

Hidden Gems Collection #9 (12 Days Of Hidden Gems Part 3): Christmas In June



IMG Credit: WWE

Hidden Gems #9

Date: 1984, 1986, 1995

It's the third of four sets of these Christmas shows and of course it's more AWA because there's nothing else to possibly air. These things are a complete hit and miss collection and while that can make for some fun surprises, it can also make for some absolutely terrible stuff. Let's get to it.

AWA House Show

Date: December 25, 1984

Location: St. Paul Civic Center, St. Paul Minnesota

Attendance: 13,000

Commentator: Ron Trongard

Billy Robinson vs. Steve Olsonowski

Robinson is freshly heel and jumps Steve to start before sending him into the corner a few times. Steve gets sent into the buckle three times in a row and then tossed outside as Robinson is being more aggressive than

usual. Back in and Robinson stomps away, followed by a loud right hand to put Steve on the floor. This time though Steve grabs Robinson's leg and wraps it around the post to give himself an opening.

Robinson takes a breather of his own on the floor and calmly stands on the apron because he's smart enough to know the referee will protect him there. A backbreaker takes Steve down but it bangs up Robinson's knee all over again. It's time to start on the knee for real with a hamstring stretch and an elbow onto the leg.

Robinson bails to the rope to get out of a leg crank so Steve elbows him out to the floor. We're told it's five minutes in at six minutes, which is a reversal from what you usually get. Back in and a sunset flip gives Steve two and the knee is damaged even worse. The leglock goes on again but Robinson is finally smart enough to use the good leg to break it up.

Steve is right back to the rope as they're certainly sticking with the formula that has worked so far. They do it again at the ten (eleven) minute mark but this time Robinson goes to the eyes to get out. The comeback is on with Steve being knocked around the ring, including getting choked on the rope. Steve is right back with a backbreaker and dropkick for two but a middle rope elbow misses, giving Robinson the pin at 13:01.

Rating: C. I was getting into this one and would have liked it more if they had a few different things going on instead of the same formula over and over. The ending didn't help either as Robinson literally just covered after Steve messed up. I've seen a good bit out of Olsonowski lately and he's a steady hand in the ring, which is something you can always use.

Steve Regal vs. Baron Von Raschke

Say it with me: not THAT Steve Regal. We hit the stall button to start as Regal yells at a fan and then chills in the corner a bit. Baron goes outside to shake hands with the fan, which takes enough time that Regal hits Baron in the face to get things going. Some stomps keep Baron in trouble on the way back in but is fine enough to send Steve into the buckle a few times.

A headlock slows Baron down and an elbow to the head sets up the chinlock. The five minute call is accurate this time as the clock must have been fixed. Baron fights up and hits one heck of a backdrop to get another breather. The threat of the Claw sends Regal bailing to the floor but he comes back in and offers a scared handshake.

Some stomping in the corner sends Regal outside again so he comes back in (again) and hammers away. We go back to the chinlock and then a headlock to mix things up a bit. Oh wait never mind as the chinlock goes on again. Baron finally (and I do mean finally) breaks it up with an atomic drop...but Regal punches him in the face and puts on a front facelock.

Regal gets caught choking and the hold is broken so it goes right back on. With five minutes left, Regal sends him head first into the mat a few times, causing Baron to Baron Up. A backdrop takes care of that but Regal misses an elbow so Raschke can really start the comeback. The Claw goes on and Regal gives up at 17:13.

Rating: D-. Nope. This is the definition of the old school match that is nothing but laying around in holds for the most part. There's nothing going on in those chinlocks and headlocks with both guys just laying there on the mat for a few minutes at a time. If they weren't doing that then they were stalling on the floor, making this a truly mind numbing experience. That kind of a match can work and it can work very well, but this was terrible.

Mr. Saito vs. Jim Brunzell

Joined in progress with Saito coming back inside and getting taken down by the knee. Saito reverses a leglock into a cross armbreaker so Brunzell rolls around trying to break it for the better part of two minutes. The BORING chants are on, which you knew was coming after the previous match. Brunzell reverses into a leglock from behind but Saito gets up and rakes the eyes for the break.

We hit the ten minute mark, meaning they skipped about five and a half minutes. The sleeper has Brunzell in trouble, but unlike the Baron he does more than just sit there, which already makes this match better. A rope gets Brunzell out of trouble so the sleeper goes on again.

Brunzell's comeback is countered with a ram into the buckle and it's time for him to take a breather on the floor.

Saito goes after him and gets pulled down so Brunzell can wrap the leg around the post (same sequence, even the same post, as the Robinson match). The Figure Four goes on (good one too) and it's kind of a weird visual since Saito wrestles barefoot. With five minutes left, Saito grabs Brunzell's leg to break things up but opts to turn it over and hurt Brunzell's leg instead. Brunzell hammers away on the mat with forearms to the head and the Figure Four goes on again.

