

The Orlando Sentinel

© 1987 Sentinel Communications Company

20 The Orlando Sentinel, Sunday, October 4, 1987 SO

SPORTS

Machine grabbing arm wrestlers' interest

By Cheryl Gordon

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

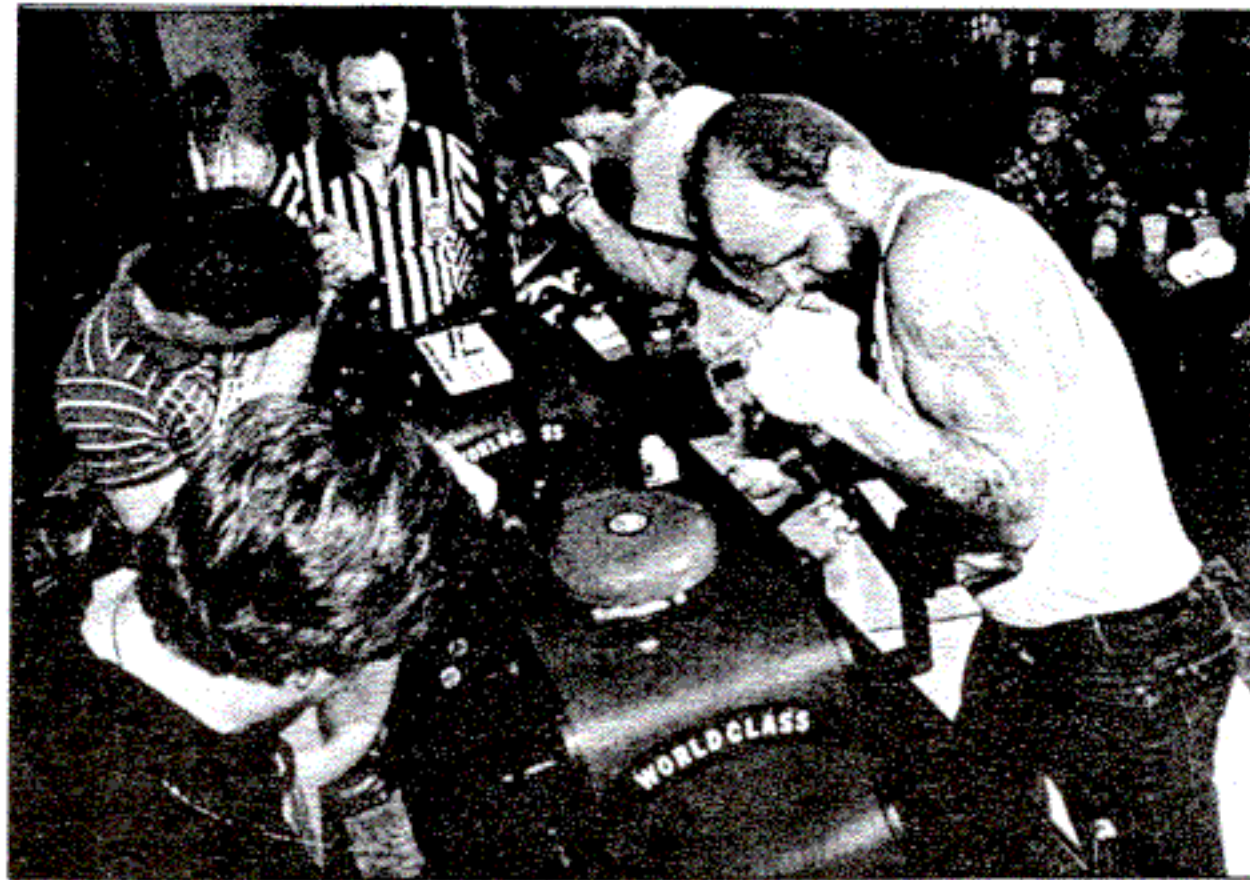
Arm wrestling isn't a new sport. It has been used as a test of strength, virility, and stubbornness for centuries. Many a wager has been resolved by plunking down elbows and gripping grips.

Up until now, unmatched partners have been at a disadvantage. If righties don't go against righties and lefties against lefties, one party, unless that party is ambidextrous, is in a weaker position from the start.

Jack Barringer, 43, an Iowa entrepreneur, has changed all that. Barringer has developed a patented machine that is an equalizer. The World Class Arm Wrestling Machine promises to take all the controversy out of hand-to-hand arm wrestling by making competitors rely on their strength and not fancy hand grips. Also, no one has an advantage any longer because of arm length.

"The biggest most exciting thing about the introduction of this machine to the sport is you can now have team competition, even mixed doubles," Barringer said between sales pitches and demonstrations at a franchise show at the Expo Center last week.

"The whole reason I've worked so hard on this is to clean up the image of



Arm wrestlers pull and tug without even touching opponent.

this sport and bring it out of the closet."

Barringer has been arm wrestling since he was a boy. He competed seriously in the sport for 12 years before becoming super involved in designing this machine. It took three years and \$350,000 to develop the portable, 300-pound machine. At one time Barringer was ranked third in the nation in this

sport he now has created his own federation for. The U.S. Arm Forces memberships are growing as you read.

The World Class Arm Wrestling Machine was one of the busier attractions at the franchise show as a mixed bag of competitors cautiously approached the machine, setting off its fire-alarm bells by beating each other.

Barringer is making his machine available to franchise owners across the world. He expected the demand for the machines to grow with the release of Sylvester Stallone's movie "Over The Top," a muscle-shirt story about an arm wrestling truck driver. The machine will soon be featured in "The New Monkees" sitcom as a venue for them to resolve their differences.

The franchise owners, who own territories where the machine can be used, make their money by renting them out to sports emporiums, drinking establishments and organizations that want to use them in fund-raising activities. They also make money on entry fees, sponsor fees and accessory fees.

Tournaments already have been held in the Midwest. No date for the first Orlando tournament has been set as of this time, but plenty of interested Central Floridians took an interest in the franchise system. Barringer is organizing a National Arm Wrestling Tournament, that will match the 300-400 best arm wrestlers in the world, in Las Vegas, in February.

Barringer will continue to make money once all the territories are assigned on franchise fees. He also has an electronic dunk tank and mechanical tug-o-war machine waiting in the wings to market.