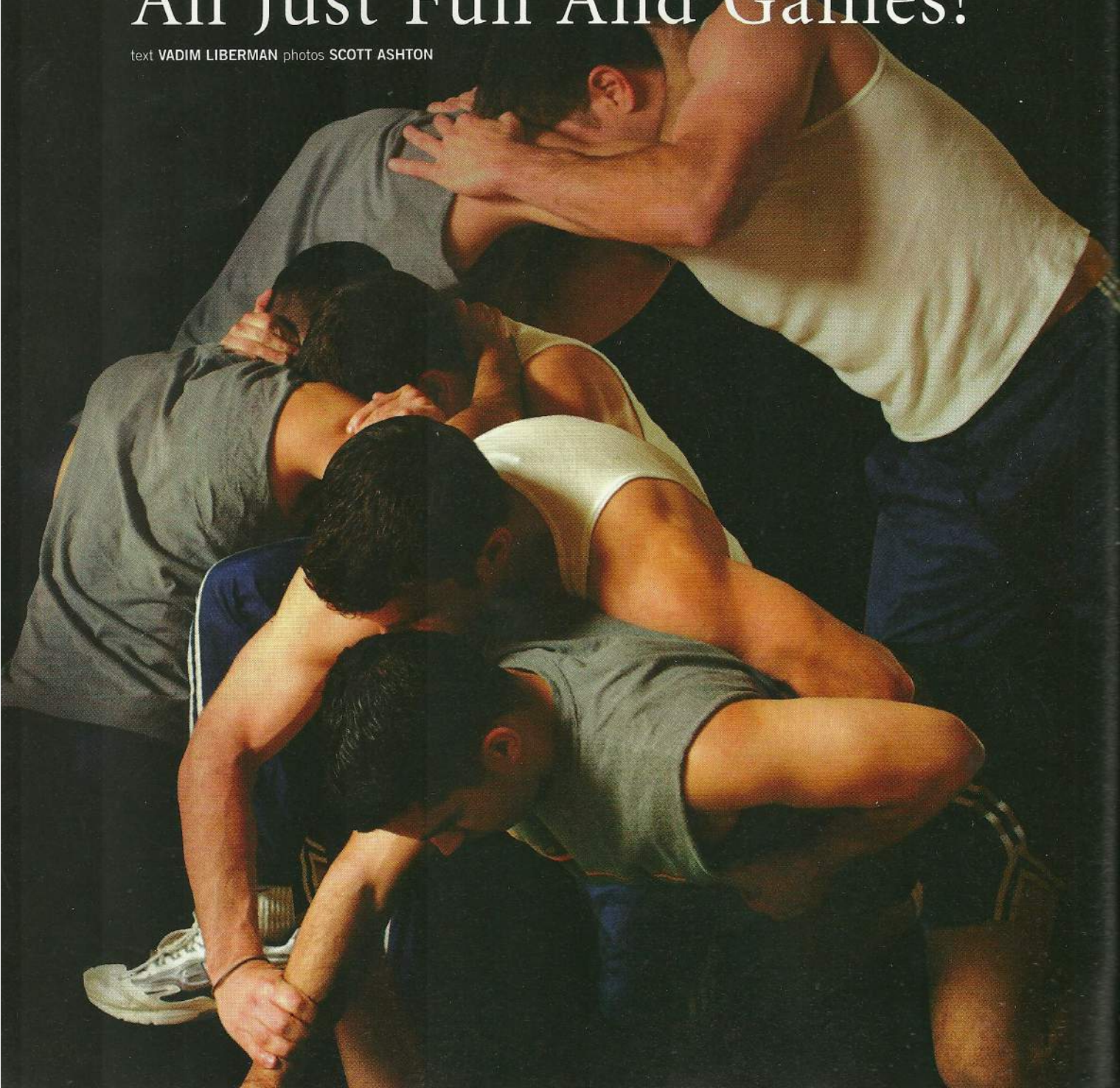


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# GO AHEAD AND GRAB HIM

Wrestling: It's All Fun And Games  
Until Somebody... Uh, Hell, It's  
All Just Fun And Games!

text VADIM LIBERMAN photos SCOTT ASHTON



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## on't let anyone tell you that fags suck at sports.

The only difference between you and the pros is that while they receive millions of dollars, all you sometimes get is a, "Thanks, dude" for playing with sticks and balls. Nonetheless, if you're a loser at conventional games, perhaps you should consider participating in an activity that assures that when you lose, you win, and when you win, you lose—your built-up "tension," that is. What sport fuses homoeroticism and athleticism? Wrestling, of course.

Indeed, some homos compete in gay wrestling clubs, the Gay Games or the WWF. But as Stephen, a gay wrestler, explains, "If you compete on teams, you expend so much physical energy that your blood runs everywhere except into your dick." Thus, while these competitors pin each other with the goal of winning, other groping grapplers pin opponents with the goal of scoring, thereby turning the sport into a fetish.

