

Wrestler of the Day – October 21: Tugboat

Today we have none other than the Sailing Superstar: Tugboat.

Fred Ottman started in 1984 and we'll pick things up with the required stopover in Memphis on October 11, 1986.

Big Bubba vs. David Haskins

Bubba is just a generic big man character. He shoves Haskins down a few times to start before dropping a pair of legs. Bubba picks him up at two before finishing him with a clothesline and splash. Total squash.

Due to being Dusty Rhodes' brother in law (seriously. So is Jerry Sags), Ottman got a spot in Dusty's short lived PWF promotion, including in the main event of PWF Homecoming in March 1989.

PWF World Title: Big Steel Man vs. Dusty Rhodes

Big Steel Man is Tugboat/Typhoon/Shockmaster. Dusty comes out to Old Time Rock And Roll. Well at least he has good taste. Oh apparently Page is the manager of Big Steel Man. That sounds like something a 4 year old would come up with. Steel Man shoves Dusty around a lot to start. Dusty comes back with an elbow. That sequence took over a minute somehow. Dusty jumps (yes, jumps) into a bearhug two minutes into the match. This match is really looking down in a hurry.

Dusty elbows out of it and goes to the floor, only to have his shoulder rammed into the post. Back inside Steel Man works over the arm with a wristlock. The guy is 370lbs and he's using a move that a cruiserweight could use. That's not a compliment in this case. The arm goes into the buckle and Big Steel drops four legdrops in a row followed by a missed top rope splash. Dusty rolls over quickly and gets the pin and the title out of nowhere.

Rating: F. OH COME ON! After this horrible show, the big star's match for the world title isn't even eight minutes long? There was no build at all

and the ending didn't do anything for the crowd, as they didn't have a chance to get ready. Also, Dusty looks like a weak champion as all he did was move out of the way instead of hitting a move of his own. Horrible main event to a terrible show.

It was off the WWF soon after this, with one of his earlier matches at Tugboat Thomas on January 2, 1990.

Tugboat Thomas vs. Iron Mike Sharpe

This is Tugboat's debut. It's also apparently from the pages of the WWF Magazine. Really? It seems to me to be from an arena that looks like Nashville, Tennessee. I think I smell a squash coming here. Sharpe runs into him and gets nothing. Vince and Jesse more or less spend the match talking about how big he is. Sharpe can't get anything going other than jobber offense and the splash ends it in like three minutes. Total squash so no rating.

Here's a similar idea on Superstars, September 2, 1990.

Tugboat vs. Iron Mike Sharpe

This is Tugboat's return after being injured by Earthquake and Dino Bravo. Rose is almost as fat as Tugboat and looks totally unhealthy. Some shoulder blocks have no effect so Rose waddles over to the corner for some shots to the ribs. Tugboat whips him across the ring a few times before a slam sets up the big splash to hopefully squash some of the fat out of Rose.

Tugboat would get to be Hulk's little buddy around this time, including at SNME XXVIII.

Rhythm and Blues vs. Hulk Hogan/Tugboat

Rhythm and Blues are Honky Tonk Man and Greg Valentine in a dumb tag team. Tugboat is here because he got the people to try to make Hogan feel better when he got hurt. Do you ever feel sorry for Fred Ottman? Can we buy this guy a decent gimmick? Not even a good one but a decent one? This goes

exactly how you would expect it to: Hogan destroys them by himself and they bail.

This is about as weak of a match as you could ask for. Naturally Tugboat gets caught by a Valentine axe handle which he sells like a hatchet to the head. Vince says that Tugboat is beached. You know, like a whale. The Blowhole Kid dodges some elbows and gets Hogan in to clean house. Hogan goes for the legdrop but here come Earthquake and Bravo.

They don't get to the ring or anything though. Back to the match after a commercial, Tugboat takes a guitar to the back for the DQ. Here comes your monster heel and it's a big beatdown. Tugboat is off somewhere in search of a Twinkie. Tugboat FINALLY realizes he's at work and pops Quake with the guitar to send them running.