It's reversed again, with Trongard being surprised that it would hurt Brunzell. I'm still not sure on the physics of that one. Brunzell doesn't realize that he's next to the rope and spends forever turning it over again for the break. The abdominal stretch keeps Brunzell in trouble until he reverses into one of his own with thirty seconds left. That's broken up as well and Saito blocks a sunset flip until time expires at 14:17 shown of 20:00.

Rating: D+. This was still dull but they did a far, far better job of keeping the fans entertained. The leg stuff was the same thing that happened to Robinson but the effort here made it better than the previous match. It also helps that most of the matches on this show have come close to the time limit so the draw wasn't the most obvious thing in the world. Still kind of dull, but light years better than it could have been.

Post match they keep brawling until the official decision.

Curt Hennig vs. Nick Bockwinkel

Hennig would explode into a major star down the road around here. Again joined in progress but it seems to be right after the bell. Bockwinkel starts with the hard forearms to the face, followed by the knees to the ribs to put Hennig outside. Hennig's head is rammed into the apron a few times as it's all Bockwinkel so far. Some more forearms off the apron keep Hennig down until he finally pulls Bockwinkel down by the knee (learn a new match layout) and hammers away at the five minute mark (Yeah they clipped all of three seconds. Why not just show the opening bell?).

This time it's Bockwinkel being knocked outside and it's a suplex to bring him back in. A double clothesline knocks both guys down and it's Bockwinkel up with some knees to the ribs for two. Bockwinkel's sleeper is broken up with a ram into the corner and it's time to hammer away on Hennig in the corner. Hennig comes back with right hands and a headknocker (picture the start of a piledriver but Hennig jumps up and lands on the back of Bockwinkel's head), setting up a sunset flip for two.

With that not working, Hennig gets two off a sunset flip. That was close so to mix it up a bit, Hennig sunset flips him for a near fall. Tired of having his sunset flipped, Bockwinkel takes him down into a Figure Four, which is turned over. For some reason Hennig grabs the rope while it's reversed, suggesting that physics don't work the same around here. Bockwinkel continues the AWA philosophy of "if a hold is broken, put it right back on" so Hennig makes the rope even faster this time. Bockwinkel tries it a third time and knowing what's coming, Hennig small packages him for the pin at 14:21.

Rating: C. The energy was better here and they had a much better story throughout with Bockwinkel trying everything he could to finish Hennig but not being able to pull it off. Hennig was still very young here but it was nice to see them trying to make a big star for a change. He clearly had all the tools save for the experience though and pushing him made sense.

Post match the livid Bockwinkel sends him head first into the post to blow off some steam. Hennig is busted open and Bockwinkel adds a pair of piledrivers. Referees and wrestlers break it up but Bockwinkel manages to add in a chair shot to the head. They break it up again and Bockwinkel gets over again to stomp away. The post match beatdown was over five minutes long.

Greg Gagne/Jerry Blackwell vs. Masked Superstar/King Kong Brody

It's a brawl to start with Gagne kneeing Superstar outside. Brody kicks Blackwell in the face and takes over. The villains alternate with their boots on Blackwell until Superstar puts on a front facelock. Superstar

gets shoved away though and it's off to Gagne for his weird dropkick on Brody.

Blackwell chokes from the apron but Brody is fine enough to block a monkey flip and put Gagne in trouble. The piledriver is broken up but Brody sends Gagne right back into the corner. Superstar's flying headbutt sends Gagne outside and it's time to walk around the ring a few times.

Back in and Gagne slips over for the tag to Blackwell so house can be cleaned. Blackwell drops an elbow and the big splash for two on Brody. Stereo dropkicks (Blackwell's is a jumping foot to the stomach) put the villains down and Blackwell powerslams Brody but the ref gets bumped. With the ref down, an ax handle knocks Blackwell out for the pin at 10:29.

Rating: C-. This was energetic but not very good. One of the most consistent problems with the AWA shows is I have no idea how we got to this match. The commentary very rarely offers any details as it's all about the wrestling, which is fine but not the most informative thing in the world.

Post match Blackwell gets beaten down even more until Greg Gagne makes the save. Blackwell headbutts the referee for not being there to count his pin.

A Tag Team Title match with the Road Warriors defending against the Fabulous Ones in a no contest is cut here.

AWA World Title: Jimmy Garvin vs. Rick Martel

Martel is defending and Garvin has Precious in his corner. Trongard says that this is a repeat of something that happened before. Now we're not told what that thing is, but something did indeed happen. Garvin starts fast with some knees to the ribs so Martel snaps off a dropkick to send him outside. An early Precious distraction doesn't work as Martel grabs an atomic drop and punches away.

