

Wrestler of the Day – April 10: Bret Hart

The Pink and Black Attack is back to be Wrestler of the Day. It's Bret Hart.

Since Bret's another guy with WAY too many classics to name, we're going with the formula of "here are a bunch of Bret matches in no order and with no rhyme or reason."

We'll start in 1992 when Ric Flair was sick (or whatever version of the story you go with) and needed to get the title taken off of him. The show was in Canada so here's a title shot for a young Canadian.

Bret Hart vs. Ric Flair

For reasons never quite explained, this was never shown on TV but instead only aired on a home video called Smack Em Whack Em. It's just such an odd decision, especially when the goal is to make Bret to be the next big deal for the company. For the life of me I don't know what they were thinking but here it is. More or less this was the token world title match you got at the end of the show because you needed a main event even though it meant nothing at all.

The announcers talk about what a great match Bret vs. Perfect would be. I'm not sure why they're talking about it in a hypothetical sense when the match had already happened. The opening of the match is mainly a headlock by Flair with Bret not being able to get much control at all. Bret comes back with a hammerlock but gets whipped hard into the corner to put him back down. Bret is brimming with confidence here as he stomps on Flair's stomach. Flair bails to the floor for a breather before coming back in for a top wristlock.

They've been going about four minutes but Gorilla thinks it's

been ten. You can see Bret limping a lot as his ankle must be bothering him, especially since Flair hasn't done any leg work at all. Bret takes him down into an armbar and cranks away for a good while. Flair sends him to the apron but gets caught in a sunset flip. In the continuation of a running joke, Flair has his trunks pulled down, exposing the back half of himself. Why this happened so many times over the year is beyond me.

Flair bails to the floor again before coming back inside and whipping Bret hard into the corner. A few hard right hands to the face have Bret in trouble but he avoids a knee drop. Bret goes after the knee now to put Flair in trouble all over again. There's a Figure Four by Bret to insult Flair a little bit. Flair finally makes the rope and gets caught in a backslide for two. The champion gets in another right hand to take over before things slow down again.

A small package gets two for Flair as does a butterfly suplex. The knee drop hits this time but Flair hurts his own knee in the process. Flair hooks the Figure Four and Bret is in real trouble now. He finally turns it over to escape but is still in a lot of trouble. Flair stays on the bad leg but can't hook the Figure Four. Bret charges into a boot in the corner but pops up fast enough to slam Flair off the top (a Flair trademark). Bret starts his comeback with a Russian legsweep and a middle rope elbow for two. A superplex puts Flair down and just like that it's the Sharpshooter for the submission and the title, SHOCKING the crowd.

Rating: A. Like I said, there was almost no way this wasn't going to be great. This was a great example of making someone into a new champion as Flair put Bret over clean in the middle of the ring after a twenty five minute plus masterpiece. They made a new star here and that was desperately needed given the changing of the guard.

One of Bret's biggest feuds was with his brother Owen, who said that Bret was holding him back and wanted to get out of

Bret's shadow. His chance came at Wrestlemania X.

Owen Hart vs. Bret Hart

For reasons I'm not clear on, the Fink isn't the announcer tonight. They lock up to start and Owen shoves Bret away, earning himself some celebrating. Bret takes him down to the mat but Owen escapes and celebrates again. Back to the mat for some amateur stuff but Owen grabs the rope. Owen tries to take it to the mat but Bret easily counters to send him out to the floor. Back in and Owen slaps him in the face to fire up his older brother.

More amateur stuff ensues and Owen gets to do his spinning counter to a wristlock, only to pull Bret down by the hair. Bret channels his inner Shawn and nips up before getting two off a rollup. Bret takes over with an armbar and a clothesline to send Owen out to the floor. Back in again and Bret slaps the blonde Hart before rolling him up for two. Bret hooks the armbar again before getting two off a crucifix. We're about five minutes into this now and there is absolutely nothing to complain about. They get up again and Owen hits a sweet spinwheel kick to take over before stomping Bret to the floor.

Owen rams Bret back first into the post as the anger is starting to seep out. A backbreaker sets up a camel clutch back inside as Lawler is loving this. Owen yells at his brother in a great touch to the evilness. Bret breaks it pretty quickly but walks into a belly to belly suplex for two. A cross body by Owen is rolled through by Bret for two but Owen goes straight to the back again. Owen hits a German suplex for two and drops a leg on the back of Bret's head for two more.

Bret tries to spin out of a suplex but gets caught in a tombstone. Owen goes up top but misses a swan dive, giving Bret the breather that he's been needing. Bret starts firing back and gets two each off a clothesline and a Russian

legsweep. There's the backbreaker followed by the middle rope elbow for two more. It's Sharpshooter time but Owen pops up and hits the enziguri to put Bret down.

