

# WORLD WIDE WRESTLING

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



BY NATHAN D. PAOLETTA



NATHAN D. PAOLETTA



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If you obtained this publication in digital form without paying for it and have enjoyed it, please consider purchasing a copy as well so that I can continue making these games in the future.

Please create and share your own material for playing this game! Join the conversation and find more resources at: **[NDPDESIGN.COM/WWWRPG](http://NDPDESIGN.COM/WWWRPG)**

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**THIS GAME LITERALLY WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT YOU**

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**THE BASICS:  
EVERYTHING TO GET  
STARTED**

**THE DETAILS:  
EVERYTHING FOR  
LONG-TERM PLAY**

**THE EXTRAS:  
CUSTOMIZATION,  
BACKGROUND,  
ADVICE AND  
CONTEXT,  
AND EXAMPLE  
WRESTLERS AND  
PROMOTIONS**

**REFERENCE:  
EVERYTHING YOU  
NEED DURING PLAY**





# ABOUT THE GAME

## CHAPTER ONE

The *World Wide Wrestling RPG* is a game that creates professional wrestling pageantry and action. It's about feuds, championships, betrayal, and righteous victory. It's about the clash of good and evil on the grandest stage. It's about whether you've got what it takes. And, in the end, it's about what the audience thinks of your efforts.

You don't need to know much about real-world wrestling in order to play this game well! All you need is an idea for an entertaining character. Wrestling is the drama of personal conflict, exaggerated until it becomes mythic. The game plunges your wrestler into these conflicts, guiding you through the drama as it escalates in more and more crowd-pleasing ways. This gets complicated by the two concurrent stories always going on. One is the "on-screen" crafted story, told by larger-than-life wrestlers, managers, valets, and authority figures in the fictional wrestling universe you create at your table. The other is the "legit" story that happens off camera, as the professional entertainers wearing the spandex politick backstage in order to advance their

### \*\*\* USING THIS TEXT \*\*\*

This text is arranged concentrically. If you read it straight through, it starts with the basic concepts and overview of how the game works in broad strokes; next, how to make characters and play a single session; next, how to prep for a continuing series of play and play subsequent sessions; next, how to customize the game to your taste; and finally supplementary resources and essays on various aspects of wrestling. Some of the material is repeated when it's relevant to more than one subject area. This organization and the color-coded tabs on the right-hand pages are meant to help find information on fly; throughout this text, choices were made to aid in finding things quickly during play, which sometimes comes at the expense of repetition for straight-through reading.

careers, attract more eyeballs to the product, and do what's best for business.

This game is meant to be accessible to both wrestling fans curious about roleplaying games and experienced gamers who want to see what this whole wrestling thing is about. Either way, if you're reading this you probably already know how to enjoy the "double life" of a wrestling character, either from the wrestling side or from the RPG side. The characters in this game are professionals at playing roles, so you'll play the role of someone playing a role! It's not difficult. Focus on the wrestling first. As you get used to how the game



works, you'll start blending the legit with the kayfabe and playing with the boundaries between "wrestling character," "my character, a wrestler," and yourself as an audience member to the unfolding game.

The key perspective you need to remember is that you're playing a character who's intentionally trying to *entertain an audience*. This concept is shorthand as the "Imaginary Viewing Audience" throughout this text. The Imaginary Viewing Audience embodies the idea that your wrestling characters are always on screen. The folks who pay good money to be entertained are the ones who ultimately determine the success or failure of your individual wrestlers and of the promotion as a whole. Some of the game mechanics keep track of how engaged the Imaginary Viewing Audience is with the product you present.

However, there's also a non-imaginary audience—you and your friends! The goal of the wrestlers in your game is to gain popularity and acclaim. The goal of you and your fellow players is to entertain each other and enjoy each other's creativity.

The Imaginary Viewing Audience always pays attention when events take place "on-screen." Most of the time, your descriptions of action and the dialogue you put into your characters' mouth is seen by the live audience and broadcast to the viewing audience at home. Sometimes, a scene will take place "off-camera." This means you're free to express the real lives of your fictional wrestling characters and explore their interactions as coworkers and professionals with their own personal agendas. As you learn more about the wrestlers' off-camera lives, conflict with the booking decisions that are made in order to please the Imaginary Viewing Audience will arise. The friction between the real and the performance, the backstage and the ring, the person and the mask—that's where the game really shines.

---

I've made an effort to state as much as possible in plain English, but kayfabe (pronounced in two syllables, "kay-faybe", used as both noun and adjective) is a core concept of the professional wrestling world that you'll need to get used to. Kayfabe is the scripted fictional reality the audience suspends their disbelief in order to enjoy. A wrestler may have a kayfabe arm injury as part of their character and wear a cast for years; two wrestlers may be kayfabe brothers in the ring, when in real life they have no familiar relationship. Kayfabe used to be a stricter "code of silence" whereby wrestlers would go to (sometimes extreme) lengths to preserve the idea that they were really fighting or that the match results weren't fixed. In today's media-saturated world, however, trying to determine what's kayfabe-real and what's really-real is part of fan engagement in modern wrestling product.

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## PLAYER ROLES

Players take on three broad roles during this game:

- ★ Most of the players create and play wrestlers. There can be from 2 to 8 of these players involved in a given Episode of play. The term “player” or “players” throughout this book refers to those playing wrestlers.
- ★ The creative and writing staff of your game’s promotion, played as one collective entity. A single player, called Creative, takes on this role. This is the “game master” or “master of ceremonies” role you may be familiar with from other games.
- ★ During individual wrestling matches, one of the players not present in the match becomes the Announcer, providing color commentary and generally helping to describe the impact of what’s going on in the ring. The Announcer role moves around to different players during each Episode, depending on who’s involved in which scenes.

In most groups, the player who owns the game and has arranged the session of play tends to also take on the Creative role, but this isn’t necessary. Whoever feels most comfortable being in a directorial role should feel free to try being Creative. Everyone else plays a wrestler.

### EACH PLAYER PICKS A GIMMICK FOR THEIR WRESTLER:

#### ★ ★ ★ THE ANTI-HERO ★ ★ ★

You don’t play by the rules.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE GOLDEN BOY ★ ★ ★

You’re the future of wrestling.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE Hardcore ★ ★ ★

You sacrifice your body for your fans.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE HIGH FLYER ★ ★ ★

You take big risks for big rewards.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE JOBBER ★ ★ ★

You make everyone else look good.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE MANAGER ★ ★ ★

You’re the brains of the operation.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE MONSTER ★ ★ ★

You scare people.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE TECHNICIAN ★ ★ ★

You’re the master of the canvas.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE VETERAN ★ ★ ★

You show them how it’s done.

#### ★ ★ ★ THE WASTED ★ ★ ★

You have a problem.

See Chapter Four (PAGE 34) for more details on Gimmicks.

Gimmicks are broad archetypes that describe individual performers. In any given game, all the players should play unique Gimmicks (though they can change Gimmicks throughout their careers). The 10 basic gimmicks presented here represent the most common kinds of wrestler, applicable to many different styles of promotion. Other Gimmicks will be created over time, and made available at [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg). In addition, you can come up with your own Gimmicks to represent a wrestler you're interested in playing that isn't covered by an existing Gimmick (see **PAGE 88** for details).

During the game, players narrate the actions of their wrestlers as they compete in matches and try to advance their careers within the company. Remember, you are playing both the costumed performer as well as the real person behind the mask.

While the players pick Gimmicks and make their characters, Creative plans out the upcoming Episode. Creative books the show by orchestrating the environment around the wrestlers, planning off-camera scenes to put pressure on the careers of the wrestlers, deciding on the results of matches, and playing supporting characters on an as-needed basis.

Finally, different players occupy the Announcer role at different times during an Episode. During each wrestling match, any player whose wrestler is not involved in the in-ring action becomes the Announcer (either chosen by Creative, or on a volunteer basis). The Announcer helps describe the wrestling action, putting their own spin on events, and holds the unique power to "put over" the wrestlers in

the ring in order to push them to higher levels of

success. A player will remain the Announcer

until the end of the match or the entrance

of their wrestler, whereupon they hand

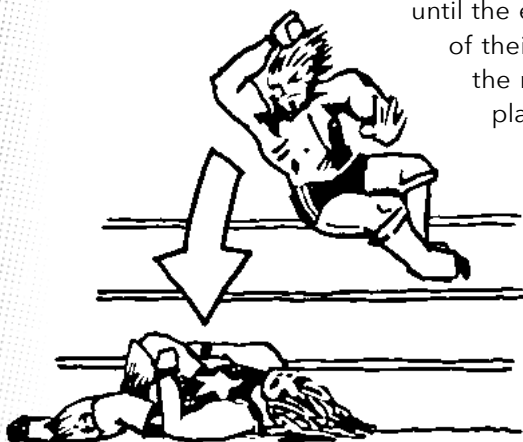
the responsibility to someone else. A

player might be the Announcer mul-

tiple times, once, or never in a

given Episode, depending

on the flow of play.



THE CLASSIC ELBOW DROP  
FROM THE TOP ROPE IS A  
DEPENDABLE CROWD-PLEASER

This is the core dynamic of the game: Creative makes plans and books storylines, but the actions and agendas of the wrestlers will alter ("swerve") Creative's plans. **Creative's primary job is to take those swerves and incorporate them into the game in such a way as to make it look like it was planned that way all along.** While the players at the table are working together to make an entertaining wrestling show, their various characters can and will come into conflict about the best way to do that. The efforts to entertain, and the conflict about how to do it, are where the game's rules kick in, pushing the story to unforeseen places.

### \*\*\* TALKING THE TALK \*\*\*

Wrestling lingo is rooted in the form's origins as equal parts carnival sideshow and faux-legitimate athletic contest. While I have made an effort not to go overboard, there are some unavoidable terms that you should know:

- \* **Work:** "To work with someone" is to wrestle them; "that's a work" is a reference to the scripted nature of a moment in the show. This game uses Work as a Stat that represents a character's technical wrestling ability.
- \* **Shoot:** Opposite of a work, a shoot refers to something that "really" happens. I use the term "legit" interchangeably with "shoot".
- \* **Heat:** Heat can refer to any notable response from the crowd (the crowd's response to a bad guy in particular) or legit bad blood between people backstage. This game uses Heat as a Stat that measures the crowd reaction to the relationship between two wrestlers.
- \* **Pop:** The vocal crowd reaction to a wrestler's appearance or a particularly exciting moment of a match. Wrestlers often compete to "pop the crowd" the most.
- \* **Book:** To plan the show and decide on the outcomes of the matches ahead of time. The head of a wrestling promotion is usually the booker, or employs a booker. In this game, Creative is the booker, but some Gimmicks give the other players the ability to book a segment of their own.
- \* **Sswerve:** An unexpected change of plans, either to surprise the audience or a legit change necessitated by something like an injury or a no-show. Generally, players swerve Creative's booking with their characters' actions.
- \* **Botch:** To flub a move, or to refer to a move that was executed poorly. In this game, a Botch is any die result of a 6 or less, and triggers negative consequences for the player who rolled the Botch; if a Botch occurs during a wrestling match, the narrative should include the Botching of the wrestler's maneuver as well.
- \* **The Finish:** The pre-determined ending of a wrestling match. In this game, Creative tells the players the finish as the match nears its end, to preserve the feeling of the wrestlers competing in good faith (and give the players opportunities to swerve the booking).
- \* **Over:** Popular with the fans; getting over is the act of gaining that popularity, and putting over is the act of making your opponent look good.

# How To Play This Game

## CHAPTER TWO

First, the logistics of play. A game of the *World Wide Wrestling RPG* requires:

- ★ 4-6 wrestling fans. The game can support from 3-9 total players, but 4-6 is a good sweet spot.
- ★ Copies of the Gimmick sheets and Moves reference sheets (available for free download from [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg)).
- ★ Pencils and at least 2 normal six-sided dice (d6). Having more dice and a handful of small tokens, such as poker chips, is helpful.

Generally, the person bringing the game will be the one who's read it and thus in the best position to take on the role of Creative. The other players will each take a Gimmick sheet and play individual wrestling characters (see **PAGE 9** for more on the player roles). The game is divided into Episodes of play, each one representing a single live televised broadcast or pay-per-view event of your wrestling franchise. A single Episode usually takes about 1-3 hours of real time to play. If you play multiple consecutive Episodes, it's called a Season.

Having a private space where you and your friends can relax with snacks or drinks is ideal. You'll be handling a lot of sheets of paper in play, so a table you can spread out on is usually helpful. Sometimes the person playing Creative also hosts the game, though this isn't necessary.

This game can be played online as well, using video or audio group chat (such as Google Hangouts, Skype or a virtual tabletop like Roll20 or Fantasy Grounds). In this case, each player should have their own copy of their Gimmick sheet and Moves references, plus a dice roller or trust in honest reporting of results. One advantage of online play is the ability to quickly link out to visual references and audio clips of entrance music or other supplementary media.

## THE MEDIUM OF PLAY

The medium of this game is conversation. You and your friends are going to have a long, heated discussion about wrestling. So what are all these rules for? Well, they specify what you can talk about, giving you the incentive to say certain things and not others and complicate

what you do say so that your conversation goes to places you never would have expected. You know how, in a board game, the rules tell you where to place your pieces, what to do on your turn, and what happens when you play a certain card at a certain time? Instead of a board, you have descriptions of what's in your imagination, and the rules guide you in detailing them and sharing them with your friends.

The basic rules of the game are summarized on the reference sheets that you'll have on the table during play. They're all listed together at the end of this book as well (starting on **PAGE 125**). The rest of the text here is primarily educational, in that it's intended to explain the reasoning behind and implications of the design decisions, and instructional, by specifying which rules apply in which situations. Because conversations can go all over the place, particularly when the subject is pro wrestling, there are rules in place to help guide and support many different areas of interest. It's not expected that you'll need to use every single rule in this book when you play, but most of the things that will probably come up in your conversation are covered. Instructions on how to generate new rules for your specific group are also included.

## How To Start

If you're a wrestling fan who's experienced with roleplaying games already, this should all make sense to you; you can go right to The Big Picture, on the next page.

If you're experienced with roleplaying games but not as knowledgeable about wrestling, there's an essay included here called How Wrestling Works (**PAGE 90**), as well as guest essays on wrestling from various fan perspectives. Read or skim those before coming back for The Big Picture.

If you're a wrestling fan who hasn't played roleplaying games, there's an essay included here called How Roleplaying Works (**PAGE 95**) for a clearer picture of how all this stuff actually comes together.





The Big Picture, below, gives a high-level overview of how this game goes in play, and Chapter Three: The First Episode (**PAGE 16**) is a walk-through guide for how to structure an Episode of play, which should help teach the game as you go.

For video examples of the game in play, check out [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg) for archived live actual play episodes on Youtube, as well as written play reports and more resources.

## THE BIG PICTURE

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You'll start your Season with a first Episode, presented here (starting on **PAGE 16**) as a step-by-step walkthrough of a single session of play. Once you've played through your first Episode, you'll have the context to start making between-session decisions about the direction of your game. Sometimes, the first Episode is the only one you'll get to play, so it's meant to be a fun stand-alone session as well as a fruitful way to kick off a longer-running game.

The first Episode introduces your wrestlers and gets the players used to the rules of the game. Starting the first Episode requires the players to create a set of interesting and iconic wrestlers, while Creative comes up with the constellation of rivals, heroes, and love interests who surround them in the promotion.

As the storylines from the first session unfold over subsequent Episodes, the wrestlers will grow and change. Some may go through multiple Gimmicks, while others will develop their original personae to iconic heights. Over time, as you get to know the wrestlers better, their real lives off-screen will become more relevant to how they perform in the ring and vice-versa.

During an individual Episode, Creative narrates the segments as they happen (promos, matches, backstage interviews, etc) and portrays non-player wrestlers (NPWs) involved in them. Players narrates their wrestlers' actions and dialogue. Some of the players will also serve as Announcer for individual wrestling matches, calling the action and (potentially) putting over the wrestlers in the ring.

Players and Creative have access to Moves, which are the rules that drive moment-to-moment play. Moves represent important and memorable actions, with the results creating consequences that drive the progressions of each segment. Moves (generally) ask the players to roll dice to determine the outcomes of their actions; each Gimmick has particular Moves associated with it, in addition to the general Moves to which all the player's wrestlers have access. Wrestling matches are



also handled by the use of Moves, featuring a specific method to pass narrative control back and forth among the participants in order to encapsulate the tension and excitement of bringing anything you can imagine into a professional wrestling match.

An entire Season of *World Wide Wrestling* can take anywhere from 3 to 12 Episodes. You can plan it out in advance (for example, by simply agreeing that your group will play a 6 Episode Season) or let the events of play dictate the number of Episodes. As the characters grow, they may require new game structures to support their player's visions for them; this is covered by the ability to make custom Moves that reflect the specific iconic actions of a given wrestler. A Season typically ends when a combination of the following comes together at the same time:

- ★ All of the current storylines are wrapped up to the group's satisfaction.
- ★ Some wrestlers lose the attention of the audience and are fired.
- ★ Some players feel that they have taken their wrestlers as far as they want to go.

## READY TO PLAY?

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If you're going to be Creative, read over The First Episode (starting on the next page), take a look at the in-play reference sheets and Gim-micks, and schedule a time for your friends to get together. Pick some wrestlers that seem cool to you from the Season One Roster (**PAGE 111**) to use as antagonists, or come up with some of your own. You may want to read over the How Wrestling Works (**PAGE 90**) and How Roleplaying Works (**PAGE 95**) essays if you don't consider yourself knowledgeable about those things. Block out a 2-3 hour span of time for the first session, cue up some of your favorite wrestling clips to get inspired, and get to the action!

# THE FIRST EPISODE

## CHAPTER THREE

The first Episode is a stage for the players to show off their wrestlers and for Creative to kick off the storylines for the ensuing Episodes. You are all meeting these characters for the first time, so it's best to *keep things simple and make obvious choices*. As you play, storylines will change, characters will grow, and the promotion will become its own unique version of *World Wide Wrestling*.

Generally, Creative guides the rest of the group through this Episode, so the rest of this section is addressed to them.

### BUILDING THE ROSTER

To start, hand out the Gimmick sheets. Each player chooses the one that seems most appealing to them.

Gimmicks are unique to each individual character. There may be many monsters, but only one of you plays The Monster, just as there may be many veterans, but only The Veteran is going to shine in your promotion. Each of the ten basic Gimmicks showcases a different archetypal kind of wrestler. If you want to keep things simple for the first Episode, you may wish to limit the choices to the most straightforward Gimmicks:

- ★ The Hardcore
- ★ The High Flyer
- ★ The Monster
- ★ The Technician
- ★ The Veteran

The other five Gimmicks have more complicated rules or are representative of less action-focused wrestling personae:

- ★ The Anti-Hero
- ★ The Golden Boy
- ★ The Jobber
- ★ The Manager
- ★ The Wasted

THE PILEDRIVER IS SO IMPRESSIVE  
FOR THE SAME REASON IT'S SOME-  
TIMES BANNED—ITS POTENTIAL TO  
INJURE THE RECIPIENT



Once the players have selected Gimmicks, they then:

- ★ Come up with a name and general look.
- ★ Choose or create answers to the “Hailing From” and “Entrance” prompts.
- ★ Follow their Stat instruction(s).
- ★ Pick any Moves they have available, in addition to the starting Moves already checked on their sheet.
- ★ Mark their starting Audience score by placing a checkmark in the box next to the number indicated by the “this Gimmick starts and resets to” sentence.
- ★ Take a token to represent their starting Momentum as per their Audience score.

★ ★ ★ **EXAMPLE: MAKING WRESTLERS** ★ ★ ★

Nathan is Creative for this game and he's invited Ron, Keith, Eric, and Ed over to play a first Episode in an ongoing Season. They order pizza and chat while Nathan passes around the Gimmick sheets. Ron picks the Hardcore immediately. Eric wants to continue playing the Monster from an earlier demo. Ed decides on the High Flyer. Keith shuffles through the rest and decides that the Anti-Hero would be a good fit.

Nathan goes over the character sheet, pointing out each area and what it means for the characters in play. Since Eric is already familiar, he goes ahead and fills out the Monster Gimmick.

He's playing Mammoth Marco, a huge Alaskan roughneck type, inspired by the “Hailing From: Dead Horse, Alaska” choice. He also picks the “Overblown and Odd” entrance, making some notes about how Marco's entrances are always production heavy, with fog machines, ice sculptures, and the like.

He goes all-in on Power and adds his +1 to that Stat, giving him starting Stats of Look 0, Power +2, Real -2, Work -1.

Mammoth Marco is obviously a Heel. He skips Heat for now (since that's done last) and flips over the sheet.

He already knows he wants the “Will You Look At That Size!” Move, which brings his Power to +3, the maximum score. In his demo game he'd taken “Shoot Kill” but decides that might not be the direction he wants for a longer-term character, so he takes the “Intimidating” Move instead, allowing him to use his +Power in certain situations outside of the ring. He doesn't have an Injury, so he skips that field, and checks the box next to +1 on the Audience chart, in accordance with his Gimmick's starting Audience of +1. He takes a poker chip to represent his starting 1 Momentum (due to the Audience +1), fills his Stats into the record boxes at the bottom of the sheet, and waits for the others to finish making their wrestlers.

## HEATING IT UP

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Once everyone has made their choices, set the wrestlers' initial Heat ratings. Heat represents how much the Imaginary Viewing Audience responds to the interactions between two characters, ranging from 0 (no heat) to +4 (the crowd goes wild every time they face off). All of the player's wrestlers start with Heat with each other. Individual wrestlers can gain Heat with non-player wrestlers (NPWs) during play.

All the players write down the other character's names on their sheet. Then, pick one player to start. The first player looks at the Heat questions for their Gimmick, picks a number of them equal to the number of other wrestlers in play, and then asks each question in turn. One of the other players volunteers to answer each question after it's asked and then the original player adds +1 to the Heat they have with the answerer's wrestler. Spaces are provided to note which character answered which question.

If one player wants to answer multiple questions, that's fine! As questions are answered, take a moment to fill out more context about the relationship; this helps to give some backstory to the wrestlers as we meet them for the first time. If a question doesn't fit someone's character concept, they can ignore it. However, encourage them to throw it out there anyway and see if someone else sees some potential in it—wrestlers often have complicated backstories or segments of their career that don't quite match up with their current character. If there's more than five players, ask all four questions (and not everyone will have extra Heat with each other).

During this process, Creative should keep their own notes on the relationships created and implied by the Heat questions as they are answered. This is a great resource for you to start thinking about future storylines. Setting initial Heat will give you a sense of the basic alliances among the characters, mentor-mentee relationships that you can seek to enhance or strain, and who has legit beef with who.

Once the players have answered the questions, everyone decides whether they're starting as a Babyface or a Heel. Often, players have already decided before this point but this is the time to make a final decision for anyone who hasn't yet. Every wrestler starting as a Heel takes an additional +1 Heat with every Babyface and vice versa. Generally, you want a roughly even split of Heels and Babyfaces for the first Episode—remind everyone that they can change role whenever it makes sense for them to do so during play.

## \*\*\* EXAMPLE: SETTING HEAT \*\*\*

Eric is ready to go with "Mammoth Marco". Ron names his Hardcore "Bruto", Ed is playing the High Flyer "The Angel," and Keith names his Anti-Hero "Keystone".

Eric looks at his sheet and picks three of the Monster's four Heat questions. First, he asks, "OK, who can stand up to me in the ring?"

Ron says "Definitely me. You're big, but I'm (throws the horns) Hardcore!"

Eric laughs and writes +1 next to the line where he's written Bruto on his sheet. Next, he asks, "So, who has an unusual backstory intertwined with mine?"

Ed volunteers. "I think I could. I mean, big guys always make high flyers look good."

Nathan throws in: "Yeah! And you guys could have an angel/devil thing going on, the Angel from the heavens and the Mammoth of the deeps, something like that?"

Eric says "Yeah, that's cool. Let's see how that goes."

He puts +1 next to The Angel on his sheet. He looks at the remaining two questions and goes with "Who's made me look weak?"

He looks at Keith expectantly, but Ron speaks up again. "What if that's me, too? Maybe I'm the only one who's had serious matches with you and you just steamroll everyone else."

Eric says, "I'm down with that—Keith, is it cool if we don't start off with anything?"

Keith replies, "Yeah, that's fine. I like the Hardcore/Monster feud being in play. I can always get myself into it..." Eric adds another +1 to Bruto, bringing that to +2.

Eric's the last one to ask his Heat questions, so they check for the Heel/Babyface interaction. Marco and Keystone are Heels, while both Bruto and The Angel are Babyfaces. Eric adds another +1 to Bruto and The Angel. Mammoth Marco starts with +3 Heat with Bruto (answering two questions, opposed Roles), +2 with The Angel (one question, opposed Roles) and none with Keystone (no questions, same Role).

On Keith's turn, Eric had volunteered to answer the Anti-Hero's question: "Who do I think is a slave to management". Thus, while Marco has 0 Heat with Keystone, Keystone has +1 Heat with Marco. This works into Eric's conception of Marco as being a beast in the ring, but actually a very straight-and-narrow "just do the job" kind of guy backstage, intent on not making waves.

## LAST TIME, ON WORLD WIDE WRESTLING

Once Heat is set, go around the table again. Each player comes up with a highlight moment from the last installment of the ongoing wrestling show that you're going to be "joining" shortly. This could be a big wrestling move, an encounter backstage, the beginning or end of a feud, or anything else that you want to use to show off how cool your wrestler is. The sole restriction: you can't give yourself a championship belt! If you want to have your wrestler debut for the very first time once the Episode begins, you can use this to describe hype videos or teasers. If you're planning on a true surprise debut, maybe a backstage or off-camera interaction your wrestler has had is appropriate.

If the main event for the Episode is going to be a big full-roster match (like the Regal Wrangle or King of the Hill matches described as stipulations, **PAGE 153**), this is a good time to do "pre-recorded" promos. These don't have any mechanics associated with them. Each player delivers a promo their wrestler would have recorded backstage before the event, highlighting why they deserve to win or what they're planning to do in the event. This is a good way to get everyone thinking about their character's promo style and agenda for the Episode.

## BOOKING THE EVENT

The main goal for the first Episode is to introduce the wrestlers to the Imaginary Viewing Audience and show off what makes them so compelling. The secondary goal is to get comfortable with the basic Moves and rules of the game. Booking the Episode is the first step for both of those goals.

Once the players have decided on their Gimmicks, built up Heat with each other, and described their "last time on" scene, take a ten

minute break. Note down any non-player wrestlers (NPWs) demanded or implied by the players' choices and think up a few that you want to make sure have a prominent place in the promotion. (To be clear, NPWs can be non-wrestlers, like the promoter, general manager, backstage interviewer and the like.)

Your most effective tool for this Episode





is a list of wrestlers. You can use the Season One Roster presented on **PAGE 111** or make up your own.

Booking this first Episode is pretty simple:

- ★ Decide which wrestlers will have matches with each other: player vs. player, or player vs. NPW. All NPW vs. NPW matches are handled by simple narration.
- ★ Who's going to win each match.
- ★ What order the matches occur in.
- ★ What segments will take place between matches (vignettes, backstage or in-ring promos, "candid" segments and the like). A good default is to plan to interview each wrestler before their match, either backstage or in the ring.

#### \*\*\* EXAMPLE: BOOKING THE SHOW \*\*\*

Nathan says "OK, let's take a 10 minute break, I'm going to book the show." The other guys chat while he looks at what he has to work with. Since Ed and Eric already brought up that their characters have intertwined backstories, that seems like a good place to start – he books The Angel and Mammoth Marco in the opening match. Also, since Eric's played before and Ed is a big wrestling fan, Nathan thinks this will be a good way to model how the game works for the other guys, who haven't played and don't keep up with real-world wrestling.

Since this is the first Episode and Nathan wants to get everyone involved, he embraces the obvious. The Angel vs. Mammoth Marco, then Bruto vs. Keystone, then the main event will be a tag match with the heels (Marco and Keystone) vs. the babyfaces (Angel and Bruto).

To get there, he decides to book the heels as winning both singles matches, then the babyface team winning the tag match (he notes The Angel to get the win, but depending on how the match goes he's happy to slot in Bruto instead, if it makes more sense). He pencils in a vignette segment after the Bruto-Keystone match where General Manager C. Colton Craig takes pity on the two babyfaces and offers them a shot at redemption by making the tag match. Other than that, he notes "promo for each character" before each match, and will let the events of play inform the context for those promos.

He has a set of segments ready, a plan for who wins each match and a basic arc for the Episode. He calls back the other players and they get started!

## AND YOU'RE LIVE

Once you've booked the Episode, go to the action! The first Episode should closely track to an actual televised wrestling show, interspersing interviews, promotional segments, and wrestling matches in such a way



as to create a compelling two hours of drama. Plan a promo or backstage segment for each wrestler before or after their matches, plus any other segments you want to use to introduce NPWs. Don't worry about having off-camera scenes unless they come up organically, or you have the opportunity to make a Hard Move (**PAGE 25**) that demands one. Integrating the "real life" of the characters with the on-screen action is a feature of longer-term play.

Keep in mind that the players are able to ask for, and sometimes demand, their own segments; you are responsible for adapting your plans to what comes up in play. This is addressed in more detail in Chapter Nine: How To Be Creative (**PAGE 78**), but you have three primary duties as Creative:

**CELEBRATE AND CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS.**

**MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU HAD IT PLANNED THAT WAY ALL ALONG.**

**ENTERTAIN THE IMAGINARY VIEWING AUDIENCE.**

Make all your decisions during the first Episode with those three agendas in mind.

## THE BASICS: MAKING MOVES

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Here's the core of how this game works: the players and Creative have a conversation at the table. They describe their wrestlers, the conversations those characters are having, the physical moves they're using on each other, how they're playing to the audience, and how the audience is responding. If they just talked about how awesome their characters were, it would get boring and predictable; this is why *World Wide Wrestling* has rules called Moves. Certain content you narrate into the conversation trigger Moves. Each individual Move tells you what its trigger is and how it's resolved; generally, the player rolls 2d6, adds a Stat and compares the result to the Move's outcome list.

For the first Episode, take a look at the General Moves everyone has available to them (**PAGE 148**, and provided at [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg)) and the Gimmick Moves each player has on their sheet. You'll see that they cover

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You have your own set of Moves as Creative. These are more like narrative approaches that you get to use at different times in the game, with harsher ones in response to failed Moves made by the players. These are explained more below, but generally the term "make a Move" is referring to player's Moves, unless specifically noted otherwise.

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most of the basic building blocks of modern wrestling—working the audience, cutting promos, ring run-ins, taking risks in the ring, and the like. When a player narrates the description that matches a Move, they make the roll; when they want to make a roll, they need to narrate the Move's trigger. When they trigger a Move, they roll the dice, read the appropriate result, and make any choices demanded by the Move. You then use the outcome to progress the conversation you're having with the other players. It's often helpful to ask players if they're intending to go for a certain Move, or just tell them to roll when they have obviously triggered one (cutting a Promo, for example, is usually pretty obvious).

\*\*\* EXAMPLE: MAKING A MOVE \*\*\*

Nathan opens the game by narrating the televised intro, which shows off each of the players wrestlers along with some non-player wrestlers (NPWs) that he's planning to feature later. He frames the first segment as a backstage interview with The Angel.

Nathan: "You're on a basic backstage interview set, just in front of a red velvet drape. Interviewer and broadcast celebrity Tina Tahini is facing you. She says "Hello, and welcome to *World Wide Wrestling*. Our first match tonight features two competitors who have faced off before, and with me now is the high-flying celestial himself, The Angel. Angel, you've never had an easy match against Mammoth Marco—what's your mindset going into tonight's match?"

Ed: "So, I'm wearing all white, including a traditional *luchador* mask with gold details around the eyes and mouth. I grab the mic and say "Well Tina, I'm not going to pretend that this is going to be an easy match, but Marco...well, Marco draws his strength from the cold, from the depths. My strength comes from the light, from the *heat*—and tonight, I'm going to light a fire out there for Mammoth Marco."

Nathan: "Ha, nice! I like it. You clearly just **CUT A PROMO**. Roll +Look."

Ed: "OK, I have Look 0." He rolls 2d6 and gets a 4 and 5 for a total of 9. He looks at the **CUT A PROMO** Move on the Move Reference Sheet in front of him. A 9 means he gets to pick one of these options: make Creative book him in a match; add a stipulation to an upcoming match; gain 1 Momentum; or gain +1 Heat with Mammoth Marco, the subject of his promo. "I'm already booked in this match, right? I'm tempted to add a stipulation, but I kind of want to see how a basic match goes..."

Nathan: "Momentum never hurts, but raising your Heat with someone you're about to wrestle isn't a bad idea. Remember, if you have +4 Heat with Marco by the end of the match, you gain Audience!"

Ed: "Oh, right. I'll do that, just gain the +1 Heat."

Nathan: "Great! OK, the camera cuts there then, and we go to the next segment."

## THE BASICS: MOMENTUM

An important thing for everyone to pay attention to during play is their Momentum. This is a number representing the character's overall energy and "intangibles" which is built over the course of the Episode. Promos feed into matches, which feed into conflicts between wrestlers, which feed back into promos and so on. Momentum is a fluid resource, so a good technique to track it is with poker chips or another kind of physical token that can be physically moved around as Momentum is gained, spent, and lost.

Players can spend any amount of Momentum to add a bonus equal to what they spend to any die roll they just made. You always spend Momentum *after* seeing what you rolled.

Some Moves, including the **BABYFACE** and **HEEL** Moves, demand that Momentum be spent *in addition* to their narrative triggers. This means that the Move cannot be made if you don't have the Momentum for it.

Momentum is also important for matches—the more Momentum among the competitors, the longer the match could potentially go. In

### \*\*\* EXAMPLE: USING MOMENTUM \*\*\*

Nathan cuts to the entrance ramp to the ring for the next segment. "Eric, the announcer goes 'Introducing, from Dead Horse Alaska....Mammoth! Marco!' What does your entrance look like?"

Eric narrates a roll of fog and a blowing snow effect amid strobing lights. Then he says "As I make my way to the ring I yell at the crowd and shake my massive fists, daring them to cheer me."

Nathan: "Sounds like you're **WORKING THE AUDIENCE** to me. Roll +Audience."

As the Monster, Marco starts the game with an Audience of +1. Eric rolls 1 and 4, which only gets him a 6 with his +1 Audience – a Botch!

Eric: "Oh no, that's not how I want to start this show! I spend my 1 Momentum to bring that to a 7." He throws a poker chip in the middle of the table. "The options for 7-9 are gain +1 Momentum or gain control of the match..."

Nathan: "Since the match hasn't started yet, that won't help you. Though I'd say that if you pick that, you'll go ahead and start it in control, if you want to make that happen."

Eric: "That's OK, I'll just gain the Momentum back." He didn't gain any specific benefit on the Move, other than avoiding a Botch. He knows that a Botch opens up Marco to being a target for a Creative Hard Move, though, so that's worth it to him.

Nathan: "Not Botching on your first roll is smart, and you end up even on Momentum. The crowd boos, especially ringside where they can hear you yelling, but the Angel's music hits and the crowd's attention shifts back to the top of the ramp for his entrance."

addition, **FINISHING MOVES** are basic 2d6 rolls, so saving Momentum up to use for your finisher is generally a good idea.

Any Momentum unspent at the end of an Episode disappears; there's no reason to conserve it.

