

On This Day: December 29, 1991 – New York City House Show: Hogan vs. Flair

WWF House Show

Date: December 29, 1991

Location: Madison Square Garden

Attendance: 11,000

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

Just a random house show that I found so I figured I'd throw it on here. This is from 24/7 so it might be cut. An hour and 48 minutes for a house show seems rather short. This is from the same night as Starrcade 91 and appropriately enough the main event has Ric Flair in it. There is no world champion at this point due to some shenanigans but the Rumble would fix that. This wasn't the best era for the company but the card looks watchable so let's get to it.

Hercules vs. Greg Valentine

Yep it's clipped as two matches are cut off here. Actually based on what I've seen later that's not the case as everything is here but the show is edited from an order perspective. This was originally the third match on the card. Heenan says this is going to be a heck of a match. Hercules is on the very brink of leaving and Valentine is a face for no apparent reason. He had a face push around this time and it BOMBED to the shock of no one.

And now let's talk about the Rumble because that's about as interesting as it's going to get as far as this match goes. With Hammer taking over, we hear something I have never heard before: Hogan and Taker get to draw from #21-#30 in the Rumble. What the heck? I know they had the title before but how have I never heard of that before? This match is really

rather boring indeed.

Hercules has a little gut there and gets a low blow to take over. What does he think this is, the late 90s? We talk about the Rumble more which has Gorilla predicting Santana or Bulldog. Smith I could understand, but dude, TITO SANTANA? I love the guy but come on now. We argue Hogan vs. Flair a bit as Hercules is dominating.

We hit the floor for a bit with Hammer's back being rammed into the apron. Hercules is a very ugly man indeed. This is when he has the long hair going for him which isn't a good look on him. We hit the bearhug to continue this boring mess. Hammer fights back and it turns into a comedy of errors as neither guy can hit a move for like 30 seconds which is funnier than it sounds.

It's the dreaded double clothesline as both guys are down and in trouble. The fans are in trouble too as this match is in desperate need of ending. And there's the ending as we go old school with Valentine getting a belly to back suplex and bridging but Herc gets his shoulder up. Does this guy know ANY other finish to a match?

Rating: D. Boring match for the most part that didn't get the crowd going in the slightest. I've seen worse, but this was a rather dull and uninteresting match for the most part. Both guys meant nothing by this point and everyone knew it. I really don't get why this opened things up and I don't think anyone else did either.

Here are Mustafa and Adnan to complain about things, namely America. The war has been over for nearly a year at this point so this makes even less sense. They call out Slaughter and of all people Gorilla grabs their mic and throws them out.

Virgil vs. Repo Man

Riveting. There's actually a point to this though as Virgil

had won the Million Dollar Title and DiBiase hired Repo Man to repossess it which makes a lot of sense. Repo goes for a rollup immediately which gets him nowhere. Virgil tries a Million Dollar Dream so Repo hits the floor. DiBiase vs. Hart later which should be pretty awesome. Repo can't get anything going until Virgil misses a dive and hits the floor in a nice bump.

We run through Heenan's injury history which is always a bit funny. Repo works on Virgil as this is again going nowhere at all. Seriously, this is something else that you have to wonder who thought it would be a good idea. The crowd is getting bored with this chinlock and even Gorilla acknowledges it. You can tell they're in trouble here.

Repo is rather funny as he hits a knee lift but then stops to make sure that he's still stealthy. His character is an acquired taste to put it mildly. We hit the floor again which gets up nowhere at all. Rollup gets two for Virgil and a small package gets the same. Virgil's offense is so painfully limited.

The bald guy slaps the mat a lot which gets him nothing but a sore hand for the most part. He makes his comeback with some jobber level stuff including a Russian Leg Sweep for two which the referee botches badly. Think Jackson James at Turning Point 2010. And then Repo Man grabs his rope and hook to choke out Virgil for the DQ. And they couldn't just do the pin? Really?

Rating: D. Boring again but a slight step ahead of the last one I guess. Virgil was completely worthless after he stopped working with DiBiase and I think they were finally getting that fact. Repo was just an odd character to put it mildly and I don't think anyone ever really got him if that makes sense. Not completely horrible but still pretty bad.

Skinner vs. Jim Powers

Wow are they even trying here? Skinner is an alligator hunter that now owns FCW, as in the WWE developmental company. Gorilla says it would be a shame to have Skinner, a degenerate, be WWF Champion. Yeah no degenerate could ever hold the world title. To the shock of no one, Powers controls to start and then messes up as the more established star takes over.

Heenan offers managing tips to Skinner as we're in a long chinlock again. You can tell it's a house show and no one really wants to be here at this time of year. I think this aired on New Year's Eve so it's not like anyone was watching it. Skinner jumps into the boot in the stupid looking spot so Powers can take over for a little while.

