

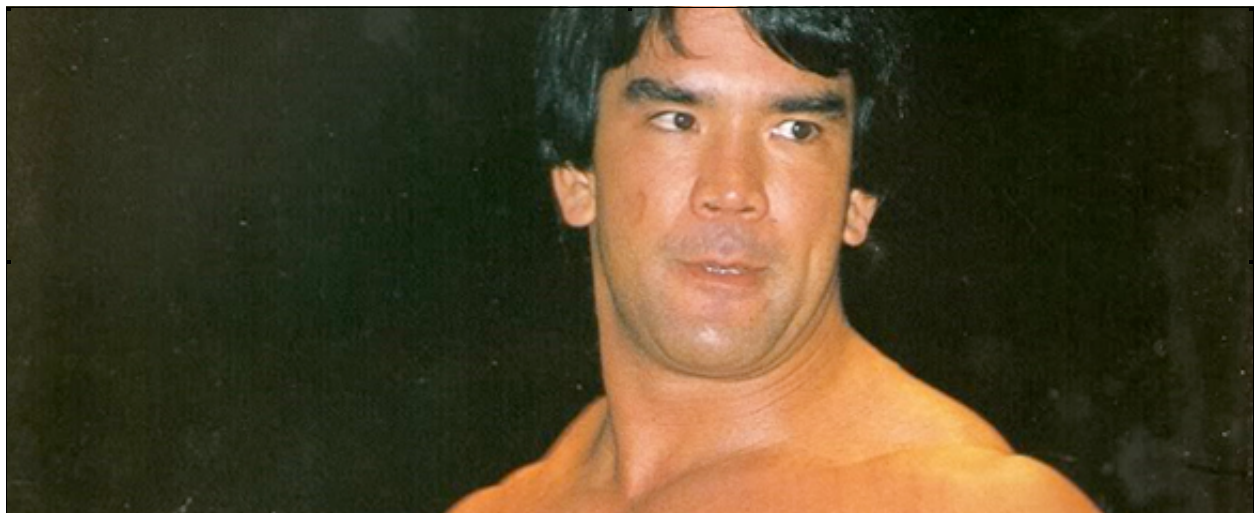


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WEEKLY MUSCLE BUILDING EXPERT *Interview Series*



Interview with Rick Steamboat



...5'11", 220. I've been had heavy as 242. When I compete for contests I've been as light at 209. My very first time was in 1977, it was a television title. In 1978 was the United States Heavyweight Champion. 1979 was the second time I had the United States Heavyweight Champion. Later on in the year of '79 was my first time I won the World Tag Team Championship. At the time my partner was Paul Jones. In the beginning part of 1980, I had a falling-out with Paul Jones. Later on in that year, around mid summer, my partner Jay Youngblood and myself won the World Tag Team Titles. This was the second time.

In the later part of 1980 on through the first quarter of 1981, I had the Mid-Atlantic Championship Title, which is a regional title which takes-in North, South Carolina, Virginia, part of Georgia, the mid-Atlantic region.

I would say the most...I think the title that I hold closest to me was the TV title, because it was the very first time I won a title, any kind of title. It was the first time I ever won anything. I hold that very close to me, even though the recognition of that particular belt is not as well as the United States Title, although I had a good feeling for that.

But, I would also have to say that the second time that I won the World Tag Team Title with my partner, Jay Youngblood, probably because the two of us became such very, very close friends and we trained together a lot, wrestling, and we also trained together a lot working out with weights. And through that and traveling with each other, because wherever we wrestled, we went to the same towns together because we were a tag team. I have to say that that particular time and title was really close to myself, us and that was the second time.

Paul Jones and myself, we were friends, but I would say it was on a different scale because he's much older than myself. And maybe his views and my views were different, although Jay and myself were pretty close in age and pretty much our thought waves and thinking was along the same line. So, maybe that's why we became a little closer. But, I would have to say the very first title I ever won was a TV title. That was the closest one I hold, myself.

I started amateur wrestling in the 8th grade. And at the time I was living in St. Petersburg, Florida. The reason for that is my dad is retired Army and he settled down in St. Pete, Florida. I started wresting in the 8th grade. By the time I was in the 11th grade, I won my first state championship at a body weight of 167-pound class. And my senior year, in 12th grade, I won the 188-pound class Florida State Champion.

I graduated from high school and went on to a junior college, a two-year junior college and didn't win any state titles at the time, but I was doing amateur wrestling. We were competing against other junior colleges in the area and I was doing fairly well.