The hammerlocking begins with Martel adding a knee drop for a bonus. Since this is the AWA, the hold stays on for a few minutes, though at

least Martel keeps moving to keep things a little more fresh. Garvin is right back with an armbar of his own, followed by some legdrops to the arm. The champ comes back with his own armdrag into an armbar, which is almost all we've seen in the match so far.

A few kicks send Garvin outside and he wants a timeout. The delay seems to work very well for him as he comes back in and takes over with a chinlock. Martel's comeback is cut off with another chinlock into the reverse chinlock for a special twist. Martel fights up and gets sent over the top, which Garvin denies and actually gets away with thanks to Precious.

Another comeback works a little bit better this time as Martel hiptosses him down and gets in a long series of right hands to FINALLY wake the fans up. A slingshot splash gives Martel two and he hammers away in the corner until the referee pulls him off. That lets Precious slip in a foreign object so Garvin can knock Martel cold for the pin and the title at 17:00.

Rating: D. While there were worse matches on the card, this was another dull one full of chinlocks and rest holds that killed the interest. Martel was trying and had his good, fired up comeback, but he doesn't feel like a top star and this didn't feel like a World Title match. You know the ending isn't going to stand either, which makes this a pretty weak way to end the show.

And never mind as matchmaker Wally Karbo reverses the decision to keep the title on Martel to end the show. That makes sense as you wouldn't want a face looking strong around here. Of the seven matches on the card, the faces went 2-3-2 with the two wins coming either via DQ with Martel after he was pinned or via fluke by Hennig, who was beaten senseless after. Even when the young faces won, they didn't exactly look good in the process. How AWA of the show.

Thankfully we can get away from the AWA a bit and jump ten years forward to Smoky Mountain, which I haven't seen much of over the years. I'm not completely sure when or where this was filmed, as the event was held over several nights in different cities. The date listed on the Network is two

weeks later, so I'd assume this is the version that eventually aired on television.

Christmas Chaos 1994

Date: January 7, 1995

Commentators: Jim Ross, Les Thatcher, Buddy Landel

Opening sequence.

Yep it's a studio show.

The announcers welcome us to the show and aren't happy to see Buddy (TV Champion), who has bought the TV time. He wants to talk about what happened on Christmas night in Knoxville and as luck would have it, here we go.

SMW Title: Dirty White Boy vs. Buddy Landel

Landel is challenging and his TV Title isn't on the line. Joined in progress with White Boy in trouble and Landel yelling at the fans in between stomping. The Figure Four (because Landel was a Ric Flair knockoff/tribute, albeit very talented as well) is broken up twice in a row and White Boy grabs a DDT for a breather. Landel pulls out a chain but White Boy takes it away and knocks Landel cold for the DQ at 2:25 shown.

Post match White Boy beats him up even more.

Landel remembers beating the White Boy's brains in and wants a rematch on January 28. White Boy wants to face Jerry Lawler and Landel would pick him too because White Boy knows he can't beat Landel. The White Boy is on his way out here so Landel suddenly remembers a conference call in Los Angeles.

We get a video from Jerry Lawler in a locker room where he finds a drunken man underneath a pile of clothes, which apparently is the drunken White Boy. That's typical for a horrible place like Knoxville, which is the dumb end of Tennessee. Lawler is coming to Knoxville at Super Saturday Night Fever because he wants the title that White Boy holds out the window of his pickup truck when he rides around with the Dirty White

Girl.

Back in the studio, the White Boy talks about how he isn't scared of Lawler or Landel so he'll face both of them at Super Saturday Night. Landel's match can be non-title though and we'll see how he likes that.

Bruiser Bedlam (Oh dear what a character. Convicted of assault, drug trafficking and blowing up a police station, plus accused of several murders. He also pinned Randy Savage.) calls Jim Ross an idiot so Ross throws him out.

From December 5 in Princeton, West Virginia.

Cactus Jack vs. Bruiser Bedlam

Bedlam is having issues with his manager Jim Cornette. They trade shoulders to start and that's a BANG BANG from Jack. Landel jumps in on commentary to rant about how awesome he is as Landel grabs a headlock. Bedlam slugs Jack out to the floor, which just seems to fire him up. Back in and Jack hammers away with forearms in the corner, followed by a chair to the back. As Landel rants about his upcoming match being non-title, Bedlam powerslams Jack for two and frustration sets in. Some brass knuckles to the head knock Jack silly but here is Brian Lee to point it out to the referee, meaning it's a DQ at 5:27.

Rating: D+. They beat each other up here for a little while and that's all it needed to be. There was no point in trying to have a wrestling match here so it was two brawlers fighting instead. That's how things should have gone and the match was entertaining enough. I wasn't wild on the finish, but the rest was entertaining enough.

