in the Lena-Lock, in what was the pair's first in-ring meeting. Michael Moreleone also ended the evening with a win, although it wasn't the one he might have expected. He had been slated to face Creek Murdoch but when his manager, London Hargreaves, decided the Don "wasn't on Creek's level," a recently returned Axxton took his spot.

Morleone would eventually get the pin after a chokebomb, but was jumped after the match by Murdoch.

There were also wins for the Wardogs against Damien Chase and Nathan Chambers in tag team action, while two members of the Alpha Sintauri continued their momentum with a win apiece. Whetu

Almasy defeated Basstosa in the evening's opener before Tommihana Kaiser later overcame Jack Carlisle.

RCW: THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

Sunday, August 22

HAVOK began his reign as Riot City Wrestling (RCW) Champion by issuing an Open Challenge which was answered by a returning Zak Sabbath - but only after Matt Hayter was screwed out of an opportunity.

Hayter had emerged at the top of the show to answer the champ's challenge, and was told by HAVOK's manager, Benjamin Rosenthal, that he'd first have to sign a contract. Hayter did so but was shortly told by Rosenthal that the contract guaranteed him a title shot at a later date. HAVOK, for what it's worth, didn't look too pleased with the shenanigans.

Hayter was then jumped by Downunder and an impromptu match was set up, with Downunder adding insult to injury by beating Hayter off the back of a low blow - the same way he lost the RCW title to HAVOK in July.

Later in the evening, the RCW Champion returned to the ring and was greeted by Mike Boomer's music - only for his Kings of Ruin partner Sabbath to show up for the first time in more than four months.

The returning Sabbath was naturally very over with the crowd but ultimately it was HAVOK who would score the pinfall after a hard-fought main event. The champion capitalised on a momentary distraction by Rosenthal to hit Sabbath with his package piledriver for the win and chalk up his first successful defence of the title.

After the show, HAVOK challenged both Sabbath and Boomer to a three-way for his title at a later date.

The C4 Absolute Grand Prix also raced towards its conclusion as the third and final round played out. Chris Basso won a slugfest against the aforementioned Boomer to tee up a showdown with Adam Brooks, who slipped to his first defeat of the tournament against a previously winless James Kray.

It means that Basso and Brooks both end the tournament on four points from three matches, setting up a decider between the two with the winner set to be crowned the promotion's first-ever Emerald Crown Champion. Don't be surprised to see Kray challenge the winner after his victory over Brooks.

The RCW Tag Team Championships were also on the line, as Eli Theseus and Gabriel

Aeros defended against Jett Armstrong and Redshaw, in what was the latters' first time going after the gold.

The match would end in unusual fashion, however, with the champions retaining on a technicality after their manager, Tyler Daniels, hit Theseus with one of the title belts, laying him out but also forcing the disqualification and costing Armstrong and Redshaw their shot at tag team gold.

There were further tag bouts in which Delta and Dean Brady scored their first victory since joining forces, defeating Brandon Black and Cayden Cornell of the Var-City Villains, while Party Guy Ty found allies in Barron and a new-look Amber Switch as the trio came up trumps in a six-person tag match against Savannah Summer, Cadie Tre and Jonathan Corvidae.

VPW: OVERLOAD V

Saturday, August 28

VENOM Pro Wrestling (VPW) crowned a new Heavyweight Champion for the fourth time this year as EC Brownie defeated Spaceman Dacey at *Overload V*.

Brownie, who only debuted for the promotion at the start of this year, picked up the win after Dacey was being reprimanded by the referee for trying to hit his opponent with his championship belt. The champ then walked right into a black hole slam, before the challenger hit a spear for the pin.

Meanwhile, Tiamat and his manager, Todd Eastman, were watching on at ringside for the match. Tiamat has the right to a shot at the title anytime after winning the Brass Ring ladder match in May.

Also on the show, Tequila Young won the 2021 Guy Fermanian Memorial Rumble match, Bruiser defeated Bobby Bishop via disqualification and Jack Tarr beat Charlie D.

There was also a big win for Rick Lloyd and Slammin' Sam in a three-way tag match, overcoming BroDay and Wacol's Most Wanted along the way. And Jason Hyde defeated B-Lars in a single match with VPW Origins Champion Dick Riggs acting as special guest referee.

After the show, Riggs approached Hyde and respectfully requested a contract signing at the next VPW show ahead of their imminent title match, which the challenger duly accepted.

Check out VPW's online post-show, the Bite, via the promotion's Facebook page for more fallout from the event.

EPW: TICKET TO MADNESS

Claremont Showgrounds, Claremont WA

Saturday, August 28

THE line-up for Explosive Pro Wrestling (EPW)'s landmark 20th anniversary showcase is starting to shape up, after a champion continued his remarkable run and a new challenger was crowned at *Ticket to Madness* in August.

Mikey Nicholls, who remains unbeaten in an EPW ring since 2019, successfully defended his Heavyweight Championship against a game Taylor King, although the prospect of him carrying the belt into EPW: Reawakening XX in November was put in doubt due to an injury sustained in that match.

Should he recover, a showdown with Julian Ward is in the pipeline after Ward won a 20-person Rumble match to become the number one contender to Nicholls' title.

