

ARE THE FIXERS MERCENARY MUSCLE FOR HIRE... AGAIN?



N.W.A. *Official*

JAN./FEB. 2024

WRESTLING

CALL HER

Ms. Starr

A NEW SIDE OF THE
THIRD-GENERATION

NWA STAR

HALF-YEAR REVIEW:

EC3

SIX MONTHS AS
NWA WORLD'S

Champion

**THIS MONTH IN
NWA HISTORY**
THE MIDNIGHT RIDER
GENE KINISKI



ALSO INSIDE: JAX DANE • BLK JEEZ • THE MYSTERIOUS ZYON
• RUTHIE JAY • THE KING BEES • BULLETPROOF BLAKE TROOP



An Official Publication of the National Wrestling Alliance

From the Desk of . . .

The NWA: Nationwide and Coast-to-Coast

Growing up, our family moved often – and I always considered it a curse. Each year brought a new home, new school, and a need to make new friends. From a practical standpoint, even eight years spent floating around Southeast Texas was a nightmare.

Looking back as a fan of the **National Wrestling Alliance**, though, they brought an unexpected windfall! My childhood came during the height of pro wrestling's territory system, and Houston received a wealth of weekly broadcasts showcasing the best NWA affiliates across the country. From a very early age, I was exposed to the greatest wrestling of all-time and the legendary names who defined the NWA for generations.

Each Saturday was **Mid-South Wrestling**, my all-time favorite, featuring stars like Junk Yard Dog, "Dirty" Dick Slater and Dark Journey, "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan, Butch Reed, Missy Hyatt, The Freebirds and Terry Taylor. I also enjoyed **Championship Wrestling from Florida**, Georgia's **Mid-Atlantic**, Dallas-based **World Class Championship Wrestling** and more.

That great territory system of the past ended before my childhood did, but the memories and its legacy live on. Now NWA President **William Patrick Corgan** has endeavored to rebuild it!

Cleveland, OH-based **Exodus Pro** was announced as the first, official territory of the **Lightning One Era**, quickly followed by Tennessee's **Joe Cazana Promotions**. Early in 2024, **NWA Chicago** joined the mix as well. All are rife with young, hungry pro wrestling talent, and it seems likely other companies similarly packed with the stars-of-tomorrow nationwide might soon fall in line as well.

Bit by bit, from touring Australia to seeing its belts defended in Japan and Finland, the NWA is reimagining what some considered an antiquated network of promotions recognizing its legendary titles. **EC3** is revitalizing the concept of being a true traveling World's champion.

It's an exciting time to be a pro wrestling fan. More importantly, it's an incredible time to be a fan of the National Wrestling Alliance. We might never again know the excitement of the '80s territory system, but today's ever-expanding NWA certainly harkens back to it!

Warmest Regards,
Paul E. Pratt
Editor-in-Chief, NWA Official Wrestling



Official
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With the World's Championship around his waist for six months now, we look back at a half-year of **EC3** atop the NWA.

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THE FIVE-STAR Superstar

Since joining the National Wrestling Alliance early in 2023, Ruthie Jay has been a woman on a mission.

Over the last year, the Haitian-born NWA star's kept her eye on the prize. Logging a string of impressive victories, Jay received repeated pay-per-view opportunities at NWA championship gold.

"The Five-Star Athlete" received her first major chance at the 2023 Crockett Cup. During a wild, multi-woman "Hardcore Team Warfare" match on the PPV's opening night, she eliminated then NWA Women's Television Champion Kenzie Paige.

The following night, Jay received a title opportunity. Though she failed to wrest the belt from Paige, she defeated the champion by disqualification.

Months later at *Samhain*, she again faced Paige, this time the NWA Women's World Title on the line. In a hard-fought battle, the champ pinned Jay.

"She didn't win, but she impressed the heck out of everyone," says Jazz, who held the NWA Women's World championship for 948 days.

At this point, Jay has yet to pick up a signature victory or claim NWA gold. The young competitor's stock continues to rise though, the legend says, with every outing.

"Every time Ruthie steps into the ring, she impresses me more," the future Hall of Famer continues. "I have no doubt she'll eventually be an NWA champion."

Ruthie Jay is definitely a (five) star on the rise!

Ruthie Jay



THIS MONTH IN NWA HISTORY

JANUARY 7, 1966 • GENE KINISKI



St. Louis has seen its share of historic National Wrestling Alliance moments. Among those was Gene Kiniski (Left) capturing the NWA World's Heavyweight Championship.

On Jan. 7, 1966, Kiniski ended the last of Lou Thesz's six legendary NWA World's title reigns. A handful of years after first facing Thesz for the belt, and losing two falls in a row, Kiniski became champion in front of more than 11,000 fans at the Kiehl Auditorium.