Rating: D+. Again, just more of an angle than a match as no one cared about who won or lost here. This was just to set up more Survivor Series stuff which is fine I suppose, but at the same time I wish they could have had a better way of doing it. Not sure what that way would have been though.

Another match as the best friend at Survivor Series 1990.

Natural Disasters vs. Hulkamaniacs

Earthquake, Dino Bravo, Haku, Barbarian

Hulk Hogan, Big Bossman, Tugboat, Jim Duggan

There's some actual drama here as Hogan had never beaten Earthquake before this and the other guys balance out somewhat well. Haku vs. Duggan start us off as the announcers talk about the Grand Finale. It's such a different time when they automatically know who is going to be on what side. Today you would be waiting on the swerve. Duggan pounds away on Haku and a clothesline gets two.

Bravo and Barbarian come in to get some shots but it's quickly off to Boss Man vs. Haku. Haku dropkicks him down for two but the Boss Man Slam

puts Haku out quick. Barbarian comes in next and Boss Man runs him over. Heenan gets taken off the apron and Boss Man punches Barbarian a bit before walking into a suplex. Barbie misses a middle rope elbow and it's off to Duggan vs. Bravo. Scratch that as Earthquake makes a blind tag and crushes Duggan in the corner. Duggan keeps trying to knock Quake down but Jimmy low bridges him. Duggan brings the board in with him and hits Quake for the DQ.

It's Hogan vs. Earthquake but Hulk beats up all three guys because he can. Hogan easily slams Earthquake and fires off ten punches in the corner. Quake comes back with a powerslam and tags in Bravo who stomps away before getting small packaged for the pin. There's the tag to Boss Man who hits his rapid fire punches in the corner. Boss Man goes up for a cross body and oh my goodness Earthquake caught him. That is SCARY. Hogan shoves Boss Man on top of him for two but Barbarian kicks Boss Man in the back to put him down. An elbow from Earthquake eliminates Boss Man.

Hogan vs. Quake again and Hulk tries to drop the big guy. Hulk tries another slam but can't get Quake up. The third attempt results in Quake falling on Hogan for two. Hulk avoids an elbow and there's the tag to Tugboat, causing everyone to shout T0000T which sounds like booing. Hogan pulls Earthquake to the floor and Quake and Tugboat get counted out. That leaves Hogan vs. Barbarian and the only thing I can think to say is "really?" Barbarian goes after Hogan on the floor and doesn't hit a piledriver well at all. It gets two and they clothesline each other. Barbarian hits the top rope clothesline, Hulk Up, legdrop, done.

Rating: C-. This was a lot more fast paced and energetic than you would expect. The continued practice of just teasing the encounter that the match is based on is getting REALLY old though as I guess they want to preserve the house show draws, because who would want to see a feud continue after a single match right? My goodness have things changed in the last twenty years.

Tugboat was reaching the end of his usefulness but he could job a bit.
From December 12, 1990.

Undertaker vs. Tugboat

This is the requested match. Really? This is WAY early in Taker's career in WWF as Brother Love is his manager still. Battle of the big men here which means they stand around a lot. Taker tries a leap frog but they botch it completely as Tugboat stops running so Taker lands on him. He had the height for it so that's on Tugboat. Tugger takes over and takes the taller man down a few times.

Taker onto offense now as things slow WAY down. He's slower than he is now with all the injuries and barely ever wrestling. Hard to believe this is only eleven years ago. New School is blocked and a powerslam puts Taker down for no cover. The Sailing Superstar (yes really) misses a corner splash and Taker goes up, walks the rope (no hands) and drops a fist for the pin.

Rating: D+. Another weak match here as there wasn't anything of note here. Taker did what he could but Tugboat was just worthless at this point and no one cared in the slightest about him. Rather boring match all around but some of Taker's stuff looked cool, especially with him so young.

One more match as the best friend on Main Event V on February 1, 1991.

Hulk Hogan/Tugboat vs. Dino Bravo/Earthquake

Hogan gets a very solid pop and is the only one of the four to get a reaction at all. According to Vince, Quake and Bravo weigh about 1,300 pounds between them. Think Vince is a bit shaky here for some reason? That's not rhetorical actually as he's normally more composed than this. Hogan cleans house on Bravo to start. Bravo and Tugboat are in now and this isn't going to be pretty.