A star-studded affair saw Ward, Damian Slater, Marcius Pitt and Gavin McGavin made it to the final four, at which point Pitt sent McGavin on his way with a huge F5 from the ring apron. A surprise superkick from his own supposed partner, Slater, then took Pitt out of the fray but it was Ward who ended as the last man standing after dispatching Slater with a clothesline.

Not that the evening's action was over there. Nicholls would come out to confront Ward after the win, backed up by his TMDK: Reanimated buddy Slater, at which point Davis Storm hit the ring to even up the odds.

The godfather of Perth wrestling later cut a promo on Ward, questioning if he had what it takes to beat Nicholls having twice failed to get the job done. Ward, by the way, provided Nicholls with his first successful defence of his current EPW title reign back in February of last year.

Davis' talk pushed Ward to challenge him to a one-on-one match at *EPW: Mighty Encounters* in October, with the new number one contender determined to prove himself ready to once again go after the big one.

It capped off an eventful evening in which Aaron Hawk

twice defended the EPW Coastal Championship. He had been scheduled to face Dan Moore for the belt, but with his opponent unable to compete he instead ended up facing Faizal Keris for the title and then Callum Collins shortly after. Hawk retained on both occasions.

The Tag Team Champions were also in action, although their titles were not on the line. Del Cano and Zenith beat Johnathan Windsor and Twitch to end the former's hopes of staking a claim for a title match. After the contest, Casey Johns and James Hartness made a fairly strong claim of their own, leaving the champs laying after a brutal post-match beatdown.

A second tag match of the evening saw Chris J Lazareth's clients, Kaz Jordan and the newly recruited Joel Hagan, face Bruno Nitro and his mystery partner, the masked El Toro Blanco.

However, Blanco was later revealed to have been Lazareth all along, and his betrayal set up a three-on-one beatdown of Nitro as the match was ruled a no contest.



Mikey Nicholls' next challenger for his EPW Heavyweight title will be Julian Ward.

Photo: Pix Photography

WRESTLE RAMPAGE: MOMENT OF TRUTH

Cosgrove Hall, Clovelly Park SA

Saturday, August 28

BATTLE lines were drawn as an exiled star was given a glimpse of a potential route back into the fold as *Moment of Truth* reached its thrilling conclusion.

After Rat Daddy had defeated Joey Graham in a dramatic main event to retain his Australian National Championship, a run-in by Graham's RenegadeZ cronies, brothers Pat and Greg and Will Gibson, prompted a mass post-match brawl.

Comdog and Robby Heart came out to make the save before Knight made his presence felt, clearing Gibson and the Grahams from the ring. He then revealed he would be using his 'open match contract' to pit himself, Comdog, Heart and Rat Daddy against the RenegadeZ, with the stipulation that if he and his team are victorious, Punch Drunk Istria will be allowed to return to the promotion.

Istria, who was banished from *Wrestle Rampage* after losing to Joey Graham at *Re-Emerging* in June, had appeared at the start of the show to bid a final farewell to the Adelaide fans.

Rat Daddy retained his Australian National title at *Moment of Truth*



But the well wishes were cut short by Greg Graham and Will Gibson's interruption. It was the start of a busy night for the pair, who in no uncertain terms sent Istria on his way before facing Lily Blaze and DELTA in the semifinal of a tournament to crown the inaugural Australian National Tag Team Champions.

Graham and Gibson picked up the win and would later go on to defeat Havok and Link Barnett - who had defeated Corey Adams and Gentleman Jordan earlier on - to get their hands on the new belts.

Unfortunately for them, though, their buddy Joey Graham didn't fare quite as well on the championship front.

After his June win over Istria had put him in pole position to challenge Rat Daddy for the Australian National title, Graham looked to be making good on his opportunity when he hit a huge Cutter from the top rope in the main event's latter stages.

But the champ somehow got the shoulder up and, after reversing another Cutter attempt, was able to connect cleanly with a superkick - the second of the contest - and capitalise to score the pinfall.

Graham had appeared gracious in defeat, extending his arm for a handshake, only to then low blow the champion and lay him out, paving the way for the post-match beatdown that set up Tommy Knight's announcement.

Knight himself had been in action already, facing off against Robby Heart with the 'open match contract' up for grabs. The match stemmed from a disagreement between the pair, with Heart urging Knight to use the contract to bring Istria back into the picture, and Knight arguing he could instead use the contract to regain the Australian National title from Graham if he were to eventually beat Rat Daddy.

Of course, he didn't, and Knight ultimately followed Heart's advice and used his opportunity to provide a glimmer of hope for Istria and his *Wrestle Rampage* future.

The quartet of Knight, Heart, Comdog and Rat Daddy will now face the RenegadeZ - Joey, Pat and Greg Graham and Will Gibson - the next time the promotion returns to Cosgrove Hall for *Final Showdown* on November 6.

Once again *Wrestle Rampage* delivered an evening of significant twists and turns and similarly impressive in ring action. Wins and losses continue to feel very important, even outside of the promotion's title pictures - which has of course now expanded to include the newly created tag team championship division. Between that, the imminent four-on-four tag and the potential return of Istria, there's a whole lot to get excited about at *Wrestle Rampage*.

ACW: EVOLVE 37

Saturday, August 28

MATT Hayter's mammoth reign as the top dog in Adelaide Championship Wrestling (ACW) continues after victory on the promotion's return to action.