Another Sharpshooter attempt is countered by Owen and a rollup gets two on Bret. This is very fast paced stuff. Owen heads to the floor and we get LUCHA BRET as he takes out his brother. He hurts his knee in the process though and Owen is very happy. Back inside and Owen goes for the leg, wrapping it around the post a few times because that's what villains do. Off to an inverted Indian Deathlock by Owen but he lets it go before too long.

There's a yet to be named dragon screw leg whip followed by a Figure Four (wrong leg of course) as Bret is in big trouble. Bret reverses and rolls into the ropes to break the hold but his knee is gone. An enziguri finally puts Owen down and buys big brother a breather. A headbutt puts Owen down again and there's the chest first into the buckle bump for Owen. A bulldog gets two on Owen as does a sweet piledriver.

There's a superplex for a delayed two as Jerry Lawler is freaking out. A sleeper is quickly broken up by a hidden low blow from Owen and it's time for the Sharpshooter on Bret. The older Hart slaps the mat but it doesn't mean anything yet. Bret reverses into a Sharpshooter of his own but Owen is right in front of the ropes. Owen charges into a boot in the corner so Bret loads up a rollup, but Owen counters into a cradle for the 100% clean pin.

Rating: A+. If there's a better opening match anywhere, I'd love to see it. This was Owen's coming out party and he looked excellent in doing it. Bret has no shame in losing here as he didn't so much get beat as much as he got caught. This set up a great feud over the summer for the title between these two, but it never reached this level again. There was some DEEP psychology going on out there with Bret being hesitant to fight his brother and Owen using the advantage to catch Bret

in a wrestling move, all on top of the leg injury. Excellent match and one of the best ever.

Back in the late 80s, Bret was finally getting a long promised singles run, including this match with Bad News Brown at Wrestlefest 1988. This was set up by the Wrestlemania IV battle royal where Brown double crossed Bret to win so Bret broke his trophy.

Bad News Brown vs. Bret Hart

This is fallout from the Mania battle royal and Bret is officially a face now. Brown would get a short feud with Randy Savage soon after this which was very interesting although it never went anywhere really. The referee gets on Brown for being too evil and Brown tells him not to worry about it. That's a nice line actually.

Brown goes up and Bret is, say it with me, PLAYING POSSUM. Why would anyone buy Bret selling anything ever? It's what he does and he does it better than anyone. Bret can't get anything of note going here. Brown yells out for the Ghetto Blaster, his running enziguri finisher. Here comes the Hitman who might not have that name yet. He hits a sweet dive over the top and Brown is in trouble now.

They crank it up and the match starts getting good. Bret doesn't have the Sharpshooter yet so he's going for whatever he can get to get a pin. He hits some of the five moves of doom but after a rollup Brown reverses into one of his own and uses the tights for a win. Neidhart comes out and they both beat down Brown to an extent. I'd love to see them in a real fight as Brown would massacre them.

Rating: B-. Solid little match here as neither guy meant anything yet. Hart was supposed to be showcasing himself here and he did that quite well. He looked like this fast guy that could brawl and have solid matches to go with it. Then they put him back with Neidhart a few weeks/months later and this

was completely forgotten about of course.

Bret's start in the WWF came as part of the Hart Foundation, a tag team with Jim Neidhart. After they fell far down the card, the team made a comeback in the early 90s and had a shot at the titles at Summerslam 1990.

Tag Titles: Hart Foundation vs. Demolition

This is 2/3 falls and Demolition is defending. Basically the Harts have about as much chance coming into this as I have at being Miss America 1974. Bret starts with Smash but the Harts knock Crush to the floor before anything gets going. Things settle down and Bret gets a quick rollup for two. Anvil comes in to crank on Smash's arm before Bret comes back in with a fist to the back. Smash tries to get into a technical match with Bret and gets caught in an armbar for his stupidity.

Smash finally slams Bret down and brings in Crush, only to have Bret avoid an elbow and pound away. Crush charges into a boot in the corner and gets rolled up for two before it's off to Neidhart vs. Smash, only to have Crush kick Jim in the back to give the champions the advantage. Crush comes in again and misses a charge into the corner, allowing for another double tag to Bret and Smash. Neidhart falls to the floor as everything breaks down. Smash is whipped into Crush and Bret gets two off the middle rope elbow but here's Crush again. The Decapitator to Bret is enough for the first fall.

The second fall begins with Crush hitting a hard clothesline on Bret and Smash pounding on the chest. After a quick neck crank by Crush, Bret fires off the Hart Attack clothesline on Smash, allowing for the hot tag to Neidhart. A powerslam gets two on Smash and Bret launches Anvil into Smash in the corner. The Hart Attack takes Smash down but Crush breaks up the pin for the DQ to make it 1-1. Why they didn't let the Harts get the pin there is beyond me.