After I got out of college, for a period of almost two...maybe a year-and-a-half, or so, I sort of broke away from any kind of sports. That included any kind of wrestling or any kind of weight training or anything. And...just trying to get my head together in a direction for an occupation.

After being out of college I was trying to major in physical education and was going to go to another...two more years to graduate junior college, but I got out and went around to different odd jobs. And then, on television on "Wide World of Sports" with Curt Gowdy one time, he was interviewing Chris Harrison who was a...I think a bronze medalist in the Olympics, in wrestling. He got beaten out by a Russian or a German, west...east or west German.

But anyway, I thought back and I said, "Man," I was starting to get the itch again to get participating in sports. So, I said, "Well, I played football, I ran track, I've played basketball, I've played baseball." But, wrestling seemed to be the very best sport that I ever participated in. I faired very well in it and I guess the reason why I really liked it, because basically is was a one-on-one type situation as opposed to a team like in baseball or football.

So, with that in mind, I sent a resume up to a man by the name of Verne Gagne who is a retired world champion out of Minnesota, Minneapolis area. He sent back a letter telling me a starting date for a wrestling camp that he has held in which on that television interview with Curt Gowdy and Chris Taylor, Chris Taylor mentioned that he went through a camp through Verne Gagne. And with this in mind, I got some addresses and phone numbers and this and that and I finally sent my resume up to Gagne.

He sent me back a reply telling me a starting date and I flew from Florida up to Minneapolis and went through a three-month wrestling camp that consisted of five days a week, five hours a day, three months.

A fellow that wants to get into professional wrestling, the person that they would have to contact and the area in which they would live in that particular area, whether it be in Nebraska or New York or Texas. If they have wrestling in the area, the person or persons would have to contact through the promoter or promotion in that area.

Other types of training, what I feel and also from what I've heard, that Verne Gagne's camp is probably the best training camp that they have out to break-in professional wrestlers or wrestlers that want to become professional wrestlers. They have other areas on the United States which guys have broken-in or have started wrestling, but it's not like a camp type thing, but it's more like where you go down to the office where the promoter is at and they have a ring set up down there. And then, maybe two or three wrestlers that are wrestling in that area will take some time out and

show you a few things, and I mean just a few things or the basics of professional wrestling that not really they were extending themselves on a particular movement, holds. They feel that a lot of them feel, especially the old timers that this will come as you progress in wrestling or the matches that you will get involved with.

Practicing for myself, my camp was five hours a day. But, I heard in different areas some guys may be only able to get into the workout area maybe once or twice a week and maybe only one hour during that one time and maybe two hours during that second time of the week. It varies.

Mine was on a scheduled basis in which you had to be there every morning at 10 o'clock and you didn't quit until 3 in the afternoon. This was set up on a schedule. Other areas maybe sound like a camp, organized type organization in which...well, I don't know or maybe this guy can come in and help you out next Thursday or something like that. This happens a lot in trying to get in wrestling.

The biggest differences I found out, in amateur wrestling as in professional wrestling... Now, don't get me wrong I do use a lot of amateur wrestling when I do wrestle pro. I use takedowns to get the person down to the mat. But the biggest difference that you'll find out in which all the submission... Basically, the majority of the submission holds that are used in professional wrestling cannot be used in amateur wrestling because amateur wrestling does not allow you to go against a joint. This may be the elbow, the shoulder, the knees, the ankles. Basically, all the submission holds that you're using are leg hold on somebody. You're going against the person's joint to make him submit, but in amateur wrestling you cannot do this. It's against the rules. Those are the biggest noticed differences between the two.

Training difference is different and depending on the individual. Because, depending on how well you can pick up the holds, the moves wrestling is depending on some people are just slow learners. Some people are...I've heard other people talk about that are just natural athletes. A guy with great in baseball, he's good in basketball, he's a great bowler, he can play golf, he can water ski. He's a great all-around athlete.