ACW, which had to cancel its July 3 *Rise to Glory* show due to Covid-19 restrictions, came back with a bang with *Evolve 37* at the promotion's academy in Prospect SA. Hayter squared off against Redshaw in the evening's main event, and ultimately picked up the victory to extend his stint as ACW Heavyweight Champion to 647 days.

The Covid era saw many champions piece together lengthy reigns, in part due to ongoing lockdowns, but Hayter still managed to defend his gold on five occasions in 2020, plus a further four times this year as his march towards two full years as champion continues.

Duke Marshall has a long way to go to match those kinds of numbers but put his best foot forward by defeating Joe Mundie to retain the ACW Evolve Championship. That's his second defence since winning the vacant belt in April.

Kit Condor also faced Joey Triton in the pair's first meeting since Condor's debut. Again it was the same outcome as he picked up the victory. And Downunder would later pick up a win of his own against Jesse Hendy.

Meanwhile, Draven Rangarsson continued his unbeaten run in the promotion, defeating Malykai Slic after the latter put out an open challenge on social media. And Simple Simon returned to an ACW ring for the first time in five years. He faced El Neon, but only after the pair had staged a dance off to Single Ladies and Nutbush.

POWERSLAM 11

Sunday, August 29

REDSHAW got back to winning ways with a victory at *Powerslam 11* at the end of August.

He defeated Downunder in the evening's main event, in what was a meeting between the promotion's number two and three ranked competitors. Victory puts Redshaw right back in the mix after his loss to Tyler Daniels, ranked number one, three weeks prior.

Also on the show, Jensen Hunt defeated Chase Magnum - a win that could

be enough to see him leapfrog his buddy Downunder into third place in the promotion's power rankings.

There were also wins for Violet Blitz over Halo, Grayson Parker over Cadie Tre and John E Radic over Jonathan Corvidae.

Shortly after the show, plans to crown a Women's Champion and Tag Team Champion were announced, with two tournaments set to play out over the course of two nights in mid-September.

QWA ROCKHAMPTON: STAMPEDE

Saturday, September 4

A DREAM two years in the making was achieved as Colt Winchester won the Queensland Wrestling Alliance (QWA) Rockhampton Championship on the first weekend of September.

Winchester shared a post on social media revealing an image of that very title had been tucked into the sun visor in his car for the last two years as a reminder of where he was headed.

And on September 4 he realised that goal when he defeated Australian Wolf to finally get his hands on the gold.

The show was also noteworthy for the action of Ref Spence, who later took to social media to reveal he was sick and tired of being messed around as an official and would be "throwing his job out the window" and debuting his in-ring persona, Apex Anderson.

Also billed for the event were Tyson De Haunt, Zuzu the Muscle Clown, Cherry Bombshell, Aaron van der Maw and the Tainted Crow.

PWSA: WAR GAMES 15

Saturday, September 4

JOHN E Radic was left in the lurch, but gained some retribution by the end of the night, while there was a career-first title win for Chase Magnum at *Pro Wrestling South Australia (PWSA): War Games 15*.

After losing to Grayson Parker with a roll-up, Radic was berated and labelled a 'wash up' by his manager, Bradey Roberts, who very publicly turned his back on his client.

Radic would later return to the ring for the eponymous War Games battle royale, and although he was not victorious, he took the shine of Twisted J's win by hitting the ring and stunning anyone and everyone in his

way, including his former cohort Roberts, to send the crowd home happy.

Earlier in the evening, Chase Magnum had celebrated a maiden championship victory by beating Jonathan Corvidae for the PWSA Adelaide Open title.

Magnum hit the Frog Splash for the win, which was met with another great response from the crowd. After, a dazed Corvidae got to his feet and snatched the belt away from Magnum, before shaking the new champ's hand and insisting on putting the title around the new holder's waist.

The evening's other title match pitted PWSA Heavyweight Champion Redshaw against Jake Viper, with the champ retaining after a disqualification.

Also on the show, Halo defeated Violet Blitz and Acid Haze versus Cadie Tre ended in a double disqualification, Brett Santorini, Kai Thorn and Twisted J defeated Ace Wilson, Doc Kinkaid and Reilly Right in a three-on-three tag.

VPW: BACKROOM BRAWL

Saturday, September 11

BOTH Venom Pro Wrestling (VPW) men's singles titles were successfully defended at the promotion's 18+ event in the City of Brisbane in September.

EC Brownie retained the VPW Championship against two-time former champ Spaceman Dacey, the very man he won the belt from back in August. And Dick Riggs went on to do the same against the up-and-coming James Jaeger.

Backroom Brawl, held in the Back Room of the Annerley's Chardons Corner Hotel, also saw Shinji score an upset victory in a Hardcore match in the evening's main event.

Shinji defeated Tim Kade, the second-longest reigning VPW Champion in history, having earned a spot in the main event by winning a Hardcore battle royale earlier in the show.

The returning duo of Strong 94, formerly known as Street Revolution, won a three-way tag match involving Bro Day and Wacol's Most Wanted, while Colt Winchester and the Bruiser squared off in singles action, as did Flashman and Ricky Rembrandt in a Last Man Standing match.

There was also a victory for Tianmat, a replacement for Bobby Bishop, in a four-way involving B-Lars, J.L. Gold and Shepard.

POWERSLAM WRESTLING 12

Research Road, Pooraka SA
Fri-Sat, September 17-18

TWO new championships are set to be introduced at Powerslam Wrestling after a pair of title tournaments kicked off at a double-header event in September.

