

Starrcade 1985 – The Original I Quit Match

Starrcade 1985

Date: November 28, 1985

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina/The Omni, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Bob Caudle, Tony Schiavone

Found this and figured it would be worth taking a look at. This is a show where they have two different locations, each with six matches and each with a main event. In Atlanta we have the rematch of previous year's show with Flair vs. Dusty of course. The other is perhaps the best match in Starrcade history as Tully Blanchard meets Magnum TA in a steel cage I Quit match. This should be very solid as the card looks freaking stacked. Let's get to it.

We open with a shot of a big disco ball. Ok then. This is called The Gathering for no apparent reason. The lighting is AWFUL. You can barely see Bob Caudle and Tony Schiavone. We throw it to Johnny Weaver who keeps looking at the cue card he's reading from which is odd to see. Other than the TV Title everything is on the line tonight. We open in Greensboro, the home of Starrcade.

The national anthem plays and we're ready to go.

Mid-Atlantic Title: Sam Houston vs. Krusher Khrushev

Krusher is more commonly known as Smash of Demolition so we'll go with that name for him as it's easier to spell. The title is vacant at this point due to a guy named Buzz Tyler leaving the territory so this is a tournament final. The referee is in yellow for no apparent reason. The ring looks rather small for some reason. Perhaps it could be that it is small. Both guys

are in red here so it looks a bit odd.

They're going power vs. speed here as Houston is a tiny man to say the least. The commentary has some long spaces of no talking at all. Crowd is a bit deceased at this point. Smash was always good at making noise during the matches. The EVIL Russian is dominating here.

Mind you that's the Minnesota form of Russian but whatever. We hit the Russian bearhug. Oh joy. Sam hits his only move, the bulldog, but the foot is on the ropes. Smash hits his move, the Russian Sickle (running clothesline but not quite) and Sam gets his foot on the ropes but the referee misses it. EVIL RUSSIA WINS!

Rating: D+. Uh, isn't the crowd supposed to get into the opening match on the biggest show of the year? This was rather boring to say the least and not a lot came of it. Smash winning was the right move as there was no point to having a guy the size of Houston pick it up. Not terrible but I've seen far better.

Now to Atlanta. Unless I say otherwise, the venues alternate.

Manny Fernandez vs. Abdullah the Butcher

This is a Mexican Death Match, meaning you get the pin and then there's a ten count the other guy has to answer and if he can't get up the match is over. Manny is about as stereotypical of a Mexican as you can ask for. He trained R-Truth which is his biggest claim to fame. Ok screw the ten count as it's a hat on a pole match instead. Ok then. Seriously you just have to climb up and get the hat to win.

Butcher jumps him before the bell so we're off early. The lighting is again crap and we have no commentary at this point. Tony again has microphone difficulties. Ah there they are. Manny is busted about 30 seconds into this. They REALLY need to work on their pauses in talking. Manny uses his boot

as we continue this annoying Southern theme in the NWA. Abdullah going up the ropes is really funny looking. Amazingly he's bleeding too. Who would have guessed that one?

Manny continues to just take clothes off and use them to fight Butches. Sure why not. So Manny is now in socks and no belt. That works I guess. Manny hits the Flying Burrito (real name) to knock Butcher to the ropes. Ok the suplex on Butcher was cool looking, I'll give him that much. Manny goes for the hat (seriously a hat?) and gets a fork to the balls. Apparently the NWA is now CZW. Another Burrito (which is a forearm in case you didn't know) and a clothesline puts Butcher down. And he just climbs up and gets it. Ok then.

Rating: B-. Pretty decent brawl here actually although the hat was just out of left freaking field. I liked it a lot though even though it was mainly just violence. Still though, solid stuff here and it came off pretty well. The big man vs. little man stuff worked well here so there we are.

Back in Greensboro Khrushchev says he's happy and thanks his fellow Russians for helping him. His total lack of accent is rather funny.

Ron Bass vs. Black Bart

This is a Texas Bullrope match where is Bass wins he immediately gets the same match with Bart's manager, James J. Dillon. Dillon is in one of those tuxedo shirts that I want. This is right around the time the Horsemen came together so there's a solid chance Dillon isn't with them yet. In every match so far, one of the guys has been from Texas. Ron Bass being a face is WEIRD. I'm not sure which set of rules they're using here but I'd bet on the four corners version. And I'm wrong again as it's pins.

Bart is bleeding inside of a few seconds. This is really just another brawl with the rope involved. Both guys are already busted and we're sitting in silence again. Dillon looks REALLY

young here to say the least. Bart is in trouble here as the winner is pretty clear I'd think. I've never liked these matches as the bell and rope are such regional things and they're just annoying.

