

Starrcade 1993 – File This Under One Match Shows

Starrcade 1993

Date: December 27, 1993

Location: Independence Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

Attendance: 8,200

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Jesse Ventura

This is a rather interesting show for a few reasons. First and foremost other than the main event, it's one of the most awful shows you'll ever see. Second of all, the main event was changed due to a near murder. Sid vs. Vader had been built up for months but then Sid got into a drunken bar fight with Arn Anderson and stabbed him, getting him fired from the company and causing him to be gone from mainstream wrestling for over a year. A side effect of this was that WCW had filmed MONTHS of footage with Sid with the title. This footage was now worthless so it was lost. I love stupid people wasting their time. Let's get to it.

Oh I forgot: if Flair loses tonight against Vader he has to retire. We open with a retrospective of Flair's life and career, ranging from the plane crash up through today with sound bytes from his career playing over them. Then we see clips of Vader just ending people left and right. They made this feel epic here which was the right idea.

Vader arrived early and had a workout. Flair isn't here yet. Race is driving Vader's car which is appropriate considering the first Starrcade with Race vs. Flair was ten years ago. Gene is at Flair's house with him. Are they playing Nintendo and eating pizza? Flair says goodbye to his family in a NICE house. David is the oldest looking 14 year old I have ever seen. This is actually kind of a touching moment as they're making it out to be a huge match. Gene and Flair have a weird

moment as they get in the limo together. I guess this is reporting? Flair is very somber here and there's almost a Rocky theme to it.

Marcus Bagwell/2 Cold Scorpio vs. Paul Roma/Paul Orndorff

They're not Pretty Wonderful yet. Also the faces have Teddy Long managing them for no apparent reason. Teddy gets Manager of the Year before the match starts. The Pauls have the Assassin with them which was a pairing I never got at all. The Pauls jump them early which fails completely as the guys that look like Halloween candy (orange and black tights) send them to the floor.

Bagwell and Roma start us off and Bagwell gets a cross body for two. This is another one of those shows that happened on a Monday which is one of those signs of the time which always takes time to get used to. Off to Marcus as the fans really don't seem to care. We hear about the tag title match later: Nasty Boys vs. Sting/Hawk. People have nightmares about that one for reasons we'll get into later.

Scorpio vs. Orndorff at the moment as this is really just a match. There's no heat or drama or anything like that. The problem is no one cares about the Pauls and they were just two guys that were out there in tights doing wrestling moves. That doesn't make good heels in the slightest, so of course they were two time tag champions as the division did nothing at all.

Bagwell takes over on Roma as we hear about him being rookie of the year which was two years ago somehow. More arm work by Scorpio to Roma as Roma yells at Teddy. The commentators just stop talking for awhile, my guess due to being sound asleep. Roma works on Bagwell's back as nothing is going on here of note. Elbow gets two. Off to Orndorff who gets a suplex for two.

Oh look: they're both stomping Bagwell at the same time.

Literally, that's the most exciting thing in the entire match up to this point. Powerslam gets two for Roma and he goes up top for a missed splash. Scorpio comes in and beats on both guys but can't get the 450. He beats on Orndorff with various stuff instead but Assassin pops up with a loaded mask and headbutts Scorpio dead, letting Orndorff fall on him for the pin.

Rating: F+. It's the biggest show of the year and this is their idea of an opening match? TERRIBLY not interesting as just about all Pretty Wonderful matches were. Bagwell would float around in boring tag teams for years before turning heel in like 96 and becoming "interesting" in the form of Buff Bagwell. Awful opener as the fans simply did not care in the slightest and the lack of any form of emotion shows it. Technically fine, but a shining example of just stupid matchmaking.

Flair and Gene are still in the limo and they talk about how it could be the last time. Gene is one of Flair's best friends. There's a line that sounds odd for some reason. Flair is really reminiscent here instead of being fired up. There's nothing but seriousness and somberness in his voice here and it's really weird compared to his usual raving lunacy. Flair says he has to win because who else would say woo?

