

Wrestler of the Day – June 9: Tatanka

Here's a guy who did very well on very little. Today is Tatanka.

Tatanka was only in the indies for a year or so before signing with the WWF in late 1991. We'll pick things up soon into his WWF career with this match from Prime Time Wrestling in February 1992.

Tatanka vs. Brooklyn Brawler

A shoulder block doesn't send anyone anywhere but another shoulder goes better for Tatanka. Brawler gets drooped by a slam and some middle rope chops but he comes back with forearms. Tatanka goes on the war path and the Papoose to Go (Samoan drop) gets the pin. Not a very interesting debut.

Like many newcomers, Tatanka would be given a fairly meaningless match on a big stage to get some exposure. In his case, the match was at Wrestlemania VIII.

Rick Martel vs. Tatanka

There are Indians at ringside chanting for Tatanka. This is about two months after Tatanka debuted on TV so you should be able to figure out what's going to happen pretty quickly here. Tatanka start off hot as Heenan explaining that Flair did nothing wrong. Gorilla shouts that Heenan is a liar, so Heenan challenges him to a fight. Martel makes a quick comeback and sends Tatanka out to the floor. Back in and Bobby makes Indian jokes as Martel stomps away a bit more. Rick goes up and gets crotched, allowing Tatanka to pound away even more. Out of nowhere a cross body pins Martel.

Rating: D+. The match was ok but it was nothing more than a

way to give the fans a breather. Like I said, no one knew Tatanka at this point due to how little time he had been on TV. Martel was in total jobber to the stars territory by this point and would be gone pretty soon. Nothing to remember here at all.

Tatanka would go on the European tour just after Wrestlemania and open the European Rampage event.

Tatanka vs. Skinner

Tatanka gets an ERUPTION. Sweet GOODNESS. This is the last night of the tour apparently. Skinner was the operator of FCW which became NXT for those of you unaware. Tatanka is relatively new here and is in long tights still. We talk about Colonel Mustafa who is more commonly know as Iron Sheik getting stuck on an escalator for an hour and a half yesterday.

It's all Tatanka so far as you would expect. This is more about just running down the card for the rest of the show so far which is fine I guess. It's a glorified house show but that's all you need sometimes. Gorilla and Heenan are awesome of course as they always were around this time.

Tatanka might be bleeding but I'm not sure. Heenan does that little stutter when he says his name which is funny for some reason. Skinner yells at Tatanka to keep his shoulder down. He's direct if nothing else. Heenan is apparently reading a rule book and looking for something Tatanka is doing wrong. Skinner scared me as a kid. He was just creepy.

I'm really not sure why this was chosen as the opener. Tatanka meant very little at this point and neither did Skinner for that matter. This would likely be better suited as a dark match or something like that. It's not terrible though. Skinner goes for a double axe off the middle while Tatanka is on his back.

It's the jump into the boot spot which is one of the dumbest things I can remember. What's the point of that anyway? Bobby says no one here has ever seen an Indian. I wonder how true that actually is. Would they be familiar with what his character is supposed to be? Tatanka makes a quick comeback and hits the Papoose To Go to win.

Rating: D+. Nothing special but it was ok for an opener I guess. Tatanka wouldn't mean much of anything for about a year or so. This was just odd to say the least, but it could have been far worse. This was very similar to the Martel match at Wrestlemania as Tatanka was still getting exposure. I don't think Skinner was around much longer.

A few weeks later, Tatanka would be in a battle royal on May 18, 1992.

Battle Royal

Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels (can these two ever be apart?), Sgt. Slaughter, Tatanka, Tito Santana, Virgil, Kerry Von Erich (he had a job at this point???), Barry Horowitz, Jim Powers, Repo Man (missed by the announcer), Kato, Skinner, (she gets Repo Man here), Dale Wolfe, Brooklyn Brawler, Brian Costello, Reno Riggins, Barry Hardy, Dwayne Gill, Chuck Casey, Tom Stone

Colonel Mustafa (Iron Sheik), Crush, Burt Spears, George Anderson (announced as Chuck Casey to mess my numbers up even more), Ron Cumberland, Bill Melky (might have missed the name but does it matter?), Ted DiBiase, IRS, Beau Beverly, Blake Beverly, Knobbs, Sags, Animal, Hawk, Owen Hart, Koko B. Ware, Earthquake, Typhoon.

