

THIS ISLAND EARTH

Beyond croquet:
Uncle Charlie
in Death's clutches.



KIRK CONDYLES

WHAM! BAM! THANK YOU! SLAM!

Extreme Backyard Wrestling's leaders and gutters

by Bill Jensen

When Death enters the ring and tosses his trademark flaming skull into the chest of America's Own Ace Cunningham, it's clear this is going to be his night. But Death, a 21-year-old mechanic named Jay O'Sullivan, never takes a holiday in Extreme Backyard Wrestling. This is just the first of his three matches tonight.

As usual, mayhem in the suburbs comes with a fence: The 12-foot-ring is a green tarp surrounded by four fence posts connected by rope and wrapped with electrical tape. No padding—it's tarp, then ground. This backyard from hell sits behind a small ranch house on an otherwise quiet street in Port Jefferson Station, just down the road from Ward Melville High, where pro-wrestling legend Mick Foley honed his taste for the brutal.

Thanks to a bookshelf stereo system set up outside, the theme from the movie *Halloween* echoes through the neighborhood, stirring the blood of the 15 or so spectators who are on their feet braving a chilly spring night. In a corner of the yard is a mess of stuff for the wrestlers to toss into the ring when needed—Adopt a Highway signs, aluminum gutters, tables, a Halloween-ghost lawn figurine and, of course, wrestling's metal chair and steel garbage can.

The Three-on-Two Intergender Mixed Handicap Match pits Death and sultry gal pal Nemesis against Cunningham, Uncle Charlie and 17-year-old Nature Kid. With all five wrestlers in the ring at once, Nemesis holds her own, dragging a plastic garbage can into the ring and smacking Uncle Charlie. Nemesis grabs an old "Vote Tom Solisano for Governor" placard and bashes Cunningham with it.

Death then hauls Cunningham out of the ring and hangs him upside down on a back fence. He arranges a garbage can in front

of his victim's face, backs up five steps, breaks into a full sprint and slides Rickey Henderson-style into the can, denting the metal into the skull of a helpless Cunningham.

After climbing back into the ring, Death administers a choke-slam to Nature Kid, followed by a tombstone piledriver onto another steel garbage can. The match is over.

"It was invigorating," says the Nature Kid after his first-ever match. "That tombstone into the garbage can—I didn't feel a thing."

Even Death is upbeat. "The last time we did this," he says, "we had the cops called on us five or six times. But nobody got hurt. The year before, when we didn't know what we were doing, people got hurt."

"It used to be nothing was booked," says Extreme Backyard Wrestling's promoter, Sean Stern, 17. "Now everything is set up. The whole thing follows a story line."

Over a portable P.A., someone announces the second event of the evening: the Loser Eats a Live Goldfish Match. Silky Smooth (21-year-old Five Towns College student Pauly Vercillo, whose parents own the house), strides into the ring to the strains of the *Boogie Nights* theme.

Dressed in a brown shirt and baggy pants and topped by a brown, curly-haired wig, he's accompanied by manager extraordi-

naire Smokey Joe, who's dressed like the cowboy in the Village People. Arkon, Silky's opponent, is dressed in black. He is suffering a little from the vampire teeth he just bought from Utopia in Centereach, now speaking with a lisp. But he still takes it hard to Silky.

"Ahh, my G-Spot, my G-spot," Silky screams as he gets pelted with lefts and rights to the stomach.

After Silky's patented "disco spinout" move backfires, Arkon puts him into a camel clutch. Silky submits and is handed a goldfish swimming in a glass of water. He gulps down the water, adding an extra chug to accommodate the fish.

Time for more Death. Armed again with the flaming skull and Nemesis, he squares off against the athletic and high-flying Damian Hardcore in a Four Tables Death Match. Death unleashes a powerbomb through a plywood table, but the wood doesn't break. Hardcore does; he's carried out of the ring by two other wrestlers and is again attacked by an aluminum leader-wielding Death.

The concluding match, a 30-minute ironman free-for-all, pits brother vs. brother. It doesn't get any better than this: Death's alter-ego, the grungy Crash (Jay O'Sullivan), against the heel Havoc (younger brother Kevin). Havoc enters the ring with his own cameraman.

Crash begins the match by pummeling Havoc with punches to the bicep. Crash steps out of the ring so he can throw in seven trash cans and then smacks Havoc over the head with a dresser drawer. Mom's not around to stop this.

A blow from one of the trash cans draws blood from Havoc.

Crash drags the apparently lifeless body of his brother out of the ring and onto a large green plastic picnic table (the original plan to set the table on fire was scrapped). Climbing upon the shed, he jumps down with a flying elbow. But Havoc, playing possum, dodges at the last second, and the table shatters. When the bell rings, Crash is ahead 2-1 on pin falls. He's the new Extreme Match Champion.

"I think my fuckin' elbow's broken," Crash says. "Dude, I'm never doing a table from that high again. We gotta see the tape."

EXIT ZERO