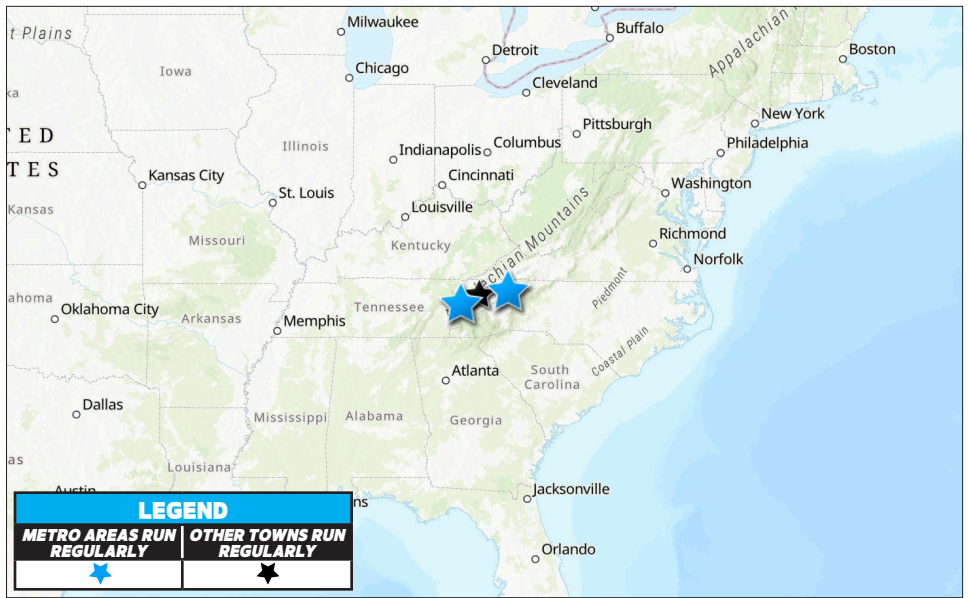


EAST TENNESSEE (KNOXVILLE/TRI-CITIES)

SAMPLE WEEK

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| MON 5/3 | -- |
| TUE 5/4 | JOHNSON CITY |
| WED 5/5 | -- |
| THU 5/6 | -- |
| FRI 5/7 | KNOXVILLE |
| SAT 5/8 | MORRISTOWN |
| SUN 5/9 | -- |

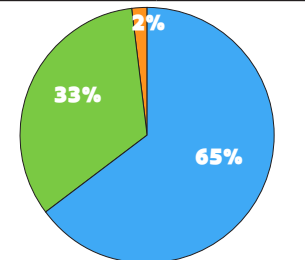


| TOP SINGLES | TOP TEAMS |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| RON WRIGHT | RON & DON WRIGHT |
| WHITEY CALDWELL | THE ALASKANS (KNOXVILLE) |
| LEN ROSSI (KNOXVILLE) | BEARCAT BROWN & LEN ROSSI (KNOXVILLE) |
| TINKER TODD (TRI-CITIES) | THE SAMOANS (TRI-CITIES) |

| HOUSE SHOW RECORDS | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|--------|
| DOCUMENTED HOUSE SHOWS | 120 | SHOWS PER WEEK | 2.3 |
| | | ESTIMATED COMPLETENESS | 15-30% |
| MISC. BOOKING STATS | | | |
| HEEL/FACE TURNS | 0 | ROSTER TURNOVER | 335% |
| ROSTER SIZE/COMPOSITION | | MATCH RESULTS | |

AVERAGE # OF WRESTLERS: 11.5

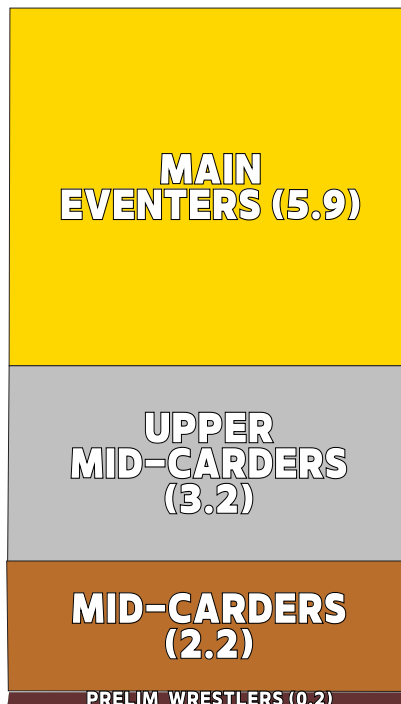
OVERALL



FACE WINS (Blue), HEEL WINS (Green), DRAWS (Orange)