## THE BASICS: AUDIENCE

The goal of every wrestler is to get popular enough that the audience wants to see them again and again. More popularity means more bookings, possibly better treatment from management, and (hopefully) more control over their own destiny. Each wrestler's Audience score represents how popular they are. The two main ways to increase Audience are to win matches and to gain Heat with the other wrestlers. Creative determines a NPW's Audience when necessary, like if a player's Move demands that their Audience goes up or down (**PAGE 77**).

For the first Episode, remind the players that the thing they have most control over is gaining Heat with their opponents, as every time they work a match with a character they have +4 Heat with, they gain +1 Audience! Hitting +4 Audience in an Episode earns that wrestler an Advance, which can be used to raise their Stats, gain new Moves and evolve their Gimmick.

## THE BASICS: THE ENGINE

In order to improve and change, a character needs Advances. To get Advances, they need Audience. To get Audience, they need Heat, whether from feuds or winning matches. To get Heat, they need to use the Moves at their disposal. Momentum greases the wheels. And once the whole roster has improved enough to gain the promotion as a whole a greater audience, the cycle resets itself (more about this in Chapter Nine: How To Be Creative, **PAGE 78**).

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*Tell the players: Make Moves to get Heat and Momentum, work matches with characters you have high Heat with, and position yourself to get booked to win to get Audience. When you gain Audience you get Advances. You use Advances to customize your wrestler's growth and decide their destiny.*

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## THE BASICS: BEING CREATIVE

In addition to pacing the show and playing NPWs, Creative uses their Creative Moves, which are more like narrative approaches and triggers for new content than specific "things" that happen in play.

Creative's Moves are divided into "Soft" and "Hard" Moves. Soft Moves are the things you say whenever the players look at you expectantly, waiting for you to move the action along.

### **SOFT MOVES:**

- ★ Put a microphone in their face (a scheduled interview, an interruption, a request for an opinion, an accusation of wrongdoing).
- ★ Take the next step for a storyline (as your dramatic sense dictates).
- ★ Book them in a match (challenged by an inferior, scheduled by management, showcase a weakness or a strength).
- ★ Bring in something On Deck (prep this in between sessions).
- ★ Put something they value at risk (a championship, a partner, a friend, a mask).
- ★ Announce kayfabe badness (a bad guy is underhanded, a good guy makes a mistake, management punishes someone).
- ★ Give them a difficult decision to make (a choice between two things they want to keep or save).
- ★ Swerve the storyline (as circumstances dictate).
- ★ Create backstage intrigue (a plot, a betrayal, an affair, a poor decision, a rumor, a mistake).

Hard Moves are the things you say when players Botch (by rolling a 6 or lower) or position themselves such that they're really just asking for it.

### **HARD MOVES:**

- ★ Turn the audience on them (they lose -1 Audience).
- ★ Turn a wrestler on them (they lose -1 Heat with the character).
- ★ Announce legit badness (someone is injured, someone is in trouble, someone has disappeared, something important is broken, something important is missing).
- ★ Give them a no-win situation (a choice between their career and their integrity).
- ★ Hire or fire someone important (hire someone they hate, fire someone they love).
- ★ Push an NPW ahead of them (because of their failure).
- ★ Steal their victory (preferably via their worst enemy).

\*\*\* EXAMPLE: SOFT AND HARD MOVES \*\*\*

Later in the show, Nathan mentions that there's a NPW match going on while all the player's wrestlers are backstage preparing for the next segments—"Cool Hand" Luke, a smarmy 70s-looking heel vs Schism, a brutal but beloved hoss of a babyface. Keith breaks in and says "Oh, I want to be out there for that! How about Keystone just comes out, no entrance music or anything, and watches the action from the entrance."

Nathan: "Oh, sure! What are you doing, just watching? What's your agenda here?"

Keith: "I'm keeping an eye on Cool Hand Luke and nodding approvingly, clapping when he hits moves, stuff like that. Uh, I don't have any particular action in mind, I just want everyone to know that I'm keeping an eye on him."

Nathan: "So it's not really a run-in, you're not interfering with the match. Uh..." He doesn't have a particular goal in mind with this match, he was just throwing it in as background. This is clearly a moment where something interesting should happen, though, so he takes a look at the Soft Move list, and sees "Announce kayfabe badness." This gives him an idea to put Keystone in a bad spot based on Keith's sudden interest in the match. "OK, so Luke notices you watching him, and it's starting to distract him. He manages to put Schism in a sleeper hold, and just stands there looking at you while Schism struggles."

Keith: "I applaud and walk down towards the ring."

Nathan: "Perfect. You walk down, Luke releases the hold to come to the ropes and say something to you, but before he can open his mouth Schism pops up, scoops him up and slams him in the Separator, his muscle-buster finisher."

Keith: "Oh no! I'm going to run in and break up the pin!"

Nathan: "OK, now you're interrupting a match in progress, so that's definitely the Run-In Move. You're coming in after Schism, right? Roll +Heat with Schism."

Keith: "I don't have any, so that's +0." He rolls a 1 and a 2 for 3, total. "Oh, crap. Botch, and I don't have enough Momentum to bring that up..."

Nathan: "Hah, great!" He looks at the Hard Moves list. Run-In doesn't have a particular Botch effect, so he picks a Hard Move off the list that he thinks will make the most drama. He wants to introduce more antagonistic NPWs, so he goes with Steal Their Victory, pulling the trigger on an idea that he was going to wait to introduce until later in the Episode. "You go to slide under the ropes, and you hear the crowd pop for something happening behind you...you feel hands on you, pulling you back, and you fall to the floor to see the boots of the People's Hero himself, Travis Mealmaker. In the ring, the ref counts the 1-2-3 and Schism gets the victory that you were trying to prevent. Travis, a down-home veteran wrestler from Arkansas, is one of the most popular babyfaces on the roster, and he just waves his finger in your face as you lay at his feet. 'Not today, Keystone. Not today.' And he walks away to cheers as you lie there."

Keith: "...I already hate that guy."



Alongside your plan of segments and matches, you should use the list of Soft Moves to fill out scenes and bring in more antagonists, as well as a resource for what to do next when you don't have anything planned.

Whenever a player rolls a Botch, pick a Hard Move and narrate how it comes about. Many of the individual Moves have an “on a Botch” result, which is the primary result of their failure. If a Move does not have a specific Botch result, then it's up to you what the fallout is. Botches should never stop the action in its tracks; rather, Botches reveal or enhance a wrestler's weaknesses in the eyes of management, or are the physical points of failure that lead to injuries, recrimination, and backstage disapproval. The show must go on through every error, it's just that things are get more difficult for the wrestlers. A Botch is not a failure, it's a springboard to making a storyline more personal and impactful on the wrestler's legit life and career.

## THE BASICS: WRESTLING

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Wrestling matches are their own kind of conversation, so they have their own Moves. Any Move (like **WORKING THE AUDIENCE** or performing a **FEAT OF STRENGTH**) may be used in the ring, but In-Ring Moves may *only* be used during a match. The basic In-Ring Moves specify *who has narrative control* and *how well the match is going*. Whoever has narrative control (for brevity's sake just “control”) of the match narrates a sequence of transitional or resting maneuvers between the competitors, culminating in a big maneuver meant to impress the Imaginary Viewing Audience. The result of the **WRESTLING MOVE** may transition control to another participant, as well as give the player mechanical options to represent how well the match is going. Creative decides who starts with control, based on what's appropriate to the situation at hand, and narrates the basic setup before handing narration over to that player.

Once the match starts, the player with control narrates the beginning portion, builds up to the big spot, and then makes the **WRESTLING MOVE** (on the In-Ring Move sheet, and **PAGE 151**). You'll see that the **WRESTLING MOVE** asks the player to pick which Stat they're rolling on—there's no right or wrong answer. If they narrate a maneuver that's obviously one thing or another, just roll the obvious one; if in doubt, they should narrate to their strengths and roll on their highest Stat. If the match is between a player's wrestler and an NPW, you never roll for the NPW; you take up narration when the player passes it and you pass it



back when you want to (or when the player uses the **INTERRUPT MOVE** to take it back from you).

It's generally your call when the match ends, based on its place on the card and your sense of narrative pacing. However, if all competitors are out of Momentum, that's a trigger to end the match. When you're ready, announce who's booked to win the match. If a player's wrestler is booked to win, they make their **FINISHING MOVE** from their Gimmick sheet and use the results to guide the narration of the end of the match. Several Moves have the potential to "override Creative's booking"—if a player ends up making one of these Moves, whatever outcome they narrate becomes the finish *instead* of what you had planned. It's your job to take these overrides and roll them into the ongoing storyline, as though the new finish was the plan all along.

## THE BASICS: THE ANNOUNCER

When a match starts, you pick a player whose wrestler isn't involved to be the Announcer for the match. The Announcer does color commentary, recapping and adding their own editorials to the action. The Announcer can **PUT OVER** each player's wrestler in the match, in order to make them look awesome. To do this, they describe what the wrestler is doing in the most impressive light to the Imaginary Viewing Audience. The Announcer can **PUT OVER** each player's wrestler once per match.

The effect of **PUTTING OVER** is to increase the player's result on a roll up one success level from what they roll: from a Botch to a partial hit (total of 7-9), or from a partial hit to a strong hit (total of 10+). Thus, the Announcer should wait to see the roll result before deciding whether to **PUT OVER** the wrestler (though they're obviously free to describe their stuff as awesome without applying the mechanical benefit). At the end of the match, the Announcer hands off their mic to someone else, or Creative takes it back to assign out for the next match.

If no players are free, Creative can serve as color commentary but does not have the ability to put over wrestlers; they're on their own. If more than one player is free, they can all participate in commentary, but only one of them has the Announcer power to **PUT OVER** the wrestlers in the ring. Some groups create individual commentators with names and personalities. Others play their wrestler characters as temporary announcers, while some groups may wish to leave the commentary team as anonymous talking heads. If a player is having trouble getting into the Announcer role you should mention the different ways to approach it so they can find the one most comfortable for them.

\*\*\* EXAMPLE: **WRESTLING Σ** ANNOUNCING \*\*\*

After some backstage segments following on the appearance of Travis Mealmaker, it's time for the scheduled Keystone-Bruto match. Both Keith and Ron narrate their wrestler's entrances, and due to how their pre-match promos went and Keystone's earlier Botch, Nathan decides that Bruto will start in control of the match. He hands Eric the microphone prop to assign him as the Announcer for this match.

Ron: "OK, so, Bruto isn't much of a (air quotes) "wrestler," he's more of a brawler. So we start off just punching back and forth, giving stiff forearms, that kind of thing."

Keith: "Yeah, Keystone is similar, he gives as good as he gets, if that's cool?" Since Ron has control of the match, it's his call how Keystone responds to the action.

Ron: "Oh, for sure. We just exchange punches in the middle of the ring, and I think you actually start to overpower me a bit, pushing me around."

Nathan: "Does he push you back into a turnbuckle?" Nathan knows Ron doesn't watch a lot of wrestling so he's helping model general expectations for match behavior.

Ron: "Yeah! He pushes me back, he's just raining blows on my head and beating me down."

Nathan: "The ref comes over and starts the five-count, to get Keystone out of the corner."

Keith: "I keep throwing hands until the 4-and-half mark, then throw my hands up all innocent and back off."

Ron: "Yeah, and that's when I launch out of the corner and just tackle you to the ground! This is my big spot-I'm thinking my style is generally to get all beat up and then just launch these massive sloppy hits."

Nathan: "Sounds great. You're rolling for the **WRESTLING MOVE**, so you get to pick which Stat. It sounds like you're playing up your gimmick, so that's +Look-unless you're trying to show off your strength and power."

Ron: "No, this is just how Bruto wrestles. +Look makes sense to me." He rolls 2 and 5 for a 7+1 (for his Look), for a total of 8. "I can keep control and keep narrating, or turn control over and take a Momentum...I'll do that, it's time for Keystone to show off some!" Ron takes a chip for the Momentum and Keith takes control of the match.

Eric grabs the prop mic that's on the table. "Well folks, this match is not going to be a pretty one. Both of these guys like a good brawl and...wow, did you see the impact on that! Bruto is not giving Keystone any breathing room here!"

Keith has control of the match. "I roll around clutching my stomach, trying to get my breath back. Maybe Bruto comes over to try and pin me, but I'm playing possum a bit. When he bends over I kick him right in the head!"

Ron: "Yeah, for sure. Ouch! I roll around with my arms covering my head."

Eric: "This isn't pretty, folks, but it sure is effective. Keystone is using those big boots to good effect as he makes his way back to a vertical base."

Keith: "I see my style as a little more wrestle-y than Bruto's. Once I'm back to my feet I drop an elbow on him to keep him down, then grab his leg and pull him into a submission hold." He looks at the maneuver reference sheet. "Ooh, Boston Crab! I put him in that. I pull him out the middle of the ring and really lean into it."

Nathan: "Cool. You're showing off your technical skill, it sounds like, so roll +Work."

Keith: Sighs "OK, that's a -1, of course." He rolls a 10 for a total of 9. "Damn, so close!"

Eric: "I'll put you over on this one, it's a cool move! 'OK folks, Keystone is taking advantage of Bruto's excessive force earlier in the match and leveraging the bigger mans weight against him. See the pressure he puts on those knees! If Bruto doesn't do something to break this hold he could face serious injury here!'" The Announcer's put-over bumps Keystone's 7-9 result to a 10+ result, so the move looks great.

Keith: "Awesome, thanks! I can gain +2 Momentum, or +1 Heat with Bruto...I think I want the Momentum, I'm still hurting for it, and I still have control of the match."

After two more exchanges, Ron is back in control of the match. He takes the action outside the ring and narrates how he throws Keystone into the ring steps.

Nathan says "OK, I think we're getting to the end of the match...and Keystone is booked to win! Ron, how do we get there?"

Ron: "Oh, OK. Um, I think I roll him into the ring and then...oh, how about this. I go up to the top rope, which I never do."

Eric: "Keystone is dazed, and Bruto...the California Hardcore is going to the top rope, what is this! He is *not* known for leaving his feet, what a big risk!"

Ron: "Yeah, so I'm on the top, I throw my hands up and yell "Haaaaardcoooooore!" then just jump straight into whatever Keystone has waiting for me. Keith?"

Keith: "Oh, nice. Yeah, while Bruto is climbing the ropes I get my breath back and get my feet under me, but I'm still kind of crouching down. He jumps, and I jump up to meet him, grab his head and flip him over in midair into my finishing submission, the Brainwasher."

Nathan: "Rad! OK, roll for your **FINISHING MOVE**...unless, Ron, you want to **BREAK KAYFABE** or something to interfere?" Ron shakes his head, and Keith rolls. He gets a 7. "**FINISHING MOVES** are rolled on a straight 2d6, are you going to spend Momentum?"

Keith: "Oh yes. I spend all 3 to bring this to a 10, so I get to pick whether I gain +1 Audience or he does...I'm going to take that for myself."

Nathan: "Nice, and the finisher looks great. The crowd pops when you lock it in. Ron, how do you sell it?"

Ron: "Bruto swings his arms and tries to get to the ropes, but he just sags lower and lower until Keystone is basically lying on his back, keeping him in the headlock. His face turns all purple and he finally taps just before losing consciousness."

Keith: "Yeah you do. Awesome."

## PACING THE SHOW

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As a general rule, *be basic and obvious* for your first Episode. Everyone is getting used to their characters and the rules of the game during this session; save the weird stuff for later. Give each wrestler an opportunity to cut a promo before their matches. Help guide the match narration as appropriate. Go backstage when necessary; if there's no immediate demand to do so, just cut right to the next vignette or promo you had planned. To model how wrestling works for players who may not watch a lot of wrestling, book a player versus NPW match early. Use it to showcase how wrestling matches are structured and point out the moments in a match you think are cool. If you have an even number of players, a tag-team match between Babyfaces and Heels is a good, high-energy way to end an Episode, and tends to spawn future feuds.

If the players have agendas and segments they want to see, you should be responsive to what they want to do. Work requests into your show and always respect their ability to advance their agendas via their Moves. Many Moves allow them to book matches or segments of their own, so either just replace what you had in mind or slot it into a place that makes sense. That said, the first Episode is often the most Creative-driven Episode of a Season, simply because the players haven't had time to get their heads around their characters yet. Have fun with it, describe some dramatic action, make obvious choices, and enjoy the conversation about wrestling!

## PROBLEMATIC CONTENT & MAKING THE X

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The world of professional wrestling relies on archetypes, which are across a very thin line from stereotypes. Many, if not most, heel characters do and say terrible, offensive, and inappropriate things in order to showcase how bad of people they are and get the audience booing them. Unfortunately, it's easy to combine villainous behavior with an ethnic, racial, sexual, gendered, or other stereotype and produce a truly offensive (or at least tasteless) result.

Because wrestling is meant to showcase the grotesque as well as the dramatic in it's larger-than-life sweep, you shouldn't shy away from using negative character traits to drive the action, but at the same time you must be aware that other players at your table may not be on the same page about the introduction of that content into the game. Every player has their own sense of what's "too much" or what content they don't want to have to deal with, and often a person won't know it until they see it hit the table.

In this game, use "the X" to signal that something has crossed your line without bringing the game to a halt. This dovetails with the traditional wrestling trope of the referee holding their arms up above their head, crossed like an X, to indicate to the producers backstage that a real injury has occurred and medical attention is needed. In this game, anyone can make the X, as per these guidelines:

- ★ When a player at the table makes the X in real life (it doesn't need to be over your head, you can simply cross your wrists over your chest or over the center of the table) it's a sign to everyone that you aren't cool with something that just happened in the game, and you should rewind the moment and start over.
- ★ A player can narrate their wrestler making the X, which generally means they're breaking kayfabe. Make the **BREAK KAYFABE** Move.
- ★ Creative can narrate the ref or an NPW making the X as part of the ongoing story, as events dictate (for example, some Moves can result in a match participant getting legit injured).

Player-level use of the X could because the content triggers them in some way, it's just lame and inappropriate to the situation at hand, or it's otherwise harming their fun. **When a player makes the X, it's a sign for everyone else to elide the content that just happened and restart the scene from the last logical point.** Players are under no obligation to explain why they made the X, though they may want to say something so that everyone knows what's up.

Creative should explain Making the X to the players at the beginning of the Episode, so everyone knows it's a tool they can use during the game.

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Making the X is adopted from "The X-Card" by John Stavropoulos, a system-agnostic tool for editing uncomfortable content in improvisational games. More info: <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>

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## WRAPPING UP

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Those are the basics of playing through the first Episode! The rest of this text is devoted to more fully describing how the rules work and interact with each other, the nuances of applying them, fleshing out Creative's job and how to approach building multi-Episode storylines, and providing inspirational resources to use for your games of *World Wide Wrestling*!

# MAKING THE ROSTER

## CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter details all of the elements you will see as you create your wrestling character. Your Gimmick sheet lists all the pertinent information you need in play, but if you want more details on the various aspects of your wrestler, that's all in here.

The complete text of each Gimmick is summarized for reference starting on **PAGE 125**. The full Gimmick sheets are available for free download from [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg), where they can be updated in the inevitable case that errors in them are discovered. If you notice discrepancies between the downloadable sheets and this book, the download should be considered the correct version.

### GIMMICKS

The first step to make your wrestler is to pick your Gimmick. This describes a broad archetype of wrestler, which you can expand on with your choice of look, move set, and in-game Moves. Your Gimmick is unique to the Season you'll be playing with your group—while there may be many monsters, whoever picks The Monster Gimmick is the one we care about and the one most attractive to the Imaginary Viewing Audience.

**THE ANTI-HERO:** You are the badass everyone loves. Whether you're sticking it to the man or telling it like it is, the audience identifies with your rejection of conformity. A babyface Anti-Hero is the people's champion, representing the everyman's rejection of the stultifying bullshit they have to put up with every day. A heel Anti-Hero is a nasty, conniving jerk, a mercenary who's always looking for the maximum profit for themselves.

- ★ Play the Anti-Hero if you want to struggle with management, use underhanded tactics to your own advantage, or have others be unsure whether they can trust you.
- ★ The Anti-Hero is best at blurring the line between kayfabe and legit and is generally not as strong or sophisticated as others in the ring.

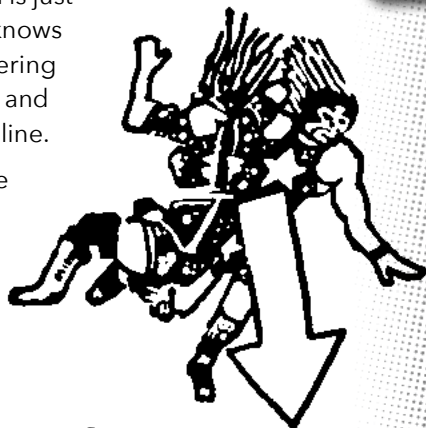


THE DRAMATIC BOSTON CRAB SUBMISSION  
KEEPS THE CONTROLLING WRESTLER ON THEIR  
FEET FACING THE CROWD



**THE GOLDEN BOY:** You're the next big thing, whether the audience and the rest of the roster want to admit it or not. Someone backstage is putting all of their weight behind you, and you just have to hold up your end in the ring. A babyface Golden Boy is the squeaky clean good guy who obeys all the rules and is just trying to do their best. A heel Golden Boy knows exactly how far they can push before suffering consequences for their poor sportsmanship and bad form, *always* stopping just short of that line.

- ★ Play the Golden Boy if you want to have management at your back and have lots of screen time. You may need to rely on others to get you through your lack of in-ring experience.
- ★ The Golden Boy is best at talking and looking great, while bad at breaking kayfabe in any way that helps them.



A SIDE SLAM IS A FLEXIBLE MOVE  
THAT RELIES ON AGGRESSION FOR  
MAXIMUM IMPACT

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The title "Golden Boy" is used because it's the most precise phrase to get the idea across, but like all the Gimmicks it can be taken for any gender of character.

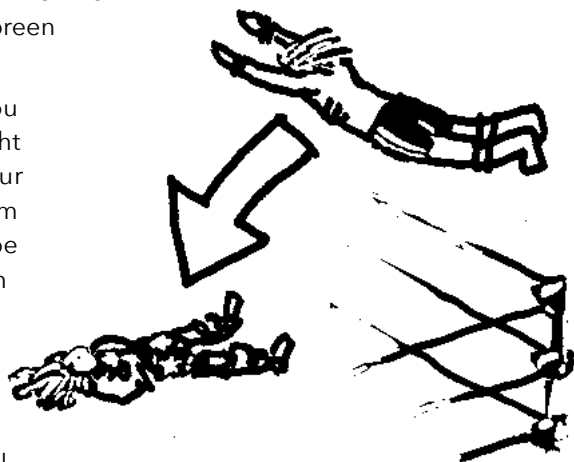
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**THE HARDCORE:** You're not the best grappler or the best looking, but you know how to get a pop through naked aggression and rampant bloodshed. Some in the business look down on you, but you're a legend in the making for a subset of the audience. How long can that fact be ignored? A babyface Hardcore invites the audience to live vicariously through their painful triumphs as well as bloody defeats. A heel Hardcore engages in wanton violence far, far beyond what a situation calls for, leaving bodies and even careers in their wake.

- ★ Play the Hardcore if you want to engage in violence, gain popularity by sacrificing your physical well-being, and have others be nervous about whether or not you're going to hurt them.
- ★ The Hardcore is either compelling because of their self-created mystique or because they just have so little regard for their own physical safety. The Hardcore is generally not good at technical wrestling.

**THE HIGH FLYER:** You are extremely athletic, able to go up to the top rope and execute dazzling maneuvers. You put your body on the line every night. A babyface High Flyer is the greatest crowd pleaser in the company, hitting their big finishers at the perfect times to get everyone on their feet. A heel High Flyer uses their moves to punish the mistakes of their opponents, show off when it's uncalled for, and otherwise preen and posture.

- \* Play the High Flyer if you want to be popular right off the bat, balance your career with your long-term health, and have others be jealous of what you can do that they can't.
- \* The High Flyer is generally great in the ring but not very good at breaking the fourth wall or being intimidating.



THE BEAUTY OF THE FROG SPLASH LIES IN ITS SIMPLICITY

**THE JOBBER:** You're a nobody. You're there to lose and make the other wrestlers look good. You may not have the fans, but you have a job to do and you can do it well. But what if you want something more? A babyface Jobber is sympathetic, just trying to do their best and always getting the short end of the stick. A heel Jobber is bitter and vengeful, angry about not being good enough and always having that shoved in their face.

- \* Play the Jobber if you want to be the support character, make others look great, and have to really work hard to transcend your role on the roster.
- \* The Jobber is actually generally one of the better wrestlers in the company, with great job security, but they're not trusted to talk or carry a storyline on their own.

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The Jobber is *always* booked to lose matches they're in (though that booking can be swerved by the events of play). The appeal of playing the Jobber is in how you make the other wrestlers look good and the drama of trying to build a definable character.

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**THE MANAGER:** You're the sizzle on the steak. You don't compete, but you have the talk, the walk, and the ideas to keep your client/companion in the spotlight—in and out of the ring. A babyface Manager always stands behind their client, shields them from harm and gives the audience the entertainment they want. A heel Manager is an outspoken ass, cheats every time they can get away with it and always stacks the odds in their client's favor.

- ★ Play the Manager if you want to be in the spotlight but not in the ring, work closely with other characters, and be on the hook for failures that may not be under your control.
- ★ The Manager is hot garbage in the ring, but great on the mic and can easily have creative power behind the scenes.

**THE MONSTER:** You're physically enormous and intimidating. You may have a "supernatural" edge or simply be mean—either way, you make people nervous, in and out of the ring. A babyface Monster is pure impressiveness, allowing the audience to live vicariously through their strength and impact. A heel Monster is a malevolent beast who intimidates audience and opponent alike.

- ★ Play the Monster if you want everyone to know exactly who you are, be the center of attention, and battle with the preconception that you can only do one thing well.
- ★ The Monster is a one-trick pony, but that trick can carry you through an entire Season.

**THE TECHNICIAN:** Whether you were an amateur sensation or an indy workhorse, you have all the skills. Even though your wrestling ability stands out, you're continually fighting the perception that that's "all you are". A babyface Technician is humble on the mic but stands up for themselves in the ring, letting their talent speak for itself. A heel Technician uses their superior knowledge of wrestling to make up for their lack of ability on the stick, making it clear that they're taking advantage of their opponents whenever they can.

- ★ Play the Technician if you want to show off your technical excellence, battle your way into the spotlight, and have others ignore you until they need your help.
- ★ The Technician is great in the ring, but has almost no presence on the mic; getting fans is an uphill battle.

**THE VETERAN:** You are an established name. You work almost every night, have a dedicated fan base, and are ready to create an enduring legacy. A babyface Veteran is an old favorite, someone the audience feels that they know well. A heel Veteran has abandoned the fans, turned inward as they see their best days slipping away and vengefully lashes out to preserve something of their former glory.

- ★ Play the Veteran if you want to be instrumental to getting others' careers off the ground, show off your experience in the business, and find a way to gracefully exit that doesn't destroy your legacy.
- ★ The Veteran is generally good at everything, with a lot of discretionary ability to help or hurt other wrestlers, but has few advancement options.



A POWERSLAM  
CAN BE A SIMPLE  
TRANSITIONAL  
MOVE OR A HUGE  
FINISHER

**THE WASTED:** You are well known for your impressive style and intense fan base, but you have serious real-life substance abuse or addiction problems that threaten your career. A babyface Wasted speaks to the primal part of the audience that loves fast cars and explosions, the part willing to give up tomorrow's security for tonight's wild ride. A heel Wasted is a broken person with nothing to lose, throwing their body away in the pursuit of one more nihilistic high.

- ★ Play the Wasted if you want to be the hottest property in the company, show up everyone with your style, and battle the demons that keep you from moving on to the next level.
- ★ The Wasted gets the most heat and the biggest pops, but is literally addicted to something that makes it possible that they will lose control of themselves during any given show. Once the Wasted resolves their issues, however, they have the most options for moving on with their careers.

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These are the 10 core Gimmicks available for every game of *World Wide Wrestling*. Other Gimmicks are available, including five Season One Gimmicks that were presented to the Kickstarter backers of this game. To make your own Gimmick, check out Creating New Gimmicks on **PAGE 88**. Visit [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg) for additional official Gimmicks as they become available, or to share the ones you create.

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## FUNDAMENTALS

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Your wrestler, regardless of Gimmick, is described by:

- ★ **Name & Look:** this is entirely up to you, though you can pick a character off of the Season One Roster (**PAGE 111**) if you want to make a quick decision.
- ★ **Hailing From:** each Gimmick has some options that thematically support that archetype, or you can pick your own.
- ★ **Entrance:** each Gimmick has some options that thematically support that archetype, or you can describe your own.
- ★ **Stats:** the four key descriptive qualities of your wrestler, ranging from -2 (the worst) to +3 (the best). The Stats are: Look, Power, Real and Work.
- ★ **Heat:** a positive number representing the entertainment value to the audience of your characters relationship with another wrestler. Ranges from 0 to +4.
- ★ **Role:** whether you're a good guy or a bad guy (Starting Roles of Babyface and Heel) or have transcended that divide (to the Advanced Roles of Celebrity, Legend or Icon).
- ★ **Moves:** specific archetypal actions for your wrestler with an array of possible consequences. You have some Moves automatically (already checked on your sheet), and then you pick some Moves as the sheet directs.
- ★ **Injury:** When you get injured, certain options become available (or closed off) to you to represent how you're handled by the company while you recover.
- ★ **Momentum:** a positive number that represents a build-up of "intangibles" and entertaining energy. You spend Momentum to give you bonuses on die rolls. There is no limit on Momentum but you lose any you haven't spent at the end of each Episode.
- ★ **Audience:** a positive number representing your wrestler's popularity and how much the audience wants to see them. Audience goes both up and down and ranges from 0 to +4.
- ★ **Advances:** certain thresholds you hit in the game give you Advances. You can spend Advances to raise your Stats or Audience, gain new Moves, gain a Manager, change Gimmick, and other things that reflect your increasing value to the company.

Your choice of Gimmick determines starting values for all of these things, and describes additional choices you may have to make. Each sheet details the specific choices you need to make for each section.

## HAILING FROM AND ENTRANCE

When you pick your Gimmick, pick where your wrestler hails from and what their entrance is like. The options presented on the sheet are meant to be inspirational, not definitional—you are free to pick or create something else if you'd like. Most players have no trouble naming their wrestler, but if you're stuck or want additional inspiration, the Season One Roster (**PAGE 111**) is available to you to pick a name from as well.

## STATS

Your wrestler has four Stats: Look, Power, Real and Work. Each Stat has a number between -2 and +3. Most characters start with scores between -2 and +2. Your Stats describe the core abilities of your character as a professional wrestler.

- ★ Look: your charisma, "it" factor and ability to inhabit your character and "live the Gimmick." Look is most important for you if you want to cut exciting promos and create a memorable character for the fans to follow.
- ★ Power: your raw strength, aggression, and impressiveness. Power is most important for you if you want to enjoy physical dominance over other wrestlers and stand out for your extraordinary physical presence and abilities.
- ★ Real: your ability to "break the fourth wall," bring in real-world concerns, and deal with legit issues. Real is most important for you if you want to blend the line between character and performer and captivate the audience with your actual personality.
- ★ Work: your ability to tell a story in the ring, execute moves correctly, and make others look good. Work is most important for you if you want to use your ring work to create your legacy.

Your Gimmick will give you initial scores, and then instructions for making an adjustment by adding or subtracting from those scores.

When a Move tells you to roll +Stat, that means to roll 2d6, add or subtract the Stat number, and then look to the results of the Move based on the total you just rolled. If your total is a 6 or less it's a *Botch*, if it's a 7-9 it's a *partial hit*, and a 10+ is a *full hit*.



## ROLE

Choose whether you're starting as a Babyface (good guy) or a Heel (bad guy). Generally, every feud is between a babyface and a heel. Each Role gives you access to the Role Move of the same name. You can transition from one to the other (called making a Face Turn or a Heel Turn) during the game whenever you narrate how your character breaks with their current Role and embraces their new one.

Babyface and heel can be defined many different ways. Here's how I've chosen to do it in this game: Babyfaces stand up for things they believe in, while Heels do underhanded things to get what they want. This doesn't mean that a babyface has to believe in something honorable or wholesome *per se*, but they do believe in *something* and take action to stand up for it. Similarly, a heel can have a perfectly understandable goal, but it's the willingness to break the rules (letter or spirit) that makes them a bad guy.

You also have access to three "Advanced Roles", which you can only take later in your character's career (see Advancement on **PAGE 46**). Advanced Roles are for wrestlers who transcend the basic good guy/bad guy division and represent something more within the company.

### THE ADVANCED ROLES ARE:

- ★ Legend: You're legendary, an inspiration to the fans. Legendary wrestlers are always popular and sometimes share their glory with others.
- ★ Icon: You're the personification of what wrestlers want to be. Iconic wrestlers have a signature move or action that they've made wholly their own, and everybody wants to see them do it.
- ★ Celebrity: You are what wrestling means to the wider world. Celebrity wrestlers bring the fame of their non-wrestling careers back to the promotion and as such have a lot of pull with management.

Once you take an Advanced Role, you stay in that role until you use an Advance to take a different one. You no longer count as a Babyface or a Heel, nor can you use those Moves.



THE LEGENDARY FIGURE FOUR LEGLOCK  
TENDS NOT TO BE ADDED TO A WRESTLER'S  
ARSENAL UNTIL THEY'VE EARNED IT

## HEAT—STARTING HEAT

Heat is a number ranging from 0 to +4, representing how much your relationship with another wrestler gets an audience response. You could have high Heat with both your tag team partner and your bitter rival, as long as those relationships are entertaining.

When you make initial characters, you ask some or all of the questions on your sheet to generate initial backstory between your characters and establish starting Heat. Write down the other wrestlers' names on your sheet and start their Heat at 0. On your turn, select a number of questions equal to the other players and ask them. The other players volunteer to answer and you take +1 Heat with those players' wrestlers.

If you're playing with only two wrestlers, you each pick a single question. You're demanding that the other player answer the question, as opposed to looking for a volunteer, so you should pick the question that leads to most interesting relationship between the two of you.

If you're playing with more than five wrestlers, ask all four questions and then move on. Some characters won't have much Heat with one another, which is fine. Players can answer more than one of your questions, so you may build up more initial Heat with some characters than others for the beginning of the game.

Once all the questions have been answered, all Babyfaces take +1 Heat with all Heels and vice versa. Heat is not symmetric—depending on who answers who's questions, your wrestler may not have the same amount of Heat with another wrestler that they have with you.

If you're joining a game in progress, you write down the other wrestlers' names on your sheet and ask your questions, but they won't ask you questions (since they've already established their relationships and backstory). They do write down your wrestler's name, and you all apply the Role adjustment. Generally, you'll start the Episode with more Heat with the established characters than they have with you—this is fine!

## HEAT—DURING PLAY

Sometimes a Move will ask you to roll +Heat with another character, in which case you add it to the 2d6 roll. Many Move results tell you to add or subtract Heat with a character. You can never have more than +4 or less than 0 Heat with someone, so if a Move result would push you past one of those thresholds simply ignore it (and you should feel free to pick another option, if one is available, so as not to "waste" your choice). You can have Heat with NPWs as well. Write the NPW's name down on your sheet when it comes up and start their Heat at +1.

Heat is an important part of your wrestler's popularity, as the Imaginary Viewing Audience pays the most attention to the wrestlers whose relationships they've invested in. If you finish a match and have +4 Heat with your opponent, you gain +1 Audience immediately, regardless of who gets the win! If you have +4 Heat with more than one opponent in a multi-opponent match, you still gain only +1 Audience.

