

Terry Funk's Wrestlefest – Now Here's Something You Don't See Every Day

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Date: September 11, 1997

Location: Amarillo Fair Grounds, Amarillo, Texas

Attendance: 4,000

Commentator: Joey Styles

Now most of you likely have no clue what this is. I had heard of it but that's it until I found it online. This is a show Funk put together for no apparent reason other than he was planning on retiring for about the 9th time. This is a three way cross promotional event, with FMW, ECW and WWF contributing guys.

And when I say WWF guys, I don't mean no names. I mean Mankind and Bret Hart with Hart defending the WWF Title against Funk in the main event. Now how does that sound? RVD is on the box but there's no sign of him on the card. I think he's in a dark match or something. Let's get to it.

The lighting kind of sucks but whatever. We're told that Fritz Von Erich passed away the day before, putting this at September 11, 1997, a Thursday. Ok then. He gets a ten bell salute and the bell sounds like nothing I've ever heard before. This is very low budget to say the least, but at this time WCW was dominating wrestling so it's not like they could afford much.

Roadkill vs. W*ING Kanemura

Roadkill isn't Amish yet and is just a New York guy. Kanemura for those of you that haven't heard of him is freaking crazy. This is a ten minute time limit so this isn't going to go on

long. Roadkill is a student in the House of Hardcore, of which Chris Chetti was the first graduate of. It's an ECW show (partially) so I have to include that. Roadkill has less than 12 matches career so he's VERY green here.

You can't see past the 2nd row so I'm betting less than 1000 people. The rail is literally that: a rail and not a fence like usual. There are no rules apparently either as chairs are used at will here. Roadkill is also about 50 pounds lighter than usual here so that's a big difference. A Rock Bottom gets two for him. It's all Roadkill here.

I think Kanemura is the face here but I'm not sure. Top rope splash completely misses and the power of Japan takes over. A Senton Splash (not a Bomb mind you. This is like jumping forward and landing on the other guy back first) ends it.

Rating: C. Considering Roadkill had less than 12 matches coming into this, I can't be hard on him at all. Wrestlers get experience somewhere and this is an example of that. Considering the level of experience he had, it came out very well. By regular standards it was bad, but for something like this, it was perfectly fine.

Taz vs. Chris Candido

Taz is the ECW TV Champion here and it's on the line here. Joey insists that this is not an ECW show and they're simply guests. I like that. If nothing else we get Back in Black for Candido's theme. No Sunny though so that's an automatic lower grade. Again it's just ten minutes for the time limit so I'm guessing the later matches are going to be REALLY long as it's only a 9 match card.

These two had a good match at Hardcore Heaven so this should be at least decent. They start with a nice wrestling sequence and Candido is full heel. I don't think a lot of the fans know who these guys are. Joey says there are 4,000 people here but I'd be a bit surprised at that. I'll go with it though.

Candido gets that nice powerbomb he does and Joey says that Taz is credited for popularizing tapping out in wrestling.

No clue if that's true or not but I don't remember anyone using it before Taz did so there we are. Very well could be wrong there though. Candido goes up for a double axe handle but opens his hands so Taz can catch him in a belly to belly. Candido COMPLETELY misses an enziguri but Taz sells it anyway. That was bad even for an ECW miss. Taz initiates his ending sequence which I like so that's good. As the announcer says there are three minutes left Candido taps to the Tazmission.

Rating: C+. Not bad but their match at Hardcore Heaven was WAY better. This was good enough though as Taz did his thing and that's all you can ask of him. Chris of course was his usual solid self but there's nothing here that jumps off the page as great. I liked it though but then again I like both guys at this stage.

Shark Tsuchiya vs. Lady Cooga

Cooga is in a mask and seems to be a face. These are both women by the way. Fans are throwing things into the ring apparently and the announcer doesn't like it. Shark is from FMW and looks like a combination of Aja Kong (Awesome Kong's tag partner in Japan) and Hawk of the LOD. Same time limit as before. The announcer gets their names backwards so that took me 10 minutes to figure out. I'm going with Joey's version though.