The promotion staged back-to-back Friday and Saturday night shows at its headquarters in Pooraka SA with the first rounds of both the Women's Powerslam Championship Tournament and the Men's Powerslam Tag Team Championship Tournament taking place.

Blair Alexis, Savannah Summers, Izzy Shaw and Violet Blitz all made it to what will be the semifinals of the women's singles tournament. Friday night's show saw Alexis and Summers defeat Kitty Katana and Maddie respectively. After the second of those matches, a post-match beatdown by Alexis and Summers on Maddie was soon broken up by Shaw and Blitz, prompting the signing of a tag match between the four at the next Powerslam show.

Shaw and Blitz then notched their wins the following evening, defeating Halo and Linka - both by pinfall - to advance to the

next round.

The men's tag tournament, meanwhile, will be contested between the teams of John E Radic and Reilly Right, Acid Haze and Twisted J, CorviTre (Jonathan Corvidae and Cadie Tre) and Tyler Daniels and Jensen Hunt.

Radic and Right defeated Kai Thorn and Ryan Violence before Haze and Twisted J beat James Kray and Cayden Cornell to steal the show on the Friday night. Saturday then saw CorviTre overcome Chase Magnum and Grayson Parker before Hunt and Daniels, subbing in for Downunder, defeated Havoc and Redshaw.

Havok and Daniels are set to meet once again, this time in singles action with the former's Heavyweight Championship on the line, when the number one contender gets his shot at *Powerslamming Virginia* on October 15.

Tickets remain on sale. Go to Facebook and search 'Power-slam Wrestling' for more information or go to eventbrite.com.au to get yours now.

NHPW: THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

Perth Wrestling Academy, Gillam Drive, Perth WA
Saturday, September 18

NEW Horizon Pro Wrestling (NHPW) returned to its homebase in Kelmscott WA, in southeast Perth, for the promotion's first academy showcase event in a year.

A blend of both emerging and established names featured on the card, headlined by a blockbuster three-way for the NHPW Hybrid Championship, with Salem Sixx retaining his gold against Rogan Karguis and Rory Holmes.

Outside of the action in the ring, the main event was noteworthy in that Holmes' tag partner, Cameron Stone, did not feature at ringside throughout the contest.

His absence came after earlier developments had seen Holmes make his way out from the back during Stone's show-opener against Eddie Christopher, only for his partner to tell him to head back to where he came from, preferring to handle his business on his own.



Salem Sixx remains NHPW Hybrid Champion
Photo: Shotweiler

The tension, brewing since Holmes inadvertently eliminated his partner in July's *Path to Greatness* Rumble match, continues as the pair prepare to defend their SST Legacy Tag Team Championships against to-be-determined number one contenders in late October.

September's academy showcase also saw WAR defeat Tye Grayson and Johnny Flash defeat Anthony Drake. And there were also wins for Jebediah and Creek Murdoch against Basstosa and Cannon Connors respectively, while Tommihana Kaiser scored a victory over Jack Carlisle.

The promotion's next event, *Trick or Treat*, takes place on October 23 and will feature matches voted for by the fans. Search for 'New Horizons Pro Wrestling (NHPW) Perth Australia' on Facebook for more information or go to www.perthwrestling.com.au/tickets to buy tickets now.

EPW: CIRCLING THE PREY

Saturday, September 11

AARON Hawk retained his Explosive Pro Wrestling (EPW) Coastal Championship with a win over Bruno Nitro at the latest EPW academy showcase.

Hawk racked up what was his third defence in the space of two weeks after two victories in one night over Callum Collins and Faizel Keris at *EPW: Ticket to Madness* at the end of August.

Meanwhile, Edith Night was crowned number one contender for the Rising Star Cup after stepping up and foiling Joel Hagan in his series of Three Minute Challenge matches.

The big man defeated both Steven Norsk and Jeremy, the cameraman, in less than 30 seconds apiece before Night stepped up to the plate. She would eventually be beaten by Hagan, but in 3:07, therefore surviving the three-minute challenge.

Taylor King, James Hartness and Collins also scored singles wins over Lucas Fantasia, the Great George and Blake Walker respectively, while Chris Target won a three-way elimination match involving Matthew Pace and Stella Nyx. Nyx had eliminated Pace first before falling to Target.

And in tag team action, Ryan Allen and Jordan Bishop overcame the team of Antonio Corrado and Mr Thompson, before Gavin McGavin and Jesse Lambert defeated the Dux Brothers.

QWA: CENTEN CLASSIC III: TESTING THE LIMIT

Saturday, September 18

A 30-MINUTE Ironman match went to sudden death overtime, with Trent O'Day and Australian Wolf sharing three falls apiece, in the main event of *QWA: Centen Classic III*.

Wolf went on to score the victory and with it, the right to choose the stipulation for an eight-man tag match set for the next QWA show.

He will be joined by Gabriel Zaya, Tommy Asguard and Seth Tylors, to face the team of O'Day, Jason Storm, Aaron Van Der Maw and Erik Thunder in a ladder match at *QWA: Hardcore Halloween* on October 30.

The same show will also feature a Venom Pro Wrestling (VPW) Heavyweight title re-match from the *Centen Classic*. EC Brownie,

the champion, will face Champ Phoenix in a Street Fight after the latter used the VPW belt as a weapon to force a disqualification in their first meeting.