The problem here is that things slow down a lot instead of having just straight fighting. I get the idea of it but at the same time it's just taking too long. Also, why are there two cowboys in the same match? Oh ok they used to be partners. There's the explanation. From out of nowhere a bell shot from the top ends it. Dillon takes his shirt off. Oh dear.

Rating: D. I hated this, but then again I hate bullrope matches that don't have Sting in them so there we are. The ending came out of nowhere and the total lack of commentary hurt this a lot. It just makes them seem uninterested which is never a good thing at all. Boring fight compared to the previous one.

Ron Bass vs. James J. Dillon

This is max five minutes as per the rules. Dillon, the manager, jumps him fast and beats the heck out of him. We'll ignore how little sense that makes. He COWBOYS UP thought and it's beatdown time. After a LONG beating, the referee goes down and Bart comes in with a piledriver and pulls Dillon on top for the fluke pin.

Rating: N/A. Too short here but the booking wound up making sense in the end as Bass got to beat on him and then wound up losing to heel shenanigans so I can live with this one.

Back to Atlanta for...arm wrestling? Yeah it's Billy Graham vs. Barbarian as they continue arguing over who the strongest wrestler is. Needless to say Graham is the face here. And there's going to be a regular match too? This is for 10,000 dollars also. Ok then. They do it left handed. Oh Barbarian has a broken hand. That makes sense. Now if you don't know how this is going to go, you have no business watching this show

or reading this review. After two comebacks, Graham wins.

Billy Graham vs. Barbarian

Sure why not? I'm not sure I get the point here but whatever. I think this is the first match where neither is from Texas. Naturally this is a big power match and little more. Graham gets the bear hug and has his arms called pythons. And there's Barbarian's manager in for the DQ. Graham is bleeding. Other than the opener that's happened in every match I think.

Rating: N/A. This was like two minutes long so what do you want me to say about it? Graham was about to get like 10 years older in about a year or two as he would go to WWF again and just be crippled by steroid abuse over the years.

National Title: Terry Taylor vs. Buddy Landel

Have I mentioned I can't stand Taylor? Like, REALLY can't stand him, almost to Ronnie Garvin levels? The National Title was just the title of the Georgia territory and not a real national belt. You have to remember that this is a bunch of promotions having big matches at once and not one company having one show. Imagine if in the NCAA all the conferences had their title games on the same night in the same place. That's what this is kind of like.

It would be unified with the US Title in about a year. Landel was a guy that was good but not great. He was a guy you could bring in and count on to have a decent feud/match and then go away. Think of someone like Kane but of normal size. The problem with the formula they're using is that it causes the matches to be a bit disjointed. What I mean is everything is a big match so it's hard to have a breather or anything.

It's really a supershow which is both good and bad at the same time. There's nothing to really talk about in this. I mean seriously we're 9 minutes in and I haven't thought of a thing that is interesting enough to talk about. There's nothing to

make fun of either.

Taylor goes for his superplex finisher but Dillon (how many people does he freaking manage???) sweeps his leg out so that he falls backwards so Landel can get the pin and the title. We'll ignore that Taylor would have landed the same had the move hit. Landel would be fired in about a month for drug use so Dusty was just given the title.

Rating: C. This is the textbook example of a match that is just there. It's not particularly good or bad. It just exists. There's no other way to put it. I know that's not much but it's all I've got.

National Tag Titles: Billy Jack Haynes/Wahoo McDaniel vs. Arn Anderson/Ole Anderson

Yes it's the Minnesota Wrecking Crew. Dang the 80s were awesome for wrestling. The faces/challengers hold the Florida Tag Titles at this point. Again these are the Georgia tag belts, not actual national titles. Haynes you may know as the guy that fought Hercules at Mania 3.

Wahoo knew like 2 moves and both were chops so there you are. Being realistic here, who do you really think is going to win here? This is formula stuff with the faces getting in trouble and fighting back to get out of it. If it works so well, why change it at all I guess. And Ole trips Wahoo so Arn can pin him. These pins are coming out of freaking nowhere and it's getting rather annoying.

Rating: C+. Not bad here and really just a way for the Andersons to get an easy title defense and there's nothing wrong with that. Don't think anyone believed there would be new champions or anything here which is ok too. Simple by the book match which at times is the best idea to go with.

Landel is in the back with Dillon and Weaver, who is really bad here. Landel is called the top man in Dillon's stable.

That's saying a lot. Oh yeah he's not with the Horsemen yet. Landel says he's the World's National Heavyweight Champion. No wonder he was fired.

US Title: Tully Blanchard vs. Magnum TA

OH YES!!! In short, screw everything else in the history of Starrcade. THIS is the greatest match in the history of the show, period and end of story and argument. Ok, so more or less, this is the idea: culture clash. Tully is considered the wrestler's wrestler. He's the epitome of the rich guy that is a total jerk to everyone but no one can beat him.

