

It Takes Some Taking To Make It To Professional Wrestling's Ring

It takes a lot these days to make it as a professional wrestler. Just ask Mooreville's William Ford.

A former all-American football player in high school, and a

veteran of the military, Ford felt he was prepared for what it took to reach his goal of wrestling professionally.

He was almost wrong. "It was eight months of you-

know-what," summed up the 240-pound, muscle-bound Ford, recalling the vigorous training and borderline physical abuse he underwent in order to meet the required standard. "I saw grown men, much bigger than me, break down and cry. They couldn't take it. You can't make it if you can't take it."

But Ford made it, and he reaps some of the reward for doing so this weekend by making an appearance in front of his adopted hometown fans when competing in this week's pro wrestling match here.

Ford, a native of Goldsboro who has lived here for two years, is on the card for Friday night's re-arrival of championship wrestling, presented by TBC Sports of Concord. The presentation ends a two-year drought for the sport in these parts.

Ford, nicknamed "The Soul Man," will enter the ring opposite Tommy Angel in one of the evening's featured one-on-one bouts.

It marks the continuation of a promising wrestling career for Ford, 27 years of age and single. He has spent one year wrestling within the National Wrestling Federation, and another year in the World Wrestling Federation before competing at his current level.

"I love wrestling," stressed Ford during a stop in to promote this weekend's event. "You learn a lot about yourself in this sport. You don't have anybody to blame

for your mistakes but yourself. It's tough, and it's not made for just anybody. You have to take it to make it. I think I have what it takes to be a good pro wrestler."

During high school in Goldsboro, Ford excelled in football and earned all-American honors as a linebacker. He also dabbled in wrestling at the prep level.

"I really thought football was my sport," he offered, and backed the thought by attracting several scholarship offers.

Ford spent a year at Chowan Junior College before joining the Army.

"When I got out of the service," recalled Ford, "I knew I wanted to wrestle. I had played football and been in the Army, so I thought I was tough enough. They sure made it tougher on me, but I hung in there. Now, I'm glad I did."

For almost a year, Ford underwent the rigorous training routine, just to get himself in pro wrestling form. It was almost more than he could take.

"There were times when I had to ask myself 'was it worth it,'" he shrugged, "but I stayed with it. You wouldn't believe how many times I've been body slammed. The training is very hard work, but it's worth it in the end."

Ford watched as some of those around him, many standing much taller than his own height of just over six feet and weighing more than his 240 pounds, folded under the always-present and heavy pressure.

"I'd see guys and say no way they couldn't make it," Ford nodded. "Then, they'd be gone."

That kind of made me more determined to stick with it."

Ford credits his God-given abilities for helping him make it through the hardest of those training times.

"I'd really like to thank the Lord for what he has provided for me," Ford stressed. "There's no power greater than His. He made this possible for me."

Ford also feels that wrestling has more than provided him with a livelihood. He suggests that the sport teaches a valuable lesson about life itself.

"As with everything," he pointed out, "there are rules to live by. You follow the rules, and you get by. There are no shortcuts in wrestling. You have to get yourself in shape, or you pay the price. The discipline and rules that apply to wrestling are the same ones that apply to life. You

break them, and you lose."

Ford hopes to do more abiding by the rules and less losing in the ring in hopes of advancing through his profession's various levels of competition.

"I haven't really thought about how long I'll be wrestling," he offered. "Like most guys, I'd love to make it all the way to the top, but I don't think that success would make me any different. I wouldn't let it."

"I know where I come from," he added, "and I owe something back to the ones that stood behind me. I'd like to be able to repay them, especially for the children's sake. They're the ones who shape our future."

For now, Ford's future may well rest on how he performs this weekend.

And he'll be doing so in front of hometown fans, showing them he has what it takes to make it.



Gospel Voices Perform Sunday

The Gospel Voices, a gospel music group from Union Grove, will present a program of old-time music at Community Baptist Church in Mt. Mourne on Sunday. The program will begin at 7 p.m. at the church, on Langtree Road between N.C. 115 and Interstate 77. The public is invited to attend.



JASON HOYLE LIPE

Lipe Graduates From American Motor Institute

Jason Hoyle Lipe, son of John and Connie Lipe of Mooreville, route 11, recently graduated from the American Motor Institute in Charlotte.

Lipe was on the school's dean's list three quarters and on the president's list one quarter.

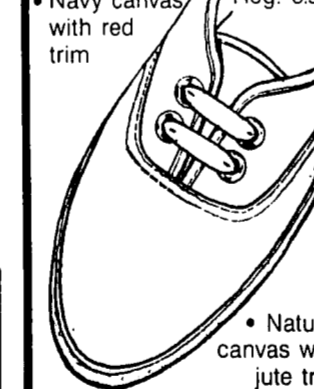
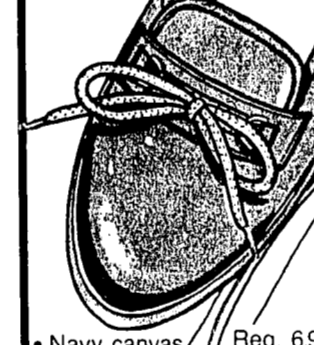
He also received an outstanding academic achievement award, and, in the diesel technical division, he earned an award for capturing first place in the trouble shooting contest.

