

WWF St. Louis – January 1, 1984 – Hulk Hogan's Debut

WWF St. Louis

Date: January 1, 1984

Location: The Chase, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Gene Okerlund

Now as some of you may know, WWF would have a lot more house shows back in the day. What they would do is film these shows in their major cities and have commentary for them, then air them on local television. They did this in New York and MSG for years. They would also split these up and air them on syndicated shows. This is one from St. Louis. This is about three weeks before Hogan won the world title so it's an era we don't really see. Let's get to it.

The Chase is a legendary wrestling venue in St. Louis but is actually a hotel. The NWA ran shows there for years and WWF came in at the very end to do a few months worth of shows.

Vince and Gene run down the card.

Dennis Stamp/Jerry Valiant vs. Rocky Johnson/Tony Atlas

Johnson/Atlas are tag champions but this is non-title. Stamp vs. Rocky starts us off. Rocky is called The Rock and it's off to Atlas. Atlas hits some bad dropkicks and we're in squash city here. Off to Valiant who is more of a brawler. Not that it does him any good as he gets knocked backwards quickly by right hands. A flying headscissors by Johnson takes Valiant down and it's back to Tony.

Off to a test of strength because Valiant is stupid enough to try that with him. Now Atlas uses a headscissors. Symmetry people! Valiant takes him down into a chinlock as this match is getting more time than I expected it to. Back to Johnson

who gets double teamed in the corner as well. And never mind as Atlas comes in, gorilla presses Stamp and splashes him for the pin.

Rating: C-. Just a long squash here but that's what a lot of TV back then was supposed to be. Johnson and Atlas are a team that the more I see of them the more I like of them. Atlas especially as he'd be a great guy to have around today with his look and power. Decent match here and a good way to showcase the champs.

Ken Jagan vs. David Schultz

Schultz is most famous for attacking a journalist who asked if wrestling was fake. He's known as Dr. D. Schultz grabs a headlock to begin and rides him on the mat. Jagan hasn't gotten in a single shot yet. Schultz pulls him up after an elbow drop and keeps beating on him. Out to the floor as the beating continues. A backbreaker gets two. This is getting boring now as it's been going on way too long. Back to the floor again as there's nothing to talk about in this. Schultz hits various offense and Jagan gets nothing in at all. Jagan gets in some very weak punches and then gets tombstoned (called a southern piledriver) for the pin.

Rating: D-. Like I said, there's only so much you can get out of a guy getting destroyed for this long. One thing that's kind of different: the announcer reads the time and even says what the finishing move was. Ok he didn't here but he did in the first place. This ran over seven minutes so you can see how it gets a bit uninteresting.

Bill Dixon vs. Hulk Hogan

Oh my goodness! Now THIS is an historic moment. This right here is Hulk Hogan's first match back in the WWF after being gone for about four years and becoming a superstar in Rocky III. He comes out to Eye of the Tiger and is way over. Hulk would jump into the world title scene in about two weeks,

winning the title in about three weeks and holding it for four years.

Actually, this is being reviewed on the anniversary of his title win so that's appropriate. Hogan takes him to the mat with a Fujiwara Armbar ala Del Rio. Dixon hammers away but Hulk comes back with a big boot, slam and the big leg (I'm assuming making its WWF debut) ends this. Total squash but the crowd reaction tells you everything you need to know here. This is history people.

The local network president welcomes WWF to St. Louis. It lasted about two months.

Hulk says he loves St. Louis and that he's focused on an upcoming battle royal. He wants a world title shot. Bear in mind he's 1-0 (by his own admission) and he's just declared himself #1 contender.

Murdoch and Adonis say they want the tag titles. They would get them in about 4 months.

Johnson and Atlas come in and say St. Louis is their home away from home.

Big John Studd says he's awesome. He has a new manager named Magaw Maginaw. No idea who that is but he looks like Luscious Johnny V.

Jimmy Jackson vs. Big John Studd

In the words of Rocky III, "my prediction? PAIN." Jackson tries to slam him and that goes nowhere. Studd offers him a top wristlock which goes just as well. Over the shoulder backbreaker ends this quick. Another squash.

Bill Berger vs. Ivan Putski

Putski is a Polish dude that is short but incredibly muscular. See, he's really strong. That's about it. And he's Polish.

This is just Putski using his strength to break almost everything and throw Berger around. Eventually the Polish Hammer (double axe to the chest) ends this.

Rating: D-. No idea what there is to say here. Putski is a pretty boring guy and this was no exception. His shoulders are huge but he has little chicken legs. Nothing really to see here and these squashes are certainly a generational thing. You couldn't get away with this if your life depended on it.

Terry Daniels/Kevin Collins vs. Adrian Adonis/Dick Murdoch

This is probably the main event. Adonis vs. Daniels gets us going. Really I don't know what to say here. After like 6 squashes there's only so much you can say. Daniels is sent to the floor and thoroughly pummeled. Back in and he gets beaten up even more. Collins comes in and gets beaten up as this is really boring. Adonis puts Collins to sleep to end this.

Rating: D. See any other match already tonight to get the idea here.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a hard one to grade. There were certainly a lot of big names on here and for a TV show that aired locally, there isn't really a lot to complain about. For the masses, this wouldn't have been much. Most of 1984 was pretty generic stuff, but once 85 got here things took off like a rocket. Not much here, but you have to keep some specifics in mind.

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