There are 40 people in this and since a lot of them are jobbers and not mentioned by the announcers, I'm sorry if I don't know their names but it's not like they matter. This was a record for biggest battle royal in WWF history until the 2011 Rumble tied it and is still a record for most people in the ring at once. I count 38 but I'm not counting them again.

One is named Donny apparently so that's 39. Don't even ask me who is still in there or going out here as it's impossible to tell.

A mob takes out Earthquake almost immediately. Typhoon is out seconds later. Everyone stands around throwing punches for awhile and there goes a jobber. A few more jobbers go out as Slaughter is in trouble. There's another jobber as there's a bit of room in there now. Hawk and Sags go out. Animal and Knobbs are on the floor now so they're out. I'm missing eliminations but it's not like it matters.

A pair of jobbers go out on opposite sides. There's another one out. Repo Man is gone too, as is Von Erich. Bret and Shawn go out at the same time. It's almost scary with those two at times. Owen goes out as they fight up the aisle. Skinner is gone. Horowitz is out. We're down to about 15 now. Slaughter does his over the corner bump to be put out. Powers is gone at the hands of Sheik.

DiBiase and Kato put Crush out. Sheik is gone, getting us down to 9. Make that 8 with Koko going out. Jobber gone. Ok so it's Kato, Tom Stone, Beau Beverly, Blake Beverly, Tatanka, Ted DiBiase, IRS and Virgil. There goes Stone...through the ropes. Then he does it again. Kato is gone as are Virgil and DiBiase.

Stone gets tossed and it's down to IRS, the Beverlies and Tatanka. They triple team the stereotype and drop elbows on him. They try some double teaming and one of the Beverlies is put out. I think it was Beau but does it matter? They try to throw Tatanka out but he low bridges them, sending IRS out. A chop gives the win to Tatanka.

Rating: C. I'll go right in the middle because there's nothing at all you can really say about this that you can't say about the vast majority of others. The 40 man aspect here was a little novelty and Tatanka winning keeps them from having to deal with the whole "well it was a battle royal so he's still

undefeated" thing. Not bad but just a big battle royal.

Here's a slightly tougher opponent from November 23, 1992.

Ric Flair vs. Tatanka

This isn't from Raw but rather a Wrestling Challenge taping. What they would do is have their TV tapings and then tape matches like these for tapes. This has to be early 93 as Flair was gone by like February of that year. Heenan gives us some rather interesting insight into Flair's mindset and strategy. He says Flair will often give the other guy his arm to sucker him into the Figure Four. That's psychology people and you rarely get things like that told to you. Also how nice of Heenan to tell EVERYONE how Flair operates in the ring. Obviously no potential opponent will ever see this match and hear that or anything like that right?

Very basic stuff to start but it's well done. Tatanka takes over and we get a Flair Flop. Flair sends him to the floor as this is a very slow paced match. Again Heenan vs. Ross is the main attraction here but often times they take away from the match, which their discussion of Green Acres is doing here. Classic Flair as he asks the referee to check if Tatanka gives up so he can grab the ropes. Basic things like that make guys into heels. It's so simple yet it gets a big reaction. Flair is a master at that.

Back to the floor again goes the less successful of these two. To fill time we hear about how Flair was in a plane crash. They haven't actually gone past basics here which is kind of a bad thing but at the same time the match is working fine for what it's supposed to be so I can't complain much. Ok so yeah I could but you get the idea. After nearly ten minutes Flair goes in for the knee and gets the Figure Four.

Heenan getting under Ross' ultra serious skin is absolutely hilarious. Tatanka is pretty bad about selling the hold as all he does is lay there. Naturally he rolls over and Flair lets

go immediately. Flair goes flying off the top of course and here comes the racial stereotype. A chop hits Flair as he comes off the top. Can Tatanka do anything other than chop? He goes for a chop (SHOCKING) off the top but gets caught by a punch to the ribs. Both hit the floor and brawl for a bit but Tatanka is thrown back in at 9 for the count out win. Flair puts him in the Figure Four on the floor but Perfect comes out for the save.

Rating: B-. This was basic but it was well done I thought. Tatanka won to keep his nearly two year undefeated streak going and Flair looked good in the process. That's all you really need I'd think. This worked rather well though as Flair was his usual evil self. Not a classic by any means, but after almost 12 minutes it didn't get boring so I'll give it a point.