Bravo actually gets an atomic drop and a very good one all things considered. Hogan vs. Quake now, which is a somewhat big feud still at this point. The slam hits on the first try which is something different for the bald one. Quake gets a nice jump kick that looked pretty good for a man his size. The

boating enthusiast gets beaten down as we wait on Hogan to get the tag.

Megaphone to the head ends any momentum he had and we take a break. Warrior is still the symbol on the graphic despite having lost the title and not even being on the card here. The referee misses the tag after the break and Tugboat takes a double slam. Hogan blocks the flying fat drop and we get the hot tag finally. Oddly enough Hogan hits the boot on Bravo and rolls him up for the pin instead of the standard finish.

Rating: D+. Totally standard house show main event here. This wasn't supposed to be anything epic at all and it definitely wasn't. These shows were designed to get the top feuds on TV and on occasions like this one, ending the feuds once and for all since Hogan had nothing else to do with any of these guys after this. Nothing great at all but fine for what it was.

Time for a tag team run to hide his weaknesses. Tugboat turned on Hogan and became Earthquake's partner Typhoon in the Natural Disasters. We'll pick things up at Summerslam 1991.

Natural Disasters vs. Bushwhackers

Andre looks terrible here and would be dead in less than 18 months. The Whackers sneak up on the big men on the floor and poke them in the eyes. We finally start with Butch vs. Typhoon and the big man being bitten on the trunks. Earthquake tries to come in but splashes his own partner by mistake. A double clothesline puts Quake down and the Bushwhackers are in full control.

Earthquake finally realizes he weighs more than both Bushwhackers put together and pounds Butch down with a few shots to the back. Heenan makes an obscure Newhart reference as Quake slams Butch into the corner but misses an elbow drop to the back. The second attempt connects though and it's off to Typhoon for more fat man offense.

Off to an over the shoulder backbreaker on Butch which transitions into a bearhug by Earthquake. Heenan leaves to go find Hogan and embarrass him

which we'll get to later. Quake finally hits Typhoon with a clothesline by mistake as everything breaks down. The Bushwhackers hit Battering Rams on both Disasters but it's finally the big men crushing Luke and the Earthquake for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was a waste of time and everyone knew it was going to be from the moment the bell rang. The Bushwhackers were the epitome of comedy bumpkins and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm not sure why they picked them of all teams for Andre to back and the match was horrible.

Same idea but in an elimination format with partners....maybe it's not the same idea. From Survivor Series 1991.

Legion of Doom/Big Boss Man vs. IRS/Natural Disasters

This is your main event people. Let that sink in for a minute. The LOD are the tag champions and IRS and Boss Man are having a worthless midcard feud. Boss Man and IRS start things off with the tax dude (if you need help figuring out who that is you're beyond my help) getting thrown all over the place. Off to Animal vs. Earthquake which fires the crowd up a bit.

They collide and Animal's cross body is caught in a backbreaker in an impressive display of strength from Quake. Back to IRS to face Hawk with the latter working on the arm. Typhoon gets the tag, only to have IRS thrown at him by Hawk. Off to Earthquake who carries Hawk to the heel corner. IRS and Boss Man come in again and it's a briefcase shot to Boss Man's head for the elimination.

It's Typhoon vs. Animal now and the Disasters double team Animal in the corner. Quake suplexes him down as Monsoon talks about Bobo Brazil. IRS hits a top rope right hand for two and Typhoon puts on a bearhug. Animal escapes and hits a clothesline before tagging in Hawk. IRS misses a briefcase shot to the head and hits Typhoon by mistake, giving Hawk the easy pin.

Quake wants to fight IRS now but walks off with Typhoon instead, making it the LOD vs. IRS. Hawk powerslams IRS down but a charge goes shoulder

first into the post. Hawk gets sent face first into the steps as we continue to fill time by having IRS look like he has a chance. We hit the chinlock as the announcers talk about Thanksgiving dinner. Not hot tag brings in Animal who cleans whatever is left in the house. IRS tries to walk out but runs into Boss Man in the aisle. Hawk hits a top rope clothesline for the win.