People like this you know...what I've seen with pick-up things a lot faster than somebody that may...all he's done all this life is maybe just lift weights and he's never participated in any other kind of sports. You know, maybe he walks around like he's got two left shoes on or something like this. But, I find that the people that are into a lot of different activities, sports, have it...pick up a lot easier in wrestling than somebody that just may stick to one sport or let's just say somebody that's never participated in sports in high school or college or nothing at all. But, let's say the person is a big and strong individual and he decided he wants to go into wrestling. He may feel that because he

can utilize his strength to become a professional wrestler, but you'll learn...that person will learn just like I've learned that a lot of the holds that I may do in the course of a match have come just because of instinct. It's not because my brain has registered to do that particular move or to do that particular hold. I've already done it before my mind has reacted for me...telling me to do it. I've reacted already to it. This is like instinct. A man's got a particular hold on that leg, I'll do something before my mind will say this and you'll see a lot of guys...



...and they have to think what they have to do to get out of a hold. And you'll find that that does align between...and main event. A good wrestler is like... When I first started wrestling, I was 23-years-old. I was wrestling a guy that was 42-years-old. I looked at him across the ring. He looked out of shape and I thought, you know, I'm in the best shape of my life and I'm going to go out there and win. Right?

But, every hold that I put on that man, he countered. And it got to the point where he was telling me, "Hey kid, I learned that 15 years ago." And it's just that everything that I was doing to him, he just got out of it because he was...it was just like second nature to him. Whenever I put my hand on his body, he knew what to do.

Getting back to the question, I feel that guys that have a natural athletic ability, that have been involved with sports, have a better chance of succeeding or becoming professional wrestlers than somebody that is just saying, "Hey, I'm pretty strong. I'd like to wrestle."

Camp, the promoter that was there instructing and watching, whenever he felt or saw that an individual that he felt would not make it because of maybe physical, because of his physical ability, guys were cut just like, I would say, football spring training. You go out for spring training, you didn't make it, you get cut from the squad, because it is physical ability. He couldn't fill that position he was trying for.

This has happened in the camp that I was in. You know, some guys would have good physical ability, but... been training you, so that you have good physical ability, but the training that I was going through was so intense that the mental ability is what took over to keep yourself going, to tell yourself to keep driving on, that this is your opportunity to keep going, that you've got the inner drive or the guts just to hang on and, you know, come back. The guys telling you you've got good potential, you've got good athletic ability, but what he's testing you now is whether or not if you want it bad enough to keep coming back. This is what they're trying to put you through. It's testing how much guts you've got.

The wrestlers...because that is as far as their own ability allows them to go. It's their own ability. They don't have that little bit of extra that they need to win more matches to get in the main event calendar, you know.

When I first came into the Carolinas area, I was also... But, like, I had a good instructor to help me, teach me a lot of things that he had learned over the number of years that he's been wrestling, a lot of the ins and outs, the tricks of the trade, different holds and this and that. And which probably in a short period of time for myself, I feel very fortunate that I got a lot more knowledge as to per se somebody that was wrestling the same length of time as myself, but nobody was showing them all those little bit of extras that you need to get you...work your way up the ladder and finally get in the main event.

Now, when you have some different guys that come into the area that have been wrestling main event in other areas, recognition and the name is usually what starts those particular wrestlers in main event matches, versus if they're wrestling in the New York area or the Minnesota area or Florida or Atlanta and they've been main event. The wrestling magazines picked-up on these guys that have been wrestling main event. They're on the cover. They've got articles written about them. Wrestling fans know these guy automatically when they come into their area. So, right then and there, the promoter knows that they are a draw, so they're going to be in the main event.

But, for myself, I started on the bottom and had to work my way up, probably the prove myself. You know, and also the promoters and everything else that hey, this guy's pretty good. Let's try and give him a main event shot. Let's put him in a title shot, see what he can do, this and that.

But, like I said, all the different guys that have been wrestling, don't get me wrong, you may have other guys that are wrestling preliminaries in other areas and wrestlers do get in to ruts, like baseball players, bad batting...average going down. They get into ruts or this and that. Wrestlers do this because it's a mental type of thing and maybe they're not happy in the area they were in before, maybe because they could be pay-offs, percentages, or let's say they're not just drawing-in, nobody's not making any kind of money. Everybody's mental attitude is down.

And they come into here and they've been wrestling preliminaries in another area, maybe because of the new atmosphere, maybe new wrestlers, everybody goes out and watches wrestlers wrestle because they'll get a new hold or pick up a new move. A lot of guys you'll see watching other people, other wrestlers wrestle.

He comes into this area as a preliminary, but then again, maybe because of the new atmosphere or the new wrestlers or because his percentage in the pay is better, that he feels better and all of a sudden this guy has blossomed and worked his way up and worked his way into a main event.