Tatanka still hadn't lost a match at this point which earned him an Intercontinental Title shot at Wrestlemania IX.

Intercontinental Title: Tatanka vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn is defending of course and has the debuting Luna Vachon behind him. Tatanka is still undefeated here and would be so until much later in the year. Shawn's former manager, Sensational Sherri, comes down the aisle to stare at Shawn and presumably be in Tatanka's corner. Tatanka takes Shawn down a few times to start and they fight over arm control. Shawn comes back with a headlock and climbs the ropes to roll Tatanka down with it for two.

The champion tries it again but gets caught in a belly to back suplex for two this time instead. Shawn goes up again but dives into an armdrag as things pick up a bit. There's a Flair Flip in the corner and a big chop puts Shawn on the floor. Sherri and Luna get in a staredown and Luna licks the ring post. More chops keep Michaels on the floor as the fans are getting into this.

Back in again and Shawn comes off the top with a semi-botched sunset flip for two but Tatanka comes right back with an atomic drop. A DDT puts Shawn down again and Tatanka works on Shawn's apparently bad shoulder. Shawn tries a clothesline like an idiot and hurts his own arm again. We hit another armbars but Michaels fights up, only to charge shoulder first into the post.

Back to the armbars followed by a shoulder breaker for no cover by the challenger. A top rope chop to the shoulder has Shawn in even more trouble but a second attempt jumps into the superkick. Since it's 1993 though that doesn't end anything so Shawn sends Tatanka out to the floor. The girls get in another staredown but Shawn hits a running clothesline off the apron to take Tatanka out again.

Instead of following up, Shawn yells at Sherri. Since he's Shawn Michaels though, he still maintains control with a neckbreaker for two. A standing dropkick gets two for Shawn and it's off to a chinlock. That goes nowhere so Shawn hits a modified victory roll out of the corner for two. The shoulder seems to be fine now. Tatanka counters another victory roll attempt into an electric chair to put both guys down. A very delayed cover gets two for the challenger and it's time to go on the warpath.

Shawn gets caught in a cross body for two and a slingshot sends him face first into the post for two. The crowd is WAY into this match now. Tatanka's Papoose To Go (Samoan Drop) is countered into a rollup for two for Shawn but he walks into a powerslam for two. Shawn sends him out to the floor and the fans chant for Sherri. Michaels dives off the apron but slams his head into the steps, knocking himself silly and causing a countout win for the racial stereotype.

Rating: B. If Tatanka wins clean here, it's a near classic. This was a VERY solid opener with the fans getting completely into the near falls. The shoulder injury being forgotten ten

minutes into it hurt things though as I can't stand a plot point being introduced and then left completely alone. Also Tatanka should have won but it still makes for a fine opener.

Like any wrestler worth anything at this time, Tatanka would take part in the 1993 King of the Ring.

First Round: Tatanka vs. Lex Luger

Luger beat Backlund and Tatanka beat Giant Gonzalez. Luger is the Narcissist at this point and both he and Tatanka are undefeated at this point. They had teased Luger vs. Hart for awhile but it never happened. Luger has a steel plate in his arm so he was being forced to have a pad over it in most of his matches. Luger really did nail the self absorbed heel character.

He has to put it on or he can't fight. Savage says the King of the Ring is the most prestigious ever. I love how things at the moment have to be built up. I get why it was done, but that's just amusing. Tatanka starts off hot if nothing else. He was generic but dang the people responded to him. Heenan gets as close to being too far as you can get without going too far with his jokes about Tatanka. Why wasn't Savage in this thing? I've never gotten that.

He says that the winner of the tournament should be considered equal to the WWF Champion. Well that's over the top but if nothing else it does come close to validating the tournament as being a big deal. That's not terrible. Bam Bam says that he wants Tatanka. Heenan says that Bigelow's grandfather was Buffalo Bill Bigelow. I don't know how to reply to that.

This turns into a pretty decent back and forth match, but given the amount of times that the announcers point out the fifteen minute time limit and the double undefeated streaks here, the ending is pretty clear. Luger is in control for the most part, but Tatanka does his version of Hulking Up towards the end. A chop gets two. A chop gets two. A chop gets two. A

top rope chop gets two.