The September show also saw Van Der Maw and Thunder retain their QWA Tag Team Championships against the team of Asguard and Tylors, while Dick Riggs retained his VPW Origins title against Outeous Law.

Colt Winchester also defended the QWA Rockhampton title against Edmund Blayr and Klaus Stirling retained the QWA Middleweight championship in a three-way with Storm and the Tainted Crow.

ACW EVOLVE: OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Friday, September 24

TWO debutants were unsuccessful in their title challenges as Matt Hayter and Duke Marshall retained at Adelaide Championship Wrestling (ACW's) latest Evolve show.

Marshall held onto his ACW Evolve Championship after victory over Jensen Hunt, before Hayter went on to match the feat with his ACW Heavyweight belt on the line against James Kray.

Earlier in the evening, Jesse Hendy had defeated Draven - handing his opponent a first defeat in ACW. And he showed up again later in the show, although things didn't quite go as planned.

Attempting to save Kit Condor from a post-match beatdown at the hands of Downunder, Hendy found himself handcuffed to the ring and forced into joining the very man who had defeated and attacked his friend - not to mention the same man who kidnapped his uncle months ago.

Things also went awry for Malykai Slic, who came up short in his bid to chalk up his first win. The rookie Slic has been given ten matches in which to secure a victory, otherwise his ACW career is over.

VPW: MELTDOWN 5

Saturday, September 25

EC BROWNIE racked up his third successful defence of the Venom Pro Wrestling (VPW) Championship in the space of 14 days.

After four title changes in six months, Brownie has brought some stability to the title picture since winning the belt at *VPW: Overload* on August 28.

Wins over Champ Phoenix, via disqualification, and former champion Spaceman Dacey were followed up by defeating Tequila Young at *VPW: Meltdown*.

Brownie's victory came ahead of the evening's main event, in which Strong 94, the team of Lynx Lewis Jr and Renegade, made it two wins from two since making their VPW return, this time with a victory over Wacol's Most Wanted.

Elsewhere in the tag division, Rick Lloyd and Slammin' Sam also strengthened their credentials with a victory over Roberto Puccino and James Jaeger.

Both they and Strong 94 could now be in with a shout at challenging El Cartel for the VPW Tag Team Championships.

Lucille Brawl, accompanied by Bobby Bishop, also got a win on the show over Kyla Knight, and Bishop himself earned a victory of his own against Tim Kade.

Colt Winchester also faced Johnny Hardwood while Tianmat, with Todd Eastman, squared off against Shepard.

WRESTLE RAMPAGE: LIVE AT THE DOJO #10

Saturday, October 2

THE RenegadeZ laid waste to just about everyone in their sight as the build to *Final Showdown* continues.

Faction members Greg Graham and Will Gibson recorded their first successful defence of their newly won Australian National Tag Team Championships in the main event of *Wrestle Rampage's* latest Dojo show, defeating the team of Rat Daddy, the Australian National Champion, and Robby Heart.

After the match, they beat down their opponents, as well as Tommy Knight and Corndog, with a variety of weapons. Link Barnett and Havok eventually came out in an attempt to make the save but they too suffered a similar fate.

The RenegadeZ even went as far as attacking production crew at ringside and ring announcer Sean Thomas before leaving the building.

Gibson and Greg, Pat and Joey Graham are set to face the quartet of Rat Daddy, Heart, Knight and Corndog on November 6 at *Final Showdown*, with the added stipulation that a win for the latter will allow Punch Drunk Istria to return to *Wrestle Rampage*.

The rest of the RenegadeZ had been in

action earlier in the show, with Joey facing Comdog and Pat going up against Havok. Knight was also in action - twice - facing Gentleman Jordan and Sir Corey Adams after they both answered his challenge, and Barnett took on Wam Bam Wellows.

There was also time for Bones Malone to call out the man in the pig mask who attacked him at *Moment of Truth* in August, challenging him to a match at *Final Showdown*.

TCW: BREAKOUT Saturday, October 2

DYLAN Daniels' wayward aim with a steel chair ended up paving the way for Elliot Greyson to set up a showdown with the Tasmanian Championship Wrestling (TCW) North Esk Champion at the end of the year.

Daniels was refereeing a number one contender's bout between Greyson and JJ Storm in the main event of *TCW: Breakout*, when he went to clock the former with a chair, only for Greyson to duck and leave Storm to get waffled.

Greyson then scored the victory to set up their title match, which is due to take place at *Proving Ground* on December 11.

A TCW Heavyweight Championship match was also made at the start of the show. Adrian Alexander, whose gradual face turn continues to gather momentum, came out to stop his manager, Mr Sinclair, from bad-mouthing the rest of the roster, when Eddie Jones made his way to the ring and issued a title challenge. Alexander, champion for nearly 600 days now, duly accepted.

Jones was in singles action later in the night against Charli Rose, the aftermath of which saw Alexander hit the ring to save his soon-to-be-opponent from a beatdown at the hand of Rose and Greyson. But much like with the main event, it all went awry when Greyson dodged a charging Jones and Alexander inadvertently copped a Spear.

Dominic Knight was also in action as he rolled through Mike Murphy, before interfering in Zakk Archer's match with Dean Nickson and putting Archer through a table.

Liam Lacey also squared off against El Hijo de Doomslayer in the first match of the evening, and after Aaron Lynch's match with Matthew Pace, Zeke Andino appeared on the screen and promised he'd see Lynch in December.