During the break between falls, Demolition knocks Bret to the

floor, allowing Ax to run down and sneak under the ring. The third fall starts with Bret getting two off a sunset flip before taking Smash down by the leg. Neidhart picks Bret up for the reverse powerslam for two on Smash. Now things get tricky as Smash rolls to the floor and rolls under the ring, switching places with Ax.

The idea is that Ax and Smash look so much alike that the referee can't tell them apart. This is fine except for one problem: THEY DON'T LOOK ALIKE! Ax is taller, heavier set and has a rounder head, not to mention a deeper voice. This reasoning never made sense to me as a kid and it still doesn't to this day.

Anyway the fresh Ax destroys Bret and gets two off Bret's chest bump in the corner. Anvil comes in sans tag as Smash takes Ax's place again. They try to switch again and the Legion of Doom come out to break it up. Smash goes after Hawk and Animal as Anvil shoulder blocks Crush into a rollup by Bret for the pin and the titles. The place comes unglued as the Harts have shocked the world.

Rating: B. That's probably a bit high but I love this match. The wrestling is just ok but the storytelling is as good as you'll get in a tag match with the LOD coming out to even things up, allowing the Harts to finally do the impossible and win the titles. This is a popular match among old school fans and if you watch it you'll see why.

Hart's first singles title was the Intercontinental Title which he won in the summer of 1991. He would lose it to the Mountie due to a storyline illness and Mountie would lose it two days later to Roddy Piper. Bret got a shot at Piper at Wrestlemania VIII.

Intercontinental Title: Roddy Piper vs. Bret Hart

Piper is defending. There's a story here actually: Bret was "sick" and lost the title to Mountie, only to have Piper win

it about a day and a half later. This is Bret's rematch. Heenan: "How would you handle Piper if you were Bret?" Gorilla: "I would use my speed advantage. You?" Heenan: "Waffle him with a tire iron." Bret takes him down to start and Piper spits in his face, basically becoming the heel of the match early on.

They trade arm holds to start but Piper can't escape Bret's non-evil clutches. Once he finally frees himself, it's a dropkick to put Roddy down instead. Bret might have hurt his shoulder in the process, but of course he's goldbricking, which gives him a two count via a small package. Piper slaps him in the face so Bret cross bodies both guys to the outside. Back in and Piper gets in a cheap shot which apparently busts Bret open. This was a big deal actually as Bret claimed it was a legit cut but in reality he bladed and lied to prevent punishment and still make it look good. Smart guy that Hitman.

Roddy pounds away for awhile and is reverting to his old style far more than he has in years. Bret comes back with a sunset flip for two and the mat is getting bloody in a hurry. Piper punches him down for two but Bret comes back with a forearm to send the champion to the outside. Back in and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Piper's head lands on Bret's ribs which should be a count but the referee sits up instead. Roddy goes up but Bret is goldbricking again, allowing him to slam Piper face first into the mat.

A suplex gets two for Hart and it's time for the FIVE MOVES OF DOOM. Piper blocks the Sharpshooter though, so Bret settles for the middle rope elbow. Roddy blocks that too though with a boot to the face and they slug it out again. There goes the referee and Piper clotheslines Bret to the outside. As they come back in, Roddy grabs the ring bell to complete the heel turn. He lifts it up to crush Bret, only to stop himself and put on a sleeper instead. That proves to be his downfall though as Bret climbs up the corner and falls back on Piper for the pin and the title.

Rating: B+. This might be Piper's best matches ever but even rarer is seeing him pinned in the WWF. Piper was VERY protective of his character, meaning that he was very rarely pinned. The match was great here and wound up being Piper's last match in the company for several years. Really good stuff here as Bret is on the verge of shooting up the card to the world title in the fall.

We'll actually look at a WCW match. From Souled Out 1998 in Bret's first big match in WCW. They're fighting over who is better and there's not much else to it.

Ric Flair vs. Bret Hart

This is your basic battle for respect. Bret has a column in the Calgary Sun newspaper and said that he was better than Flair. That wasn't cool with Ric and we had a main event. This is Bret's in ring debut for WCW. Feeling out process to start until Bret takes over with a headlock. Flair reverses into one of his own and runs Bret over with a shoulder as we're still in first gear.

Bret grabs a Figure Four of all things but Flair is almost immediately in the ropes. A suplex gets two for Hart and it's chinlock time. Flair fights up but loses a battle of top wristlocks, allowing Bret to take him back down with an armbar. Bret slaps him out to the floor and Flair takes a breather. Back in and Hart puts on the headlock again to keep Flair at a slow pace. Flair fights up and pounds away in the corner and suplexes his way out of a quick sleeper.

