

Wrestler of the Day – January 12: Killer Bees

Today we look at a tag team due to one of its members (B. Brian Blair) having a birthday: it's the Killer Bees.

The mid 1980s were as good of a period as there has even been for tag team wrestling, which is a shame for the Bees. They were an incredibly talented team that never got a chance on top because there were just too many other great teams ahead of them. As luck would have it, there's a perfect night to showcase the Bees' talent. On March 15, 1987, there was a one night tag team tournament in Toronto with the winners getting a tag title shot against the Hart Foundation later in the night. We'll be looking at the Bees' matches throughout the evening.

First Round: Kamala/Sika vs. Killer Bees

Sika is more famous for being in the Wild Samoans. Has Kamala ever actually won anything? I don't remember a thing that he actually accomplished. The camera angle is odd at this show as it's from an angle and the ring is kind of up on a platform if that makes sense. The crowd is kind of small too. The ring looks small too. Valiant isn't a good talker but he's energetic. Sika and Brunzell start. For some reason Kamala starts climbing the ropes. Ok then.

No clue why the heels are teaming together. Oh apparently they're a semi-regular tag team. As always the idea of them registering for a tag team is very funny. Their manager, the Grand Wizard, would be replaced by Mr. Fuji, who Shawn Michaels LOVES. They get a double slam on Kamala which was kind of cool. We get to the formula stuff here as Blair, the less talented of the faces, gets beaten down a lot.

That ends though due to the first instance of something I'm sure you'll hear a lot of tonight: heel miscommunication. A hot tag to Brunzell and a quick dropkick gets the win for

them. On replay, you can see how awesome that one was. He kicked Sika right in the freaking face.

Rating: C+. Not bad for an opener at all. They used your standard formula here but at an accelerated pace. To be fair though, the heels are pretty much crap here though and that's hurting things. Bees were their usual solid selves, but they were being held down here by bad opponents.

Semi-Finals: Killer Bees vs. Paul Orndorff/King Kong Bundy

Bundy says that they should just get the titles now. Thanks for that Mr. Bundy. The Bees have their trademark masks which is a nice face acting heelish move. There's no way to tell them apart at this point so I'm not going to try. Again, why is Bundy getting cheered? Apparently Brunzell is in the ring at the moment. This is another quick match as the heels beat down one of the Bees but as they brag to the crowd the Bees do the switch. A rollup ends it.

Rating: D+. Again, just nothing to talk about here. This was maybe 3 minutes long and I have no idea how this is going to end up. This wasn't great or anything at all but the ending sets up the showdown with Demolition, which fits the power vs. speed idea but it doesn't leave many surprises for who is going to win.

Finals: Killer Bees vs. Demolition

So it's a 32 minute final. Yeah I'm thinking NO on that one. Smash and Brunzell start us off as we're talking about Elvis for no apparent reason. This is very reminiscent of all the other matches, with nothing of note happening and this just being your standard match that could have been on a regular TV show. And this is the final match right? Got it. Demolition is dominating of course and here come the masks. Gorilla said those exact words but I typed them first. I BEAT MONSOON!!! And a sunset flip off the top by Brunzell ends it? Ok then.

Rating: C+. A bit better but still nothing at all to write home about, let alone write a review of 23 years after it happened. Oh never mind. Anyway, nothing great here at all but it could have been much worse I guess. That gives us the Bees vs. the Harts for the titles, in a match that happened about 500 times by Brunzell's guesses.

Tag Titles: Killer Bees vs. Hart Foundation

Well ok then. Apparently this is the reward for the win. Better than nothing I guess. The Harts try to walk off since the Bees are wearing their masks but they're declared legal. This should be a good match if nothing else. The masks are removed and we stall some more. Apparently the match has been signed already. That's impressive since the other match ended like 8 minutes ago. Those are some fast lawyers.

Danny Davis is with them and isn't wrestling tonight yet he's wearing the shorts anyway. Ok then. Anvil and Brunzell start us off. Anvil takes his straps off at the very beginning for no adequately explored reason. These four always had solid chemistry together and this doesn't seem to be any exception. A fan jumps the railing for reasons of genuine idiocy. Brunzell runs into Anvil and everyone is down.