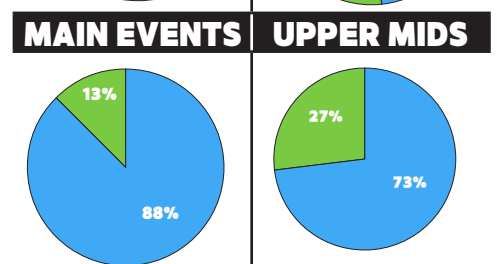
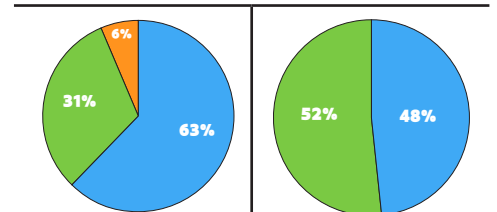
TOP FEUDS BY MARKET

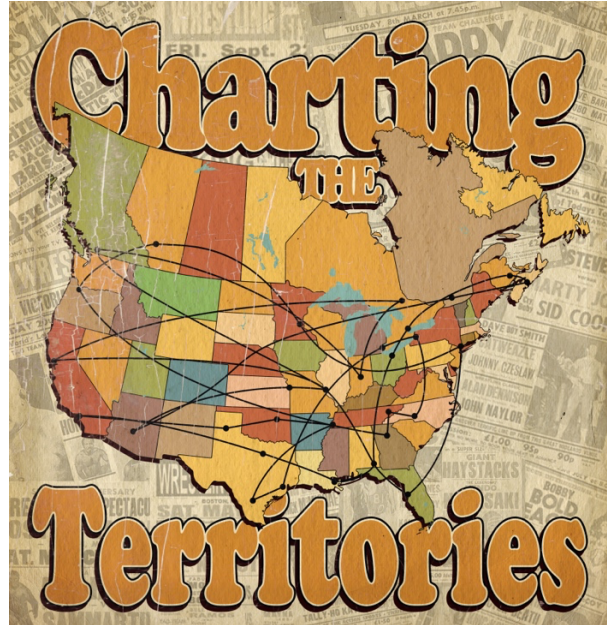
- WHITEY CALDWELL VS RON WRIGHT
- BEARCAT BROWN & LEN ROSSI VS RON & DON WRIGHT (KNOXVILLE)
- KEVIN SULLIVAN & WHITEY CALDWELL VS RON & DON WRIGHT (TRI-CITIES)
- TINKER TODD VS RON WRIGHT (TRI-CITIES)



TITLE CHANGES

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| SOUTHEASTERN HEAVYWEIGHT | 1 |
| BABYFACE CHAMP | 33% |
| HEEL CHAMP | 67% |
| TENNESSEE TAG TEAM | 10 |
| BABYFACE CHAMPS | 27% |
| HEEL CHAMPS | 62% |





EAST TENNESSEE (KNOXVILLE/TRI-CITIES) 1971: A Year in the Life

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Rankings

This is a list of the “most pushed acts” in the territory during the year.

RANKINGS FOR EAST TENNESSEE (KNOX/TRI-CITIES) - 1971

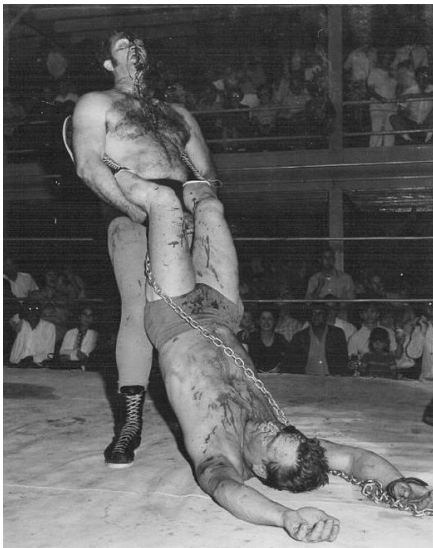
- 1 - RON & DON WRIGHT**
- 2 - RON WRIGHT**
- 3 - WHITEY CALDWELL**
- 4 - THE ALASKANS (FRANK MONTE & MIKE YORK)**
- 5 - BEARCAT BROWN & LEN ROSSI**

Wrestlers are ranked based on their week-by-week **SPOT Rating** as well as the total number of weeks they were in the territory during the designated time period

based on research as of 6/1/2024 - chartingtheterritories.com

Territory Profile (1971-1973) by Al Getz

As the 1970s began, two promoters operated in eastern Tennessee using the same small crew of local talent augmented by wrestlers from Nick Gulas' booking office. John Cazana was based in Knoxville, running weekly cards at Chilhowee Park Friday nights. Other towns run by Cazana included Lenoir City, Morristown, Newport, and Tazewell. The Tri-Cities (Kingsport, Johnson City, and Bristol) promotion was owned by Ron Wright. They ran the Johnson City Recreation Center on Tuesday nights; Kingsport and Bristol were run regularly as well. The promotion's boundaries stretched north into the southwestern part of Virginia and the southeastern part of Kentucky.



