

Fully Loaded 1998 – Just A Stop Before We Get To Summerslam

In Your House 23: Fully Loaded

Date: July 26, 1998

Location: Selland Arena, Fresno, California

Attendance: 9,855

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

So King of the Ring has come and gone and as I've gone over, we know what the double main event was and I'm sure you all know what happened in those matches so I'll spare you the details. Ken Shamrock is your new king and that went absolutely nowhere. Not a lot really happened other than the main events but the Raws were the big deal for your buildup here. The main thing going on at the time was Austin feuding with just about everyone with Taker slowly becoming a tweener.

Your main event is Austin and Taker trying to get the tag titles from the new champions Kane and mankind. It was all leading up to the big feud with Taker and Kane against Austin, eventually being revealed as being masterminded by Vince himself. In reality, this show was more of a catalyst than a big show, but that doesn't mean it's bad. Let's see if it is or not.

Oh I almost forgot: a guy that walked the streets and subways, screaming because he was bordering on being completely psychotic and beating up random people had debuted about a month before this. His name was a strange one: Edge.

The intro more or less just talks about how Austin has been facing everyone and somehow still has the title. Nothing special here at all but it gets the job done I suppose.

Val Venis vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jarrett now has the Godwinns, now known as Southern Justice, as his bodyguards. Venis was controversial to say the least as he is likely the most envelope pushing character in company history as he jumped WAY over the line many times. However, he was a very good wrestler that is often overlooked. Kaientai of all people come to the ring with their boss doing commentary and clearly doing an impression of a Japanese accent.

Their feud was over his wife sleeping with Val and appearing in one of his "videos." This would end up with Val allegedly being castrated on Raw which was freaking creepy at the time and actually ended the show which was odd indeed. It also involved Taka turning heel and completely killing the division. Jarrett hits a DDT and the comments are great from both guys.

Ross says that anyone would go limp from that, which Lawler says he planted him like a geranium. What kind of a comparison is that? Venis really was underrated in the ring. He's got a nice variety of offense which is a rare thing to see and he rarely made any noticeable mistakes. Apparently Austin thinks Taker is going to turn on him and that it'll be 3-1 in the main event.

Val eventually wins it with a roll up as Yamaguchi continues to say that he'll never be the same after Raw tomorrow. He's really short so he gets a lot of jokes for that. Val gets on the mic and says that Yamaguchi is small and his wife says so.

Rating: B. This was a very decent match as both guys can really go in the ring when they're given the chance. Val was the hot shot rookie and he showed why he was here. He had a nice variety of offense, a very unique gimmick a good look, size, strength and agility. Put him in there with a good technician like Jarrett and how could this be bad?

We see a shot of the Hart Family Dungeon where there will be a match tonight.

D'lo Brown vs. X-Pac

This is just a continuation of the DX/NOD feud but the real match would have been later tonight between Rock and HHH in an Iron Man match. Brown beat HHH for the European Title on Monday for no apparent reason as the Iron Man was supposed to be title vs. title. I was at a house show the Friday before that Raw so 10 days before this where D'lo was already billed as champion despite not winning the title until three days later.

Kama is now the Godfather of the Nation and is dressing like a pimp. This is non title for no good reason. There's a bikini contest tonight with Sable and Jackie so King simply will not shut up about it. Other than that, this match is painfully boring. I can't stand X-Pac but this is just bad no matter who is in it. The crowd is completely dead and in a ten minute match you should not need three rest holds. Godfather interferes and D'Lo hits the Sky High for the pin.

Rating: D. This was a very boring match. It wasn't any good at all and while I can't put the blame on either guy more than the other, I'm going to blame X-Pac because I hate that little bastard. This really was just a bad match and the non-title didn't help it. It just gave us even less of a reason to care here so why should this be any good at all?

Apparently the Undertaker isn't here yet.

Farrooq/Scorpio vs. Terry Funk/Bradshaw

Anyone that can find the point to this match will receive a free ham sandwich. As the other team heads to the ring, Funk says that this will be his last match in the WWF for at least six months, thereby ticking off Bradshaw. From what I can find, this wasn't actually told to Bradshaw until just then so

his reaction was legit. It pretty much left him without anything to do but he and Farroq would join up around November.