When you finish a feud with someone (as the storyline naturally dictates—when in doubt, its Creative's call as to whether the feud is over), you both reset your Heat with each other to +1.

### HEAT—COOLING OFF

At the end of each session, check to see if you interacted with everyone on your Heat list. If you didn't interact with someone (no matches, promo segments, vignettes, or anything else, on or off-camera), lower your Heat with them by 1. Sometimes there's a bit of a judgment call to make. If you're in doubt, ask the other players whether they think you interacted or not, and go with the overall sense of the table. This represents how if you're out of the audience's sight for too long, they stop being as invested in your rivalries.

### AUDIENCE

Audience tracks how popular you are with the Imaginary Viewing Audience. Are you a major draw, middle of the card, or on your way out? Each Gimmick starts with a specific Audience score; this is the value you start the game at. In the event that the promotion gains popularity (something Creative tracks), you reset to this score as well.

**Audience +4:** Mark an Advance the first time you hit +4 Audience in an Episode. When you hit +4, any other character with +4 bumps down to +3, as there's only one top spot on the roster and you just claimed it. If you have +4 Audience at the beginning of an Episode, you make the **OVER** Move (a Top of the Card Move, **PAGE 150**).

**Audience +3:** You're hot! Start the episode with +2 Momentum.

**Audience +2:** You matter. Start the episode with +1 Momentum.

**Audience +1:** You're present. Start the episode with +1 Momentum.

**Audience 0:** You're boring. Mark an Advance the first time you hit 0 Audience in an Episode. If you have 0 Audience at the end of an Episode, you are fired! If you wish to continue playing you should make a new wrestler, or talk to Creative about taking over an existing NPW as your new character.

During an Episode, whenever you roll +Audience, add your current score to the roll. Your score will go up and down during the Episode depending on your booking, how you roll and the decisions you make. Whenever you hit 0 or +4 for the first time in an Episode, you mark an Advance. If you happen to hit that same value again in the same Episode, you do not mark another Advance.

When you hit Audience +4 during an Episode, you've just claimed the top spot on the card. Any other characters with Audience of +4 bump down to +3. If multiple characters hit +4 at the same time (most often, when two characters at +3 who have +4 Heat with each other wrestle a match), they share the top spot until someone else bumps them both out of it.

When you're at +4 at the beginning of an Episode, you make the **OVER Move (PAGE 150)**. This Move is only ever made by a player at +4 Audience. You make it before the Episode goes on-air, and can "save" the result for later in the show. Everyone in the top spot makes the **OVER Move**, if more than one wrestler made it at the same time.

When you're at 0 Audience at the end of an Episode, the audience has completely lost interest in your character. Creative no longer has anything for you and your wrestler is legit fired. If you intend to keep playing, it's time to make a new character or take over an NPW wrestler as your own. If you hit 0 right at the end of the session and want to keep playing this character, you must spend your Advance on the "Gain +1 Audience" Advancement option right away.

## MOVES

Moves are signature skills that your character demonstrates during each Episode. You have some Moves automatically, based on your Gimmick. You also have the option to pick another Move or two. Pick whatever you think is cool for your character! You'll have opportunities to get more as you gain Advances. All Gimmicks have a **FINISHING MOVE** (or equivalent), which is the Move you make when you're booked to win a match. The finishing moves are similar across Gimmicks but they emphasize different wrestling styles.

Most Moves will tell you to roll +Stat, which just means roll 2d6 and add your relevant Stat, comparing your result to the Move's outcomes. Some Moves are contingent on something happening, ask you to spend Momentum, or have other triggers. For more detail on basic Moves, see Chapter Six: Moves (**PAGE 56**).

## MOMENTUM

Momentum measures your potential to get over in the current Episode. You start the Episode with either 1 or 2 Momentum, depending on your current Audience score, and many Moves give you the option to increase your Momentum during play.

You spend Momentum to add a bonus to a roll equal to the amount you spent. You choose to spend after you make the roll. Sometimes a Move will call for you to give someone Momentum or take Momentum from someone, which is what it sounds like—you lose 1 and they gain 1, or vice versa. If you're called upon to spend or give Momentum and you are at 0 already, you simply stay at 0. There's no negative Momentum. If you're supposed to give someone Momentum and you have none, they still gain 1. If you're called upon to give Momentum to a NPW, you just lose 1, it doesn't go to anyone.

When you wrestle a match, Momentum helps because it's the only bonus you'll potentially have to spend on your **FINISHING MOVE** (in addition to generally helping you out if you roll poorly).

Whenever you have the chance to gain Momentum and you have no more compelling choice, go for the Momentum. It can only help you. However, you lose all unspent Momentum at the end of each Episode. Spend it!

## INJURY

You can get injured as the result of some Moves (yours or your opponents). Creative can also inflict injury upon you when it's the obvious outcome of a sequence of events. You have a certain number of Injury boxes on your sheet; whenever you're injured, check one off. Your Gimmick has a set of conditions that activate when you're injured; as long as you have at least one Injury check, you play with those conditions in effect.

When you've checked off all of your Injury boxes, you can no longer compete. Creative can no longer book you in matches at all. If you want to get into a match, you're going against the company to get in the ring; this generally means you have to make the **BREAK KAYFABE** Move.



You can erase an Injury check whenever you make an Advance, *in addition* to the effect you're spending the Advance to gain. This is entirely your choice—if you're enjoying playing with your Injury condition in effect, you can choose not to erase a check. The only other way to get rid of Injury checks is when you take an Episode off and return with a new Gimmick or Advanced Role. Upon your return, you erase all checks and re-enter the ring uninjured (this is not by choice, your wrestler always heals up when they change Gimmick).

### ADVANCEMENT

Over the course of your career, your wrestler will grow and change. Advancement comes from having rivalries, getting the audience behind you, and closing out storylines. Whenever your wrestler hits certain thresholds, you takes an Advance. You can spend Advances whenever you want to gain one of the effects listed on your sheet.

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Some Gimmicks have modified advancement options. Treat the Advancement information printed in the Gimmick as superseding this list if they conflict.

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#### GAIN AN ADVANCE:

- ★ The first time your Audience hits +4 or 0 in an Episode.
- ★ When you gain a Championship Belt.
- ★ When you end a feud satisfactorily.

#### SPEND AN ADVANCE TO:

- ★ Add +1 to any Stat (max +3).
- ★ Add +1 Audience.
- ★ Pick another Move from your Gimmick, or another Gimmick.
- ★ Create a custom Move for your character based on a signature habit (see **PAGE 86** for creating custom Moves).
- ★ Gain a Manager, a Valet or an Enforcer (NPW).
- ★ Form a Dedicated Tag Team (see **PAGE 69**).



**AND ONCE YOU'VE PICKED 3 OF THOSE:**

(this means that once you've picked three from the above list, you're able to pick from the list below in addition to the above options):

- ★ Create a new character to play. You can play both characters simultaneously, or switch between them on an Episode-to-Episode basis. Talk to Creative if you need advice on playing more than one character.
- ★ Retire this character and pick an NPW to play for the next episode. Pick a Gimmick for them and play them as a new wrestling character. Then return this character, with a new Gimmick, and/or in an Advanced Role (Legend, Icon or Celebrity). Each Gimmick notes which Gimmicks it can or cannot return as. See below for details.
- ★ Your character legit retires. Create a new character or take over an NPW if you want to continue playing in this Season.

**NEW GIMMICKS**

Starting with your fourth Advance, you have the option to take a new Gimmick. Each Gimmick has its own selection of other Gimmicks you can select, representing the progression of your wrestler through different stages of their career. When you take a new Gimmick, it represents the character's whole image being reconsidered and repackaged backstage. This is why the character takes an Episode "off"—you can play an NPW already introduced, try out a new character entirely, spend the session as an audience member, or take the session off yourself. If you want to give the character multiple Episodes off, that's fine too.

When the character returns:

- ★ Keep your Stats.
- ★ Keep all Moves you've purchased with Advances (from the original Gimmick, or any other).
- ★ Keep any Custom Moves you've created.
- ★ Lose the old Gimmick's automatic Moves, including the **FINISHING MOVE** (or equivalent).
- ★ Take any Moves you automatically get for your new Gimmick, including the **FINISHING MOVE**.

- \* You can trade the Gimmick Moves you selected when you first made the character for Moves on your new Gimmick's sheet on a 1-for-1 basis.
- \* Lower your Heat with everyone by -1.
- \* Pick whether you come back as a Babyface, a Heel or in an Advanced Role (Legend, Icon or Celebrity).
- \* Make the Heat adjustment (Babyfaces takes +1 Heat with all Heels, Heels take +1 Heat with all Babyfaces, Advanced Roles take +1 Heat with any other Advanced Roles).
- \* Take -1 to your Audience (If this would take you to 0, mark the Advance, but remember you look for whether you're fired at the *end* of the Episode, not the beginning).

If you want to come back in an Advanced Role but in the same Gimmick, you return with all of your same Stats and Moves. Make the same Heat and Audience adjustments as listed above.



## \*\*\* EXAMPLE: CHANGING GIMMICK \*\*\*

After four Episodes of play, Eric has gained 4 Advances for Mammoth Marco. He spent the first three on gaining another Look (bringing him to +1 Look), gaining an Audience when he badly needed one, and creating a Custom Move, the Mammoth Mountain, representing Marco's ability to stand fast in the ring and ignore his opponents blows without it killing the momentum of the match.

With his fourth Advance, he's eligible to change Gimmick. He's been angling towards a new role for Marco in the storyline, playing up his backstage "company man" nature and allegiance to the powers that be. He announces that he wants to change Gimmick at the end of the fourth Episode.

Since changing Gimmick means the character needs to disappear for an Episode, Eric plays the NPW "Cool Hand" Luke, now a key member of Keystone's rising Revolution faction the next time the group gets together.

When Marco returns at the top of Episode Six, it's as "Millionaire" Marco, in the Veteran Gimmick. Eric narrates a video package that covers the backstory for the change –Marco's ancestral Alaskan homeland turns out to be rich in oil and other natural resources, and he's tamed his wild side in order to use his newfound wealth to shore up the authority figures in the promotion.

To make the Gimmick change, Eric:

- ★ Keeps the Stats of Look +1, Power +2, Real -2, Work -1.
- ★ Keeps the "Mammoth Mountain" Move, since that was a custom Move purchased with an Advance.
- ★ Loses the Monster's **FINISHING MOVE**, and gains the Veteran's **FINISHING MOVE** in it's place.
- ★ Gains the Veteran's automatic **VETERAN INSTINCTS MOVE**.
- ★ He has two Gimmick Moves he can trade, **WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT SIZE** and **INTIMIDATING**. He trades **WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT SIZE** for the Veteran Gimmick Move **PUT OVER**. This does mean that he loses the +1 to Power he'd enjoyed as a Monster—Eric explains that the Veteran Marco is slimmed down a little and more agile in the ring than his old persona. He keeps **INTIMIDATING**, however. Marco is now scary outside of the ring for multiple reasons
- ★ He left as a Heel and decides to come back as a Babyface, since he's intending to oppose Keystone's Revolution movement, and Keystone is a Heel. He could come back in an Advanced Role, but doesn't think it's time for that for Marco just yet
- ★ He lowers his Heat with everyone by -1
- ★ He takes a -1 to his Audience. Marco had +3 when he left, so he now has a +2 on his return

The new Veteran "Millionaire" Marco is ready to debut.

# How To Play Your Wrestler

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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If you watch wrestling regularly, you've probably internalized a lot of what makes wrestling work and how the performers make themselves larger than life. If you're not as immersed in that world, or feel like you're having trouble portraying a wrestler in this game, this chapter breaks down how to approach playing your character.

### CONCEPT

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All wrestlers have a core concept. While your Gimmick describes an archetype, it's up to you to decide on what the "deal" is with your character. The goal of your character's ring attire, entrance music, and even moveset is to communicate to the viewing audience what that "deal" is as smoothly as possible, so they can get to understanding the story you're telling quickly and without a lot of exposition. This is why wrestling outfits are so frequently literal and obvious. Cowboy hat, jeans and boots? Well, that's a cowboy character. Come out in a robe and glasses holding a book? Educated, or at least thinks-he-smarter-than-you character. Explosions and fog machines heralding your entrance? Someone supernatural or bizarre, with the entrance already signaling to the audience "suspend your disbelief a little more, this is going to be a different kind of character."

Be obvious in your choices and pick a concept that you would be excited to see in front of you if you were a viewer. The game is built to allow you to evolve your character over time, so you're not locked into your initial choice in any way. Doing the obvious things (especially for the first Episode or two) makes it easier for everyone to interact with one another as they gain familiarity with how the game works. Even if you copy your favorite real-world wrestler, the events of play will quickly push them into new storylines and you'll have your own ideas of how they should develop, making them unique to you.



THE DDT IS SO CROWD-PLEASE-  
ING BECAUSE IT CAN BE HIT OUT  
OF ALMOST ANY POSITION

## YOUR WRESTLERS AGENDA

Get into your characters head. What do you want? This can be simple: “I want to win the World Wide Wrestling Pan-Oceanic Championship” or complex: “I want to build a stable of cronies, then trade them to Uncle Money for his support in getting me named to the Management Council;” abstract: “I want to show that I’m the greatest high flyer of all time” or specific: “I want to make Mammoth Marco tap out with my submission finish.”

Having a goal for your character is important for two big reasons. First, it’s a way to give yourself a direction for any interaction you have. Because of how booking works, you aren’t always going to have storylines that focus directly on what you want. Often, Creative decides your immediate direction and you’ll be playing off of what opportunities you’re given on camera. Sometimes, you’ll end up in a match or a feud that comes out of left field and you’ll need something to fall back on. You will often be able to use your goal as something to tap into these situations and make them more interesting.

Second, a goal means you have something to agitate for as a player. Many of the Move results give you the opportunity to book a specific match or demand a certain segment, and you should use those to advance towards your goals. Don’t worry about whether you’re “ruining” anything or messing with what Creative has planned—that’s the whole point! Creative’s job is to take the swerves you serve up and work them in, not to steamroll you with their agenda.

When things slow down and you don’t feel a sense of urgency about addressing the situation in front of you, take action in service of your agenda. Not only will this be more fun for you as a player, it’s how you develop the idea of your character as having an “inner life” as a fully realized persona outside of the ring, as well as in it. Use your goals and agenda to add dimensions to your character over time.

## CUTTING PROMOS

You’ll have ample opportunities to cut promos in this game. Not only will Creative cast you into plenty of talking segments, there is always a mic available to your wrestler. Just say that you want to say something, and you’ll be given time to talk.

What makes a good promo? A good promo engages the audience, communicates something new about you, your opponent, or your feud, and creates an opportunity for response.

**IN ORDER TO DO THAT, CONCENTRATE ON THREE KEY INGREDIENTS:**

- ★ Who you are.
- ★ What you want.
- ★ Why you'll get it.

"Who you are" doesn't mean just repeating your name over and over. Use promos to introduce new aspects of your character, or reveal something that you've started understanding about yourself and you want to make explicit. The audience only knows what you tell them. "What you want" is often the easiest to talk about, because it's generally the reason you're cutting the promo, but if you are having a hard time making your promo "about" something, remember your goals and look for an opportunity to make this promo about something larger than just the next match or opponent. "Why you'll get it" could be a description of your wrestling prowess, or an aspect of your character that makes you unique or superior to your opponent.

You can deliver your promo in-character or you can describe what your wrestler says in the third person. One common way to do it is to deliver the promo in character, and then recap the points you're trying to get across out-of-character "...so my point here is, I may not be stronger than Mammoth Marco, but I'm smarter and, in the ring, it's smarts that matter." Remember—regardless of the smoothness, intensity, or entertainment value of what comes out of your mouth as a player, it's the roll of the dice that tells you how well your wrestler communicated to the audience. The purpose of the die roll is to make it so that, sometimes, even the best-delivered promo falls flat or the most stumbling hits a chord. You don't need to be really good at talking in real life for your character to deliver great promos!

**★ ★ ★ ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR OPPONENT ★ ★ ★**

If you're going to speak directly to or about another wrestler, it's good practice to talk them up at least a little bit (unless your character is an insulting jerk, which has its place). Defeating an opponent you respect, even grudgingly, makes you look better than defeating someone you think is worthless; beating someone strong is more appealing than beating someone weak. The audience can only tell how you feel about someone by what you say about them, so when you build them up in your promo you're telegraphing that it will be an achievement to defeat them.

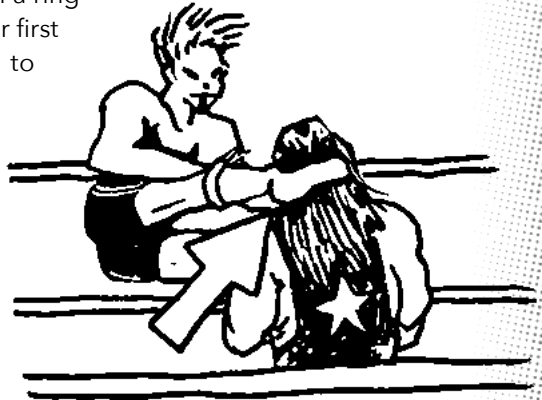


## NARRATING WRESTLING MATCHES

When your character wrestles, it's as much a part of their character as their costume, entrance, and the way they talk. Even if you don't have a deep knowledge of wrestling moves, you should describe your grappling in ways that echo your concept and character. Does your wrestler punch and brawl? Do they go to the ropes and flip around their opponent? Do they take everything their opponent dishes out before getting started? Do they hang on for dear life, making it a big deal whenever they get a hit in? Do they counter and reverse into technical holds? Do they employ misdirection or set up traps for their opponent to blunder into? Coming up with a ring strategy and sticking to it for your first couple matches is a great way to establish your character and how they "feel" in the ring.

Remember that when you have control of a match you are in charge of building up to the next big spot, including narrating your opponents' moves as they react to yours. Interstitial or "transition" moves vary depending on wrestling style and performer, but some standard things include: exchanging punches, running the ropes, clotheslines, Irish whips, dropkicks, and rest holds (headlocks, hammerlocks, bear hugs, or anything else that puts the two wrestlers heads together so they can call the next sequence under the guise of trashtalking). If you're uncomfortable narrating everything in the sequence, ask your opponent how they react to what you're doing and invite them to add details. Just remember you retain general authority over the sequence.

When you get to the big spot, you narrate it and then decide which Stat to roll on (if you're doing the basic **WRESTLING MOVE**). This is where you focus on a specific single maneuver. Again, if you don't know the names of wrestling moves off the top of your head, use the provided maneuver illustrations—just pick something that looks cool or has a cool name! If you do have wrestling knowledge, remember to describe how it looks and any unique twist your character puts on it.



THE UTILITARIAN ENZIGURI FITS MANY MOVESETS AND CAN WORK ANYTIME DURING A MATCH

Your narration might make it obvious which Stat to roll on, but if it's in doubt you can ask the table for their input. Generally, you should narrate up to the maneuver's execution, then roll for the Move you're using before describing the result. This is so you can narrate the final effect based on your roll and avoid narrating a successful move only for it to Botch, necessitating a revision of your narration. Your wrestler is assumed to always be able to functionally execute the Move; it's the *quality* of the execution or the ability of your opponent to find a counter for it that depends on the dice. You never "whiff" in the sense of being unable to perform in the ring. Rolling a Botch can mean you actually mess up the move, but it could also mean that the audience just doesn't like it, or that your opponent interrupts and counters it. It depends on the context, and you have control over what it actually means, so you can shade it towards how it matches your character in the moment.

You roll the dice for any important moment. This doesn't always have to be a wrestling maneuver! Narrating how your Monster stands impervious to a flurry of blows without moving an inch could be a big spot, calling on you to roll +Power for the **WRESTLING MOVE**. A loudmouth character might grab a mic and start insulting his opponent from outside the ring in order to throw them off their game, exemplifying their character and allowing you to roll +Look for **WRESTLING**. You can also roll for a Gimmick or basic Move when you narrate the appropriate trigger. One common strategy is to **WORK THE AUDIENCE** midway through a match, in order to get them behind you and gain some Momentum.

Sometimes, you'll be the one in control when Creative reveals the finish of the match. If your wrestler is booked to win, that's generally straightforward, but what happens when you're in control and your opponent is supposed to get the 1-2-3? You still narrate the sequence, but it's in service to setting up your opponent's victory. This applies generally: just because you have control doesn't mean you need to narrate how your wrestler is doing well. **You can narrate the other wrestler as having control of the in-ring action, even as you have narrative control.** Especially when building up to a finish where your wrestler loses, this is a great opportunity to show how your wrestler behaves when they're on the receiving end of a beating or to demonstrate your ability to make the other wrestler look good. When you do get to the final move of a match, your opponent still describes their finishing move (they roll the dice for it, of course), unless you have a great idea for a finish that doesn't involve them hitting a particular maneuver.

Note that they still roll for the **FINISHING MOVE** on their Gimmick sheet, even if they don't literally hit their wrestler's finisher in the narration.

What happens when the finish is revealed and you want a different ending to the match? This is where you should look at your Moves which have effects that change or override Creative's booking. The **HEEL Move**, in particular, is built for doing this, but many Gimmicks have Moves which allow you to override Creative's booking. Whenever you override Creative's booking, their job is to make it look like the new ending was the original plan—there may be backstage fallout or other consequences, but Creative abides by the results of your Moves along with everyone else. If you have nothing that applies, or can't make any of the narrative triggers work in the context of the moment, you can narrate how your wrestler ignores the booking entirely to do what they want. This triggers the **BREAK KAYFABE Move**.

## LOOKING GOOD WHILE MAKING OTHERS LOOK GOOD

Wrestling and roleplaying have one key thing in common: they're both about making your peers look good. In wrestling, performers have to trust each other and give each other room to perform, so that everyone involved can look their best. This, in turn, means more audience, more money, and more fame for everyone. In roleplaying, players have to trust each other and give each other hooks for their characters to take advantage of, so that everyone involved can take the spotlight when they have something to contribute.

### THESE ARE YOUR PLAYER AGENDAS:

- ★ Be *generous*. Ask other players questions about their characters and invite them to interact with your wrestler.
- ★ Be *positive*. Answer questions by building on them. Join in other storylines when invited or opportunities present themselves.
- ★ Be *obvious*. What seems too obvious to be interesting in your head is probably something nobody else at the table would come up with. At worst, you will establish a baseline to grow from; trying to come up with the most “creative” material can lead to paralysis or things too abstract for others to work with.

Your contributions reflect back upon you. By making others look good, you also look good. The characters compete, but all players share the goal of making the most awesome wrestling storylines possible; being generous, positive, and obvious is the way to do it.

# MOVES

## CHAPTER SIX

Moves are the discrete, consequential actions taken by your wrestlers. Any player's wrestler can use the General Moves (the basic things all wrestlers do) and In-Ring Moves (used to play out wrestling matches). Each wrestler has their own Gimmick Moves, noted on their Gimmick sheets. Only Creative uses the Creative Moves.

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The General and In-Ring Moves are provided for reference starting on **PAGE 148**.  
Download the most updated Moves reference sheets at [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg)

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General Moves are available to all of the players all of the time—things like cutting promos and working the audience. In-Ring Moves are available to all players whenever they wrestle. Both the General and In-Ring Moves are grouped together on their own reference sheets, and you should have a couple of those sheets on the table during play so everyone has access to them. For easy reference they're sub-divided by the part of the game they apply to (Top of the Card Moves only apply to certain wrestlers, Stipulation Moves only apply to matches with those stipulations, and so on). Gimmick Moves are the Moves listed on each individual Gimmick sheet. Each player can only use the Gimmick Moves they've selected from their initial picks, as well as any taken with Advances.

Creative has their own list of Moves, used in response to the player's actions. Players usually announce their Moves when they make them, while Creative picks a Move in reaction to the game's circumstances, making decisions and announcements in accordance with the Move they picked.

Most of this section focuses on the Moves that players make. Creative has their own guidance for their Moves in Chapter Nine: How To Be Creative (**PAGE 79**).

### TO MAKE A MOVE

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Take a look at some Moves (**PAGE 148**). They list a trigger condition, in the name of the Move (like "**WORK THE AUDIENCE**") and/or in the description (like "**BABYFACE**: When you stand up for something you believe in..."). To make the Move, you can just narrate the action called for, or specify which Move you want to make and then narrate how your

character fulfills the trigger condition. Usually, you'll just be saying what your character says and does, then resolve any Moves made during the narration (whether you were aiming to make one, or you realize that you're triggering one partway through). Sometimes Creative will ask if you're making a specific Move based on what you're saying, as one of Creative's jobs is to pay attention and tell players that they're triggering a Move if they don't notice.

Once a Move is triggered, simply take the listed action. Most Moves ask you to "Roll +Stat", which just means roll 2d6+Stat indicated; compare the total to the results listed on the Move, making whatever decisions you need to make. A result can be a *strong hit* (10 and above), a *partial hit* (7-9) or a *Botch* (6 and below). Often it matters whether you get a strong hit or a hit, but not always. It always matters whether you hit or Botch.

### \*\*\* ANATOMY OF A MOVE \*\*\*

**CUT A PROMO:** When you take the mic and speak your mind, roll +Look.

- ★ On a 10+ you connect with the audience, gain +1 Momentum and pick 1 from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 you get them to pay attention, pick 1:
  - make Creative book you in a match
  - add a stipulation to a relevant match
  - gain +1 Momentum
  - gain +1 Heat with the subject of your Promo.

The trigger is "when you take the mic and speak your mind." This Move triggers almost every time a wrestler says anything important on camera. You could say "I'm cutting a promo," narrate it and then roll, or just naturally launch into one when a mic is put in your wrestlers face. Either way, you trigger the Move and make the roll.

The action is "roll +Look," so you roll 2d6 and add your wrestler's Look score (positive or negative) to the result.

Once you have your result, you see if it's 6 or less, 7-9 or 10 or above. For this Move a 10+ is just a little bit better for your wrestler, since it gives you a Momentum in addition to the choices on the 7-9 result.

This Move does not have a specific Botch result, which means if you get a 6 or less, it's time for Creative to pick one of their Hard Moves that applies to the situation. You could get booked in a punitive match, lose the confidence of management backstage, or perhaps be stripped of an opportunity because of your characters failure to connect with the audience on their promo! It's up to Creative.

Remember, you spend Momentum to gain a bonus on your roll *after* you see the result, so if you get a total of 6, you might want to spend a Momentum to bring it to a 7 in order to avoid the Botch.

Botches are opportunities for Creative to add more difficulties into your character's storyline and/or personal life, and sometimes have specific effects depending on the Move in question.

## JUDGMENT CALLS

Some Moves ask you to make a judgment call, either about the trigger condition or about the result. For example, the **BABYFACE** Role Move:

### \*\*\* BABYFACE \*\*\*

When you stand up for something you believe in, spend 2 Momentum and pick 1 of the following:

- \* gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- \* leave your opponent speechless
- \* make Creative book you in a match
- \* add a stipulation to a match

Whether a specific action is your wrestler standing up for something they believe in is a judgment call. It's always up to you, the player, to decide whether it's the case or not. Whether it's significant to leave your opponent speechless in that moment is also a judgment call, depending on the nature of the relationship. Sometimes a wrestler will do the same thing multiple times (maybe even in a single Episode), but in one case they're standing up for something they believe in and in another they're not! Spending the Momentum to trigger this Move means that you're making a statement about what your wrestler believes; deciding to leave your opponent speechless is a statement about the relationship between the two of you and the power of your character's righteousness. A powerful subtlety exists in making these judgment calls. Remember that it's always up to the player, not Creative or anyone else. When in doubt, trust your gut and your sense of dramatic action.

## CREATIVE MAKES IT WORK

Between the General, In-Ring, and Gimmick Moves, there are a lot of potential Moves and outcomes. Moves can sometimes interact in odd or inconsistent ways. One of Creative's jobs is to look at the situation at hand in the larger context of what they have booked and what's going on in the Episode so far, making their own decisions about how to apply the interactions in a seamless manner. In play, the context surrounding the use of the Moves tends to make it clear how they should be combined, but it is ultimately up to Creative.



## WHICH MOVE?

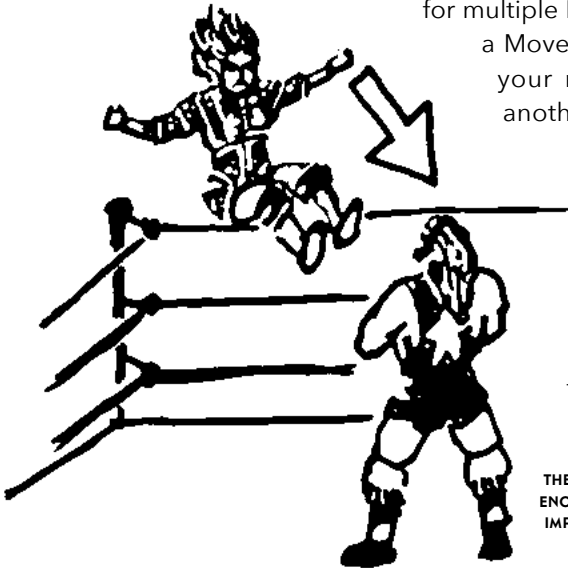
Some of the Moves are differentiated more by their intended effect than by their fictional triggers. For example, your babyface delivers an inspirational promo at the top of the ramp, thanking the fans and saying they couldn't have made it without them. The character could **WORK THE AUDIENCE**, **CUT A PROMO** or even make the **BABYFACE MOVE**! It depends on your intent. If you intend to whip the audience up and get them on your side, you should roll for **WORK THE AUDIENCE**. If you intend to make a proclamation of your characters state of mind going into the match, roll for **CUT A PROMO**. If you intend for it to be an example of the character standing up for the strong bond with their fans which they really believe in, then it's the **BABYFACE MOVE**.

Some players look at the Move list and pick the specific thing they're going for and narrate such that they trigger it. Others approach the game from a more in-character perspective, not thinking about the dice until they happen to trigger a certain Move. In the latter case, you might have more conversations about what Move in particular you think would best fit the situation. Creative is generally on the lookout for when Moves are triggered, and may ask you about it at key points of your narration.

While one action or description could potentially trigger multiple Moves, you pick *only one* to roll for and see where it takes you. You never use the same fictional trigger to roll

for multiple Moves; once you've made a Move, you need to move on in your narration before making another one. Often, the results

of a Move will directly inform the path before you; many of the Moves are complimentary to each other, but you still need to narrate separate triggers to roll for them.



THE MISSILE DROPKICK IS BOTH SHOWY ENOUGH TO PULL IN A DEAD CROWD AND IMPACTFUL ENOUGH TO TURN A MATCH'S MOMENTUM AROUND

## USING MOVES

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Like the Gimmicks, the general Moves are listed in their entirety at the end of this book for easy reference (**PAGE 148**). Reference sheet downloads are available at [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg) and will be updated as needed. The downloadable sheets should be considered to be the correct ones if you notice any discrepancy between them and the material in this book. Presented here are some expanded thoughts on the best way to implement the Moves, and some corner cases that can come up in play. Since Creative is generally the one with authority over how the Moves interact, the following notes are addressed to them.

### BASIC MOVES

**CHEAP HEAT:** Even when the insult or compliment is buried inside a **PROMO** or an attempt to **WORK THE AUDIENCE**, it still triggers (this is an exception to the "one Move at a time" rule).

**WORK THE AUDIENCE:** The most obvious place to **WORK THE AUDIENCE** is when the wrestler is physically in front of a live audience. **WORK THE AUDIENCE** is also a great Move to make in the middle of a match, whether because it naturally fits into the action or because the wrestler wants to build up more Momentum.

It can be unclear whether something a wrestler says is **WORKING THE AUDIENCE** or **CUTTING A PROMO**. The key difference is that **WORK THE AUDIENCE** doesn't demand a response or push a feud forward, while **CUT A PROMO** does. A Botch already turns the audience against the wrestler (by taking away their ability to use this Move for the Episode), so any additional Hard Moves should revolve around that.

**CUT A PROMO:** The trigger uses the phrase "take the mic" but a promo doesn't require a literal mic if the context doesn't include it. **CUTTING A PROMO** is one of the most common Moves. It triggers after anything a wrestler says which demands a response or pushes a feud forward (as noted above in **WORK THE AUDIENCE**). If a player is having trouble coming up with the content of their promo, they can describe the basic points that the wrestler is trying to get across and the dice result will tell you whether the audience gets it or not. A Botch on this is generally a good time to push a NPW over the character, announce legit badness (like someone backstage turning sour on them), turn the audience on them, or change your booking on the fly to give them a loss.

**FEAT OF STRENGTH:** Demonstrating extraordinary strength can involve props (like bending iron bars or crushing rocks), what the wrestler does

to someone else (like throwing someone across the ring), or action taken that demands incredible physicality (like a pose-down or eating 100 hot dogs). The 7-9 result of "risk of injury" creates an opportunity for you to follow up with a Hard Move that injures that character when appropriate. In the ring, if the wrestler is pushing their opponent around just to show off, rather than to move the match along, you should use this Move instead of rolling +Power for the **WRESTLING MOVE**. A Botch injures the wrestler, sometimes presenting a ripe moment for another Hard Move.

**BREAK KAYFABE:** The key question for this is, "are you breaking kayfabe?" Because part of the fun for a lot the Gimmicks is treading the line between kayfabe and legit reality, it can be a difficult call to interpret in the moment; pause and ask, "are you **BREAKING KAYFABE** here?" when it's unclear. The player should telegraph this as much as possible. In addition, there are a couple of Moves that demand that a player's wrestler act in a certain way—if the subject of one of those Moves wants to refuse that demand, they need to **BREAK KAYFABE** to do so.

Finally, **BREAKING KAYFABE** can only work on camera. If the scene takes place off-camera, there's no kayfabe to break and characters can switch between wrestling reality and legit concerns freely and without consequences. A Botch on **BREAK KAYFABE** should bring down as hard a Move as you can come up with for that moment.

**RUN-IN:** This is the "I'm bored" Move. It's a legitimate Move to make for a player who feels like they haven't had enough screen time, and is the best way for a player to get their character into a storyline with someone they haven't been booked with yet. The storyline reasons for running in can range from a Heel taking advantage of a Babyface's weakened state to get the jump on them to an intentional drawing of a DQ in order to advance the agenda of the wrestler running in. The logic behind the set of 7-9 options is rooted in a wrestling trope that non-fans may not be familiar with, so here it is:

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When Abracadabra and Blockhead are wrestling a standard match with no special rules and Crusher runs in to attack Abracadabra, Crusher is technically "interfering" on Blockhead's behalf; Blockhead may be disqualified and Abracadabra wins the match. If Blockhead is DQed, he may be (understandably) irate that Crusher lost him a match that he had well in hand. If Crusher runs in on a match that has a no-DQ stipulation (like a Hardcore Match), the match still ends in a no contest, with no winner declared, and Blockhead is still unfairly denied a victory by Crusher. Thus, a run-in often ends with the wrestler who was not the target of the interference starting a feud with the wrestler who ran in to disrupt their match.

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On a Botch, you may interpret this as something happening to keep the run-in from occurring, or apply a Hard Move after the run-in happens.

## ROLE MOVES

Both of these Moves are completely within the player's control. Often, when the character is obviously doing *something* meaningful but none of the other Moves seem to cover it, it'll fall under this Move. Creative should prompt players when they seem to be triggering these Moves.

**BABYFACE:** As mentioned above, the "something you believe in" doesn't have to be a particularly positive or honorable thing. But it should be clear that the wrestler has something they care about more than breaking the rules. This may include giving up a victory or opportunity to win!

