

On This Day: June 14, 1989 – Clash of the Champions #7: The Ultimate Heel vs. The Ultimate Face

Clash of the Champions 7: Guts and Glory

Date: June 14, 1989

Location: Ritz-Epps Fitness Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Commentators: Jim Ross, Bob Caudle

Oh where to begin here. First off (here I guess), this is being held at an army base so the entire crowd is comprised of soldiers. In other words, they are completely and utterly insane. It's Flag Day and the day that the army was first founded so expect a BIG military theme for this one. This is the build up show for Bash 89, widely considered to be the best WCW/NWA show ever.

Tonight is also the final three matches in the world tag team title tournament. The only other thing of note here is the biggest appearance ever of one of the most hated, complained about and freaking dumbest concepts in the history of professional wrestling. Yep, tonight we see the Ding Dongs. Let's get to it.

Some army dude tells us that the army is ready to fight.

Funk vs. Steamboat tonight. That sounds pretty awesome.

We don't know who Hayes' partner is in the tournament tonight which heavily implies to me that those are your winners.

This is a 3 hour show, making the video just over two hours long. That's much longer than these usually were.

Some NWA Crew guy stands behind Ross and Caudle looking

straight at the camera in a funny moment.

Star Spangled Banner with full military choir. That's kind of cool.

We see some wrestlers doing some ROTC training. Any chance we could have some, like, wrestling?

We see Missy Hyatt and a more or less jobber named Ranger Ross doing a zipline thing.

NWA World Tag Team Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Dynamic Dudes vs. Freebirds

The Dynamic Dudes are Shane Douglas and Johnny Ace as REALLY annoying surfboarders/skateboarders and no one liked them. The Freebirds beat the Road Warriors and the Dudes beat Jack Victory and Rip Morgan. Jimmy Garvin, an associate of the Freebirds for like six years, is the new partner. Terry Gordy was the original partner of Hayes but dropped out for no apparent reason. He's fighting later so it's not like he's hurt.

Ah apparently Garvin is just there and they're using the appropriately named Freebird Rule. It's a good thing the move is named that. It would be awkward if it was named the generic tag team heel rule. Much better this way and what a coincidence too. Hayes and Johnny start us off. The Dudes work over the arm of Garvin and the crowd is red hot. Apparently it would be an upset if an established team beat a new team.

Ross talks about the tournament, the main event, Muta, and the Ding Dong. I can't wait for that one. The level of wrestling in this match is slipping rapidly. We hear about how many soldiers there are here and how the base is like a city. Hot tag to Johnny which makes me think of the Spirit Squad. How are we only five minutes into this? That doesn't seem possible. With Shane on the floor a Hayes DDT ends Johnny to send the Birds to the finals.

Rating: D+. Just a quick tag match here with the ending rarely in doubt. You don't debut a new member of a team and have them lose to a glorified jobber team that few liked at all. This was a standard match also with nothing special at all going on in it. Nothing horrible though.

Ranger Ross vs. The Terrorist

As I read on a blog I read, what kind of military base lets a man known as THE TERRORIST come in without jumping him? Ross is a generic military character but was a legit paratrooper. The Terrorist is played by dying days of ECW manager Jack Victory. It's a one minute squash here with Ross winning with a superkick/big boot (it looked awful). This was rather predictable but the crowd loved it so all is fine.

Video on the Road Warriors. They're awesome don't you know. So awesome they lost in the first round of the tournament. We get Iron Man though so all is not lost.

Muta comes out for something called a Dragon Shy demonstration. The idea is that Hot Stuff Eddie Gilbert has challenged Muta to a Double Jeopardy match, which is where you flip a coin to determine which gimmick is used, in this case Dragon Shy or Coal Miner's Glove. Gary Hart (underrated heel manager) says Muta wants real competition, not these no name guys (he says Gaijin but I don't think a lot of readers would get that term. In short it's not nice).

Muta had spit mist in the eyes of Missy Hyatt who was Gilbert's girlfriend at the time. He runs down and throws fire at Muta, who is terrified of it apparently. The more famous of the two pulls a jobber in front of him and he gets burned badly. Apparently he's hurt but hey we've got squashes to get to so get him out of here.

George South/Cougar Jay vs. Ding Dongs

PLEASE MAKE IT SHORT! Their music is downright whimsical

though. They have bells all over their clothes (full body orange jumpsuits with masks) and a bell in the corner which they ring throughout the entire match. The Ding Dongs are in trouble here vs. generic jobber #2.

We hear about the Great American Bash Series, which is different than what you would be used to. It was actually a big tour and at least one PPV was just a best of show. By 89 this wasn't the case but I'm not sure about earlier than that. Thesz Press gets two for one of the Ding Dongs. The worst part is that they're not a particularly bad team. The gimmick is just so freaking stupid.

Power Hour is debuting on Friday night at 10:20. What a great time to start a wrestling show. A combination elbow drop and knee drop gets a pin on generic jobber #1 who is apparently George South. Bob Caudle immediately says "that was horrible" as I don't think he knew his mic was on.