But, like I said, the other area and that other area that he just came in might just have been a preliminary. But, like I said, a change of pace or a change of atmosphere might have put the little spark that he needed to get that little bit he needed.

I've been wrestling professional now for five-and-a-half years. The first year was preliminary, almost to the exact day of my first total year was preliminary and then on to the past four-and-a-half years has been main events.

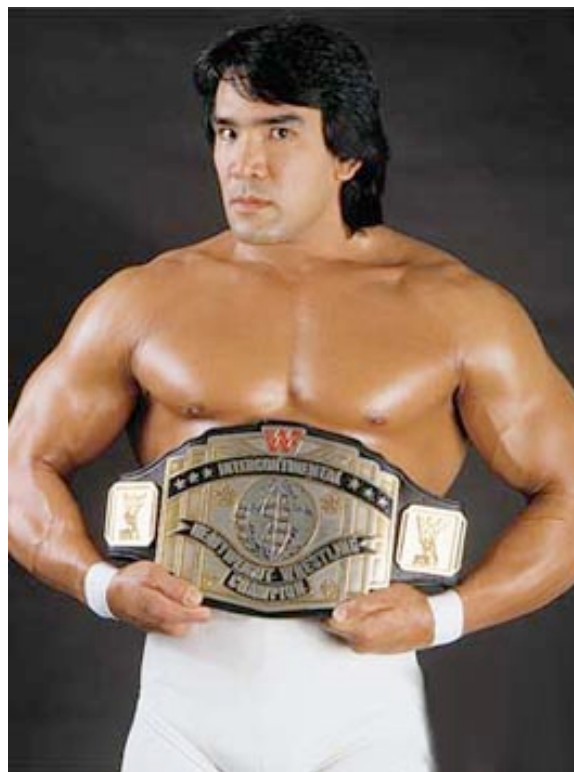
I'll tell you something, I don't know if you're going to believe this. Really, I don't have any particular favorite hold. I know a lot of different holds and if the situation calls for in a match for me to try and win, or defeat the opponent at that particular time on a hold that I'm using, I will use that specific hold. I don't have a favorite, although at times I may be repetitious on using a particular hold.

I don't really have any favorite or Boston Crab or arm-bars or hammer locks or Figure-Fours or Grapevines or you know, anything like that, or reverse chin locks. I just... If the particular hold will come up to me and know that I can feel this person is starting to go down or I can feel this person is maybe he's going to give up on this particular hold, I'll go with it. When I have that hold on that person, I'll go with it.

In other words, what I'm trying to say is that every hold that I mostly try to use on my opponent is hopefully to try and win the match at that particular time. Although, they have guys that have their favorite hold. Ric Flair's favorite hold is his Figure-Four leg lock. I know how to use that. Paul Jones is the Indian Deathlock. I know how to use that. Johnny Weaver uses the Sleeper. I know how to use that.

But, it just calls for... You get into so many different situations in the course of a match that if, for instance, if a guy has hurt his shoulder, why would you want to go put a Figure-Four leg lock on him if that's your favorite hold? So, you have to... Every match is different and I just use what has been happening in the course of the match. That's the way I do the whole...

Escape maneuvers, I would say the best way for anybody or any wrestler on an escape maneuver is just trying to get out of the situation that he's in the best way he knows how. And a lot of times you'll note that you're better wrestlers, most of your main event guys are doing moves that are reacting on instinct as to what their mind is telling them to do. You'll notice that if you watch wrestling or you'll see somebody that's in a particular hold and that person that's in the hold will have to think for maybe a few seconds or maybe 20 seconds or whatever, of how he's going to get an escape or get out of this particular hold. But, you'll find that your better wrestlers, that when something is applied that before, hopefully your opponent cinches-up on it, that you have reacted and that type of reaction is all relied on instinct.



...myself that I would say that I wrestled one...like a particular man on one occasion I thought that on that particular evening, I don't know, he must have been at his peak or he was very, very tough, possibly a time when I got defeated by that individual. And then maybe later on, three or four months later, I wrestle the same individual again and found out that maybe, I don't know, he hasn't been resting or hasn't been training or he's not quite up to peak to where he...I thought he was three or four months ago.

I've had a lot of this in the different times that I've wrestled numerous different wrestlers. But, I've got to say, I would say that probably Ric Flair, Harley Race. I wrestled guys such as Blackjack Mulligan which are...they outweigh me by over 100-pounds. But, my strategy towards the bigger man is a lot different towards somebody that I know is in shape, as to trying to need my strength and maybe my weight to overpower somebody that weighs over 100-pounds more than me. I'm just really wasting my time.

