

Brawl To End It All – Wrestlemania's Granddaddy

Brawl To End It All

Date: July 23, 1984

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 15,000

Commentators: Gene Okerlund, Gorilla Monsoon

This is one of the most important events in wrestling history. Back in 1983 Lou Albano appeared in the music video for Girls Just Want To Have Fun by Cyndi Lauper. An angle was written to promote WWF television and the song by having Albano sound sexist. Lauper, one of the biggest stars in the world at the time, came to the WWF to argue with Albano.

Much like Trump vs. McMahon at Mania 23, both picked representatives for their match. Lauper picked a young wrestler named Wendi Richter and Albano picked the Fabulous Moolah. They would have a Women's Title match to main event this show. Keep in mind Moolah had held the title since the late 50s (allegedly).

The importance here is that this was broadcast on MTV and gave unprecedented exposure to the company. It would lead to another show called The War To Settle The Score, which in turn led to the mother of all shows and the ultimate blowoff to the Rock N Wrestling Connection: the first Wrestlemania. Like I said, this is incredibly important so let's get to it.

There were eleven matches on the card but ten were dark matches. This was literally a one match show as it was only an hour long special on MTV.

While this is only a one match television broadcast, thanks to the power of the internet I've managed to track down a decent

chunk of the card which wasn't broadcast on television. This was likely shown on a syndicated show later.

Tag Titles: Sgt. Slaughter/Terry Daniels vs. Dick Murdoch/Adrian Adonis

I think you know who the champions are here. Daniels and Slaughter are a military themed team kind of. The referee is rather short. Fans flipping off Adonis in 1984 is weird to see. Murdoch and Slaughter start us off and never mind as it's Daniels starting for the challengers. This is a very different era of tag wrestling as the Expresses haven't set up the classic formula yet so if this sounds weird it probably was.

Slaughter vs. Adonis now and it's impressive to hear how popular Slaughter is. Daniels comes in and is rather fast. Murdoch has some kind of a foreign object which might have been thrown in by a fan. Daniels works the arm as this isn't much so far. The fans chant USA for four American wrestlers. Are Murdoch and Adonis just not patriotic for some reason?

Things speed up a good bit until Adonis hits an elbow to take Daniels down. Slaughter has barely been in this. In a nice counter Slaughter jumps up on the ropes to prevent Daniels from ramming into the buckle. Hot tag to the Sarge and it's on all over again. And so much for that as it's back to Daniels and the KKK member.

Murdoch gets a sweet hold in as he had Daniels' arm over his own shoulder and lifts him up onto his back, bending the shoulder over his own shoulder. I know that sounds confusing but it looks painful. Slaughter comes in and cleans house. He gets the Cobra Clutch on Murdoch but Adonis gets a knee in to break it up.

Everything breaks down as the fans are getting way into this. Murdoch gets a top rope knee to the back of Daniels as the referee is with Slaughter to get the pin and keep the titles. Slaughter beats down the champions after the match ends.

Rating: D+. Kind of boring at times and a good bit too long at nearly 20 minutes but this was watchable. The North/South Connection was a solid team but the times were changing as new teams were coming to change the course of tag wrestling forever. This was ok but really not that great at all.

Intercontinental Title: Bob Orton vs. Tito Santana

This should be good. I'm a big Santana fan so I like the sound of this as Orton was a very solid guy back in the day. No promos here as we just get going. The belt is still green here which was a theme going on back in the day. Well when I say get going I mean slowly feel each other out. Tito has the belt here of course. Nice little power battle to start as Santana gets to show off a bit.

Gene says Santana will be tested this week, implying it's just the standard TV show on MSG. Mostly Tito here as Orton keeps trying to run. He works the heck out of the arm of Orton as you can tell we're going to be out here for a long time. You can see Orton thinking in there and it's rather impressive. Orton goes nuts and literally prances over for a running stomp. He had wanted a knee drop but Santana moved so he had to switch and hop one more time, making it look much funnier.