Ron Wright vs Whitey Caldwell, Aug 1967

In both promotions, Ron & Don Wright and Whitey Caldwell were featured prominently. Ron and Whitey had been wrestling locally dating back to the mid-1950s; prior to that, they were amateur wrestlers and products of the local Kingsport Boys' Club. Mickey Baarns, who ran wrestling in the Tri-Cities in the 1950s, brought them in for some undercard matches. These were generally promoted as amateur bouts. By the end of the decade, Ron and Whitey were wrestling "pro style". Cazana started booking them in Knoxville a few years later.

Ron had acquired the Tri-Cities promotion from Dennis Hall in 1968. As the story goes, Hall offered to sell it to Ron for "however much money you have in your pocket right now". Ron eventually gave 'points' in the territory to a few people, including Whitey and his brother Don.

Their television aired on WKPT out of Kingsport. It had been airing on Saturday afternoons but moved to Sundays at some point before 1973. The show would often include a segment where wrestlers answered questions sent in by fans, and Gulas would send in tapes of whichever of his wrestlers were going to be in Johnson City the following Tuesday. There was also a weekly show on local cable television (still in its' relative infancy at the time). The show usually aired matches from the Recreation Center on a few weeks delay, along with current promos for the next show there.

About 100 miles southeast, the Cazana family had been running Knoxville for decades, with John purchasing the promotion from his brother, George, at some point. In 1971, Cazana's television program aired on WTVK on Saturday afternoons. The show would recap what happened the night before at Chilhowee Park and set up the matches for the next one.

A common misconception is that Ron and Whitey wrestled one another virtually every week for years on end in East Tennessee. This was not the case. They always drew well together, but neither Ron nor Cazana wanted to over-expose the region's top two stars head-to-head. Typically, Ron & Don would feud with a babyface team brought in from Gulas' office for a few weeks. They used all the tricks of pro wrestling (particularly what is referred to as "Southern style") to switch up the formula and keep things

interesting from week-to-week. The Knoxville feud between Ron & Don and Len Rossi & Bearcat Brown in the summer of 1971 is highly illustrative of this approach.

Rossi & Bearcat, the Tennessee Tag Team champions, successfully defended the titles against Ron & Don on June 25th. In order to get a rematch the following week, Ron “promised” he would “abide by the rules” during the match. Bearcat didn’t appear for unknown reasons, and Whitey Caldwell took his place. Of course, Ron’s promise didn’t last long, and he was ejected from the match by the referee for using a chain, leaving Don all by himself to be pinned by Caldwell.

On July 9th, Ron defended his Southeastern Heavyweight title against Rossi. Wright won by disqualification, and Len wanted another shot the following week. He agreed to put up “his half” of the Tennessee Tag Team titles to get a rematch. Ron Wright pinned Rossi to win the match, retain his Southeastern title, and win “half” of the Tag Team titles. This led to a unique encounter the following week where enemies Bearcat & Ron were supposed to play nice to defend the titles against Frank Monte & Mike York. During the third fall, Bearcat found himself in trouble. Apparently, Ron refused to help him, leading to interference by a furious Len Rossi on behalf of Bearcat, causing a disqualification.

On July 30th, Bearcat faced Don Wright, with Bearcat putting up his half of the Tag Team titles and Don wagering his hair. Bearcat won the match, and Wright “had to sacrifice his curly hair”. Finally, on August 6th, the two teams squared off with the winners to get both “halves” of the titles. Ron & Don won that bout to gain full possession of the championship. This is merely one example of how a core group of wrestlers were able to do the same basic feud (Ron & Don versus a “visiting” tag team for a few weeks) over and over again while coming up with unique ways to present and prolong it.

Tragedy struck on October 7th, 1972. After wrestling in Morristown (results aren’t available, but he had been scheduled to team with Jack Donovan against Al & Don Greene), Whitey Caldwell was struck head-on while driving on a two-lane road as a motorist going the other direction was attempting to pass and “failed to return to the right-hand lane in time to avoid the collision”. Whitey was taken to Johnson City Hospital, where he died at 2:15 AM the morning of the 8th. He was just 37 years old.

Whitey and Donovan were to face the Greene brothers at Chilhowee Park the following week. In true pro wrestling fashion (for better or for worse), Ron Wright “asked to fill in for Whitey”, using the death of his legitimate long-time friend to turn babyface.