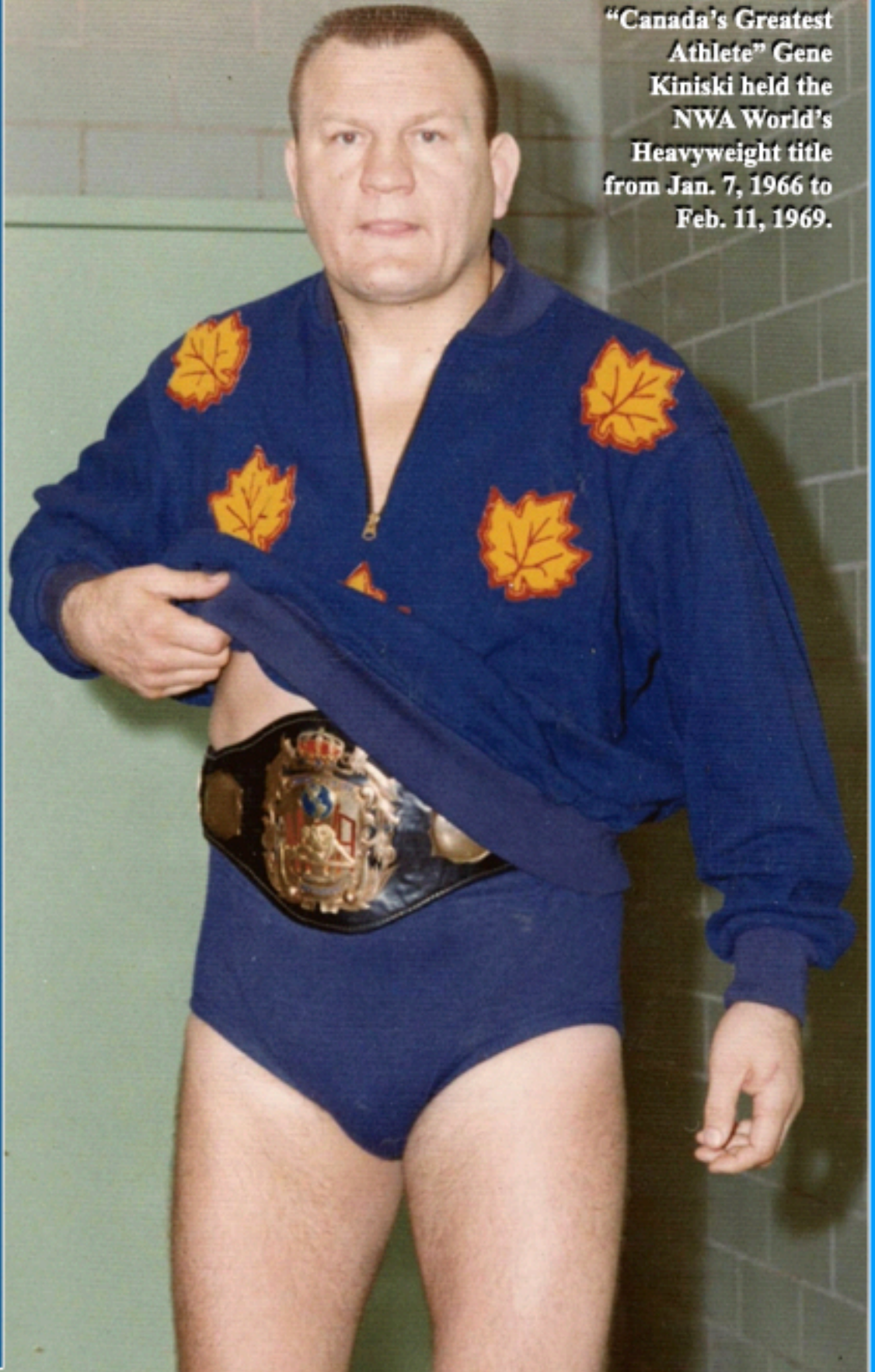
It was the second recognized World Heavyweight Championship for "Canada's Greatest Athlete." Several years prior, he won the American Wrestling Association (AWA) World Championship, holding it only a scant 28 days.

Kiniski's time atop NWA proved much more impressive. He held the belt for three years uninterrupted, defending it around the globe against the top names of his generation. Bobo Brazil, Dick the Bruiser, Abdullah the Butcher, Haystacks Calhoun and many more tried — and failed — to wrest the gold.

Kiniski's reign finally ended at the hands of another celebrated NWA legend: Dory Funk, Jr. On Feb. 11, 1969, Funk won the championship with a spinning toe hold in Tampa, FL.

In addition to his impressive in-ring career, Kiniski also dabbled in acting. He appeared in the 1979 Sylvester Stallone film Paradise Alley among others.

Inducted into the NWA Hall of Fame in 2009, Kiniski passed a year later. He died April 14, 2010, at the age of 81.



"Canada's Greatest Athlete" Gene Kiniski held the NWA World's Heavyweight title from Jan. 7, 1966 to Feb. 11, 1969.

THE

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ARE JAY BRADLEY & WRECKING BALL LEGURSKY GUNS FOR HIRE....AGAIN?!

BUSINESS

The rise of The Fixers was swift. What many see as their 'fall' has come equally fast. Can the former U.S. tag champs get back on track?

Debating as hired muscle, Jay Bradley and Wrecking Ball Legursky collected checks to break bones for others. The duo eventually set their sights on a goal all their own — becoming the first National Wrestling Alliance United States tag team champions of the Lightning One Era.

For months, The Fixers dominated — both in the ring and on the airwaves. Together the U.S. tag champs hosted a variety of NWA specials, weekly programming and more. That all came to a screeching halt, though, at the hands of The Country Gentlemen. AJ Cazana and Anthony Andrews won the U.S. tag titles on the first ever *NWA Powerrr LIVE*.

Bradley and Legursky lost far more than just the belts that night, many say. Those close to the situation feel The Fixers lost their way. Suggests Bobby Fulton: "For months and months — even *after* losing the championships — the United States tag team titles *defined* The Fixers."

The NWA legend appears right. After their loss, The Fixers were so focused on regaining the championships, they *stole* the physical belts from The Gentlemen, forcing Fulton to intervene.

"The Fixers forgot who they were without those titles," Fulton opines. "It's a year later, and I'm *still* not sure they have any real direction as a team."

Fellow legend "Dr." Tom Prichard agrees. According to Prichard, who won countless tag titles with the iconic Heavenly Bodies, The Fixers lost their edge.