TCW: Providing Ground takes place at the Elphin Sports Centre, in Launceston TAS, on

Saturday, December 11.

Tickets are available from Event Brite via www.eventbrite.com/e/proving-ground-tickets-176911977487

PWSA: IN THE DEWG HOUSE Saturday, October 2

JAKE Viper was busted open at the hands of Redshaw at *Pro Wrestling South Australia (PWSA): In the Dewg House*.

Technically he scored the victory on the night, but with the outcome coming via a disqualification, Redshaw retained his PWSA Heavyweight Championship. The pair are set to do battle once more at PWSA: Spooky Slam at the end of the month. Fittingly, given the finish of this encounter, that match will be contested under First Blood rules.

A similarly violent main event closed the show as Acid Haze and Cadie Tre went one-on-one in a rare Dog Collar match. Tre actually has history with this stipulation, after a previous outings in for Riot City Wrestling and Adelaide Championship Wrestling in 2018 and 2019, but the experience didn't seem to do him many favours as Haze escaped with the victory.

A second title match of the evening saw Chase Magnum successfully defend his PWSA Adelaide Open Championship against Cayden Cornell, shortly after Colossus had defeated Jonathan Corvidae to become the number one contender to that title.

Party Guy Ty also defeated Jensen Hunt in singles action, while Grayson Parker beat Doc Kinkaid, and the team of John E Radic and Ace Wilson saw off Kai Thorn and Twisted J.

IPW AUSTRALIA: NO EXCUSES Saturday, October 2

RIP Reilly made his title aspirations crystal clear when he returned to Impact Pro Wrestling Australia (IPW) and attacked its champion, Zeke Andino.

Reilly appeared in the aftermath of Andino's successful IPW Heavyweight Championship defence against Skhorn, emerging from the crowd beneath a hood to attack the champ before revealing his face. He then went on to issue a challenge for a title match at November's *Ladder Wars* show.

Andino had earlier defeated Skhorn to retain the gold, avoiding the challenger's attempt to nail him with a steel chair before hitting his Sick Kick for the win.

Bojack also retained his IPW Unified Championship, but only after a draw was announced following a double pin in his match with the returning Reaper after a C4 from the top rope. Commissioner Jace the Ace then announced that the pair will go at it one more time in a ladder match at *Ladder Wars*.

One championship that did change hands were the tag titles. Kiwi Thriller beat Chad Atlas and Nick Breeze after Chad turned on his partner, in what was actually a two-on-one match after Thriller's partner, Sweet Ass, was deemed unable to compete due to injury.

Alexander Kasimir also defeated Slammin' Sam, and Jesse Love defeated RIP, before CJ challenged Kiwi Thriller to an impromptu match, winning after hitting his CJKO.

NIGHTFALL WRESTLING: UNLIMITED Saturday, October 2

NIGHTFALL Wrestling was able to perform for a capacity crowd at Narangba Community Hall following an easing of coronavirus restrictions in Queensland.

Those in attendance saw the first Nightfall Heavyweight Champion crowned as JL Gold defeated Spaceman Dacey and Renegade. His first opponent looks likely to be B-Lars, who overcame Edmund Blayr, Shinji, EC Brownie, Jason Storm and Yeet Stevens to win the Contenders Cup.

And there was drama in the main event as Australian Wolf turned on his Team Kyote teammates, Combat Wombat and Detective Riggs, to gift the victory to Bruiser, Tiamat and James Jaeger of Team Flashman.

Zuzu the Muscle Clown had earlier beaten Rhys Rayzelle in the opener, ahead of Logan Pearce and Troll's win over Rick Lloyd and Kobra in tag team action.

There were also wins for Kyla Knight over Johnny Hardwood and Zoltan over Tim Kade, who promptly took his frustrations out on the referee after the match.



SOUTHERN TERRITORY WRESTLING: BORDER WARS

Kalamunda Performing Arts Centre, Kalamunda WA
Saturday, October 2

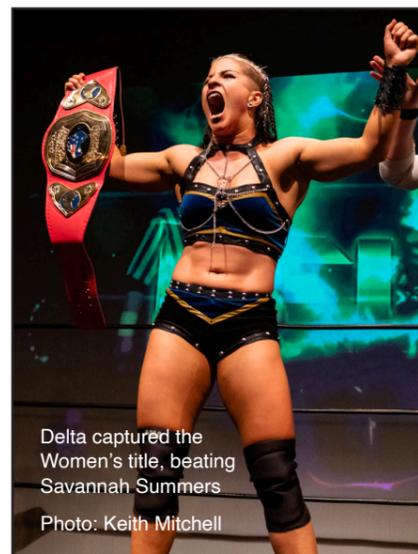
With the odds stacked against them and time not on their side, Australia's newest professional wrestling company, Southern Territory Wrestling (STW), did the unthinkable. With only a fortnight's notice, this newborn company put on one of the most memorable shows in recent history, writes STW Brand Ambassador, Kay Gee.

The stageside interview set was a brilliant touch, helping diversify the evening's entertainment which hosted some memorable moments between the company's founder, former wrestler Andrew 'Shark' Carter, and the likes of Kaz Jordan, Philippine Dream Julio as well as confrontations between Julian Ward, Chris Target, Adam Brooks and special guest, Mikey Nicholls. But the real action, naturally, was in the ring.