Cooga is a freelancer apparently. This is pretty back and forth and not bad at all. Shark is really strong here and is dominating more often than not. These referees tonight have been very slow. Cooga totally misses a kick in the corner but it's sold anyway. There seems to be a lot of that going around tonight. Shark just hits stiff clotheslines and knocks the heck out of her. Another one ends this.

Rating: D+. Sloppy as all goodness but I've seen worse. Not a

terrible match or anything but the sloppiness hurt it a lot to me. That and a dead crowd made this hard to get through. However it was nice seeing women that can be stiff and not have it be mainly about their looks for a change.

Youngbloods vs. Bushwackers

Youngbloods are Mark and Chris. I believe their brother was Jay but I'm not sure. They're the hometown boys here. Their father is with them and his name is Ricky Romero. Go figure. Apparently this is a big feud in Puerto Rico. Again with the ten minute time limits! We're 30 minutes into this two and a half hour show and of the 9 matches on the card I have this is number four. SLOW DOWN.

Somehow the Bushwackers are heels here I think which is odd. Chris has short hair. Got it. Ah yes their brother is indeed Jay. Good to know. Good night this is sloppy beyond belief. WOW it's weird seeing Luke and Butch as heels. I think they're going Shepherders here on us too. Butch goes for a chair as I want this to end quickly.

Butch is good at playing heel if nothing else. We get some heel miscommunication from the Bushwackers and WOW that was weird to say. They keep the clock going down and as we hit 45 seconds, the Youngbloods hit a dropkick combination to get the pin on Luke. Post match they tease more violence but it doesn't happen.

Rating: D. This went WAY too long and it never clicked for me. This was more for the Amarillo crowd than for anyone else which is ok I guess. It's still just very odd to see the Bushwackers as the heels ever but that's fine for a nice change. They were good at it too so I can certainly live with it.

Balls Mahoney vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

MAJOR miscommunication in there somewhere as this is

originally announced Sandman vs. Balls. Bubba runs out instead during Sandman's entrance and is introduced as Mahoney. Whatever. Sandman's entrance of course takes forever. Joey takes shots at the announcer and he's exactly right. Sandman takes some cane shots from Bubba and here's Balls. Injury I'm guessing.

The announcer is told point blank that this is no contest. Naturally he says no disqualification. This guy is AWFUL. Bubba tries to leave and Balls calls out Bubba and that's how the match starts. Bubba says no way and Balls threatens the referee to start the match or get a chair shot. Naturally this is No DQ.

So I think the miscommunication earlier is just that the announcer sucks. Bubba dancing is funny stuff. We're on the floor now with Bubba in control. There's not much to say here as it's pretty bad. Bret and Foley are going to have to save this thing.

Bubba takes a beer to the face. Sandman slips Balls a chair. I've heard of tripping balls but slipping balls? Sandman looks WASTED. I mean he is gone. Balls ducks a chair and hits two bad cane shots and then one good one for a pin that looked like two. Sandman takes him out instead.

Rating: F+. Just a total mess here and the announcing threw everyone off beyond belief. This was bad anyway as no one wanted to see just Bubba. The Dudleys at this time were a unit and just like today when you took one apart they fell apart completely. This was by far the best of the night.

ECW World Title: Shane Douglas vs. Tommy Dreamer

Beulah is the hottest I've ever seen her here, period. Francine looks pretty good too. Shane has just gotten the title back at Hardcore Heaven so there's more or less zero chance of him losing here. Shane's heel stuff is underrated I think. He's overrated beyond belief, but he's decent at times

I think. Ok apparently this is now non title. Ok apparently it is. Dreamer threatens to beat up the announcer if he doesn't say it's for the title.

Beulah gets on the mic and says that after looking at Shane's trunks she knows not everything is big in Texas. If I'm Dreamer I'm thinking two things. Why is my wife looking at his trunks, and how in the world did I get a woman that looks like that? Dreamer dominates until Shane kicks the chair he's holding into his face.

The fans keep shouting about Lex Luger for no apparent reason. Shane works on the knee and Francine helps which causes him even more trouble. I'm liking some of the stuff Shane is using on the knee as he's varying it up very well. We're told that there are ten minutes left, meaning the time limit was 15 minutes. Dang we get a figure four from Shane. There are about a millions jokes there.