A top rope chop gets two. Starting to see why Tatanka didn't really do a lot in the company? The announcers point out that neither guy can know the time limit is about to expire, which it does following Luger nearly winning it. There's no announcement that we're running out of time which is something that I like here. Why tell them?

It makes things more believable towards the end of the match. Anyway, we have a draw, but afterwards Luger acts like a face by asking for five more minutes. He confirms being a heel, even though that would end in like two weeks, by nailing Tatanka with the steel forearm to knock him out. Bigelow is in the finals now.

Rating: B-. This was another good match. While the ending was a bit predictable, sometimes that's ok. These two were both rather limited in the offense area but they still put on a solid enough match for this to be passable. Tatanka didn't do much other than chop people, but he knew how to work a crowd and it made up for everything else, which holds true for Luger also. It wasn't pretty, but it did what it was supposed to do.

Without much else going on, Tatanka would be put in a six man tag at Summerslam 1993.

Smoking Guns/Tatanka vs. Headshrinkers/Bam Bam Bigelow

Aren't cowboys and Indians supposed to fight? The heels have Afa and Luna Vachon with them. The Samoans run over the Guns to start and we have Bigelow vs. Tatanka to get us going. Tatanka fires off a shoulder block and a dropkick followed by an impressive backdrop. Both guys try cross bodies and Tatanka actually gets the better of it. For a gimmick wrestler Tatanka had some good success around this time.

A double tag brings in Billy vs. Fatu (Rikishi) with the Samoan hitting a quick superkick. Billy comes back with a top

rope clothesline as Vince tells us Billy went to college on a rodeo scholarship. That actually exists? Another superkick from Samu knocks Billy into the tag to Bart who is slammed face first into the mat for his troubles. Bigelow comes in with a dropkick for two before it's back to Fatu for a wicked powerslam. The Samoans take turns double teaming Bart with headbutts and chops as the heat segment goes on for a good while.

Bigelow misses a charge and hits the post, allowing Bart to make the hot tag off to Tatanka. The Indian chops every heel in sight and takes Bigelow down with a DDT and a high cross body for two. Tatanka goes on the war path but walks into an enziguri from Bam Bam. Sometimes there's no better solution than to kick a guy in the head. Everything breaks down and Tatanka is left all alone against the three monsters. A TRIPLE HEADBUTT puts Tatanka down and all three go up for a triple flying headbutt, but Tatanka rolls away and rolls up Samu for the pin.

Rating: B-. Where in the world did this come from??? This was a shockingly good tag match with everyone moving fast and some great looking spots from Bigelow. Tatanka was one of those guys that the fans just liked and there's no way you can fake that. Good stuff here and a very nice surprise.

Tatanka's undefeated streak would be broken by Ludvig Borga in October 1993. There was some new talent being brought into the company around this time and Tatanka would face one of them on Wrestling Challenge on February 13, 1994.

Tatanka vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jeff gets in a cheap shot during Tatanka's posing and drops him with an elbow to the jaw. Tatanka makes a comeback and chops away in the corner but misses a charge to give Jeff control again. He mocks an Indian cry and nails a snap suplex for two. Ludvig Borga comes out for no apparent reason and

Jarrett chokes away even more. Borga gets in a cheap shot but it only wakes Tatanka up. We hit the warpath and Tatanka hits the floor to chop Borga as well, drawing in Ludvig for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was nothing to see and was just there to keep up the feud between Borga vs. Tatanka, which didn't go anywhere after that. Jarrett would take a long time to really get anywhere and this character wasn't helping anything. Granted that's likely because there was no character to be seen.

The next match up is from the March to Wrestlemania X special.

Yokozuna vs. Tatanka

Yokozuna's WWF Title isn't up for grabs. This is about revenge after Yokozuna crushed Tatanka and put him on the shelf for a few months. Yokozuna's manager Mr. Fuji offers a distraction to give Yokozuna a cheap shot from behind. Some chops don't have much effect on the big man but he misses a splash. A high cross body gets two for Tatanka, but that's about the extent of his offense as he runs into a knee to the ribs. We hit the nerve hold before Tatanka is thrown to the floor with ease.

The fat guy takes off a turnbuckle pad and we take a break. Back with another nerve hold before a clothesline takes Tatanka's head off. Yokozuna sends him into the corner but goes face first into the exposed buckle, giving Tatanka a very delayed two. A series of chops put Yokozuna down for another two but he's way too big for the Papoose to Go (or the Wigwam Bomb as Johnny Polo dubs it). The belly to belly sets up the Banzai Drop to give Yokozuna the pin.