"When The Fixers arrived, they barreled through the NWA," Prichard points out. "It's exactly what you'd expect from a team weighing over 700 lbs. — but it feels like they've lost their killer instincts."

Others echo Prichard's thoughts. Veteran manager Danny Dealz, now on the call with NWA Senior Broadcaster Joe Galli each episode of *NWA Powerrr*, argues The Fixers have become too "playful."

"Those big brothers should be snapping people in half," he says. "Instead they're showboating."

And it definitely *could* be costing them. In recent months, The Fixers have come up short twice against 2023 Crockett Cup winners Knox and Murdoch. Bradley and Legursky also failed to wrest the NWA World Tag Team titles from Blunt Force Trauma.



Many say The Fixers — Jay Bradley and Wrecking Ball Legursky — have lost focus since losing the NWA U.S. Tag Team titles. That could change soon, our source indicates.

"On paper, The Fixers have everything it takes to defeat either team," asserts Galli, "But they seem distracted by their own 'shenanigans.'"

Reports indicate statements like these have reached The Fixers. Privately fuming, one insider says Legursky and Bradley are plotting to prove the detractors wrong.

"They're tired of losing to teams they know they can beat — and even more sick of how people seem to think of them now," the individual shared. "I bet we're going to see a very different side of The Fixers when they return."

Or, perhaps, a very familiar side — if one fans haven't seen in years. According to behind-the-scenes intel, with championships seemingly out of reach for now, The Fixers' attention has returned to money.

It's rumored the duo is again shopping their "services" as hired heavies to others. "If that's true," says Fulton, "The NWA could be in trouble."

"When they're lacking focus or without a purpose, people can think whatever they want about The Fixers," the legend concluded, "But when you have two monsters like that dedicated exclusively to hurting people for money, they're a very, very dangerous team!"

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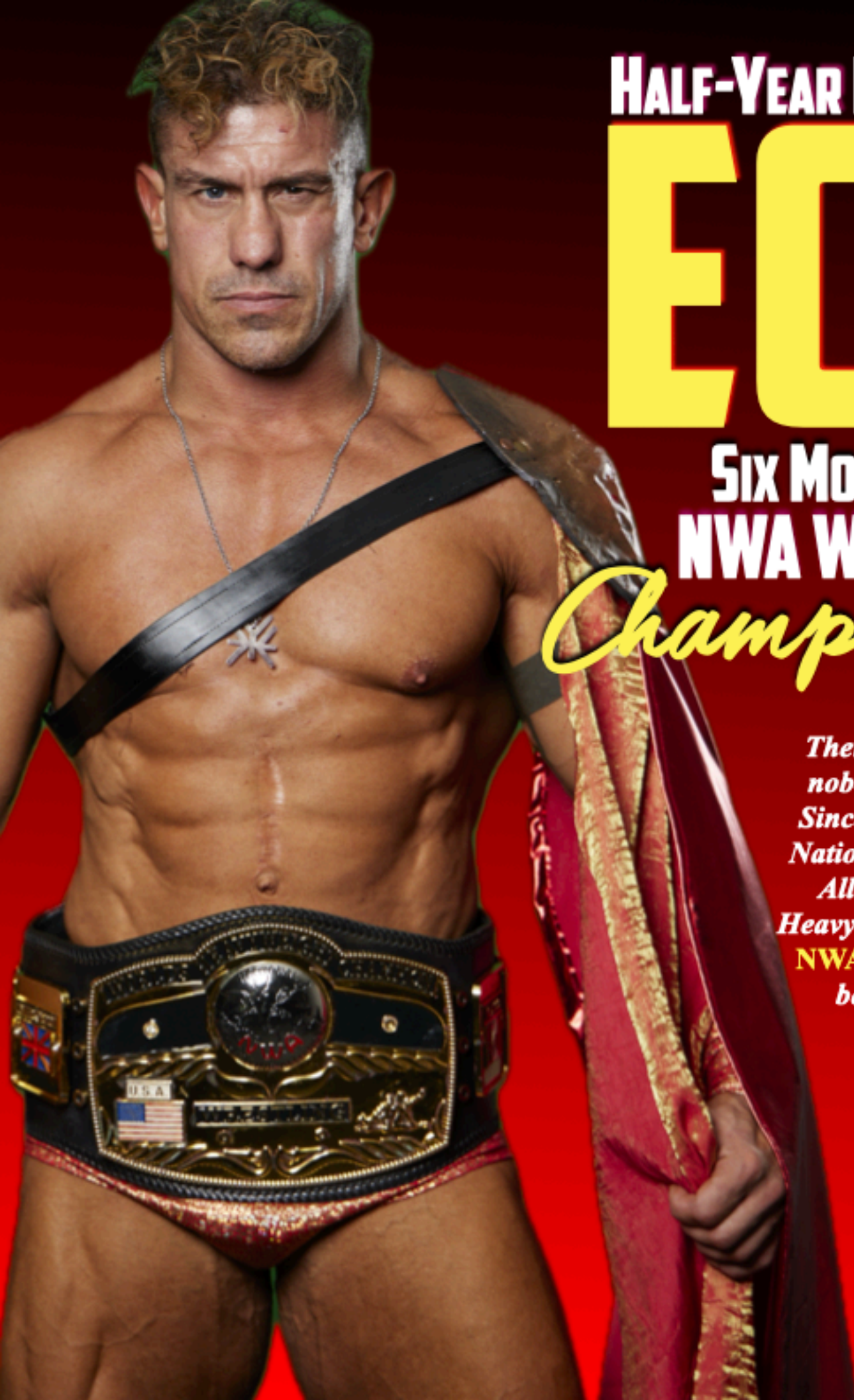
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HALF-YEAR REVIEW:

EC3

SIX MONTHS AS
NWA WORLD'S

Champion

There's one thing nobody can deny. Since winning the National Wrestling Alliance World's Heavyweight title at NWA 75, EC3 has been a fighting champion.

