

# Brooklyn Brawler

## Wrestler has local ties despite moniker

By DEAN HAMRICK  
Special Writer

There are a lot of things in the world that leave you wondering why?

For example, why is it cold and dry in Greenland, yet green and warm in Ireland?

Or, why is the biggest guy you know nicknamed "Tiny"?

Or, why does The World Wrestling Federation's "Brooklyn Brawler" live in Livonia?

Unlike many pro athletes, Steve Lombardi, a Livonia resident, did not grow up training or even hoping on the chance that he might one-day become a professional wrestler.

Growing up as a kid in Brooklyn he never had big hopes of going that route. Heck, he was a student, a biological chemical engineering major.

off, but I kept coming back and finally they listened to me. I hadn't planned it. I, more or less, just fell into it."

He was persistent and eventually got what he wanted. In pursuit of this newfound interest, Lombardi took a risk, a big one.

He made the decision to drop out of St. Francis University in New York, where he was two and a half years into his degree. He then proceeded to get a couple part-time jobs and start training to become a wrestler.

"Really, I just decided that wrestling was a lot cooler," said Lombardi.

A decision that most would deem foolish or brash seems to have paid off.

For the past 19 years, Steve Lombardi has been a prominent member of the WWF. Faithful fans around the world have come to know him as the rough-mannered "Brooklyn Brawler."

Throughout his career however, he has played eight or nine different characters, all kinds of outlandish personalities, ranging from Kim Chee, a wrestling manager, to Doink the Clown.

He has wrestled everywhere from Lindis to Australia. He wrestled at the Pontiac Silverdome in front of what is still recorded as

the highest indoor attendance in wrestling history.

He was the very first pro wrestling match for WWF superstars like The Rock and Bret Hart, as well as The Rock's father, Rocky Johnson. One of the crowning moments in his career came in winning the Battle Royal held at Madison Square Garden. That, in turn, afforded him the opportunity to wrestle then-champion, Sean Michaels.

The never-bashful Lombardi takes pride in what has done. "I would classify myself as a very successful individual in what I do, in the sport of wrestling," said Lombardi.

As the longest active member of the WWF, Lombardi has had time to see the federation transform. A pastime once followed by only a select group of fans has now managed to make its way into the mainstream and burst into the public eye. WWF stars are now seen all over, in commercials, television shows, music videos and even the big screen.

The matches, always known for action and excitement have even been kicked up to another level in the past few years. But, as long as it's still wrestling the Brawler is happy to be part of it.

"Nowadays it's more aerial and high flying," said Lombardi. "It has gotten much more world wide and more involved with the television industry, but I like both eras."

As for Lombardi's involvement in the WWF, at age 40, he doesn't wrestle as much as he did. He spends the majority of his time doing work for the interview department. Still very much involved in the federation, Lombardi doesn't plan on hanging it up any time soon.

"I plan on staying as long as they'll have me," said Lombardi. "I mean sometimes I miss the ring but I really enjoy what I do."

It seems to be a success story of the best kind. Boy meets childhood idols, boy joins childhood idols, boy becomes idol. However, that still doesn't explain why the Brooklyn Brawler has a quaint suburban house in Livonia.

"I lived in Brooklyn as a kid," said Lombardi. "But I met my wife (Sandra) and she lived in Michigan so now here I am."

When his wrestling days end, he'll trade the Brooklyn Brawler for quality time in the sun?

"Then I'm finally done. I plan on just relaxing," said Lombardi. "I'll be sitting back and sipping pina colada's by the pool."



WWF veteran: Steve Lombardi lives in Livonia but is known in the wrestling world as the Brooklyn Brawler.

# Local players in USTA playoffs

Farmington Tennis Club will send 13 teams to the United States Tennis Association regional playoffs in Ann Arbor.

Following a summer of inter-club competition in league play, division winners from southeast Michigan advance to the playoffs at the University of Michigan Tennis Center in men's, women's, seniors and mixed doubles.