Rating: C-. This pairing actually made a good deal of money on the house show circuit in 1993 with this exact same match. There's something that works about a smaller guy doing everything he can to drop a huge guy and the reaction to the big chop putting Yokozuna down proves it. Not a good match or anything but it told a good story.

With the hard working Native American gimmick having run its course, it was time to switch things up. Around this time, Tatanka's friend Lex Luger was having issues with Ted DiBiase. The Million Dollar Man was saying that Luger had sold out and Tatanka started to believe it. Luger felt the only way to prove his innocence was to have a match because that's how wrestling works. From Summerslam 1994.

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

The fans aren't sure how they feel about Luger at the moment. They finally lock up with Luger taking it into the corner for a clean break. A shoulder puts Tatanka down but Luger still won't follow up. Tatanka grabs the arm as we're still in first gear. A cross body gets two for Tatanka and it's time to slug it out with Lex taking over. Tatanka starts the war path and hits a top rope chop for two but a high cross body only hits mat. Luger starts his comeback but here's DiBiase with a bag of money. Lex shouts that he didn't sell out, allowing Tatanka to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: D. The match was very slow paced which isn't good in a short match. We were waiting for the angle here instead of the match which is fine, but it didn't make the match any less dull. Tatanka was into a more serious phase of his career here and his matches got a lot less fun to watch as a result.

Post match Luger is mad and he kicks the bag out of DiBiase's hand....only to have Tatanka reveal the HE sold out by destroying Luger. Tatanka puts him in the Million Dollar Dream and shoves money down Luger's throat. This has always been a favorite of mine.

Here's a rematch from October 19, 1994.

Tatanka vs. Lex Luger

Tatanka is part of the Million Dollar Team so this is after Summerslam 94. We're in Albany it seems. The racial stereotype

tries to talk but gets cut off by the music of the Renegade Lex Luger. Luger goes right after Tatanka and we're on in a hurry. The Indian hides on the floor as we stall a lot. Luger wants to kill him it seems. Literally all we have here is Luger chasing Tatanka and Tatanka running away.

FINALLY the referee gets in Luger's way and we get going. Luger hammers away and after about a minute I have a bad feeling about this tape. Out to the floor and it's Tatanka in control. We're maybe four minutes into this and I want to go watch some Sandman vs. Sabu. Three elbows get two for Tatanka.

Ah there's a chinlock. Wow this is riveting. Luger's face is pathetic here as he might as well be ordering dinner. He fights up and Tatanka gets a knee to put him back down. Back to the chinlock again. To tell you how pathetic the Million Dollar Team was, King Kong Bundy was considered their best chance at getting a title. Lex fights up again and AGAIN it's the chinlock. This is one of the most boring matches I've ever seen, which is covering a lot of ground.

Luger knocks Tatanka to the floor which seems to be a common theme tonight. Lex goes out after him and the beating continues. At least this is finally picking up a bit. It's about time after that big long boring match. And there's a double countout to end this. Oh no. Oh no they didn't just give us THAT finish after watching these two for almost fifteen minutes. Dang it yes they did.

Rating: F. This was AWFUL. Nothing happened in this and it was the epitome of filling in time without having to do a thing. This was a feud I always liked and then we get this nonsense. Totally boring match that is mostly chinlock and running. I know this era was bad but this isn't making me feel any better about this tape.

Tatanka would continue to be part of the Million Dollar Team, including teaming with Bam Bam Bigelow to go after the Tag

Team Titles. They would have their shot in a tournament final at the 1995 Royal Rumble.

Tag Titles: Bob Holly/1-2-3 Kid vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Tatanka

Shawn and Diesel split up and we needed champions. Holly and Tatanka start things off with Tatanka hitting a side slam for two. Holly comes back with a slam and a few dropkicks as this is going nowhere so far. Off to the Kid vs. Bigelow, with the big man running over both of the smaller guys with ease. Bigelow LAUNCHES Kid into the air but gets caught in a rana to send Bam Bam rolling.