The amazing part is that Funk actually did leave after this and wasn't seen on a mainstream show until he showed up in WCW about two years later. The main thing here is all about Taker not showing up yet and Funk leaving soon. Other than that, this match is bad. The fans agree apparently as they start the boring chant which is actually acknowledged.

It's just nothing of note at all here with a powerslam by Farroq when Bradshaw jumps from the ropes being the only thing decent at all. Funk won't tag out and in the big brawl Scorpio pins him after a 450. Bradshaw then beats all three of them up as he turns heel.

Rating: D. This was just bland as heck and no one was interested at all. It would have been fine on Raw I guess, but this had no business being on a PPV. The wrestling wasn't that good, there was no story or build and no one really seemed to care that a 54 year old man was leaving. Can you blame them really?

Vader vs. Mark Henry

Apparently they had a tug of war or something on Shotgun Saturday Night which is a show I should review in a lot more detail someday. I just do not get what Vince's problem is. Mark Henry is described by JR as still being raw and a rookie when he's been in the company and a professional for over two years at this point. Vader has been a three time world champion in WCW.

The crowd is chanting VADER for the majority of the match. So how does the booking go of course? Henry gets his head handed to him for the majority of the match and hits two moves to win it. He kicks out of a move that more or less is the Vader Bomb, hits a bad powerslam and a splash to win it. WHAT THE

HECK IS YOUR PROBLEM VINCE MCMAHON???

Why in the world would you not push a guy like Vader but have Mark freaking Henry still be a big deal? It's been 13 years and he's the same worker he was back then. Why in the world was he kept around when he gets hurt every five minutes while Vader is getting cheers but can't keep a job?

Vader is clearly getting in better shape too as he's visibly not as fat but more muscular and maybe a hair faster, while Henry's chest looks rather horrible. Seriously, Vince needs to get his head some fresh air.

Rating: C. Vader of course does all the work and makes Henry's level of suck reach only that of a vacuum and not a tornado. Henry botched a slam at the beginning of this match. Do you realize how difficult it is to botch a slam? It's the most basic move there is after a punch. The sad thing is he could still botch it today and likely has. This just had me shaking my head and making me a bit angry. There was no sense at all to do this to Vader.

The Outlaws say they'll be watching this next match closely.

LOD vs. DOA

Dang was there a spelling bee coming up with all of these abbreviations or something? Anyway, this is the convergence of two storylines in one as Paul Ellering, LOD's mentor and the only person that's ever been able to control them left them for the DOA a few weeks ago.

This was combined with the beginning of Hawk's alcoholism storyline which evolved into a drug problem which evolved into him falling off of the top of the big screen one night which evolved into a storyline that a lot of people got a bad taste in their mouths because of. It just never felt right. Once again, Vince runs down another very over team in exchange for a copy of them, in this case the DOA. Anyway, this one is

short and we don't really see any effect of Hawk's "condition."

It's fast for the most part with a standard tag team formula of faces dominate, heels take over, hot tag, finish. There's nothing wrong with that and it works pretty well here. Animal even uses a dropkick and a pretty good one at that. He always was the more polished of the two. Anyway, the finish here is fairly simple: switch after the Doomsday Device leads to the pin. The main thing here was DOA's manager being crazy according to Ross, but he really just acts like a normal heel manager. There's nothing really all that crazy about him when you watch this match, so I guess there was a promo or something like that where his craziness was more explained. Either way, this was what you would expect from two teams like this.

Rating: B. Not bad but given the four guys out there, this was as good as it was going to get. Hawk gets beat up, tags Animal who cleans house, and then since the LOD was dominant in the 80s, Vince says screw you to the fans and pushes another team to the moon who never did anything in the company.

Dungeon Match: Owen Hart vs. Ken Shamrock

This is in the famous Hart Family Dungeon for absolutely no reason at all. In something else that there's no point to, Dan Severn, Shamrock's UFC rival is the referee. He wrestled as the NWA Champion forever and has a four year reign to his credit, but it was during the time when the company was completely dead. He was at an MMA tournament in Japan when he was called on to defend the title at a PPV called TNA.