### AND IN THIS CORNER...

Like most men aroused by piledrivers and bearhugs, Stephen remembers when he was younger watching TV wrestling: "There was this very good-looking guy, in brief trunks that highlighted his butt and clearly outlined his crotch, suffering demonstrably as he was pressed into the mat and tossed around the ring. I was hooked. Now, wrestling is at the core of my psychosexual make-up."

Eventually, kid Stephen became Kid Leopard, wrestler for and owner of gay-wrestling video company BGEast. While he enjoys riding hunks in skimpy trunks, Kid explains that, "A good match can also involve pure, primal passion, taking you for one hell of an emotional ride...whether it's total muscular engagement or a fleeting and telling touch. I love the kinetic sculpture of bodies intertwined in sometimes exquisite, surprising and even unimaginable ways."

Of course, wrestling is often faked, fueled more by domination and submission fantasies. Some men (known as "heels" in wrestlespeak, and "the butch stud you always wished you could be" in homospeak) enjoy manhandling or humiliating opponents. Others ("jobbers") relish getting pummeled. "I like to win," says Kid, a heel. "The emotions and sensations excite me more when I'm on top, and I like watching an opponent suffer." But as Jarret Cole, a BGEast wrestler who also grapples in private matches, explains, "In the long run, as long as you both get enjoyment, who cares who 'wins'?"

### ALL DRESSED UP

One thing Jarret deeply cares about is spandex. Like most sexual wrestlers, he's turned on by what he puts on. While spandex briefs or square cuts remain the most popular gear, some guys prefer thongs, underwear, or singlets. "I think a hot guy is even sexier in Speedos," states Jarret, who enjoys lots of gear changes during a match. "I prefer square cuts or bicycle shorts because they're form-fitting, smooth and don't restrict me."

Still other exhibitionists choose to brawl in the buff. While companies like BGEast and Can-Am meticulously choose attire for their wrestlers, Barry David, owner of On Top Productions, explains that, "Guys are watching my videos for what wrestlers are *not* wearing." Still, the majority of men prefer to tackle each other in trunks. As Dan Lake, who runs a popular submission and oil wrestling night at The Works, a Manhattan gay bar, puts it, "Wearing attire gives you something to work toward. Otherwise, you might as well just have sex if you're naked."

### I'LL TUMBLE FOR YA

Speaking of sex, for many wrestling knocks conventional sex out of the ring. Explains Mike, "Wrestling a guy arouses me more than just blowing him. And I'd rather get off by having a guy muscle me in holds than by having him suck me off or fuck me." With that in mind, some video companies, like BGEast, never feature anal sex.

And instead of sucking at a sport, you can get sucked in one, especially if you wrestle for "stakes," sexual rewards that go to the winner. Kid explains, "For some, there is wrestling and then there is sex. When one ends, the other begins. The outcome of the wrestling might impact the tenor of the sex." Thus, the bout determines what sexual role you'll play, which is how Barry shoots his videos. "Over the years, I've learned what guys want," he states. "They want to see sweaty bodies and legitimate holds, not anything staged. We shoot real matches, and

whoever wins, wins. After that, they have sex. It's not choreographed, and we don't like to determine what roles guys will play."

### SO YOU THINK YOU'RE READY TO RUMBLE?

First decide on how you're going to tumble by choosing a style of grappling, such as erotic wrestling. Often done nude, it generally involves plenty of grinding during slow, sensual holds. Many men enjoy stroking themselves or getting stroked within the constraint of an inescapable hold. In fact, some engage in climax wrestling, the goal of which is it to force your opponent to shoot his load first. "I love the feeling of trying to keep it all in while some guy threatens to apply more pressure to a hold unless I come," explains Drew, 34, who often wrestles climax matches. For some, oil wrestling creates a stimulating experience as they slip in and out of holds. Still other erotic matches involve "rip-and-strip" wrestling, in which combatants tear each other's clothes off until they're nude.

If you prefer more pain, submission wrestling involves intertwining your body with another hunk's in holds that involve stretching, squeezing and, yes, some pain. "The key is to carefully gauge the amount of pressure and pain that my opponent enjoys most," explains Kid. "I love to dance around that threshold, taking my opponent right to the edge and then pulling back just slightly to enjoy his pleasure and pain." Often competitive, the goal is to trap someone until he moans his submission. "It becomes a conquest," explains Jarret.

Similar to submission wrestling, amateur/freestyle wrestling usually involves opponents slipping into singlets to apply traditional Greco-Roman holds, often done by men who have previous experience wrestling in high school or college. "I like freestyle because it's so competitive," explains Mark, 25, a former high-school wrestler. "The competition arouses me, and when wrestling becomes too fake, it ceases to turn me on."

