

Wrestler is unbeaten

Associated Press
NEW YORK — Andre the Giant agreed Tuesday to fight heavyweight Chuck Wepner in a mixed wrestler-boxer bout. But he expressed some reservations about the fairness of the matchup.

"I like my opponents the way I like my steaks — in bunches," the gargantuan, unbeaten grappler said. "It is more even if I fight Wepner, Muhammad Ali and George Fore-

man one after another or all together.

"There is nobody in the world who can stand up to me, man against man. I must be careful not to crush him."

Andre was unveiled at a press conference as the foe of Wepner, the brawling barkeeper from Bayonne, N.J., in a 10-round free-for-all that will serve as a semi-windup to the Ali-Antonio Inoki battle, the so-called meeting for the World Martial

Arts Championship in Tokyo June 25.

Andre and Wepner, however, will do their stint at Shea Stadium in New York, for 10 rounds or less, as part of the bizarre ring spectacular that will be beamed around the world on closed-circuit television.

"We will sell more closed TV seats than any fight event in history," said Bob Arum, head of Top Rank, Inc., which is sponsoring the show with Video Techniques and Capitol Wrestling Corp. "It will be bigger than the Foreman-Joe Frazier fight and all three of the Ali-Frazier bouts." The first Ali-Frazier meeting supposedly grossed \$20 million.

Andre the Giant is perhaps the world's most awesome athlete. He stands 7 feet 5 inches tall, weighs 462 pounds, has a head bigger than a basketball with a wild Afro hairdo, arms like wagon tongues and hands as big as ham hocks.

Ali is guaranteed \$6 million — Andre said he cannot understand why a boxer would risk his life against a wrestler.

"He cannot win," the French behemoth said. "Ali is good, but Inoki will beat him. I can beat them both. Andre is the best fighter in the world."

The Giant's real name is Andre Roussimoff. He was born in Grenoble, France, the son of a farmer. The rest of his family is normal-sized but

his grandfather, he says, was a Bulgarian who stood 7-8.

Andre said he has been out-sized all his life, stretching 6-10 and weighing more than 300 pounds at the age of 16. "Nobody made fun of me," he said. "Everybody was very friendly."

He played soccer and cricket, dabbled in boxing and even took a stab at pro football with the Washington Redskins. "Pro football

could not pay me enough," he said.

"I make \$300,000 a year." He starts the day by devouring dozen scrambled eggs, a pound of sausage, a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk. He keeps his body fueled eating five times a day, four meals at a sitting.

His clothes are specially made by a tent manufacturer. He wears size 80 jacket and size 22 shoes. He doesn't get them shined at a shine parlor. He goes to a car

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