

## **DAVE BRADSHAW - SAMPLE OF WRITTEN WORK**

*The following is a sample of the kind of content I produced for Fighting Spirit Magazine (FSM) between 2009 and 2011 when I served as its UK news editor. I typically wrote all of the articles each month – enough to fill four pages of the magazine – completing all of the research and liaising with photographers to secure the relevant shots to accompany the stories. The following stories were all written by me, and included in an issue of the magazine from early 2011. You might spot references to several future worldwide stars!*

### **BRITS CROSS THE LINE**

#### **UK talent shines on TNA tour**

As reported last month, some of the top names from the UK scene were included in TNA's tour of the UK in late January – a huge opportunity by any standards. So, how did it go?

Scottish heavyweight Lionheart, having already felt the wrath of Jeff Jarrett's guitar during a PBW training seminar in December, faced the "King of the Mountain" when the tour rolled into Glasgow on 27<sup>th</sup> January. In front of thousands of his countrymen, Lionheart gave a very creditable performance on his way to a defeat against TNA's founding father.

Mark Haskins, the impressive British flyweight who has spent much of his recent career competing for Dragon Gate in Japan, had not been announced for the TNA tour when the last issue of FSM went to press. But in fact, he ended up competing twice: the first of which was the opening bout on that same night in Glasgow. Haskins eventually lost a wildly entertaining Fatal Four-Way for the X Division Title against Shannon Moore, Chris Sabin, and champion Kazarian who won the contest. The following night at Manchester's MEN Arena, Haskins again opened the show – this time losing a high-flying singles match against Moore.

The final UK date saw over 8000 fans cram into London's Wembley Arena for the biggest live attendance in TNA history. It is a night that many fans will remember for fellow Brit Doug Williams' brilliant contest against Ric Flair. But earlier in the evening, Cumbrian man mountain Johnny Moss had a career highlight of his own, as he got his chance against Jarrett. Even before Moss arrived in the arena, the hated Jarrett had worked the crowd into a frenzy, and that feeling only grew as he used his famous guitar to steal a victory from their countryman.

"It was a real honour for me to be on a show alongside so many greats," Moss told FSM after the match. "Obviously it was one of the greatest nights of my career, and I was pleased that the match was well received not only by the fans but by the guys backstage. Dixie Carter, Rob Van Dam, Ric Flair and Jarrett himself all seemed really happy with it, so I'm hopeful I'll get the chance to work with TNA again in the future."

### **HAMMERLOCK IS BACK**

#### **Famous UK promotion returns**

It was once legendary as the only place in the UK where wannabe wrestlers could get a proper education in the business – a talent factory that acted as a starting point for the likes of TNA's Doug

Williams and Winter (Katie Lea in her WWE days), New Japan's Prince Devitt, and top stars from the UK scene such as Alex Shane, Jonny Storm and Jody Fleisch. It was also among the first promotions to import big name former WWE stars such as Jake "The Snake" Roberts and Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart. But NWA-UK Hammerlock faded away into extinction in the late Noughties after its founder Andre Baker was sent to prison.

As FSM reported last May, Baker tragically passed away soon after his release last year but now an attempt is underway to restore the Hammerlock brand. It all begins with a special memorial show to Baker on 21<sup>st</sup> May, marking the first anniversary of his death and featuring many of the success stories who came through the Hammerlock system during its initial 15-year run. In a particularly eye-catching bout, Devitt will return from Japan to face young British sensation Zack Sabre Jr, who himself started training at the school in 2002, aged just 14. Other stars scheduled to appear on the show include Johnny Moss, Danny Garnell, Jon Ryan, Jon Ritchie, Tank, Jimmy Havoc, Hugh Mungus and NWA Ireland's Paul Tracey. Former Hammerlock stalwarts Majik and Conscience are coming out of retirement especially for the show too.

#### THE LEGACY LIVES ON

The man behind the show is Tony McMillan, one of Baker's earliest students who had worked almost exclusively for Hammerlock since its launch in 1993. When Baker was incarcerated, McMillan and his tag team partner Dean Champion bought his rings and entranceway from him so that they could promote shows in his absence. After his death, McMillan says it was an easy decision to try and continue the Hammerlock legacy.

"I started with Andre right in the beginning," he tells FSM. "Even now Andre is gone, I want to ensure Hammerlock lives on into its 18<sup>th</sup> year and beyond. I'm hoping that we can use the memorial show as something of a launchpad to get the Hammerlock name back out there, and eventually to start running regular shows again."