The regional winners advance to the state tournament, and those winners will go to the sectional playoffs against the best from Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana. The final phase is the national tournament.

Following are the Farmington Tennis Club teams and the players who will be competing.

### TENNIS

Men's 8.0 Flight: Karl Lewohl, Stefan Sosenschnob, Thomas Fargo, Christopher Wise, Brennan Sicks, Chris Marschak, Evan West, Sean Howard, Tony Mallis, Stephen Thompson.

Women's 8.0 Flight: Phyllis Summa, Phyllis Wehrman, Susan Leask, Lisa Hara, Dianne Thompson, Karen Friedman, Andrea Ferris, Linda Helebach, Karen Fehi, Deborah Scoggia, Laurie Colavanti, Gayle Lucas, Donna Marvicin, Maggie Otto, Mary Wright.

Men's 4.0 Seniors: Dianne Smalec, Sherry Johnson, Claire Adams, Carol Warwick, Janet Lanning, Gene Saltz, Janice Caprice, Sandra Risset, Pam Dally, Janice Mechowitz, Ann Munro, Irene Sullivan.

Men's 3.5 Flight: Charles Kirby, Jerry Lello, Joachim Doehrer, Emil Tijan, Deyl Cary, Daniel Jones, Craig Lehmann, Marc Wiseman, John Giles, David Cash, Ramkumar Rajagopalan, Shane Spencer, Richard Moffet.

Men's 3.5 Flight: Douglas Fitzsimmons, Randal Markiewicz, Nathan Pedakanyga, William Harner, Larry Janow, Mark Catwell, David Markiewicz, Michael Murphy, Derek Darkowski, Don Walter, Adam Finch, Thomas Gavel, Michael Jacobs, David Gotsch, Paul Cornille, Thomas Robb, Albert Russo, Brian McGrath, Lester Hayden, Jerry Potter.

Men's 3.5 Seniors: Ronald Glowinski, Charles Kirby, Joachim Doehrer, Robert Vin-

cent, Daniel Lennidon, Emil Tijan, Deyl Cary, Randal Markiewicz, Larry Janow, Daniel Jones, George Nasse, Pete Peterson, Jerry Lello.

Men's 8.0 Flight: Karl Lewohl, Stefan Sosenschnob, Thomas Fargo, Christopher Wise, Brennan Sicks, Chris Marschak, Evan West, Sean Howard, Tony Mallis, Stephen Thompson.

Mixed 8.0 Doubles: Albert Russo, Patricia Hahn, John Miller, Bev Miller, Randal Markiewicz, Joyce Robb, Thomas Robb, Gwen Markiewicz, David Markiewicz, Greg Duke, Lori Duke, Heather Lockwood, Bath Zierba, David Gustafek.

Mixed 8.0 Doubles: Sheri Arps, Jerry Lello, Karline Walker, Terry Refal, Beverly Vabela, Ronald Glowinski, Robin Sessal, Kathleen Mason, Susan Maritz, Eric Haerz, Maurice Sessal, James Zimmer, Michael Rosko, Kimberly Hysinger, Judy Aubrey, Suzanne Nash, Robert Kieve.

Mixed 7.0 Doubles: Linda Suspeck, Kathleen McCrann, Sally DeLacy, Michael Jacobs, Danyle Carey, Christine Darkowski, Derek Darkowski, Andrea Bologna, Paul Cornille, Daniel Jones, Elizabeth Lindsay, Aaron Bernardo, Larry Steenbergen, Maura Lapp.

Mixed 7.0 Doubles: Larry Steenbergen, Eric Mitchell, Louise Janzen, Greg Richter, Claire Adams, Wade Johnson, Kristine Viglotti, Dianne Smalec, Leonard Gumpino, Linda Lingo, Rendi Seifert, Sean Howard, Sally DeLacy, Shawn McGrath, Suzanne Nash, Cara Malone.

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