He had to forfeit and Shamrock became the first TNA Champion. Anyway, Owen and Shamrock are apparently feuding so we're having a match in Owen's basement. This seriously looks like a homemade wrestling project that would be thrown on YouTube or something. Severn just leaning against the window when

Shamrock makes his entrance amuses me for some reason. Anyway, this is submission only.

This looks dangerously close to a shoot with how hard they're hitting each other in there. You get some very stiff shots into the wooden walls and they use the water pipe to get in the air. I'm really not sure if this is terrible or awesome. Anyway, they beat on each other for a bit until Owen, and I wish I was making this up, lifts Shamrock into the air and his head goes through the ceiling.

Anyone else thing that just sounds funny? Anyway, they brawl a bit more but Shamrock kicks Severn in the head, allowing Owen to grab a dumbbell and smash Shamrock in the head. He locks on a crossface and then taps Shamrock for him as Severn is waking up to declare Owen the winner. Owen goes through the dungeon (which is one room) and into the garage to leave. This didn't last five minutes.

Rating: C. I gave it a C because I have no idea what to say about this. It was a cross between wrestling, UFC and backyard fighting. The whole thing was meant I think as just a way to have a novelty but it was somewhere in between sweet and terrible. Really just a weird thing.

In the back, Vince says that he has a replacement partner in case Taker doesn't show up: Brooklyn Brawler.

Recap of HHH vs. Rock, which was supposed to be title for title as previously mentioned.

IC Title: HHH vs. Rock

This is two out of three falls. One thing I've never liked about 2/3 falls: pretty much whoever wins the first fall should be the champion shouldn't they, at least if it's by pin or submission? I mean, they beat the champion in a title match in a way by which the title can change hands. Also, for some reason I love HHH's tights here.

This is yet again a match where DX and the Nation are there and have no real point of being there other than to act as a bunch of seconds. After the 37 other people clear out of the ring it's time to get going. Slaughter sends off a bunch of people and only lets Chyna stay out there because she has a legit manager's license. I'd love to take that test.

Crotch chop by HHH and it's on. We have a thirty minute time limit which is likely going to come into play here. Chyna drills Rock behind the referee's back as you can tell they're in for a long one here. We brawl up the aisle a bit and HHH controls. Jerry asks an interesting question: if they're both counted out is that one fall apiece or just the first fall?

Game gets sent into the steps and Rock starts dominating. The fans think Rocky Sucks. Back in the ring the momentum changes again. These two are far better at emitting emotion in a match than most guys are today. You get the feeling that this could end at anytime rather than just killing time until the finish.

With Rock distracting the referee Mark Henry comes down and splashes HHH. Billy Gunn comes out for the save and Henry heads to the back. Rock gets a belt shot for two. We hit a chinlock as Rock gets to run some time off. All Rock at this point. Dang Rock looks like he's roided up something huge here. I mean he's always been a big guy but he looks muscular here.

Back to that chinlock as we're probably about 15 minutes into this. HHH gets some comeback offense in and hits the knee to the face. Rock grabs him and throws him at the top rope for a hot shot. Here comes Godfather but the Outlaws run out before he can even make it to the mats at ringside.

Rock keeps shoving the referee but it's a distraction so that D'Lo can come in with the European Title but HHH stops him. He walks into a Rock Bottom to make it 1-0 Rock though. We have a one minute rest period now. Rock beats him up for awhile but

gets sent into the railing. He pops off of that and KILLS Rock with a clothesline.

People's Elbow hits as Brown is getting back up for two. HHH gets a big clothesline and both guys are down. We're under 10 minutes to go here and Brown is getting back up. Chyna takes him out and while she's being reprimanded, X-Pac runs down for an X Factor for two. Rock brings in a chair but accidentally pops the referee with it.

With no referee Chyna runs in for a low blow and a DDT on a chair. You might notice the high level of the term RUN-IN here. That evens us at one fall with about 5 minutes to go. After the rest period other referees have come out to help their fallen official so there's no referee there. We only have two minutes left.

HHH gets all fired up as Hebner is here now. Facebuster sets up the 6th crotch chop and a big clothesline for two at a minute left. Samoan Drop puts HHH down for two as they were moving there for a bit.