EC3 entered the National Wrestling Alliance with one thing in mind — and it wasn't just controlling his narrative. The "Essential Character" was determined to fulfill his destiny. Six months ago, he accomplished his dream of becoming the NWA World's Heavyweight Champion.

Since that time, EC3 has done nothing short of being a traveling, fighting champion. From vanquishing top contenders like Thom Latimer on pay-per-view to defeating former champion Matt Cardona at an NWA Signature Live Event, EC3 has put the title on the line against the best.

Beyond just top contenders within NWA, the list of challengers includes key opponents from independent promotions across the country — in and out of NWA partner territories. He's even won Ohio Valley Wrestling and Premier Streaming Network gold as well!

The champion's next possible marquee defense happens March 2, when *Hard Times 2024* rolls into Dothan, AL. With "The Over Champ" potentially putting "The Ten Pounds of Gold" on the line once again, we reflect on his six months atop the NWA.

NWA 75

Bullrope Match

August 29, 2023

So much was at stake when EC3 faced Tyrus for "Sweet Charlotte." It was a showdown years in the making — since long before either stepped foot in the NWA.

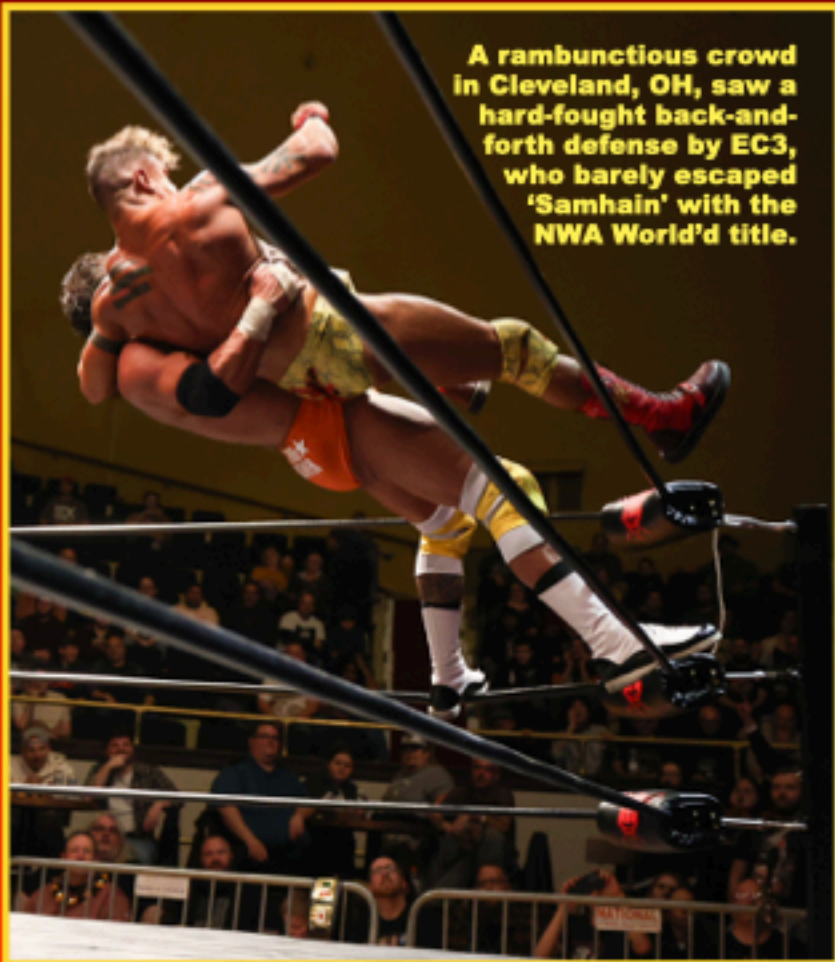
Tyrus was once a key factor in EC3's first tenures as a World champion elsewhere. By Summer 2023, the roles were decidedly reversed. "The Great American Smash" was so certain he could defeat the man who vacated the NWA National Championship for a shot at his title, he even put his career on the line!

The two went to war at St. Louis' legendary Khorassan Ballroom. Joined by a bull rope, the match was not pretty — but it was brutal! EC3 fulfilled what he claims was his destiny that night, forcing the champion to submit.

The victory not only earned EC3 his first NWA World's title. It also closed the book on the former champion's career. Both, assuredly, will stand as bragging points for "The Over Man" for years to come.



Despite a vicious onslaught from champ Tyrus, EC3 won the NWA World's title in a bullrope match at NWA 75.



A rambunctious crowd in Cleveland, OH, saw a hard-fought back-and-forth defense by EC3, who barely escaped 'Samhain' with the NWA World'd title.

At NWA Samhain, in a violent confrontation, EC3 narrowly survived the challenge of long-time rival, former World Television Champion and No. 1 contender Thom Latimer.



NWA SAMHAIN

No Limits Match

October 28, 2023

The bad blood between EC3 and Thom Latimer extends back to the now-World's champion's NWA debut. From his arrival, EC3 appeared borderline obsessed with "The King of All Evil."

The ensuing showdowns between the two led to no obvious advantage for either, but the stakes were higher than ever when they met in Cleveland. Latimer had already given up everything, cashing in his "Lucky 7" and trading the NWA World's Television title for a mere chance at "The Ten Pounds of Gold."

Though both men gave their all, with Latimer nearly picking up a signature victory and the belt, a ghost from the title's past became the deciding factor. Former NWA World's champion Matt Cardona made a surprise appearance, costing Latimer his opportunity and extending EC3's time atop the NWA.