Ric has the referee check the time so he can hit Bret low like only Naitch can. A knee drop gets two and it's off to a chinlock on Hart. Back up and they slug it out until Bret grabs a neckbreaker to put both guys down. Hart gets two off a bulldog and it's time to go for the leg. He cannonballs down onto the knee and loads up the Figure Four around the post, only to have Flair kick him back into the barricade. Back in

and it's Ric's turn to go after the knee with the knee crusher and a few pulls on the leg.

The Figure Four is countered into a small package by Bret but now the Figure Four works for Flair. Bret finally turns it over to escape before slamming Ric off the top. Bret comes right back with a Russian legsweep and takes down his straps so Flair can chop him even harder. The Five Moves of Doom set up a superplex which sets up the Sharpshooter for the submission.

Rating: B-. Solid match here but it wasn't going to be able to live up to the hype. It's a great debut for Bret and good proof that he still has it with an ending that makes sense. The match was all about respect and Bret won the match with pure wrestling skill and a submission hold. That's the right choice.

Another Hart Foundation match, this time against probably their biggest rivals: the British Bulldogs.

British Bulldogs vs. Hart Foundation

That was their first match in MSG, and this is their second. Joined in progress with Dynamite and Bret getting us going. The Brits clean house until the power guys come in for a test of strength. Bret comes back in and the Harts take over with some nice double teaming stuff. Bret misses a charge and knees Anvil by mistake to bring in Dynamite.

House is cleaned and everything speeds up. There's a falling headbutt to Bret as things finally get down to one on one. Missile dropkick puts Bret down and there's the powerslam but Jim breaks up the cover. That allows Bret to take over and the Harts dominate. Dynamite hooks a sunset flip but the curfew comes on. That means it's I think 10pm in New York and therefore the show has to end. Imagine that happening today.

Rating: C+. Good stuff here but there's only so much they can

do with so little time. These teams just couldn't have a bad match in this time period if their lives depended on it. Dynamite was so great with his speed stuff and it's easy to see how Benoit modeled himself after the Kid. Fun match, would have been great with a finish.

Here's a singles version, from Toronto in I think 1986.

Dynamite Kid vs. Bret Hart

I think we're in Toronto here so the crowd is likely going to be split. Bret hits the floor almost immediately as he's in the blue here. Gorilla talks about a Rolls Royce giveaway which would be at the Wrestling Classic, the first PPV (kind of). Dynamite grabs a slingshot and sends Bret into the corner so he hits the floor again. This referee is counting very quickly.

Hayes sounds very drunk here. Bret keeps hiding as he was a great heel back in the day. Great snap suplex gets two for Dynamite and we hit the chinlock. We're getting replays in this match so I keep thinking we're having cuts but they're just replays. Dynamite reverses a wristlock into one of his own. Since he's not sure what else to do, Bret cheats and takes over.

Apparently we're in Maryland. I thought only Toronto had the tilted camera. Ok then. Bret drags him around by the hair because he's evil. A few legdrops get no cover as it's all Bret at the moment. Out to the floor and Bret slams him. That referee looks oddly familiar. Dynamite grabs a sunset flip out of nowhere for two but Bret knocks him right back down.

Hayes calls a European uppercut a forearm. Shouldn't he know better than that? Backslide gets two for Dynamite. Over to the ropes and Dynamite is all tied up. A charge misses and Bret jumps into the ropes very hard. Clothesline sets up a standing diving headbutt for no cover. Bret gets to do his chest into the buckle spot. Knee drop gets two for the Kid. Good match so

far.

A belly to back gets two so Dynamite gets a middle rope knee for a very close two. Dynamite trips over Bret on a criss cross and Bret shoves him to the floor. Back in and Dynamite grabs an O'Connor Roll out of nowhere for the pin (called a reverse sunset flip by Monsoon).

Rating: B. Good stuff here as you would expect given the participants. These two wrestled probably 9000 times in Stampede so this was old hat for them. Good match though as those matches made them good against each other. Bret's singles push was years ago but what else are you going to do?

As mentioned, Bret's first singles title was the Intercontinental Title. Here's the classic that won him the belt.

Intercontinental Title: Mr. Perfect vs. Bret Hart

Perfect has been champion since last November so he's a pretty big deal. He also has his Coach (former wrestler John Tolos) with him. Stu and Helen Hart are in the audience to watch their son. Feeling out process to start with Bret scoring first by hip tossing Perfect to the floor. Back in and Bret grabs a headlock followed by a crucifix for two. Bret puts the headlock on again as Heenan and Piper are going to war on commentary. Gorilla: "WILL YOU STOP???"