Rating: N/A. It's short enough to not be able to grade and it's just a squash anyway, but this is one of the more famous bad ideas in wrestling as they more or less left after this. Can't say I blame them as a drunken military crowd booed this. That says a lot.

A United States Representative says thanks for doing this and gee isn't the American Flag awesome?

NWA World Tag Team Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Midnight Express vs. Samoan Swat Team

This would be the Headshrinkers vs. Bobby Eaton/Stan Lane for those unfamiliar. The Express are faces here which is even weirder to see. They beat Bob Orton and Butch Reed while the Swat Team beat Ron Simmons and Ranger Ross. A fan tries to run into the ring during Cornette's introduction and is caught in one of the fastest reactions I've ever seen.

The Swat Team is managed by Dangerously. What kind of a name

is Samoan Swat Team anyway? Paul is more or less nothing here but a guy that can talk. He looks like an idiot, even more so than usual. Cornette swings the tennis racket at him and it's on early. Almost all Express to start us off. The future Rikishi is in trouble early on. They finally take over on Eaton and we enter the formula.

Suplex on the floor and the Samoans clear the ring. Lane finally comes in (and by that I mean after like 2 minutes) and cleans a few rooms. Down goes the referee, in come the Road Warriors, down go the Samoans, Midnights win.

Rating: D. Total nothing match here that goes like six minutes and ends with a weak ending. Apparently the Samoans cost the Road Warriors a spot in the semi-finals. This just went nowhere at all and was done so fast that nothing could have been interesting in it at all. Bad match.

We see Funk/Flair from the previous PPV, setting up the match at the Bash. Good angle. In short, Funk wants a title shot, Flair says no, Funk half kills him, Bash match made. There you go.

Terry Gordy vs. Steve Williams

Total war to start with both guys beating the tar out of each other in this explosion of the Miracle Violence Connection. Kevin Sullivan had more or less brainwashed Williams and then Williams rebelled, resulting in Sullivan paying his old rival Gordy to take out Williams. For the second time tonight, Ross says he could use a cold Coors Light. Soon after this the turnbuckles would have sponsors, so you know what we had to deal with then.

Williams is the face here and sends Gordy to the floor for more brawling. Surprisingly it's not a double countout as we head back into the ring for more fighting. Williams hits a decent (all things considered) crossbody for two. And so much for next month as they're in the Coors Light Corner. Oh dear.

Now they brawl up the aisle again and there's the countout.

Rating: C-. Big physical brawl here but nothing special at all. Williams was always fun to see but this was just to set up a draw which was kind of pointless. LOUD bull chant from the fans so at least they know crap when they see it. Nothing horrible but this just didn't do anything but fill in time.

Mike Justice vs. Norman the Lunatic

It's Bastian Booger as an insane asylum patient with Teddy Long as his manager. It's a 45 second squash and Norman wins with a splash. Nothing else to say here. Oh and hospital orderlies in white coats come out and take him away with Teddy threatening to lock him up if he doesn't go.

We hear about the triple chance King of the Hill battle royal. It's a two ring battle royal where there was one at every Bash show with the winners having a big one at the Bash PPV.

The Freebirds have some new rules, which they don't specify at first. Or at all actually.

Video about Flyin Brian and his groundbreaking stuff.

Varsity Club vs. Steiner Brothers

This is more or less the major debut for the Steiners as a team. Sullivan and Rotunda as their opponents here in a VERY long running feud. This is under Australian rules, whatever that means. The Steiners have Missy with them. Scott is in regular tights so you know this is an early appearance for him. Big brawl to start as Rick is way over.

Hey there's another Coors Light reference and let's thank some army dudes. Rick vs. Mike now which is the real meat of the feud. Ross says hi to all of the fans in Connecticut where they're headed soon which might be a slight jab at WWF but nothing big. The commentary is more or less just a commercial for the upcoming tour.

Kind of a slow start here but the fans are into it and it's nothing bad at all. You can see the superstar in Scott just waiting to get out. The Club throws Scott to the table on the floor and then throws steps at his legs and connects. He's limping badly now which very well could be legit. Ross and Caudle are FREAKING over this which isn't exactly overkill here. Gorgeous dropkick by Rotunda puts Scott down.

Hot tag to Rick but Sullivan had the referee. I love that trick as it's so simple yet it works every time. Mike misses a dropkick and there's the real hot tag. Rick just massacres both guys until Scott can get back up. Sullivan steals Caudle's chair and slides it into Mike who hits a suplex on Scott onto the chair on Scott's already injured back (which was played up throughout the match after landing on the table in a nice mini-story) for the pin.

Rating: B-. This was pretty good with a basic formula, a nice story and a hot crowd packed together into less than 9 minutes. The Steiners would of course go on to become the most successful tag team in company history but this was more or less their first match that meant anything. Fun stuff here and a fairly good match.

Cornette (looking SKINNY) runs down the Freebirds. He was 27 here which is just weird to imagine as he always seems to be this 41 year old man that rants about everything.

Ross: Let's hear from the Governor of North Carolina, Jim Martin. Martin: Hello, I'm Jim Martin, Governor of North Carolina. So what you're saying is he's Jim Martin, Governor of North Carolina? He says basic stuff.