Rating: D+. We go from Hogan vs. Andre II to this in five years? That should give you a good idea as to what you've got going on with this show. The match was nothing and there was no reason to get excited about it, because the whole reason the match was happening had been postponed to Tuesday. In Texas.

After a face turn it was time to go after the Tag Team Titles. From Wrestlemania VIII.

Tag Titles: Money Inc. vs. Natural Disasters

Money Inc. is defending and is comprised of Ted DiBiase and I.R.S. DiBiase and Earthquake start things off with the heels (Money Inc.) getting beaten down and the rich man being knocked to the floor. Off to Typhoon vs. I.R.S. For some arm work by the big guy. Typhoon misses a charge into the corner and it's off to DiBiase...who is immediately beaten down as well. Typhoon misses a splash against the ropes and falls over the top and out to the floor.

I.R.S. cranks on a front facelock for a bit as Ted hits an ax handle off the middle rope for two. A double clothesline puts both guys down as this match is DRAGGING. Everything breaks down and the challengers take over. A clothesline puts DiBiase on the floor and there's the big splash from Typhoon. Jimmy Hart pulls Irwin out to break up the Earthquake splash and the champions walk out to retain the titles.

Rating: D-. I have no idea what the point of this was. The match wasn't entertaining, it wasn't good, and the match didn't accomplish anything. I'm guessing this was supposed to be filler between the other matches, but we already had one of those and that's what we're about to get next. Nothing to see here at all.

Here's something a bit more worth seeing. From July 20, 1992.

Tag Titles: Money Inc. vs. Natural Disasters

Don't you see the connection here? This would be before Mania as Jimmy is with DiBiase and IRS here, despite being with Hogan and Beefcake earlier. Yeah that's not confusing at all. Irwin's promo implies this is after April 15 but that wouldn't add up at all so maybe that's an error. The champions, Money Inc, tries to leave before the match starts but that gets nowhere. Typhoon and DiBiase start us off.

Everyone goes in there at once and the fat guys do nothing but corner splashes for about two minutes. They follow this up with a BIG splash, just to add some variety. They try it again and Quake misses and hits the floor. No earthquake from it but whatever. DiBiase chokes him with a rope from somewhere. Nothing of note going on here as it's mainly just punches and kicks.

LONG beatdown segment on Earthquake as the heels do their evil deeds. Crowd is relatively dead here until Quake hits a hiptoss and STILL doesn't make the tag. We get a comparison of Earthquake to Undertaker which is a matchup that could have been interesting if the timing had been right. Quake was getting to the point of not mattering when Taker arrived.

Tag by Quake doesn't count since the referee didn't see it. Double clothesline by Quake as Hart is described as a monkey on helium. Hot tag to Typhoon and the crowd wakes up a little bit. Everything breaks down and the referee tries to get Hart out of the ring. IRS blasts DiBiase in the face with the briefcase and Earthquake drops an elbow....FOR THE PIN? This actually looks like the title change and with nothing else happening...yeah that was a title change.

Rating: D+. Boring match but the crowd popped for the title change, I think due to shock more than anything else. This was their only title reign as they would lose the belts back to Money Inc in about three

months. The match was pretty bad but a title change back then was always a good thing. This was a house show mind you, so it's not like this was well known or anything, making it an actual rarity.

Now for a title defense at Summerslam 1992.

Tag Titles: Natural Disasters vs. Beverly Brothers

The Brothers are managed by the Genius and are challenging here. Genius messes up his poem by getting some dates wrong but the fans are already cheering for the fat champions anyway. The challengers try to jump the big guys early on but the champions take their heads off with clotheslines. Both Brothers (Beau and Blake) are crushed in a fat man sandwich, leaving us with Typhoon to start against Blake.

