

On This Day (Second Post): July 6, 1997 – In Your House #16: Canadian Stampede: A Forgotten Classic

In Your House 16: Canadian Stampede

Date: July 6, 1997

Location: Saddledome, Calgary *dramatic pause* Alberta, Canada

Attendance: 12,151

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

Well, KOTR has passed. Your highlights are Steve Austin and the returning Shawn Michaels have beaten Owen and the Bulldog for the tag belts. This happened on a Raw but I'm too lazy to go back and correct it. As for the PPV, HHH is your new King of the Ring, and Taker is pretty much fighting every big named heel on the roster. Austin's war with the Hart Foundation has reached a boiling point and here is your blowoff to the biggest part of it.

Since Austin has no friends, he pretty much found four guys that hate the Harts just as much as he does: Goldust, who was feuding with Pillman (I think), Shamrock was feuding with no one in particular but would soon begin a feud with Smith, and the LOD was feuding with the former tag champions for all of two days.

Other than that, the only big match is Taker vs. Vader for the WWF Title. The issue with a ten man tag for your main event is simple: we're looking at a four match card on a PPV. That's a stretch even for these shows. This show is praised for its crowd involvement, with Bret himself saying it's one of his all time favorites. I haven't seen this show in almost 12 years so we'll see how it holds up.

As a side note, this is the end of the traditional IYH formula. After this, IYH would be the subtitle, such as the next show which is Ground Zero: In Your House. It would also be the last two hour show, so these reviews will get longer.

Free For All: Blackjacks vs. Godwinns

The hog men are back to being heels after I don't think they've been on TV at all, so that's a bit weird. For some reason that I don't know, Vince and Lawler are dressed as cowboys so they're all in JR style hats. JR looks at them like he wants to shoot them. Lawler's headset isn't working.

We get some graphics showing the two big matches before the intros of the teams. Taker is rocking his usual sleeveless outfit but he has the title and a cowboy hat on. It's actually somewhere between awesome and ridiculous looking. Not sure which actually. Anyway, let's get to this bad match, which to be fair was free so you can't really complain about it.

The Blackjacks are Barry Windham and Bradshaw, which is a decent pairing as you have two big guys from Texas that are completely opposite styles: Windham has talent and Bradshaw doesn't. Great combination as pairings like this always work best when they're opposites. Apparently the Godwinns are heels since the LOD botches their finisher and broke Henry's neck. Vince says the crowd will be pro-Canadian.

Lawler's headset is fixed as he saves the commentary by saying of course they will be. THEY'RE CANADIAN! Have to love Vince's brilliant impact. Apparently all of the Hart Family will be there tonight. Oh yeah the match. The crowd is way hot for it, but it's a free match to get the crowd excited so what can you expect from it? There's nothing of note here but double teaming wins it for the Godwinns.

Rating: D. It was just a five minute tag match to get things going so it wasn't supposed to light the world on fire. It was a way to get things going, which I guess it did. Nothing to

really say here.

Very nice video package talking about how things are changing in the company and there's no more black and white but rather shades of gray. Austin is the anti-hero now but he's so over that the company doesn't really care. Bret is going to be god incarnate in the ring tonight and it's just going to be fun to watch.

Best sign of the night: Brett is King. They can't spell their hometown legend's name right. That cracks me up.

HHH vs. Mankind

This is a rematch from the KOTR finals. My favorite entrance music plays as HHH comes to the ring. I mean just dang that choir singing his praises is amazing. Recap video showing how different these two are. This has spawned Foley's face turn. The crowd is WHITE hot tonight. Foley imitates HHH's curtsy which is just freaking hysterical.

I've always loved that running elbow from the apron. Who else does that? Foley is just beating the tar out of HHH here and it's fun to watch. Apparently he's the prime minister of Parts Unknown. I guess the Warrior is the mayor? HHH gets a freaking sunset flip of all things. I mean really, WHERE IN THE WORLD DID THESE MOVES GO?

Rock is throwing cross bodies, HHH is sunset flipping people, Austin is coming off the top, I mean what the heck? Match gets turned around when Chyna hip tosses Mankind into the stairs where he slams his leg. A chair shot makes his leg hurt even worse. After that we get HHH working over the knee for a long time but Mankind starts his comeback with a shoulder to the balls which I don't think I've ever seen before.

Chyna is really getting annoying here with all of the interfering. I don't like the constant interfering as it makes her look more important than HHH. It's just distracting and

eventually gets stupid. Finally they brawl to the floor and eventually into the crowd for the double DQ.

Rating: B-. This was a fun, hard hitting match. Any time you can get two guys to just beat the living heck out of each other with a bit of a past together, it's almost always fun. These two had a great amount of chemistry and it would show later on when they were one on one for the world title in a few years. Great stuff here.

They keep brawling through the crowd which is almost always fun to see. HHH is going at it here and you can see the Cerebral Assassin coming out in him. He's starting to get some definition as well so he's really starting to transform into the Game.