Perfect grabs at the hair to escape and chops Bret's chest off. A slam puts Bret down but he kicks Perfect away and slams him down, only to have Perfect kick him right back. Bret is all like screw this wrestling stuff and clotheslines Perfect to the floor. The champ tries to run but Bret throws him back in and the dude in pink is mad. Perfect gets in a HARD kick to the ribs and Bret is sent to the floor where Coach whistles at him.

Bret tries to get up but is knocked off the apron and right on

top of a production guy who has a very confused look on his face. Back in and Bret jumps over Perfect in the corner and gets two off a rollup. The fans are WAY into this so far. Perfect sends Bret chest first into the buckle to take over again as Heenan is starting to lose his marbles. Another hard whip into the buckle gets two for the champion followed by the Hennig neck snap for two more.

Hart is sent to the floor for a bit and they both come back in on the top. It's Bret crashing down to the mat to give Perfect two as Heenan is thinking Perfect should get himself disqualified. The champ hooks a sleeper but Bret fights up into a crucifix, only to be dropped down into a Samoan drop for two. The PerfectPlex looks to finish Bret but it only gets two, sending MSG into delirium.

Back up and Bret fights back, sending Perfect across the ring and crotch first into the post. A suplex and small package get two each for Bret and it's Five Moves of Doom time. Bret yells at the referee and gets rolled up for two before Bret starts going after the knee. He loads up the Sharpshooter but he has to knock Coach to the floor. The distraction lets Perfect get in a shot to take over. Perfect drops a leg between Bret's legs but as he tries it again, Bret grabs the leg and puts the Sharpshooter on from his back. He turns the hold over and Perfect submits really fast but it's good for Bret's first singles title.

Rating: A. Oh come on it's Bret vs. Perfect from Summerslam 91. Do I really need to explain this one? It's one of the best matches of all time and holds up over twenty years later. The counter by Bret is a great way to show how solid of a mat wrestler he was. Kicking out of the PerfectPlex was the perfect idea as Bret took the champ's best shots and still won. It's still excellent and required viewing for wrestling fans.

Bret was also involved in the first ladder match in the WWF.

From late 1991.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Bret Hart

This is a ladder match obviously. Like I said these were used back in Stampede and one day Bret suggested to Vince that they use one in WWF. This is the result. This is from about 92 and would be from before Summerslam. Bret is champion for those of you that don't know your history. Gorilla suggests that the title is vacant at the moment. That's kind of true actually.

The ladder is really far away at the moment so it's really more like a normal match to start us off. Shawn makes a diving save to keep Bret from getting the ladder, which is kind of stupid since there's no advantage in having the ladder first, but to be fair this is the first go around so there's no psychology or history to go off of here. Gorilla says breast. I'm scarred for life. Sherri stops Bret from going up but Bret saves it by nailing Shawn.

This is one of those matches that's hard to critique as they have no idea what they're doing and more or less are inventing these spots as they go. Also it's good given the two in there so it's not like it's easy to crack jokes. Shawn touches the belt but can't get there. Why is it so hard for people to realize how tall they are? In nearly every ladder match, someone touches the bottom of the belt for like 15 seconds as they apparently forget that there are more rungs to it.

Bret hits Shawn with a slingshot into the corner. Bret then does it AGAIN. Misjudges the height I mean. Dang dude you knew it like 2 minutes ago. How did you forget it that fast? They both go up at the same time and down it comes. Shawn hits Sweet Chin Music before it's known as that but it's a patented move by this point. Instead his finisher is that stupid suplex but whatever. Shawn does the same mistake with the height and Bret dropkicks the ladder so that Shawn gets crotched on the top. Bret climbs up and retains the belt.

Rating: A. This was a great match. Now one thing you have to keep in mind is that they have NO idea what they're doing here. By today's standards, this is a weak ladder match. But remember, this had never been done in this company before. They were just trying random stuff out there and it worked. Also, this is more about Bret vs. Shawn rather than the ladder, and that combination is rarely bad. Great match all around though and fun to watch.

Over his career, Bret was known for putting people over. One of the people he did that for better than probably anyone was Steve Austin in a two match series, starting with Survivor Series 1996.

Steve Austin vs. Bret Hart

They stare each other down in the middle of the ring and Austin flips Hart off. This feels like a huge fight which is exactly what it's supposed to do. Austin takes Bret into the corner and gives a clean break. Bret goes for Austin's leg and they go into the corner as well for another clean break. I love matches where the guys mirror each other. JR says neither of these guys have ever submitted in the WWF. That's not actually true but we'll go with it for the sake of simplicity.

Austin actually wins a technical battle and cranks on the arm. Bret does the same and adds a hammerlock. They fight for wristlocks and Bret takes it to the mat, working on the arm. Austin fights up and takes his head off with an elbow. Bret stays technical, Austin turns it into a brawl. This is going to have some good psychology in it I'd assume. Bret takes it right back to the mat and cranks on the arm again.

