

SuperBrawl 1997: Who Knew Alcatraz Was So Easily Hijacked?

Superbrawl 1997

Date: February 23, 1997

Location: Cow Palace, San Francisco, California

Attendance: 13,324

Commentators: Dusty Rhodes, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

I had a request to do Uncensored 97 and since I have every show from Beach Blast 93 through Souled Out 97 and there's one show in between Souled Out and Uncensored, I figured I'd do that one show (Superbrawl) and then Uncensored. Wow that was a long sentence. Anyway the main event here is Hogan vs. Piper for the title because for absolutely no apparent reason, Starrcade was non-title. Let's get to it.

We open in Alcatraz. As in inside the closed prison with Piper in a cell. Apparently he's escaping to go to the arena to face Hogan. How much do you think this cost them to make? He had these videos playing for a long time so his shirt is in tatters and all that jazz. He gets on a sail boat and shouts at the city. That's WCW for you.

We recap Malenko vs. Syxx. The idea is that Syxx has been stealing belts that don't belong to him such as Eddie's US Title and Dean's Cruiserweight Title.

Cruiserweight Title: Syxx vs. Dean Malenko

Syxx has the belt itself but Dean is champion. There's a huge space between the entrance and the aisle. Dean is all ticked off to start and hits a leg lariat for two but pulls Syxx up. Brainbuster gets two. Powerslam gets the same as this has been one sided for the first few minutes. Syxx gets caught in the

Tree of Woe as this aggressive Dean is kind of cool. Doesn't suit him at all but it's kind of cool.

Cloverleaf doesn't work so a cross body sends both guys to the floor. Back in the ring and Syxx finally gets a kick to the face to take Dean down. Syxx hits that three kick combination of his in the corner to set up a Bronco Buster. We hear about Barry Bonds coming to San Francisco which doesn't mean much but the match is going kind of slowly and I need something to talk about.

Sleeper goes on for a bit as Malenko counters with a belly to back for two. Dean's neck is messed up so Bobby suggests neckbreakers or piledrivers. Syxx goes with a brainbuster instead and follows with a guillotine legdrop for two. Love that move. Back to the sleeper as we talk about Hogan and Piper now and how everyone is concerned about Piper. Dean throws on a sleeper for irony I guess but they ram into each other and down they go.

The announcers debate trains for awhile and how they crash which is annoying as my grandmother is currently heading to Washington via train. Syxx gets crotched on the top but reverses a belly to back off the top into a cross body to put Dean down. Syxx goes for the belt and Eddie IMMEDIATELY sprints out to stop him. Tug of war winds up sending the belt into Dean's head for the pin and the NWO's third title.

Rating: C. Pretty good match here which set up Eddie vs. Dean later I think. This was fine with the Cruiserweight formula of mat based guy (well kind of) being a heel vs. the fast paced guy (again kind of) being the face. Nothing very good here and not the best choice for an opener but I've seen far worse before.

DDP has a match with someone in the NWO tonight but doesn't know against who so he runs down the list of the possible opponents. Gene thinks Buff Bagwell and what do you know he

gets word that it's him.

Konnan/La Parka/Villano IV vs. Ciclope/Super Calo/Juventud Guerrera

Not sure if this is trios rules or just a regular match. Calo's team is the face team. Villano vs. Ciclope to start us off as we talk about Ray Stevens who passed away about 10 months earlier. Villano apparently means villain which is named after a character that all the Villanos' father played in an El Santo movie back in the 50s. These guys are a bit bigger than most luchadores but it doesn't matter as we're off to Konnan and Juvy.

Rolling clothesline puts Guerrera down but a springboard dropkick changes momentum. And never mind as Konnan remembers he's the real star here and beats up everyone to bring in Parka to face Calo. It's moving too fast here to really keep track of it. Calo sends him to the floor and hits a slingshot Swanton. Parka puts him in a chair as selling is completely forgotten here and crashes into him.

Villano vs. Ciclope again as we've started all over apparently. Ciclope TOTALLY botches a moonsault to the floor as he veers to the left and lands hard. Off to Parka vs. Juvy with Parka hitting what we would call a Whisper in the Wind. Slingshot rana by Juvy gets two. Villano and Konnan get what was supposed to be a Doomsday Device on Juvy and follow it with a double leglock.