Shockmaster vs. Awesome Kong

Kong is a big fat dude in a mask. His partner, King Kong, is with him. Shockmaster is Tugboat and the guy that is more famous for falling flat on his face. This is one of his final appearances I think. The Kongs jumps Shocky in the corner as this is a battle of the big men. It's one of those matches where basic moves are allegedly more effective due to their size. Cross body by Shocky sets up a slam and a fast count and we're done in maybe a minute flat. The guy he pinned had tights that said King so who knows if that was the right guy.

We hear about the dark match for some reason before we run down the rest of the card. British Bulldog can't wrestle for some reason so The Boss (Big Bossman) is replacing him against Rude for the International Title.

Flair's limo gets here. He and Gene part ways and that's about it.

TV Title: Steven Regal vs. Ricky Steamboat

Regal is champion. Dragon has the lizard man thing going on here. I miss something I think as I hear Jesse talking about Princess Diana strapping on some boxing gloves and fighting Sarah Ferguson. Ok then. We hear about the 15 minute time limit and they stall incessantly. You figure out where this is ending.

This is one of those matches where more or less nothing happens the entire time and it's all REALLY basic stuff, which is described as methodical. They exchange some covers and it's very clear where we're going here. Off to a headlock as Sir William, the manager of Regal, makes fun of various fans at ringside. Sunset flip gets one for Steamboat and we hit a leg lock.

Top rope chop gets two. Probably an average of 45 seconds are passing between moves here. There's just nothing to talk about in between them. Armbar by Steamboat as I think you're getting my point here. We're ten minutes into this match allegedly which looks a bit like 8 to me but then again I'm just a guy watching this on a version with a timer on it. What do I know?

They start messing with the clock as we're down to four minutes left about 52 seconds after the five minute announcement. Headscissors by Steamboat gets him nowhere. There's another 57 seconds minutes so Steamboat chops a tiny bit faster. Out to the floor a bit which has nothing going on again.

Under two minutes now as this really needs to end. Technical stuff abounds and you know that's going to be good with these two. Minute left as Ricky gets a butterfly suplex for two. They head to the floor as the fans FINALLY wake up a bit here. And then the cross body misses and we're out of time after thirteen minutes. Brilliant there guys, brilliant.

Rating: D-. The technical stuff was good but at the same time the idea of doing the same match they did every week with Regal at Starrcade is just freaking stupid all around. He held the title for what seemed like forever and this was more or less the standard operating procedure for his entire reign.

Tony and Jesse talk about Flair for a bit.

Cactus Jack/Maxx Payne vs. Shanghai Pierce/Tex Slazenger

The not Cactus Jack team is more famous as the Godwins. Their theme music sounds like the train level on Turtles in Time. Jack is just past his awesome run vs. Vader so they threw him in a random tag team to give him something to do. The Godwins are Texas boys and therefore are about what you would expect. To give you an idea of the sizes here, Jack is the smallest of these four.

Payne vs. Pierce (in a mask. Got it) starts us off. Jesse gets the future hog farmers confused which messes up my writing a bit. Off to Jack and Tex with Jack getting a nice pop. Now of course when Hogan came in, Jack was dropped in favor of guys like Jim Duggan and Honky Tonk Man, but they're CLEARLY better talents than Jack right? Naturally he's the most talented and best guy in the match so his parts are the best.

We're in brawl mode quickly as the Texas guys can't get anything going. Payne hammers on the future Mideon but a bulldog saves Tex. Sunset flip gets two for Payne and a belly to back puts both guys down. Jack comes in and beats the tar out of Pierce and it breaks down again. Cactus Clothesline puts him and Pierce on the floor for a bit as the faces stand

tall. Payne no sells a double axe off the top and throws on his Fujiwara Armbar finisher which is broken up. Jack back in and heel miscommunication sets up a double arm DDT to end Pierce.

Rating: D. This was a little under 8 minutes long and the Texans were on offense less than 30 seconds combined. Somehow though this wasn't a squash even though it met all the qualifications for one. Jack and Payne would split soon and Jack would float around the tag division for awhile as he more or less mastered the semi-hardcore brawling style that made him famous before heading to ECW in 94.

Some racing guy with a mullet talks because this is WCW.