With Whitey gone, both the Tri-Cities and Knoxville promotions relied even more on the Gulas booking office. Teams like The Fabulous Kangaroos (Al Costello & Don Kent), The Great Fuji & Taro Murasaki, and Terry Garvin & Duke Myers came in to feud with Ron & Don. Meanwhile, John Cazana turned 60 in July 1973. After a few decades in and around wrestling (he had been a protégé of Jim Londos in the early 1930s), he may have been thinking about the next stage of his life. In the fall of 1974, Cazana sold his promotion to Ron Fuller.

What would happen over the next several years rivaled even the most heated of grudge matches between Ron Wright and Whitey Caldwell, as power struggles and power plays developed for control of both the Knoxville and Tri-Cities promotions.

Roster

All the wrestlers who completed regularly in the territory are listed below, grouped into categories based on their average position on the cards using a metric called Statistical Position Over Time (SPOT for short). There are also links to articles/biographies/obituaries for many of the wrestlers from SLAM Wrestling.

MAIN EVENTERS IN EAST TENNESSEE (KNOX/TRI-CITIES) - 1971

| | SPOT | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-------------------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Don Greene | 1.00 | Orange | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Big Bad John | 1.00 | | | Blue | | | | | | | | | |
| Al Greene | .96 | Orange | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Avenger #1 | .94 | | | | | | | | | | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Avenger #2 | .94 | | | | | | | | | | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Karl Von Brauner | .93 | | | | | | | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | |
| Kurt Von Brauner | .93 | | | | | | | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | |
| Len Rossi | .90 | | Blue | | | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | | | |
| Ron Wright | .89 | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange |
| Frank Hester | .89 | | | | Blue | | | | | | | | |
| Karl Von Stroheim | .87 | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | | | | | | |
| Kevin Sullivan | .87 | | | | | | | | | | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Bearcat Brown | .87 | | Blue | | | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Jimmy Golden | .85 | Blue | Blue | | | | | | | | | | |
| Frank Martinez | .84 | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | | | | | | |
| Don Wright | .84 | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange | Orange |
| Ed Wolfe | .83 | | | Blue | Blue | Blue | | | | | | | |
| Whitey Caldwell | .83 | Blue | Blue | | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Alaskan #2 | .83 | | | Orange | Orange | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | | | |
| Alaskan #1 | .81 | | | Orange | Orange | | | Orange | Orange | Orange | | | |

Wrestlers with an average weekly SPOT Rating between .80 and 1.00 are considered **Main Eventers**

SPOT (Statistical Position Over Time) Ratings measure a wrestler's average position on the card; the highest possible SPOT is 1.00. Babyfaces are shaded in blue, heels are shaded in orange; darker shading indicates higher SPOT

based on research as of 6/1/2024 - chartingtheterritories.com

Don Greene <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2014/07/05/don-greene-was-not-so-mean/>

Karl Von Brauner <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2009/07/17/karl-von-brauner-dead-at-78/>