NWA RETURN TO ROBARTS

World's Title Defense

November 18, 2023

The "Ten Pounds of Gold" was on the line in the main event of NWA's historic return to Sarasota, FL. EC3 defended his title against former champion Jax Dane, the most decorated competitor on the NWA roster.

"The Dane Event" had plenty to prove! Though he's never far from title contention, it was his first shot at the World's title since the Lightning One Era began.

Dane frequently overpowered the EC3 in the early goings. However, the wily champion rallied, picking up an impressive win in just under eight minutes.

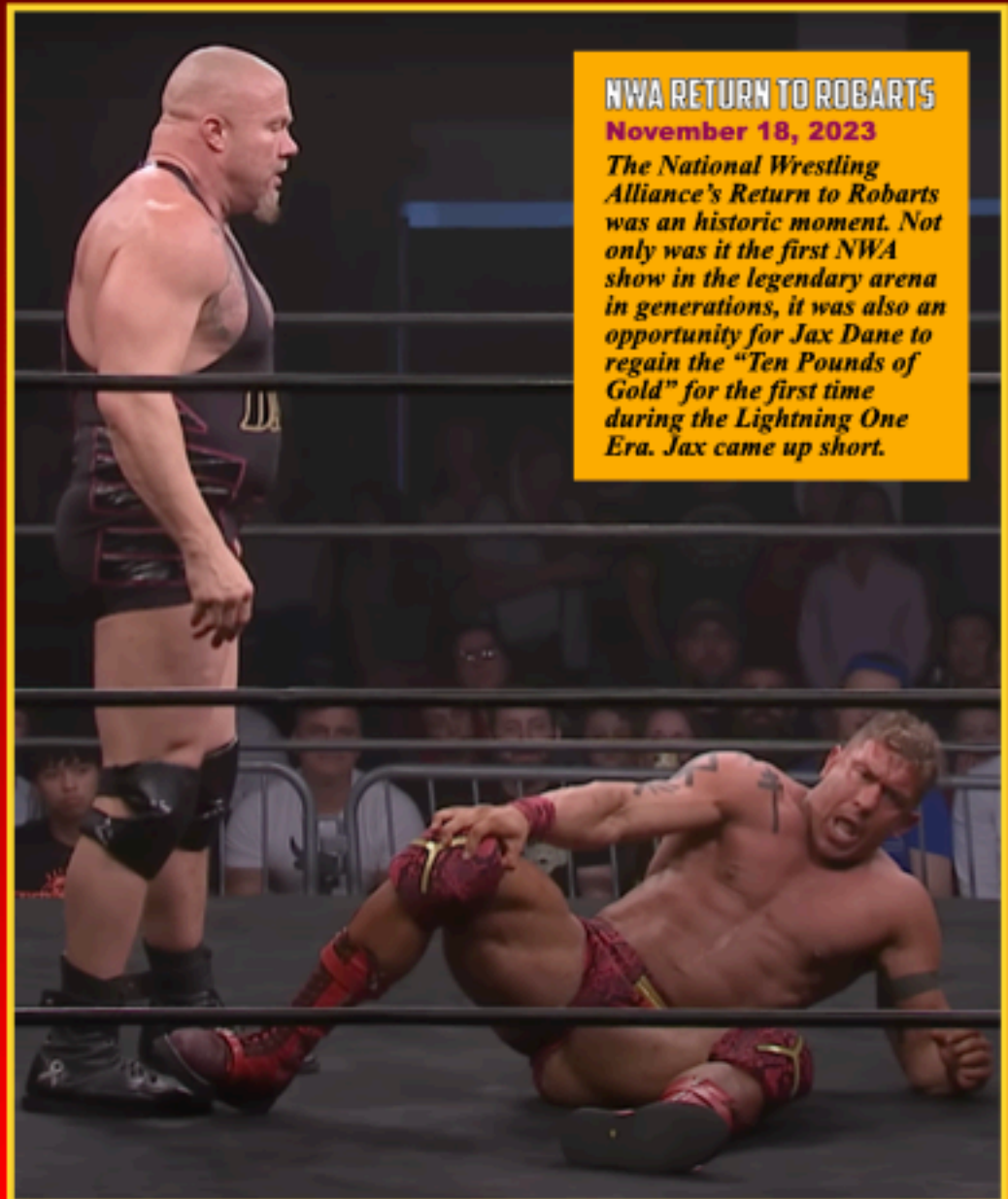
Thom Latimer gave EC3 a serious challenge — but fell short of becoming the NWA World's Champion.



NWA RETURN TO ROBARTS

November 18, 2023

The National Wrestling Alliance's Return to Robarts was an historic moment. Not only was it the first NWA show in the legendary arena in generations, it was also an opportunity for Jax Dane to regain the "Ten Pounds of Gold" for the first time during the Lightning One Era. Jax came up short.



With "Ten Pounds of Gold Weapons" involved, EC3 managed to defeat former champion and "The Death Match King" Matt Cardona at NWA Paranoia.