Back up and Austin drops Bret with a Stun Gun and immediately chokes. Hit the neck, work on the neck. It's not complicated. Austin stomps on the neck and throat before slingshotting Bret's throat into the bottom rope. An elbow to the neck/chest sends Bret to the floor and Austin is starting to roll. Back

in and Austin hooks a chinlock before dropping knees to the chest/throat for two.

They slug it out with Austin knocking Bret into the corner. Bret comes back with an atomic drop (which Vince calls a reverse piledriver because he's Vince McMahon and isn't a very good announcer) and a clothesline followed by a Russian legsweep for two. A bulldog attempt by Hart is countered by sending him chest first into the buckle. Austin loads up a superplex but Bret slams him down and hits a top rope elbow for a delayed two.

Austin escapes a backbreaker with a rake of the eyes as momentum shifts again. Bret gets sent to the floor and Austin just pounds on him with forearms and punches. Austin rams him back first into the post as the attacks shifts to the back. Bret comes back by sending him into the barricade, breaking the thing apart. They head into the front row and knock the barricade over. Austin is in trouble again and Bret chases him to the other side of the ring.

Steve is like screw this defense thing and sling shots Bret onto the Spanish announce table. They fight underneath the table with Austin pounding away. Austin was a smart heel in that instead of standing around, he wanted to beat on Bret even more when he had Bret down. Back in and Austin drops a middle rope elbow for two. A running crotch attack to Bret's back gets another two and Austin is getting frustrated.

Off to an abdominal stretch and of course Austin grabs the rope. Back up and Bret wins a slugout before Stun Gunning Austin right back to take over again. A piledriver puts Steve down for two and Bret is exhausted. Bret hits a backbreaker and goes up, only to get crotched and superplexed down. Austin has that look in his eye where you know he's feeling it. Bret hooks Austin's feet after the superplex but only gets two.

Bret goes after Austin and walks into a Stunner but it only

gets two. It gets another two and make that four. Austin is all ticked off now and pounds away at Bret before getting two more. He puts Bret in a solid Texas Cloverleaf but Bret still won't quit. He makes the rope and the fans breathe a sigh of relief. Austin sends him into the corner but Bret's knee gives out and Bret's back hits the post.

That gets two and Austin goes back to the Cloverleaf. Scratch that as he makes it a bow and arrow instead. It's amazing how much different that broken neck made Austin. He's a completely different guy here and it works really well too. Austin grabs the ropes to block a Sharpshooter and there's a sleeper but Austin hits a jawbreaker to escape. Austin slaps on the Million Dollar Dream but Bret climbs up the buckles and backflips onto Austin for the surprise pin. Steve is stunned, no pun intended. Apparently this was a #1 contenders match. Ok then.

Rating: A+. It's Austin vs. Hart for 25 minutes. Were you expecting anything but a masterpiece? This match isn't remembered for one reason: they had a rematch which is one of the greatest matches of all time. This however is liked better by a lot of people and I can easily get that. This is a pure, hard hitting wrestling match which ends with a wrestling counter. The psychology here is incredible with Austin wanting to prove he can go move for move with Bret before finally getting outsmarted when Austin was frustrated and trying one of his old moves. This is one of the best pairings of all time.

I don't think this match needs an introduction. From Summerslam 1992.

Intercontinental Title: Bret Hart vs. Davey Boy Smith

Bulldog has British Commonwealth boxing champion Lennox Lewis leading him to the ring and carrying the Union Jack. The place comes unglued for Davey but Bret isn't booed at all, as his

style is perfect for a crowd like this. Bulldog shoves him into the corner to start before hitting a hard shoulder to send the champion to the floor. Back in and they head to the mat with Bret grabbing a headlock to take over. Bret gets a few near falls off some rollups and it's right back to the headlock.

Back up again and Davey grabs a hammerlock but Bret hits a HARD elbow to the face to escape, drawing the ire of the fans. Davey takes him down with basic technique and cranks on the armbar. The hold stays on for a good while with the fans getting louder and louder the longer Smith has control. Bret finally sends him into the ropes to escape and drives a knee into Smith's ribs. The fans boo Hart out of the stadium for a basic move like a knee and boo even louder for a chinlock.

An atomic drop (called a reverse piledriver by Vince) puts Smith down and Bret blocks a crucifix (which worked earlier) in a Samoan Drop for two. Another chinlock is quickly broken but Davey charges into a boot in the corner to put him down again. A bulldog puts Bulldog down but he slams Bret off the top a second later. Davey misses a top rope splash and is sent to the outside, drawing a ton of heat for Bret.