**HEEL:** Doing "something underhanded" should be contextual to the rules and restrictions in play at the time and should generally be clearly telegraphed by the player. Note that this Move lets you just win a match by cheating, as long as you have the 2 Momentum to spend—you can do this before the end of the match is announced, or after (in order to swerve the booking). If multiple players used the **HEEL** Move to win a match, apply them in sequence. Sometimes a match result will be subject to multiple attempts to change it from various characters. Whether it's appropriate to continue using the Move to cheat out a win multiple times in one match is up to Creative.

## ADVANCED ROLE MOVES

All three of these Moves (**LEGEND**, **ICON** and **CELEBRITY**) enable the character to dominate the top of the card by giving them more ways to gain Audience than the other characters. They also open up the player to losing Audience by Botching the Move. Creative should almost always make a Hard Move in addition to losing the Audience (including doubling up and losing them -2 Audience, if they deserve it). The consequences for letting down the audience for a character on that level should be dire!

## TOP OF THE CARD MOVES

**OVER:** Players make this Move before the Episode starts. Unlike most of the other Moves, this is a "meta" Move that represents general popularity and doesn't trigger on any particular action. It's just a check of whether the wrestler has +4 Audience or not. The results from this Move should probably happen first on the show, but the player can save

them and introduce them later. The Botch is an opportunity for you to try to kill their popularity by putting them against a nobody, but it could be used to introduce a new, legitimate challenger as well.

**CHAMPION'S ADVANTAGE:** This applies to anyone defending a championship (whether it's a literal title or not). If the match in question is a no-DQ match or has some other stipulation that affects the "counted out" part, this Move still ends the match in some kind of no-contest. You work out how exactly the title is kept in these cases.

### IN-RING MOVES & STIPULATIONS

Details of how to apply the Moves for in-ring action are contained in the next chapter, Wrestling (PAGE 64).

As a general note, remember that wrestlers can use non-wrestling Moves while they're in the ring, but they generally cannot use an in-ring Move when they're not actually wrestling.

### WHAT ABOUT BACKSTAGE? \_\_\_\_\_

You'll notice that there are no general Moves that trigger from off-camera interactions. Some Gimmicks have individual Gimmick Moves that do apply backstage, but in general all segments that aren't in front of the Imaginary Viewing Audience are conducted through improvisational roleplaying conversation.

What happens when conflict happens backstage? The players (including Creative) use what they know of their characters to inform how they interact and decide what the most appropriate resolution should be. Creative still uses their Moves to guide off-camera segments in certain ways and enforce consequences for legit actions. Players can take their grievances or agendas back in front of the audience in order to get what they want, if they're having trouble talking their way into it.

In the constructed world of professional wrestling, it's what happens on camera that informs the reality.

Matches show off your wrestler's in-ring abilities, advance storylines, and are the basic draw for your audience. The promise of a good wrestling match is why the audience pays hard-earned money to see your show! This chapter goes over the mechanics of applying the In-Ring Moves to a wrestling match. For more about narrating a match in a productive and entertaining matter, see the Narrating Wrestling Matches section in *How To Play A Wrestler* (PAGE 53).

Matches are generally announced and booked ahead of time by Creative. Some Moves enable players to make matches during an Episode. Matches can also be created through roleplaying interaction (though Creative has to sign off on them). Matches can be booked between players, or between a player and a NPW. Any match between multiple NPWs is simply narrated in broad strokes by Creative. Play time should always focus on the player's wrestlers.

The key concept for playing out a match is *narrative control*, or just "control". During a match, one player at a time has control, so they narrate the majority of the action between the ropes. Their opponent helps out, narrating their character's contributions.

The mechanical core of the match is the **WRESTLING MOVE**, which determines how well the character in control executes their big maneuvers and key spots. Once a player narrates their exchange, they pick the Stat (Look, Power, Real or Work) that best fits their wrestler's actions, make the roll, and chooses the appropriate result from the **WRESTLING MOVE** (a full breakdown of the **WRESTLING MOVE** is on PAGE 66).

Control transitions between players as a result of the dice, players using the **INTERRUPT MOVE** to jump in and take control for themselves, or the player with control choosing to hand it off. This back-and-forth narration continues until the end of the match is called or triggered, whereupon Creative reveals their pre-arranged finish.

### STARTING THE MATCH

Creative chooses who starts in control based on their sense of narrative appropriateness; often, one player will have done better on a pre-match **CUT A PROMO** or **WORK THE AUDIENCE** roll, indicating that they should start it off. If in doubt, whoever has more Momentum starts in control. If the match is booked with an NPW, the player always starts in control.



## THE ANNOUNCER

As the match starts, Creative designates one of the players not in the match (if any) as the Announcer for the match. Use a prop (like a physical microphone) or a notecard with “Announcer” written on it to keep track of the Announcer. The Announcer’s job is to call the match as if they were color commentary at ringside, recapping the action and putting their own spin on things as the match progresses. The Announcer also has a very specific ability: they can **Put OVER** the wrestlers whenever they feel like the action needs a boost.

The Announcer can **Put OVER** each wrestler once per match. To put a wrestler over, the Announcer recaps something they just did in the most glowing light; this bumps the wrestler’s die roll up to the next result level, from a Botch (6-) to a partial hit (7-9), or from a partial hit to a full hit (10+). The Announcer should generally wait to see what the player rolls before deciding whether to put them over or not, and there’s often some negotiation on a failed roll between whether the player wants to spend Momentum or the Announcer should put them over—this is fine! Just remember that the Announcer can only put over each wrestler once per match.

Once the Announcer has put over a wrestler, they are free to hand the mic off to someone else whose character isn’t yet present. If there are no eligible players, the mic just goes back to Creative for now. Creative can act as the color commentator, but they do **not** have the power to put over wrestlers. Other players who aren’t participating in the match can also take on color commentary roles, but until the Announcer mic is passed to them they can’t **Put OVER** anyone either. If the Announcer’s character appears in the scene, the Announcer must hand off the mic even if they haven’t **Put OVER** anyone yet.

## WORKING THE MATCH

Whoever has control narrates their wrestler’s moves and prompts their opponent for their responses. This is a conversation; you should be talking with your opponent, not simply dictating to them. Just as your wrestlers work together to entertain the Imaginary Viewing Audience, you and your fellow players need to work together to entertain everyone at the table.

You should cover a whole range of action with your narration, as opposed to a single maneuver at a time. These sequences lead up to a big moment in the match. Generally, you’ll make the **WRESTLING Move** for these moments, but you can make any other Moves that

are appropriate to your actions (like **WORK THE AUDIENCE** or a Gimmick Move that applies to in-ring action). When you get to your big signature move, that's when you make the **WRESTLING MOVE** and find out the consequences.

### ★ ★ ★ THE **WRESTLING MOVE** ★ ★ ★

When you have control of the match, you narrate the transitional sequences, working with your opponent to fill in the details. When a sequence leads up to a big spot or key move in the ring, narrate the maneuver and roll:

If you execute a difficult, demanding or dangerous maneuver that showcases your technical wrestling ability roll +Work

If you put your opponent or yourself at legit risk by using your physical strength, roll +Power

If you execute a signature move, demonstrate your character through action or otherwise showcase your Gimmick, roll +Look

If you work with your opponent to execute an amazing and memorable sequence, roll +Heat

- ★ On a 10+ you hit it great, retain control and pick one:
  - gain +2 Momentum
  - gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- ★ On a 7-9 you hit it pretty well, pick one:
  - retain control and transition into the next sequence
  - give your opponent control and gain +1 Momentum
- ★ On a Botch you get countered. Give 1 Momentum to your opponent, and they immediately take control of the match (if you have no Momentum, they still gain 1).

You choose which Stat to roll on based on what aspect of your character you want to showcase with the Move. You may narrate your wrestlers spot and then pick the Stat, or aim your narration towards a particular choice from the beginning. Often, a given maneuver could work for more than one Stat, and different characters will roll different Stats for the same spot. It's up to you to decide which one you want to use. When in doubt, play to your strengths! The player with control continues narrating and making Moves until one of the following happens:

- ★ The result of a Move demands that you hand off control
- ★ Your opponent uses the **INTERRUPT MOVE** to take control
- ★ You voluntarily cede control to your opponent
- ★ Creative calls for the end of the match

Sometimes a match will have a stipulation that effects narration or adds a Move you can make; Creative will let you know when special stipulations apply and whether they have mechanical effects.

Remember that you can spend Momentum to give yourself bonuses on your rolls during a match. You also want to build up Momentum during the match because, if you're booked to win, you might need it for your **FINISHING MOVE**.

## ENDING THE MATCH

### A MATCH ENDS IN ONE OF THREE WAYS:

- ★ Creative declares that the match is coming to a close, based on their desired pacing for the show.
- ★ The players involved run out of Momentum.
- ★ One of the players declares that their wrestler "calls an audible" and wants to end the match early.

When one of these things happens, Creative reveals the booking, and the player of the character who's booked to win makes their **FINISHING MOVE**. In the case where a player is booked to lose to an NPW, they do not make their **FINISHING MOVE**, they simply get pinned, or whatever the booking demands. Calling an audible just means that the player wants to end the match with the pre-arranged booking. If they want to change the booking of the match (either before or after it's revealed), they have to use a Move that allows them to do so.

## WORKING WITH NPWs

Creative generally plays NPWs in matches. If they prefer, they can cast another player into the role for the duration of the match instead. NPWs never make rolls; they simply take up narration when the player cedes control (by choice or as a result of a roll), looking for opportunities to give it back when appropriate. When an NPW is booked to win, no **FINISHING MOVES** are made.

Those only trigger when a player's character is booked to win a match. If the player wants to override the booking and force a win over an NPW, that generally triggers the **BREAK KAYFABE** Move (unless the player has another more appropriate Move).



THE ARMBAR SOFTENS UP THE ARM FOR  
LATER SUBMISSION ATTEMPTS

## WORKING WITH EACH OTHER

Matches between players have a more back-and-forth flow, as each player rolls dice for their Moves, potentially triggering counters. It's still up to Creative to call the end of the match, either due to a mechanical trigger or their sense of dramatic pacing (as listed on the previous page). When the finish is revealed, the player with control narrates the ending sequence for the match, with the booked winner making their **FINISHING MOVE**. Control can still be taken and passed around during the ending sequence, but the player who's booked to win makes their **FINISHING MOVE** regardless of who has control when the finish occurs. Generally, it makes sense to narrate up to the moment the wrestler goes for their finisher, then find out the results of the **FINISHING MOVE** before narrating the final moment; the results tend to tell you how well it goes over and whether the opponent has a key role to play in the finish.

## THE REWARDS

Once the end of the match is settled, each player checks to see whether their wrestler has +4 Heat with any of their opponents. Everyone who does gains +1 Audience, as the intensity of their issues with their opponent draws the crowd further into the feud. This applies both to wrestlers who started a match at +4, and those who gain Heat during the match to bring them to +4. Everyone in the match checks, regardless of who won or what happened to end the match in the event of a no-contest.

If a wrestler hits +4 Heat with multiple opponents (like in a tag team match), they still only gain +1 Audience. In the unlikely event that a wrestler hits +4, loses Heat and then hits +4 again, they still only gain +1 Audience.

"Opponent" is defined broadly, and applies to anyone involved in the match on the opposing side from your wrestler. For example, if your wrestler hits +4 with their opponents manager (who was present at ringside) you still gain the +1 Audience even though the manager didn't get in the ring.

If a wrestler would gain Heat and they're already at +4, nothing happens, they simply remain at +4 Heat.



THE POWERBOMB IS EASY TO CUSTOMIZE FOR A SINGLE WRESTLER, OR AS A TANDEM TAG MANEUVER

## TAGS AND MULTI-WRESTLER MATCHES

In a tag team match, players have access to the Tag Team Moves. These Moves give options for building Momentum and passing control between teammates. Tag matches can be a little more complicated to keep straight because there's more wrestlers involved. However, it's still one continuous back-and-forth conversation, just with more participants. The booking for a tag match may be for specific wrestler to win, or just for one of the teams. In the latter case, the legal wrestler when the end of the match is called is the one who makes their **FINISHING MOVE**.

To use the Tag Team Moves (**HOT TAG** and **TAG TURN**) appropriately, you do need to keep track of the legal wrestler for each team. In a standard tag team match, the wrestler in the ring is the *legal wrestler*. They need to make a tag to their partner in their corner to switch out with them, whereupon their partner becomes the legal wrestler (or their partner can tag themselves in if they have a chance). Only the legal wrestler can get the pinfall or submission victory in a tag team match.

Any match with more than two participants (Triple Threat, Fatal Four Way, etc) follows the same basic logic—each wrestler has narration until they lose it, have to pass it on, or get interrupted. Creative still calls the end of the match and will let you know who's booked to win. In the case of multiple NPWs being involved, Creative should narrate their business together, keeping the main spotlight on the player's wrestlers.

## MAKING A DEDICATED TAG TEAM

Making and breaking tag teams is Creative and storyline dependent. When two players are in an ad hoc tag team, they can still have singles matches and they retain their individual Gimmick identities. If two players want to take their tag relationship to the next level, they can commit their characters to being a Dedicated Tag Team.

### TO MAKE A DEDICATED TAG TEAM:

Each player must spend an Advance (on the "Form a Dedicated Tag Team" advancement option). This should be accompanied by a vignette or on-camera moment where the characters make the moment happen in front of the Imaginary Viewing Audience.

### WHEN TWO WRESTLERS ARE IN A DEDICATED TAG TEAM:

- ★ Come up with a tandem tag finisher. Whenever the team is booked to win a match, the legal man can use either character's **FINISHING MOVE** when they perform the tandem finisher.

- ★ During a match, each partner can spend their Momentum to give bonuses to the other's rolls, in addition to their own.
- ★ Both partners must be the same Role (Babyface, Heel or any combination of Advanced Roles).

#### **A DEDICATED TAG TEAM IS DISSOLVED WHEN:**

- ★ One of the partners makes a Role turn (Face Turn, Heel Turn or leaves and comes back in an Advanced Role).
- ★ If either partner hits 0 Heat with the other.

Dedicated tag teams still abide by Creative's booking decisions and use the Tag Team Moves as usual.

## **OTHER STIPULATIONS**

Many stipulations are simply drama-creating devices to add additional obstacles for wrestlers to overcome. For example, a cage match is more interesting because of the lack of a way to escape the ring, while a 2-out-of-3-falls match creates drama through the pursuit of the multiple falls (for more about how limits enhance matches, see **PAGE 81**).

If a match stipulation doesn't fundamentally change the core back-and-forth nature of a match, it probably doesn't need a special Stipulation Move. However, if the stipulation presents a greater risk of physical harm or relies heavily on chaotic interactions (or both), you should consider using or creating one.

Some Stipulation Moves are already included on the Moves Sheet, including **HARDCORE/VIOLENCE**, the **REGAL WRANGLE** (a timed-addition over-the-top-rope battle royal), and the **KING OF THE HILL** elimination match. See Chapter Ten: Building Your Promotion (**PAGE 86**) for guidelines on making new Custom Moves for your special stipulation matches.

### **★ ★ ★ A WORD OF ADVICE ★ ★ ★**

Before making a new Stipulation Move, think about whether the style of the match is already covered by existing Stipulations. One reason that there aren't many Stipulations presented here is that the Hardcore Stipulation already covers, in effect, most of the outcomes of any match involving objects or violence. A Ladder Match, a Street Fight, and a No Holds Barred match all present the same potential outcomes of extra Audience if you do well, injuries and drastic drops in Audience if you do poorly. That said, if the circumstances of your game demand a different take on the core Stipulations, have fun coming up with new twists on the formula!



# CONTINUING A SEASON

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**Y**ou're Creative. You've constructed a roster of entertaining wrestlers, played out a couple of matches, had some backstage segments, and kicked off the first stage of some storylines. Now what?

### GENERAL STRUCTURE

Each Episode of play follows the same basic format: establish some matches, bracket them with other segments, take the results of each segment, and use them to inform everyone what happens next (always with an eye towards entertaining the Imaginary Viewing Audience).

#### A NON—EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF SEGMENTS:

- ★ Interviews (pre-taped or live interview with a wrestler).
- ★ Promos (pre-taped or live opportunity for a wrestler to cut a promo, in-ring or backstage).
- ★ Matches (wrestling!).
- ★ Backstage Fallout (what happens immediately after a match).
- ★ Behind The Curtain (real-life fallout from kayfabe events).
- ★ Commercial Break (generally just a passing mention to establish a break between one sequence of Segments and the next, though you could also run an off-camera, real-life interaction that happens during the break).
- ★ Pre-show/Post-show (establish and wrap-up off-camera, real-life interactions).

As with the first Episode, you book each Episode ahead of time and choose the segments to use to fill out the show.

If a player wants a specific segment and it makes narrative sense, you should take their request into account and slot it into what you already have planned. If a player wants to force a segment by interrupting someone else's promo, running-in to a match in progress, or tracking down the General Manager backstage to discuss a contract, they simply narrate what their character is doing. This will often trigger an appropriate Move. Generally, you will always have some player-initiated segments and matches to work into an Episode once they have developed their agendas and rivalries.

One of the most important things for you to do before each session is to come up with your own agenda for play, listing the characters and set-pieces you need in order to pursue them. Your main tool for this is putting things On Deck.

## ON DECK

In between Episodes, you should take some time to think about the events of play and come up with some exciting, dynamic swerves which could drive the game onwards. These elements are "On Deck," waiting to be sent out when the action slows or you have a good opportunity to complicate what the wrestlers are doing.

Below are some guidelines for making wrestling-appropriate elements for this game. One convenient thing to keep in mind is that the things On Deck don't necessarily need to make sense; rather, they are a great place for you to place the NPWs and feuds that you've come up with but haven't had a chance to surface in the course of player-driven play yet. After all, the creative staff of the promotion always has a new character to debut or a new angle to try out.

For each player, come up with one element On Deck, and spread them out across the following categories:

**A NEW CHALLENGER:** The player's wrestlers can be involved in multiple feuds. Find or create a pretext, and introduce a new challenger for a wrestler who you feel is getting off easy or doesn't have enough to do. Debut the challenger in way which demands a response—interrupting a match, kidnapping a partner, a parking-lot beatdown, etc.

**BETRAYAL:** Anytime there's a team or a partnership, think about how it could get split up. Offer one member something they really want or insert the influence of a third party. Make the benefits of enacting a betrayal clear (if you're splitting up two player's wrestlers) or have the betrayal be sudden and brutal (if you have an NPW to use).

### ★ ★ ★ BANGS ★ ★ ★

Putting things On Deck is an implementation of a technique called "Bangs," as described by Ron Edwards in his 2001 RPG *Sorcerer*. There, he says, "Bangs are those moments when the characters realize they have a problem right now and have to get moving to deal with it." In the 2012 Annotations he says, "The essence of a Bang is that it may not be ignored...when the Bang hits, you have no idea where things will go now."

For this game, this means you should come up with beginnings, not endings; complications, not resolutions.

**GIVEN NEW RESPONSIBILITY:** This could be on-camera, like a wrestler being made a special guest referee for a match between two wrestlers they hate, or backstage, like giving the character some booking responsibility.

**GIVEN A NEW VALET OR MENTEE:** While wrestlers can gain valets or other companions of their choice with Advances, you can also arbitrarily assign them one. This works best when the two characters have a contentious relationship, whether on-camera or backstage, or when it's an obvious setup for some kind of underhanded deal.

**ADDED TO A STABLE:** Similarly, you can add wrestlers to tag teams or stables at your whim. Again, creating a stable with characters who have conflicting agendas or interests creates the most dynamic tension.

**OFF-CAMERA RELATIONSHIP SURFACES:** This can be an on-camera revelation of an off-camera relationship, or you can introduce a thus-far unacknowledged or unseen off-camera relationship. The wrestlers in question could be lovers, best friends, unknown children, bitter enemies, or any other destabilizing relationships you can think of.

**LOCKER ROOM CONFRONTATION:** One of the basic places to settle real-life issues is in the locker room. This could be entirely off-camera or put on-screen. When you feel like the players are treating the NPWs unfairly, this is where you can lay that issue out for all to see.

**RUMORS (FOUNDED OR UNFOUNDED):** Use an NPW to spread, ask about, or implicate a wrestler in a rumor. The great thing about rumors is that they're wide open to embellishment and can turn out, in the end, to be as true or as false as play demands. Use rumors to put pressure on the elements of a wrestler that their player is most invested in and see what happens.

**OR ANYTHING ELSE:** You aren't bound by these categories if you have ideas that don't fit into them cleanly. They're an aid, not a straitjacket.

The core idea of an element On Deck is that it's an exciting thing that demands response from the players, but doesn't telegraph specific endpoints.

Players will take things you thought would make them balk and embrace them; they'll also take something you thought wasn't that big of a deal and react like it changes their careers. Come up with cool stuff you want to see in play; introduce it at opportune moments with as much description as you can. Just be ready to change your mind about what you thought would happen.

## ORDERING THE CARD

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Once you finish the first Episode, you'll have many potential feuds and storylines that need your cultivation to grow into the operatic clashes that the best wrestling can be. The ideas you have On Deck are helpful for keeping things interesting and varied, and should generally be used to add drama to the player-driven storylines which arise in play.

Between Episodes, make some notes on the feuds that are still ongoing from the previous Episode and decide which segments and matches will further them. Rank the storylines in order of each wrestler's current Audience. If multiple wrestlers are involved, add their ratings together to get their overall score. This determines the order of the card—the hottest stuff should go on last and the lowest-rated first. Book the winners of the matches according to your sense of drama and what you think will make the most satisfying long-term story. If in doubt, Babyfaces tend to gain more sympathy when they're chasing victory, while Heels will use an early win against them as fuel for longer-term grudges. Because the players can (and will) override your booking, you shouldn't plan too far ahead. Just think about what the result of the next match is going to mean and book with that in mind.

When to end a storyline? Well, gaining a championship is a good natural ending point. It's also natural to use it as the launching pad for a different storyline involving the same wrestlers. Use your judgment, while also letting the actions of the players guide you.

For the purposes of this game, any feud that sees the same match more than three times in a row is probably in need of changing up, either by adding another dimension to the storyline or by capping it off with a major blowoff match. Whenever your booking is overruled or made irrelevant, use it as an opportunity to revise the storyline. Finally, if the player loses interest in the feud and starts agitating (or forcing) other ideas, you should run with those. Play is a conversation between all of you at the table, and your job is to mix it all together for maximum entertainment value.

## BOOKING MATCHES

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Each wrestling match has a different story to tell. Some are quick affairs to showcase a new character or demonstrate a monster's dominance. Some are key to a single storyline, but otherwise not relevant to the overall Episode. Some are filler between the highlights of the show. And some are the big deal, ultimate clash, stuff-of-legends confrontations.

**TO BOOK A MATCH, YOU DECIDE:**

- ★ The participants (a player's wrestler vs NPW, player vs player, or multiple wrestlers. NPW vs NPW matches are always simply narrated by Creative, if you need to cover them at all in play).
- ★ The kind of match (standard singles match, multiple falls, time limit, etc).
- ★ The stakes of the match (a belt, a mask, hair, a contract, etc).
- ★ Any stipulation for the match (cage match, falls count anywhere, lumberjack, etc). If you have an idea for a Stipulation Move, this is where to start thinking about it.
- ★ The winner (who do you want to see win in order to create the most compelling storyline).

While the feuds in your game can sprawl across many segments, Episodes, or a whole Season, they should ultimately be settled in the ring. Here are some basic finishes for matches that you can book, depending on how you want to encourage a storyline to develop or complicate what's going on between the wrestlers.

- ★ A **clean finish** is a pin or submission in the middle of the ring, no funny business. Clean finishes generally demonstrate that the winner is the superior wrestler and are the best way to declare a feud settled "once and for all."
- ★ Victory can come about through the **intervention** of another wrestler. This can be the result of the **Run-In Move**, or you can book some kind of interference into the match finish in order to add another wrestler into a feud.
- ★ The winner can **cheat to win** in a manner apparent to the audience, but not the referee (foot on the rope, hand on the tights, concealed foreign object, whatever). Heels should cheat more than babyfaces, but sometimes a babyface victory via the same underhanded tactics used against them in the past is satisfying. Heels can use their **HEEL Move** to gain a cheating victory regardless of your booking.
- ★ A **disqualification** means that the loser cheats, but is caught by the referee, resulting in a disqualification. This could be for breaking a rule (no weapons, no strikes to the head, etc) or because of outside interference that the ref sees.

- ★ A **countout** means that the loser stays outside of the ring, or is unable to rise, for a certain count of time (usually 10, sometimes 20). Title-holders can use the **CHAMPION'S ADVANTAGE** Move to get intentionally counted out but retain their championship (as titles generally do not change hands on a countout).
- ★ **No contest** means that the neither wrestler is able to continue the match. This could be a double countout, the two knocking each other out, or another wrestler taking them both out. This generally leads to a rematch.
- ★ A **dusty finish** is when one wrestler is declared the winner, followed by the referee reversing the decision due to a technicality (another ref or wrestler shows them that a foot was on the rope, the original ref was knocked out, a second ref makes the 3 count, and then the original ref revives and reverses the decision, etc). This finish is traditionally used to allow a babyface to win a championship, but then immediately hand it back due to the second ruling, and almost always leads to a rematch.
- ★ A **shmoz** occurs when a bunch of wrestlers rush the ring and the whole thing devolves into a brawl, with no winner declared.

There are plenty of other finishes, with their own unique details and variations. Book the finish you think provides the most drama for any given match, and be ready to change it on the fly if need be.

The winner of a match rolls for their **FINISHING MOVE**, even if their victory is due to outside interference or the like. For matches that end in no contests or a shmoz with no clear winner, nobody should roll for their **FINISHING MOVE**.

## GAINING NEW AUDIENCE

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Just as individual wrestlers gain Advances, thereby increasing their abilities and evolving their characters, your promotion as a whole relies on the popularity generated by it's stars. At the top of each Episode, check to see whether your company has gained new viewers.

Simply add together the Audience scores of the player's wrestlers, and compare that number to (number of players x 3). If the total Audience is equal to or greater than that number, you've gained new viewing audience! All wrestlers reset their Audience score to the "start and reset to" rating indicated by their Gimmick. This represents the fact that, with these new viewers, they now have to win over new people



and prove themselves again to fresh eyes.

If you have fluctuating player attendance, perform this check in relation to just the wrestlers playing in that Episode; if attendance does grow, any wrestler who's not present for that Episode still resets their Audience value at their next appearance.

*** GAINING AUDIENCE ***	
# of Players	Total Audience To Grow
2	6+
3	9+
4	12+
5	15+
6	18+
7	21+
8	24+

## NPW AUDIENCE

NPWs can have an Audience score, though they never make Moves. However, players can "target" NPW rivals with Move results that raise or lower Audience. When this happens to a NPW with no current score, give them +1 (a minor or background character), +2 (a regular on the show) or +3 (a current title-holder or otherwise a big deal). NPW Audience does not factor into the gaining new audience calculation, but they should be factored in when ordering the card, if present.

## ENDING THE SEASON

There's no hard rule for how long your Season should take. You can start a Season with a specific number of Episodes in mind, booking towards that plan, or you can just play until the group feels like they've told all the wrestling stories they want to tell. Generally, an organic ending point for an open-ended Season will come about when the wrestlers gain Advanced Roles or are fired, finish up their main storylines, or gain the major Championships in your promotion.

## MULTIPLE SEASONS

You've completed a Season of play and you want to start another one. That's great! Players can continue playing their wrestlers from an earlier Season or use the opportunity to start fresh with new characters. At the beginning of your first Episode, erase all Heat from the previous Season and do the first Episode Heat setting process with all the characters together (some answers may refer to the events of the previous Season). Any continuing characters start the new Season at their "start and reset to" Audience value.

# How To Be CREATIVE

## CHAPTER NINE

The preceding chapter went over the tools at your disposal. This chapter addresses how, why, and when to use them. Everything you do in play as Creative boils down to making a Move, guided by your Principles, and in service to your Agendas.

### FIRST, YOUR AGENDAS

These are all of the things you are trying to achieve through your choices of storylines, your booking, your arrangement of segments, and your portrayal of NPWs both in and out of the ring.

**CHALLENGE, AND CELEBRATE, THE WRESTLERS:** No champion reigns unchallenged. No insult is left unanswered. No friendship is left untested. Nobody gets a free ride in *World Wide Wrestling*.

**MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU HAD IT PLANNED THAT WAY ALL ALONG:** This is the key to engaging wrestling storylines. The players have agency and the ability to change what you had planned. Your job is to take their swerves and pull the storylines back together in order to create overarching coherent narratives.

**ENTERTAIN THE IMAGINARY VIEWING AUDIENCE:** This is who's judging your storylines. These are the people who will turn off the TV if they don't see narrative resolution. If it wouldn't make sense to them, use the tools at your disposal to make it make sense. And of course, at the end of the day, you and your friends playing the game are your own imaginary audience.

Each decision you make, from booking to the order of segments to which NPW to introduce should be accordance with at least one of your Agendas, preferably all three.

### NEXT, YOUR PRINCIPLES

These are your guideposts. You use them to direct you in making decisions and to inform what you should be saying and describing during any given segment. If you don't know how to say something or need to make a decision about why something happened, take a look at your principles and pick one (or a combination).

- ★ *Be a fan of the wrestlers.* The wrestlers are who you're all here to see. Challenge them, in the service of seeing them get better.

- ★ *Explain the audience reaction.* The audience gives feedback to the wrestlers. Explain why they cheer, what they're reacting to, and why what falls flat doesn't connect with them.
- ★ *Describe every gimmick evocatively.* The production budget of your imagination is unlimited. Use it.
- ★ *Describe everything as larger than life.* You are working together to make modern day myths.
- ★ *Make the world seem constructed, but frail.* The seams and cracks between the kayfabe and the legit could break down at any time, if the wrestlers don't work to continually maintain the facade.
- ★ *Make your Move, but never speak it's name.* Your Moves are actions, not pronouncements. Describe why and how, but keep the curtain closed on what, exactly.
- ★ *Speak through your NPWs.* The other characters are your mouth-pieces. Use them as megaphones or as chorus, as needed.
- ★ *Use a real-world cause for a kayfabe effect.* Backstage politics and relationships should push booking decisions, often unfairly.
- ★ *Use a kayfabe cause for a real-world effect.* What happens in the ring spills into the wrestlers real lives, for both good and ill.
- ★ *Think offscreen, always.* Prep your elements On Deck, set up ways to bring them in and think about what's happening backstage that explains what you're describing on camera.
- ★ *Book for maximum drama.* Go big or go home.

## FINALLY, YOUR MOVES

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Your Moves, unlike player's Moves, aren't resolved by dice. Rather, they are specific things you say at any given time, informed by your Principles and in service to your Agendas. Some of your Moves are Soft Moves; you make them whenever the players look at you expectantly for what's coming next. The other Moves are Hard Moves; you make them whenever a player Botches (rolls 6 or less) or when the progression of the game demands that one be made. The difference between Soft Moves and Hard Moves is that Soft Moves are directed at the wrestling personae in question, while Hard Moves impact the real-world person behind the Gimmick.

The Imaginary Viewing Audience almost always sees Soft Moves, but almost never sees Hard Moves.

## SOFT MOVES

- ★ Put a microphone in their face (a scheduled interview, an interruption, a request for an opinion, an accusation of wrongdoing).
- ★ Take the next step for a storyline (as your dramatic sense dictates).
- ★ Book them in a match (challenged by an inferior, scheduled by management, showcase a weakness or a strength).
- ★ Bring in something On Deck (prep this in between sessions).
- ★ Put something they value at risk (a championship, a partner, a friend, a mask).
- ★ Announce kayfabe badness (a bad guy is underhanded, a good guy makes a mistake, management punishes someone).
- ★ Give them a difficult decision to make (a choice between two things they want to keep or save).
- ★ Swerve the storyline (as circumstances dictate).
- ★ Create backstage intrigue (a plot, a betrayal, an affair, a poor decision, a rumor, a mistake).

## HARD MOVES

- ★ Turn the audience on them (they lose -1 Audience).
- ★ Turn a wrestler on them (they lose -1 Heat with the character).
- ★ Announce legit badness (someone is injured, someone is in trouble, someone has disappeared, something important is broken, something important is missing).
- ★ Give them a no-win situation (a choice between their career and their integrity).
- ★ Hire or fire someone important (hire someone they hate, fire someone they love).
- ★ Push an NPW ahead of them (because of their failure).
- ★ Steal their victory (preferably via their worst enemy).

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During a wrestling match, players are already giving up narration and/or losing mechanical resources when they Botch a roll. You should be selective about adding on an additional Hard Move, and wait for particularly appropriate circumstances.

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Your Agendas, Principles and Moves are the framework to help you keep focused. Everything you say during the game should be productive from the perspective of giving the wrestlers an entertaining world, within which they get to show off and perform.

The rest of this chapter concerns structural advice for how to make an engaging wrestling universe for you and your friends.

## CREATING DRAMA IN WRESTLING

The dramatic content of a wrestling storyline grows out of two things: the *stakes* of the feud and the *limits* within which the wrestlers work. Every match has a default setting along both axes: the stakes are to win the match, while the limits are those imposed by the rules of the promotion, as well as the physical limits of each wrestler. If every match has the same stakes and limits, however, the overall experience of the show becomes a blur. This is why the concepts of feuds and match stipulations are so important to *World Wide Wrestling*; feuds raise and change the stakes of a given match, while stipulations change the limits of the wrestlers' performance.

### STAKES

Stakes can be raised by the wrestlers communicating their storyline investment to the audience, by rewards provided by Creative, or both.

Some examples of the first: say a wrestler cuts a promo about how, no matter what, he refuses to tap out to the opponent who's already tapped him out in two previous matches. In the ring, every time his opponent goes for a submission hold he has a real reason to avoid it or reverse it, perhaps by going to new lengths and debuting some aspects of his character that the audience hasn't seen before! Or say a tag team implodes and the betrayer cuts a promo on her former partner, saying that it's her weakness that was holding the team back the whole time. Now the two of them each have something at stake: the betrayer wants to prove her superiority, while the betrayed wants to show that it was the callowness of the villain that was the real problem.

Simple and oft-repeated storylines, perhaps, but in this game you should start with the simple and obvious. The players will provide their own unique spin on it. As Creative, you can encourage their investment by staging interview segments that specifically ask the player to explain themselves. You should also create vignettes where you cast an NPW as the voice of the inquisitive audience, prodding the wrestler to give some exposition about their feelings or agenda in an ongoing feud.

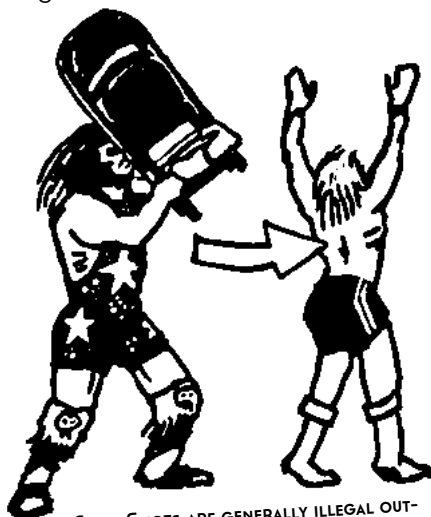
The other thing you should do as Creative is provide rewards. The most basic example of this is the Number One Contendership Match—not only does the winner prove that they're the better competitor, they're next in line for a shot at the title! Not all rewards need to be in pursuit of a title, however. An old-school style promotion might make the "purse" front-and-center in every match, announcing how much actual money is at stake for the winner. You could structure a round-robin tournament with rolling points scores, so any given match becomes rife with questions like "if you win, you advance but if I win or we draw we both advance," opening the door to strategic deal-cutting or match-throwing. Rewards should be thematically appropriate for your promotion, and they can be a great way to add meaning to a one-off match or spice up a feud.