US Title: Steve Austin vs. Dustin Rhodes

Austin is challenging and this is 2/3 falls. We do get the Natural theme song though so that's a plus...I think. Jesse keeps making jokes about the Hooters girl at ringside, saying you can't call her the Natural. Funny stuff. So weird to see Austin being this young and with hair and in white boots. Feeling out process to start with a lot of technical stuff and Austin getting sent to the floor.

Still waiting on anything to really get going. We hear about Rush Limbaugh and my head begins to hurt again. Austin hits the floor for about the third time already as this is really boring stuff. What a great theme to have all night long. Tony rattles off stats about Austin's TV Title reign and impresses Jesse. "How do you know all this stuff?" Tony Schiavone just got asked that question. Mark down the date and time.

Out to the floor AGAIN and Austin is sent into the crowd like a luchador. Back in and Dustin pops him with a right hand and Austin sells it like he got shot. Back to the headlock now as things were starting to get interesting. This is what I'm talking about when I say this company had no idea how to use various people. You have a young (turned 29 9 days before this

show) Austin and you stick him in there with Dustin, who works the same slow, boring, methodical (read as lays around a lot) style that only suits old school fans and sucks the life out of matches every single times. Very annoying.

They slug it out again and talk about how one of these guys is going to dominate WCW for the next ten years. Well Austin certainly did dominate them after April of 98 so I guess Tony is right there. They slug it out even more and Austin gets a belly to back to put both guys down. Remember what I said about this being boring? Here's another instance of that.

Middle rope elbow misses for Austin and Dustin channels his inner papa. Dustin gets a powerslam for two as we're still in the first fall. Austin is sent into Parker and it counts as being thrown over the top. Oh joy. The Colonel is out apparently as we have a thirty second rest period. Rhodes doesn't seem to care as he sends Austin into the post to bust him open a bit. Colonel is taken out.

And there go the lights. Literally, the lights go out other than a spotlight, drawing the biggest pop of the match sadly enough. Dustin hammers away a bit as Jesse uses the term dark match in a different context. They go into the corner and the lights come back up. Austin takes some punches in the corner but comes out with something like a spinebuster and a handful of tights to win the title which he held until August.

Rating: D+. And somehow they manage to get a boring match out of Austin. Dustin is a guy that no one cared about but because his dad was famous he kept getting pushed. Goldust was the best thing that ever could have happened to him. Weak match as the first fall was weak and the lights made them look stupid as always. Somehow this is one of the better matches of the night so far.

The announcers talk about Boss vs. Rude a bit. They say that the title is an officially recognized world title, so if

you're ever curious, Rick Rude was a world champion.

WCW International World Title: The Boss vs. Rick Rude

As I said earlier, it's Big Boss Man in black. Short version, it's the physical NWA World Title belt without the lineage because of a bunch of ridiculous stuff. The International Board is a parody of the NWA Board. The titles would be unified in a few months at a Clash of the Champions. This is billed as a super match. Boss beat Rude before which is why he was picked to get this match.

After some big match intros we're ready to go. We stall/jaw at each other a lot before they stall even more in a long lockup. The referee keeps getting in between these guys that think it's 1990 again. Over three minutes in and we FINALLY have something other than stalling: right hands. Boss Man takes over a bit and gets a HUGE backdrop and a boot to put Rude down.

Boss fires some stiff shots in the corner and we hit the floor. I know it sounds like this hasn't been on that long but we've been at this over six minutes and I think I've put in every single move they've done. Literally that's how slowly they're moving. Rude gets tied up in the ropes upside down facing the audience. Some punches by Boss and we hit the last thing this match needed: a bearhug.

I know Flair vs. Vader was the only thing that mattered here but dude, can you at least try to give us one other good match? The annoying thing is that they're not even that bad. They're just DULL. Rude bites him and they slug it out a bit. Boss takes over again but misses that running shot when Rude is on the ropes in a 619 position and a sunset flip ends him. I give up.

Rating: F+. Yet ANOTHER boring match. I mean they had 10 minutes out there and they could have fit the offense they had in maybe 3 of them. This whole show has been like that: boring

matches with TONS of stalling despite having more than enough time to get something going. At least there are only two more and one is great.

