

Saturday Night's Main Event #10: The Wrestlemania Preview



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Date: March 14, 1987

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 21,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jesse Ventura

This show is all about Hogan vs. Andre and everything else is just kind of going on in the background. The company is rolling right now though and it's all going to pay off in the Silverdome soon after this. It's very interesting that they're running this show basically in the same city as Wrestlemania just about a month before the big show. Let's get to it.

Hogan has no friends in the battle royal but knows he's in there himself. All he wants to do is get even with Andre the Giant and that's the only reason he's in this match. It's going to be just the two of them and Hogan will get what he wants.

Heenan says Andre is the best.

Elizabeth explains the stipulations for Savage vs. Steele: the winner gets the title and her.

The Hart Foundation say it's their first defense on this show but it's going to be Santana and Spivey's last time period.

Jake Roberts and Damien will be feasting on 400lbs of King Kong Bundy.

Opening sequence.

Jesse says Vince looks like the Penguin from Batman.

Hogan says he lives in the danger zone and he'll face Andre anytime. It doesn't matter if every member of the Heenan Family comes after him at once, he's getting his hands on Andre.

We recap Savage vs. Steele, which we covered last time. Steele loves Elizabeth but it's really just a background story for Savage vs. Steamboat. Of note here, the wrestlers now have customized graphics, such as Savage's saying Macho Man underneath a picture of his signature sunglasses.

Elizabeth says she's scared but Savage says he'll win. Okerlund says Elizabeth has to go out last due to some rules. Savage: "Well rules are made to be broken. LIKE YOUR NECK!"

After Savage's entrance, Steele comes up to Elizabeth and says "George! Manager! BYE BYE!"

Intercontinental Title: George Steele vs. Randy Savage

Winner take all. Before we get the bell, we get our fourth separate segment with Elizabeth in the first ten minutes, with Gene wishing her luck. Elizabeth is sitting in a chair at ringside like a lifeguard. George goes over to her but Savage jumps him from behind to get things going. He immediately tries to take Elizabeth to the back but Steamboat is waiting on him.

The distraction lets George get in a shot from behind as the match really gets going. Savage goes face first into the buckle and takes a blind swing at the referee. Naturally Steele stops to eat a turnbuckle. The champ uses the distraction to knee Steele in the back and nail the top rope ax handle. Steele just bites the arm and chokes Savage in the air

but again goes for a turnbuckle. This time he shoves the stuffing in Randy's face, only to go outside and look at Elizabeth. Savage sends him into the barricade and knocks Elizabeth's chair onto the Animal for the countout win.

Rating: D. I'm sick of these two fighting as they had a ridiculous three matches on the first ten episodes of this series. Thankfully this would be it for these two as Savage would go after Steamboat full time after this. Steele would have been easier to sit through if he mixed things up every now and then but it was always the same thing.

Steele takes the title belt and finds a poster of Elizabeth as a consolation prize.

Hogan is warming up and keeps saying the name of someone in the battle royal with every other name being Andre.

Heenan and Andre say the Giant will win.

Battle Royal

Hillbilly Jim, Ron Bass, Sika, Haku, Tama, Lanny Poffo, Hercules, Butch Reed, Paul Orndorff, Billy Jack Haynes, Koko B. Ware, Nikolai Volkoff, Blackjack Mulligan, Ax, Smash, Honky Tonk Man, Jim Brunzell, B. Brian Blair, Andre the Giant, Hulk Hogan

You should know most of these people. Sika's sons are Rosey and Roman Reigns. Haku and Tama, collectively known as the Islanders, are actually faces here. Reed is a power guy who was around for a few years but never really did much. Billy Jack Hayes was around even less time and accomplished even less. Demolition and Honky Tonk Man are both newcomers. The announcers make no secret of the fact that this is all about Hogan vs. Andre.

Everyone gangs up on Hogan to start but some guys go after Andre instead. Hogan fights back and dumps Honky Tonk Man before Andre does the same to Sika. Andre dumps Sika before hitting a massive headbutt on Poffo to bust him open, followed by a quick elimination. Hogan fights back as Poffo is taken out on a stretcher with pools of blood underneath him. Things

settle down a bit as the ring has cleared out a little. Bass gets eliminated by Hogan and Andre does the same to Mulligan.

Hogan dumps Volkoff as we're just waiting for the clash of the titans. Andre gets rid of Blair before stepping on Koko's face. Orndorff and Hercules (now minus the Hernandez) whip Hogan across the ring and HERE WE GO. Hogan runs right into Andre and the fight is on. A few right hands stagger Andre but Orndorff and Demolition come over to break it up. Hogan dumps Orndorff but a single headbutt from Andre is enough to knock Hogan out and stun the crowd. We stop for a slow motion replay with a focus on Andre's sneer at Hogan on the floor.

After a break we come back with Hogan still leaving. Andre tells him to come back for more and literally swats Koko away without even looking at him. Brunzell quickly gets tossed but everyone left gets together and dumps Andre. Hercules dumps Tama and Ax is gone a second later. Smash tosses Jim out and we're down to Smash, Hercules, Koko, Reed and Haynes. Koko dropkicks Reed out, setting up their Wrestlemania III match.