Everyone goes in and it was a six man submission hold/pin attempt at the same time. Everything breaks down and they all get tossed around with Konnan and Villano left standing. They do a four person leg hold called the Star and Parka puts Juvy in a surfboard in the middle. Triple suicide dive by the faces with Juvy completely missing Konnan but he tried. Back in the ring Konnan gets two on a Power Drop (Razor's Edge into a sitout powerbomb) but they call it three despite Juvy's arm

being up maybe a second early.

Rating: C. Well that was something. I have no idea what it was but it was something. This was just another random Mexican Cruiserweight match which wasn't very good but they were trying to pop the fans a bit. Not enough dives to make the fans care but it definitely got your attention. Not sure if that's a good thing or not though.

TV Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Prince Iaukea

WCW put their midcard title on a Samoan by beating a blueblood just after Rocky Maivia did in the WWF. No reason given why Iaukea, who meant nothing, popped up to become a champion but I'm sure it wasn't copying WWF. Not at all. Rey is still young and awesome here with both knees intact. Technical stuff to start with no one being able to get an extended advantage.

The Prince misses a springboard shot but gets a kick to the face for two. Off to the floor as Dusty talks about becoming a king. Bobby wants to know what he's a prince of, suggesting Omaha. Big dive by Iaukea takes Rey down on the floor and he takes over. The fans get distracted by something in the audience as he hits a suplex on Rey and we hit the chinlock.

Iaukea is more or less the default heel because only an idiot (or Russo) would try to make Rey a heel. Prince tries to come off the top but gets caught by a dropkick and a rana takes Iaukea to the floor. In a SICK bump, Rey lays him on the floor and gets a running dive through the ropes with a front flip to land on Iaukea (not a Swanton but more of a back splash).

Back in the ring and a spinwheel kick and falling moonsault (he stood on the top and dropped down onto the rope for the moonsault) get two for Rey. The Prince comes back with what would become known as an Angle Slam off the top as Regal, the former champion, comes down. They botch a top rope rana so they try a modified version of it. Regal pulls Rey down and his face goes into the apron, allowing Prince to pin him. He

didn't see Regal drop him on the apron.

Rating: C. Not bad here and the reason for Regal is Rey distracted Regal on Nitro to cost Regal the title. Not much of a match as the third straight cruiserweight style match got a bit tiring. Iaukea went nowhere after losing the title while Rey would go on to become Rey Mysterio. Always cool to see two different paths like this here.

Iaukea tries to give Rey the belt when he figures out Regal cheated but Rey doesn't want it. So no one wants to be champion? I've heard of worse ways to kill a belt.

The Giant talks about how the Outsiders like to play mind games but tonight it's his game at his speed. He has a handicap match later since Luger is hurt.

Buff Bagwell vs. Diamond Dallas Page

DDP is in the middle of the push of a lifetime by being the first guy to turn down the NWO so this could have been a stuffed panda in an NWO shirt and DDP would have fit in perfectly. Page isn't quite the People's Champion yet as he still has the cigar but it's shaping up quickly. Very slow start as Page hits some basic stuff, including a neckbreaker that Bagwell would use as a regular move in a few years.

Out to the floor as Bagwell gets a shot in and Dusty talks about various rambling things. Bagwell hasn't been heel that long at this point so he doesn't have his stuff down yet. Small package gets two for Page but he walks into a clothesline to take him down. The referee gets in Bagwell's face in a funny bit. Discus clothesline and both guys are down. Heenan sounds drunk again.

Here comes the comeback as Bagwell is just a step above a jobber so it's not much of a comeback. Helicopter bomb gets two even though it would be a propeller that didn't spin that much. Diamond Cutter doesn't work as Bagwell hits his

Fisherman's suplex finisher but wants the referee to count Page out for ten instead of covering him.

When that of course fails he tries a neckbreaker which is reversed into a Diamond Cutter to bring the crowd straight to its feet. And here's the NWO G-Team of Mr. Wallstreet, Nick Patrick and Syxx for the save. Page actually runs from them because nothing spells fear like IRS and a referee. Page wins by DQ because we can't have Buff Bagwell get pinned to hurt his credibility right?