Big powerslam gets two for Orton. He works over mainly the back but kind of shifts around. Lots of old school stalling here from Randy's dad. Santana is all like screw that and pops Orton in the jaw. Orton gets a nice Perfectplex from his knees which looked awesome. Orton goes for a top rope Vader Bomb which eats knees.

Tito gets all fired up and makes his big comeback. He just grabs Orton's head and slams him into the mat. I love that. It's so basic but it certainly would hurt. Abdominal stretch goes on which is an old move that was far more impressive back then. And so much for that as Orton gets one of his own. Very back and forth match here.

Tito gets a small package for two. Forearm misses though and Orton takes back over. Very solid stuff so far. Tito counters a Piledriver and both guys are down. We get a bit more brawling and there's the bell for the time limit draw. Gene does in fact confirm that there was a bell. They brawl more after it's over with Tito dominating.

Rating: B+. I really liked this. The IC Title back then was more or less the wrestler's title and this was no exception. These two just beat the crud out of each other with neither guy being able to really get an advantage going for that long. Tito could get a crowd into his matches very easily and he did so here. This was awesome back and forth stuff with 20 minutes flying by. Great match.

WWF Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Greg Valentine

Valentine was a much bigger deal back in this era, even "being awarded" the WWF Title once in a big mess that was a pretty decent story. Anyway let's get to this. We get promos from both guys. Valentine says Hogan is going to feel his wrath. There's a reason he rarely talked. Albano is his manager. This guy was BUSY back then.

Hogan had only been champion about 6 months at this point so his title reign wasn't really huge yet. Eye of the Tiger for his music at this point along with the white tights. Sweet GOODNESS Hogan is over. The song fits perfectly here, almost better than Real American. What was up with the five bell strikes after everything Fink said? Hammer jumps Hogan and we're on.

Oh come on it's 1984 like that's going to work at all. This is Hogan back when he was in his 20s so he's moving incredibly well. Scratch that actually as he's 31 here. It's so weird to think that his big break didn't come until he was that old. It just comes off as strange in today's era of people being world champion by their mid 20s.

Valentine reverses a headlock into a suplex to take some control. Hogan takes back over a bit later with just pure power. He even throws in a shoulderbreaker to mess with our heads a bit. We hit the floor and it's all Hogan. Valentine jumps him as he gets back in and Gene says it's because Valentine is a capitalist. Ok then.

A chinlock has our hero in trouble. Hogan does the always funny finger shake of no before the comeback. He throws some left hands which are weird to see from him. Valentine gets some chair shots to the knee and the referee is ok with it I guess. Figure four is blocked twice so Valentine just punches him. Rather than HULKING UP Hogan just hits Valentine as he's coming off the top and drops the leg to retain. It was a different time I guess.

Rating: C+. Nothing that special here as it's really just a standard Hogan title defense. It's not bad or anything but it's just Hogan out there doing his thing and not really looking like he's in that much trouble. Still though he was moving very well out there and had the place rocking so I'll give him something for that. Decent match and fine for a basic title defense.

Battle Royal

Sika, Luis Rivera, Butcher Vachon, Antonio Inoki, Tony Garea, Jay Strongbow, Afa, Steve Lombardi, Dick Murdoch, Bob Orton, Adrian Adonis, Rene Goulet, Ron Shaw, Charlie Fulton, Terry Daniels, Iron Sheik, Tito Santana, Paul Orndorff, Sgt. Slaughter, Samu

This is of the 20 man persuasion and is the last match before we go on MTV. In other words, everyone that was on the card tonight other than Hogan and Valentine and Backlund plus three other guys that I don't feel like figuring out. Slaughter goes right after Sheik and of course it's too nuts to really call. Lombardi is out. Orndorff's tights say O. P. Isn't that

backwards?

Orndorff is gone as Gene isn't on commentary here. Strongbow is out and looks very old. Slaughter and Daniels are partners so they're working together. Orton hits the floor twice but never over the top. Ok scratch that as he and Sheik are gone. Scratch that scratching as Orton is still in. Vachon is out.