So, my strategy for somebody such as that is to try and wear them down to utilizing time, and their weight is against them. As opposed to maybe they're using their weight to beat me...quicken the match. And I use their weight to an advantage where I try to use their weight as to a disadvantage, possibly more in a defensive type of wrestling. As opposed to more offensive and going after the man, I'll be doing a lot of defensive maneuvers and using his weight and time will tell, weigh him down eventually.

I would say Ric Flair or Harley Race, possibly are a few of the hardest matches...wrestlers I've had matches again. There are many times I've wrestled where he couldn't beat me or they couldn't beat me and I couldn't beat them, like the one-hour time limit, which is very... I've done a lot of hard training, but wrestling one-hour and wrestling is, to me, my whole body is gone through, I believe, more than anything else.

My occupation puts the bread on the table. Bodybuilding to me is sort of like a pastime hobby. Maybe as each week or month or year goes by that I do see improvements in myself, maybe I'm heading towards more seriousness in bodybuilding, I try to improve my lifts. But, I would say that for myself, having a good-looking physique out there among...there are a lot of people looking, has helped me and I would say it's drawing power and the... My particular drawing power, if I went out to the ring with maybe a 38" or 40" waistline and possibly could weigh maybe 270 pounds or something like that, but I would rather stay in better shape and look better. I think it helps me...people establish just the way I look with Ricky Steamboat. They don't associate Ricky Steamboat as somebody that weighs 280 pounds or like a lot of your conventional heavier wrestlers. And also, I just have...my last thing on that is just personal satisfaction within myself. This is the way I want to look.

You could say that weight training or the way I train with weight training has helped my wrestling tremendously, for the fact that I know that when in periods of time when I lay off of weight training, and continue to wrestle that as each day goes by, my body is feeling a lot sorer than it did as to if I had trained for that particular week. Like, if I took a week or two off from weight training, but continued wrestling, during that two weeks my body muscles are a lot sorer than if I had been continually training, which would keep them pumped and toned, keep them firm.

How much has it helped my wrestling, I would say it's helped me tremendously because I like to train in a method for as much as building my strength and power and looks to my body, but also in a way which helps my respiratory system. I like to train pretty fast paced. Not contest training pace, but for guys who will take maybe 20 second break in between each set and then go on.

But, a pretty fast pace, which helps my respiratory system because basically, to tell you the truth, a lot of guys are still in shape go out and run, and I do not like to run. Not that much. Track and field was not one of my better sports even when I was in school. But, I felt to keep in shape, if I would weight train with little rests in between sets and keep heavily breathing through my whole workout routine, which takes about...almost two hours, an hour-and-a-half to two hours, that during that workout I feel it's helping my respiratory system out very much. The deep breathing and the fast pace.

So, I know in that sense it's helped me keep in shape for wrestling. But, getting back to...it's helped my strength and power because after ever year, maybe I'm not pushing the heavy poundages as much as I used to, but I know my strength is there and it feels good. And also, like I said before, if I take lay-offs I feel like I'm in...my body is worse for wear than if I was training all the time.

I see a lot of wrestlers that eat everything, and I mean everything. To me they're like...they're like the super heavyweight power lifters that will just go and get everything that they can possibly eat to keep their weight up. Some guys are just, how do you say it, hypnotized or whatever with just being big. You know, maybe they're so out of shape that they couldn't run for 40-yards before collapsing or something. I mean, I'm talking about ¼ of a mile, you know, or something. But, they're just...they eat a lot.

But, like I mentioned earlier, I watch what I eat. Basically I try to maintain enough carbohydrates to keep my energy level up. I like to watch my fats and keep it down. And I probably try to get as much protein as I think I need, although maybe not as much as some of the other bodybuilders have said that you have to have to maintain muscle growth. But, I eat a lot of...it's balanced-out and I don't like to bloat my stomach out that much.