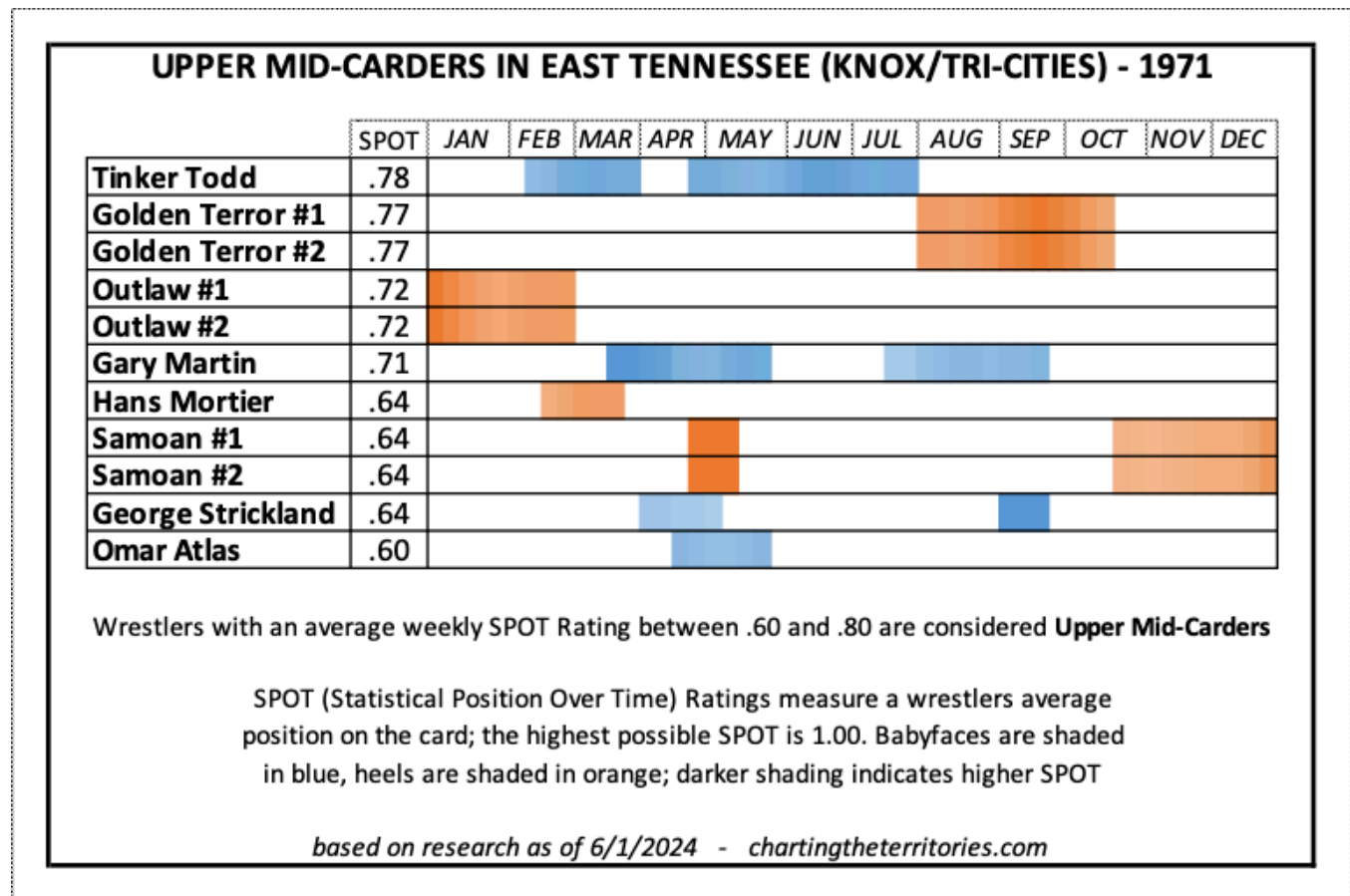
Kurt Von Brauner <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2009/07/17/karl-von-brauner-dead-at-78/>

Len Rossi <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2020/10/10/tennessee-wrestler-len-rossi-passes/>

Ron Wright <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2015/04/21/ron-wright-was-a-rasslin-star-in-east-tennesse/>

Karl Von Stroheim <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2006/08/15/hockey-injury-led-to-wrestling-for-karl-von-stroheim/>

Kevin Sullivan <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2008/04/20/wcws-demise-uncovered-in-sullivan-shoot/>



Tinker Todd <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2013/07/18/tinker-todd-dead-at-85-was-a-master-storyteller/>

Hans Mortier <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2010/12/15/dreaded-heel-hans-mortier-dies/>

Omar Atlas <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/1999/10/27/omar-atlas-just-doing-his-job/>

MID-CARDERS IN EAST TENNESSEE (KNOX/TRI-CITIES) - 1971

| | SPOT | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Frankie Cain | .59 | | ■ | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Inferno #1 | .58 | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| Inferno #2 | .58 | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| Dennis Hall | .57 | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ |
| Roy Klein | .55 | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| Tommy Gilbert | .51 | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| Mike Pappas | .51 | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| Tiny York | .51 | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | ■ |
| Jack Donovan | .50 | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | ■ |
| Oni Wiki Wiki | .48 | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | |

Wrestlers with an average weekly SPOT Rating between .40 and .60 are considered **Mid-Carders**

SPOT (Statistical Position Over Time) Ratings measure a wrestler's average position on the card; the highest possible SPOT is 1.00. Babyfaces are shaded in blue, heels are shaded in orange; darker shading indicates higher SPOT

based on research as of 6/1/2024 - chartingtheterritories.com

Frankie Cain <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2021/01/08/frankie-cain-autobiography-is-a-beacon-of-light-in-a-congested-genre/>

Tommy Gilbert <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2015/11/26/tommy-gilbert-dead-at-75/>