Haynes goes after Smash and Hercules stomps Ware down in the corner. Pure power dumps Koko and we're down to three. A double clothesline puts Haynes down but he nails a clothesline of his own to eliminate Smash. Heenan gets on the apron for a distraction and Hercules puts Billy Jack out for the win.

Rating: D+. There wasn't much good here but it's rare to hear a crowd come to life like they did when Hogan and Andre went at it. It was clear that that match was going to be huge but I don't think anyone realized just how big. Hercules winning is more of a footnote than anything else as the interest just died after the two big names were gone. To be fair though they wrapped it up in a hurry after Andre was eliminated.

Andre says it took eight men to eliminate him but it took one giant to get rid of Hogan. Heenan comes in and brags about Andre's success before declaring him the next Heavyweight Champion of the World. Bobby never mentioned Hercules whatsoever.

Jake says he and Damien will always be at the top of the food chain.

Jake Roberts vs. King Kong Bundy

Roberts tries to work on the arm to start and Bundy runs from the snake bag. Things settle back down with Bundy going to a standing armbar but Jake kicks the knee out to escape. Bundy goes to a test of strength and easily takes the Snake down for some near falls, only to have Jake go right back to the knee to get out again. A front facelock has a more lasting effect on Roberts but Jake slithers out and drills Bundy with a knee lift.

Jake goes for the bag, only to have Bundy drag him back to the middle of the ring and Heenan steals the bag. We take a break and come back with Roberts walking down the aisle with the snake bag, making Heenan's actions fairly pointless. Jake sidesteps a big charge and Bundy hits the buckle hard. Some right hands and clotheslines put Bundy down but the referee stops Jake from going for the bag, earning a knee to the ribs for the DQ.

Rating: C. This was much better than I was expecting until the fairly lame ending. Jake was so smart in the ring and even acted like a snake, right down to the slithering around. I was surprised by how good the chemistry was here, especially when the match was looking like a filler.

Jake plants Bundy with the DDT and tries to get the snake, only to be tackled by the referee. Vince: "Put the snake on the referee!" That's exactly what Jake does because he listens to his boss.

We see crooked referee Danny Davis costing the British Bulldogs the Tag Team Titles back in January.

The Hart Foundation introduces Danny Davis as their official ringside observer, whatever that means.

Tag Team Titles: Hart Foundation vs. Dan Spivey/Tito Santana

The Harts are defending and Davis cost Santana his Intercontinental Title over a year ago in another questionable decision. Spivey is a tall guy who looks a lot like Barry Windham (so much that he replaced Windham when he left the US Express). He takes Neidhart down with a headlock to start

but a big clothesline drops Spivey right back. Off to Bret vs. Santana, which should be awesome.

Unfortunately it only lasts a few seconds before Spivey comes back in for a shoulder. The Harts take over on Dan though with Neidhart dropping him throat first across the top rope. Bret chokes against the rope and gets two off a middle rope elbow. Off to a front facelock from Bret, of course drawing in Neidhart so the referee misses Spivey's tag to Santana.

Bret misses a charge into Neidhart, allowing Tito to come in off the real hot tag. Santana cleans house with his flying forearm to both Harts before putting Bret in the Figure Four. The other two are still fighting though, allowing Davis to nail Santana with the megaphone to give Bret the pin.

Rating: D+. This was decent while it lasted but there was no way we were getting new champions here. Spivey wasn't much of a partner as he couldn't even neutralize the likes of Danny Davis. The tag division was about to take off and once the Harts started getting some better competition, they never looked back.

Ricky Steamboat says his fire is getting hotter and hotter, even if people go after his injured throat.

Iron Sheik vs. Ricky Steamboat

Savage comes out to yell at Steamboat before sitting in on commentary. Sheik uses the distraction to hammer Ricky down but the Dragon skins the cat and suplexes Sheik down. As Ricky slaps on a front facelock, Savage stays on a rant about how none of this would work on him because he's the best in the world. A suplex puts Ricky down and Savage swears he would have gotten a pin right there. Sheik puts on an abdominal stretch but Steamboat hiptosses out and nails a top rope chop for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match didn't have a ton of time but Savage's commentary carried the whole thing. They've done a great job of keeping these two apart before they finally get to destroy each other in about two weeks. Savage's commentary was great here as he can say all these things but we know he's capable of backing them up. Fun match but not very good if that

makes sense.

Savage and Steamboat yell at each other.

Hogan is distraught about the loss and says Andre cheated. He doesn't actually say how but he swears it happened. Hogan thinks Andre must have cheated in every win of fifteen years, apparently because Hogan has never watched an Andre match. He has the big man upstairs in his corner and there's no way Andre can beat him at Wrestlemania III.

Roddy Piper is retiring after Wrestlemania III and is humbled by having a tribute video made for him. Wrestling kept him out of jail when he was a kid, but he's going to Hollywood to give it all he's got. We see the tribute video, set to Frank Sinatra's My Way, which really is an appropriate song.

The standard recap ends the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was one of the weaker shows in the series, but it's only there to set up Wrestlemania III, which was already set in stone by this point. Piper's tribute is good stuff, even though at least half the clips were from the previous Saturday Night's Main Events. The company is about to explode even more than it already has and the next few months and years will be outstanding stuff.

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