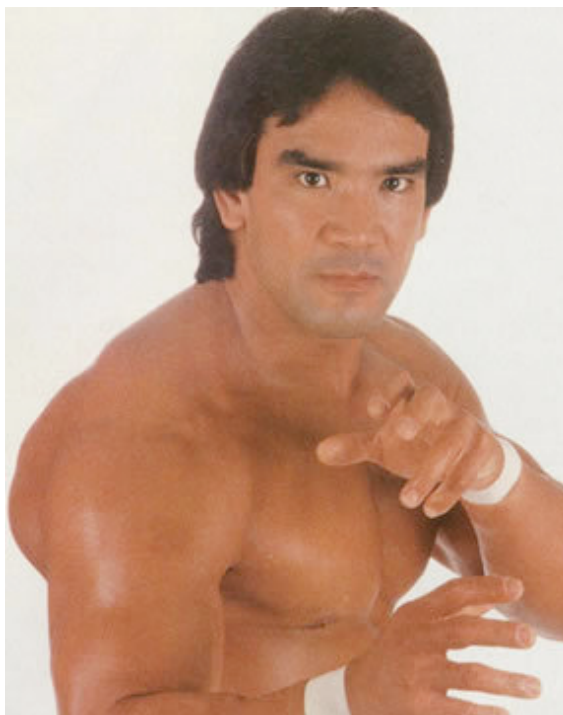
Let me put it this way, if I had a title match coming up, to move...it gets me more excited when I get in... I seem to train harder. If I've got a good match coming on I seem to train harder. As to...a lot of guys will take a day of rest. And I sit around the house and think about the match and knowing that I'm just lazing around and you know, just sitting around on my can, watching TV or something, and everybody would think that that would be good because you're relaxing and saving your energy. But, I feel it would drain you. Just sitting would just drain you. You know?

As to, if I got in a gym where there was a lot of...I would feel enthused over training real hard for the match that's coming up. My recuperative powers are very, very good and I think I know my limits pretty well that I don't feel that great if I took a day of rest for an important match. I feel like if I rested and laid around all day long it would make me lazy and tired and by the time I got to the arena that particular night, I would really feel dead. As to, if I had a good workout, nice hot shower and I felt great, got a good meal in me, I'm ready for tonight. That's the way I feel.

I would say that for my stuff I'm probably averaging around 50,000 to 60,000 miles a year traveling in a car. And all the other thousands of miles...I do a lot of air travel. I do wrestle in Canada. I do go to...well, I'll be going to Japan. I do go over there two or three times a year on tours.

How many times a week I wrestle depends on cities and towns run on specific nights. Charlotte runs on Saturday night, Toronto runs on Sundays. Cincinnati runs on Saturdays, Cincinnati, Ohio. Greenville, South Carolina is Monday. Fayetteville, North Carolina is on Monday. You know? Depending how many times a week is also and how much you are in demand, such as preliminary wrestlers are just there to maybe show the promoters or the...get more experience for themselves in wrestling. They may only wrestle two or three times a week.

I've wrestles as much as nine times in one week, but only because I was involved in two tournaments in which in each tournament I had to wrestle four times. So, my schedule is depending on basically how much I'm in demand, utilizing...promoters utilizing my name. I'd say I average maybe three or four times a week. Sometimes Flair has such a hectic schedule he's on the road... I talked to him he said, "God, I got beat-down. I'm tired. I've been on the road for nine days in a row." He was really worse for wear, you could tell. But then, he'll get his time off, too, this and that. But, I don't try to...



...wrestling, how many times you've got to wrestle a week just depends on demand. Somebody like myself or Ric Flair or Blackjack Mulligan or some of your top wrestlers, I know that I could book myself to wrestle every single night of the year if I wanted to. You know, if I wanted to. All I...it's just a phone call away. I could just setting up my bookings night after night after night, city after city after city. It's just a matter of just calling these promoters.

"Sure, come on. Let me get the advertisement out. Let me start doing it. When you going to be here? Two weeks? Okay, fine." Blah, blah, blah. You know, your name and all that. I can't do it. It's hard. I can't do it.

In professional wrestling it is very hard to have any kind of social life or any private life, marital or single. And if you have somebody serious in mind, it's very, very difficult. The only thing I can say is your spouse has got to be very, very understanding and have a lot of patience.

Marital status in professional wrestling is worse than the national...what's the national...how do you say that? National figures in which today it's every one out of two of every marriage now days ends up in divorce. Well, in pro wrestling it's worse than that. It's even worse than that and I don't know how it could get worse than that, but it is.

The only thing I can say is that each of you have to just bear with it and I guess be very understanding. First of all, you've got to have a spouse that understands the amount of traveling and amount of time that you are away and if you don't get along with that, I would suggest right there and then you have a sit-down talk and say, "I don't think things are working out." Many times if you put your job first and that's what I'm doing, because it's something that I know will help me in the future. Fortunately, my wife is understanding about that.