Back to Tatanka who whips Kid into the buckles a few times before it's off to Bigelow to pound on the small guy some more. In something that actually impressed me, Kid backdrops Bigelow to the floor. Both small guys try top rope cross bodies but they escape and dropkick the heels together. Things settle down with Tatanka beating on Holly for a LONG time. Bigelow comes in, allowing Tatanka to distract the Kid. Holly goes to the corner to find no partner and Bigelow splashes Bob.

Holly gets beaten down so badly that he goes to the wrong corner and tags in Tatanka. Thank goodness this isn't the Attitude Era because it probably would have been legal in some of their matches. Tatanka comes in for more beating on Holly until Bob FINALLY gets in a clothesline for the hot tag to the Kid. Everything breaks down and Kid is LAUNCHED to the floor by Bigelow. Bam Bam loads up the moonsault but Tatanka accidentally hits the ropes to knock him to the mat. Somehow that's enough for the pin and the titles for the Kid.

Rating: C+. This went nearly sixteen minutes which was just too long. It's quite good but it would have been great if they cut off five minutes or so. Those launches by Bigelow were awesome looking as Kid continues to be an excellent seller of moves like those. The idea was that it was all Bigelow's

fault, even though Tatanka is totally to blame for Bigelow crashing like that. The Gunns would win the titles back the next night on Raw, making this whole thing pretty pointless.

Bigelow would be thrown off the Million Dollar Team and eventually be replaced by Sid. This set up the main event of the 1995 King of the Ring, with Tatanka teaming with Sid against Bigelow and WWF Champion Diesel.

Diesel/Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Sid and Tatanka

For some reason Bigelow had a pyromaniac gimmick going on or something like it. His outfit consists of a full body costume with orange and black flames sticking off of it and forearm things that shoot fire. This is stupid as all goodness. This match hasn't been mentioned or hyped or anything at all tonight. Literally, I forgot about it for a lot of the show. That's how important this match was for the company.

Sid and Diesel had fought at In Your House with Diesel winning. Bigelow was fired from the Million Dollar Team because he kept losing. Other than that, the Team injured Diesel's arm so it's bandaged. This feels like a dark match after a show is over that isn't advertised or anything. Seriously, it's added on at the end or something like that. What's the point here?

It's your standard main event tag match with the faces dominating early and then the heels work on the injury to set up the hot tag, then beat down face #2, Bigelow in this case, leading to the final hot tag to the champion. That takes 15 minutes, and NO ONE CARES! That's the issue with the whole show. No one cares about anything here because there is zero effort being put into it. You can tell the wrestlers don't care because this show means nothing at all.

This might as well have been a big house show or something. After working on the injured elbow, which Vince wants them disqualified for in a stupid string of comments, Diesel hits

the powerbomb on Tatanka but wants Sid, who runs away so Diesel can get the pin. There would be a lumberjack match the next month and that's all there is to it. Yeah seriously that's how the show ends.

Rating: C-. And that's out of pity. This was just so generic again that all I can call it is average. It had some ok spots but nothing special at all. Sid and Diesel were crushing the company with their horrible feud that never went anywhere. The company somehow managed to screw things up even worse in a few months with Diesel vs. Mabel.

Vince's love of big men continued to suck the life out of his company and more importantly the fans with these stupid big men matches. Diesel was talented, but the opponents weren't. Seriously, you have Bret, Shawn, Owen and Taker to put him against and you picked Mabel. That's just freaking stupid. Anyway, this was ok, but like every single match tonight, there was no reason to care about it and I'm glad this crap is over.

Tatanka's time in the company was coming to an end but he would have this match on Raw from February 19, 1996.

Tatanka vs. Undertaker

This is after Undertaker's VERY long feud with the Million Dollar Team so we can call this part of the aftermath. Undertaker sends Tatanka into the corner to start and chokes away as Diesel comes to the ring with an ax. He takes the cameraman with him and we go to a break. Back with Tatanka holding a headlock and a split screen showing Diesel destroying Undertaker's casket with the ax. Undertaker comes back with the running clothesline and Old School as the casket is destroyed even more. Tatanka scores with a piledriver but gets chokeslammed and tombstoned for the easy pin.

Rating: D. This was there as a backdrop for the Diesel stuff which helped set up their Wrestlemania match. Tatanka meant

nothing at this point and it was painfully obvious. At the end of the day there's only so much you can do with a character like his and we passed that about two years ago.

Tatanka would leave the WWF soon after this and hit the indies/mostly retire. He would come back on the indy circuit a bit later on, including this match from Rodman Down Under in 2001.