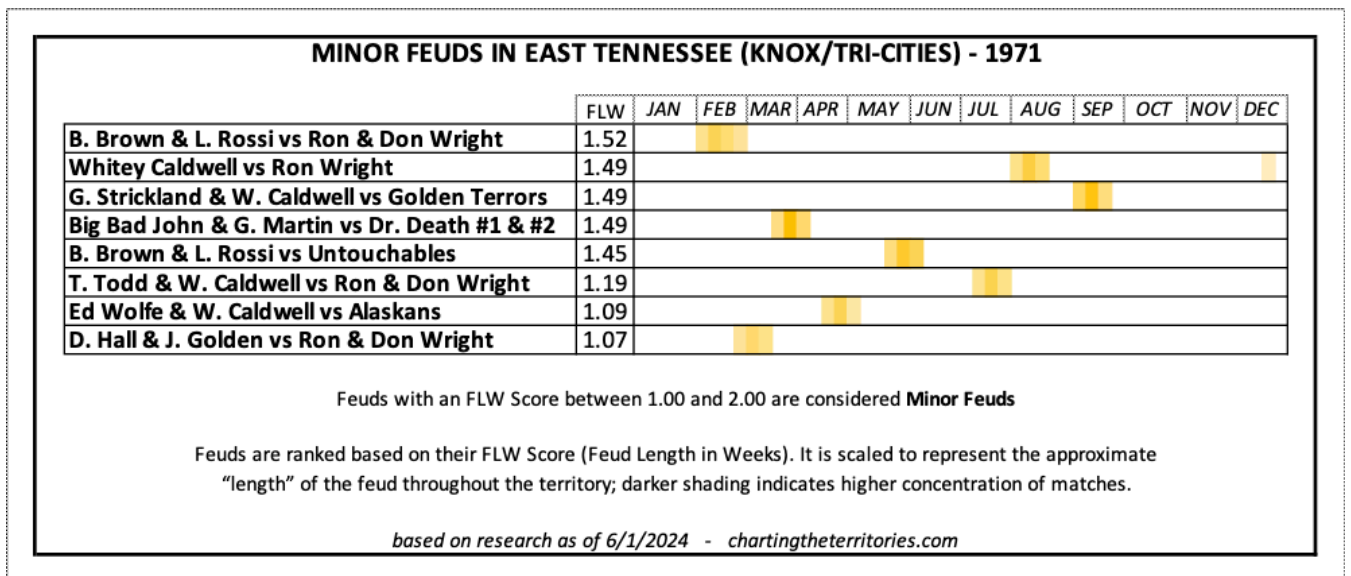
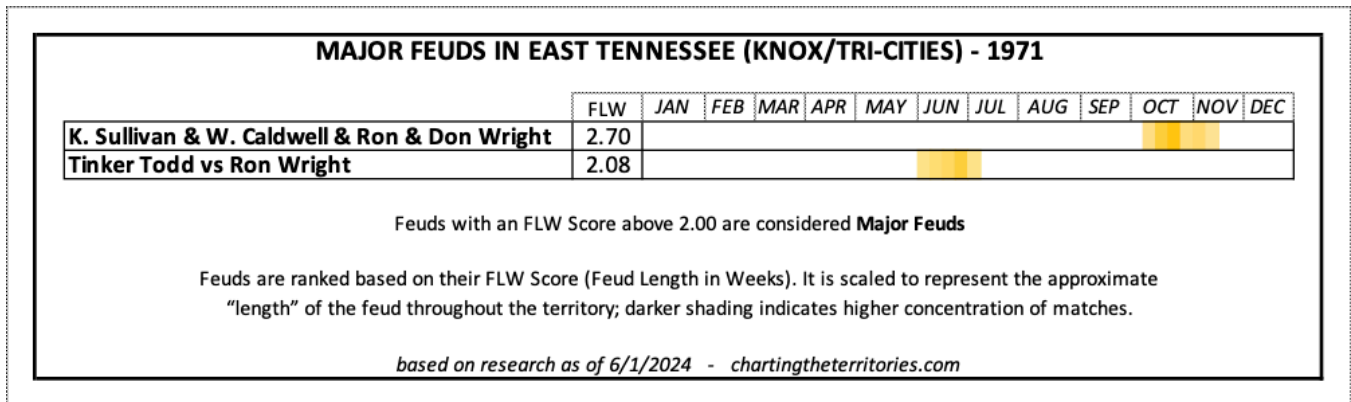
Mike Pappas <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2023/01/01/flying-greek-mike-pappas-dies/>

Tiny York (Jim White) <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2010/01/10/cancer-claims-southern-star-jim-white/>

Jack Donovan <https://slamwrestling.net/index.php/2004/11/28/dandy-jack-donovan-dead-at-76/>

Feuds

Here are two charts listing the biggest feuds in the territory using a metric called Feud Length in Weeks (FLW for short).



The progression of feuds often differed from city to city. This led to each market having its own narrative. If a main event drew well the first time out in some cities, they could build to a rematch the next time. In other cities where it didn't draw well, they may choose to have that first match end in a clean finish and present a different main event the following show.

Here are examples of how some of the bigger feuds played out in select cities.