McMillan plans to promote many of the same venues in and around Kent that were known as Hammerlock territory for so many years. This may not be easy though, with LDN Wrestling now resident in some of those original halls. Nonetheless, he should have a decent pool of talent to work with: still-active Hammerlock names like Garnell and Havoc are expected to be regular fixtures on any new Hammerlock roster, and McMillan will be trying to bring through new talent from the Bucket of Blood training school he runs in Essex with Jon Ritchie.

#### ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE

In the meantime, though, the focus is on that first memorial show. In the last decade, Baker used to run occasional charity shows for children's hospice charity Demelza, so it seemed fitting that a share of the profits for this event would go to that cause.

"It was a cause close to Andre's heart so we absolutely want to give the hospice some of the money," says McMillan. "The rest will go to Andre's family, so that they can cover the cost of things like Andre's funeral and his headstone. Hopefully the show will be a big success and can become an annual thing – there are still some big names I'm hoping to announce nearer to the date, and for next year I would love to get other Hammerlock guys like Jonny Storm and Jody Fleisch involved too."

*The Andre Baker Memorial Show takes place at Mote Park Leisure Centre in Maidstone on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011. Bell time is 7pm (doors open at 6) with adult tickets priced at £15, children at £10, and a 4-*

*person family ticket at £45. There will also be a meet and greet session at 4pm, with tickets priced at £5 each. For more info go to [www.nwahammerlock.co.uk](http://www.nwahammerlock.co.uk).*

## **KARTEL KOLLIDES**

### **Samuels and Frazier set for “I Quit” war**

For several years they were considered to be our nation’s top team, dominating the tag division in IPW:UK and other British promotions as well as touring the world and training with the likes of William Regal and Dave Taylor. But now, after years of teaming and training together, best friends Terry Frazier and Sha Samuels are going their separate ways into singles competition. Before they do, though, they will settle a year-long feud in the promotion which made them famous when they compete in an “I Quit” match at IPW’s big show “No Escape” in Sittingbourne on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March.

That big grudge match might have fans talking more than anything else on the card, but there is plenty more for IPW’s loyal audience to get their teeth into. Marty Scurll, one half of the Leaders of the New School (who have arguably taken the Kartel’s mantle as the UK’s premier tandem), will have the biggest singles match of his career when he faces former Ring of Honor tag champion El Generico, making his first appearance in the promotion for a year and a half. Meanwhile, another hugely successful duo will reunite when Mark Haskins and Joel Redman - formerly the Thrillers – combine to take on All Star combination of Mikey Whiplash and Robbie Dynamite. For more information go to [www.ipwuk.com](http://www.ipwuk.com).

## **FURTHER FRONTIERS**

### **FWA prepares to launch Season Two**

It’s certainly an unusual approach to present wrestling in “seasons”, much like other TV series and complete with DVD box sets and the like – but it’s one that has so far paid dividends for the reborn Frontier Wrestling Alliance. Anticipation has been growing among the company’s growing legion of fans since the cliffhanger ending to “European Uprising” at the Birmingham NEC in November, a day when Head of Content Alex Shane made an unexpected heel turn to join with heel faction “The Agenda”, costing Leroy Kincaide the title rematch which many thought would see him become the promotion’s second world champion.

With Shane as the apparent puppeteer behind the already-powerful stable, it is difficult to see what Kincaide and the other babyfaces can do in the face of such impossibly large odds. But according to the company’s play-by-play commentator Dave Bradshaw, that’s likely to be where much of the drama comes from in Season Two. “To use a Star Wars analogy, I kind of see this season as our ‘Empire Strikes Back’ moment,” he told FSM. “The bad guys are very much on top and it’s a dark time to be fighting for the Resistance, but it’s in those kinds of apparently hopeless situations that real heroes emerge. It’s about showing courage in the face of potentially terrifying consequences, and I expect that will be a major theme as our storylines progress this year.”

The new season begins with the rescheduled Brit Wres Fest at Debut London beneath London Bridge train station – an event which will probably have concluded by the time you read this. More dates at the NEC and London’s Excel Centre are also already signed, meaning a busy few months ahead...

## ROYAL RUMBLER

*With little opportunity for full time wrestling in the UK, many of the country's stars lead unlikely double lives but surely none is more unusual than that of David Deville. The former LDN British Champion, who recently made the jump over to the FWA, lives at Buckingham Palace where he is a footman to Her Majesty The Queen. FSM snuck past the soldiers at the gate for a quick word with him...*

**FSM: When people ask you what you do, and you tell them you split your time between being a royal footman and a professional wrestler, does anyone ever believe you?!**

Ha ha, not at first! Fortunately, in this age of iPhones I can quickly log on to the internet and prove it to any doubters. It used to be a pretty good way of starting conversations with girls if I was at a bar but now I'm spoken for, so I guess that benefit is gone!