## LIMITS

Limits are the rules of the match, especially in a game where you're free from budgets and production concerns. The rules governing the match are important, not because of what they specifically allow or forbid but because of the audience expectations they set. In a standard wrestling match, the limits include: the match ends with a pin-fall (the losers shoulders are held to the mat for a count of three) or submission (the loser taps out to their opponent); all action must occur inside the ring; certain dangerous holds and moves are disallowed; and use of foreign objects or outside interference will get you disqualified.

Because of the rules in a normal match, the audience is prepared for the heel to skirt the letter of the rules (applying an illegal hold as long as possible without getting disqualified, for example). If the action spills to the outside, we know that the competitors are more interested in hurting each other than winning the match. The limits set the expectations for the match, allowing for more vibrant storytelling.

As the limits change, so do the expectations. In a No Disqualification Match, we expect to see



CHAIR SHOTS ARE GENERALLY ILLEGAL OUTSIDE OF hardcore AND OTHER NO-DISQUALIFICATION MATCHES



chair shots, chokeholds, and (depending on the style of promotion) blood and violence. In a cage match, we expect to see the wrestlers add “climbing the cage” to their strategy, but only after pummeling each other first. It’s by buying into and sometimes subverting these expectations that matches draw the audience in. Use stipulations and other changes to the rules to emphasize important matches, introduce new characters, or just change up how matches are narrated in order to keep your Season fresh.

## PERSONAL STORIES

Of course, all of the stakes and limits in the world won’t keep the audience’s attention if they’re not in the context of an engaging story. I heard a great summation of what makes for good wrestling stories on the Straight Shoot podcast ([aubreysitterson.com](http://aubreysitterson.com)): a wrestling story is either about *money*, *family* or *dignity*. And here’s the most fundamental storyline guideline, as oft said by legendary announcer Jim Ross: wrestling is *personal conflict, settled in the ring*.

Often, your first Episode won’t feel that personal. That’s fine! Just like a new audience, you and your friends are all meeting these wrestling characters for the first time, and it usually takes a little time for things to click. Use the basic motivations (to win a match, to get revenge for a slight, to show you’re better or stronger) and then, as the players get into their wrestlers and have more interactions, pay attention to those three things. When is money an issue? When does someone get aggressive towards another’s family? When is someone’s dignity threatened? You can manufacture those moments yourself through adversarial NPWs, but your players will also create them. When they do, grab it and run with it. The more personal to the character, the more investment the player has in contributing to the feud, and the more creativity they pour into their own agenda.

Create personal conflict, and then bring it to the ring to be settled. That’s professional wrestling.

# BUILDING YOUR PROMOTION

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## CHAPTER TEN

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Whether you start your game with an entire roster and style planned out or you let the events of play determine the wrestlers' world, in this game you build the kind of professional wrestling promotion you've always wanted to see.

### PROMOTIONS

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The default promotion style for *World Wide Wrestling* is that of a modern, televised weekly show, but the rules are relatively agnostic as to the details of *your* promotion. As long as there's an audience, you can play a game as a glorified backyard fed, an old-school territory, a stationary indy promotion, or any particular combination of these you want. Does your show travel from city to city or does it have a single home arena? Does it have pay-per-view supercards every month, a couple times a year, or not at all? Are there different weight classes, gender splits, or other roster divisions? What signature match styles or kinds of wrestling does it privilege over others? You can make all of those decisions in play, have one player map them out ahead of time, or have a discussion at the beginning of the first Episode about them. No matter the choices, you should use this game to reflect the kind of wrestling you enjoy the most!

One structural element should be kept consistent in order for the progression of the wrestling characters to make sense; the player's wrestlers should generally start out in middle of the pack, so that they can move up or down the card as they develop.

### CHAMPIONSHIP BELTS

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The kayfabe goal of every wrestler is to be the champion. Your game should start with NPWs holding title belts. Wrestlers generally have to earn #1 Contender status, then win the belt in a match set up through the events of play. Come up with compelling names and meanings for your titles—is it a classic World Championship Title or is it the Heavy-weight Master of Wrestling Championship? Is it the Americas Belt or the Cup of Champions? Women's Championship or Lady Lucha Campeona? The belts and championships flavor your *World Wide Wrestling* promotion.

## THE CARD

Most wrestling promotions have multiple belts, at least two for singles competition and one for tag teams (and one for each gender, if there's a gender split for competition in your promotion). The two singles belts correspond to the lower and upper cards. "The card" refers to old-school schedule cards, where the main event was listed at the top of the bill, and the matches were ranked under it in essentially descending order of how famous, experienced, or important the wrestlers were.

Today, the notion of lower and upper is much more amorphous. A division certainly exists between newer, less experienced, and less popular wrestlers, and older, more established, fan favorite, and better-at-wrestling performers. It's a division enforced more by overall booking, rather than specific matches on a single show.

Starting characters are on the lower midcard. This is so the wrestlers have somewhere to grow as they gain more Audience, Advances, and accolades. When a wrestler hits +4 Audience, they get an Advance—this represents the idea that the Audience regards them as more important and deserving of a higher spot on the card. If a wrestler keeps hovering in the +1 to +2 Audience area, they're still considered midcard. If their Audience hits 0, of course, the Imaginary Viewing Audience just isn't interested in seeing them at all. The Advance earned for hitting 0 represents the wrestler's last chance to improve.

### \*\*\* WORLD WIDE WRESTLING: THE PROMOTION \*\*\*

Here's what I tend to have in my games of *World Wide Wrestling*:

- ★ The promotion is called World Wide Wrestling, and travels around the country to small college-sports arenas and event spaces.
- ★ It's a mixed roster with no gender division. Every wrestler is eligible to compete for every belt.
- ★ The Pan-Oceanic World Wide Wrestling Championship (POW Title) is the top of the card championship. The Regional Athletic Division (RAD Title) is the midcard championship, often carried by more technical wrestlers. There's also the WWW Tag Team Championship and the Journeyman's Cup, a trophy awarded in an annual tournament to a promising young wrestler.
- ★ There's a General Manager, but past that most of the on-screen characters are wrestlers, interviewers or commentators.

Those are the basics. I improvise details in play depending on what the group I'm playing with is interested in.

For a link to a series of Actual Play videos featuring World Wide Wrestling as a promotion, visit [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg).

The card, in these terms, is infinitely divisible. While players mechanically mark an Advance when you hit +4 or 0 Audience, fictionally, it means the audience has promoted or demoted the characters overall standing in their collective eyes.

Being at a certain place on the card has no mechanical weight, but the idea that there's always somewhere to go in the characters career is an important one. Keeping the card metaphor in mind should help support that progress.

## CREATING CUSTOM MOVES

You should make custom Moves to cover aspects of wrestling that you don't see represented in these rules. The most common custom Moves represent specific match stipulations and player-requested ones from the "Create a Custom Move" Advancement option. But you can make custom Moves for anything you want, if you want to give more structure to something you're missing in the basic game.

Moves have two basic components, a fictional trigger and an array of possible results. To create a custom Move, the most important thing is to specify the trigger. What's the fictional circumstance with a non-predictable result, or that demands a specific array of outcomes? Some Moves don't need a specific trigger (for example, the **OVER** Move just looks at the Audience score, an abstract metric), but you probably have a mental image already if you're thinking about a custom Move.

Once you've put that into words, think about what the outcomes from that trigger should be. This game has a relatively rigid rules structure for Move outcomes, and they're mostly a combination of these basic ingredients:

### ON A 10+

- \* Gain +2 Momentum
- \* Gain +1 Heat with someone
- \* Gain +1 Audience
- \* Book a specific segment, including a match
- \* Get something you want with no cost or drawback
- \* Create an advantageous fictional position for yourself
- \* Injure someone
- \* Pick 2 options from a list shared by 7-9 results

**ON A 7–9**

- ★ Gain +1 Momentum
- ★ Gain +1 Heat with someone
- ★ Add or remove a stipulation to a match
- ★ Get something you want at a cost or drawback
- ★ Create a beneficial fictional position for yourself that's vulnerable to disruption
- ★ Put someone at the risk of injury
- ★ Pick 1 option from a list shared by 10+ results

**ON A BOTCH**

- ★ Lose -1 Audience
- ★ Lose -1 Heat with someone
- ★ Face negative, legit repercussions for your actions
- ★ Take an injury

Custom Moves should be focused narrowly on the specific wrestling moment you want to emulate, and the outcomes should be the typical kinds of fallout you would expect to see in a wrestling show from that moment happening. Focus on the fictional outcomes first. Then add one or two mechanical outcomes alongside them in order to bring the Move into line with the General or Gimmick Moves that it seems to be most closely aligned with.

★ ★ ★ **EXAMPLE: CREATING A CUSTOM MOVE** ★ ★ ★

Eric spends an Advance on making a custom Move for Mammoth Marco that represents the Monster's signature habit of no-selling his opponents offence in the ring. So far, he's just rolled +Power for the **WRESTLING MOVE**, but he wants it to be a bigger deal for Marco. After discussing it with Nathan they come up with:

Mammoth Mountain: When you take everything your opponent can dish out in the ring, roll +Power. On a 10+ you stand impervious, take or retain control of the match and gain +1 Heat with your opponent. On a 7–9 you stand strong, gain +1 Momentum and choose: take control of the match, or they take control of the match and you both gain +1 Momentum. On a Botch, you can't take it this time. You lose -1 Heat with them, give them 1 Momentum and they take control of the match.

This is modeled on the **WRESTLING MOVE** but with the twist of potentially gaining Marco lots of Momentum just for standing still, but could lose him credibility with the audience (represented by losing Heat) if his opponent can take him off his feet.

Not every custom Move needs to be an entirely original composition. Here are some ways to think about making custom Moves without having to build the entire thing from scratch:

- ★ Substitution Moves, allowing the character to roll one Stat instead of another when they perform a specific action (the Jobber's **SYMPATHETIC** lets them roll +Work instead of +Audience when they **WORK THE AUDIENCE**).
- ★ Enhancement Moves, which trigger off of a certain roll or fictional achievement in order to demonstrate how much better the character is at a specific thing than other wrestlers (the High Flyer's **HUMAN HIGHLIGHT REEL** gives them a +1 Audience when they hit a top rope maneuver with a 10+).
- ★ Conditional Moves, which always result in a certain effect when they're triggered (the Veteran's **VETERAN INSTINCTS** grants them an automatic +1 Momentum whenever they start a match).

Custom Moves should always be up for revision in play. Check in with the player after they've used it a couple times to see if it's giving them the feeling they were going for; be ready to make modifications if the Move needs some adjustment after it hits the table.

You can also make custom Moves covering how audiences interact with the wrestlers, how your promotion is structured, certain styles of wrestling, and any other features you want to give mechanical weight to in your game. For examples of some Promotions with custom Moves, see the Season One Promotions starting on **PAGE 119**.

## CREATING NEW GIMMICKS

The basic 10 Gimmicks cover a broad range of wrestlers and styles, but wrestling contains multitudes. If the existing Gimmicks don't cover the exact wrestler archetype you'd like to play, you should make your own! Making new Gimmicks is a great way to translate what excites you about wrestling into playable form.

Use an existing Gimmick that's close to what you have in mind as a template. There are a couple of constants across all Gimmicks, so that they interact on the same mechanical level and are compatible to play across all games of *World Wide Wrestling*:

- ★ Basic Stat distribution: When you add all their Stats together, they should total -1 across the four Stats (usually -2, -1, 0, +1 and add 1 to one Stat).



- ★ For Gimmicks that represent a narrow specialization (The Manager, The Clown\*) or “elite” levels of experience (The Veteran, The Giant\*): Total of 0 across the four Stats.
- ★ To make a more player-customizable set of Stats, add 1 to the basic distributions, and then the player adds +1 to one Stat and subtracts -1 from one Stat.
- ★ Four Heat questions, two that imply a positive or helpful relationship, and two that imply a contentious or difficult relationship.
- ★ Start and reset to at either +1 (regular) or +2 (fan-favorite) Audience.
- ★ 5-7 total Move options. Every Gimmick needs a the **FINISHING MOVE** (or equivalent, like The Manager and The Wasted) by default. If they only have the **FINISHING MOVE** then they get to pick two of the other Moves to start; if they start with 2 default Moves, then they pick one other Move to start play.
- ★ One of the discretionary Moves should be based on +Real.
- ★ No more than two of their Moves should be based on their default highest Stat.
- ★ Three Injury boxes, and Injury should have both a minor advantage and a thematic drawback that's in effect while injured.

The real art of the Gimmick comes in writing their Moves. Use the existing Moves and the guidelines above to guide your creation, but always keep in mind what specific situations you see that character in, and what you want to see happen in the game as a result of those situations.

Please share your custom Gimmicks! Visit [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg) for links to the *World Wide Wrestling* discussion community to share what you're working on and get feedback.

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\* Limited edition Season One Gimmicks: The Athlete, The Clown, The Gatekeeper, The Giant and The Provocateur. Check the [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg) for availability.

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# How Wrestling Works

## ESSAY ONE

Professional wrestling is equal parts performance art, athletic competition, and scripted drama. Its origins lie in traveling carnivals and circus performance (the performance art part), Greco-Roman amateur wrestling (athletic competition), and parting fools from their money (the scripted part). There's a deep and fascinating history to the development of professional wrestling, but I'm going to focus on the story that starts in the late 1970s, where the trends that leads directly to today's product starts. I'm also going to primarily focus on wrestling in the United States. Professional wrestling, along with the blues and comic books, can arguably be called one of America's truly original art forms.

In the 1970s, the USA was still divided into "the territories." Regional wrestling promoters had control over geographic areas, which meant that they arranged the shows, booked the talent, promoted events to get audience in the door, and generally ran their area how they saw fit. The organization that a promoter created is what the term "promotion" refers to, with multiple promotions sometimes banding together into a "federation." Some promotions had a home arena where they hosted shows on a regular basis, while others traveled from city to city in their area, acting as a special attraction.

In both cases, the promoters needed two things to get people in the door: a big name that people would pay to come to see and the promise that they would see something special. However, there were

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There are equally fascinating histories to the development of *lucha libre* in Mexico, *puroresu* and *puroresu joshi* in Japan, and the parallel growth of professional wrestling in the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Despite the unique cultural resonances and stylistic differences, however, most of modern wrestling had developed from the historical trends considered here.

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This history is drawn from multiple sources and general genre osmosis, but the single clearest summary of early wrestling history I've read is in David Shoemakers *The Squared Circle: Life and Death in Professional Wrestling*. For more about the mythological appeal of "the spectacle of excess," look up Roland Barthes' classic essay *The World Of Wrestling*.

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only so many wrestlers in a territory and not all of them could be on every show. Some wrestlers would travel to different territories, so promoters could book special attractions or one-night only appearances. Others would be local work-horses, providing a basic level of familiarity for the audience. But even more than competitors, the promoters needed something that one-off events and athletic competitions didn't: something to happen during the show which would make the audience want to come *back*. They needed storylines.

How could the promoters guarantee an exciting show every time? By fixing the matches. Professional wrestling did have a phase, right at its inception in the early 20th century, of showcasing legitimate grappling competition. But by the 1920s wrestlers were regularly fixing their matches to make them more exciting to watch. There may have been a period of time where this was a true secret, but the public has always known on some level that they were getting "worked." By the 1960s newspaper stories would print the results of wrestling shows in terms that made it clear the reporters knew they weren't watching legitimate competition.

So, professional wrestling is fixed. It has pre-determined outcomes, but many factors could and did confound the plans of the promoters. A wrestler could no-show, necessitating a change to the match schedule on the fly. They could take a better offer and jump to another territory, throwing off a whole year's build. They could get injured. Or the promoter could decide they just didn't like a wrestler and drop them from a program. In addition, wrestlers could and did have personal beef or "heat" with each other, doing things like refusing to drop a title to someone they didn't think deserved it or putting their opponent in a legitimately damaging hold ("shooting" or "stretching" them, also often used to haze young wrestlers in their first matches).

The promoters would employ bookers (often older wrestlers) to book their shows in order to pull in audience, but the *intrinsic* draw of the show depended on the talent and the feuds. These shows had to appeal both to new fans who were watching for the first time and to locals who went to every show. The wrestlers would employ outsized, easily readable personae, called characters or "gimmicks". The evolution of the gimmick started to accelerate in the 1950s, when wrestling started airing on national television and wrestlers began to package themselves as TV stars, instead of (or in addition to) athletes. By the 1970s and '80s, legendary wrestlers like "Black Jack" Mulligan, "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes, "Nature Boy" Ric Flair, Jesse "The

Body" Ventura, and Baron Von Raschke all exemplified different kinds of characters that audiences would recognize regardless of geography.

To make it even easier to follow the action, matches would almost always be booked between a good guy, the "babyface" (or just "face"), and the bad guy, the "heel". Audiences read narrative into legitimate athletic competitions all the time; the insight of professional wrestling as a performance art was to make the narrative explicit, thus controlling the audience's reaction to the contest. In almost every match, the babyface is the one the audience identifies with, cheers for, and wants to see succeed. Conversely, the heel is the one who insults and mocks the audience, terrorizes the babyface, and makes the audience want to see get what's coming to them. Of course, only in the broadest strokes does this apply to every match. Even in the 1980s, audiences would go crazy for the cowardly, conniving Ric Flair as he cheated his way to another victory over the "good guy" challenging him.

The babyface/heel division also went hand in hand with the idea of outside talent coming in as special attractions. A wrestler might be a babyface in their own territory, but booked as the heel threatening the home champion in another promotion. This basic structure made it easy to debut new wrestlers, develop them through opponents that the audience already knew, and (in the best cases) become draws for their personality, not just their role on the card.

## KAYFABE

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Kayfabe originally referred to the notion that wrestlers would not reveal the "truth" about how their sport worked. If two friends were booked in a feud, they would make sure not to travel together, and go to great lengths to preserve the idea that they legitimately hated each other. Kayfabe gradually eroded as the form developed into the 1990s, and was functionally obliterated with the advent of the Internet. However, the concept remains valuable in its modern sense of the *scripted reality* of the stories being told. Two wrestlers might be kayfabe brothers, presented to the audience as siblings, but they're in actuality not related. Kayfabe marriages are storytelling devices, not actual unions of the performers. Kayfabe injuries are played up with bandages and pained expressions, but the wrestler can still compete in the ring.

A kayfabe element is also referred to as a "work," as in the audience is being "worked" to believe something that isn't actually true. The opposite of a work is a "shoot" (referring back to the act of "shooting" someone in the ring: actually hurting them). In contemporary pro

wrestling, almost everything is a combination of works and shoots, or at least combines elements of each since it's so easy for fans to find out the "real" story. Finally, the "worked shoot" is an instance where a wrestler breaks the fourth wall and reveals legit information, but this revelation has been planned out and approved of ahead of time.

## IN-RING WORK

That's a lot about the promoters and the audience, but what about the wrestlers? The actual wrestling is what powers the whole enterprise. The main thing to remember is that wrestlers are *professionals*—they're not there to win, to demonstrate that they know more holds, or to gain accreditation. Those things are all important, but the performers are *primarily* pulling a paycheck. Professional wrestlers are very good at making what they do entertaining without actually hurting each other. Entertaining matches makes them more popular, which makes them more attractive to bookers, because more people will pay to see them wrestle; keeping each other safe means they can keep making those dates and keep their income streams going. When a wrestler steps in the ring, their safety is literally in their opponents hands, and vice versa; stories abound of wrestlers with legitimate hatred for each other who managed to stay professional and work together between the ropes without hurting each other.

While the outcome of the match is (generally) decided in advance by the booker, promoter or owner, how the wrestlers get there tends to be up to them. The contents of the match can be scripted as well (a more common process now for mainstream wrestling), but the wrestlers generally improvise their match as they go along, sometimes with the help of the referee. This is referred to as "calling" a match, and generally the more experienced wrestler or the heel is in charge of calling—that's right, the bad guy paces the match. Calling a match means that they literally call for moves as they go, taking into account the audience reaction, the story they're telling in the ring, and other elements that might come into play.

Each match ideally has its own story which fits into the overall narrative arc of the show or of a feud. The most basic in-ring story goes like this: the babyface comes out to challenge the dastardly heel, only to find that the heel is ready for them. The heel starts inflicting violence upon the babyface out of proportion to anything done to deserve it. As the babyface gets more and more beat down, the audience wants to see them come back more and more; eventually, a breaking point is

hit, and the babyface (thanks to the audience's cheers) gains a second wind, mounts a furious comeback, and gives the heel a well-deserved comeuppance, resulting in a victory for the hero! Or the villain trips up their naive opponent, gaining an undeserved win through underhanded tactic, and setting up another match later to *really* settle things.

This basic story is ripe for subversion, interpretation, and evolution; the art of wrestling is finding new and novel stories to tell in the ring.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

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The basic framework of professional wrestling was set decades ago. The changes and permutations are either extensions of it or mindful subversions of it. But this basic framework is the one that I've used to build this game. So, in your game of *World Wide Wrestling*, assume:

- ★ The players are on the "inside," and they're performing for the benefit of the Imaginary Viewing Audience.
- ★ Wrestlers are working professionals, and the key to continued success in their profession is performing well in the ring.
- ★ Creative comes up with the storylines that the audience wants to see and books the shows to create those narratives.
- ★ Wrestlers are babyfaces or heels, and most feuds are between one of each.
- ★ The outcomes of matches are predetermined, but what happens between the start of the match and the agreed-upon ending is up to the wrestlers.
- ★ Things happen that change ("swerve") Creative's booking all the time. Creative needs to be ready to improvise with what they get so the audience doesn't realize the plan changed.
- ★ The tension between kayfabe and legit is a productive one that you can use to enhance stories.
- ★ The kayfabe relationships between the wrestlers are the long-term engine of the promotions success; developing and enhancing those is one of the main goals of play.

Like real wrestling, this endeavor is equal parts performance, skill and script. You're performing for each other, developing your skills at using the game's rules to achieve what you want for your characters. Script what you want to see, but be ready to change it; use the tropes, but plan to subvert them. And above all, enjoy the spectacle!



# HOW ROLEPLAYING WORKS

## ESSAY TWO

Roleplaying is an unique and infinitely malleable activity. Consider a spectrum of communal activities that require rules. At one end, you're playing *Monopoly* but giving your pieces personalities and funny voices, or *Settlers of Catan* and coming up with a narrative about why your settlements interfere with each other's development as you play. At the other end, you're playing improv theatre games—say, the game where someone rings a bell after each of your lines until you come up with something more entertaining. At each end, you're combining *improvisational fictional content* with *structural rules* guiding how that content develops. At the board game end, the rules are very strict and your content, while it may be engaging for you, has little effect on how the game plays out (at most, maybe a player makes a different decision because of it than they otherwise would); at the improv end, you're coming up with characters with agendas and motivations on the spot, the interactions of which are the whole point of the activity. The rules simply demand more effort and spur additional creativity from the performers.

The *World Wide Wrestling Roleplaying Game* is in the broad middle-ground of the spectrum, perhaps a little more towards the improv end. You create distinct, exciting characters; these characters have sets of rules that describe and complicate their interactions. Discrete moments arise during the game that demand the rules be consulted and implemented, in order to make the game more exciting and channel your narrative into the world of professional wrestling.

Like many RPGs, this game has a “game master” role, called Creative. Creative is a little like the bell-ringing facilitator in the improv game. Creative's role is to provide a framework within which the other players can inhabit their characters and interact in surprising, revealing, and entertaining ways. Creative has specific responsibilities in this game, like coming up with other wrestlers in the promotion, deciding on the long-term story lines, booking the shows and matches, describing the audience and the arena, and using the rules to pace the session.

Everyone at the table is there to entertain each other. It's everyone's job to be good listeners, build on the opportunities handed them by the other players, and offer ways in which their character can enhance the ongoing story.

Logistically, play of this kind of game is often broken into sessions. The same group of people gets together multiple times over the course of some weeks or months and plays out a continuing, unbroken narrative. *World Wide Wrestling* in particular is suitable for single-session play (like a board game night) or for a group where you have fluctuating attendance over the course of the sessions. After all, in the real world, it's perfectly normal for wrestlers to only make some appearances and not others. This game calls sessions Episodes; when you play out a series of linked Episodes, you're playing a whole Season.

During an Episode, play looks like this: pieces of paper are scattered all over a table—each player's Gimmick sheet (which records all the information you need to know about that character), reference sheets (the majority of the rules are summarized on 2-3 sheets of paper), some dice (regular 6-sided dice), poker chips or some other kind of token (these are used to track a resource you have called Momentum, which you gain and spend frequently during play), a microphone (to hand to the Announcer at any given time), maybe a quick sketch of the ring to show where wrestlers are during a big match, drinks and snacks, and maybe a laptop or mobile device with entrance music cued up. Everyone's sitting around the table, where they can see and hear each other. Creative, or a player who owns the game, should have a copy of the game rules at hand (in case you need to reference an edge case or look up a new rule that hasn't come up yet).

The medium of play is conversation. You say what your character says and does; the other players respond with their own descriptions and narrations. The rules of the game mediate the conversation. Some things you say (like "I get the audience cheering along with me" or "I go for my finishing move" or "He gets in my face? I stand up and say, very quietly, 'Well what are you gonna do about it?'" ) trigger rules called Moves. This is when you go to the dice, roll them, compare the result to the Moves description, and then (usually) make a choice between some possible outcomes. That process changes your character's options and guides the events of play to places you might not have gone. That's the point of rules: pushing your game to places you and your friends wouldn't think to go on your own.

Different people hold this conversation in different ways. Some people inhabit their characters like an actor, changing their voice, acting out what they're doing (please be careful!), and speaking in the first person. Some people act more like a writer, narrating their character's actions from a third-person perspective and filling in more

evocative descriptions in their own voice. It's very common to blend the two, describing your characters action but engaging in dialogue fully "in-character." There's no wrong way to participate and each player should find the way that works best for them.

The words "narrative" and "story" comes up a lot in this game text. While the medium of play is conversation, the output of play is a narrative or story. Not in the sense of a composed, outlined, "first this happens, then that happens, then this" story—no, the narrative of a role-playing game is a messy, zig-zaggy trail, composed of in-the-moment decisions and unexpected outcomes that only come into focus after it's finished. In the moment, you say whatever strikes you as most important, entertaining, or helpful to the situation at hand; the rules of the game will channel your creativity into appropriate developments that make fun wrestling stories. When you're done, you'll say, "well, I never thought *that* was going to happen."

It's fun! I hope you enjoy it!

# HOW TO LET WRESTLING MAKE YOU A BETTER ROLEPLAYER

EPIDIAH RAVACHOL

## WATCH A CAREER GROW FROM THE BEGINNING

A deluge of backstory awaits any new wrestling fan. A wink and an allusion will elicit strong responses from a knowing crowd but leave the neophyte in the dark. Ask a simple question about a wrestler's motivation and you can be subjected to hours of recounted matches and feuds. The very names of the more storied wrestlers and their signature moves are vestigial remnants of histories no longer evident. The whole tangled knot of it can seem impossibly complex to a newcomer.

But their origins are unambiguous. They start with one simple, obvious hook to clue the audience in to exactly where their motivation lies. So we know precisely why the wrestler would subject themselves to the brutality of the ring. And we understand just what is at stake should they lose whatever match they build towards. They have a belt they want, vengeance they crave, respect they feel they deserve. Even those who wear masks and shroud themselves in mystery are uncomplicated. They have their mystery to protect.

The key is to let the audience in immediately, to make them understand precisely what drives you as soon as possible. And then when whatever you desire or fear most is dangling in front of you, it is also dangling in front of them.

**PLAY OBVIOUS.**

## WATCH A HEEL TOY WITH THE AUDIENCE

There is an exquisite art to making an audience twist. Heels can berate and belittle audiences across their circuit with the exact same material at every stop. But the golden moments are when they dig into the crowd and make it personal. They insult a local hero. They denigrate points of civic pride. They play on colloquialisms.

This holds true at the table. When you play, you're not just playing to satisfy yourself. Look to your fellow players and seek out what resonates with them. Play them as much as you play your character.

**KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.**

## WATCH THEM SELL THEIR BUMPS

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This is where the magic is. Effortlessly taking down jobber after jobber will earn you no heat. But let yourself get tossed around the ring like a rag doll, make the crowd feel every bone-crunching impact, show them your agony as your opponent locks you up in another impossible submission hold, and when you have finally had enough, let the audience see just how deep down you have to reach to find that last scrap of defiance left in you—well then you're on the edge of something magnificent.

Resist the temptation to be one of the cool, disinterested combatants who brushes their foes aside with ease. There is no glory awaiting you there. You will not be measured by your might, but by the might of those you overcome.

### INVEST IN YOUR FOE.

## WATCH THEM SET UP THEIR FINISHERS

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It is a simple trick, but an effective one. Your opponent writhes around on the ground, woozy from the punishing assault they have just suffered. You stand above them, almost triumphant, but not quite yet. One last move to settle it. One last move to definitively end the match. While your opponent struggles to their knees, you look out to the crowd and give them the sign. The finisher is coming.

We don't know for sure what will come next, and we don't have to. This is one of the oldest tricks in fiction. Entire genres are built upon this tool. Tell your audience what is about to happen and then either bring it to fruition or fail to. It doesn't matter which. Either way the audience is enrapt. Once the wolf starts huffing and puffing, they must see if he's going to blow that house down.

### TELEGRAPH YOUR PUNCHES.

## WATCH LOCAL SHOWS

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When you hit up your local VFW for some wrestling action, you're in for a different experience. The venue is small and sparsely populated. The ceiling is a bit too low to let anyone fly from the top rope. The wrestlers have day jobs that keep them from gym most days of the week. The shows are monthly at best and have no pay-per-view to build to. There is no Titantron or fireworks or even the legal rights to the wrestlers' entrance music. But for all that they lack, these shows will mark you out.

They will have you on your feet booing, chanting and cheering. And they will have you returning again and again.

The trick is every single person in that room, from the announcer to the refs to the wrestlers to the kid in the front row who is terrified that the monster is going to tear the babyface apart to that one guy who is above it all but let his friends drag him here anyway—everyone in that room is roleplaying. Through the will and guile of their collective imaginations a spectacle is born. The wrestlers grow larger than life, capable of transcending the mundane and physical boundaries of the venue. Through this enthrallment the audience will imbue wrestlers with powers beyond their ken. Some will rise, seemingly, from the dead. Some will soar beyond the confines of the ceiling. Some will be granted monstrous might or even supernatural capabilities.

Without the cooperation of everyone in that room the magic does not happen. You must step up and do your part, even if you are sitting in a folding chair backed up against the farthest wall in the room. You do not let everyone else carry all the weight. Do your damn part.

**MARK OUT.**

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# BEING A WRESTLING FAN

BLACK CAT

November 26th, 1988. This was the day professional wrestling hooked me for good. I was ten years old and had been watching for a few years. I laid on the floor that Saturday afternoon staring at the 19-inch Hitachi TV set. On the screen was a 300-pound bolt of lightning standing in a small television studio in Atlanta, GA. He spoke like a preacher with fire in his belly and had the conviction of one speaking about the end of the world.

This was the typical scene. You'd often find this beloved man speaking his mind with such fury and passion. Tonight was different, though. Atrocities had been committed against a friend by two other men he used to call friends. These former friends were behemoths that wore shoulder pads with six inch metal spikes attached to the top and wore paint on their faces like ancient warriors preparing for battle. They spoke about deviating your septum and obliterating your face.

I want to be clear that I knew the realities of pro wrestling. I might not have understood how things work like I do now but I knew things weren't on-the-level. And I had seen plenty of pro wrestling up until this point in my life, but for the first time I was about to see raw, unadulterated violence perpetrated to a man that fought for you and me and stood for what was right in this world.

The hero spoke with a righteous fury into a microphone held not just by a television announcer, but a loyal friend. Out of nowhere the two behemoths charged into the studio, grabbed him, and threw my hero into the wrestling ring. One of the beasts continued assaulting the man while the other one detached a spike from his shoulder pads. The setting for this show was a simple, small TV studio with a few bleachers of people but the sound generated by this small crowd while they witnessed their beloved hero viciously attacked could easily rival the sound of any capacity crowd at the biggest of arenas.

The painted warrior stood there with a spike in his hand looking at his victim. He lunged with the spike and proceeded to slowly carve out the eye of our hero. Moments seemed like an eternity. Blood poured out of his head onto his white button up shirt as he screamed "Oh god, my eye! My eye! Help!" Finally, friends of our hero came from behind the television curtain to save him as they ran off the two violent savages.

ESSAY:  
BEING A FAN

11/26/88

My hero laid tragically in the middle of the wrestling ring like a rotting carcass that had been picked over by vultures. Drama had unfolded before my eyes that I had never experienced before—characters that were very real to me were brutally attacked. Two men betrayed the trust of their fans. Now they had viciously attacked my hero and I was left trying to reconcile how anyone could perform such a vile, disgusting act of violence.

April 6th, 2014. I traveled across the country with some friends to attend the biggest professional wrestling event of the year. Many other stories were told on this night but arguably the biggest involved a menacing performer that grew to legendary status because of his imposing stature, his use of intimidating theatrics and physical resiliency, but most importantly because he had never been defeated on the biggest night of the wrestling year.

This accomplishment was simply known as "the streak." For over two decades he was perfect on this night. As the years went by the story became bigger and bigger. Every year the storytellers were also able to tell individual stories within the larger story of "the streak" about someone who might be able to defeat the unbeatable. Sometimes it was a young up-and-comer starving for their first moment to shine, or maybe another legend had something to prove before vanishing into wrestling history. Year after year the unconquerable phenomenon would be given an opponent and every year it would be the same result—"the streak" would live to see another day.

Many assumed the conclusion to this story would be the legend saddling up his horse with his reputation intact and riding off into the sunset like the end of a great cowboy movie, but this year the storytellers had something else in mind. On this night the holder of "the streak" was to face the most intimidating force he had ever faced in his career. His opponent was known for breaking limbs, dropping people on their heads and finding joy in pain.

The lights dimmed in the stadium that night as the legend slowly walked to the ring looking like the years were finally starting to catch up with him. Initially the legend charged at his opponent with a fury of offense, but as the match proceeded he was slowly broken down as his body was beaten, contorted, and dismantled by his stronger, younger, more agile, vicious adversary. Our legend would have brief moments of hope as he fought valiantly to protect his legacy but finally he could not take anymore.

The sound of silence echoed throughout the stadium as the official in the ring counted to three and raised the hand of the beast that had defeated "the streak." A twenty-three year story had finally come to an end. I have seen just about every different way you can tell a story with two competitors inside three ropes on a square stage. I can usually tell you exactly what is going to happen next, who is going to win a match, how they're going to win, and what the performers will say after the match, but there are still moments in professional wrestling like these where you are left speechless.

As we walked the streets that night after "the streak" had come to an end we immediately felt a vibe from the thousands of wrestling fans there with us in the city. We would stumble upon groups of people where you would just hear snippets of conversations and you knew immediately they were talking about the end of "the streak." I remember even the next morning we still heard people talking about how the biggest story in professional wrestling was now over. The storytellers of professional wrestling had once again left their audience truly captivated.

Professional wrestling is a world of interconnected relationships with conflict, drama, and emotion all performed on a live stage where the viewer feels very much a part of what is happening. Professional wrestling is a fictional world presented as reality. Maybe it is because the shows are performed in front of a live crowd; or the fact that, bizarrely, these performers often portray themselves as their characters in real life; or the people telling the stories know just the right moment to pull the trigger on the intricacies of a story. If you allow yourself you cannot help but become emotionally involved in what you are watching.