KEVIN SULLIVAN & WHITEY CALDWELL vs RON & DON WRIGHT in Johnson City

While results aren't available for these cards, the progression of match stipulations from week-to-week offer some insight into the booking philosophy

- 10/12 Winners get full possession of Tennessee Tag Team titles (Ron & Whitey had been champions but split up; it is believed that Ron & Don won the titles here)
- 10/19 Tennessee Tag Team titles, no time limit, no disqualification
- 10/26 No time limit, no disqualification, referee stationed outside of ring, Wrights agree to throw \$200 to crowd if they do not win
- 11/8 Chain match
- 11/16 Ring surrounded by chicken wire, chain match, no time limit, no disqualification

WHITEY CALDWELL vs RON WRIGHT in Knoxville

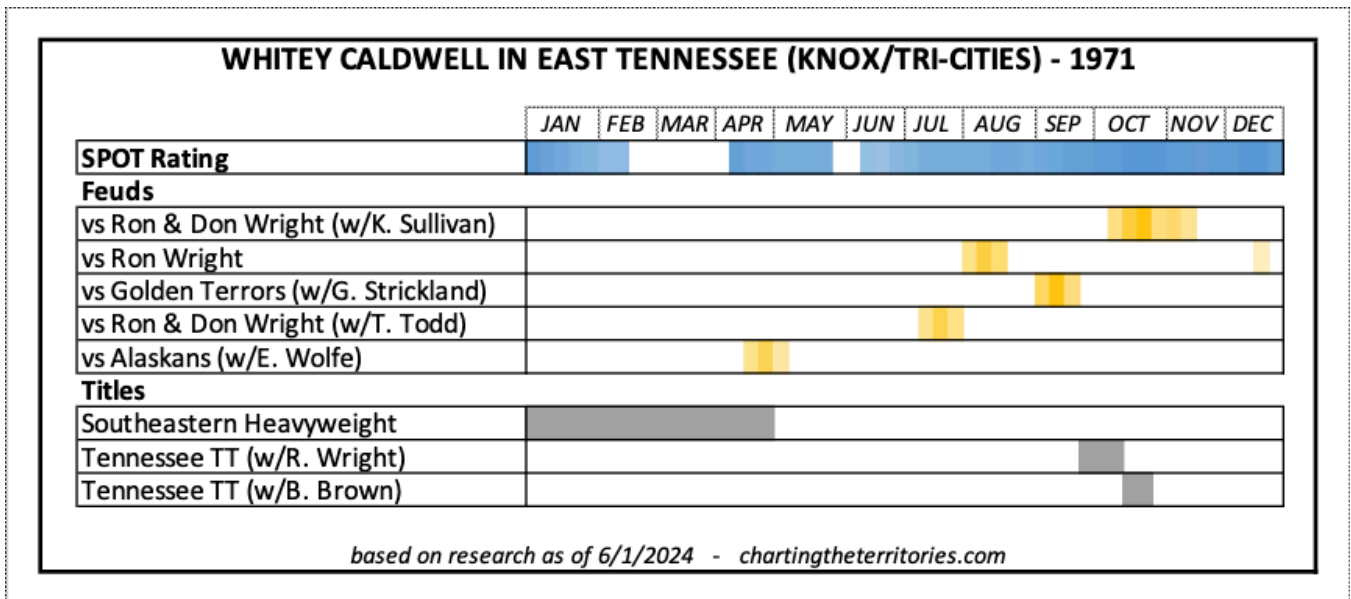
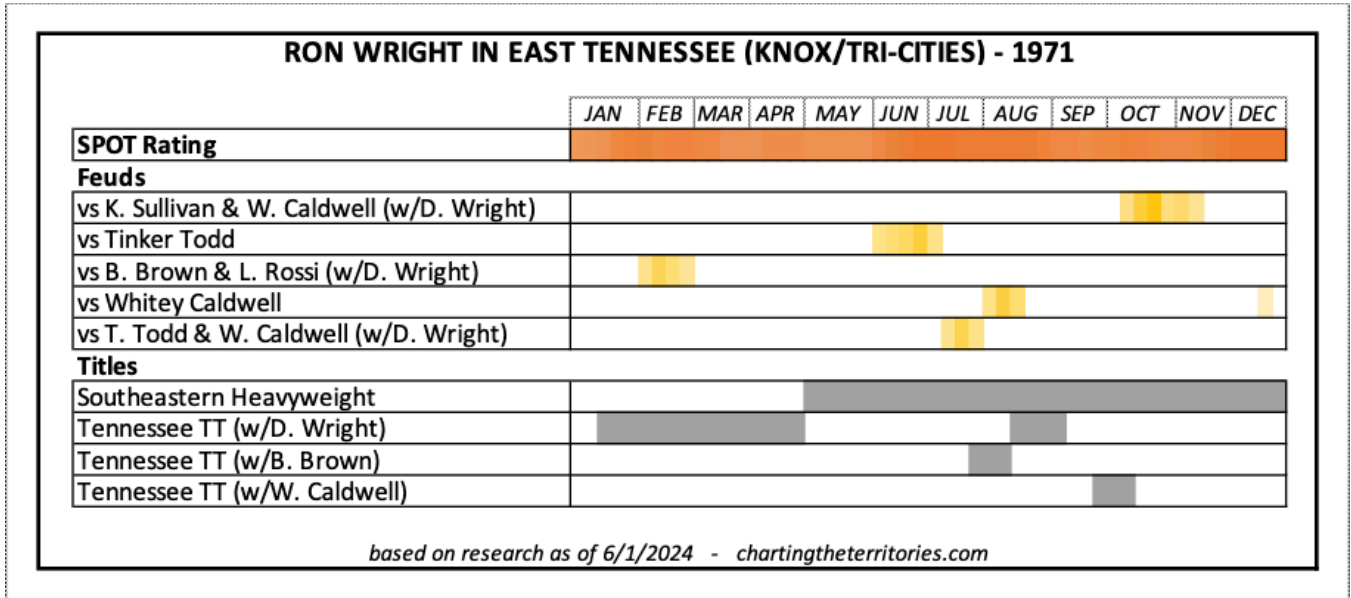
- 5/7 Southeastern title (Ron had won the title from Whitey the previous month): results not available
- 5/14 Tornado match: Caldwell won
- 12/25 Caldwell won by disqualification
- 1/1/72 Southeastern title: Caldwell won by disqualification