Many, however, feel otherwise and enjoy pro wrestling, "a collaboratively contrived illusion," as Kid puts it. "Matches are improvised around a structural outline. Wrestlers know the beginning and finish and most likely have some planned high spots, but matches are not choreographed. A successful pro wrestler is adept at improvisation." In the absence of a ring, most guys use a mattress while brawling in matches that >>

sometimes involve a give-and-take of holds and other times turn into squash jobs, where one stud opens up a can of whoop-ass to demolish another. Like what you see on TV, pro-style requires both opponents to cooperate in applying holds while frequently acting out emotions associated with pain, suffering and victory. A hot match demands that both guys immerse themselves into the fantasy of it. Kid confirms the essential nature of fulfilling the fantasy: "There has to be a good chemistry between the wrestlers. An attraction and/or a rivalry can add spark and sparkle. It also helps when a wrestler has a pinch of narcissism."



### GROPING FOR GRAPPLERS

While referrals are the best way to meet other wrestling fetishists, the Internet remains the first stop to look up those who lock up. "I once thought I was the only one in the world who had this fascination [with wrestling]," reveals Kid. "The Internet has helped reduce the feeling of isolation, and it bodes well for current and future generations of young men discovering wrestling as a primary object of their desire." Typing "gay" and "wrestling" into a search engine will yield links to sites featuring photos of slamming studs, wrestlers' homepages, gay wrestling video companies' Web sites and specialized personal ads sites.

When reading personal ads or talking online, potential opponents size each other up based on many of the same characteristics that you use to judge if someone's worthy of hooking up with you: height, weight, muscles, etc. "I try to be cautious when screening opponents," explains Jarret. "If I'm not turned on by somebody, I'm not going to want to wrestle them. Why should erotic wrestling be any different from any other sexual contact?" But hitting the mats requires more information than hitting the

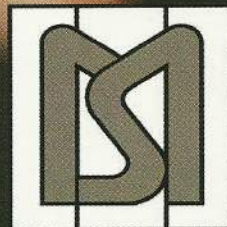
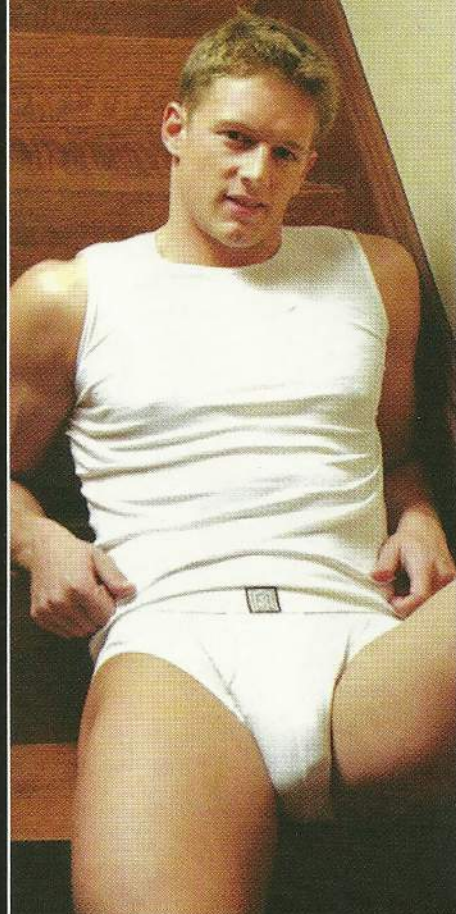
sack does. Guys will want to know or discuss the style of wrestling, favorite gear, holds and roles they play. Furthermore, men will explore what fantasies turn them on. Often, one's screen name indicates his style of wrestling, role, or overall gimmick. For example, RussianChamp, a frequent visitor to vanga.com (a personal ads site), is a heel who promises a "hot finish to a Cold War" match.

After e-mailing or IM-ing each other and exchanging photos of themselves in their favorite gear, opponents will make plans to meet, usually at one's home but sometimes at a motel, beach or workplace. Some even

arrange for tag-team matches, kind of like wrestling's version of a gang bang. Others, however, have a match without ever meeting by cyberwrestling, which involves typing descriptions of holds and moves in an IM box that acts as the ring. A hot cybermatch demands that opponents vividly visualize what they type and fulfill each other's fantasies. Some fantasies are your typical pro or submission matches, whereas others involve opponents wrestling their favorite celebrities or superheroes. Furthermore, because guys apply holds via a keyboard, they can exaggerate and create moves impossible to execute in reality. Or they can cyberwrestle in a chatroom so that the room's other members act as an audience. "Wrestling guys in front of a chatroom audience adds to the realism of a pro match," explains Jake, a 22-year-old cyberwrestler. "Also, I love humiliating an opponent in front of others." For others, if they can't see an opponent suffer in a hold, then they want to at least hear him, so they wrestle over the phone. Like phone sex, they describe their actions until one of them loses, comes or answers his call-waiting beep.

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