The evening began with Jordan defeating Dean Brady and set the bar extraordinarily high for what would be a fiercely contested night. Felix Young and The Great George were the next to do battle - and battle they did! Felix however was fighting with more purpose than his opponent and picked up the win. Turns out he'd had an ultimatum laid out to him earlier that day. Beat five opponents of 'Sharks' choosing and earn a championship opportunity. One down, four to go.

Up next, the monster Barren versus Taylor King. Somehow Barren managed to withstand whatever Taylor threw at him and after a chokeslam and tombstone combination got the pin.

There are fewer competitors in the world who could have made a more dominant debut on West Australian soil than Delta, who pinned the fifteen-year veteran Savannah Summers, in what was arguably one of the matches of the night, to be crowned the new Australian Women's Champion.



Delta captured the Women's title, beating Savannah Summers

Photo: Keith Mitchell

President Elizabeth Hogan has made it clear she wants to build a marquee women's division at STW and later in the night announced the new signing of Perth's own, Stella Nyx. However, before Nyx would even get the chance to address the audience, Dan

Steel emerged and revealed that Lena Kross was also here and would face Nyx in an impromptu match! The contest ended prematurely, though, when Delta came out and hit a double spear, causing a disqualification.

For many people, Matt Hayter versus Julio for the Southern Cross Championship was the match of the night. Fighting through the crowd, up stairs, back through the crowd and back into the ring, both men gave it their all but it was Julio who emerged victorious to claim the gold. Up next, Del Cano faced one of the toughest challenges of his career so far in the veteran Rocky Menero but it was one he was more than ready for as he claimed a big win.

There was another impromptu match in the form of the returning Killah and local Dizzy Videl, but fans were twitching in their seats knowing full well what came next - a three-way STW Championship match. The pace was unreal and there was one incredible spot after the next throughout the contest. It genuinely felt like the company's marquee championship was going to stay on home soil but Adam Brooks managed to turn things around for a big win, and will go down in history as being the first-ever STW Champion.

Mikey Nicholls was quick to get into the ring after the match and, despite nursing a severe muscular injury, got in the face of the brand new champion, saying that once he's at one hundred percent, he was going to prove Adam Brooks was "nothing more than a transitional champion."

Julio is the new Southern Cross Champion.

Photo: Pix Photography



Editor's note

Huge thanks to Kay Gee for providing a first-hand report of STW's inaugural show. Congratulations to all involved, and here's hoping there's plenty more to come from the newest face in Western Australian wrestling.

RIOT CITY WRESTLING: HEAVY IS THE CROWN

Gray Street, Kilkenny SA
Saturday, October 9

ADAM Brooks may well agree that the crown is indeed heavy after adding yet another championship to his collection as the C4 Absolute Grand Prix reached its conclusion.

Brooks defeated Chris Basso in a main event match worthy of closing any tournament to get his hands on the new Riot City Wrestling (RCW) Emerald Crown Championship.

He now holds three different championships across three different states, with honours in South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria. Not since Indi Hartwell in 2018 have we seen a three-state belt collector - props to Brent Welch from *On the Tumbuckle* for that gem of a stat.

Another man who continues to set the gold standard is Havok, who retained his RCW Heavyweight Championship in a three-way match. And while there was no tag team title bout on the night, new number one contenders were announced in the form of Jett Armstrong and Redshaw.

Ultimately, though, the night belonged to Brooks. Arguably the standout performer of the weeks-long C4 Absolute Grand Prix, he was the first man to qualify for the Grand Final with two wins from his first two matches. That included victory over Basso in match two, before his perfect record was blemished by a defeat to James Kray in the final round of matches.

Basso, meanwhile, matched Brooks' tally of two wins from three with victories over Kray and Mike Boomer, but he was unable to avenge that first defeat to Brooks when the tournament final eventually rolled around.

Brooks' latest victory means he is now the Melbourne City Wrestling World Heavyweight Champion, the Southern Territory Wrestling Champion and the RCW Emerald Crown Champion. Heavy is the crown, indeed.

Havok, meanwhile, may not be defending quite as many titles at the moment - just the two, as RCW and Powerslam Champion - but his reign with the RCW gold is starting to develop into a decent run.

After dethroning Matt Hayter, the veteran has gone on to defeat Zak Sabbath on his return to the promotion and at *Heavy is the Crown* he trumped that by overcoming both Sabbath and his tag partner Mike Boomer in a three-way. Sabbath and Boomer have since signalled their intent to focus on tag team glory moving forward.

But they'll find themselves behind Jett Armstrong and Redshaw in the queue, after the pair became number one contender's to the Parea's RCW Tag Team Championships. Just seven weeks after coming up short in their first title opportunity, they'll be another bite of the cherry after beating



the team of Gabriel Aeros and Tyler Daniels after the latter suffered a bit of a communication breakdown.

Other matches on the show included Matt Hayter having a good go of running the gauntlet, before falling to his rival Jensen Hunt at the final hurdle. And Chase Magnum made his RCW debut in singles action against James Kray.

The show was also notable for being the promotion's first from its brand new Academy Headquarters in Kilkenny SA. RCW moved to its new home in Gray Street very recently after outgrowing its former facility in Colgin Street, Hindmarsh SA. After the show, management thanked fans for being a part of the latest chapter in the promotion's history.

"Thank you to all who packed our new home last night at Heavy Is the Crown for the grand opening of the best pro-wrestling training facility in the country!" the team wrote on social media.