ED WOLFE & WHITEY CALDWELL vs THE ALASKANS in Knoxville

- 4/16 The Alaskans won by disqualification
- 4/23 No disqualification: Wolfe & Caldwell won
- 4/30 Two referees: Wolfe & Caldwell won

Wrestler Data

A look at the “character arc” for select wrestlers, showing their weekly SPOT Ratings, biggest feuds, and title reigns chronologically.



Title Holders and Histories

The following charts show the chronological progression of title holders in the territory. Looking at them this way gives you a better feel for the length of title reigns, and how they may have differed between babyface champs and heel champs.

SOUTHEASTERN HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE - EAST TENNESSEE - 1971

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Whitey Caldwell | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ron Wright | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Only title changes recognized across the entire territory are listed.

In this chart, new champions are generally recognized the calendar week after the title change.

Blue shading denotes babyface champions, orange shading denotes heel champions.

Exact date of Ron Wright's title win is unknown.

based on research as of 6/1/2024 - chartingtheterritories.com

TENNESSEE TAG TEAM TITLES - EAST TENNESSEE - 1971

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| Al & Don Greene | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ron & Don Wright | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The Untouchables | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Len Rossi & Bearcat Brown | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bearcat Brown & Ron Wright | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The Alaskans | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ron Wright & Whitey Caldwell | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bearcat Brown & Whitey Caldwell | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kurt & Karl Von Brauner | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The Avengers | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Only title changes recognized across the entire territory are listed.

In this chart, new champions are generally recognized the calendar week after the title change.

Blue shading denotes babyface champions, orange shading denotes heel champions.

Green shading denotes 'odd couple' team of a babyface & a heel. Exact date of Untouchables' title win is unknown.

based on research as of 6/1/2024 - chartingtheterritories.com

Taking Attendance

In this section, we look at any attendance (and/or gate) figures we have. Unless otherwise noted, these numbers come from newspaper reports. They should be taken with several grains of salt.

We only have attendance figures for two cards in 1971:

- The Knoxville News-Sentinel reported attendance of “about 1500” for the April 2nd card at Chilhowee Park featuring a one-night tournament to determine a challenger for Southeastern champion Whitey Caldwell
- They reported a “capacity crowd of more than 6000” for the July 23rd card at Chilhowee Park featuring Ron Wright teaming up with Bearcat Brown against The Alaskans. It is believed that the base capacity for the venue was around 4,000. Since it is an outdoor venue, they could have crammed more than that in via standing room only (and of course it’s possible the reported figure is fudged)

Link to House Show Lineups and Results

We have shared our newspaper clippings and other documents with wrestlingdata.com to aid them in providing comprehensive information.

On their site, the cards from both East Tennessee promotions are included in the much larger set of lineups & results from the entire Gulas territory.

To see all available lineups & results from the East Tennessee towns run regularly in 1971, click the links below

Johnson City

<https://www.wrestlingdata.com/index.php?befehl=shows&sort=ort&land=3®ion=6&stadt=75&arena=&ansicht=&jahr=1971>

Knoxville

<https://www.wrestlingdata.com/index.php?befehl=shows&sort=ort&land=3®ion=6&stadt=495&arena=&ansicht=&jahr=1971>

Morristown

<https://www.wrestlingdata.com/index.php?befehl=shows&sort=ort&land=3®ion=6&stadt=2481&arena=&ansicht=&jahr=1971>