We get a lot of standard tag stuff, such as the hot tag with the referee not looking and the slam getting dropkicked for a cover for a long two. The masks go back on and we get a double sleeper. Brunzell gets a small package on Hart but Davis turns it over, allowing Hart to get the pin and keep the titles. Post match the Bees beat up Davis to an ERUPTION.

Rating: B-. By far the best match of the night. I think Brunzell once said these two teams wrestled between 300 and 600 times and it shows. This is one of their weaker matches but it's still pretty decent stuff, given that they had like 8 minutes to do it in. Not great, but good enough.

Since this is from a very old review and the writing sucks, here's a match that showcases the tag team division far better. It's from the first Survivor Series.

Team Hart Foundation vs. Team Strike Force

Hart Foundation, Bolsheviks, Demolition, Dream Team, Islanders

Strike Force, British Bulldogs, Killer Bees, Young Stallions, Fabulous Rougeaus

The rules here are that if one member of a team is eliminated, both members are out so it's still just five eliminations needed. Strike Force recently stunned the Harts for the titles. I think you should know every team here. The Dream Team is Greg Valentine and Dino Bravo and the Stallions are Jim Powers and Paul Roma. I'm a big Strike Force fan so it's good to see the fans pop loudly for them.

I've seen this show many times as it was one of my favorite tapes but I've never figured something out: for this and the main event, the lights are turned down. Why would that be the case? It's clearly darker in the arena now and it's not a dome with sunlight coming in or anything. I've never gotten that. Volkoff and Martel start things off. There are so many people on the apron that you can't see most of the ring from a standard camera shot.

Volkoff powers him down to start before bringing in Zhukov. Since Zhukov is pretty much worthless, Martel beats him up and brings in Santana for the forearm out of nowhere for the quick pin. Santana's reward for the pin: he gets to fight Ax. Ax does his pounding but knocks Tito into the corner and it's off to Jacques Rougeau who speeds things up with a jumping back elbow to take over.

Dino Bravo comes in and the good guys start speeding up their tags. I'm sorry for all of the play by play in this but when you have 18 guys in a match there isn't much room for analysis or anything else. After Bravo gets beaten up by about five different guys we wind up with Smash vs. Dynamite and the Bulldog (Dynamite) gets caught in the heel corner. Well actually it would be the heel side of the ring because they don't all fit

in one corner but corner sounds better.

Off to Haku and they chop it out before Dynamite tags in a Killer Bee who tags in the other Killer Bee. Neidhart comes in and gets his legs stretched by Brunzell and Roma. Back to Smash and then Ax who beat on the (somehow) future Horseman. I'm not listing a lot of the tags as there are probably five of them a minute and there's no point in listing off stuff like "Ax comes in and hits Roma once before tagging back out."

Roma tags in Powers who gets beaten down just as fast as Roma did, so it's off to Jacques again. Not that it matters much as Jacques misses a cross body and Smash gets a quick pin. That's good as we're now down to sixteen guys left in the match. Off to Dynamite vs. Tama but Powers comes in, only to hesitate and gets his head taken off by a clothesline. Neidhart comes in and puts him in an over the shoulder powerbomb position as Haku drops a double ax (is there a single ax?) to the chest.

Off to Roman who gets beaten up by Ax and then Valentine. The Stallions are jobbers for all intents and purposes but they were great at selling so there was a point to having them around. Bravo comes in and hits a gutwrench suplex for two. Roma crawls over and brings in a Killer Bee who tags out to Dynamite almost immediately to face Smash. Smash fires off something similar to Sheamus' ten forearms but shoves the referee, drawing the DQ to knock out Demolition. Notice that they kept Demolition VERY strong here and didn't let them get pinned.

Bret immediately comes in and piledrives Dynamite for only two. Jesse immediately starts singing Bret's praises as he was known to do. Bret misses a charge and hits the post shoulder first and it's off to Powers again to face Tama. Tama misses a Vader Bomb and there's the tag to Martel. Rick cleans house but when he puts the Boston Crab on he's too close to the ropes and Neidhart gets a tag.

Rick gets away enough to bring in Santana who hits the forearm almost immediately for two. The saving shot to the back of Santana's head by Bret is enough for Neidhart to get a pin and eliminate the champions. To recap, we have the Harts, the Dream Team and the Islanders vs. the Bulldogs, the Stallions and the Bees. At least now things can slow down a

lot. Haku hits a HIGH dropkick on Powers as Jesse talks about his great great grandfather coming over on the Mayflower.