NWA PARANOIA

Ultimate Match of 'Death'

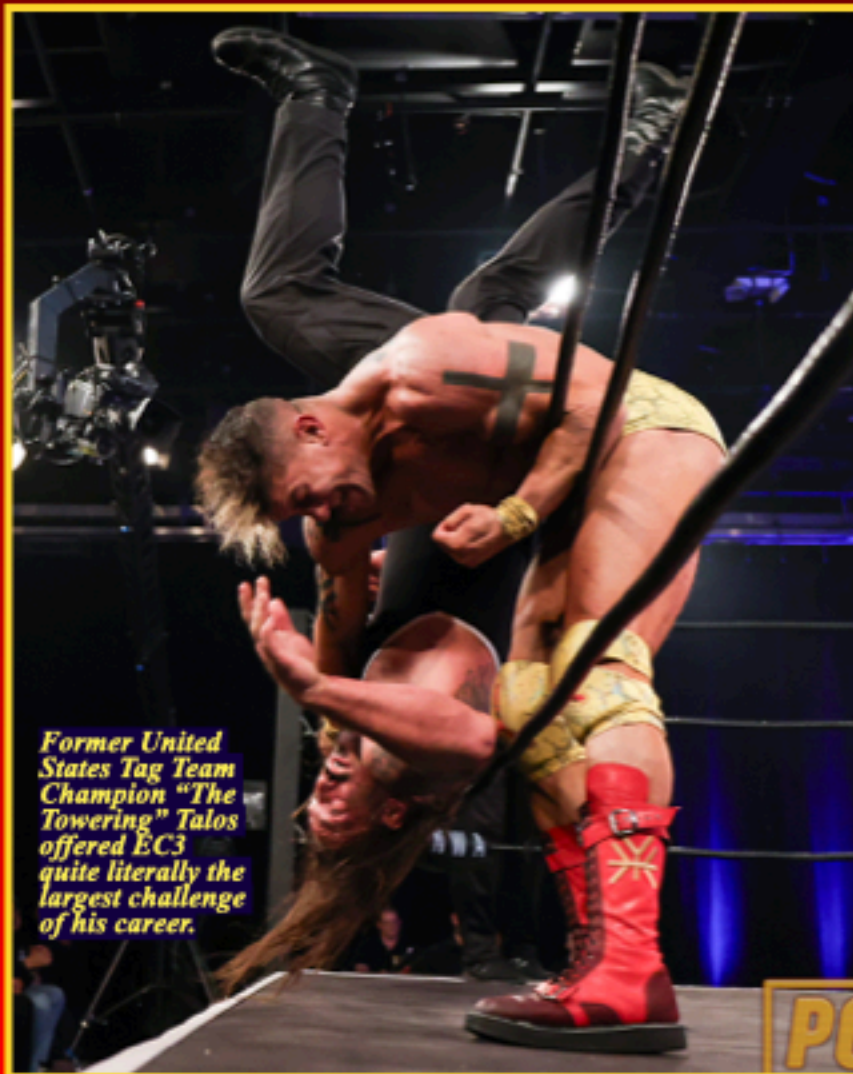
January 13, 2024

Cardona didn't hand EC3 a victory over long-time rival Latimer at *Samhain* out of the goodness of his heart. In return, he demanded a chance to regain the title he never *technically* lost. (Cardona was stripped of the title when he was not medically cleared to defend it at *NWA Alwaysz Ready*, the pay-per-view named in his honor!)

EC3 didn't back down from Cardona's challenge. Things eventually grew heated and personal between "The Over Champ" and "The Death Match King," resulting in an "Ultimate Match of 'Death'" at *NWA Paranoia*.

Highlighted by "Ten Pounds of Gold Weapons," a bizarre-yet-intriguing stipulation, their match at the first NWA Signature Live Event of 2024 was an absolutely brutal affair! The combatants used everything from a golden guitar to gold-colored light tubes as they bathed the ring and each other in crimson and debris!

Ultimately EC3 gained a submission victory over Cardona. With EC3 still champion, their short-lived but intense rivalry reached its bloody conclusion.



Former United States Tag Team Champion "The Towering" Talos offered EC3 quite literally the largest challenge of his career.



Former United States Tag Team Champion — and Ohio Valley Wrestling Heavyweight Champion — Jay Bradley proved a worthy first challenge for EC3's World Championship.

OTHER OPPONENTS

In addition to these high-profile showdowns, EC3 has faced various other quality opponents. During *NWA Powerrr* Season 17, he defended the title twice.

Shortly after winning the title, Jay Bradley answered EC3's call for challengers. Beyond holding the NWA U.S. tag titles as half of The Fixers with 'Wrecking Ball' Legursky, Bradley's a former Ohio Valley Wrestling Champion and a mountain of a man. Though he put forth a game effort, EC3 survived with the strap.

Next EC3 faced quite literally the biggest challenge of his career. At over seven-feet-tall, "The Towering" Talos — another former United State Tag Team Champion — gave EC3 quite a fight but went down in defeat!

In NWA territory Exodus Pro, EC3 put the title on the line against Fodder. Accompanied by Angelina Love, "The Psycho Boy" proved a game opponent, but eventually came up short as well.

Ring legend Crowbar received his opportunity at the NWA World's title October 21, 2023. Sanctioned by Outlaw Wrestling in New Jersey, EC3 defeated the former WCW World Tag Team Champion to retain.

6-MONTH REPORT:

B+

As World's Heavyweight Champion, EC3 has faced some of the biggest men in the National Wrestling Alliance, overcoming many of the top contenders for the coveted title.

Still, countless possible opponents wait in the wings. As a champion in multiple promotions, the assortment of World's title challengers also extends well beyond the NWA.

It's plausible many foes in Ohio Valley Wrestling, where he reigns as the National Champion, could vie for NWA gold. Additionally, he travels the nation, putting "The Ten Pounds of Gold" on the line coast-to-coast. Yet it does appear the biggest tests for EC3's reign could be homegrown.

Whereas EC3 dispatched former champion Cardona, he's yet to face two-time World's Champion Trevor Murdoch. Though Murdoch's busy as half of 2023 Crockett Cup winners and an ongoing challenger for the World Tag Team titles, he has a valid argument for a title shot.