Both girls come in and Beulah manages to break up the hold and Dreamer gets two on a rollup. Dreamer goes for the DDT but there's Francine for the save. You know what's coming. Shane beats up Beulah including the belly to belly. Dreamer hits everything he has on Shane but can't get the pin. Francine saves him after the DDT and takes the safest piledriver I've ever seen. I love that he never even checked on his wife. A quick belly to belly ends this.

Rating: B-. I liked this a lot more than I should have. The interference was annoying beyond all belief to say the least, but we get hot women so I can't complain much. This was a good match though and it got the job done that it was shooting for so I can't complain.

Some fighter named Steve Nelson is here. Ok we get it. You can leave now.

Sabu vs. Mankind

This is old school Mankind with the brown leather vest I guess you would call it. He had been Dude Love around this time so this was a quick change. It's Foley so I can't complain. This should be pretty decent. They mention RVD losing to Dory Funk Jr. Dark match or not on the DVD I guess. Yep based on some other reviews, that match did happen just before this one. No clue where it is but whatever.

Sabu hits a nice spin kick to get us to the floor followed by a nice plancha. We've got a chair in there now. What took him so long? Foley tries to do his head in the ropes spot but it doesn't work as the ropes here suck. Sabu sets up a table between the ring and the rail. It's weird hearing Styles talk about Mankind. There goes the table. Foley loses his mask.

The triple jump hits and I think Foley drops an F Bomb but gives his way of jabbering it likely wasn't. Foley wakes up and just goes off on Sabu and hits the Double Arm DDT and does some Cactus Jack mannerisms. Fonzie, Sabu and the referee get the Claw but the bell has already rung. The announcer says it's a DQ. Screw telling us who won or anything. Not important. Joey points out that Foley would win because Fonzie ran in.

Rating: C-. Solid brawl here as Sabu wasn't as insane as normal so this was far better. When he's calmer he's much more watchable. Foley was his usual great self here. Putting these two in a brawl is a recipe for awesome so this worked fine other than the cheap ending.

Hayabusa/Masato Tanaka/Jinsei Shinzaki vs. Headhunters/Jake Roberts

Shinkzaki is more commonly known as Hakushi and I'll be calling him that here. The Headhunters are two fat men from Puerto Rico. My goodness Jake actually looks sober. I can't believe it. Yep the announcer gets the Japanese names totally wrong. Apparently it's Hayabuta. He doesn't announce Hakushi

at all. This has a 30 minute time limit.

Even Joey says he can't tell the Headhunters apart so I'm happy. They were the Squat Team at the 95 Rumble if that helps at all. That's a pretty freaking stacked Japanese team. Tanaka and one of the Headhunters start us out. Ah here's Jake. Much better. He looks fat but sober so I can't complain that much. It's now a fat guy vs. Hayabusa and we start with a test of strength. Ok then.

A bunch of kicks puts the fat man down. Hayabusa is good. In case you're wondering he's retired due to being paralyzed now. The Headhunters are your traditional big fat guys that can't do much at all. Chair is brought in with the non Japanese team winning. One of the Headhunters hits a top rope splash on Tanaka for two. This needs more Jake as the Headhunters are doing about 80% of the wrestling.

They're also starting to impress me with their versatility if nothing else. And there we have it. That might have been the dumbest thing I have ever seen in wrestling, and I've seen New Jack matches. Jake has Tanaka set for the DDT and stands there looking at Hakushi climbing the ropes. He continues to stand there and gets kicked in the face from the top.

I mean it's not like the DDT takes a second to do or anything and it's not like Jake was LOOKING STRAIGHT AT THE OTHER GUY. I question this master of psychology thing at times. Big old mess now. A Headhunter misses a splash and a 450 splash hits for two but the referee calls it 3 anyway. Yep the announcer just calls them Team Japan. Whatever. Post match the losers act like jerks.

Rating: D+. This wasn't much of anything. I don't get the selection here at all as Jake is over the hill and the other two aren't that good so let's put them against an all star team. Made little sense but it could have been much worse.

Two former women's world champions are here. No clue who they

are or anything but why should that be important? Let's not bother showing them or anything either.