"We look forward to bringing you many more special events from the Riot City Wrestling Academy."

PRO WRESTLING LEAGUE: PROJECT REVOLUTION 3

Kedron Wavell Services Club, Cherside QLD
Saturday, October 9

BACK in July, a 16-second video shared to Facebook had the Australian wrestling community abuzz. It was pretty simple stuff. A logo, some smoke and just two words. "We're back."

Fast forward just under three months, and those two words have since translated into the first Pro Wrestling League show in more than a year-and-a-half.

After the show - which is due to be made available on demand on the Australian Wrestling Network soon - social media was similarly excited about what went down. And looking at the card ahead of time, it's not hard to see why.

Talent from Queensland and beyond were featured, with Jake Nova and Zeke Andino squaring off in the evening's opener. Rip Rielly and Jack Tarr were booked for a good old fashioned hoss fight, while Yeet Stevens was slated for his Pro Wrestling League debut against James Jaeger.

The tag team quota for the night was just as intriguing, with Lucille Brawl and Bobby Bishop facing the team of Kyla Knight and Sorrow for the right to get their hands on a mystery briefcase. And the recently returned Strong 94 were advertised to face an unknown tag team.

Also billed was a three-way between Outback Adam, Saxton Turner and Solomon Blackwell, and of course the evening's main event - the highly-rated Tommy Knight vs. Brisbane's returning son Punch Drunk Istria.

As if that card wasn't enough in itself, the promotion helped build the show with some great vignettes on social media - not least of all the promo for the Brawl/Bishop vs. Kyla/Sorrow tag team match, complete with a movie-quality parking lot brawl and some cracking one-liners.

They've been described as the gold standard in Queensland wrestling by some within the industry and if the

show, when it eventually drops, is anything like the buzz both before and after the event and the content that was put out in the lead-up, you wouldn't want to argue with those claims.

Following the show, the promotion shared an update via its social media pages, reading: "We want to thank each and every one of you for supporting our return event tonight.

"We'll be back on Saturday, February 5, 2022, with our next event at Kedron-Wavell, and we'll have ticket pre-sale info headed your way soon.

"A full recap from tonight will be available soon, and Project: Revolution 3 will go up on the Australian Wrestling Network within the next couple of weeks too."

"This is just the beginning."

Amen. Stay tuned to the Australian Wrestling Network (awn.pivotshare.com) to see the show once it's available.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Fri 15 October **POWERSLAM: POWERSLAMMING VIRGINIA** Virginia Community Centre, Virginia SA
- Sat 16 October **EPW: MIGHTY ENCOUNTERS** Gate One Theatre, Claremont WA
- Sat 23 October **NHPW: TRICK OR TREAT** Cockburn Youth Centre, Success WA
- Sat 23 October **ACW: SILENCE OF THE DEFIANCE** ACW Academy, Prospect SA
- Sat 23 October **VPW: HIGH VOLTAGE** The Showmen's Club, Yatala QLD
- Sat 23 October **WBPW: REVENGE III** Maryborough State High School, Maryborough QLD
- Sat 30 October **SHWA: HALLOWED EVE** Maddington Community Centre, Maddington WA
- Sat 30 October **PWSA: SPOOKY SLAM** Karadinga Sports and Recreation Centre, Modbury North SA
- Sat 30 October **QWA: HARDCORE HALLOWEEN** Centenary Hotel, Pimlico SA
- Sat 30 October **UPW: HALLOWEEN BASH** Morayfield Sports and Events Centre, Morayfield QLD
- Sun 31 October **RCW: END OF DAYS** Arkaba Hotel, Fullarton SA
- Fri 5 November **AWF: LEGACY - 22-YEAR ANNIVERSARY SHOW** Bowman Hall, Blacktown NSW
- Sat 6 November **WRESTLE RAMPAGE: FINAL SHOWDOWN** Cosgrove Hall, Clovelly Park SA
- Sat 6 November **THREE COUNT PRO WRESTLING ACADEMY: UNTAPPED** Shelter Morningside QLD
- Sat 6 November **IPW AUSTRALIA: LADDER WARS** William Duncan State School Hall, Highland Park QLD
- Fri 12 November **UPW: BRISBANE IV** Mansfield Tavern, Mansfield QLD
- Sat 13 November **NIGHTFALL WRESTLING: REALITY CHECK** Narangba Community Hall, Narangba QLD
- Sat 20 November **DMDU: DEATH RULES EVERYTHING AROUND ME** Arrow on Swanston, Carlton VIC
- Sat 27 November **EPW: REAWAKENING XX** Gate One Theatre, Claremont WA
- Sun 28 November **FWA: RESOLUTION IV** Dural Country Club, Dural NSW
- Fri 10 December **PWA: GOLD COAST** Burleigh Bazaar, Burleigh Heads QLD
- Sat 11 December **MCW: FUSION** MCW HQ, Somerton VIC
- Sat 11 December **TCW: BREAKING GROUND** Elphin Sports Centre, Launceston TAS
- Sat 18 December **MIRACLE ON 69TH STREET (Ft. PWA)** The Forum, Melbourne VIC
- Sat 15 January **MCW: FIGHT TO SURVIVE** Thornbury Theatre, Thornbury VIC
- Sat 5 February **PRO WRESTLING LEAGUE** Kedron-Wavell, Chirnside QLD