Rating: D+. Just a match really with nothing of note going on. DDP could have realistically challenged any NWO person at this point so Bagwell was just the opponent of the night for him. The ending is pretty freaking stupid as the fans wanted to see Page win with the Diamond Cutter and it's not like this was against Hogan. It's against a lackey and a new one at that. What's the point?

US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Eddie Guerrero

Gee think this will be good? The graphic says TV Title because WCW is stupid. Eddie is champion here and Jericho is still relatively unknown here having debuted in August but only doing random cruiserweight stuff. Let's give him a shot at the second biggest title in the company on PPV! Tony says the wrong year for the first Superbrawl (it was 91).

Technical stuff to start and Eddie works on the legs a bit. Dusty rambles a lot and after we talk about the new generation we better talk about Hogan and Piper again. Crowd is DEAD because this is just a random title match with no particular rhyme or reason. Test of strength doesn't prove anything and more technical stuff follows. Very back and forth match with no one getting an advantage.

Spinebuster sets up the Liontamer which doesn't have a name yet and the announcers criticize it because they don't get it yet. Off to a chinlock as Jericho has been winning for the

majority of the match. Eddie is a bit off because he cost Dean the title earlier. Jericho gets a backbreaker on him which is more or less a torture rack. He drops down into another backbreaker for two.

They speed things up a bit and Jericho misses a cross body out of the corner and Eddie gets a powerbomb for two. Brainbuster looks to set up the frog splash but he rolls through it and Jericho gets a NICE release German to put both guys down. Things slow down a bit now and Eddie reverses a bunch of stuff before an overhead belly to belly gets two for Jericho. Eddie gets crotched on the top and a springboard dropkick puts him on the floor so Jericho can hit a pescado.

Back in Eddie catches him in an atomic drop as Chris comes off the top. They both try kicks (drop for Eddie, spinwheel for Jericho) and Jericho might have hurt his knee. They collide again and we're both down again. Powerslam gets two for Jericho. Suplex reversal gets two for Eddie but he walks into a superkick and La Magistrol for two. Jericho counters a tornado DDT into a northern lights suplex for two. We get a reversal sequence and Eddie comes out with a sunset flip for the surprise pin.

Rating: B. Very good match here which is exactly what you would expect. Both guys worked very hard out there and I'd be shocked if this isn't the runaway match of the night. That being said, neither guy would get anything out of it as Eddie dropped the title a month later and Jericho wouldn't do anything until June when he won the Cruiserweight Title and was in that division for like a year.

Faces of Fear vs. Harlem Heat vs. Public Enemy

This was supposed to be a four corners match with the Steiners but the Outsiders and Syxx ran their car off the road to injure them, filmed it, and AIRED IT ON NITRO. Naturally the Steiners said let us win the titles in a match instead of, you

know, PROSECUTING THEM AS FELONS! This isn't for the #1 contender spot because the Steiners aren't in it if that makes sense.

Rocco Rock is bald now. Rock and Barbarian start us off. Powerslam gets two for the Samoan/Tongan/stereotype of the island monster. Stevie comes in and Rock gets beaten up a bit more. Grunge comes in and Heat takes him down with ease. Booker gets the axe kick for two on Grunge. Dusty is of course losing his mind over everything here and won't shut up.

Booker gets a side slam and a Spinarooni to set up the Harlem Side Kick to take Grunge down. Meng comes in and beats on Booker a lot, including hitting a dropkick of all things. Clubberin commences and Booker is in trouble. Belly to belly superplex gets two for Barbarian. Meng hits a Piledriver on Booker for two. The Islanders hit their signature powerbomb combo for two and everything breaks down. Public Enemy hits a double team move off the top with no tag whatsoever and the referee is like whatever and gets the pin on Barbarian. Sure why not.