Terry Funk vs. Bret Hart

I'm pretty sure this isn't for the title so we'll go with that. It's no DQ if nothing else. He comes out to a cover of Freebird. Sandman had the regular Metallica theme and he can't use Freebird? Dory is with him and there's Bret's music. This is just weird to see/hear. Bret is from Calgary, Canada and is the present WWF Champion. Seriously who talks like that?

Bret was the monster heel in WWF at the moment so the reaction here should be interesting. Dennis Stamp is the referee, who was Bret's first ever opponent and I believe a jobber in the AWA. A bunch of people get in the ring. Chris Candido is in a towel. Seriously you couldn't throw on some jeans? Heyman has the mic and the fans are cheering for Funk.

Heyman puts Funk over very well for ECW and for Amarillo and wrestling in general. In a cool moment they give him a belt and declare him World Heavyweight Champion for life. I like that. That's rather cool. Bret gets on the mic and gets booed out of the building. He says what Bret Hart the person not Bret Hart the character would say which is very nice. He shakes Funk's hand and says he's going to kick Terry's teeth in. Nothing wrong with that as it makes Terry the even bigger face.

The camera is messed up early and we can only see half of the ring. Ah there we are. This referee is SLOW with his counts. Funk uses a headlock for awhile as they're having a very basic match to start us off. This is pretty solid stuff so far with basic technical stuff but it's working. Funk can wrestle quite well. Don't think he's all about hardcore and brawling. He can go on the mat.

Funk gets the toe hold but it's broken up by the ropes and now we're getting some punches. One of Bret's brothers is his

corner man. We're not told which though. They're going very slowly here to set up the big ending which is fine by me. Something happens in the crowd as they all get up all of a sudden. Terry gets rammed into the table on the floor. This has been solid so far.

After working the knee the entire match, Bret hooks the figure four and uses the ropes which is completely legal here. Dang that's a bad figure four. It's getting into Dusty territory here. Stu Hart is here also. He has two brothers here and neither is Owen so who cares? Funk makes his comeback with mainly punches and gets a great pop. Funk gets a DDT so I'm happy. For a guy that's 50, Funk looks pretty decent.

At 15 minutes in we hit the crowd and Funk is in control. The figure four on the post breaks that up as I continue to think the post wouldn't actually do that much in it. Bret initiates the ending sequence but stops to go grab a chair. Funk winds up with it and goes off on the knee. The announcer can't tell time as 6 minutes after 15 minutes passed we're at 20 minutes.

Funk goes for a Vader Bomb onto Bret through a table but misses Bret and goes through. He's busted open too. It's all Bret here as this has been a really good match. Funk gets a small package out of the Sharpshooter for one. See what I mean about the speed of these counts? Seriously a one count after twenty minutes? Funk gets the toe hold and Bret is in trouble.

Terry goes for one spin too many and there's the other small package that gets two. See how much better that sounds than ONE? They do the messed up time thing AGAIN but thankfully Bret ends it as Funk hits a belly to back suplex and Bret gets his shoulder up while Terry's are down. Post match Funk gets the weakest announcement ever from the worst announcer ever and then he says he has no complaints and he loves the fans. Classy.

He'd also be in the WWF in 3 months but it's Terry Funk so

it's a bit different. Also they said his last match in Amarillo more than once tonight, so that's a bit better. Big difference between this and what Flair got which I classify as a bit disrespectful but that's for a later argument.

Rating: A-. Great match here as they had someone out there that legitimately respected Funk and they let him have a great match. Funk's in ring work is vastly underrated in the technical aspect so this was a nice way to let him showcase himself. Also notice something here: he went out losing to a younger star, giving Bret the spotlight rather than taking it for himself. This was a very good match regardless of the circumstances and I liked it quite a bit.

Overall Rating: C-. This is much more of a novelty than anything else. The wrestling other than the main event is pretty poor, the production is AWFUL, the ring announcer had Joey legit annoyed and the referee needed to be on Social Security. Still though, seeing this kind of talent at an indy show is worth seeing as is this three way cross promotion.

Overall this is a decent show but other than the main event (and potentially the inexplicably not there RVD/Dory match) there's nothing great to see other than the stunning Beulah. This is something that would be good in like an 8 dollar bin at Wal-Mart or something like that. Find the main event as it's nearly 30 minutes of Bret Hart's goodness.