About being approached from different guys that are testing me, I've never had that...I've never really had that serious of a problem with people. Maybe it's because I project myself on TV... I'm not really out to hassle anybody or to prove that I'm better than you at arm wrestling or I can hold my breath longer than you or lift more weights than you. I don't project to do that, although there are a lot of guys that brag about things that they're able to do, this and that.

I never had any problems with fans like that. I never have, myself. I know there's been many instances such as Flair and Wahoo McDaniel, Blackjack Mulligan, you know, they've been approached countless number of times by different fans in bars or hangouts and this and that and have gotten into some serious lawsuits and trouble. But, I don't know what it is...I don't know about me. I don't know. I've never been seriously approached.

I've always tried to... If a guy come up and wanted an autograph, for instance, if I'm in the middle of my meal, I would try to be very polite and say, "If you don't mind, could I...if you just leave it here I'll sign it when I finish eating." Sometimes other wrestlers are like, "Hey, can't you see I'm eating? What's the matter with you?" Right? I just try to approach it a little bit more, you know, yeah.

A lot of good, scientific wrestlers just get tired of all the autographing and back-slapping and hugging and kissing and hair-pulling. You know, fans running up to you and doing this countless times, year after year after year. They drive away in a car and it's, "Man, those fans are just really starting to get to me." You know, and this and that.

After a while, at different times in...I would say wrestling there's a lot of highs and lows in your feelings during your career. A lot of times you feel down in the dumps. A lot of times you feel good if you had a good spring of wins or if you won a championship title or something like that. A lot of times guys will just say, "Hey, I'm tired. I'm trying to beat these guys and stay off the plain side. I'm not making hardly any kind of money any more. My losing it going...it passing up my winnings." This and that and he just says, "Financially I'm...just for me to..." winning and losing is a big different in your pay-offs. So, hey, I can't...with the economics the way now days, I'm just going to go the other route. This is happened.

Fans, I would say, yes, has maybe turned wrestlers from good to bad, from bad to good. But, I would say the economics have turned guys from good to bad and bad to good.

For myself, I don't know it's maybe because of the way I was brought up with my mom and dad. You know, they always tried to do what is right and that will always be the best way. I do what is good and that has always been the best way.

To add that jealousy among fellow wrestlers... Jealousy is a part to...where if he's a tag team partner, maybe you're a little bit better than him, he gets a little warm at times. Or, people give a better response towards him than you. You know. Jealousy... I've had guys hot at me because they thought that they deserved title matches against the World Champion and maybe I got it. You know, that with promotion. Right? I proved myself. I have the chance and other guys thought they deserved it and they get hot.

You know, "Hey, that's my opportunity to win the title." Well, you're getting one. "Well, what about me?" You know. All this is set up like through the contracts drawing-up with Harley Race, with the champion, myself and the promotion. You know? I've had a lot of wrestlers get hot maybe because of the fact that I've had more opportunities, the promotions felt that I'm proving myself more than the other guys. Although, they...the other guys may feel that they proved themselves.

This causes splits. This causes guys to go bad, jealousy and stuff like that. Making more money. Better percentages on pay-offs. Oh, that causes a lot of heat, too.

On my particular matches and career, promotion has approached me and such thing as, "Will you do...put your shoulders down for a certain amount of money?" or stuff like this. This has, myself, has never been approached in my career. Although, I've heard through the grapevines and this and that, you know, because money situations and this and that, because there's no hush-hush like in boxing or something like..saying that I've heard it's been done. But, in my particular career, I've never been approached to...as a pay-off, taking a dive or like they say in wrestling...I mean boxing.

As to how much of this is planned out and this and that, well, I would say that to a lot of the wrestling fans that do watch wrestling on a very regular basis, that a lot of different times they'll see a lot of different holds and moves done, for instance, on the first match and then it will be done on the second match, you know, the same things. I don't know how things get into...made look routine-ish or something like this.

But, when a guy gives a guy a turnbuckle and then...or slams him and then dropkicks him, you know, and then you'll see the second match the guy will give him a

turnbuckle and slam him and dropkick. You know, a series seems the same. None of it is set-up, it's just...basically coincidental.