**FSM: You hit the headlines in October 2009 when you won the LDN British Championship, with coverage on BBC website and in national newspapers. Did you enjoy the sudden attention?**

Yeah, it was great. I had been working at my wrestling for a long time so it was good to get some recognition and to feel like some success was coming my way. But more than that, it was good for my parents. They used to drive me from Oxford down to Hammerlock in Kent twice a month to go training, so I hope they saw that all that effort had paid off and I'd stuck at it.

**FSM: Has Her Majesty ever spoken to you about your wrestling? Apparently she used to be a fan back in the World of Sport days...**

No she hasn't, but I'm reliably told that she saw the article in The Sun. Every day she is given all the press cuttings of stories about the royal family, so I'm pretty sure she will have seen it. Other members of the Royal Family have mentioned it to me though, and at one function I wore my LDN tag title belt instead of a cummerbund – that got quite a bit of attention!

**FSM: You got injured soon after winning the LDN strap and were out for ten months. Do you think that's hurt your career's momentum?**

Well it definitely knocked my confidence a bit. One minute I was the top guy in the promotion where I was working, and the next I had gone back to nothing. I couldn't train and I lost a lot of weight. It took me a while to get all of that back, but now I'm in the FWA and it's been brilliant to see the faith they have in me. I've definitely got my confidence back now.

**FSM: Your FWA career started with a surprise appearance at FWA European Uprising in November. How did that come about?**

Strangely enough, it all started when one of my friends met Alex Shane at a party and gave him my number. Alex called me and offered me the chance to work with him, which was very appealing to me. I had got to a point with LDN where the company was losing a lot of its best talent and the people who were still there were no longer as happy as they had once been. Unfortunately, soon after I spoke with Alex was when I got injured. But when I had recovered I called him again and asked if the offer was still open: he said it was, so the decision was easy. The FWA is easily the number one promotion in the UK right now, while LDN felt like a sinking ship. So I jumped.

**FSM: The jump also involved switching to playing a heel character. Later that night you had your final appearance for LDN, as a babyface. Was it easy to jump between the two roles in a matter of hours?**

Yeah, I've played heel for quite a lot of my career. There's nothing else like being a heel, I give a lot of passion to it and it was fun to switch into that and then have a babyface experience so soon afterwards. The LDN show was in my hometown and I had friends and family there. It was kind of a nice way to say goodbye and bring an end to my time with the company.

**FSM: What's the top priority: your job at the palace or your wrestling career?**

Wrestling is absolutely my top priority. Jobs are often things you kind of fall into, and fortunately my day job is fantastic, but wrestling is not a job, it's a dream. Being a wrestler is my lifelong ambition, and if I had the chance to do it full time I would absolutely snap it up. I want to be the best guy in whatever promotion I'm in, and a guy who others look up to. Then I'll feel as though I've really had the kind of wrestling career I want.

## **ONE TO WATCH: Noam Dar**

*Wrestles for: PBW, BCW, 1PW, Dragon Gate, ICW, CWN, DPW*

*Hailing From: Tel Aviv, Israel (now residing in Ayr, Scotland)*

*Stats: Height 5'10", weight 174 lbs*

*Finishing moves: Kneebar submission, Knockout Knee, Regal Plex*

*Titles held: PBW Tag Team Championship, ICW Zero G Championship*

About Him:

At 14 years old, Noam Dar tagged along with a friend who wanted to learn how to become a wrestler. Looking to lose weight, wrestling seemed like a novel way to get in shape – and from the moment he arrived he was hooked. His friend dropped out months later, but Dar went on to become a star pupil at Premier British Wrestling's academy, debuting on a show before his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. He has since become a tag team champion in PBW and even wrestled for Dragon Gate in Barcelona. Still only 17, Dar is turning heads with a charisma and in-ring ability far beyond his years.

What His Peers Say:

"I first met Noam around the end of 2008 when he was just 15 years old, but even then his massive potential was clear to see. He showed great dedication to training, the gym and his diet. He has shown a fantastic attitude towards learning and improving at every juncture and already uses his impressive charisma to effectively work a crowd. With his passion to learn and determination to achieve his goals, the possibilities for him in the future are immeasurable. A genuinely top guy that is an asset to any promotion.." (Zack Sabre Jr)

"Noam is undoubtedly a big star of the future - it has been a privilege to watch him grow and work alongside him. Already a talking point amongst fans and co-workers alike, Noam has a great amount of experience behind him already. Smart enough to focus on education as much as wrestling, he has already caught the eye of some very influential people in the UK scene, and his best years are still to come.." (Lionheart)