Magnum is from the South, rides on a Harley, drinks beer instead of champagne and is a fighter known for two things: a heck of a right hand, and the sickest belly to belly this side of Brock Lesnar. For months upon months these two had gone after each other but there had never been the definitive match. Everyone knew that would come on Thanksgiving night and here we are. The build for this is off the charts.

It's also in a cage and an I Quit match. Hmm. A match between a guy considered to be the top technical man in wrestling and a pure redneck where you win by submission. Just goes to show you that even the best angles such as Hart and Austin aren't always original. Also, this is a more violent match so there you are.

Magnum is introduced as the vastly popular Magnum TA. That's an understatement. Hey they hit the lights so we can see! The fans pop like crazy over a single punch. They help this match a lot as they've watch this build for about a year or so and are drooling for the end. They slug it out to start and I'm glad there's no commentary here as it's not needed. And of course there goes Bob Caudle.

The people here are popping for every single thing so they can more or less do whatever they like. This is a match where it's all brawling and that's all it should be. Tully is bleeding

from the face and the arm which is something you hardly ever see but it's working for me. Magnum, being smart, goes for the arm. Magnum is bleeding too.

The microphone they have to say they give up into is finally brought into play and we get the famous sequence as Tully screams at him to say it but when he says no Tully blasts him with the microphone. So simple yet so effective. They do it again and Magnum is in big trouble. He dodges an elbow drop and the fans EXPLODE. You would think he just won the title. Tully won't give up either.

The mic use is what I like about this as it makes perfect sense to have that in the ring with them rather than the insane things you get in Cell matches. With both guys on their knees they just start throwing bombs at each other. Tully is getting very frustrated and loses his cool. Hmm where have I seen this before?

Baby Doll, Tully's manager, throws a wooden chair in and it gets broken up. Tully uses a piece to drive into the head of Magnum but it doesn't work. Magnum gets the spike and DRIVES IT INTO TULLY'S EYE FOR THE SUBMISSION. Tully screaming in pain after it's over makes this whole thing even better.

Rating: A+. Just an epic fight here with tons of blood and straight up violence. THIS is how you blow off a feud. Go find this match. It's on the Essential Starrcade and shouldn't be hard to find online. Go watch it as it's an absolute classic.

Miss Atlanta Lively/Jimmy Valiant vs. Midnight Express

This is a street fight and it's Eaton and Condrey in case you old school fans are wondering. Lively is Ronnie Garvin in drag. This has F written all over it. Somehow Garvin is the better wrestler on his team. The Express are in tuxedos for no apparent reason. Cornette is at his best here. Oh and the face manager is named Big Mama. Kill me now, please. Cornette is cracking me up, saying both of them may be men but they

both may be women but he's not sure.

Valiant is one of those guys that can't wrestle but he got a major push anyway and is over so there we are. Condrey is busted open. This should be Bloodfest instead of the Gathering. Someone has powder and hits Valiant with it. This was the 1980s so it's likely spare cocaine. They try to get Garvin's clothes off and I have no idea what the point of this is supposed to be. Garvin takes the racket to the top of the head. Rock on violence against women!

Garvin is wearing heels and pins Bobby Eaton. So a woman and a guy that is more known for his beard than his ability beat one of the best teams ever. Sure why not. Post match they strip Cornette to his boxers. Take me now, please.

Rating: F+. I have NO idea what the idea of this was supposed to be but it completely failed in my eyes. This was not only boring but was crap too. Granted there was zero talent on one side and a lot on the other but whatever. At least it was short.

Magnum cuts a GREAT promo, talking about how he'll be a fighting champion. Sweet goodness did he have a ton of potential.

NWA Tag Titles: Rock N Roll Express vs. The Koloffs

This is in a cage as well and is the ending of the Greensboro part now. These two feuded for the better part of ever in the 80s and this is yet another "blowoff" to it. The RNRE of course are WAY over as you would expect them to be. They're also the challengers here. They're tagging here so this should be fun. This is the Rock N Roll Express and it's the 1980s. Do you need me to explain what happens here?

Oddly enough Gibson is in there most of the time. This is another of those matches where there's little that I can say about it. Khrushchev and Don Kernoodle are the seconds here.

Referee goes down again. Morton finally gets the tag and after his usual stuff, hits a rollup for the pin and the titles. The Russians beat them up even more after the match.

Rating: B-. It's hard to mess up an RNRE match if their opponents are at least passable and the Russians were indeed passable. This was fine and served as a way to get a massive pop for the end of the night in Greensboro. This was a good match that served its purpose very well I though. Nothing classic or anything like that, but fine for what it was.