Likewise, EC3 has unfinished business with NWA National champion Silas Mason. While "The Over Man" defeated "The Thrillbilly" twice before relinquishing the National title in pursuit of "Sweet Charlotte," both victories were dubious...and Mason's hungry to be the man to finally defeat EC3.

Likewise, an argument could be made for Unified TV Champion Max the Impaler. Should "The Non-Binary Nightmare" achieve the 'Lucky 7,' Father James Mitchell's runaway train could be on a collision course with the champ.

Should EC3 successfully face all and retain, it will do wonders for the long-term memory of his time as NWA World's Champion. In fact, victory over these top contenders would instantly (and unquestionably) catapult his reign from a current "B+" to "A+" — a solid "100%" across-the-board.



**DROPPING WARHEADS ON
PEOPLE'S FOREHEADS!**

A skilled Mixed Martial Arts fighter, Blake "Bulletproof" Troop has quickly become a force to be reckoned with in the National Wrestling Alliance. With the wily Chris Silvio, Esq. almost always at his side, he's only interested in victories — and "Snatching Limbs & Cracking Chins!" #LightsOut

BULLETPROOF TROOP

WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN?

Introduced by "The International Heart Throb" Austin Idol to vanquish former National Champion The Great Cyon, little is known about The Mysterious Zyon. What is presumed is that, like his predecessor, he is one of Idol's long-lost sons. And, as with the masked man before him, he's a dangerous in-ring talent!



THE MYSTERIOUS ZYON



MAX THE IMPALER
"Non-Binary Nightmare" T-Shirt



EC3
"Champion" T-Shirt



MECHAWOLF
"Drac" T-Shirt



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SCAN TO SHOP

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The banner features a black background with the NWA logo and the text "FIND DEALZ NOW!". A QR code is positioned to the right of the text. A hand is shown holding a smartphone displaying a mobile shopping interface with various NWA merchandise items. Below the banner, a photograph shows several women at a wrestling event, some wearing NWA merchandise like a black t-shirt with a star and a purple crop top.

THE KING BEEES



**Charity King &
Danni Bee —
The **NEW** NWA
Women's World
Tag Team Champs
— are dripping in
GOLD**

*On the Feb. 27 episode of NWA
Powerrr, streaming on The CW,
Charity King (Left) and partner Danni
Bee — The King Bees — unseated
Pretty Empowered to become the NWA
Women's World Tag Team Champions.*

Ooh, Honey! It's Gonna Be Live in The Hive!

THE KING BEES HAVE CAUSED QUITE THE BUZZ!

Charity King and Danni Bee did it! In their second shot at the gold, The King Bees unseated Pretty Empowered to become the *new* National Wrestling Alliance Women's World Tag Team Champions.

Though the duo gave the champs all they could handle and then-some during their first attempt at NWA gold, Pretty Empowered employed their trademark underhanded tactics to retain. The King Bees were prepared to make the utmost of their opportunity when they again faced-off with Ella Envy and Kylie Paige in Ft. Lauderdale.

With the Florida audience firmly behind the challengers, King and Bee thwarted Envy and Paige's every attempt at chicanery. In what can only be considered an upset, they won the historic belts in a hard fought-victory broadcast on the February 27 episode of *NWA Powerrr*.

"This is a dream come true for us," said a breathless King after the title win.

"People thought we were crazy for wanting to be a women's tag team," she continued, "But as NWA Women's World Champs, we are the best in the world!"

"We represent the most incredible women's division in pro wrestling," an ecstatic

King and Bee celebrate with their newly-won NWA Women's World Tag Team Championship belts.



Bee agrees. "And — unlike Pretty Empowered — we'll give those women a *fair* shot at our gold!"

Naturally, the win does *not* sit well with former champions Pretty Empowered. Since *NWA 75*, the faction has dominated the NWA locker room, holding two of three championships.

"They're big, fat, stinky cheaters!" shrieked a distraught Envy afterward. "We were being *nice* even giving them a title shot. We didn't think they'd come in and rob us!"

Kylie Paige, equally devastated by a rare loss on her record, is even less charitable. She lobbied threats at the new champions, promising revenge.

"Who's even *heard* of a 'King Bee'? Paige asks.

"That's not even a thing!" Envy screamed. "It's totally *not*; I swear. I googled it!"

"Everyone knows Pretty Empowered runs NWA," Paige continued.

"We are the *Queen* bees around here," she concluded, "And those two will regret ever getting in our way!"

CHARITY KING

DANNI BEE

SURVIVOR

BLK Jeez's Incredible Story of Fortitude & Perseverance

There are 'rough years,' then there's the year BLK Jeez has faced!

Diagnosed with multiple myeloma in April 2023, Jeez gallantly fought to return to the ring. Finally medically cleared to compete at January's National Wrestling Alliance Signature Live Event *Paranoia*, things took another dramatic turn for the cancer survivor.

On January 11, just days before his scheduled 2024 comeback in Ft. Lauderdale, Jeez was attacked by four masked men. The superstar was shot in the hip during an attempted carjacking before fending the assailants off with his own, legally-registered firearm.

"His strength and resilience have inspired us all," said NWA President William Patrick Corgan of the brave grappler at the time. "We eagerly await his return to the NWA ring."

Though his wounds were not life-threatening, and Jeez determinedly asked to return as planned, he was again shelved to recover. However, reports indicate the courageous competitor is once *again* cleared for action.

When Jeez was last seen in the NWA, he'd formed a relationship with EC3 to challenge Tyrus for the World's Heavyweight title. His biggest mark has been leading others' careers under The Church's Money Enterprises.