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Professional Wrestling Returns Fri.

It's back! After a hiatus dating back over several years, professional wrestling returns to town this weekend.

TBC Sports out of Concord presents a night of championship wrestling Friday in the Mooreville Senior High gym.

Action in the ring is set to get underway at 8 p.m.

Tickets are available for \$8 ringside, and \$6 for general admission.

Advance tickets are now on sale at Mooreville High School or from any member of the Mooreville Athletic Boosters Club.

Friday's main event features a Junior Heavyweight title bout between "Georgeous" Gary Royal, the current divisional champion, and challenger Rikki Nelson.

Another bout being featured includes David Isely and L.A. Stevens, with manager Sal, against Magnum Force.

A special tag team match will be held pitting the Ring Warriors, Steel and Hammer, against "Ragin' Bull" Manny Fernandez and Cyborg.

Also featured on the tag team card will be the Cruel Connection 1&2 against The Heartbreakers.

Other single matches in the night's line-up include the Beastmaster vs. Brian Johnson, and Tommy Angel vs. Mooreville's own William Ford.

Also scheduled to appear are Colt Steel and Nelson Royal, among others.

The official wrestling card for Friday's bouts is subject to change.

The event will take place in the High School gym.

Next stop, regionals for Mooreville's girls and boys track teams.

Qualifying participants emerging from last week's Southern District Seven Conference meet will now move on to this week's regionals looking to land a berth in the following week's state finals.

From Mooreville, a handful of girls and a single member of the boys team will be engaged in regional competition tomorrow (Thursday).

For the girls, the two-mile relay team, consisting of Angie Mayhew, Angie Carver, Arlene Poland, and Sally Smith, will be making the trip to Ledford High School later this week.

In addition, Smith and Mayhew will also be competing in individual events.

Smith has qualified for the regionals in the high jump, while Mayhew has done the same in the 800-meter run.

The relay team, as well as both Smith and Mayhew each turned in first-place finishes for the Devilettes at last week's conference-ending meet.

For the boys, only Ty Cross put together the kind of numbers needed to meet regional requirements. Cross did so in the discus.

Cross was also a gold medal winner in the conference meet held at Bunker Hill last week.

All regional competitors will be looking to finish among the top four positions in their respective events in order to make the field for the following week's state track and field finals.