Rating: D-. So this was a bad match with nothing on the line and the ending was completely against tag team rules. Well of course it was. And this made it to PPV. Having Tony remind us that even though Public Enemy won a big tag team match but ARE NOT #1 contenders really points out how stupid this was.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Steve McMichael

Mongo is a Horseman and if Jarrett wins, he gets to be the fifth Horseman, which would be Benoit, Flair, Anderson, Mongo and Jarrett. This is when Jarrett had long hair, country music and not a shred of credibility. Flair and Anderson are out with injuries at this point so this is more or less an attempt to build up a new generation. Also Debra is in the middle of all this.

Someone keeps ringing a cowbell at ringside. Jarrett gets a

hiptoss and struts a bit. Powerslam gets no cover for Mongo. Debra stops Mongo and here comes Jarrett. Out to the floor again and it's all Mongo. Terribly boring stuff here as Jarrett has no heat and Mongo isn't anything good at all. It would be about a year and a half before Jarrett got anything resembling credibility which seemed to happen when he cut his hair.

Lots of choking and slow moving stuff here like walking around. Sleeper by Mongo and Jarrett gets a suplex to escape. Debra isn't sure who to help. Cross body gets two for Jarrett and the referee goes down on the kickout. Mongo wants his briefcase but Debra says no, throwing it over his head so Jarrett can clock Mongo with it and become a Horseman.

Rating: D. This is one of those matches that is technically ok but at the same time there was nothing going on. They were in slow motion almost all the time and the stakes meant nothing as no one bought either guy as a Horseman. Weak match overall and of course they feuded forever, eventually over the US Title.

Chris Benoit vs. Kevin Sullivan

This is a death match which means street fight. Jackie is with Sullivan and Woman is with Benoit. The chicks will be strapped together for no apparent reason. These two feuded FOREVER and it never particularly went anywhere other than giving us one or two great matches and then the guys trying to redo the matches over and over again which never worked. This would be (I think/hope) the final one.

Both pairs start brawling and it's a nice pop for that surprisingly. The women are the focus here of course as Benoit and Sullivan have the most basic match you can have that is still classified as pro wrestling. They're suplexing each other, as in butterfly/regular varieties, in a DEATH match. Woman crotches Sullivan with the strap and the girls get

unattached. Benoit gets hung, which I guess you could call foreshadowing?

Dusty freaks out because a woman is doing something so this is turned into a total joke. The girls beat on the guys as I want this to end very badly. The guys watch the girls then wake up and beat on each other. The girls get left in the ring as the guys fight up the aisle. It's split screen time because WCW enjoys doing that for some reason.

The guys fight into the back and we're on one screen now. They throw stuff at each other and it's time to go back into the arena after about a minute or so. The referee, ever the genius, stayed with the girls instead of going to the back where a pin could have happened. Back in the ring and Benoit gets caught in the Tree of Woe, which is one of Sullivan's finishers.

Woman saves and Benoit pops up to piledrive Sullivan. Jackie doesn't hit Woman but she falls down anyway. It's table time which wasn't a well known wrestling thing yet so it was still a fairly big deal. Sullivan goes on the table, Jackie gets on top of him for the sake of protection, Benoit is like screw it and dives on both of them, the table doesn't break, Sullivan is pinned under the table.

Rating: D. Terribly boring stuff here as this was a DEATH match and it was a comedy match. No idea what they thought the appeal to this would be but it didn't work in the slightest. This feud was straight up played already so they kept going with it for months and months on end. Weak match, feud sucked, wasn't funny.

LONG post match stuff sees everyone in the back not known as a wrestler comes out to help them and everyone goes out on a stretcher. Eats up like 6 minutes. Naturally Dusty says Hogan and Piper could end up like this. Can you imagine either of them either coming off the top or going through a table? Give

me a break. Woman doesn't look bad with her hair pulled back.

Tag Titles: Outsiders vs. The Giant

Ok so there's a backstory here. Giant and Luger are partners but Luger has a broken hand/arm and couldn't get a doctor's clearance in time so Giant has to go this alone. Syxx is with the champs. Hall starts off here with the idea being to tick Giant off. Hall hammers away which seems to just be getting him in trouble. One armed slam by Giant and it's off to Nash. This was the teased match for an entire year which didn't happen until the following January because Nash didn't want to job to Giant.