Now, professional wrestling isn't for everyone. To most it isn't even worth a second thought—it can be trite, kitschy, juvenile, racist, misogynistic, and, of course, gratuitously violent. But that's not what pro wrestling has to be—if you can allow yourself to look past these preconceived notions you will find tremendous moments of drama like these because it is a such a unique form of entertainment with amazing opportunities for creative storytelling told both by the highly skilled athletic performers and the storytellers behind the scenes.

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Black Cat is the co-host of the Old School Wrestling Podcast and co-author of the *OSWP 500* book. He's been told he only sounds happy when he's talking about professional wrestling. [oldschoolwrestlingpodcast.com](http://oldschoolwrestlingpodcast.com)

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# PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING: BURLESQUE FOR BOYS

AUBREY SITTERSON

When you think about burlesque, what goes through your brain? Tasteful nudity? Schtick comedy? Women stripping for women? Contemporary burlesque isn't just a performance of stripping or comedy or comedic stripping—it's a performance of femininity. That's why today, when you can get absolutely any type of porn you can imagine (and some you probably can't) sent directly to your phone, burlesque is enjoying a resurgence. In the same way that burlesque provides a romanticized, hyperbolic version of what it is to be a woman, professional wrestling is a performance of the idea of masculinity.

Violence is a huge part of it to be sure. But wrestling doesn't have anything near a monopoly on men hurting one another. If what you want is violence you can watch mixed martial arts, boxing or football, but all of these are missing something crucial: narrative. Little boys, unless they're complete and utter psychopaths, don't just dream of violence—they dream of righteous violence, justice of both a poetic and karmic nature, where the bad guys lose and the good guys celebrate together. They want a fairy tale, but one with violence as the triumphant exclamation point.

Every problem in wrestling is solved by violence. Every. Single. One. Someone wants your championship? Pin the jabroni. Your boss is coming down on you unfairly? Make him so mad he agrees to wrestle you. Someone is trying to steal your old lady? The guy's just begging for a steel cage match. This is the crux of wrestling's appeal. Just like contemporary burlesque showcases sensuality without sex, wrestling offers justified violence abstracted away from the much more complex role it plays in the real world.

This is why so much of the handwringing that goes on around wrestling isn't just unnecessary, but actually chips away at what works best about the medium. Due to a nationwide bullying panic and WWE's eagerness to jump on the bandwagon with their own campaign, it's become in vogue to criticize any kind of violence outside of a match as an example of bullying, like say, when a heroic wrestler gets a few shots in on a villainous manager or authority figure. But this misses the point of what a bully truly is.

A bully isn't just someone who perpetuates violent or aggressive acts—they're someone who perpetuates violent or aggressive acts without good cause and while not expecting to receive similar treatment in return. While people criticize wrestling for promoting bullying, wrestling's moral code is, at its core, diametrically opposed to bullies, with the problem of bullying managers, wrestlers and authority figures always solved using wrestling's signature tool: violence.

A villainous character displaying their villainous tendencies is just one aspect of their performed personality, their gimmick. When a new wrestler is introduced to the audience, there's a very small window of time in which the audience can be told how to feel about the character. Gimmicks exist as a kind of shorthand that lets the audience know immediately whether they should cheer or boo this person standing before them.

Because they're designed to elicit an immediate reaction, gimmicks have a tendency to be crass, on-the-nose stereotypes: the heroic soldier, the arrogant intellectual, the hardworking underdog, the cruel millionaire, and of course, a slew of racial and ethnic-based gimmicks. It's a difficult, problematic situation to be sure, especially when traditionally under- or misrepresented minorities are involved, but it's a tightrope that the medium has become especially adept at walking.

Where even the crassest gimmicks redeem themselves, however, is in what comes next. More often than not, successful wrestling characters add new depth and nuance to their gimmicks as time moves on, sometimes abandoning them completely as they settle into a gimmickless persona based more on a real person. What becomes abundantly clear is that the original hyperbolic gimmick doesn't matter in the long run—the only thing that really matters is whether the wrestler is a hero or a villain.

Mostly, a wrestler's alignment is determined by whether they follow the rules or not. Generally speaking, a hero doesn't break the rules, or at least isn't the first to break them. If an unscrupulous opponent cheats, they deserve the same in return, right? But there are a slew of other things that can render a wrestler villainous in the audience's eyes, with some of the most serious offenses including a refusal to stand and fight, trying to get out of a fight or having anyone else fight your battles for you. In this cartoonish, exaggerated performance of masculinity, the ultimate, unforgivable sin is cowardice.

A wrestler's initial gimmick exists only for the audience to know how to feel about them until actual feelings form based on the wrestler's

actions and behavior. Operating in a very similar fashion is the crass, sophomoric tone for which wrestling is too often derided. Wrestling isn't a prestige cable drama, and to judge it by the same metric is like criticizing a donut for not being as healthy as an apple. Unlike other television shows, people don't watch wrestling for rewarding, nuanced dialogue and character studies. In wrestling, dialogue and character development are all just fuel for the fire, leading to an explosive, violent and cathartic end.

Storylines, promos, backstage vignettes—they're all just quick, easy and often dirty ways to set up a scenario that can only be solved by, you guessed it, violence. Because at the end of the day, violence isn't just why people watch wrestling, but it's also the meat of the medium. While the characters involved in a wrestling match and the circumstances leading up to it might be base and simplistic, the match itself is home to endless, recursive, self-referential and frankly, fascinating variation. A good wrestling match can, in terms of complexity and nuance, stand proudly next to anyone's favorite highbrow drama.

Professional wrestling inhabits a world where all of the characters and conflicts are easily summed up in a sentence before being violently resolved inside a ring. It's a crass and reductive way of seeing the human condition, but that's all any story is really. Even the smartest piece of fiction you can think of works by distilling the complicated realities of life down into more easily (and enjoyably) digestible chunks. Is wrestling an extreme variation of this approach? Absolutely, as the medium relishes in its ability to tap into a base, visceral, almost primal understanding of right and wrong—one that you've known and felt ever since you were a kid on the schoolyard.

Wrestling speaks to big issues through the high proof symbolism of two people beating the everloving bejeezus out of each other, and if you think that's base, crass, too violent or reductive, well...that's kind of the point.



# PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING IS THE AMERICAN DREAM

IAN WILLIAMS

The mother of one of my childhood friends would cry whenever Dusty Rhodes would cut a promo. She wouldn't sob or carry on. Dusty would speak and I'd glance over to find that her eyes were wet as she half-paid attention to the grainy screen of a mid-80s television set.

I grew up in Lexington, North Carolina, one of those mill towns John Edwards made so central to his biography during the 2004 and 2008 presidential races. It was small, somewhere between a town and a city, but booming. Everyone worked in a factory, either furniture or textiles, less often the local fiberglass plant, and it was good money in a place where the cost of living was low. I had friends who had pools in their backyards due to a line worker's salary. Nice, fast cars. Big barbecues every weekend, with cock rock blaring and pigs cooking.

Lexington happens to be about 45 minutes north of Charlotte, which was home, in those days, to Jim Crockett Promotions, base of operations for the crown jewels in the slowly eroding NWA. Ric Flair, Magnum TA, the Andersons, the Rock 'n' Roll Express, and a host of other barrel chested pro wrestlers of the Southern branch of the art form. This was during the Rock 'n' Wrestling Era up north, where the heroes were steroid abusing freaks aiming to tap the deep well of wanting American superheroes to restore some semblance of pride after the still fresh wounds of the Carter years. Hogan *et al* were aiming to do the job for us working folks. We could never be Hulk Hogan, only admire him from afar.

And then there was Dusty.

Dusty wasn't what all us Southern working class kids and adults wanted to be. He was what we already were. Dusty was fat and slovenly, his dress alternating between work clothes and garish, sloppy attempts at what you might think a rich man dressed like had you never actually seen one. His forehead bore the marks of his career, a mass of deeply grooved scar tissue after years of chair shots and blading. He wasn't great in the ring, but was a master of psychology and storytelling.

The stories he told were working class stories. He took his lisping Texas drawl and married it to an African-American preacher's cadence. Not for nothing was one of his earliest nicknames the White Soul King.

ESSAY:  
THE DREAM

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

Rather than outright co-option, it seemed to be a sincere effort on Rhodes' part to speak to a pan-racial working class, setting him up as a hero for blacks, whites, and Latinos to cheer on against whatever villainous rich guy he was put up against.

Fighting those rich guys is what he did best. In the 1970s, it was his famous series with "Superstar" Billy Graham. Graham was the fore-runner to Hogan, a muscled, tanned, blonde braggart. Hogan grievously ripped Graham off, turning the latter's arrogant muscle worship into a face gimmick (though, if you pay attention, Hogan didn't spend much time working face). Rhodes went north and the two wrestled the hell out of each other in Madison Square Garden before the WWWF became the WWF. The subtext was clear: plain old Dusty Rhodes, the White Soul King and working class schlub, against the steroid abusing, vain freak, Billy Graham. Rhodes won on technicalities, never grabbing the title from Graham, but it didn't matter: old footage reveals the crowd going nuts for Rhodes like they did for few others.

And why not? The reason why Rhodes mattered is essentially the reason why wrestling matters. Wrestling tells working class stories to working class people, even today in the slick, overproduced WWE. Dusty Rhodes is the greatest storyteller in that vein who has ever wrestled. He's not my favorite of all time; his nemesis, Ric Flair, is and has always been my favorite wrestler. But if we stop measuring greatness by titles, instead going by pure quality of the storytelling, physical or verbal, Rhodes is arguably the greatest of all time.

Look up what's popularly become known as the "Hard Times" promo. Rhodes (and the NWA, by extension, where he was the top face at the time) rattles off a list of the reasons why the common person has it tough as a way of dumping on Flair's heelish reasons why his life is rough. Rhodes talks about declining wages, the first stages of what would become a new American tradition of outsourcing, and fears of being replaced by automation.

It was hot fire, left as hell, and delivered in a way that made Southern mill workers cheer. He was the American Dream, with all of the hope and melancholy that entails. When he asked the fans to touch the screen, touching their hands to his hand, it was a two way street. Because you felt at the time that you really could touch Dusty if he happened to be next to you. He was the approachable hero, the image of us. He was your dad or your brother or your co-worker.

Not that all was well with his career. He carried his weight poorly as he aged, carried his responsibilities poorer still. He was booker off and

on, leading to the famed Dusty Finish, a situation in which the babyface triumphs only to be screwed by a technicality or rules shenanigans. He leaned on it heavily as a way both to keep him in the public eye and easily get out of tough booking decisions. For every innovation he made as booker, like War Games, there were six or seven disasters.

He eventually booked his way right out of Jim Crockett Promotions. Vincent K McMahon was only too happy to pick him up. But there was none of his father's fascination with Rhodes as a working class hero. The younger McMahon was set on mocking him as a buffoon, sticking him in polka dots and giving him skits centered on unclogging toilets.

Even up north, in the changing working class landscape of the early 1990s, Rhodes made it work as best he could. His feud with Macho Man, whose own star was just beginning to fade, was better in retrospect than it seemed at the time. The cheers were still there, the promos goofier but still tight. The age and the weight caught up with him and, shortly after introducing his son, Dustin, to audiences, he retired from in-ring competition.

His retirement came just as the working class of America shifted drastically. The 1990s brought about mass de-industrialization. That it coincided with Dusty's retirement and the disappearance of the American Dream character (he still uses the name, but no fire accompanies it) is one of pro wrestling's little ironies. Dusty Rhodes could only exist in the South of the 1970s and '80s, where a boom time was the product of working class pride and awareness. Neither Dusty nor the South of those years could survive the 1990s. Hard times became desperate times and there's no going back.

The story of Dusty Rhodes is what we want from pro wrestling and it's what the form has always delivered. No matter how corporate the modern product may be, no matter how beholden to television deals or the stock market the feds may get, it is the tale of the American working class. Its fans are working class, its heroes are working class, and it is the only form of working class entertainment which is still visible in American life.

In Dusty Rhodes, you can see the foreshadowing for those working class heroes who came after. Steve Austin, with his swearing, boss-hating, beer-swilling badassery a few years later. CM Punk, the dumpy kid who came up through the industry the hard way, in backyards and hardcore feds, through sheer work ethic. Even John Cena, seemingly more Hogan than Rhodes, is reliant on the cross-racial appeals which Dusty pioneered.

And this is why pro wrestling, particularly in the United States, matters. It's history in microcosm. The arc of a wrestler's career maps closely to his or her times. In Dusty Rhodes' career, the history of the American working class' aspirations and fears during the 1970s and '80s is written as surely as in any book.

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Ian Williams is a freelance writer and journalist. His work has appeared in Jacobin, The Guardian, Paste, and many others. He's also an absolute mark for Ric Flair and Jimmy Garvin.

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# SEASON ONE

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR GAME

SEASON  
ONE

Season One is a collection of wrestlers, finishing moves and ideas for different kinds of wrestling promotions submitted by backers of the Kickstarter campaign for the *World Wide Wrestling RPG*'s initial publication. Many thanks to the backers of the campaign!

You should feel free to use the wrestling characters presented here as part of your game of *World Wide Wrestling*, or adapt specific parts (a name, an illustration, a description) to what you need for your game.

### THE SEASON ONE ROSTER

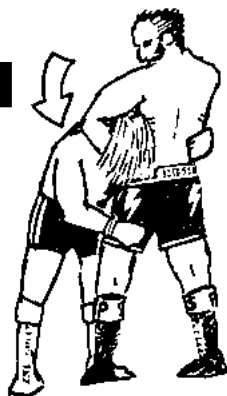
ADAM "SUBMISSION" CONNOR	<i>Adam Connor</i>
ANTONIO "EL CORREDOR" VALDEZ	<i>Tony De Francisco</i>
AUBREY, PRINCE OF THE DEPTHS	<i>Aubrey Sitterson</i>
BASH HAMMER	<i>Ralph Mazza</i>
BEN KEY	<i>Arnold Cassell</i>
BRAINBURG	<i>Joseph Le May</i>
DOCTOR MOREAU	<i>Tim Rodriguez</i>
EL TORO	<i>Jason Cordova</i>
FRANKIE COCHEESE	<i>James Privitera</i>
"GOLDEN BOY" B-ARTHUR	<i>Arthur Loewenkamp</i>
GRYLA	<i>Tim Jensen</i>
JIMMY "JC" CATETERE	<i>Angelo Cislaghi</i>
JOEY CRAK	<i>Joe Zantek</i>
JOHNNY RAIKE	<i>Joey Daly</i>
KENDRIK SOULBANE	<i>Ryan Smith</i>
LEE OMICRON	<i>Jonathan Moore</i>
"LUXURIOUS" LARRY GIBSON	<i>Tom Deterling</i>
MEGAMERICAN	<i>Andy Fix</i>
MYSTERIOUS MERCURY	<i>Shervyn von Hoerl</i>
OFFICER ANNIE	<i>Trey Stone</i>
ONI NO TSU	<i>David Reichgeld</i>
ROBERT "HIGH CLASS" JORDAN	<i>Roberto Gonzales</i>
SAERIN AURORA	<i>Andrew Rosenheim</i>
SIR JUSTIN TYME	<i>Justin Hunt</i>
THE ARCHITECT	<i>Paul Casey</i>
"THE HARDCORE ARTIST" FRANKIE VALIANT	<i>Franklin Rollins Jr.</i>
"THE LEGACY" VIRGIL DAVIS	<i>Virgil Pederson Jr.</i>
THE REAPER	<i>Stras Acimovic</i>
VALERIUS CLAUDIUS GREPPA	<i>Kevin Ullrich</i>

### ADAM "SUBMISSION" CONNOR

#### Time To Tap (Standing Guillotine Choke)

#### Alternate: Connor Contortion (Camel Clutch + Leg Lock)

Initially a tag team specialist, Connor's first partner retired with an injury and Connor was given the identity of the Confessor, a pseudo-religious gimmick that really never got over with the fans. The Confessor was "killed" in a Buried Alive match, the best of Connor's career to that point, and Connor returned to his roots as Submission, an honorable and technically proficient submission specialist.



### ANTONIO "EL CORREDOR" VALDEZ

#### Disconnection (Northern Lights Suplex)

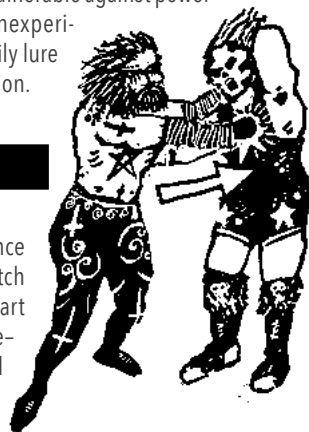
Antonio is a lucha-trained grappler who dresses in a sharp suit. Before each match, he neatly folds his jacket and shirt, and places them on the turnbuckle; his tie changes week-to-week to suit his mood. He wrestles a mixed style that see him trading between quick aerial moves, submissions and the occasional shirt-based illegal maneuver to gain an advantage. Antonio is especially vulnerable against power moves, and is still relatively unexperienced—savvy opponents can easily lure him into a disadvantageous position.



### AUBREY, PRINCE OF THE DEPTHS

#### The Heart Punch

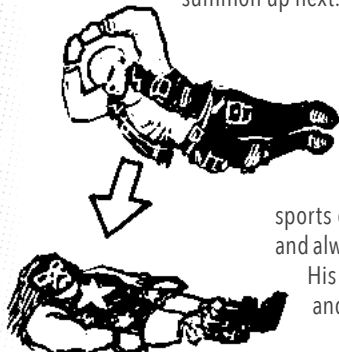
After years spent traversing "the orient", the once Pretty Prince returned with a darkened countenance and the arcane, eldritch knowledge of a technique banned and thought lost...The Heart Punch! Between this devastating maneuver and his corpse-painted appearance, none know what the Dark One will summon up next.



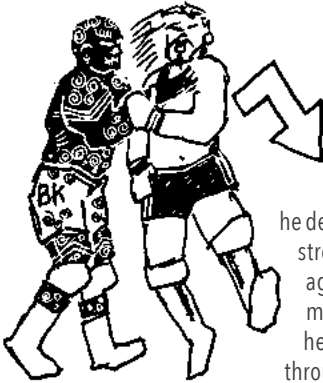
### BASH HAMMER

#### Earth Mover (Frog Splash)

Bash Hammer's look is Tinker from Roadhouse meets Larry the Cable Guy. He's shaped like a barrel in work boots, sports cargo pants, white undershirt and denim sleeveless jacket, and always wears his signature trucker hat that reads "Diesel Power." His approach to his matches is as straightforward as his name, and as brutal.



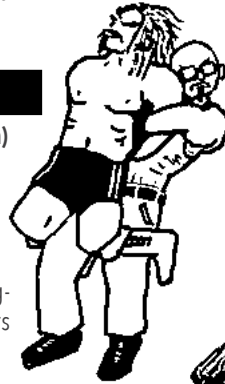


**BEN KEY****One-Handed Choke (Chokeslam into a Chokehold)**

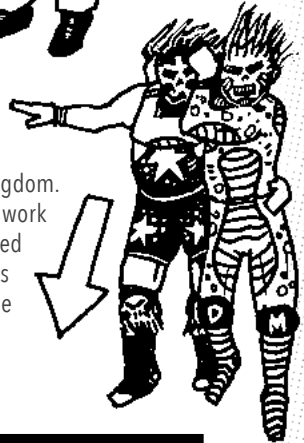
Ben Key is a one-armed master of the ring. Never wanting the promotion to use his nature as a gimmick, he demonstrates an unshakable resolve along with enormous strength every time he gets in the ring. One of his first managers named him after mythological Japanese warrior monk Benkei due to his size (matching Ben Key's billed height of 6'7") and the mangled transliteration has stuck throughout his devastating career.

**BRAINBURG****Pollos Hermanos (Double Chicken-Wing Submission)**

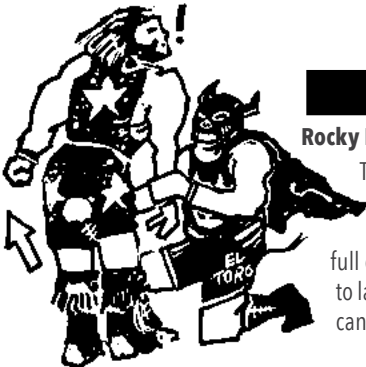
Never afraid to cash in on a trend, Brainburg plays up his physical resemblance to Breaking Bad central character Walter White. He wrestles in brown boots and slacks with a wife-beater undershirt and glasses. His shaved head and goatee have become his signature look as he struggles to elevate himself against more entrenched wrestlers on the card.

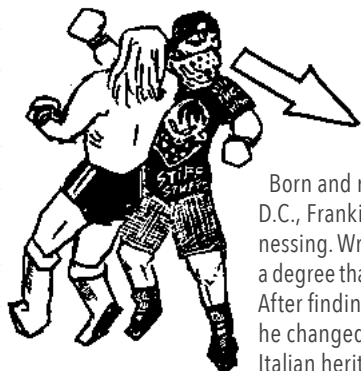
**DOCTOR MOREAU****The Mutation (Snapmare)**

Doctor Moreau has a mysterious connection to the animal kingdom. Coming to the ring in a variety of animal costumes, his ring work morphs to match his totem creature for that match (often selected to take advantage of his opponents weaknesses). When he hits the Mutation, his opponent ends up wearing the mask of the Doctor's chosen prey animal—and some never recover.

**EL TORO****Rocky Mountain Oysters (Low Blow Uppercut)**

The mysterious El Toro doesn't say much, but he (or possibly she) displays no respect for honorable competition. A master of misdirection, El Toro is full of creative strategies to distract the referee in order to land the illegal finisher...and escape before the victim can extract revenge.





### FRANKIE COCCHESE

#### Toe Tagger (Crooked-Arm Lariat)

#### Alternate: The Takeover (Tiger Bomb)

Born and raised in one of the roughest quadrants of Washington D.C., Frankie saw things most people have the fortune of not witnessing. Wrestling saved him from ending up dead or in jail, to such a degree that he started wrestling on the indy circuit as "Bandanna". After finding his groove with a more hardcore, smashmouth style he changed to a spin on his real name and started playing up his Italian heritage. His ring gear still features a signature bandanna, a matching color fitted hat on backwards, denim shorts or cargo pants, and Vans style skate shoes.

### "GOLDEN BOY" B-ARTHUR

#### Golden Gate Bridge (German Suplex)

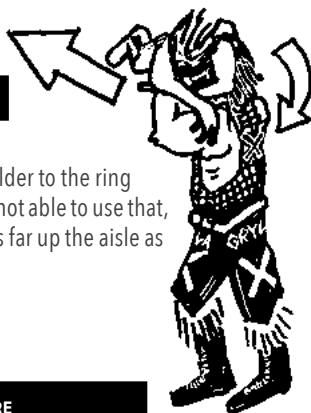
The Golden Boy debuted as a fur-coat sporting, gold-lamé wearing arrogant son of privilege, his disdain for his opponents as strong a weapon as his devastating suplex. After an explosive debut and middling title run, "Mr. B" found a new calling as the "financial manager" for up-and-coming talent, only taking to the ring when it's time to "show the boys how it's done."



### GRYLA

#### Shot Put (Toss Over the Top Rope)

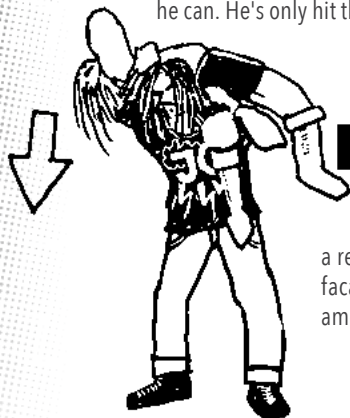
This 7'+ bearded monster from Iceland carries a giant boulder to the ring to intimidate (and sometimes crush) his opponents. When not able to use that, he likes to finish a match by flinging them out of the ring as far up the aisle as he can. He's only hit the stands once or twice.



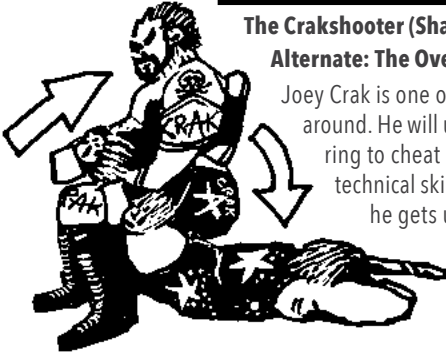
### JIMMY "JC" CATETERE

#### JC Cutter (Backbreaker Rack into Facebuster)

JC's long dark hair, goatee, tattered jeans and black t-shirt give a relatable air to this local-boy-gone-pro competitor. His everyman facade conceals a savage approach to his matches and a surprising amount of strength as he works to cut his way through the competition.



## JOEY CRAK

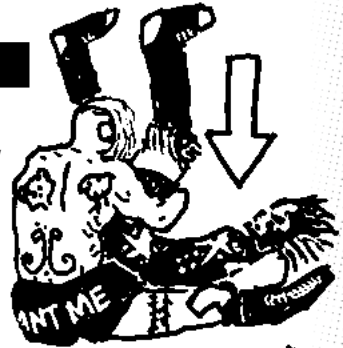
**The Crakshooter (Sharpshooter)****Alternate: The Overdose (Rolling Cutter)**

Joey Crak is one of the most arrogant and underhanded wrestlers around. He will use every advantage possible on the mic or in the ring to cheat his way to victory. He talks the talk, and has the technical skills to back up some of his claims. One of the ways he gets under his opponents skin is to use their finisher, always claiming to have perfected it. After all, as he says ad nauseum: "No one can handle. One Hundred Percent. Pure. Crak."

## JOHNNY RAIKE

**Pleasure Seeker (Inverted Victory Roll Bomb)**

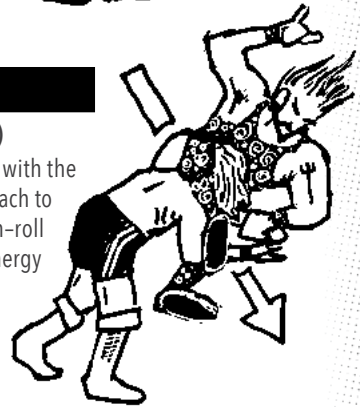
At 6 feet with well defined, though wiry, musculature, Johnny has good reason to love himself wholly and truly. His bad tattoos are just as much a part of his ring gear as his shiny vinyl boots and bike shorts with "Want Me" across the back in acid green. Everything from his sandy brown emo reverse mullet to his multiple facial piercings oozes his trademark narcissistic hedonism.



## KENDRIK SOULBANE

**Savage Endings (Famouser into Armbar submission)**

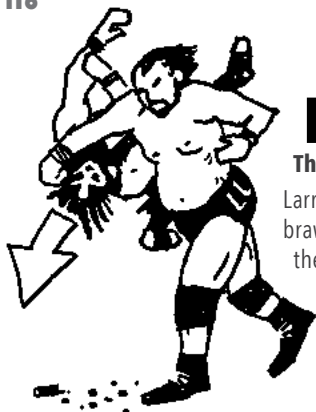
Soulbane's original fantasy MMO look failed to get over with the fans, so he added the "Kendrik" and modified his approach to a more high flying, crowd-pleasing moveset and rock-n-roll persona. Able to fill any role he's asked to do, his high energy offense thrills crowds regardless of opponent.



## LEE OMICRON

**Salt Lick Smash (Facebuster, with reverse STO variation)**

A worker's worker, Lee Omicron has wrestled in almost every independent company of significance, including a recurring presence in Japan, where he's held multiple championships. With a swaggering, cornfed good ol' boy look, he always manages to find a way to make his presence felt.



### "LUXURIOUS" LARRY GIBSON

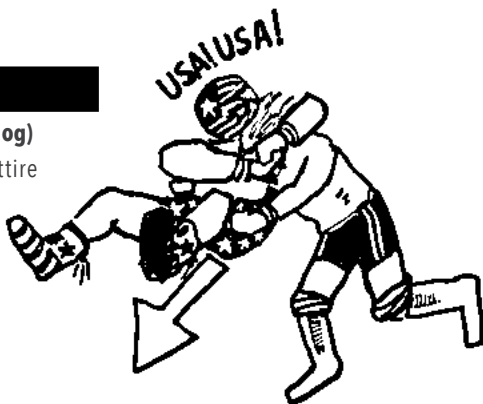
#### The High Life (Lariat)

Larry Gibson made his name in the territory days, trading on his brawling style and lack of scruples to draw in the fans. Now on the downside of his career, he's doubled down on his sleazy underhanded tactics in the ring, ending more than one match with the roll of quarters stashed in his tights.

### MEGAMERICAN

#### The American Bulldog (Running Bulldog)

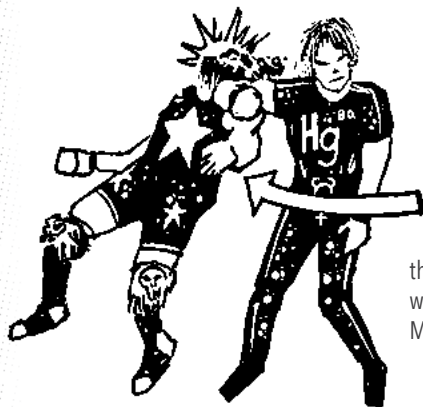
MEGAMERICAN's star-spangled ring attire and hard-hitting aerial style make him a standout whenever he steps into the squared circle. Battling for America's most deeply held values, the Deacon of Democracy will permit only civil behavior in his presence.



### MYSTERIOUS MERCURY

#### The Unseen Elbow!

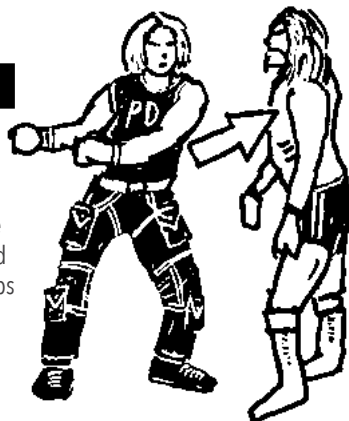
Mysterious Mercury refuses to fit into easy little boxes. More a Joker than a Batman, they combine bizarre plans with incredible tenacity in the ring. They're lithe, fast, smart, never give up and will do anything to win. The only thing to expect from Mysterious Mercury is...the unexpected.



### OFFICER ANNIE

#### Busted (Double Closedfist Chop)

Fresh from protecting the public of Venice Beach, the Lady Cop Officer Annie is here to lay down the law. All business both backstage and in the ring, she sports simple black attire, a POLICE baseball cap and a police whistle. The only time a smile crosses her lips is as she winds up to deliver the final blow to her stunned opponents.

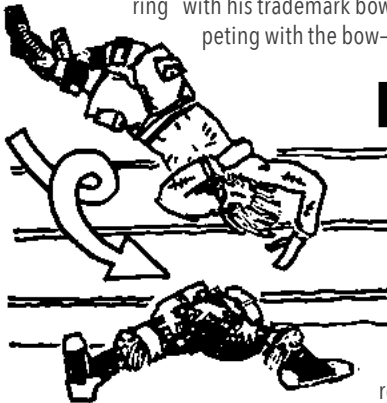
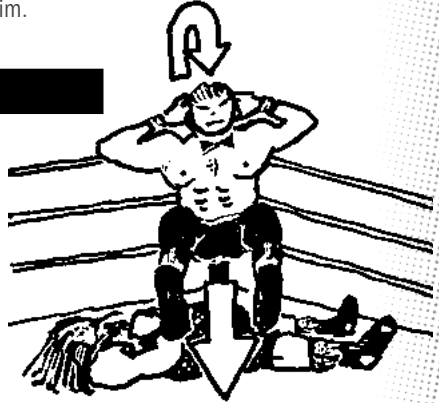


**ONI NO TSU****Tsunami Bomb (Double-Handed Sitout Chokeslam)**

Combining traditional sumo with crowd-pleasing ring-busting power moves, Oni no Tsu has made quite an impression. Channeling the folklore of the Japanese demonic Oni, this super-heavyweight wears a variety of intimidating masks to the ring in order to inspire terror in those unlucky enough to face him.

**ROBERT "HIGH CLASS" JORDAN****Bow Tie Bomb (Senton Bomb)**

Raised in the rich suburbs of Philadelphia, Robert developed a fascination with street fighting at an early age. Kicked out of private school for beating up his classmates, he took his smarts and family money to hire the best trainers in the country. Now, he's an A+ technical wrestler who goes out of his way to embarrass his less-skilled opponents. He wears expensive three piece suits to the ring with his trademark bow-tie, often competing with the bow-tie on, just to "keep it sexy" (his trademark line).

**SAERIN AURORA****Air Sickness (Splitlegged Corkscrew Moonsault)**

Not one for deep psychology, Saerin Aurora prefers to use wild outfits, exciting entrances and uncannily acrobatic moves to stick out in the crowd's memory. Sometimes criticized as lazy by more technical opponents, this canny veteran knows exactly how to pop the crowd and sees no reason to change what works.

**SIR JUSTIN TYME****London Bridge (Fisherman's Suplex)**

Sir Justin Tyme is a proper English gentleman often accompanied by manager Lord Alfred Mayes and lackey Isaac Quinn. He wrestles in the traditional stiff brawling and stretching style of catch-as-catch-can. His technical prowess is matched only for his love of Queen and Country.



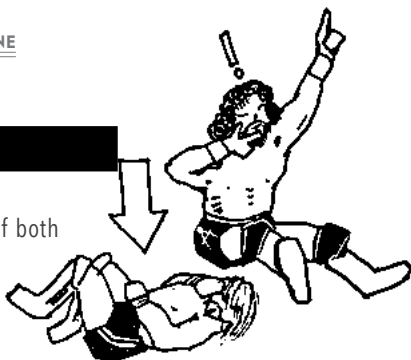
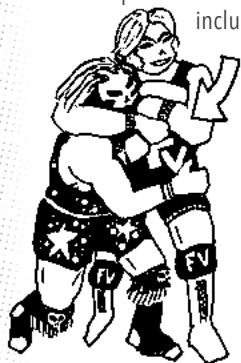
WRESTLING  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
JIM  
FARRAR



### THE ARCHITECT

#### The Flying Buttress (Butt Drop)

A notorious showboat, The Architect is full of both wrestling and architectural knowledge. His pun-based argumentative style is legendary, including the crowd favorite "You're Frank Lloyd...Wrong!"



### "THE Hardcore ARTIST" FRANKIE VALIANT

#### The Hardcore Dream (Sleeper Hold/Million Dollar Dream)

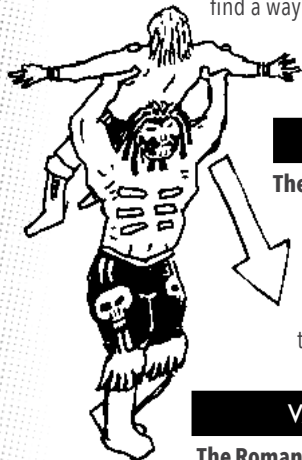
From the mean streets of Chicago, Frankie Valiant combines skill at grappling with a hardcore approach to his matches. Surprising his opponents with aggressive holds and submissions in the middle of a knock-down drag-out fight, Valiant turns hardcore wrestling into an artform every night.