We get the required jobber offense that gets us nowhere at all. Some of the gems here include a knee lift, ten corner punches and a clothesline. A dropkick gets two as we're just waiting on Skinner to end this. And there it is as it's a reverse DDT which I think was his finisher. He spits on Powers afterwards as was his custom.

Rating: D. Can we PLEASE get a decent match? This was an extended squash. I never got the appeal of Skinner at all, especially considering he was a very talented wrestler that managed to get stuck in a match like this which gets no one anywhere. This went nowhere at all and I don't think anyone expected it to.

Nasty Boys vs. Bushwackers

Gorilla: "Where's that little crossdresser, Jimmy Hart?" DID I MISS SOMETHING? Gorilla Monsoon just asked if Jimmy Hart was a crossdresser. What the heck? Picture Gorilla asking that and thing about how odd it sounds. The Marching Morons are still great. We get a pose off to start and guess who gets cheered louder. Heenan talks about Flair the whole time and I can't say I blame him.

The Nasties stall a lot. That sounds like the name of a villain in a really bad cartoon. They charge the Bushwackers and we're off after a blindside. Evil is defeated though as the Wackers fight them off with wacking and punching. You have to give them credit for going from being some of the most violent and hated men in wrestling to being totally fan friendly and popular, even getting on Family Matters. That was awesome.

We finally get down to a regular match with Sags vs. Luke to start. It's a brawl already again and Battering Rams take out both of the Nasties. Luke vs. Sags again but Knobbs distracts him to allow the evildoers to take over. Gorilla goes back to the crossdressing and Heenan doesn't seem to mind.

Luke gets a sunset flip but the referee isn't paying attention at all. BIG Irish Whip takes down the New Zealander. We hit the chinlock as this is more or less going nowhere. Butch comes in which leads to double teaming which leads to the Nasties messing up which leads to the hot tag sans heat to Butch. Everything breaks down again and Knobbs pins Butch with a clothesline? Well ok then.

Rating: D+. Somehow this is the best match of the night so far. This was nothing special at all but I don't think the ending was ever really in doubt. The Bushwackers were past their expiration date here but they were still getting decent pops at house shows so I guess it was ok. Nothing of any real importance here though.

Heel beatdown follows but Sgt. Slaughter makes the save for no adequately explained reason.

Intercontinental Title: Bret Hart vs. Ted DiBiase

Ok this has to be good. Crowd pops big for the title mention which hopefully is for Bret. Nice pop for Bret when he comes out. Apparently the leather jacket is a new thing here. That's odd to hear indeed. Gorilla thinks Sherri likes Bret. That's a

scary combination: Sherri and Bret with Gorilla watching.

Long feeling out process to start with DiBiase stalling to try to tick Bret off. Bret, the hothead that he is, falls for it to an extent. DiBiase gets a shot to the ribs but runs when Bret comes after him. We hit the floor and it's on. It's weird seeing a big Marlboro ad behind the ring. I love watching DiBiase flip forward. It's perfect every time.

Bret rams DiBiase and "the witch's" heads together to drive Heenan crazy. We hit the headlock on the mat with Bret in control. DiBiase keeps rolling him to the side as this is a chess match so far. It's time to talk about the Rumble some more as Bret hits a dropkick for two and now right back to the headlock.

DiBiase fights to his feet and manages to get a hot shot out of nowhere to turn the tide all over again. As good as Bret was on offense he's somehow even better on defense which is odd indeed. Nice spinning neckbreaker for two. DiBiase hits the chinlock as Sherri keeps distracting the referee so Ted can get some choking in. Bret fights up and gets some punches him but is sent into the corner and smacks his chest against the buckle in one of his signature spots.

Million Dollar Dream goes on and Bret is in big trouble. Sherri grabs the wrench that they use to ring the bell and rings it for the referee as DiBiase grabs both belts and celebrates. Fink calls shenanigans and Hebner throws Sherri out. Bret gets a Russian Leg Sweep out of nowhere to get us back to even. Heenan wants to take the belt to make it a watch.

Bret plays possum (I'm stunned too) and takes over. Nice suplex gets two. Small package gets the same. Middle rope elbow has Ted reeling. We see the Million Dollar trunks pulled down as a gutwrench suplex gets two. DiBiase is knocked to the floor and almost lands on Sherri. Bret hits a perfect pescado

and Ted is reeling. And there's the time limit which thankfully they didn't announce at all. That helps a bit actually.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but the chinlocks kind of hurt it a bit. One of the major things here is that Bret gets to show he can hang with a known master like DiBiase, but I really don't see why they couldn't let Bret get a pin. It's not like DiBiase was doing anything in storylines so it's not like his credibility would really be hurt or something. Odd ending to a rather good match.

Interviews a go-go, mainly focusing on Hogan and Slaughter.