What The Promoter Says:

“Noam was one of the breakout stars in the UK during 2010. His look, charisma and talent have seen him become one of the most in-demand wrestlers in Scotland today. He won two different titles last year which shows how much trust Mark Dallas and myself have in him to represent our companies. With his perfect attitude towards training and diet, I see no reason why the rise of Noam Dar will not continue as we enter 2011 as long as he keeps his feet on the ground.” (Ross Watson, PBW promoter)

What He Says:

“From the moment I started training, I decided that in order to be a success I would need to be dedicated to all aspects of my training – from diet to gym work to psychology. Ross Watson and Lionheart have helped me hugely, and are always honest in their opinions of what I need to improve. I’m a naturally confident person, so hopefully my character’s swagger comes off as fairly natural. I’m going to uni next year but I’ll still be focusing on my wrestling, trying to get physically bigger, more experienced, and established as a mainstay in European wrestling.”

## **LITTLE BLACK BOOK – this month’s events nationwide**

- 23 Feb – LDN Wrestling, Princes Theatre, Clacton
- 23 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Woodville Halls, Gravesend
- 24 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Princes Hall, Aldershot
- 24 Feb – LDN Wrestling, Thurrock Civic Hall, Grays
- 25 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Marina Theatre, Lowestoft
- 25 Feb – LDN Wrestling, Stour Centre, Ashford
- 26 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Leisure Centre, Stevenage
- 26 Feb – One Pro Wrestling: A New Dawn, Electricity Sports and Social Club, Ellesmere Port
- 26 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 26 Feb – Wrestlezone: Aberdeen Anarchy VI, Northern Hotel, Aberdeen
- 27 Feb – UFC 127: Penn vs. Fitch, Acer Arena, Sydney, Australia
- 27 Feb – All Star Wrestling, Prince of Wales, Cannock
- 27 Feb – LDN Wrestling, Winter Gardens, Margate
- 03 Mar – UFC Live 3: Sanchez vs. Kampmann, KFC Yum! Center, Louisville, Kentucky
- 04 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Princes Theatre, Torquay
- 04 Mar – Grand Pro Wrestling, Monaco Ballroom, Wigan
- 04 Mar – Adrenaline Fuelled Wrestling, Arden Hall, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham
- 05 Mar – Strikeforce: Columbus, Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio
- 05 Mar – Fightstar Sports Entertainment, Ormskirk Civic Hall, Ormskirk
- 06 Mar – IPW:UK No Escape, Swallows Leisure Centre, Sittingbourne
- 06 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Oakengates Theatre, Telford
- 06 Mar – LDN Wrestling, Ryan Hall, Chingford
- 06 Mar – Alternative Wrestling World, Collingwood Centre, Birmingham
- 08 Mar – IPW:UK: International Incident, Tap n Tin, Chatham
- 11 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Corn Exchange, Ipswich
- 12 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Charter Hall, Colchester
- 12 Mar – Scottish Wrestling Alliance: Source, Cumbernauld Community Centre, Cumbernauld
- 12 Mar – Runcorn Wrestling Academy, Grangeway Community Centre, Runcorn
- 12 Mar – Herts and Essex Wrestling, Jubilee Hall, Takeley
- 13 Mar – TNA: Victory Road, Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida
- 13 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Fairfield Halls, Croydon
- 18 Mar – All Star Wrestling, City Hall, Hull
- 19 Mar – UFC 128: Shogun vs. Evans, Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey
- 19 Mar – LDN Wrestling, Fleming Park Leisure Centre, Eastleigh
- 20 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Towngate Theatre, Basildon
- 20 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Civic Hall, Bedworth
- 25 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone
- 25 Mar – LDN Wrestling, Goresbrook Leisure Centre, Dagenham
- 25 Mar – North East Wrestling Society, Abbey Leisure Centre, Durham
- 26 Mar – Frontier Wrestling Alliance, Memorabilia Expo, NEC, Birmingham
- 26 Mar – UFC: Fight Night 24, Key Arena, Seattle, Washington
- 26 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 26 Mar – British Allstar Wrestling Alliance, Bicester School, Bicester
- 26 Mar – Scottish Wrestling Alliance: Source, Spittal Community Centre, Rutherglen
- 26 Mar – Wrestlezone, Victoria Hall, Ellon, Aberdeen
- 27 Mar – Frontier Wrestling Alliance, Memorabilia Expo, NEC, Birmingham
- 27 Mar – All Star Wrestling, Ferneham Hall, Fareham
- 29 Mar – Fightstar Sports Entertainment, Barrington Centre, Ferndown