The champion tries a dive to the floor but lands on Davey's back, nearly breaking several bones in the process. Bret sends him into the post before heading back inside pounding away with European uppercuts. Hart hooks a chinlock for a good while before loading up the Five Moves of Doom. He pulls Bulldog up by the hair to show how evil he is and it's off to a sleeper. This stays on for a LONG time as well but Smith rams him into the corner to escape again.

They slug it out but Davey drops him out of a gorilla press into the ropes. Three straight clotheslines get two for Smith and a gorilla press gets the same. The delayed vertical and the chest first bump into the buckle get the same. Bulldog hits his powerslam finisher but Bret gets out at two, with far

less of a reaction from the crowd than you would expect. Bret rolls through a suplex for two of his own, only to get superplexed down for a near fall.

Back up again and a double clothesline puts both guys down, giving the fans a needed breather. While laying on his back Bret hooks the Sharpshooter ala last year against Mr. Perfect, terrifying the fans. Smith gets the rope so Bret tries a suplex, but Davey drops to his knees and hooks both legs for the pin and the title. The place ERUPTS on the three count.

Rating: A+. This took awhile to get going but once those near falls started it turns into an instant classic. Davey had to win here and it was a perfectly clean pin in the middle of the ring. Bret, ever the critic, doesn't like this match and basically blames the whole thing on Smith for being spent five minutes in. Those of us in the real world see it for what it is: a masterpiece.

In 1997, Bret turned heel and became the Canadian hero. He restarted the Hart Foundation and went to war against Steve Austin and America as a whole. After defeating the Rattlesnake, Bret wanted the WWF Title again. He got his chance at Summerslam 1997.

WWF World Title: Undertaker vs. Bret Hart

Remember that Shawn is guest referee. Bret hits Undertaker in the back with the belt to start and pounds away but Undertaker throws him away and out to the floor. The champion misses a charge into the post and is sent knees first into the steps by the Canadian. Bret tries to jump off the apron at Taker but is caught in midair and slammed into the post. Back in and Undertaker works on Bret's back before sending him into the corner a few times.

Off to a bearhug on Hart followed by a big boot to the face, but Taker misses a legdrop. A second big boot misses though and Bret goes after the knee. Hart cannonballs down onto

Taker's knee and kicks the leg out from under the 6'10 champion. As a small sidebar, Vince says that you're not 6'10 when you're on the mat. I'm pretty sure he still is actually, but he just can't use that height advantage.

Hart cranks on the leg even more and puts on the Figure Four for good measure. This brings out Paul Bearer for some reason which angers the champion. Undertaker turns the hold over to escape before going after Bearer. Bret uses the distraction to jump Undertaker from behind and send him into the barricade. There's the Figure Four around the post by Bret as he stays on Taker's leg. Owen Hart and Brian Pillman of the Hart Foundation come out to ringside.

Taker's leg is wrapped around another post and Bret flips off a yelling fan. Shawn hasn't been a factor as referee yet. Back in and Bret puts on another leg lock but Taker rolls it over and uses the good leg to kick Bret in the face. With no provocation, Undertaker drops to the floor and beats up Owen and Pillman. Back in and there's the chokeslam but Shawn is watching for more Harts. Bret heads to the floor and rams Undertaker's back into the apron and post to take over again.

Shawn tells Bret to get back inside or the match is over. They head into the ring again with Bret getting two off a backbreaker. A suplex puts Undertaker down again and there's the middle rope elbow for two. Bret hits a DDT for the same but Undertaker drops him face first onto the turnbuckle for two of his own. Hart goes after the back again but can't hook the Sharpshooter. The chokeslam is countered with a kick to the leg but Undertaker hits an uppercut to put Bret down.

Undertaker hits his jumping clothesline to take over again before whipping Bret chest first into the buckle for two. Bret tries to go up but gets chokeslammed down off the top for a close two. Old School is countered and Bret superplexes Undertaker down but he can't cover. Instead he puts on the Sharpshooter but Undertaker kicks him away, which is the first

time the hold has been completely broken. Another clothesline puts Bret down but he escapes the Tombstone and puts on the Sharpshooter around the post in a new move. Taker kicks him off and he crushes Shawn in the process though.

Bret brings a chair into the ring and lays out Undertaker with no Michaels to see it. Shawn limps back into the ring but the count only gets two. Bret erupts on Shawn and flips him off before pounding away in the corner again. Shawn picks up the chair and is spat on by Bret. Shawn swings the chair but knocks Undertaker out cold, giving Bret the pin and the title.

Rating: B+. This took a lot of time to get going but with thirty minutes to use they had more than enough time to waste. Hart winning was definitely the right move after he spent all summer on top of the company. This opened up a lot more options than Taker was providing, which is what a champion is supposed to do.