They slug it out and Rock sets for the Rock Bottom but HHH counters into a SWEET Pedigree as the time is up. Oh man the fans are not happy. The Nation and DX come out for the big beatdown. HHH would get one last shot at the title in August at Summerslam and to say it blows this away is an understatement.

Rating: C+. I HATE the ending here. Who in the world books a 2/3 falls match to end in a time limit? That makes absolutely no sense at all to me. They're getting close to the big blowoff to this match next month which is light years ahead of this, so this was fine I guess. It kept us from having a definitive end to the feud and it makes HHH's win next month all the sweeter because we now know he can beat the Rock.

The main issue here is the amount of run-ins. Everybody comes in and the announcement of the time limit at the start more or

less gave it away. This feud was the one that made both of these guys stars but it is NOTHING compared to what they would do two years later. I can't wait to get to that iron man match.

Bikini Contest: Sable vs. Jackie

See, I told you Sable would be back. Before this starts, Dustin Rhodes comes out and leads us in a prayer, asking for forgiveness for those that watch what's coming. This was a really weird period in his career that he was more or less a preacher. He would eventually start saying He is coming back, inferring Jesus but of course meaning Goldust.

Lawler is your moderator of this. Jackie is the annoying woman that allegedly is hot but no one else has ever seemed to see that in her. She's with Mero now and no one could care less. She's in a robe, Sable is in a t-shirt. Jackie goes first and has a red one piece on that's more or less a pair of suspenders. Definite nip slip here as it's easily visible and she covers it up after she's done dancing badly.

Sable takes hers off and has on a half shirt and a thong. She says that Vince, who apparently is the way she got back into the company, said she should wear something more conservative. I think that was supposed to be a kind of sleeping with the boss story or at least an implied one but nothing ever came of it.

Anyway, she says it's live TV and there's nothing Vince can do so she pulls her half shirt off to reveal painted handprints with pasties over the nipples. Of course she wins and of course Vince comes and covers her up with his coat. The next night they reversed it, saying that wasn't a bikini because we have to waste some time on all Raws.

Rating: F. This was freaking stupid and not even a decent contest. This was just bad.

Recap of the main event feud that is complicated to say the least. It was Russo's magnum opus as it was a year long storyline that culminated with the swerve to end all swerves as Vince goes so far as to terrorize his own family due to his obsession with making Austin's life a nightmare.

That would come later though as at the moment the main story was that Vince, Taker and Kane were part of a conspiracy against Austin. This started because Austin hit Taker with a chair by mistake when Taker was trying to help Austin against Kane and Mankind. After that Taker was seen going into his own locker room with Kane standing in it. That led to the theory that Taker was in on it.

Tag Titles: Taker/Austin vs. Mankind/Kane

The heels won the titles from the Outlaws on Raw a few weeks ago. Taker comes out to new music after getting there twenty minutes ago apparently. This is exactly what you would expect from a main event tag match with these four, but it's given nearly half an hour. All four guys beat on each other and the tension between Austin and Taker is clear. They brawl on the floor, in the ring and all over the place.

It's very hard to comment on a match like this because the first 15-20 minutes or so are just what you would expect in a match like this with very little of note. Austin keeps hitting stunners but there are kickouts every time or someone interferes. It's a good match, but I really don't get why the titles had to be involved.

Putting two guys that are big singles stars as tag champions rarely if ever works and it didn't here, as the faces win but lost them back I think either the next night or 8 days later. Taker wins it with a tombstone on Kane.

Rating: B+. This was fine, but it made no sense to change the titles back so fast. It was Russo 101 to make them just a prop, which I've always hated deeply. Seriously, what's the

point in just making the belts a thing to advance a storyline? They should be on the top tag team, which they did about two weeks later when the Outlaws got them back. The wrestling was top quality with four great workers in there at the top of their game. Great match, but I'm not wild on the storyline.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is bad. There are two matches on it worth anything and one is a horrible ending. The main event is solid but it certainly can't save the show. Aside from that and the opening match, the show is just a waste. Nothing of note happens and the two good matches certainly can't save it.

The rest of the card is just random filler that few cared about. It would get a lot better soon though as the real glory days of the Attitude Era were on the horizon. Skip this for sure though and go grab Summerslam which is light years better and a very solid show.

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