### "THE LEGACY" VIRGIL DAVIS

#### Master of Taunts

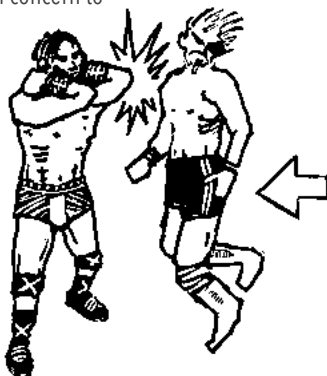
Virgil Davis calls himself "The Legacy" because he embodies the core principles of professional wrestling: mocking the fans and making his opponents look foolish. He manages to find a way to turn any move or sequence into a taunt and feeds off the jeers of the crowd.



### THE REAPER

#### The Whirlwind (Clothesline into Crucifix Powerbomb)

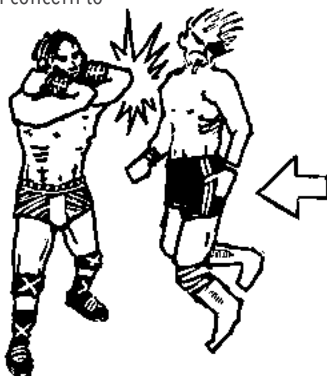
One of the more iconic members of the roster, The Reapers dreadlocks and skull-like face paint translate into a terrifying presence in the ring. Sometimes surrounded by his servitor "Bones," The Reaper's mysterious agenda is always of concern to those around him.



### VALERIUS CLAUDIUS GREPPA

#### The Roman Phalanx (Double Elbow to the Chest)

A throwback to the birth of catch wrestling, Greppa's impressive 6'4" frame is shown off to its best advantage in his typical ring gear of simple loincloth and brown boots with red and gold accents. Fully capable of gaining physical advantage of his opponents, it's the look in his ice blue eyes that gives him the edge in many of his bouts.





## PROMOTION: UN PUEBLO GUERRERO

BY TONY DE FRANCISCO

Born in Texas in the early 1990s, Un Pueblo Guerrero was formed in the wake of the gradual shutdown of the major southwestern territories of the 1970s and '80s. Capitalizing on new television-driven exposure to Mexican *lucha libre* wrestling, a mixture of Mexican and American wrestlers were signed to the roster. Soon UPG was running shows in every state that touches either side of the border.

During the wrestling boom of the late 1990s, UPG would stage shows on the same weekend as national companies whenever they came to the area—a financial blunder that almost bankrupted the promotion. Nowadays, this old ploy forms one of the cornerstones of UPG's rebellious and fiercely territorial reputation, as clips from the bygone era are shown repeatedly on UPG's marketing material.

In the present day, UPG (sometimes just called "Pueblo" in the US) enjoys a sizable share of the indy market, enjoying the unique position of having both Spanish and English-speaking audiences. There are four big Sunday shows per year, and UPG offers a weekly show on a subscription basis through their website.

While UPG obviously has a very strong *lucha libre* history, the company has learned from past mistakes, and currently employs wrestlers of many styles, not only from Mexico and the US, but individuals from Japan, Europe, and further afield as well.

### PRODUCTION STYLE

While the in-ring action and atmosphere is typical of a mid-level indy promotion, the backstage segments of UPG tend to avoid "backstage." Rather, they happen mostly outside the arena, from parking lots to back alleys to a wrestler's home. These vignettes tend to center on alliance making and influence brokering. Loose networks are continually being formed and disbanded in UPG, and many wrestlers are as often defined as much by these activities as by their in-ring actions.

UPG's four main shows take place at the end of March, June, September, and December. Traditionally, the March and September shows take place in Mexico, and the June and December shows take place in the US.

Each individual stop is strongly flavored by the resident *Alcalde* (see next page), which sometimes extends to the ring decoration and the setting used for pre-recorded segments.

## TITLES

The UPG maintains a company-wide **UPG World Championship** and **Campeonato en Trios UPG** (UPG Tag Team Championship). While the Tag Titles were originally awarded to traditional three-man teams, the tag division has evolved to where a team of any number of members can hold the belts.

In addition, and completely separate from the title belts, the *Alcalde* (mayoral) system provides a method by which a marquee matchup can be inserted onto any card. Every town that UPG visits has an *Alcalde*, and the position is defended every time the promotion comes through. Some towns see frequent changes to the *Alcalde*, while some *Alcaldes* have their position on lockdown. Regardless, the signature *Lucha de la Alcaldia* demands that the challenger put something of theirs on the line against the *Alcalde*, from a period of servitude to their hair or mask, to their very existence in the company.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- ★ Corrine Vega, storyline manager of UPG. An older woman in a worn suit, she is responsible for administering the will of the unseen *Fundadores* (the storyline founders of UPG).
- ★ Manuel Vega, Corrine's storyline, and now real-life, husband. A manager with a sprawling stable, an old UPG comedy spot is to have Corrine make her entrance while Manuel is insulting a wrestler, causing him to suddenly start praising the wrestler instead.
- ★ Antonio "El Corredor" Valdez, sharp-dressed UPG newcomer. He is still relatively inexperienced, but tours extensively with UPG and makes an appearance almost every week.

## CUSTOM MOVES

**ALCALDE:** When a characters hits +4 Audience or +4 Heat with the current *Alcalde*, they may challenge for the position of *Alcalde* of their town. When you are *Alcalde*, you make the **OVER** Move regardless of your Audience at the top of the show.

**LUCHA DE LA ALCALDIA:** When the *Alcalde* is challenged for their position, the challenger must put something they value on the line, and roll +Heat with the *Alcalde*. On a 10+, the *Alcalde* accepts. On a 7-9, the *Alcalde* adds something to the challengers stakes. On a Botch, the *Alcalde* both adds to the stakes, and adds a stipulation to the match that tilts it in their favor.

## PROMOTION: HUSMAN EXTREME WRESTLING

BY JUSTIN HUNT

Based out of Cincinnati, HEW is basically no more than a traveling regional promotion. What makes it unique is the deep pockets of Harry J. Husman IV, heir to the Husman Potato Chip fortune. The wrestling venture started off as a one-off promotional event to debut Husman's new "Extreme BBQ" chip product line. The single event did well enough that Husman, a wrestling fan himself, decided to turn it into a long-term marketing vehicle (and huge tax write-off). Husman spares no expense to recruit and retain premier talent in order to showcase the artful blend of lucha-style acrobatics and southern-style brawling that he likes to call *High-Flyin Wrasslin'*.

### PRODUCTION STYLE

HEW travels through the Midwestern US on a seasonal schedule, with the majority of its events booked during the summer (when chip sales are higher). Shows are not televised, though fan recording is actually encouraged. It is very common for a show to feature the taping of one or more live action segments that get turned into Husman Potato Chip commercials aired year-round.

HEW features a lot of tournaments, both one night and multi week affairs that go along with new product launches. The bookers are always trying out new and unconventional tournament structures to keep interest in them fresh.

### TITLES

There are many "Flavor" champions in HEW, especially whenever a new product line is due to debut. While the secondary titles come and go with little fanfare, the primary titles are the premier and namesake singles championship **Extreme BBQ Championship**, the **American Classic Champion** (awarded at an annual tournament with fan-vote pairings) and the **Double Dip Tag Team Champions**, the newest title coinciding with Husman's new "Double Dip" chip product.

### NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- ★ Delicious Tommy Vicious, the current Extreme BBQ champion, a handsome, smarmy brawler.
- ★ Lemon Drop Kid and Triple D, the bad-boy fan-favorite pairing, currently holding the Double Dip Tag titles.

- ★ Lord Alfred Mayes, a hated manager who carries his prep school rivalry with Husman into all of his storylines.
- ★ Sir Justin Tyme, the hot new prospect who was brought in by Mayes to win this years American Classic tournament.
- ★ Isaac Quinn, Tyme's lackey and bodyguard, notorious for snatching the phones out of fans hands as they attempt to take pictures.

### CUSTOM MOVES

**PRODUCT SYNERGY:** When you go to management with an idea that ties into the parent companies product lines, roll +Real. On a 10+ they totally buy it! Gain +1 Momentum and set up a segment to enact or get the ball rolling for your idea. On a 7-9, it's a hard sell. Choose whether Creative sets up a segment to allow you to prove the viability of the idea, or someone else steals your idea (and gain +1 Heat with them). On a Botch, you're out of the loop. Either your idea is already in the works, or it just doesn't make sense to those holding the pursestrings. Lose all Momentum.

**LOYAL FANS:** Every wrestler picks one of their Gimmick Moves they roll dice for to be their "fan favorite Move" (this can include their **FINISHING MOVE**). Whenever you hit your fan favorite Move on a 10+ before spending Momentum, the crowd goes wild. Gain +2 Momentum or +1 Audience, in addition to the effects of the Move. If you Botch your fan favorite Move, the crowd is over it. You no longer have a fan favorite Move. You can spend an Advance to change your fan favorite Move, or to gain one if you don't currently have one.

## PROMOTION: PACIFIC WRESTLING

BY ANDREW ROSENHEIM

Pacific Wrestling is a West Coast promotion founded by professional wrestlers who wanted to showcase their favorite aspects of the business in an entertaining, engaging show for modern audiences. Leaning heavily on social media and word of mouth to market each individual shows, Pacific Wrestling tends to attract life-long fans with a combination of fun wrestling, high-flying action and hard-hitting styles.

The wrestlers on each show have a lot of autonomy to show themselves off, whether they bring in comedy, *lucha libre*, *puroresu* (Japanese "Strong Style"), traditional wrasslin', or technical grappling. Each show tends to be booked to transition between different aspects of the business, taking itself as seriously as the situation dictates.

The company has distinguished itself from other independent promotions by consistently delivering a fun night out that even non-wrestling fans can enjoy, leading to a devoted and evangelical audience that welcomes new and casual fans.

## PRODUCTION STYLE

Pacific Wrestling likes to take over a venue for a whole weekend a month, putting on two or sometimes even three shows over that weekend. The travel circuit hits major cities along the west coast, with occasional forays west to Las Vegas and north to Vancouver. The live shows are the bread and butter of the promotion, alongside online video streams and downloads. Fans constantly wonder why no cable network has picked them up, but there's been no indication that they want to go into TV...yet.

Vignettes tend to be pre-recorded, or staged in the ring in front of the live audience. Going outside the ring or backstage is reserved for the more serious feuds, and tend to be memorable moments.

## TITLES

The **Pacific Wrestling Championship** is the main title. It avoids the words "world" and "heavyweight" to showcase how any performer can earn it, regardless of size or style. The **Pacific Tag Team Championships** are awarded to the star performers of the tag division, which tends to feature ad-hoc alliances of singles competitors rather than dedicated tag partners or factions.

Tag matches are run under *lucha libre* tag rules to increase match energy: wrestlers can enter the ring as soon as their partner leaves it (whether they dive out, are thrown out or any other reason), and many matches are 2-out-of-3 falls. One of Pacific Wrestling's signature matches is the Four Corners of Chaos, with a tag team in each of the four corners of the ring. Teams are eliminated as members are pinned or submitted, until one team remains standing. These matches are sometimes booked with three or four wrestlers per team for chaotic, explosive major events.

The **King of the Road** is an honorific defended at each year's live event of the same name. Wrestlers earn points throughout the year based on how many matches they compete in and how often they win (so wrestlers who travel and appear on multiple shows are generally the ones in contention). Points determine the matchups for King of the Road tournament, a single-elimination series of rounds culminating in

a new King of the Road. The King of the Road can also be challenged for the title mid-season by anyone with equal or more points than them at that time, which tends to become a major storyline when it happens.

### NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- ★ "The Epitome" Brady Miller, the prototypical pro wrestler in look and ego, able to get the crowd booing with a single sneer.
- ★ Dmitri the Red, a Russian high flier known for his unique style and over-the-top (kayfabe) accent.
- ★ Tahunga, a surprisingly agile Maori big man, one of the new hot prospects everyone's eye is on.
- ★ Connor Finnegan III, a young third generation wrestler, lean and lanky. Still trying to make a name for himself.
- ★ Arianna Villafano, a manager looking to buy her way to fame and her client's way to championships.

### CUSTOM MOVES

**FOUR CORNERS OF CHAOS:** You can make a **Hot Tag** to anyone in the match, not just your partner. When you do, the wrestler you tag gains the benefit of the Move, if any (that is, the effects of the **Hot Tag** are not limited to your partner).

**KING OF THE ROAD:** Every match you wrestle on a Pacific Wrestling show, gain 1 point. Every time you win a match on a Pacific Wrestling show, gain 2 points. Whenever you're on a show with the current King of the Road, and you have as many or more points than they do, you can challenge them for their title. Roll +Work. On a 10+, the producers think you've earned it and Creative books you to win (this can still be swerved by later Moves). On a 7-9, it's the main event, but you're booked to lose; you do gain +1 Momentum when the match starts. On a Botch, something happens to keep your match from happening.

If this is the first Episode of a new Pacific Wrestling Season, Creative decides on a NPW to be the current King of the Road. They start the game with points equal to the number of players (and gain points as they wrestle as well). If this is a game continuing from the last Season and a player was King of the Road at the end of it, they start the new Season as King of the Road with points equal to their starting Audience.



# THE GIMMICKS

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Your Gimmick is your choice of general wrestler archetype for your *World Wide Wrestling* character. For full-page printable Gimmick sheets, visit [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg). For all the details on making your wrestler, see Chapter Four: Making the Roster (**PAGE 34**).

All Gimmicks share the following:

## THE BASICS

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**STATS:** Look, Power, Real and Work.

**HAILING FROM:** Pick a thematic origin place, or decide on your own.

**ENTRANCE:** Pick a thematic style of entrance, or decide on your own.

**NAME & LOOK:** Come up with a performance name, and decide on your wrestlers general look.

## HEAT

Write down each other wrestlers name.

On your turn, ask one of the four questions per other player. When answered, gain +1 Heat with their wrestler.

Whenever you work a match with a character you have +4 Heat with, gain +1 Audience.

When you finish a feud, reset Heat with that wrestler to +1.

## ROLE

Pick your starting Role. You can use the Move of the same name. Gain +1 Heat with everyone who's the opposite Role.

★ Babyface—You're a good guy.

★ Heel—You're a bad guy.

When you deliberately break out of your role, you switch to it's opposite ("make a turn"). Gain +1 Heat with everyone now opposed to you.

You can gain an Advanced Role instead via Advances. When you take an Advanced Role, you can use the Move of the same name.

★ Celebrity—You've gained fame outside the ring.

★ Icon—You embody your style of wrestling.

★ Legend—The audience will never forget you.

## THE MOVES

---

You have all Moves checked on your sheet automatically. All Gimmicks have an automatic **FINISHING MOVE** (or equivalent). Some Gimmicks have another automatic Move.

Pick one or two of the remaining Moves, per your sheet.

## THE REST

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### INJURY

When your wrestler takes an injury, check an injury box. As long as you have at least one injury box checked, your Gimmick's Injury rules apply. Whenever you spend an Advance, you can choose to erase an Injury check in addition to gaining the effect of your purchase.

### MOMENTUM

Start each Episode with Momentum per your starting Audience, or the effect of the Over Move if you have +4 Audience.

Whenever you make a roll, you can spend any amount of Momentum to add that amount as a bonus to your roll.

You lose all unspent Momentum at the end of each Episode.

### AUDIENCE

Your wrestler starts the first Episode at a certain Audience rating. Whenever the overall promotion gains viewers (per Creative's guidelines), you reset your Audience to that rating as well.

**Audience +4:** Mark an Advance the first time you hit +4 Audience in an Episode. When you hit +4, any other character with +4 bumps down to +3. There's only one top spot on the roster and you just claimed it. If you have +4 Audience at the beginning of an Episode, you make the Over Move (a Top of the Card Move, **PAGE 150**).

**Audience +3:** You're hot! Start the episode with +2 Momentum.

**Audience +2:** You matter. Start the episode with +1 Momentum.

**Audience +1:** You're present. Start the episode with +1 Momentum.

**Audience 0:** You're boring. Mark an Advance the first time you hit 0 Audience in an Episode. If you have 0 Audience at the end of an Episode, you are fired! If you wish to continue playing you should make a new wrestling character, or talk to Creative about taking over an existing NPW as your new character.

## ADVANCEMENT

### GAIN AN ADVANCE:

- ★ The first time your Audience hits +4 or 0 in an Episode.
- ★ When you gain a Championship Belt.
- ★ When you end a feud satisfactorily.

### SPEND AN ADVANCE TO:

- ★ Add +1 to any Stat (max +3).
- ★ Add +1 Audience.
- ★ Pick another Move from your Gimmick, or another Gimmick.
- ★ Create a custom Move for your character based on a signature habit (see **PAGE 86** for creating custom Moves).
- ★ Gain a Manager, a Valet or an Enforcer (NPW).
- ★ Form a Dedicated Tag Team (see **PAGE 69**).

### AND ONCE YOU'VE PICKED 3 OF THOSE

(this means that once you've picked three from the above list, you're able to pick from the list below in addition to the above options):

- ★ Create a new character to play. You can play both characters simultaneously, or switch between them on an Episode-to-Episode basis. Talk to Creative if you need advice on playing more than one character.
- ★ Retire this character and pick an NPW to play for the next episode. Pick a Gimmick for them and play them as a new wrestling character. Then return this character, with a new Gimmick, and/or in an Advanced Role (Legend, Icon or Celebrity). All Injury checks are erased as well. Each Gimmick notes which Gimmicks it cannot return as (see **PAGE 47**).
- ★ Your character legit retires. Create a new character or take over an NPW if you want to continue playing in this Season.

# THE ANTI-HERO

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You are the badass that everyone loves. Whether you're sticking it to "the man" or telling it like it is, the audience identifies with your rejection of conformity.

## THE BASICS

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### STATS

Look 0, Power -2, Real +1, Work -1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

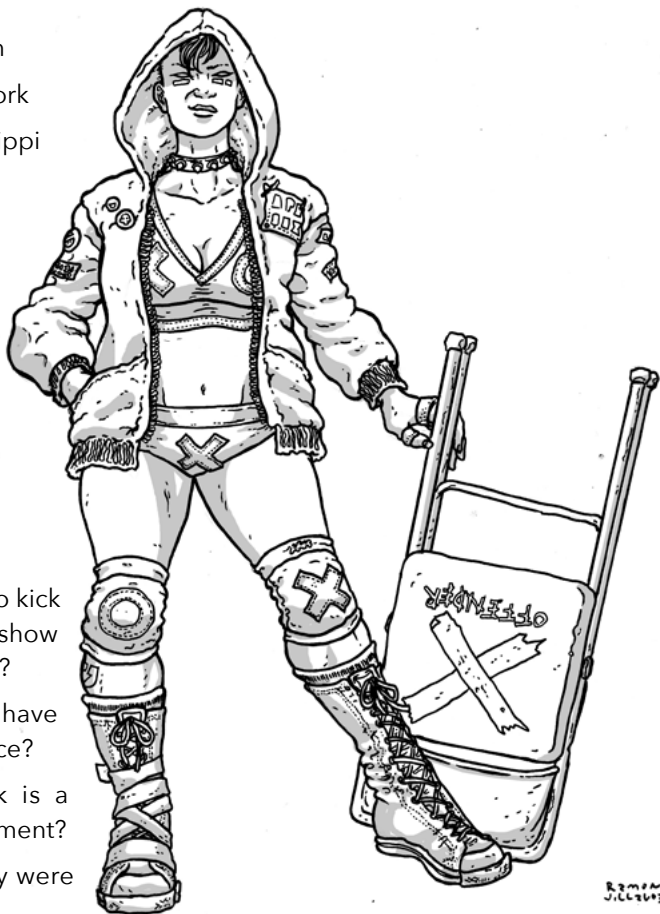
- \* Detroit, Michigan
- \* Brooklyn, New York
- \* Alligator, Mississippi
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Loud & Flashy
- \* Downhome & Gritty
- \* Silent & Serious
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who did I have to kick the shit out of to show how badass I am?
- \* With whom do I have a reluctant alliance?
- \* Who do I think is a slave to management?
- \* Who wishes they were as cool as me?



## ANTI-HERO MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6. On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean. Choose whether you gain +1 Audience, or whether your opponent does. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Chose: you win clean, and you both gain +1 Momentum, or win via countout, disqualification or interference, and gain +1 Heat with your opponent. On a Botch, choose: you lose -1 Audience (but get the win) or you're screwed out of victory by an authority figure.

(and pick 2)

**RULES? WHAT RULES?:** When you break the rules in a match, roll +Look. On a 10+, you get away with it, book the finish of the match on the fly. On a 7-9, pick 1: you get away with it and gain +1 Momentum, or you don't and gain +1 Heat with your opponent. On a Botch you get DQed and lose the match (these results override Creative's booking).

**ANYTHING YOU NEED TO DO TO WIN:** You can use both the **BABYFACE** and **HEEL** Role Moves.

**MOUTH OF THE PEOPLE:** When you speak truth to power, roll +Audience. On a 10+, gain +1 Momentum and pick 2; on a 7-9, pick 1: They shut the hell up right now; you get booked in a match with them; you gain +1 Heat with them. On a Botch, you get beat down by their cronies.

**TWITCH THE CURTAIN:** When you air your legit grievances, on camera, you can roll +Real for any Moves you make outside of the ring for the rest of the Episode. At the end of the Episode, if you haven't gained any Audience, you lose 1 Audience.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box, and note who did it. While injured, you can interfere in any of their matches without Creative's approval or consent, and they gain +1 Momentum when you do so.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Anti-Hero starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Anti-Hero cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber or Manager.

# THE GOLDEN BOY

---

You're the next big thing, whether the audience, and the other wrestlers, admit it or not. Someone backstage is putting all of their weight behind you. You just have to hold up your end in the ring.

## THE BASICS

---

### STATS

Look +1, Power 0, Real -2, Work -1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* Los Angeles, California
- \* Muncie, Indiana
- \* Dallas, Texas
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Classic & Impressive
- \* Showy & Ostentatious
- \* Mild & Unremarkable
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who did I debut with (and leave behind)?
- \* Who's taken me under their wing?
- \* Who's jealous of my rapid rise?
- \* Who has taken it upon themselves to teach me a lesson in the ring?





## GOLDEN BOY MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean, gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Choose: they obviously allow you to get the win, gain +1 Heat with them; they push you, you both gain +1 Momentum. On a Botch, choose: an authority figure interferes and calls the match in your favor on a technicality, losing you -1 Audience; or there was a last-minute change to the booking from backstage and your opponent wins the match.

(and pick 2)

**DYNASTY SCION:** Take +1 Look (Max +3)

**I AM THE FUTURE:** When you keep a promise or follow through on a threat you made on camera, roll +Look. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick 1: book yourself a match with any opponent; add a stipulation to a match; gain +2 Momentum. On a Botch, you get booked in a punitive match.

**SPECIAL SNOWFLAKE:** When you go to an authority figure to save you from the consequences of your actions, roll +Real. On a 10+, they cover for you and you pick one; on a 7-9 they cover for you and they pick one: they demand something new from you; they make you pay for it; they take something away from you; you make a new enemy. On a Botch, whoops, you thought wrong.

**ALWAYS LEARNING:** When you work a match with someone you know is better than you, roll +Work. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick 1: gain +1 Momentum; gain +1 Heat with them; gain their respect. On a Botch, you make a rookie mistake and lose -1 Audience.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box. While injured, you can refuse to compete when booked in a match; if you do so, gain +1 Heat with the character you would have faced.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Golden Boy starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Golden Boy cannot change Gimmick to Veteran, or take an Advanced Role.

# THE Hardcore

*Original Concept by Ian Williams*

**Y**ou're not the best wrestler or the best looking, but you know how to get a pop through naked aggression and rampant bloodshed. Some in the business look down on you, but you're a legend in the making for a small subset of the audience. How long can that fact be ignored?

## THE BASICS

### STATS

Look 0, Power -1, Real 0, Work -1; then add 1 to either Look or Real

### HAILING FROM

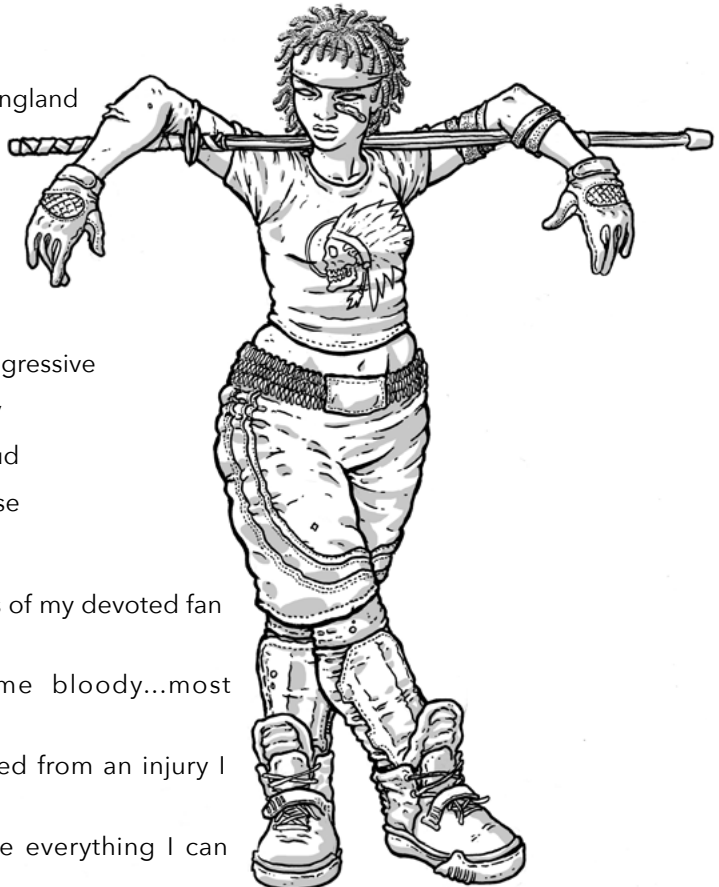
- \* Peoria, Illinois
- \* Manchester, England
- \* Union City, New Jersey
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Raucous & Aggressive
- \* Ironic & Jokey
- \* Sudden & Loud
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who's jealous of my devoted fan base?
- \* Who beat me bloody...most recently?
- \* Who's returned from an injury I gave them?
- \* Who can take everything I can dish out?



## HARDCORE MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6. On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean (or bloody). Choose whether you or your opponent gains +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Choose: you win clean, and you both gain +1 Momentum, or sacrifice your body to make it happen—you gain +1 Heat with them and take an injury. On a Botch, you still get the win, but pick one: you lose -1 Audience, or you injure your opponent.

**TABLES AND LADDERS AND CHAIRS, OH MY:** Whenever you're booked in a match, you can add the Hardcore stipulation: no disqualification, no count out, and weapons allowed. The match uses the **HARDCORE/VIOLENCE** Stipulation Move.

(and pick 1)

**HIGH PAIN TOLERANCE:** +1 Real (Max +3)

**WHAT A WEIRDO:** +1 Look (Max +3)

**MASTER OF HARDCORE:** Whenever you're booked in a hardcore match, take +2 Momentum.

**"THAT IS INSANE":** When you demonstrate reckless disregard for your own health and safety, substitute +Real for any other Stat.

**RED MEANS GREEN:** When you're covered in blood, substitute +Look for any other Stat.

**ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED:** When you suffer injury, endure humiliation or go down in the face of overwhelming odds, roll +Real. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick one: Gain +1 Audience, make Creative book you in a revenge match, gain +2 Momentum. On a Botch, they are not entertained, lose -1 Audience.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box, and gain +1 Heat with the character you were working with.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Hardcore starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Hardcore cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber or Technician.

# THE HIGH FLYER

---

You are extremely athletic, able to go up to the top rope and execute dazzling maneuvers. You put your body on the line every night. How long can you keep this up?

## THE BASICS

---

### STATS

Look 0, Power -2, Real -1, Work +1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* Guadalajara, Mexico
- \* Black Hawk, Colorado
- \* Daytona Beach, Florida
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Fresh & Young
- \* Loud & Fast
- \* Rhythmic & Mellow
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who always has my back?
- \* Who mentored me when I first joined this roster?
- \* Who's ripping off my high-flying style?
- \* Who wishes they could do what I do?



## HIGH FLYER MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean. You gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Choose: they counter and you have to resort to a roll-up, gain +1 Heat with them; or you execute another high spot, and gain +2 Momentum. On a Botch, you still get the win, but pick one: it looks terrible and you lose -1 Audience; injure your opponent; injure yourself.

(and pick 2)

**"LOOK AT THAT AMAZING ATHLETICISM!":** +1 Work (Max +3)

**HUMAN HIGHLIGHT REEL:** Whenever you attempt a high-flying maneuver, and you roll a 10+ before spending Momentum, gain +1 Audience.

**ENMÁSCARADO:** When your mask is at stake in a match, use this Move instead of your **FINISHING MOVE**. Roll +Heat with your opponent. On a 10+, you keep your mask, and your legend grows. Gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, you keep your mask, and pick how you lose the match: you are saved by someone else; you save yourself by fleeing the ring; you save yourself by using a weapon. On a Botch, lose the match, and your mask. (This Move overrides Creative's booking)

**FAN FAVORITE:** You know they want to see you. When you make a big deal of being passed over roll +Real. On a 10+, pick 2, on a 7-9 pick 1: Demand, and be granted, a match; gain +1 Heat with the one sidelining you; gain +1 Momentum. On a Botch, you were wrong, lose -1 Audience.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check two Injury boxes. While injured, any time an opponent uses your injury against you to gain an advantage, they gain +1 Momentum and you gain +1 Heat with them.

If you have four checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The High Flyer starts and resets to Audience +2.

### ADVANCEMENT

The High Flyer cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber or Monster.

# THE JOBBER

*Original Concept by Bret Gillan*

**Y**ou're a nobody. You're there to lose and make the other guy look good. You may not have the fans, but you have a job to do and you can do it well. How long will that keep you, and your family, fed?

## THE BASICS

### STATS

Look -2, Power 0, Real 0, Work +1; then add 1 to one Stat and subtract 1 from one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* Hillsboro, Iowa
- \* Rumford, Maine
- \* Right Here!
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* None
- \* Silly & Overblown
- \* Strangely Sympathetic
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who was my tag team partner before they made it big?
- \* Who can't remember who I am?
- \* Who refuses to work with me?
- \* Who is always trying to get management on my side?





## JOBBER MOVES

**DO THE JOB:** You are always booked to lose your matches. When your opponent pins you for the win, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you make them look great. They gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, you do OK. Gain +1 Momentum or +1 Heat with them, your choice. On a Botch, you don't sell it right. You both lose -1 Audience. If your opponent is another player's wrestler, roll for this when they make their **FINISHING MOVE**.

**CAREER WRESTLER:** If you end a session with Audience +3 or higher, you can change to any other Gimmick, per the changing Gimmick rules. If you end a session with Audience 0, you aren't fired—instead, your Audience is reset to +1.

(and pick 1)

**HAM-N-EGGER:** Take +1 Real (max +3)

**SYMPATHETIC:** Roll +Work instead of +Audience when you make the Work the Audience Move.

**JOBBER TO THE STARS:** When competing against an NPW jobber, you don't count as a Jobber and you're booked to win! You can pick the Finishing Move from any other player's Gimmick to replace your Do The Job Move.

**MULTITALENTED:** When you demonstrate leadership or ability outside of the ring, roll +Real. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick 1: someone important notices you; someone gives you the opportunity to prove yourself; take +1 Momentum. On a Botch, you make a fool of yourself.

## THE REST

**INJURY**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box. If you play up your injury during a match, your opponent gains +1 Momentum.

You can compete with any number of checks, but when you have four checks you're fired. You're just too much of a liability to keep in the ring.

### AUDIENCE

The Jobber starts and resets to Audience 0. Do not take an Advance when you start, or when your Audience resets (you still take an Advance when your Audience hits 0 during play).

### ADVANCEMENT

You cannot change Gimmick with Advances or take an Advanced Role (use the **CAREER WRESTLER** Move instead).

# THE MANAGER

---

You're the sizzle on the steak. You don't compete, but you have the charisma, the talk, the walk and the ideas to keep your client or companion in the spotlight—in and out of the ring.

## THE BASICS

---

### STATS

Look +2, Power -1, Real 0, Work -1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- ★ Memphis, Tennessee
- ★ New York City
- ★ Las Vegas, Nevada
- ★ Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- ★ None
- ★ Generic & Celebratory
- ★ Uses Client's Entrance
- ★ Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- ★ Who do I manage/accompany to the ring? (If you manage a NPW instead, start with Heat +3)
- ★ Who is trying to undermine me backstage?
- ★ Who turned on me when I was their Manager?
- ★ Who knows I have their best interests at heart?

Whenever your *Client* works a match with a character you have +4 Heat with, gain +1 Audience.



## MANAGER MOVES

**MEAL TICKET:** When you interfere on your client's behalf to win them a match, roll 2d6. On a 10+, you pull it off and they get the win. Choose whether you gain +1 Audience, or your client does. On a 7-9 the ref notices your attempt, choose: your client uses your distraction to get the win, they gain +2 Momentum; or you interfere but their opponent still wins, you gain +1 Heat with your client. On a Botch, choose: your effort is hilariously obvious, losing you -1 Audience (though your client still wins the match); or the ref tosses you out of the match and DQs your client. The results of this Move overrides Creative's booking.

**MOUTHPIECE:** When you speak for your Client, they can roll on your Stat instead of theirs for any Move they would normally make. (If your client is an NPW: Gain +1 Momentum when you speak for your client.) (and pick 1)

**"ALWAYS HAS A PLAN":** +1 Look (Max +3)

**BRAIN FOR THE BUSINESS:** +1 Real (Max +3)

**LOYAL:** When you take action in your client's best interests, roll +Look. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick one: gain +1 Momentum; overturn a decision made against your client; gain +1 Heat with your client; add a stipulation to your client's upcoming match. On a Botch, you're obviously faking it, lose -1 Heat with your client.

**BACKSTAGE POLITICS:** When you cut a deal backstage (on or off camera), roll +Real. On a 10+, take +2 Momentum and set up any segment you want later in the show. On a 7-9, you set up a segment later in the show, but pick one: it's a match your client does not want to have; it places you or your client in an embarrassing situation; it demonstrates how much better someone else is than you. On a Botch, Creative picks two.

## THE REST

**INJURY**

☐ ☐

When you use your injury as an excuse to help your client, they gain +1 Momentum. If all boxes are checked, you're too injured to appear on camera.

### AUDIENCE

The Manager starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

"Gain Another Client" replaces "Gain a Manager, Valet or Enforcer".

The Manager cannot form a Dedicated Tag Team.

The Manager cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber or Veteran.

# THE MONSTER

---

You're physically enormous and intimidating. You may have a supernatural edge, or simply be mean—either way, you make people nervous, in and out of the ring.