After fighting so hard to again compete in the sport he loves so dearly, it's possible Jeez's focus has changed. Could this never-say-die warrior be looking to wear NWA gold all his own?

Time will certainly tell!

In just 12 months, BLK Jeez has overcome cancer and a shooting to return to the NWA.



SHE WAS ONCE **NWA'S**

Sweetheart

— NOW SHE'S A

Star

*"Call Me
Ms. Starr"*

Some think the loss to National Wrestling Alliance Women's World's Champion Kenzie Paige pushed her over the edge. Others blame the ongoing strain of living up to her family's legendary name in professional wrestling.

Whatever the case, one thing everyone agrees on is something must have snapped in the mind of Samantha, uhm, **Ms. Starr.**

Don't be foolish enough to repeat Kyle Davis' mistake!

The hapless interviewer found himself in hot water when speaking to the former Samantha Starr last fall! During a segment at the podium, the third-generation superstar forcefully corrected Davis, insisting he address her with respect and *demanding* she be referred to by the preferred 'Ms. Starr.'

It was a head-snapping turn of attitude. Ms. Starr — nee, Samantha — was once considered among the nicest competitors in the National Wrestling Alliance locker room.

"I'm not sure what has gotten into her, but there's definitely been a change," admits former NWA Women's World champion and agent Jazz.

Those once close to Ms. Starr say they noticed a shift emerge as far back as NWA 75. One former friend says it appeared she was disappointed to not win — and, in fact, be eliminated somewhat quickly — from the Burke Invitational Gauntlet.

"She was noticeably different afterward," confirms Taylor Rising, who debuted at that event. "Before hand, Samantha was very friendly. Afterward, she seemed much more withdrawn."

"I think it's really about her iconic family," speculates Pollo Del Mar, who has grown close with Starr's mother, NWA legend Baby Doll.

"Samantha wants desperately to stand on her own two feet and make a name for herself in NWA," the colorful manager continues. "I can't imagine what that pressure must feel like."

Starr once humbly discussed her deep roots in wrestling. She is rightfully proud to be one of the industry's few competitors to go back three generations on both sides of her family.



Ms. Starr, seen here clotheslining Heather Monroe at NWA 75, has shown a new side of late. Some suggest her early elimination from The Burke Invitational Gauntlet might have been the start of her attitude change.

"Now, however, Ms. Starr demands others acknowledge her family legacy. She brags openly about parents Sam Houston and Baby Doll, uncle Jake "The Snake" Roberts and aunt and former Women's World champion Rockin' Robyn.

"I'd be proud to have legends like that in my family too," shares NWA star Missa Kate, "But between this new attitude and all her bragging, she's not making many friends!"

'Making friends' does not seem a high priority for Ms. Starr. In fact, even her new 'assistant' — the obviously browbeaten Chelsea — appears scarce these days.

Not long after being introduced, Ms. Starr delighted in feeding the terrified valet to Max the Impaler. Chelsea has been missing in action ever since.

It's led some to note, if the new outlook was intended to move Ms. Starr up the ladder, it hasn't yet paid dividends.

Her efforts to unseat NWA Women's World Champion Kenzie Paige at 'Return to Roberts' fell short. And while she's still among the belt's Top 5 challengers, Natalia Markova is once again the No. 1 contender.

"I know she wants the respect she apparently didn't feel she was getting before," Rising speculates, "But I really think she's going about it the wrong way."

"Running around *demanding* to be called 'Ms. Starr,' acting like people should bow to her because of who her family is doesn't earn *my* respect," Missa Kate agrees.

"But it *might* get her smacked!"



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THIS MONTH IN NWA HISTORY

FEBRUARY 9, 1982 • THE MIDNIGHT RIDER



Photo Courtesy of Pro Wrestling Illustrated

The feud between **Dusty Rhodes** and **Ric Flair** for the National Wrestling Alliance World's Heavyweight Championship virtually defines both Hall of Famers' careers.

Rhodes' second reign atop NWA ended at the hands of "The Nature Boy." Flair defeated him Sept. 17, 1981, to claim the first of his eventual 16 World championships.

Soon after, NWA's Florida territory suspended "The American Dream" from active competition. Almost immediately Rhodes' wrestling obligations were assumed by a shadowy newcomer: **The Midnight Rider**.

While many adamantly insisted this mysterious masked marauder was Rhodes, none could prove it definitively. Eventually the Rider earned a shot at Flair's NWA World's Title.

On **February 9, 1982**, the desperado pinned Flair to seemingly become NWA champion. Sadly, the party was short-lived. When The Rider refused to reveal his identity per NWA policy of the era, then-NWA President Bob Geigel stripped him of the title, nullified the victory and reinstated Flair as champ.



Just before Rhodes returned, The Rider rode off into the sunset. He *did* reemerge years later to avenge an *again* suspended "Dream" in Jim Crockett Promotions.

The Flair/Dusty rivalry reared its head far more often than The Rider. During the 1986 *Great American Bash*, Dusty finally downed "Naitch" to regain the strap.

As with The Rider years before, Dusty had little time to celebrate. Just two weeks later, Flair ended Rhodes' third and final NWA championship run.

For much of the 1980s, Dusty Rhodes was in hot pursuit of Ric Flair's National Wrestling Alliance World's title (Left).

In 1982, though, "The Nature Boy" faced a new contender! Soon after Rhodes was suspended, **The Midnight Rider** emerged to challenge Flair.

On Feb. 9, 1982, the mysterious wrestler — suspected to be Rhodes under a mask — pinned "The Nature Boy" to briefly win "The Ten Pounds of Gold." When Rider refused to unmask afterward, NWA stripped him of the title (Top). Flair resumed as champ, the victory stricken from the records.



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