Giant gets a dropkick to send Nash to the floor and manhandles him with ease, including ramming him into the post. Elbow gets two back in the ring. Nash gets in a shot with the Cruiserweight Title and Hall adds what was supposed to be a bulldog but Hall manages to wind up behind Giant, making it more like a Zig Zag.

Basically this is 3-1 and that's about what was expected. Nash misses the running pelvis to the head with Giant on the middle rope in a 619 position. That move REALLY needs a name. Off to Hall again who hammers away in the corner. Giant fights them off as Syxx comes in and slips the belt to Hall who drops Giant with it. Nash manages to powerbomb Giant in a cool spot as somehow we haven't had a DQ yet.

Here's Luger with a cast on to clean house. He Racks Nash who hurt his back on the powerbomb. That rings a bell for a submission somehow but wait, Nash wasn't legal. Therefore Giant (illegal) chokeslams Hall, the legal man, and pins him for the definitive pin. Naturally this was overturned the next night on Nitro for literally no reason other than "that wasn't legal" but it was a stupid moment so I can forgive it.

Rating: D+. Match was junk for the most part but that powerbomb was indeed awesome. Nash vs. Giant would FINALLY get

blown off 11 months later because WCW saw no problem with Nash screwing over a PPV audience at Starrcade. Anyway, this was more stupid stuff that meant nothing if you were paying attention but it's WCW so there you go.

We really have to do the main event now don't we?

WCW World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Roddy Piper

WCW didn't do video packages at all and it took a bit to get used to it. Ok so Piper debuted at Halloween Havoc because a mere four years since he meant anything were seen as nothing I guess. Piper got to set up the contract at Starrcade so for some reason he made it non-title. Piper then went to Alcatraz for a week because WCW thought we would care. Piper has said he's not WCW for whatever reason but it's not like anyone cares again. Let's get this over with.

Piper is of course covered in a dirty shirt which is full of holes as they actually tried to make us believe he was in a closed prison for a week. Hogan stalls, apparently channeling his inner Memphis. Piper chases him in the aisle and goes after his eye for no apparent reason back in the ring. There's a low blow as this isn't going to be wrestling is it?

Total brawl of course and Piper no sells a low blow. NWO people come out and Piper beats them up like Sting, Luger, Savage and Giant couldn't because he's old I guess. Piper no sells everything and brawls, using eye pokes (nyuk nyuk nyuk), punches, biting and choking. Hogan gets crotched on the top to add to the "comedy" of this match I'm guessing.

Here come Sting and Savage, who were hanging out at the time. Savage leaves Sting there but Sting stops him. Hogan finally gets a shot in as Savage is chilling on the floor. The fans LOUDLY cheer for Sting as Hogan gets two. Sting just leaves as Hogan beats on Piper. At this time it wasn't clear whose side Sting was on so this was normal for him. Bear hug by Hogan as we see that Savage has lightning bolts on his clothes just

like Hogan. Gee, foreshadowing much?

Another low blow sets up the sleeper by Piper and out of absolutely nowhere we're done. It's as abrupt as it sounds. And then after Piper's hand is raised, Savage pulls Hogan's feet under the ropes even though the referee could see the 10 inches plus between the feet and the ropes. Savage slips something on Hogan's hand, Piper gets drilled, Savage is in the NWO and Hogan keeps the title while no one really gets what's going on at all. The idea is Savage was thrown out of WCW so it was NWO or nothing else.

Rating: F. The match sucked as neither guy could move in the slightest so they were put in back to back PPV main events. The ending is completely stupid as no one got what was going on and it's designed to make Hogan look even weaker than before. Terrible main event and one of the worst ever. Tony not mentioning Savage pulling him under the ropes after the match doesn't help either as we saw Savage pull him.

Piper gets beaten down post match and it's a huge moment or something because Piper was the big savior I guess. Beating ends the show.

Overall Rating: D. There's some watchable stuff on here but the pacing really hurt this show. They had all their exciting matches at the beginning so after the Guerrero/Jericho match they had nothing else they could go with to pick the crowd up. Not the worst WCW show ever, but nothing worth seeing at all because it's more NWO dominance as they get stronger with Savage now. Another weak show.

Remember to like this on Facebook and follow me on Twitter @kbreviews