TV Title: Sting vs. Bill Irwin

Sting is more or less the hottest thing in the world but they had no idea what they were going to do with him so they threw the TV Title on him and said go be awesome. To say it worked is an understatement as he won the world title at the Bash the

next year. Luger won't come out for commentary as he's been teasing a heel turn lately. Irwin gives him problems for like a minute and then the Splash ends it with relative ease.

Rating: N/A. Total squash on TV for the TV Champion. What more can you really ask for?

Video on Scott "Gator" Hall. It's Scott Hall with long curly blonde hair as he goes after alligators in a swamp to a bad 80s song. Sweet goodness that's out of nowhere.

Ross is at Flair's house where he's wearing sunglasses and a neck brace. Well of course he is. This is his first interview or first televised appearance since May when he won the title and got hurt by Funk. He's in a Lakers blazer which is odd for some reason. Flair says he's not worried about money as he has enough money to spend in two lifetimes. That's just comical.

He compares this injury to the plane crash as he contradicts all kinds of history as he says after the crash the doctors said he definitely would wrestle again. Nice one there Naitch. Ross asks about the thirty day title defense rule as it has been five weeks since the injury. Flair more or less says they said screw it, let's give him another thirty days. The announcement of his future will come on July first. Flair says he'll get Funk. More or less 6-7 minutes of nothing here.

NWA World Tag Team Title Tournament Finals: Freebirds vs. Midnight Express

Is there a reason why the music for the Birds changed from the first match? It's now Freebird by Lynyrd Skynyrd which makes sense. Dangerously runs out and blasts Cornette with a tennis racket before we get started. The Express opens the racket and there's a horseshoe and a chain inside of it. Nicely done.

Basic feeling out period to start us off as they've never faced each other before which is rather surprising to me given how the 80s were with the territories and people switching

companies very quickly. Garvin beats on Eaton as we're just kind of slowly building up here. The Birds clear the ring as we waste more time.

Eaton goes to the floor for the second time in a minute as I'd love for this match to like, end. He gets beaten down even more as Lane and his kicks get in for the first time in the match. He gets a DDT on Hayes out of nowhere to bring Eaton back in like an idiot after a long beatdown he just went through. Gordy sneaks in for a WEAK powerbomb to end this with the Birds winning the titles.

Rating: D. Another boring match here which didn't get going at all. Way too much stalling and wasting time with the Express just doing nothing at all and the Birds just not being that good. This show has been ok but nothing great and this was the same way as that. Weak match.

Terry Funk vs. Ricky Steamboat

Terry is ranked #10 and Steamboat #1. They lock up and go against the ropes so Patrick gets between them although he gets ridden around the ropes. They chop the HECK out of each other and it's a standoff. SWEET dropkick that hits Funk in the jaw by Ricky. Funk goes to the floor and comes back in for a slugout which Steamboat is lost in.

Funk just punches Steamboat down and looks very evil doing it. He is just such an ugly man and played a natural heel as well as anyone I can think of. Steamboat stands on the top rope for the better part of ever before FINALLY coming off with a huge chop. Then he goes out of character to pick him up and walk nearly a lap around the ring with Funk up in a slam. I like that for some reason.

Funk takes over again as this is a very solid back and forth match. Piledriver hits Steamboat for two which is Funk's finisher. Down goes the referee and Steamboat hits the floor again. Why does everything have to be about hitting? Funk hits

a "running" Piledriver on the floor which is a nice way of saying he took a few steps backwards before hitting it. This gets two as Ross loses it.

Steamboat blocks a top rope splash (???) with knees and takes over a bit again. Gutbuster hits Funk and a top rope chop sets up an enziguri to put Funk outside. Funk grabs the mic and drills Ricky in the head for the DQ. He grabs a chair and looks like he's about to kill Steamboat but Luger runs in for the save.

Rating: B. Solid match here between a great heel and a great face. This was very back and forth and the ending fit perfectly. Steamboat looked great and so did Funk, who was having a legit resurgence of his career at this point. Neither could win which is how it should be. I liked it and it felt like a major match.

Luger says he has no problems and then drills Steamboat, half killing him with the chair and the Rack. He says here lies your #1 contender. Luger is the second ranked guy and is jealous. Sting comes out to get rid of Luger.

After a break, we have a freaking birthday party for the Army. Not a person in the Army, but for the Army itself. The Ft. Bragg Commander makes a very boring speech and gives WCW a trophy. Oh and the choir sings. This must have been RIVETING for the fans at home. This is your last 10 minutes of the show. They sing Happy Birthday to the Army as I want a small firearm for my head.

Ross and Caudle say nothing of note and they just replay the ending of the wrestling as the credits end us.

Overall Rating: C. Not bad here as a lot of stuff was happening and there's some decent stuff, but a lot of this was filler as three hours was just too long. A lot of the squashes and military stuff could have been completely cut out and no one would have minded. The Norman match and the Ding Dongs

match were just stupid. This wasn't the worst show ever, but at three hours it's just too much. Watch only if you're really quite bored.

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