Typhoon pounds away on the smaller man but Blake manages to lift him up for a slam. He can't turn it over but it was a nice try at least. Everything breaks down for a few seconds until we're back to more Disaster dominance. Quake accidentally splashes Typhoon in the corner and the ocean themed guy is down. The Brothers double team Typhoon with a splash but he launches Beau to the floor on the kickout.

Hang on a second: Shawn Michaels has left Wembley Stadium!

Back to the match with Blake hitting a middle rope headbutt for a delayed two. Beau holds Typhoon on the ropes so Blake can jump on his back in a move later used by Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin. The Brothers take turns pounding on Typhoon and draw Earthquake in, allowing them to double team Typhoon even more. A headbutt gets two for Blake and it's off to a front facelock.

Typhoon finally makes a tag but the referee doesn't see it, likely due to being bored by the match so far. Beau drops an ax handle onto Typhoon's back but the big man FINALLY clotheslines both Beverlies down but stops to slam Beau instead of tagging out. Blake dropkicks his brother into a cross body on Typhoon for two and Quake has had enough. His save attempt is broken up by Genius' metal scroll to Typhoon's back as this match just keeps going. Quake breaks up the cover and gets the hot tag to clean house. A powerslam and the Earthquake are enough to retain the titles.

Rating: D. This just wouldn't stop as the Brothers got WAY too much offense in here. The problem is the same as it was last year: there was no doubt as to who was walking out with the belts and that makes for a rather boring match. Also, the Beverlies are pretty average size guys so there's only so much they can do against people like the Disasters.

It was off to WCW after this as.....*gulp*.....the SHOCKMASTER! If you somehow don't know what that is, go look it up and see the perils of stupid costumes, fat guys and live television. From Fall Brawl 1993.

Sting/Shockmaster/Davey Boy Smith/Dustin Rhodes vs. Vader/Harlem Heat/Sid Vicious

WarGames again. This is the mother of all gimmick matches in WCW and something that a lot of people with they would bring back in WWE, me being one of them. The idea is it's 4 on 4 in a double cage match. Two people start us off, one from each team. They go at it for five minutes and then we have a coin toss (the heels will win). The winning team gets to send in another man for a 2-1 advantage. That last two minutes and then the losing team gets to send in its second man. After two more minutes the winning team gets to send in its third. You alternate until everyone is in and it's first submission wins.

Harlem Heat are Kane and Kole here but I'll be calling them by their more famous names. Vader is the other world champion here, the WCW World Champion. Animal is advising the faces here for no apparent reason. Dustin has really bad ribs here. Shockmaster is the hilariously infamous falling man that is more famous as Typhoon/Tugboat. Dustin starts without his partners wanting him to and gets Vader.

Dustin hammers Vader down surprisingly enough and pulls his boot off to beat on Vader even more. Well it's resourceful if nothing else. Dustin is able to fight Vader off as well as anyone else has been able to do in a very long time. His ribs end that run though and there's the Vader Bomb. Remember that you can't end the match until after everyone is in the ring.

That's a great rule that makes sure there's additional violence.

Rhodes fights back AGAIN and puts Vader down. That could be a heck of a Clash of the Champions main event actually. More boot shots (with the boot itself mind you, not a foot in it) to the head of Vader and Dustin is surprisingly in control. The heels win the coin toss which I literally think was a perfect record for them over the years. Dustin counters a dive off the top by Vader into a powerslam in a nice move.

Kane (Stevie Ray) comes in second. Dustin tries to fight them off but Vader gets a shot in to the ribs to take him down almost immediately. A minute in (remember everything now is just two minutes) and Dustin is in trouble. I'm not entirely sure why they sent in Vader so soon but whatever. Sting comes in but Vader and Stevie wait on him by the door like smart people would do.

2-1 is nothing for Sting though as he fights both guys off. I could watch Sting vs. Vader all day. Dustin is back up but is bleeding badly. His grandma is here tonight. Dusty's mom is here. Let that sink in for a bit. Vader is sent into the cage and stumbles into the cameraman in a funny moment. Sid comes in to fight Sting in an old rivalry. Chokeslam takes Sting down and it's all Sid.