## THE BASICS

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### STATS

Look 0, Power +1, Real -2, Work -1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

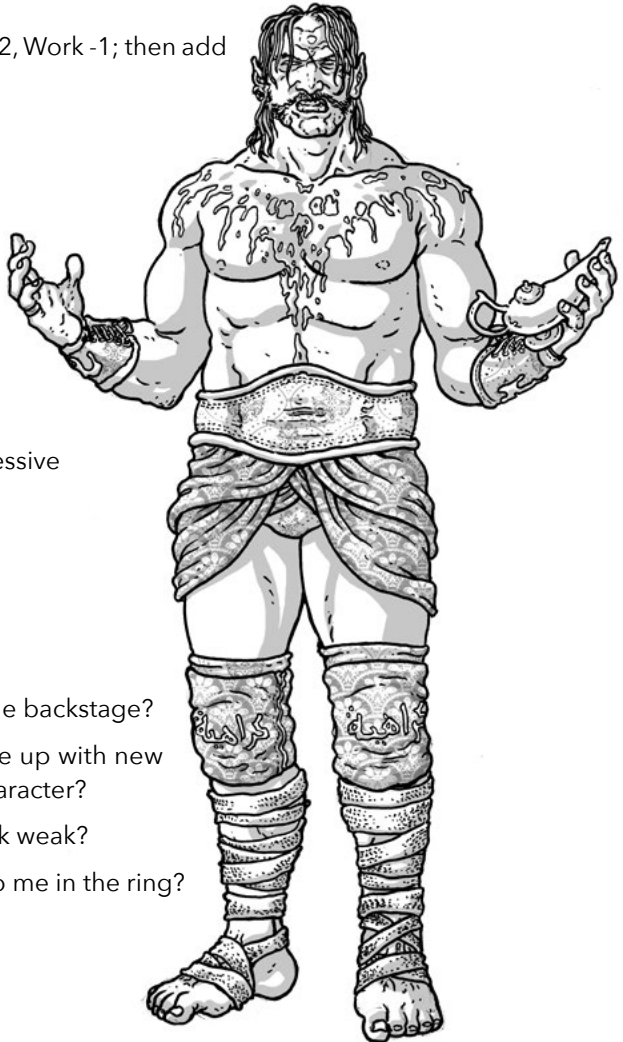
- \* Parts Unknown
- \* Dead Horse, Alaska
- \* Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Thunderous & Impressive
- \* Overblown & Odd
- \* Weird & Mysterious
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who is terrified of me backstage?
- \* Who helps me come up with new directions for my character?
- \* Who's made me look weak?
- \* Who can stand up to me in the ring?



## MONSTER MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean, gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Choose: they showcase your strength, and you both gain +1 Momentum, or they're unwilling to take your finisher and flee the ring, gain +1 Heat with them. On a Botch, you still get the win, but choose whether you lose -1 Audience or injure your opponent.

(and pick 2)

**"WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT SIZE!":** +1 Power (Max +3)

**INTIMIDATING:** When you are not in the ring, roll +Power instead of +Look.

**SHOOT KILL:** When you really go after someone, in or out of the ring, roll +Real. On a 10+, gain +1 Audience (whether they see it or hear about it later, they approve), and you pick one from the 7-9 list. On a 7-9, gain +1 Heat with your victim and they pick one: someone gets injured, you lose all your Momentum, disciplinary action is taken backstage. On a Botch, the match is stopped, if you're in one (and you lose by DQ), and you lose -1 Audience for going too far.

**NOT OF THIS WORLD:** Pick or create a signature match stipulation. Whenever Creative books you in a match, you can choose to add that stipulation, even if the match already has one, and you start the match with +2 Momentum.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box. While injured, when an opponent uses your injury against you, they gain +1 Momentum and you gain +1 Heat with them. When you erase your last Injury check, you can demand, and be granted, a revenge match with anyone who won a match against you while you were injured.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Monster starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Monster cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber, High Flyer or Manager.



# THE TECHNICIAN

---

Whether you were an amateur sensation or an indy workhorse, you have all the skills. Your wrestling ability stands out, but you're continually fighting the assumption you only have one dimension to you as a performer.

## THE BASICS

---

### STATS

Look -2, Power 0, Real -1, Work +1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* St. Paul, Minnesota
- \* Calgary, Alberta Canada
- \* Manchester, England
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Generic & Easy
- \* Loud & Overblown
- \* Raw & Intense
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who was holding me back as my tag team partner?
- \* Who's trying to learn by watching me in the ring?
- \* Who's jealous of my skills?
- \* Who is trying to teach me to be more of an entertainer?





## TECHNICIAN MOVES

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean. You gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you work for it. Choose: they counter and you have to slap a real submission hold on them, gain +2 Momentum; they no-sell your finish and you have to hit them with it again, gain +1 Heat with them. On a Botch, pick one: it's sloppy, lose -1 Audience and win the match; or you go overboard and really crank in a hold, you injure your opponent, and end the match in a no contest.

(and pick 2)

**"FORMER AMATEUR CHAMPION":** +1 Real (Max +3)

**TECHNICAL EXPERT:** +1 Work (Max +3)

**EXCELLENCE OF EXECUTION:** You roll +Work for your **FINISHING MOVE**.

**VERSATILE:** You use the opposite Role move of anyone you're squaring off with (in or out of the ring). If you're facing a Babyface, you use the **HEEL** Move, and if you're facing a Heel, you use the **BABYFACE** Move. If you're facing an Advanced Role, you use your normal Role Move.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** When you shake hands with another wrestler, roll +Real. On a 10+, pick two, on a 7-9, pick one: you both gain +1 Momentum; you gain +1 Heat with each other; you get to pick who attacks who (or if nobody does). On a Botch, they attack you before your hands touch (and they gain +2 Momentum).

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box. Whenever you lose a match due to your injury, lose all Momentum. Whenever you push through your injury to win a match, gain +2 Momentum.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Technician starts and resets to Audience +1.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Technician cannot change Gimmick to Golden Boy, Jobber or Monster.

# THE VETERAN

---

You are an established name. You work almost every night, you have a dedicated fan base, and you're ready to create an enduring legacy.

## THE BASICS

---

### STATS

Look 0, Power -1, Real -1, Work +1; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* Hollywood, California
- \* Toronto, Ontario Canada
- \* Charlotte, North Carolina
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Classic Orchestral
- \* Solemn & Dignified
- \* Iconic Symbolism
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who am I keeping out of the spotlight?
- \* Who is my protégé?
- \* Who is undercutting me?
- \* Who has no respect for all the work I've put into this company?

## VETERAN MOVES

---

**FINISHING MOVE:** When you're booked to win a match, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit your Finisher clean. Choose whether you or your opponent gains +1 Audience. On a 7-9, they make you



work for it. Choose: you use your veteran skills to force a win, and gain +1 Heat with them; or you let them look strong in defeat, and they gain +1 Audience. On a Botch, you win by countout, disqualification or interference (Creative's choice), and you lose -1 Audience.

**VETERAN INSTINCTS:** Gain +1 Momentum when you start a match.

(and pick 1)

**TOP OF THE CARD:** When you demand a match, it must be granted by Creative.

**BURY 'EM:** When you go to management to stop another wrestler's push, roll +Real. On a 10+ you book their next segment. On a 7-9 pick whether you book yourself to win next time you wrestle them; or add a stipulation to their next match. On a Botch, you accelerate their push instead.

**PUT OVER:** When you show vulnerability to an opponent in the ring in order to make them look good, roll +Work. On a 10+, you both gain +1 Audience. On a 7-9, one of you gains +1 Audience and the other loses -1 Audience, your opponents choice. On a Botch, you lose -1 Audience and your opponent resents you for your pandering.

**RESPECT THE BUSINESS:** When you act to preserve wrestling tradition, roll +Real. On a 10+ they back down and you gain +1 Heat with each other. On a 7-9, you gain +1 Heat with them and they choose one: they do it behind your back; they jump you; they start spreading lies about you in the locker room. On a Botch, traditions change. Lose -1 Heat with them and all of your Momentum.

## THE REST

**INJURY** ☐ ☐ ☐

When you get injured, check an Injury box. When injured, you can pull out of any match you're booked in without repercussions, but you gain +1 Momentum if you don't.

If you have 3 checks, you can no longer compete.

## AUDIENCE

The Veteran starts and resets to Audience +2.

## ADVANCEMENT

The Veteran can only change Gimmick to Anti-Hero, Manager or Wasted.

# THE WASTED

*Original Concept by Alex Isabelle*

You are well known for your impressive style and have a dedicated fan base, but you have some serious real-life substance abuse and addiction problems that could threaten your career.

## THE BASICS

### STATS

Look +1, Power -1, Real -2, Work 0; then add 1 to one Stat

### HAILING FROM

- \* Orange, New Jersey
- \* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- \* Holly Springs, North Carolina
- \* Elsewhere

### ENTRANCE

- \* Screams & Tears
- \* Rock & Roll
- \* XTreme & Wild
- \* Something Else

### HEAT QUESTIONS

- \* Who kicked my ass backstage most recently?
- \* Who thinks I'm a curse for the company?
- \* Who did I last injure while I was high?
- \* Who is jealous of my fan base?



## WASTED MOVES

**MONEYMAKER:** When you go for your Finisher, regardless of whether you're booked to win or not, roll 2d6: On a 10+, you hit it clean. You gain +2 Audience. On a 7-9, you gain +1 Audience, though something goes wrong. Lose all Momentum and choose: your opponent no-sells it, lose -1 Heat with them; you injure yourself; you injure them. On a Botch, you forgot the booking. You lose -1 Audience, and your opponent gets to call an audible and finish the match however they want (somebody had to do something...)

**ADDICT:** Whenever you take something, gain +2 Momentum and lose -2 Real (minimum -2). Whenever you're on something, roll +Real for ALL your non-Gimmick Moves (Basic, In-Ring, Top of the Card and Role).

(and pick 1)

**THEY KNOW IT:** The audience knows of your addiction and it's part of why they're into you. Gain +1 Momentum when you enter the ring obviously high.

**STILEY:** That sick style? You got it. +1 Look (Max +3)

**"YOU'RE A PROBLEM YOURSELF":** When you piss someone off with your bullshit, roll +Real. On a 10+ they give you the rope to hang yourself with, set up any segment you want and gain 1 Momentum. On a 7-9, gain +1 Heat with them and pick one: you're booked in a punitive match, you get beaten down, you get humiliated because of your addiction. On a Botch, all three.

**COMPLETELY INSANE:** You can replace any Stat with +Look when you do something that's just plain crazy. (This overrides **ADDICT**) If you Botch, you injure yourself.

## THE REST

**INJURY**

☐ ☐

When you get injured, gain +1 Audience and check an Injury box. For every Injury box you have when you compete, your opponent gains +1 Momentum at the beginning of the match.

If you have 2 checks, you can no longer compete.

### AUDIENCE

The Wasted starts and resets to Audience +2.

### ADVANCEMENT

The Wasted can change Gimmick to anything except Golden Boy.

# THE MOVES

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This is the list of the shared Moves used by the players of wrestling characters. To download a set of standard printable reference sheets, visit [ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg](http://ndpdesign.com/wwwrpg).

## BASIC MOVES

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**BREAK KAYFABE:** When you expose the legit truth on camera, roll +Real.

- ★ On a 10+ it's exactly what the audience was waiting for, gain +1 Audience
- ★ On a 7-9 you blur the line, gain +2 Momentum and pick 1:
  - o Creative books you in a punitive match
  - o the revelation loses you -1 Heat with someone
  - o you lose someone's support backstage.

**CHEAP HEAT:** When you insult or praise the audience or their hometown, gain +1 Momentum. You can only get cheap heat once per Episode.

**CUT A PROMO:** When you take the mic and speak your mind, roll +Look.

- ★ On a 10+ you connect with the audience, gain +1 Momentum and pick 1 from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 you get them to pay attention, pick 1:
  - o make Creative book you in a match
  - o add a stipulation to a relevant match
  - o gain +1 Momentum
  - o gain +1 Heat with the subject of your Promo

**FEAT OF STRENGTH:** When you demonstrate your extraordinary strength, roll +Power.

- ★ On a 10+ pick 1:
  - o you do it easily and gain +2 Momentum
  - o you impress your opponent and gain +1 Heat with them
- ★ On a 7-9 it's an obvious effort. Gain +1 Momentum and they (your opponent or Creative) picks 1:
  - o you do it with obvious difficulty (and the Audience notices)
  - o you put yourself at risk of injury
  - o you put them at risk of injury
- ★ On a Botch you injure yourself.



**RUN-IN:** When you interrupt a match in-progress, roll +Heat with the character you're coming after (establish Heat at +1 if necessary).

- ★ On a 10+ it's a hot angle, you both gain +1 Heat with each other and you pick one from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 it has potential, you gain 1 Momentum and your target picks one:
  - you attack them in the ring, resulting in their opponent getting DQed; they win the match (this overrides Creative's booking)
  - your interference doesn't change the result of the match, but Creative books the two of you in a match later in this Episode
  - your interference doesn't change the result of the match, but their opponent comes after you for interfering in their business

**WORK THE AUDIENCE:** When you pump up, yell at or otherwise work to get the audience into your corner, roll +Audience.

- ★ On a 10+ you get them on your side, gain +2 Momentum.
- ★ On a 7-9 they pop, pick 1:
  - gain +1 Momentum
  - take control of the match, if you're in one.
- ★ On a Botch they're not feeling it; you can't Work the Audience again this Episode.

## ROLE MOVES

You can use your Role Move as long as you have the Momentum to spend on it. You can only use the Move that corresponds to your current Role, unless you have another Move that allows otherwise.

**BABYFACE:** When you stand up for something you believe in, spend 2 Momentum and pick 1 of the following:

- gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- leave your opponent speechless
- make Creative book you in a match
- add a stipulation to a match

**HEEL:** When you do something underhanded to get what you want, spend 2 Momentum and pick 1 of the following:

- gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- win a match (this overrides Creative's booking)
- leave someone helplessly lying on the floor
- get out of a match you've been booked in

## ADVANCED ROLE MOVES

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**CELEBRITY:** When you leverage your non-wrestling fame, roll +Real.

- \* On a 10+ you get to call the shots, pick 2 from the 7-9 list
- \* On a 7-9 everyone listens to you, pick 1:
  - o Creative must book you to win your next match
  - o book any match you want to see (including outcome)
  - o gain +1 Audience
  - o gain +2 Momentum

- \* On a Botch the fans feel abandoned, lose -1 Audience

**ICON:** Pick any of your Moves, including your Finishing Move, that you roll dice for. When you make the Move, in addition to the normal result:

- \* When you roll a 10+ on that Move, choose:
  - o you gain +1 Audience
  - o your opponent or the target of the Move gains +1 Audience
- \* When you roll a 7-9 on that Move you gain +1 Momentum
- \* When you Botch your iconic spot you lose -1 Audience

**LEGEND:** When you make your first appearance in an Episode, roll +Audience.

- \* On a 10+ they adore you, pick 2 from the 7-9 list
- \* On a 7-9 the crowd pops, pick 1:
  - o gain +1 Audience
  - o gain +1 Heat with someone else present
  - o someone else present gains +1 Audience
- \* On a Botch you're stale! Lose -1 Audience

## TOP OF THE CARD MOVES

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**CHAMPIONS ADVANTAGE:** If your championship is at stake in a match, before Creative reveals the finish you can roll out of the ring and get counted out. You lose the match, but retain the title, as titles do not change hands on a countout. Roll +Audience.

- \* On a 10+ you get to add a stipulation to the rematch, and gain +1 Momentum
- \* On a 7-9 pick 1:
  - o gain +2 Momentum
  - o gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- \* On a Botch the audience really wanted to see that match, lose -1 Audience

**OVER:** If you have +4 Audience at the top of the show, gain +2 Momentum and roll +Look.

- ★ On a 10+ pick 2 from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 pick 1:
  - demand, and be granted, any match you want
  - call out anyone on the roster to explain themselves, and gain +1 Heat with them
  - gain +1 Momentum
- ★ On a Botch Creative books you with your lowest-Heat opponent, or debuts and books you with a new NPW (establish Heat at 0)

## IN-RING MOVES & STIPULATIONS

You can perform other Moves (Basic, Role and Gimmick Moves) during a match as well. Narrate how you use them and resolve them whenever you have control of the match, or to follow up an **INTERRUPT** move.

**WRESTLING:** When you have control of the match, you narrate the transitional sequences, working with your opponent to fill in the details. When a sequence leads up to a big spot or key move in the ring, narrate the maneuver and roll:

If you execute a difficult, demanding or dangerous maneuver that showcases your technical wrestling ability roll +Work

If you put your opponent or yourself at legit risk by using your physical strength, roll +Power

If you execute a signature move, demonstrate your character through action or otherwise showcase your Gimmick, roll +Look

If you work with your opponent to execute an amazing and memorable sequence, roll +Heat

- ★ On a 10+ you hit it great, retain control and pick one:
  - gain +2 Momentum
  - gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- ★ On a 7-9 you hit it pretty well, pick one:
  - retain control and transition into the next sequence
  - give your opponent control and gain +1 Momentum
- ★ On a Botch you get countered, give 1 Momentum to your opponent, and they immediately take control of the match (if you have no Momentum, they still gain 1)

**INTERRUPT:** When you cut in to take control of a match for yourself, spend 1 Momentum and narrate your interruption. You gain control of the match and continue on with the next sequence.

**WORK REAL STIFF:** When you go to legit injure somebody in the ring, roll +Real

- ★ On a 10+ you really lay 'em out, pick 2 from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 that sure is stiff, pick 1:
  - o you injure your opponent
  - o the match ends in a no-contest (this overrides Creative's booking)
  - o your opponent loses -1 Audience
- ★ On a Botch you screw it up, and get injured as a result

### **TAG TEAM MOVES**

Tag matches focus on the current performer (called the "legal wrestler") for each team in the ring. You still follow the rules for the players having and losing control of the match (including using the **INTERRUPT MOVE**), which means that the player with control of the match may not necessarily be the legal wrestler.

**HOT TAG:** When you have control of the match and you go to tag your partner at a critical moment (either to get in or out of the ring) roll +Heat with them.

- ★ On a 10+ the tag is made and you get a double-team opportunity on the legal wrestler from the other team. Everyone on your team gains +1 Momentum. The new legal wrestler from your team takes (or retains) control of the match.
- ★ On a 7-9 the tag is made. The new legal wrestler on your team gains 1 Momentum from their teammate, and takes (or retains) control of the match.
- ★ On a Botch the other team interferes, blocks the tag and isolates your legal wrestler in their corner. The legal wrestler from their team gains control of the match, and you give them 1 Momentum.

**TAG TURN:** When you refuse to tag in to a match, roll +Heat with your partner (if they're going for a **HOT TAG**, resolve this Move instead).

- ★ On a 10+ you remain outside the ring, and leave your partner to get pinned by the opposing legal wrestler (this overrides Creative's booking). Gain +1 Heat with your partner.

- ★ On a 7-9 you cause them to get hit from behind. They give you 1 Momentum, then you tag yourself in as the legal wrestler.
- ★ On a Botch you get beaten down outside the ring by the other team before your partner can reach you. Give 1 Momentum to the legal wrestler from the other team, and they gain control of the match.

## MATCH STIPULATION MOVES

**HARDCORE/VIOLENCE:** When you draw blood, use a weapon or revel in violence in the ring roll +Real.

- ★ On a 10+ the crowd goes nuts, gain +1 Audience, retain control of the match and pick 1 from the 7-9 list
- ★ On a 7-9 the crowd pops, your opponent gains control of the match, and you pick 1:
  - someone in the match gets injured
  - you gain +2 Momentum
  - you gain +1 Heat with your opponent
- ★ On a Botch you play it too safe or fuck it up. Give 1 Momentum to your opponent, they take control of the match, and pick 1:
  - you lose -1 Audience
  - you take an Injury

## THE REGAL WRANGLE

Two competitors start in the ring, then another enters at staggered intervals. Wrestlers can only be eliminated by being thrown over the top rope. The last one standing is the winner! Creative decides on who starts in the ring. Whenever a player makes the **WRESTLING MOVE**, replace the normal result list with this one:

- ★ On a 10+ retain control of the match, and pick 1:
  - you gain +2 Momentum
  - throw an opponent over the top rope, gain +1 Heat with them
  - pick the next entrant to the Wrangle, gain +1 Heat with them.
- ★ On a 7-9 pick 1:
  - you need to work with someone else to throw an opponent over the top rope, and they take control of the match
  - retain control of the match and pick the next entrant
- ★ On a Botch you get taken to the top rope! You can spend 1 Momentum to stay in the ring, or you get dumped out, and gain +1 Heat with whoever dumped you

Wrestlers can use the **INTERRUPT MOVE** to avoid elimination.

In addition to those introduced through the Move, Creative introduce new competitors whenever they feel it's appropriate.

If the wrestler who's booked to win is about to get eliminated, Creative should reveal the finish early (but continue playing out the match). If someone goes to dump out the winner once they know who's booked to win, that's Breaking Kayfabe! If you want to "play it straight", then just play as normal, using this Move, until one wrestler is left standing tall.

Creative should plan on introducing at least as many NPWs as there are players in order to create a suitably chaotic atmosphere for this match.

## KING OF THE HILL

*Original Concept by Willow Palacek*

A King of the Hill match features multiple wrestlers in a single ring, with a raised platform in the middle. Any wrestler thrown over the top rope is eliminated. At the end of a timer (usually 10 minutes), whoever stands on the platform is King of the Hill!

Creative sets the timer to 10 (writing it in big numbers is a good way to do it). The timer ticks down based on the wrestlers Move results. When the timer hits 0, whoever is currently King of the Hill wins; they gain +1 Audience. If Creative has booked a winner and they are about to be eliminated, you should reveal the finish early, as in the Regal Wrangle. Creative can tick down the timer as needed as well.

Creative decides who starts as King of the Hill, and they start with control of the match. All of the other contestants start in the ring. Whenever a player makes the **WRESTLING MOVE**, replace the normal result list with this one, depending on their position in the ring:

If you are King of the Hill:

- ★ On a 10+ you dominate, retain control and pick 1:
  - o you gain +2 Momentum
  - o you gain +1 Heat with the wrestler who most threatens you
  - o you knock a challenger over the top rope, eliminating them!
- ★ On a 7-9 you maintain. Creative ticks down the timer by 1, and you pick 1:
  - o you keep control of the hill, but you give a challenger control of the match
  - o you are dumped off the hill! Choose who dethrones you and give them control of the match, and gain +1 Heat with them.



- ★ On a Botch you get dumped off the Hill. Whoever dethroned you gains control of the match and becomes King of the Hill. Creative ticks down the timer by 1, and you pick 1:
  - give one Momentum to the new King of the Hill and stay in the match
  - you're thrown out of the ring and eliminated, gain +1 Heat with whoever took you out

If you are challenging for the Hill:

- ★ On a 10+ you rule. Retain control of the match, and pick 1:
  - you become King of the Hill
  - you gain +2 Momentum
  - you gain +1 Heat with the King of the Hill
- ★ On a 7-9 you mix it up good. Creative ticks down the timer by 1, and you pick 1:
  - someone else sabotages your valiant climb up the Hill, gain +1 Heat with them and give them control of the match
  - you need to work with someone—choose another wrestler to become King of the Hill, but retain control of the match
- ★ On a Botch you get dumped off the Hill. The current King of the Hill gains control of the match. Creative ticks down the timer by 1, and you pick 1:
  - give one Momentum to the King of the Hill and stay in the match
  - you're thrown out of the ring and eliminated! Gain +1 Heat with the King of the Hill

## A CUSTOM MOVE

**REVOLUTION:** When you take over the show lose -1 Audience, then gain +2 Momentum.

During the show, you can spend Momentum 1-for-1 any time to:

- book a match (Creative still books the finish)
- interrupt a match or segment without having to make the **RUN-IN** Move, ask permission or otherwise explain yourself
- set up any backstage segment you want
- gain +1 Heat with someone who's bucking your self-declared authority

If you end the Episode without having gained any Audience, pick one:

- you lose an additional Audience
- you face severe backstage consequences.

If you gained any Advances this Episode, add this to the Advance list:

- ★ Extract a major backstage concession from management.

# THE GLOSSARY

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## GAME CONCEPTS

**Agendas:** What each player is trying to achieve in order to make the game as fun as possible for everyone at the table. **PAGE 55** (Player Agendas) **PAGE 78** (Creative Agendas)

**Imaginary Viewing Audience:** The fictional audience watching your wrestling show. **PAGE 8**

**Making The X:** A method to indicate to the other players that something has crossed a personal line. **PAGE 32**

**Moves:** Discrete moments of play that demand resolution or push the game forward. See Moves entry (**PAGE 159**) for specific references.

**Principles:** The guideposts that Creative uses to decide which Moves to make in service of their Agendas. **PAGE 78**

## GAME TERMS

**Advances:** Gained by players wrestlers from certain Audience scores, finishing feuds and gaining championships, and spent to improve and evolve the character. **PAGE 46**

**Audience:** The rating of how popular a wrestling character is. Both player's wrestlers and NPWs have an Audience score, rated from 0 to +4. **PAGE 43** (Player's Wrestlers) **PAGE 77** (NPWs)

**Botch:** When a player rolls a 6 or less when they make a Move. Botches represent the inability of the character to get what they want out of the Move, and allow Creative to make Hard Moves. **PAGE 56**

**Gimmick:** Each individual wrestling character's unique archetype. **PAGE 34** (Making Your Wrestler) **PAGE 125** (The 10 Basic Gimmicks)

**Heat:** A score representing how engaging a wrestler's relationship with another character is to the audience. Ranges from 0 to +4. **PAGE 42** (Setting Heat) **PAGE 42** (Heat In Play) **PAGE 43** (Cooling Off Heat)

**Injury:** Checkboxes indicating how injured a character is, and the conditions in force whenever a box is checked for an individual character, indicating their level of injury. **PAGE 45**

**Momentum:** A resource representing a character's intangibles and intensity in a given Episode. Spent to add a bonus to rolls after they are made, and to trigger some Moves. **PAGE 45**

**Stats:** The four basic attributes all Gimmicks share, rated from -2 to +3: Look, Power, Real and Work. **PAGE 40**

## GAME STRUCTURE

**Booking:** Creative decides on the results of wrestling matches and the order of segments before each Episode starts. Booking can be changed (swerved) by the events of play. **PAGE 20** (Booking the First Episode) **PAGE 74** (Booking Later Episodes)

**Episode:** The basic time unit of play, covering a single show performed by your roster. Episodes generally take 2-3 hours of real time to play. **PAGE 14** (Overview) **PAGE 16** (The First Episode)

**Gaining Audience:** As the player's wrestlers gain Audience, the entire promotion gains new viewers. **PAGE 77**

**On Deck:** Creative makes a list of ideas, characters and feuds they want to see in play in between Episodes. **PAGE 72**

**Promotion:** The fictional wrestling company that employs your wrestling characters. **PAGE 84** (Building Your Promotion) **PAGE 119** (Season One Promotions)

**Roster:** The list of wrestlers in your promotion, including the players wrestlers and NPWs. **PAGE 16** (First Episode Roster) **PAGE 34** (Making Wrestling Characters) **PAGE 111** (Season One Roster)

**Season:** A linked series of Episodes following the set of continuous storylines involving your wrestling roster. **PAGE 14** (Overview) **PAGE 71** (Continuing A Season)

**Segment:** An single scene that occurs inside an Episode, generally booked by Creative. Can be in-ring, backstage or off-camera. **PAGE 32** (Pacing Segments) **PAGE 71** (List Of Segments)

**The Card:** The relative importance and popularity of the wrestlers. Usually determines what order wrestling matches are booked in and who's in contention for title belts. **PAGE 74**

## WRESTLING TERMS

**Kayfabe:** The concept that the audience accepts the scripted reality as "real" in order to enjoy a wrestling show, acknowledging that there's a legit reality behind it all. **PAGE 8** (Summary) **PAGE 92** (History)

**Other Jargon:** A reference list of commonly used wrestling terms (and how they're used in this game) is on **PAGE 11**

## PLAYER ROLES

**Announcer:** During a wrestling match, any player who's character isn't booked to be in the match can serve as the Announcer, calling the match for the Imaginary Viewing Audience and sometimes **PUTTING OVER** wrestlers in the match. **PAGE 65**

**Creative:** A single player who books matches and Episodes, creates antagonists for the player's wrestlers, and generally organizes and narrates the ongoing show. **PAGE 78**

**Non-Player Wrestler (NPW):** All of the characters in the game that aren't played by single players. Often played by Creative, or assigned to a player whose wrestler isn't present in a segment on an ad hoc basis. Players can also take over NPWs to play when their wrestler is off screen during a Gimmick change, or as a new or additional character due to spending Advances. **PAGE 47** (Taking Over NPWs) **PAGE 67** (Wrestling NPWs) **PAGE 72** (Creative & NPWs)

**Wrestler:** Each player (other than Creative) creates an individual wrestling character. Play focuses on these characters and their storylines. **PAGE 34** (Making Your Wrestler) **PAGE 50** (Playing Your Wrestler)

## CHARACTER ROLES

Overview of Character Roles **PAGE 41**

**Babyface:** A good guy. Babyfaces generally have moral principles, care about their fans and stand up for what they believe in. **PAGE 149** (The **BABYFACE** Move)

**Heel:** A bad guy. Heels generally are selfish, look out for their own interests first and cheat to win. **PAGE 149** (The **HEEL** Move)

**(Advanced) Celebrity:** A wrestler who's transcended good and bad through fame gained outside of the wrestling world. **PAGE 150** (The **CELEBRITY** Move)

**(Advanced) Icon:** A wrestler who's transcended good and bad through their devotion to their craft. **PAGE 150** (The **ICON** Move)

**(Advanced) Legend:** A wrestler who's transcended good and bad through the fan's love of their character. **PAGE 150** (The **LEGEND** Move)

## WRESTLING MATCHES

Overview of Wrestling Matches **PAGE 64**

**Dedicated Tag Teams:** Two players can use Advances to put their wrestlers into a Dedicated Tag Team, giving them advantages in tag team matches over non-Dedicated teams. **PAGE 69**

**Putting Over:** The ability the Announcer for a match has to describe a wrestlers sequence in the most positive light, bumping up their die result one level (from Botch to partial hit, or partial to full hit). **PAGE 65**

**Stakes & Limits:** The tools used by Creative to add drama to wrestling matches, by heightening rewards or adding formal or informal stipulations. **PAGE 81**

## CUSTOMIZATION

**Custom Moves:** Moves you create to showcase unique aspects of your games wrestling universe. **PAGE 86**

**New Gimmicks:** Gimmicks you create to represent specific archetypes of wrestler not covered by the basic 10 presented here. **PAGE 88**

**The Promotion:** The details of how your wrestling world works are up to you, and can be decided beforehand or through the course of play. **PAGE 85** (Default Assumptions) **PAGE 119** (Season One Promotions)

## MOVES

Overview of Making Moves **PAGE 56**

**Basic Moves:** The Moves all wrestlers can use. **PAGE 60** (Using Basic Moves) **PAGE 148** (Move List)

**Creative Moves:** Moves made by Creative to advance storylines and challenge the players wrestlers. Soft Moves are made when it's time for something to happen on-screen. Hard Moves are made when players Botch, or when the situation demands fallout in the legit lives of the wrestlers. **PAGE 79** (Making Creative Moves) **PAGE 80** (Creative Move List)

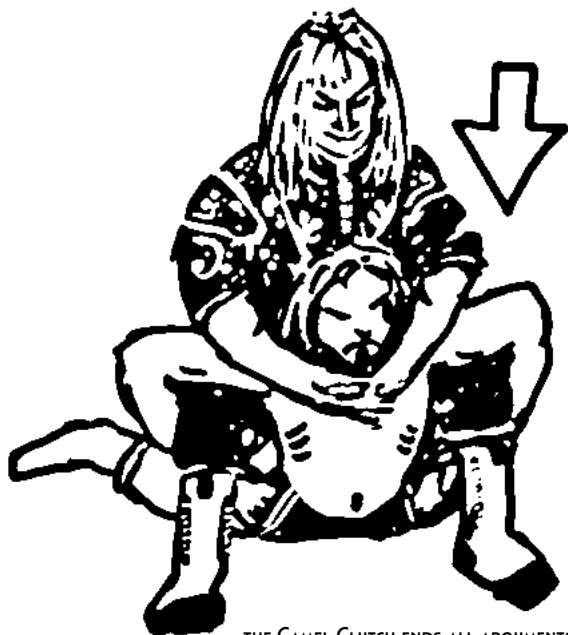
**Gimmick Moves:** The Moves for each individual Gimmick, chosen as each Gimmick instructs. Gimmicks start on **PAGE 125**

**In-Ring Moves:** Moves used by all wrestlers during wrestling matches. **PAGE 65** (Using In-Ring Moves) **PAGE 151** (Move List)

**Other Moves:** Moves can be created to cover other aspects of the game, like a promotion-wide concept or the interactions between wrestlers and fans. **PAGE 86** (Creating Custom Moves) **PAGE 155** (A Custom Move)

**Stipulation Moves:** Moves that apply when a match is given a matching stipulation. **PAGE 70** (Making Stipulations) **PAGE 153** (Move List)

**Top Of The Card Moves:** Moves used by wrestlers who are at the top of the card (either due to popularity or holding a championship title). **PAGE 62** (Using Top Of The Card Moves) **PAGE 150** (Move List)



THE CAMEL CLUTCH ENDS ALL ARGUMENTS

## COLOPHON

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This publication was created with Adobe CC on a MacBook Pro. The Avenir Next typeface was chosen for body text for its readability and humanistic proportions. Titles are set in Cassanet, a contemporary display typeface inspired by French Art Nouveau poster type. It was chosen for its resonance with special event title graphics from the 1970s and '80s. Incidentals are from Zaft Dingbats and Phosphate.

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Crafted with love in Chicago, IL.

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WELCOME TO THE PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING RPG  
OF NARRATIVE ACTION!

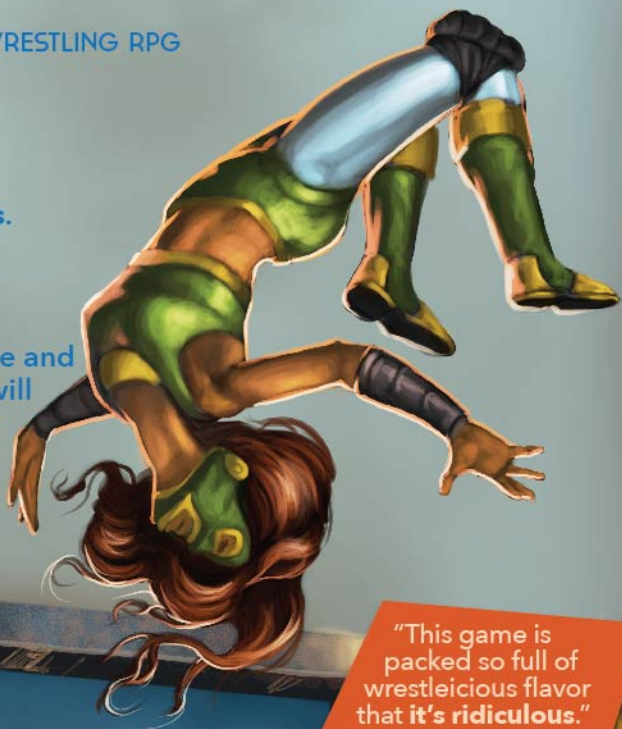
Create **iconic wrestlers**.

Play out **dramatic feuds**.

Explore **entertaining storylines**.

Clash in **epic in-ring action**.

Through play focused both on competition in the squared circle and events behind the scenes, you will discover who has what it takes to **become a wrestling legend**.



"This game is packed so full of wrestleicious flavor that **it's ridiculous.**"

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## WORLD WIDE WRESTLING

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

- \* Supports large and small groups, irregular attendance, drop-in guest stars and one-shot play.
- \* Quick character generation based on wrestling archetypes.
- \* Play out a single wrestling show in two hours, then link Episodes into an ongoing Season of your promotion.
- \* In-ring action rules that channel your creativity to make entertaining and engaging wrestling matches.
- \* Ongoing feuds, getting over and gaining more fans, changing Gimmicks over time, and much more!
- \* Helpful essays from different perspectives on professional wrestling, roleplaying and how the two interact.

3-8 Players  
1-10 Sessions  
1-3 Hours/Session  
Action & Drama



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