General Adnan/Colonel Mustafa vs. Sgt. Slaughter

The winner gets to raise their own country's flag. Mustafa (Iron Sheik) sings the Iraqi national anthem. No tagging required here I don't think. Nope none at all. They jump Slaughter to start and use his bullet belt to work Slaughter over. Adnan goes outside which apparently he doesn't have to do but does anyway. Most odd indeed.

Sheik gets a shot to Slaughter's throat with something but the referee is distracted. Slaughter gets a clothesline to take over to almost no reaction. Adnan comes in as this needs to end soon due to the high level of suck in the evil foreigners. Slaughter rams them into each other and clotheslines Adnan for the pin to end it even though he wasn't legal I don't think.

Rating: D. Quick but barely long enough to call it a full match. It's pretty bad and thankfully this angle/feud ended soon after this as the time for this thing went on way too long. Nothing special at all here and it was boring and bad on top of all that. Sarge was back though, even though he would be gone relatively soon.

Sarge does the Pledge of Allegiance post match.

Berzerker vs. British Bulldog

This should be short and relatively bitter. Bulldog's music is rather hard to hear here. Crisscross to start and Berzerker kicks him in the head. Bulldog is a favorite in the Rumble because he won some other battle royal in England. Gorilla said the cup he won was ugly. What a great ambassador Gorilla is.

You can tell the fans aren't exactly caring here, even though if the chart I saw is correct, this was the opener. No Fuji with Berzerker here for some reason. Camel clutch by Berzerker has Bulldog in something resembling trouble. Gorilla and Heenan talk about people in the Rumble as they don't care at all here. It's a shame that they have something to talk about here as Gorilla and Jesse could be hilarious when they got bored. Powerslam is blocked and Berzerker falls on him for the pin.

Rating: N. As in nah that didn't really happen. I'm just so bored here that I wanted to do something to break up the monotony. Bulldog gets the worst rollup ever about a second later for the real pin.

Rating: D-. Boring match with these two managing to botch a rollup of all things. That's HARD to do. This went nowhere at all and nothing at all came of it. I get that Bulldog is supposed to be getting a push, but wouldn't the powerslam be a better way to do that? We really needed to protect John Nord?

Chris Walker vs. Brooklyn Brawler

Walker is some muscle head that I'm sure Vince masterbated to a few times in order to get a job. He's awful as Brawler carries him to a bad match. I shudder to think what it would have been like without him. Walker looks a bit like Kerry Von Erich if he was more muscular. The guy can jump though. This is his debut apparently.

Brawler takes over for a bit and gets in his jobber offense. Gorilla wants Hulk to win the Rumble. Well of course he does. Did Gorilla EVER cheer against Hogan? Even against other faces? Walker looks good and that's all he has going for him it seems. Small package gets two. Top rope cross body ends this.

Rating: N/A. Just a squash and nothing too impressive. Walker was about as uninteresting as you could imagine. He's not horrible that is, but he's a body and a decent jumping ability and that's about it. Nothing special here at all.

Hulk Hogan vs. Ric Flair

Think this might be the main event? I love that black robe that Flair has. It's by far his best one. The censor messes up (it's the REAL World Title thing) so there's just a blue dot above Flair's head while you can see the tag title belt. Perfect and Flair jump Hogan as he comes in which of course gets them nowhere.

Hogan beats on Flair for a bit as I think we all know what's coming. Flair Flop as the future champion is in trouble. Heenan is losing it as he says OH COME ON as Hogan beats on him even more. We hit the floor once and then do it again with Hogan destroying him. Belly to back suplex on the floor takes Flair down even harder.

ALL Hogan as he pounds away on Ric on the floor. Gorilla calls it a war but I'd hardly say that as in a war don't both sides need to fight back? Perfect distracts Hogan and Flair gets in a shot to the knee and the regular stuff is on. Perfect tries to get the turnbuckle off but the referee manages to stop it. Hogan slams him off the top and no Figure Four yet which is kind of surprising.

Hogan works on the knee of Flair in a nice little twist. In a nice spot Hogan gets Flair in the figure four and Perfect comes in. Hogan trips Perfect and gets a small package on him

but there was powder thrown in the referee's eyes. I've seen someone do that before but I can't remember who. Flair gets a shot with a foreign object to Hogan's noggin for two but naturally that doesn't work. Hulk Up but Flair is intelligent and RUNS but can't get back in time for the count out. Lots of posing closes us out.

Rating: C+. Pretty weak and generic match but it wasn't bad and Hogan going after Flair's knee was a nice touch. These two never got the proper showdown in the WWF that they should have which is a shame. At the end of the day though it's Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan in the main event in Madison Square Garden. That's hard to beat.

Overall Rating: D+. This was a pretty weak show overall. The main event is good and the IC Title match is rather good but aside from that: there isn't much going on here. It's more or less a big ad for the Rumble but there isn't much about the Rumble if that makes sense. The matches meant nothing at all and not many people seemed to be into this tonight. Bret was but that's typical for him. Everything but those two matches are total meh moments though. Weak show but not unwatchable.

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