

WWF Wrestling Challenge – January 17, 1988: The Rumble Royal? Since When?

WWF Wrestling Challenge

Date: January 17, 1988

Location: Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

Back to the early 1988 B shows from the boys up north. We're still getting close to the Rumble which probably won't be mentioned more than in passing. Expect some more talk about the upcoming Hogan vs. Andre II match, assuming that's been advertised already. This is going to be very similar to the Superstars shows that I've already done so I'll know a lot of it before I watch it. Let's get to it.

We get a message from Bill Boner, the mayor of Nashville, welcoming us to the city.

Gorilla and Bobby are hosts. Gorilla: "Gorilla Monsoon here with this miserable individual." He's coming out swinging this week.

They run down the card and Duggan is called a policeman. I haven't heard that one before.

Jake Roberts vs. Gino Carabello

Gino can barely make it onto the bottom rope to hold his arms up. Gino gets in a single shot before Jake knees him in the ribs to take over. Jake grabs the arm as the fans chant for the DDT. Short clothesline and a slam set up the DDT for the quick squash win.

Gino gets the snake treatment.

Dino Bravo is going to attempt to break a world bench press record at the Rumble and he speaks French about that for a bit.

Jimmy Hart's Glamor Girls defend the Women's Tag Titles against the Jumping Bomb Angels. Look those challengers up if you want to see some cool women wrestlers. They get a quick word in Japanese here.

Demolition vs. Omar Atlas/Rex King

Ax and let's say King start us off and it's time to pound on the back. Smash comes in for some slams and throws King to the outside. Ax slams him on the concrete and it's time for more pain. A HARD chop puts King in the ropes and it's off to Omar. He gets smashed (see? The name makes sense) down as Gorilla and Heenan have some funny exchanges about Heenan's standing in the company. Fuji says that's enough and the Decapitator ends Omar.

Rating: D. This wasn't much other than a long squash, but the tag matches were almost always longer. Demolition was straight up awesome and they dominated for so long that there was no one capable of hanging with them. The match was boring but at least the music was cool.

Gene keeps telling us about the Rumble Royal coming up next Sunday in Ontario. Ron Bass likes his chances and explains the rules one more time.

Bad News Brown is coming.

Jim Duggan vs. Joe Mirto

Harley Race says he's the real king. Heenan bails to go take care of something else as Duggan pounds away. Mirto is a big guy too so this is even more impressive. Three Point Clothesline ends this.

Van Van Horne vs. Rick Rude

Gorilla thinks Rude vs. Warrior would be a classic. Well I wouldn't say classic but it was certainly good so chalk up most of one for Monsoon. Rude offers a free shot at the ribs which does nothing of course so he snap suplexes Van Horne after shrugging it off. Rude keeps beating him down but Heenan won't let him end it. Oh ok now he can so Rude hits a NICE dropkick. I've never seen him do that before but it worked perfectly. Rude Awakening ends this.

More Rumble stuff. The Gang and Reed aren't wanting to go to Canada but they'll go for the money.

Young Stallions vs. Los Conquistadors

Powers starts with let's say #1 and armdrags him down. Off to #2 who gets caught as well. The Stallions double team #2 as Heenan is back with facts about Los Conquistadors. They're from South America and one of them is not named Raoul. One of them, the one we'll presume isn't named Raoul, comes off the top with a shot to the back of Powers and more double teaming commences. #1 misses a dive off the top and it's off to Roma. No one in the crowd seems to care as Powers hits a powerslam on #2 for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not the worst match in the world but the Stallions weren't interesting at all. They were both your run of the mill muscle guys that were nothing different than any other guys with their builds would have been. There's just nothing there and that's why no one cared about them. Even in a less crowded tag team scene they wouldn't have meant anything.

We get our "live" interview segment with Andre and DiBiase. They talk about the Main Event and Andre says he'll win the title for DiBiase.

Ultimate Warrior vs. Brian Costello

Warrior immediately clotheslines him over the top to the floor before suplexing him back in. Someone gives Heenan an

envelope. Gorilla press and splash get the pin.

Bolsheviks/Butch Reed/One Man Gang vs. Killer Bees/Lanny Poffo/Rick Hunter

This is the closest thing you'll get to a big match on this show for all intents and purposes. The Bees break up the Soviet anthem and we start with Blair vs. Boris. Off to Brunzell quickly as Heenan shows Gorilla a letter from Tunney reinstating the Islanders. O'Connor Roll gets two on Nikolai, who locks in a bearhug on Brunzell. Reed comes in and runs over Lanny with an elbow and Hunter comes in. Reed runs him over and the Gang hits whatever he called the gordbuster for the pin. Not enough to rate but it was a squash.

Beefcake has his own small bullhorns which he'll give to the fans to counteract the Megaphone. Then it'll be him vs. Valentine, which is what he wants.

Gorilla and Bobby wrap it up.

Overall Rating: D+. Nothing of note here but it wasn't bad. The idea was to talk about the Main Event and it's pretty clear that no one intended the Rumble to be a major event. I'm more curious about what they're doing with the name, as it was Rumble Royal a week before the show but the Royal Rumble when it aired. Anyway, pretty weak show, but things would pick up soon.

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