Tony tells Jesse he's a good looking man. As random as it sounds.

Tag Titles: Sting/Hawk vs. Nasty Boys

This wouldn't be the one I was talking about when I said great. HUGE pop for Sting. Great place for your second most popular guy right? Allegedly before the stabbing this was going to be Flair/Steamboat trying to win the titles. There's a pairing you don't often see. Missy Hyatt is with the champions here. I'd assume Animal is injured or something here. The Nasties pose a lot before the match to waste time.

Sting vs. Knobbs to start us off and it's time to stall. Finally we get going with brawling to start. After the champions are sent to the floor for a bit it's off to Sags vs. Hawk. Jesse says Hawk's hair looks like a Los Angeles Ram without the helmet. He chops away in the corner which gets him nowhere as the Nasties take over. Shocking no one that pays attention, Hawk no sells it and sends them to the floor.

We stall a bit to change the pace again. Hawk hammers on Sags and throws some of the worst punches I've ever seen as his hand is so clearly open it's absurd. Hawk gets an enziguri for two of all things. Thankfully Sting comes in to take away the sloppiness. And of course he's in there for thirty seconds. Hawk works on the arm of Knobbs as does Sting. Crowd is only kind of into this.

The bird man gets sent to the floor and into the post. Missy gives him a slap that Stephanie would be jealous of as Knobbs hammers away again. Off to an armbar again as this hasn't been terrible actually. It's not anything great but it's not a horrid match I guess. Jesse says a slam by Knobbs was bad. When Jesse Ventura is criticizing your in ring work, you might

suck.

Back to the armbars and Hawk slaps the mat. Since this isn't Philly though that means nothing yet. Tag to Sting doesn't count so Hawk fights them both off on his own. A lot of these moves are missing. There's a tag to Sting as we hit the fifteen minute mark. Sags tries an elbow drop to Sting to break up a cover and while it looked like it hit him Sting doesn't seem hurt by it. Missed spot I guess.

The Nasties try to leave which fails of course. Back in and Sting's big splash off the top eats knees. Knobbs tries I guess a leg drop but it comes off like a backsplash from the middle rope. That's what I'm talking about by the sloppiness. Sting plays Ricky Morton for awhile now and goes to the floor for a bit. Off to the abdominal stretch by Sags as the crowd is more into this than they've been into anything else all night. Granted that's not saying much but still.

And now for a change, Knobbs uses the stretch. We get to ten minutes left in the thirty minute time limit. Sting gets a sunset flip for two and it's off to Sags for the third abdominal stretch in about 2 minutes. Now it's time for a chinlock because that's the next logical rest hold. Suplex gets two so we go back to the same hold. I guess they got tired in between.

Abdominal stretch #4 goes on as again we have the problem with the match being that it goes on WAY too long. Five minutes left as Sting breaks the hold. Something gets botched as we get a splash by Knobbs off the middle rope but it's pretty clear that wasn't supposed to hit. They repeat it and this time Sting gets a boot up to set up...nothing as the Nasties try their finisher. That of course fails as it's hot tag to Hawk. Stinger Splash hits and it's time for a Doomsday Device. Missy runs in for the DQ which looks completely unplanned. The announcers and Sting/Hawk look totally confused.

Rating: D. Again, this match suffers from one major problem: it's HALF AN HOUR LONG. On top of that it has a bad ending which like I said I don't think was exactly planned to go that way. It's certainly not the worst match in the world but at the same time there is a lot here that doesn't work in the slightest. The whole rest hold marathon hurt it a lot as well.

Please.....let this main event be the BEST MATCH EVER. It has to be to make this show worth anything.

WCW World Heavyweight Title: Ric Flair vs. Vader

Title vs. career here. Race is Vader's manager and is carrying the belt to the ring. Vader is basically a killing machine that has injured everyone he's fought so this is something close to David vs. Goliath. Flair's pop is one of respect to say the least. It's the purple robe tonight. This has a 45 minute time limit for some reason. This is in the day when a retirement match would have meant something so there's a far more serious tone to this.

