

PRO WRESTLER OWEN HART DIES IN FALL

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Owen Hart, a wrestling veteran of over a decade, passed away Sunday night during the World Wrestling Federation's pay-per-view Over the Edge in Kansas City, Mo.

Hart, who was portraying a character called the Blue Blazer, was to be lowered from the ceiling of the Kemper Arena prior to his match with the Godfather for the Intercontinental Championship. As Hart was being lowered, an apparent equipment failure occurred and Hart dropped nearly 85 feet to the ring area.

Paramedics immediately went to the ring in an effort to save Hart's life. Hart, 33, was taken to an undisclosed local hospital.

Nearly 45 minutes later, WWF announcer Jim Ross read a statement to confirm Hart's death.

Hart, who had been the Intercontinental and Tag-Team champion several times in his career, was the younger brother of World Championship Wrestling's Bret "The Hitman" Hart. Both brothers got their start in the Stampede Wrestling organization - which was run by their father Stu - in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Viewers of the event did not see the fall or the paramedics' efforts, as the WWF cameras showed shots of the crowd and Ross during the near 10 minutes before Hart was taken to the hospital.

Kemper Arena officials would not comment on the incident, but did say the WWF would be issuing a statement late Sunday night or early this morning.

BOB EMANUEL JR.

AUTO RACING

Qualifying cut short

Rain cut short the second of two days of time trials for the May 30 Indianapolis 500 by four hours. But the rain held long enough for Robbie Buhl to bump his way into the lineup for the race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

His run was completed one minute before rain shut the 2 1/2-mile oval. With several other drivers still hoping to take a crack at the lineup, track officials waited 2 1/2 hours before making the end of qualifying official.

Buhl, 35, qualified with an A.J. Foyt borrowed Oldsmobile Aurora-powered Dallara with an average speed of 220.115 mph. That was just good enough to bump Mike Groff out of the 33-car lineup.

At Indy, it's the 33 fastest cars that start the race, meaning that non-qualified cars can take a run at knocking the slowest qualifiers out of the field until the 6 p.m. finish - or until rain halts the action.

With wet weather in the forecast, there was a flurry of activity when qualifying started at noon.

Raul Boesel immediately drove onto the track and bumped out Lyn St. James, the only woman entered in the 83rd 500-mile race and the slowest first-round qualifier at 218.970 mph.

Johnny Unser, cousin of first-day qualifier Robby Unser, qualified for his fourth Indy start at 221.197 mph. Also qualifying Sunday was Jack Miller at 220.276.

* T. LABONTE WINS ALL-STAR RACE: An unexpected victory in stock-car racing's all-star event prompted The Iceman to step out of character Saturday night in Concord, N.C.

Terry Labonte, whose laid-back demeanor on and off the track earned him his nickname, was in a celebratory mood after his team's late-race pit gamble helped him win The Winston.

After overpowering the field in the closing laps, Labonte drove his Chevrolet Monte Carlo into Victory Lane at Lowe's Motor Speedway and broke into what - for him - amounted to a raucous celebration. He hopped out of the car, jumped on the roof, raised his fists in triumph and jumped up and down several times.

* KENSETH WINS NAZARETH: NASCAR Busch Grand National points leader Matt Kenseth outlasted the rain and the competition to win the First Union 200 at Nazareth (Pa.) Speedway.

ETC.

* SOCCER: Steve Jolley scored his first goal of the season in the game's third minute as the host Los Angeles Galaxy (5-5) beat the New England Revolution (3-6), 1-0, in MLS. . . . Late Saturday action, Ronald Cerritos scored in regulation and in the shootout, and goalkeeper David Kramer stopped three of four shots in the tiebreaker as the host San Jose Clash (6-0) beat the Dallas Burn (1-5), 2-1. . . . Paul Bravo scored twice as the Colorado Rapids (6-2) extended their team-record winning streak to six games with a 2-0 victory over the visiting New York-New Jersey MetroStars (4-5). . . . Diego Gutierrez scored two goals against his former team as the host Chicago Fire (6-3) defeated the Kansas City Wizards (1-8), 3-1.

* FOOTBALL: Quarterback Chris Dittoe, who joined the team just five days ago, led the host Berlin Thunder (1-5) to a 27-20 upset of the Barcelona Dragons (4-2) in NFL Europe. Dittoe threw for 223 yards and a touchdown after flying in Tuesday when Andre Ware and Chuck Clemons were sidelined with injuries. Former Dolphin Lawrence Phillips was held to 65 yards on 19 carries. He scored two of the Dragon touchdowns on short runs.

- Caption: photo: Owen Hart (a)

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