Australasian Title: One Man Gang vs. Tatanka

Yes seriously. Tatanka is defending and is the face, but wouldn't you think he would be a heel for being so proud of being from another country? The Gang thanks the fans for their support but wants the women to wash their underwear before they throw them to him. Gang looks so old it's unreal. He pounds away in the corner to start and gets two off a clothesline. Tatanka comes back with kicks and chops as this is somehow less interesting than the girls.

Gang is sent to the floor and complains about how bad he smells. He takes a walk up the aisle and after nearly a minute the fans fill the ring with trash. Back in and they trade wristlocks with Gang pounding down into the shoulder. Tatanka comes back with shots to Gang's shoulder as well and a chop to the head for two. A nearly botched cross body gets two more for Tatanka but Gang hits one of his own for two. Tatanka works the leg for a bit as this is already going longer than it should.

Gang kicks him to the floor but gets caught in a sunset flip for two. The big man slowly drops knees as I go read Gone with the Wind to fill in the time. Off to a nerve hold until Gang drives some shoulders into Tatanka's ribs. Gang misses a running charge in the corner but Tatanka charges into a boot in the corner. A big fat legdrop makes me wish I was watching a Yokozuna match but Tatanka avoids a second one. I'm assuming he does as the camera was on fans in NWO shirts.

Tatanka makes his comeback and a chop to the head gets two. He rams Gang's head into the buckle but the referee is crushed off a whip. Gang is slammed off the top and chopped in the head but there's no referee. The fat man loads up some brass knuckles and knocks out the Indian for the pin and the title after nearly TWENTY MINUTES.

Rating: F+. I'll give Gang credit here: he was trying. He was playing to the crowd and actually moving a bit out there which is more than you can say for most of the wrestlers tonight. The match was WAY too long though and on a show already this bad there's no reason for it to go this long. Did they only have twelve people for the show or something?

He even came back to WWE for a year, with this being the highlight. From No Way Out 2006.

MNM vs. Matt Hardy/???

This is an open challenge. MNM is Mercury, Nitro and Melina. Nitro is more famous as Morrison now. Matt took them up on it but we don't know who the partner is. MNM are the Smackdown tag champions here so of course this is non-title. Here's Matt, and here's his partner.

MNM vs. Matt Hardy/Tatanka

This is like an indy show nightmare. Tatanka is in a non-title tag team match with Matt Hardy on PPV in 2006. WHAT THE HECK? Zero reaction as you probably would have guessed. Tatanka came back at the Rumble and would eventually turn heel and start a feud with Lashley before leaving before they had any contact. Hardy and Mercury start us off here.

Somehow Matt is the big star here. Off to Tatanka and Mercury is in trouble. Sweet goodness this is uninteresting beyond belief. Tazz: who's going to challenge MNM. Cole: Matt Hardy and Tatanka? Point for Cole. Melina gets in Hardy's face and slaps the tar out of him. Tatanka comes in to chop a lot.

Melina rakes his eyes and MNM takes over again. Sweet merciful crap this is boring.

The heels double team Tatanka as I want to find a bag to put over my head to avoid having to watch this. Suffocation is sounding good right now. You can hear Hardy calling Tatanka Chris which probably isn't the best thing in the world to hear. Tatanka catches Mercury coming off the top in an atomic drop but Nitro comes in to keep the tag from happening. And that completely fails as Matt comes in a few seconds later.

Matt cleans house as this is still completely uninteresting. Twist of Fate is blocked and Nitro gets a superkick to Hardy. Both members of MNM have been in the ring for like a minute and Tatanka doesn't seem to mind his partner doing double duty. Back to Tatanka and we get stereo Twist of Fate and Papoose To Go to end this. Was there ANY point to this at all?

Rating: D. It was boring, it wasn't interesting, and Tatanka was the best they could come up with? Was Shannon Moore not available? Somehow he would have been a better choice. This was just awful as the fans didn't care and this went nowhere at all. I can't even say it was short as it went over ten minutes. Bad match.

Tatanka is a good example of a guy who had a very limited gimmick and turned it into a fairly decent career. He was kind of a throwback to an old school one note gimmick character and it did about as well as it was going to. Even though he didn't have a ton of success, he was always around for a long stretch which isn't the worst thing in the world.

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