Flair is only a ten time champion here so he's still a young legend. To say the crowd is one sided is the understatement of the year. Vader easily overpowers him to start of course so Flair tries to make him run around. Finally though Vader gets his hands on Flair and let the pain begin. Race shouting YOU WANTED HIM FLAIR is great stuff. We hear about Flair's record at Starrcade which is pretty remarkable to say the least.

Big gorilla press puts Flair down as they're taking their time here. The first five minutes or so have been better than anything else that has happened all night. To the floor for a bit as this is completely one sided. Vader pulls a Sting though and misses a splash into the railing. Flair fights back because it's all he can do to keep his career alive but Race pops him to take over. The fans nearly erupted over a 5 second flurry of offense from Flair. They're that hot.

Back to the beatdown as Vader hammers away. STIFF clothesline

takes Flair down. You could describe every move of Vader's as stiff as a board to put it mildly. Flair gets some chops in but Vader just pops him in the head to take him back down. Middle rope clothesline puts Flair down but Flair gets out of the way of a splash and gets a shot off the top.

Flair manages to get three straight shots from the top and takes Vader down. Vader shrugs it off and takes Flair down, busting open his lip. Middle rope suplex puts Flair down but Vader can't pop up immediately. He's slowing down a bit which is an important point to the match. Splash misses though but it's not like Vader cares. Flair is sent to the floor and Race kicks him square in the head.

Back in a splash misses but the second doesn't so Vader just hammers away. Flair gets up and straight beats Vader down with nothing but right hands. Awesome sequence here as it's all heart and Vader can't stop it. Flair goes for the knee and gets a chair shot in as Race tries to interfere. More punching down follows as the story here of Flair having to give up his usual stuff and fight for everything he's got is great.

Chair (as in the unfoldable kind that you sat on in elementary school) to the head and Vader is in big trouble. Flair hammers him down again but collapses due to exhaustion. Time to work on the knee and he even manages a strut. Crowd has been going nuts for about five minutes straight now. Figure Four is casually blocked and the crowd goes silent again.

Vader Bomb misses and here they come again! Somehow Flair gets the Figure Four on Vader and the champion is in trouble! Vader gets to the ropes but Race is freaking out so much that the referee doesn't see it. Flair is all fired up even when the hold is broken. Twenty minutes in and Vader gets a big boot to slow things down.

Vader hammers away on the mat as he's spent. Moonsault misses and Race goes up when Flair covers. The headbutt hits Vader

which is reminiscent of the star destroyer hitting the Death Star in Return of the Jedi as everything falls apart. Flair hammers away and grabs a single leg (kind of botched) and rolls up Flair to win the title and send the crowd into insanity.

Rating: A. Great match here as Flair and Vader both told the story of Vader not being able to beat Flair and Flair having to resort to the bare basics to keep his career alive. This was ranked #1 on the Starrcade countdown which is probably one spot too high (Magnum vs. Tully is still one of the sickest wars you'll ever see) but this beats anything else for second place. This is reminiscent of Mania 14 with HBK vs. Austin as we knew Flair was winning but the fun part was the journey getting there.

Tony says Flair's career goes on and on and on which makes me laugh given what Flair is doing today.

The announcers point out the psychology of Vader hammering on Flair as much as he could but got caught in a simple move to win the title as Flair finally got a chance to clear his head and used his basic wrestling skills to win the title. Brilliant story told in the match.

Vader is in the back and is MAD. He gets in Race's face and tears lockers down so Eric runs off.

Flair comes out to the arena again for a curtain call as this show has only run about two and a half hours.

Gene is with Flair's family and Flair pops up to say how awesome this was. As usual he's very humble as a face, saying how his family being here meant a lot. His wife doesn't talk much. Sting comes in and praises Flair. Steamboat comes in and says Flair is awesome too.

Overall Rating: D+. The problem here was that other than the main event, this show was either terrible or really boring.

They seemed to be setting up ONLY Flair vs. Vader as a good match which is an idea I've never agreed with. The show comes off as really boring for the most part and a lot of matches leave you saying "that's it?" or "what was that?" The main event is must see for a lesson in how to tell a story in a match but the rest isn't worth seeing in the slightest.