NWA World Heavyweight Title: Ric Flair vs. Dusty Rhodes

Oh like anyone but these two would be in the main event. Flair in this era coming out to that music is nothing short of perfect. The double city thing makes sense as in Greensboro Flair would get the biggest pop of the night. Dusty is listed at 275. That's HILARIOUS. The big gold belt isn't there yet. This is happening because Dusty helped Flair and then the team that would become the Horsemen in January broke Dusty's leg/ankle.

Dusty, please don't shake it. The planet can't take that much weight shifting. Dusty of course dominates early on. We can already see the problem here. See, at this time, Flair could allegedly wrestle a broom to a B grade match (the expression you might hear is three and a half star but screw that star system. Everyone else uses it and I hate it).

He did this because Flair had a very basic way of working a match: he controls, the other guy makes a comeback, shot to the knee, Flair works the knee for 8 minutes, face makes the comeback, finish. How many times have you seen that match and how many times has it been at least good? The idea was you wouldn't always see a classic, but you would hardly ever if ever at all see a bad Flair match.

EVERYONE but Dusty got that idea and Flair's formula worked to near perfection. Dusty insisted that they use HIS method which

is make Dusty look good and use a LOT of rest holds. It worked for Dusty and the fat of doom but not for anyone else and it was very boring. Flair goes for the knee and Dusty hits the floor. Dusty tries to inject psychology into the match which translates into he gets to lay down after 5 minutes.

Dusty works on Flair's knee and I use that term loosely. In an unintentionally hilarious spot, Flair can't suplex Rhodes. Allegedly it's his leg but I would argue it's the weight of the planet between Dusty's legs and his back. And Dusty lays down again. Let's do a sleeper! Even more time where we don't have to really do anything for Dusty! Dusty lunges for the corner to break it up. My bet is there was some powder left from earlier and Dusty thought the turnbuckle was a new kind of doughnut.

Dusty was lazy on a snapmare. ON A SNAPMARE. Ok let's stop and think about this for a minute. How exactly does a snapmare work? You have two guys, one behind the other. One guy grabs the other's head and snaps, hence the term SNAPmare the other guy's head forward while the guy taking the move jumps right? Oh and the guy doing it ducks down. Dusty did NOTHING. He slowly brought his arms forward.

He didn't SNAP, he didn't duck, and he went to the side instead of over the shoulder. ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME??? JACKIE GAYDA could do a snapmare properly and this guy is about to win the freaking world title? Good freaking night. Dusty misses an elbow and lays down AGAIN. Seriously he's been laying on his back more than Becca would for Shawn. Dusty comes off the top with a cross body for two.

Flair should get the title right there since a mountain just jumped at him. Dusty does his stupid looking punches and misses a kick so the knee is down again. Any credit this match gets goes to Flair for having to sell for this fat tub of goo, period. One thing you might notice about the figure four that Flair uses: about 90% of the time, it's on the wrong leg. The

straight leg is the one that's in pain, not the crossed one.

Dusty manages to reverse without ever selling the pain, which is at least staying consistent as nothing Flair has done has seemed to hurt him here. He's not even limping. ARE YOU KIDDING ME? Young is knocked to the floor. Cue the (future) Horsemen. Dusty gets that abomination that he calls the figure four on and there they are. It's Arn and Ole in case you were wondering. That's nothing though and Dusty gets the rollup on Flair for the pin.

It's traditionally called a small package but nothing about Dusty is small. A bunch of wrestlers including Billy Graham come out to carry Dusty on their shoulders but of course they can't do it. No one can carry Dusty. Dang I love double entendres. Post match Dusty says he'll be champion for a long time and the announcers send us off. Actually that's not the case though.

Dusty's title reign isn't counted as on the next TV show he was stripped of the title due to the referee being down and the other referee counting the pin. Yes, Dusty managed to do a Dusty finish ON THE BIGGEST SHOW OF THE YEAR. Can you imagine what would happen if they did this at Mania? The backlash (oh wait it's Extreme Rules now isn't it?) would be off the charts. Anyway, that's the end of the show.

Rating: D. Dusty...you are a fat worthless goon. Flair...I salute you. That's all I have to say here.

Overall Rating: B+. I went back and forth between B and B+ here. The thing is, even though the ending wound up meaning nothing, that can't be factored into the grade of the show. The show was solid all around as feuds were settled, titles changed hands, and the big moments worked.

This is a solid show with some misses in there. Still, definitely very good and it felt like the biggest show of the year which it was. Dusty...go away. DEFINITELY see the I Quit.

Other than that there isn't much worth seeing individually but overall the card is well worth seeing.