This is of course very slow paced with not much going on at all. Adonis is gone and he's ticked off about it. And of course he won't leave. He's still a biker dude at this point. Murdoch is gone and won't leave either. Ok so he's not out. This is confusing. Fulton is out. Not a lot is happening at all here. The Samoans are dominating for the most part.

Ok so Adonis is still in too? What the world is going on? He goes out AGAIN but through the second rope this time. Shaw was eliminated and is back in anyway. Santana keeps Goulet from putting Slaughter out. Adonis, Slaughter and Murdoch all go out in about 4 seconds. There are about 10 left. Afa goes out and that gives us ten.

Tito is out and so is Sika. Rivera goes out and I can't really tell who is left. Daniels gets us down to six when he goes out. Samu goes out I think and it's Inoki, Goulet, Orton, Shaw and Garea. If you can't get the winner from that list you have no business reading this list. Enziguri puts out Orton in some of the funniest selling I can ever remember. Garea is put out, leaving only Inoki as a face in there. Heel miscommunication puts Shaw out and Inoki wins easily.

Rating: D. Boring match here but the crowd was hot for it. This was just to give the fans something to get excited about as we went to the MTV show. Battle royals are usually solid for getting a crowd going and this was no exception. Boring match but the crowd liked it so I guess it did its job.

There were 6 other matches, none of which were anything of note with all but one being a squash.

After a TV intro and a recap of the feud we're ready to go. I think this might have been only a half an hour long.

Moolah says she's a legend and this is going to be easy.

Women's Title: Wendi Richter vs. Fabulous Moolah

Moolah looks old. Richter looks insane but this is the 80s so that makes sense. Nuclear heat on Albano. Lauper is at ringside too which gets a huge pop. Moolah throws her out onto the announce table almost immediately. Moolah probably had a hand in training Richter so this should be a pretty bad clash of styles.

Lauper's manager is on commentary and can't talk that well which is expected I guess. Richter gets an armbar to maintain control. Both miss dropkicks as it's odd to see this being the big blowoff to a major feud as the feature contest. Albano's ramblings are rather funny.

In a funny moment Richter gets her neck snapped over the ropes and Gene shouts OH SNAP! Rather sloppy match here as Moolah gets hung upside down in the ropes. She stays there for a good while until Albano saves her. Ok so he's just trying to as it doesn't work at all. Finally she's out thanks to the referee.

Full nelson to Moolah and Cyndi pops up on the apron. And now she's down. Was there a point to that at all? Lauper hits Moolah in the face with...something and the referee is fine with this I guess. Ok then. Suplex gets two for Wendi. This has been almost dominance by Richter here.

Moolah gets a monkey flip for two, as in back to back one counts. That was odd looking. She takes over a bit and pulls Wendi up off a backdrop which is one of her finishers. Why it was one of her finishers I'm not sure but whatever. Albano misses a wild punch and Moolah continues her dominance.

Belly to back with a bridge gets the pin but we're not sure

whose shoulders were down. Ah ok Moolah got pinned. Really don't like that booking as Wendi needed the definitive pin to make this work. Moolah and Albano beat up the referee after the match. Richter and company celebrate to end the show.

Rating: C-. The match sucked but that wasn't the point. This was for the big blowoff and we got it. This match was really just the appetizer and table setter for the big one coming up in February and then March. Nothing all that special but it's better than a lot of what you would see today.

Overall Rating: C+. This is hard to grade. I didn't want to take the other matches into account but it's hard not to. The whole point of this was to have a big night on TV and it worked very well. The wrestling isn't much at all but the rest of it I think worked as well as anything else was going to.

This is WWF's first foray into national mainstream attention and I think it's safe to say that worked. This is recommended for the historical aspects, but War to Settle the Score is far more important so keep that in mind. Weak wrestling but solid presentation.