We see a recap of Stampede Weekend. There was a parade and all kinds of stuff which is an annual tradition up there. There was a tug of war and a big party which really looks like it would be fun. Bret was a big guest at a rally and there were thousands of people there for him. This seriously is insane.

Bret and the Harts are in the back. Austin interrupts but Bret calls off the dogs, saying he wants it five on five later on. The crowd is hot even seeing him let alone him being in front of the camera. That main event is going to be insane.

Taka Michinoku vs. The Great Sasuke

Fink with a cowboy hat is great. We cut to the crowd and Mankind and HHH are still hammering each other. HHH is busted open but it made him madder. This is a freaking slugout. Now we get to the real match. A graphic says this is a light heavyweight match. Two things: do we really need a graphic to let us know that? We heard their weights and we can see they're small and thin.

Also, isn't light heavyweight an oxymoron? If you're light, how can you be heavy? Why not just lightweight? Actually, why

not you don't have size so you'll never be a world champion-weight? That's the real weight class we're seeing here as WWF tries to make their own cruiserweight division which bombed so badly that words cannot describe it. This starts out as a martial arts match which is ok I guess. Sasuke is the heel here I think.

These two are doing a bunch of random moves which are ok I guess but they have nothing on WCW. Taka however has one of my all time favorite moves as he gets a running start, jumps to the top rope, pauses while on it, and throws a huge dive. That always made me mark out. Sweet looking missile dropkick from Taka. See what I mean? It's just random moves from all over the place. No psychology or anything involved, just random moves. Sasuke wins with a Tiger Suplex.

Rating: C-. This was wild but not particularly entertaining. This was the difference between WCW and WWF in this division: WCW built up guys over time. WWF's division is like the women's division now. There are no stories, very few promos, and the only matches you would ever get are contender's matches and title matches. WCW had a whole division and not the champion against challenger of the month. It was a copy of WCW, minus the thought and the majority of the talent.

We go back to HHH and Mankind who are still fighting. They're outside now and it's still fun, but now we're getting to the point of overkill. I like it so far but they don't need to take it too far.

Recap of the Taker feud, which was supposed to be him vs. Ahmed, which is my memory and the stories I've heard are true, Ahmed was supposed to get the title here. However he legit got hurt and had to stay out of it. A big brawl explains this.

Vader and Bearer are in the back and a newly clean shaven and blonde Paul Bearer talks about what would become one of the best done stories of all time: Taker killing him family.

Through this, we would hear of a man that would be revealed as Undertaker's brother. His name was Kane. More on this in a few months.

WWF Title: Vader vs. Undertaker

Like I said this was thrown together due to Ahmed being hurt. Taker's pop is of course epic, even in Canada. That shows how great he is, as Canada is notorious for booing the faces. Taker is the exception to the rule I suppose, as he is in so many other things. He comes to the ring with the I guess you'd say jacket over his ring gear. He takes it off and there it is: the WWF Title. That just looks perfect on him.

Taker starts off by punching the heck out of Vader. This is exactly what you would expect from these two: hard hitting brawling. Taker beats on him for the first 3 minutes or so but eventually Bearer gets involved and the Mastodon takes over. Vader at this time was just freaking awesome to watch but no one knew what to do with him. He wasn't going to win the belt off a three day notice and after this he would just start flying down the card until he faded into Bolivia.

Part of this might have been due to the absolute worst nerve hold I have ever seen. Vader's hands aren't even clenched. It's him with his hands on Taker's neck and nothing more. It's pathetic looking. There's a serious lack of drama in this match as Taker never really seems to be in any real danger. Vader gets close of course but never puts anything big together.

He kicks Taker low right in front of the referee but there's no DQ called. JR has no clue why there wasn't and neither do I. I thought that was the finish actually. Anyway, Vader goes for the Bomb, Taker blocks it, hits two chokeslams and a tombstone to keep the belt.

Rating: C-. Like I said, there was no drama here. It really felt like this was a title match for the sake of having a

title match, and that rarely if ever works. Now to be fair they had a week to build this up so Vader really was a last second replacement which likely takes a lot away from this. I just wanted more from this match though which pretty much sums up my feelings as a whole: I wanted more.

We get a recap of all of the stuff that the Harts have had for them this weekend. Allegedly many of the lines to just get Bret's autograph were a mile long. Now I don't know if that's true or not, but it sounds amazing either way.

Video package on the history of this feud. Basic stuff here that I won't bother going into except this: Mankind is shown fighting Bret. Why then would you put Goldust, a mid card guy, into the main event and not Mankind, a guy with main event experience? I just don't get that.

Austin's team is in the back. Each cuts a mini-promo and Shamrock's is so bad. Austin says nothing and just leads them to the ring.

Austin's Team vs. The Hart Foundation

Before the match some Canadian band sings O Canada and the crowd is on fire. Hart Family is shown at ringside. Goldust is out first to pretty much no reaction. Hearing that a team's combined weight is over 1,300 pounds is just odd sounding. No Marlena tonight which is a good thing I think. Shamrock gets a pretty good pop. It's not mind blowing but it's good. Three hot women have signs that says the Harts suck. Well I'll be darned.