There's one more match to close it out and it might be the best match ever.

Steve Austin vs. Bret Hart

This is a submission match and Ken Shamrock is guest referee. Austin has actual glass shatter as he enters which is rather cool. He gets cheered but Bret gets something resembling a mixed reaction. Austin tackles him down to start and the fight is on immediately. They head to the floor with neither guy being able to get an advantage. Austin gets posted but he manages to crotch Bret on the barricade. Bret gets clotheslined into the crowd as this is all action so far.

Bret gets in a few shots in the audience and Shamrock is right with them. Presumably this is falls count anywhere. Bret gets in a solid right hand but Austin grabs him for a piledriver. Hart counters with a backdrop and they head back towards the ring. Back to ringside and Bret dives off the barricade with a forearm to the back. Austin comes right back by whipping Hart

into the steps to put him down again.

Steve hits a forearm off the apron before picking up the steps. Bret kicks him in the ribs though and the steps might have crushed Austin's leg. As they get back in the ring (remember that thing?) Bret guillotines Austin on the top rope to take over again. Bret cranks on the leg and cannonballs down on it ala Flair. More cranking ensues and Hart wants him to get up. Bret misses another cannonball and Austin ERUPTS with a clothesline to put both guys down.

We get some foreshadowing by Lawler when he says you can't give up when you're unconscious. Hart comes back with a kick to the leg and throws on the Figure Four around the post. Bret goes to get the bell but switches over to a chair. That one has too much padding on it though so he gets a regular chair to Pillmanize the ankle with. The fans are getting WAY into this. Bret goes up top but Austin crotches him and CRACKS him with the chair.

Another big chair shot to the back sets up a suplex as Hart is in big trouble all of a sudden. A middle rope elbow from Austin hits Bret as JR is in full on JR mode, including a few jabs at WCW ("This isn't about posing or covering a bald spot!"). Austin this another Bret move in the Russian legsweep followed by a reverse Koji Clutch (as in he cranks on the arm while wrapping his leg around Bret's head. That's a bit too complicated for Austin though so there's a Boston Crab instead.

Bret makes a rope because in a war like this, let's make sure we follow the rules. Austin loads up a Sharpshooter (he has no idea how to get it on) but Austin escapes. Steve fires him through the ropes and to the floor. Bret comes back and reverses a whip into the barricade while running over a few people in the process. Austin is bleeding and it's a GUSHER. Bret sends him into the steps and pounds away at the cut as we head back inside.

Hart pounds away even harder at Austin's forehead before hitting the Five Moves of Doom. Bret gets the chair as Vince says this is becoming too much to watch. Hart drives the chair into the leg over and over again but he can't get the Sharpshooter again. The mat is covered in blood. Austin comes back with a low blow but he can barely stand up. He whips Bret chest first into the corner and here comes the Rattlesnake. Austin stomps the mudhole in Bret and the double bird gets a big reaction from the fans.

Austin puts Bret on top and superplexes him back down. You can't see Austin's forehead from all the blood. Since nothing else works, Austin goes to the floor and gets the electrical cable to choke Bret out. Hart grabs the bell from somewhere though and blasts Austin in the head, knocking him silly. Now the Sharpshooter goes on and the place goes NUTS. Austin's head is on the mat and you can see the blood pooling up under him. That is SICK.

The crowd starts chanting for Austin and we get one of the most famous shot in company history as Austin screams into the camera with blood flowing down his face. He gets one last rush of adrenaline to push up and break the Sharpshooter for the first time ever. Well kind of as he gets Bret off his back but couldn't break the grip. Bret gets the hold back on but Austin will not quit. Austin is out cold and Shamrock finally stops it. Austin never gave up.

Rating: A+. This is the highest rating a match can get. If there was a higher rating, this match would get that. This is one of the greatest wars you will ever see in a ring with some of the greatest storytelling you'll ever see either. The idea of Bret being taken out of his element, only to get sucked into Austin's world where he reaches a point that he's never been to before but it's STILL not enough to stop Austin is amazing and works to this day. The key point here: Hart could not stop Austin. He could only slow him down. Absolutely amazing and if you haven't seen this, go find it right now.

Seriously, go watch it now. It's excellent.

Post match Bret is disgusted with himself but looks at Austin's lifeless body and gets mad all over again for not being able to make Austin quit. Bret goes after the leg again but Shamrock grabs him and hooks a kind of suplex to get Hart off. Shamrock says let's go if you want to but Bret backs down and leaves. The fans GO OFF on Bret as Austin is trying to remember what planet he's on. A referee comes out to check on him and gets a Stunner for his troubles. Austin walks out on his own power and gets a well deserved standing ovation. And that my friends, is a double turn.

It's Bret Hart. I'm done.

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