

ENTERTAINMENT

# No glamour, no payoff, no problem

Local wrestlers aren't about filling stadiums or their pockets

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Four-sided steel cage? Check.  
Aluminum garbage lids? Check.  
Barbed wire? Check.

On the morning of Saturday, May 23, members of NWA NY sift through their small storage garage in Henrietta, gathering weapons to use during Anarchy V, the independent wrestling organization's fifth anniversary show. Yet, something appears to be missing.

"Where's that bowling ball?" asks 23-year-old Henrietta resident Mike "Kid Justice" Champion, wrestler and promoter for NWA NY, a regional chapter of the National Wrestling Alliance.

Champion can rest easy. The bowling ball is in the hands of Mike "Hellcat" Rosario, wrestler and owner of the organization. Rosario is a prime candidate to get hit by the ball during a street fight at Anarchy V, the first of two events taking place that weekend. The second — on Sunday, May 24 — will be filmed for the first episode of *No Limits*, NWA NY's new television show, which will air monthly on WBGT-TV, "My18." (The show was set to premiere on Sunday, May 31.)

Clockwise from left are Gabriel Saint, Hellcat, Mo Mantha and Kid Justice.

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Mike "Kid Justice" Champion was sidelined for two years with a neck injury but says he's living out a dream.

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Joining Rosario and his competitors in the ring for the street fight will be several metal chairs, ladders, wooden tables and mousetraps. Yes, mousetraps.

Money serves as no incentive for Rosario and his fellow wrestlers. They've grown up entertained by the bright lights of professional wrestling. And now they're risking life and limb to act out their childhood fantasies, even if on a much, *much* smaller scale.

"You do it because you love it," Rosario says. "That's why all these guys are here."

Any money made at the gate from Anarchy V will go toward paying venue costs, licensing fees and the national talent from out of town, including former WWE wrestlers Danny Doring and "Little Guido" Maritato. What's left will be divided up among the local wrestlers, and Champion says it probably will amount only to "a little gas money."

Many of the guys with NWA NY swear by *The Wrestler* — last year's Oscar-nominated film starring Mickey Rourke — as an authentic portrayal of what they go through — which is in stark contrast to the glitz and glamour of the WWE.

There are no six-figure contracts or stadiums of screaming fans. Anarchy V takes place at Minett Hall at the Fair and Expo Center in Henrietta in front of a few hundred people sitting in folding chairs. The changing room consists of a few tables where the wrestlers can go over choreography for matches and nurse battle wounds. And none of them have John Cena's body or The Rock's charisma. For the most part they're just ordinary, friendly guys.

Lou Englert, 28, of Pittsford teaches 11th and 12th grades in the Rochester School District. However, in the ring he's "Mo Mantha," the current No Limits Champion and one of the NWA NY's top villains. Dressed in overalls, Mantha is a foul-mouthed redneck hell-bent on making fans hate him. And more often than not, he succeeds.

After his match at Anarchy V, Mantha

grabs the microphone and points to a few police officers in the crowd (who are clearly in on the gag).

"What's that dirty pig smell?" snarls Mantha. "Must be some of Rochester's finest in the front row tonight."

Then there's Mantha's chief nemesis, Gabriel Saint (real name Jerrel Edmondson), 28, of Rochester, who explains his motivation for wrestling this way: "I grew up as a foster kid. The only memory I have of my real parents is going to wrestling matches with my dad."

In the hours before Anarchy V, Edmondson runs through the basics of "taking bumps" (or falling) properly. As this reporter found out, just two "bumps" done improperly can render your neck motionless the following day.

## NO LIMITS TAPING

**WHEN:** 4 p.m.  
Sunday, June 28

**WHERE:** The Roost,  
4853 West Henrietta Road, Henrietta

**COST:** \$10 at the door; \$8 in advance

**TICKETS:** Available at [www.nwaupstate.net](http://www.nwaupstate.net), The Roost and Woody's II, 2758 West Henrietta Road, Brighton

The matches may be choreographed and the results may be predetermined (something professional wrestling is no longer shy about acknowledging), but the athleticism it requires and

the pain it involves are by no means fake.

Neither is the liability agreement the wrestlers must sign. Every participant must be 18 years old, and all NWA NY matches are sanctioned by the New York State Athletic Commission. Each wrestler signs a waiver to relieve NWA of "liability for personal injury... or wrongful death caused by negligence."

In past matches, Edmondson has broken his jaw. Englert has torn cartilage in his right knee. And Champion was once sidelined for two years with a neck injury. None of this has ever stopped any of them from signing the waiver.

"It's an escape for us," Champion says. "People who aren't into it might not understand, but for us, it's a chance to live out your dreams." ♦



Mike "Hellcat" Rosario

Above, Hellcat wrestles Evan McCloud, at top, at the NWA Upstate's Anniversary Anarchy V. Below, Johnny Kayfabe, the manager of Triple X, and Hellcat enter the Anarchy V arena.



Lou "Mo Mantha" Englert