The pops Sting gets for even the most basic moves are amazing. Vader and Sid ram Sting into the top of the cage for fun. With thirty seconds left it's going to be the Bulldog in next. Yes Tugboat is batting cleanup. Davey comes in and Sid jumps him immediately. He fights off Sid and Vader by himself. He was a straight up tough guy in WCW if you haven't seen any of his stuff there. In a nice touch Sting and Bulldog do to Sid what Vader and Sid did to Sting moments ago.

Kole (Booker T) comes in so there's just Shocky left to come. Everyone is in one ring so that ring is completely

overcrowded. The announcers make fun of Shockmaster falling which is funny stuff. They finally split up a bit and the match gets more interesting as a result. Sting takes down Stevie but hurts himself in the process. Sid gets caught in a Figure Four but here's Shockmaster to even us up. Tony: Hey he made it through!

He's bigger than Vader which isn't something you often see. He beats up everyone in sight and after just over a minute and a half he throws Booker in a bearhug and it's over. Wow so Typhoon beat a multiple time multiple time multiple time multiple time multiple time world champion? Sweet goodness man.

Rating: C. That's bad for a WarGames match mind you. It's ok, but the lack of starpower kind of hurts this here. Sid is an afterthought and Vader got beaten down like a fat jobber. Dustin Rhodes looked the most impressive out there which is odd as all goodness. This was kind of weak and did nothing to set up the next shows or anything. Shockmaster was gone almost immediately after this and no one cared.

Another match at Halloween Havoc 1993.

Ice Train/Charlie Norris/Shockmaster vs. Harlem Heat/Equalizer

Harlem Heat are known as Kane and Kole (Stevie and Booker respectively) and are by far the most talented guys in there. The face team (listed first) is perhaps the least talented group of three men ever assembled and that covers a lot. Shockmaster is the guy that fell over, Ice Train is a big muscular black guy and Norris is an Indian. Equalizer is not very good.

Ice Train and Stevie start us off. 2 Cold Scorpio and Marcus Bagwell are tag champions apparently. Train runs through him but surprisingly enough there's no tag. Train can more or less do nothing at all. Off to Stevie now and Norris as well. Stevie gets his arm worked on as I'm bored already. Shocky comes in to a pop for no apparent reason. He drops some legs

on the arm as we hear about his agility. Oh dear.

Harlem Heat use nefarious means to take down Ice Train as I guess he's the face in peril. Still no Equalizer at this point. Oh great here he comes. That's EXACTLY what I wanted to see. This is of course boring and the most interesting thing we hear is that Yoshi Kwan has been replaced by Paul Orndorff in his match with Ricky Steamboat.

Shockmaster, called Uncle Fred here, comes in to beat up Equalizer. The fans chant whoomp there it is to tick me off. Norris in now but down he goes anyway. END THIS PLEASE!!! Booker misses a splash and it's off to Shockmaster. He locks a bearhug on Booker and falls on him for the pin to THANKFULLY end this.

Rating: F+. Do I need to explain to you why this was terrible? Other than Booker T, Tugboat was the best worker in the entire match. Absolutely terrible, FAR too long at nearly 10 minutes and absolutely nothing special in the slightest about it. At least it's over though and that keeps me sane

We'll wrap it up at Clash of the Champions XXV with a singles match.

Equalizer vs. Shockmaster

Yes, he somehow kept a job after falling through a wall. Shockmaster looks like a construction worker now but the announcers crack jokes about him falling down all the way to the ring. Equalizer jumps him as Shockmaster gets inside and uses a wide assortment of forearm smashes and choking. The announcers tell us about something going on in the back with Rick Rude and promise an update later. Shockmaster comes back with a clothesline and a bearhug before falling down on Equalizer with the hold still on for the pin. This was nothing.

The more I think about it, the more I feel sorry for the guy. Yeah he was a one dimensional guy and very limited in the ring, but look at what he had to work with: Big Bubba, Big Steel Man, the Sailing Superstar, Typhoon and whatever the Shockmaster was supposed to be. No one could get

those gimmicks over and it's not fair to put the blame entirely on him for how they went. Some blame yes but not all of it.

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