

Chillicothe Gazette

Red, white & bruised

The Gazette Staff

Chillicothe's Backstage will once again host the International Wrestling Alliance Thursday for its annual Red, White & Bruised show.

It's considered the alliance's second-largest event of the year and is built around the United States title, for which feature wrestlers U.S. Heavyweight Champion Chris Cruik will fight Omega Mark Mattis.

"They've wrestled twice before and there hasn't been a clear-cut winner," said Tom Miller, a wrestler and booking agent for IWA.

However, the alliance's commissioner said this match will be different.

"This time there will be a winner," said James Whitt, noting there will be a few stipulations to this match.

No chopping -a brutal, open-hand slap, usually to the heart region -will be allowed.

According to a release, Cruik complained after the last encounter with Mattis that he sported numerous welts from Mattis' chops.

Cruik wasn't the only one complaining, however, as Mattis claimed it's hard to defeat Cruik because he spends a lot of time stalling outside the ring.

To that end, Whitt said a deliberate stall -as well as a chop -will be grounds for a disqualification when the two meet at Red, White & Bruised.

Additionally, the commissioner said the title will change hands on a disqualification, when titles usually only change with pin falls or submissions.

Another feature of Thursday's event will be Caged Chaos, during which a 16-foot high steel cage will surround the ring.

Eight wrestlers will be split into two teams to fight it out.

Featured in Cage Chaos will be Wildfire Tommy Rich, who became the youngest world champion in history when he defeated Harley Race for an NWA championship.

He'll join The Black Superman, Onyx, E-Dog and young Aaron Williams in a fight against Bull Miller, Bad Boy Malloy, Chad Cruise and IWA Champion King Randy Allen.

"We're very family-oriented," said Miller of the show. "We're not as storybook driven or soap-opera driven as the WWE might be. We're one of the few live events that come to Chillicothe on a regular basis."

The alliance, based in Columbus, comes to Chillicothe on the first Thursday of every month, as it has for the past five years or so. Its matches have been taking place in town for about 10 years, he said.

"We have four bigger shows a year, and this is one of them," Miller said. "Chillicothe's always been one of our better towns. I guess Chillicothe is a wrestling town."

Those who wish to attend the event can get advance tickets at The Backstage or Acme Comics for \$8. They can also be purchased at the door for \$10. Children 10 and younger are free with an adult's paid admission.

"A lot of people think because it's in a night club, that kids aren't allowed," he said. "But it's not really a night-club setting when we're there."

Fans can also watch IWA wrestling from home on Horizon Cable channel 11 at 7 p.m. on weekdays or on Time Warner channel 73 beginning 11 a.m. July 14.

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