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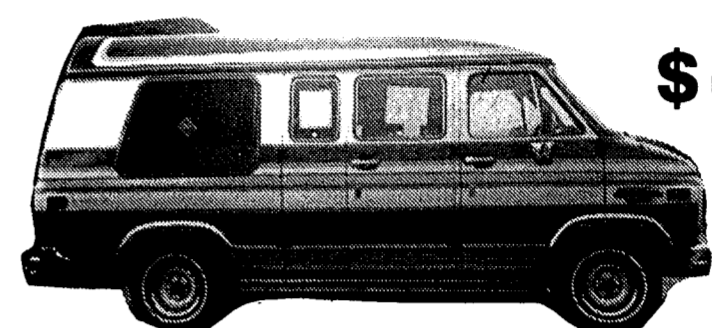
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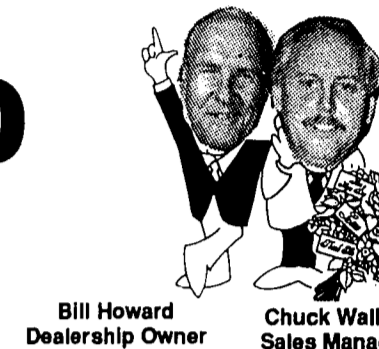
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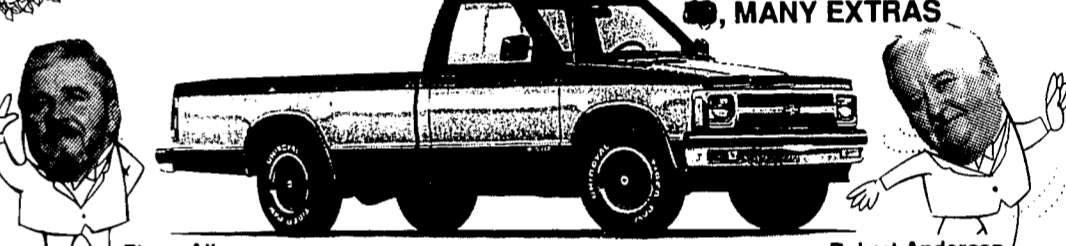
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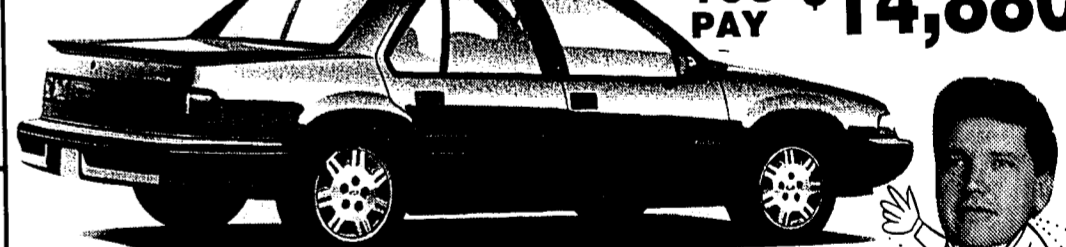
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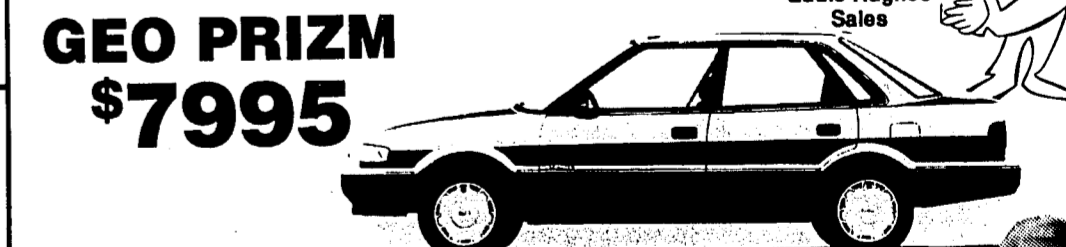
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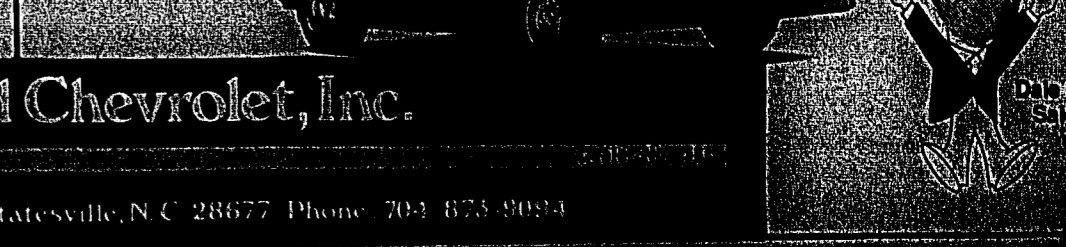
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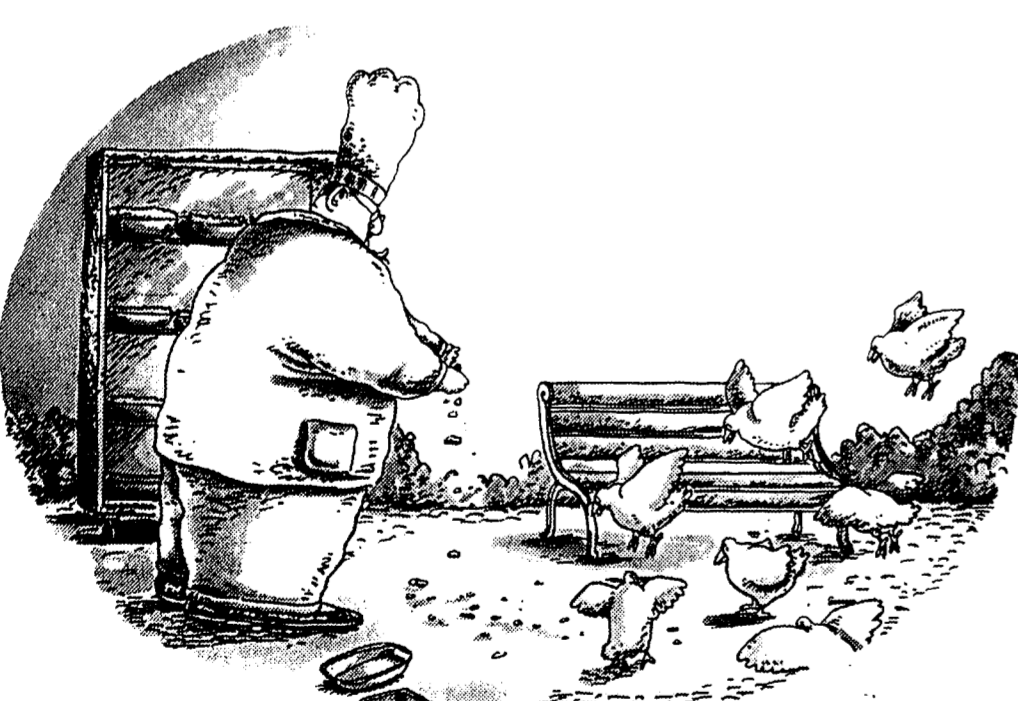
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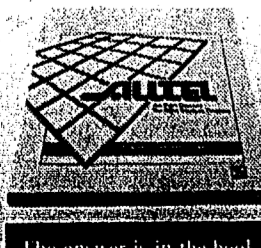
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