Valentine comes in and does Arn Anderson's jump in the air and get crotched spot. Anvil (Neidhart for you schmucks out there) comes in and hot shots Powers followed by a superkick from Haku. Off to Valentine who has his suplex countered but still blocks the tag by bringing in Hitman. Bret suplexes Powers but Roma is still able to get the tag somehow. Back to Valentine who comes off the middle rope with a shot to the back for two.

In something you rarely see, Bret whips Roma into the ropes and knocks Valentine off the apron. Bret misses a dropkick and there's the tag to Dynamite. A belly to back gets two for the Kid and it's off to Roma which is a pretty questionable move given the beating he's taken. Off to Haku vs. Blair as Roma was only in for a few seconds. Davey comes in and it's power vs. power. Make that power vs. Powers but Jim misses a corner charge and Haku tags Anvil.

Powers dives away from Bret and it's time for Davey Boy vs. Bret in a Summerslam 92 preview. Davey uses a perfect gorilla press on Hart and hits the powerslam for two on Haku. Dynamite tries a middle rope headbutt (notice all the similarities between Dynamite and Benoit. Benoit basically cloned himself after Dynamite) on Haku but knocks himself silly, allowing Haku to superkick him for the elimination.

It's 3-2 now and Roma immediately charges in with a dropkick for two. Off to Bravo who misses an elbow and it's off to Powers. Why won't they tag the Bees already? Valentine Hammers away on Powers as do both Harts. Valentine comes in for a second before handing it off to Bravo again. Dino hits his side suplex but tags off to Valentine for the Figure Four, which is countered by a kick to the back. Off to Roma who sunset flips Valentine off the top to make it 2-2 (Stallions/Bees vs. Islanders/Harts).

The Bees double team Anvil in a match that by their own words probably happened 300 times over the years. Brunzell hits a high knee to the face for two and it's off to Bret who does about as well. Tama comes in and

takes out Roma and it's off to Haku. Haku misses a legdrop and it's back to Brunzell. Brunzell hiptosses him into the heel corner for some reason and Bret comes back in. Roma gets two off a middle rope fist but Hart comes right back with a belly to back suplex.

The Islanders hit a double headbutt and this referee counts SLOW. Haku pounds on Roma and hits a dropkick which is rather impressive for a guy his size. It's not quite as impressive as Anvil doing a dropkick of his own (literally 2 seconds after Monsoon says he'd like to see Neidhart try one) though. Bret comes back in and Roma slides between Bret's legs and tags in Brunzell.

Brunzell tries to slam Hart but Tama dropkicks Bret's back. Brunzell rolls through and gets a fast pin to eliminate the Harts and get us down to 2-1. Tama hooks a nerve hold on Brunzell followed by a shoulderbreaker from Haku. That gets two so Haku puts on a nerve hold of his own. Now Tama puts on ANOTHER nerve hold. To be fair we're over half an hour into this so the guys are likely getting tired.

Brunzell tries a sunset flip but there's no strength in it at all and he only gets two. He FINALLY gets a tag off to Powers who tags in Roma for a powerslam for two. Things start to break down a bit and the Bees being in the ring allow the Islanders to double team Roma a bit. Roma escapes enough to tag Blair but Tama kicks him before Blair can even get in. Tama misses an elbow and it's off to Brunzell again for some reason. He can barely get Tama over for a backdrop but the signature dropkick gets two. Everything breaks down and Blair puts on his mask (it was a thing the Bees did to cheat) and sunset flips Tama for the pin.

Rating: C-. This match just kept going on and on and it was kind of exhausting to sit through. It runs nearly forty minutes and by the end there were no combinations we hadn't seen already. You could easily cut out fifteen minutes of this match and it would have improved greatly. If you like tag wrestling, find a copy of this NOW but otherwise be ready to fast forward a lot. It's not a bad match or anything but man alive is it long.

As I said, the Bees were one of the best teams to never hold the tag

titles. They just came up at the wrong time and didn't have a chance with teams like the Bulldogs, the Harts, Demolition and Strike Force out there getting all of the glory. Still though, they were very exciting to watch and could put on clinics with anyone. Also here's a bit of trivia for you: Blair faced Hulk Hogan in Hogan's first ever professional match.

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