There's a lot of times I've watched a particular wrestler do a series of two or three moves and then I thought... I said, "A-ha, that's what he...he did that first, second and third movement. The reason why he did it is because he ended up with that final move or hold." I say, "God, I never thought of going into that way to get that hold on that particular guy." And I've used it. I went back out there and did the same thing. And I don't think, hey, so-and-so did that earlier.

But, maybe... I know a lot of guys are copying me because there's... I've gotten into a routine or something that go into different ways of getting a particular hold on somebody and I've wrestled like Flair when I used to wrestle several times. It got to the point to...before I would register like...Oh, I've done this so much with him that he's countered it and he's gotten out. I forgot. Because, maybe it's so routine for myself that get to the arm and all of a sudden I'll start doing my thing, boom, boom, three or four different moves or holds, but he already knew what I was doing. He picked it up also, as my opponent.

This is the only thing I can kind of see how things look routine-ish because a lot of guys will come up to me and say, "How did you... You did something, you did something, and then I forgot what you did. That one extra little thing which enabled you to get the move or hold that you wanted on the individual, and I can't remember what it was." I say, "Well, I did that." "Ahh." And then, maybe a couple of weeks later on TV or at a house show or something I'll see that same guy do those three or four different moves that I was telling him about.

I haven't been around to talk... Let me put it this way, I know in football and basketball everybody is prone to a lot of injuries, knee injuries, shoulder separations, back, lower back and neck injuries. And you hear it in football, you hear it in basketball, you hear it on all sorts of sports, you hear injuries. In wrestling I've had two separated shoulders, ribs, two dislocated jaws, you know, I've got a bad knee right now, literally. My lower back is bad. I have a broken tailbone.

I would say I don't know what the percentage of injuries would be in football, but I'll tell you one thing, a lot of the conversation with wrestlers, among themselves, is the injuries that they have. "Oh, my back is really hurting today," or, "My shoulder is killing me today." Or, "My knees are really, really bad. I feel like they're going to give-out." "My neck is out." "My sac in my lower back is out." You know, stuff like that.

I couldn't tell you... All I would know is that I haven't met a professional wrestler yet that hasn't been injured or that isn't going through some kind of injury or isn't in that pain of injury.

I've seen wrestler...usually on TV, if a guy gets out and he starts talking... We're usually in two separate dressing locker rooms. The good guys on one side and the bad folk, bad guys on the other side. And we have our own monitors and televisions. We watch this and that.

I've seen... I've done it myself, watching, sitting there casually watching some guy rattle on and then starts to put me down and down and down. A couple of the other boys are sitting around saying, "We're listening to that man go now, listen to him talk about you." Maybe they work me into a frenzy or something like this, but I've done it a lot of times where I've stormed out of the dressing room and walked back out there on TV and said, "Hey, what are you doing?" You know, exchange, exchange, exchange, exchange. I've done this on my own and I've seen it done many, many times with other guys storming out.

I don't know. I've just done it because of my own personal feelings. I get hot at guys. I know many times Flair will make me hot, "slanted-eyed son-of-a-gun". You know, when you start talking like that, I, without a moment's hesitation, I'm blasting out the door, heading towards the TV set, TV cameras. That's all I can say on that.

...consideration when you choose a tag team partner is compatibility, knowing that you're going to get along with them. Because then, if you know that you're going to get along with that particular partner, if you can trust him 110%, you would give a lot more in a match or try a lot harder in a match knowing that the somebody you have as a partner is backing you.

As opposed to, let's say, if you pick somebody that maybe is a lot better in wrestling, but hate his guts, because you can't stand his attitude or the way he projects himself out of the ring and in public, at the mall or at the 7-Eleven. You can't stand him. You can't stand to be around him. So, while you're wrestling or something, you may not give it all because you can't stand him, even though this guy may be a better wrestler than another partner that you've picked.

But, you get along so well because the guy is really a good guy. You know the guy is trying 110%. And maybe you'll say to yourself, well, maybe I can take him aside and have training with him for a little bit and he'll become a better wrestler. Friendship is strong. So, this...

I would say compatibility and trust is, I would say, a lot more than...for myself, than looking at somebody and say, "I'd rather pick this guy because his ability is better, but his attitude is really down." As opposed to, maybe this guy's wrestling isn't quite up to par, but his attitude and his will and everything about him is so much easier to get along with.

Richard Henry Blood (born February 28, 1953), better known by his ring name **Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat**, is a retired American professional wrestler who is one of the most well-known professional wrestlers of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He is currently signed to WWE working as a road agent.

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