

sports feature continued from page 8

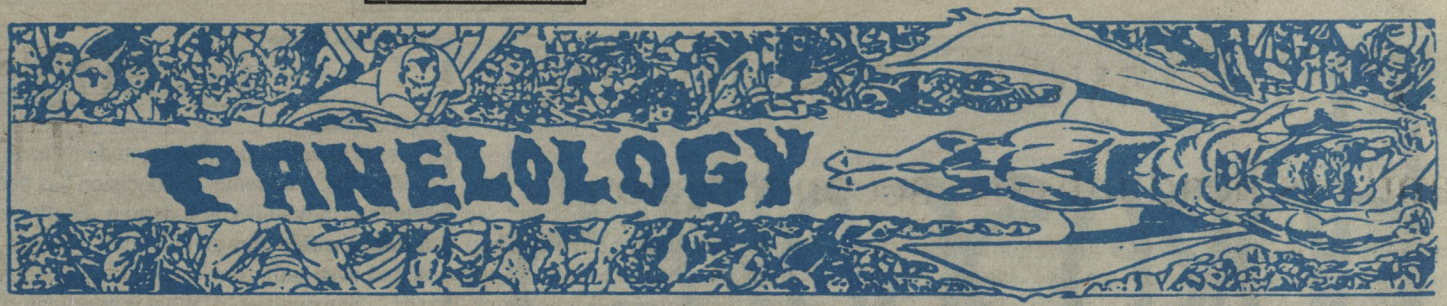
ay, but rather the point of having 75,000 people or more confined in a stadium all watching the same event. Any minor occurrence that happens on the field will instantly affect the equivalent of nearly two thirds of the population of this province directly, and in some cases, violently. This theory is jaunted by another sport of similar proportions: baseball. The crowds are similar in number, but not in temperament. Perhaps the laid-back semi-athletic style of baseball has something to do with this. True, there are occasional fights in baseball, most of which are entire team brawls instead of individual disputes like hockey. Baseball can be violent, but as a whole it is not a violent sport. Another example is football. Crowds can often surpass 100,000 people, and the game itself involves tremendous physical contact between the players. With the exception of possibly a crowd gone berserk, no violent effects are made on the fans. However, the aspect of anonymity in a crowd so large could cause some unstable people to lose control.

Italian society is the last possible scapegoat I can imagine, and this is based purely on stereotypes and hyperbolic images portrayed by Hollywood. Perhaps Mafia violence has somehow corrupted the minds of some, who now believe that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems. If this scenario was true, then we would see numerous murders at American baseball, football or basketball games, since the USA is one of the most violent countries in the world. However, this is not the case. No matter how many violent movies are shown to willing American audiences, there are few acts of violence in professional sports that do not involve the players.

In truth, no matter how many excuses, justifications or scapegoats are used, we cannot forget that a man was killed by another for no other reason than a difference of opinions involving a game. I am not an extreme sports fan, social psychologist, ethical philosopher or expert in any related field, but I do hope that this incident is an isolated one, so that sports can return to healthy competition, not a life and death confrontation.



Scott, on a good day...



By Sean McQuaid

This week, folks, we snatch a fleeting glance at some of the current offerings from the fine folks at DC Comics. To wit:

Blood Pack

(4-issue mini-series; Writer: Charles Moore; Penciller: Christopher Taylor; Inker: Andrew Lanning)

Anyone remember *Bloodlines*? You know, that sprawling multi-part summer epic a year or two ago which dealt with a plague of aliens who sucked out people's spinal fluid (talk about spinal tap!) A few attack survivors mutated and gained incredible powers, becoming what DC proudly touted as the next generation of super-heroes. After that, most of them promptly vanished. Now, DC makes good on its publicity by unleashing the Blood Pack, a team of these "new blood" heroes as they're called. The Pack is a super-team who divide their energies between heroics and self-promotion for profit. This concept has been done before (and better) by the Conglomerate and the sorely missed Infinity Inc., though a pleasant surprise in the first issue is the hiring of ex-Infinitor Jade (daughter of the original Green Lantern) as the Pack's mentor. Apart from Jade, interesting characters include Nightblade, Sparx and Geist the Twilight Man (who has the dubious power of being invisible in bright light but visible in the dark). The story and characterization, apart from the above points, are unexceptional. The art is a bit too slick for its own good-- lots of energy and line, but not much in the way of

depth or form. Apart from beefing up the story and art, I'd also suggest adding a few more "new blood" characters like Prism (from the *Eclispo Annual*).

Extreme Justice

(Ongoing series; Writer: Dan Vado; Penciller: Marc Campos)

Look, up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's... the Liefeld League of America!

Justice League, takes a few more disenchanting members (Blue Beetle, Booster Gold, Maxima and Amazing Man) with him and sets up his own extremist vigilante faction of the League (featured herein). First, this business of multiple contradictory Justice Leagues is initially intriguing but getting old (and implausible) fast. Second, the idea of an "extremist" League goes against the whole Justice League concept and clouds the identity of the respective teams. Third, the characters (with the exception of Maxima and the new bad-attitude Captain Atom) have never been extremist vigilante types by any stretch of the imagination. Fourth, this hard-hitting, hyperkinetic outlaw hero team schtick was getting old even before Rob Liefeld and company ran it into the ground at *Image Comics*. Fifth, Captain Atom is insufferable in his current incarnation. Sixth, the title smacks of its *Image* influences and sounds just plain silly to boot.

Basically, this series comes across as DC's attempt to simulate an *Image* team book (complete with posturing heroes, tactical jabber and high-tech subterranean headquarters)-- right down to the profusion of tiny lines in the all-out-action artwork. On the plus side, it is nice to see Booster Gold and Blue Beetle being treated as serious characters again (though they've gone from one extreme to another), and the original Firestorm is slated to return in these pages at last, so there are some engaging characters to sustain reader interest.

Writer's Note: Remind me to explain to y'all sometime how the Extreme Justice crew are the modern-day reincarnation of Marvel's old Champions of Los Angeles team. The parallels (though presumably unintentional) are absolutely eerie.



EXTREME JUSTICE

Boy, this is one sick puppy, conceptually speaking. The premise: Captain Atom (who has been acting like a hyper-aggressive super-jerk for the last year or so) walks out on the