LOD is very over as well. That's another gimmick that just works no matter what. And now, the captain of the team: for a guy that is supposed to be the arch rival of the national hero, the guy is pretty freaking popular. He got the biggest pop of the team and while there was booing, it was nothing compared to the cheers.

However, he just got outpopped by a mile by Brian Pillman. All five Harts get their own intro, and the fans are insane the whole time. They progressively get louder until they blow the roof off the place for Bret. His pop is one of if not the loudest I have ever heard. You all remember the sign that says if Cena wins we riot. In this case, that would be true.

The difference between Cena and Austin can be made clear right here though: Cena was visibly shaken at One Night Stand. Austin is thriving in this environment. The Harts come to the ring in unison, all wearing leather jackets. That's a nice little touch that's missing from so much today. Tag teams should dress alike. It just makes them look more unified to me.

There's a great visual to start this as all ten men are in the ring but Bret and Austin are in the middle with their eyes locked on each other. All eight others just fade away and all you see are those two. That's absolutely great. They start of course which makes me wonder if that should have been your main event: Bret vs. Austin. However, they've fought so many times and the crowd is so hot for him, I can't really see how it would be better.

The ten man is the right decision. Bret actually wins the first fight to start as the crowd is orgasming on every move. Austin comes back though, beats Bret into the corner, flips the crowd off and THEN whips Bret in. See what he did there? He got a little extra heat going, but it didn't take any momentum away from the match. That's a very nice touch.

Eventually Neidhart gets tagged in. I have come to the conclusion that he is nothing more than a fondly remembered Marty Jannetty. He never did a thing on his own. Actually, Marty did more than Anvil did. That's saying something indeed. Shamrock's belly to belly is just freaking sweet. I'm not liking the tags at the same time thing over and over. Let us see more than just the rivals. Owen apparently has a new

haircut.

It's so new he's had it for three months now. Dang this crowd is intense. They're screaming, yelling, cussing, shouting obscenities at people and will not calm down for one second. You might say they're just-insane. Bulldog actually gets the delayed suplex on Hawk. That's rather impressive.

However, he hits the powerslam and Hawk is up within about three seconds. It was one of the worst no sells I've ever seen. Goldust is put into a tree of woe in the Harts corner and gets one of the worst beatdowns I have ever seen. The crowd sees him get tied up and rises to their feet.

We finally get our first wild brawl of the night as all ten guys come in. During the fracas, (that's your big word for the day people: fracas) Owen's leg is destroyed by Austin. Three times being slammed into the post and a chair shot. He limps to the back with the help of officials so apparently it's 5-4 now, even though this isn't an elimination match. Ass shot of Pillman which is something I didn't really want to see.

Bret retaliates by going after Austin's knee, eventually using the figure four on the post, which when you think about it, doesn't hurt much with the post. It would hurt, but not as bad as they would like it to. Austin goes to the back too as this is very one sided now. That's a tactic I use when I write OCW multi-man matches. Ten guys are just too many to work with so I'll shorten the amount of people in the match.

Vince calls the Harts a nationalistic faction. WELL DUH VINCE! Bulldog beats the living tar out of Shamrock and the crowd is exploding to say the least. Once Goldust comes in, JR does a GREAT Dusty Rhodes impression but I'm not sure how many people would pick up on it. It's so subtle that it's hard to catch. Austin comes back out and it's him vs. Bret again and Austin is beating the tar out of him.

According to Ross, Austin is being excellently executed.

That's a good little line. Austin calls spots to Bret but the beauty of Austin's character is you could believe that he's talking trash to him. Bret is in a sharpshooter as Owen comes back to the ring. Soon thereafter, the Hart brothers at ringside get involved by punching Austin and jumping the rail. Within a few seconds it's a wild brawl and Owen rolls up Austin for the pin.

Post match, we have another wild brawl and for some reason security does nothing to the fans that jumped the railing and lets them get in the ring and celebrate. Austin of course runs back into the ring as the Harts are celebrating with a chair and gets his ass handed to him. Lawler's hatred for Bret will simply never go away.

Of course, Austin is handcuffed instead of the other Harts and is taken away by security. The logic in WWF makes me shake my head at times. Stu gets into the ring afterwards and the crowd is gone completely. There's almost thirty Harts and all of them come into the ring. Make that fifty. The Harts' praises are sung as we go off the air.

Rating: A. This was a great ten man match for many reasons, but the one that is forgotten is the wrestling itself. I wasn't bored once during this match and as someone that can't stand tags to end a show, that's saying a lot. It's probably the best non-gimmick team match I've ever seen. I really liked it and the crowd carried this for the most part, which wasn't actually needed.

Overall Rating: A. The obvious big flaw with the show is that it's just four matches. However, the weakest by far is the light weight match, which was at least watchable. It's far from bad, just not that great. The main event is of course the best on the card with a crowd as hot as I have ever seen. Great show, maybe not all time great, but certainly great and probably the best In Your House so far. At worst, it's second to Mind Games only.

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