From Christmas night in Knoxville.

Chris Candido/Boo Bradley vs. Tracy Smothers/Cactus Jack

Falls Count Anywhere. Tracy is replacing Brian Lee, who had transportation problems. If Bradley (Balls Mahoney) doesn't take care of Jack, Tammy Fytch (Sunny) will THROW BRADLEY'S CAT OFF A BRIDGE. They don't play around here. Candido chairs Smothers off the apron and Jack is in trouble. Smothers comes back in to pull Jack out of the way, causing

Bradley's top rope splash to hit Candido instead. That's enough for Jack to steal the pin at 57 seconds shown.

Post match Candido yells at Boo, who the fans get behind. Candido slaps Boo and gets knocked down but here's Fytch with the cat. With Bradley taken out by a chain, Fytch puts the cat back in the bag and runs off, sending everyone in a chase. They come back into the arena with Candido carrying the bag (I think you get the idea here) and Bradley hammering away. Fytch hairsprays Bradley, allowing Candido to drop the top rope leg on the bag. Candido and Fytch leave and Bradley is devastated (I mean, not as devastated as the cat) so here's Cactus Jack to console him. Rather hot angle here.

Candido and Fytch have both been suspended and are rather unhappy. When that ends, Candido has to face Bradley.

Jack and Bradley have a funeral for the cat with Jack telling Bradley that he has to step out of Candido's shadow. Bradley says Candido is his enemy now and Candido won't like him when he's angry.

From Christmas night in Knoxville again.

Tag Team Titles: Rock N Roll Express vs. Gangstas

The Gangstas are defending and Jim Cornette is managing the Express to make sure the sky is falling in Knoxville. Joined in progress again with everything breaking down and New Jack hitting Gibson with a slap jack. New Jack goes after Cornette though and it's a tennis racket shot from Morton for the pin and the titles at 1:18 shown.

Post match the Gangstas beat down the Express but Cornette makes the save with the racket n one of the most bizarre scenes I can remember in a long time. The Gangstas get back up and destroy Cornette as Gangstas' associate D'Lo Brown comes in to help with the beating. Cactus Jack and the Dirty White Boy make the save.

In the back, the Express praises Cornette for doing what he promised to do and then taking a heck of a beating. Cornette now has an open invitation to manage the Express against the Gangstas anytime. Cornette

staggers in, COVERED in blood, saying he needs a phone.

We go to Cornette's home a few days later. Cornette talks about wanting to remember Christmas night so he can hate someone. After twelve years of fighting the Express, he decided to find a team that could destroy them once and for all. For once, he had them feeling like they owed him something because he helped them win the Tag Team Titles. He thought about turning on them but decided to be a man of his word.

Cornette knew that the Gangstas would destroy them after the match and he would have a ringside seat for a Christmas treat. Then the fans started begging Cornette to help them and his ego took over. For about twenty two seconds, he beat the Gangstas down but then reality took the ego's place. After that, all he remembers is pain and it's all from the Gangstas.

When Jack and the White Boy made the save, Cornette got a round of applause. Now he hates the Gangstas but before he left the building that night, he called some friends. The Heavenly Bodies are coming back to help him deal with the Gangstas. They'll be back on January 28 for Super Saturday Night Fever but before we get there, Cornette wants to talk to Commissioner Bob Armstrong to get the Bodies' suspension lifted. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Now this was an old school southern promo, which did exactly what it needed to do. Cornette explained everything and set up stuff for the future in a great angle. I love the idea of bringing someone in to continue the angle as it's such a territory style which works very well. That's how you keep people coming back and this worked very well.

The announcers hype up next week's show to wrap things up. This is edited off the Network version.

Since I can't escape them, back to the AWA!

Brawl In St. Paul

Date: December 25, 1986

Location: St. Paul Civic Center, St. Paul, Minnesota

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Ron Trongard, Dick Jonckowski

It seems that we're skipping Buddy Wolf vs. Buck Zumhofe going to a fifteen minute draw. Aww shucks.

Earthquake Ferris vs. Brian Knobbs

Yes that Brian Knobbs and not that Earthquake. Knobbs is still very green here and calls Ferris fat. That earns him a slam from the bigger Ferris and it's time for a breather on the floor. Back in and the name calling continues with Knobbs telling the fans that Ferris is a worthless piece of meat. Ferris slams him down but misses the elbow, meaning Knobbs can start in on the arm. Some legdrops to the arm and a twist around the rope have Ferris in trouble. He's fine enough to whip Knobbs into the corner for a running splash and the Ferris Wheel (airplane spin) sets up another splash for the pin at 4:26.

Rating: D. Not the best start to the show as Ferris isn't quite the most thrilling big man and Knobbs on his own is holding up a bit too much (needs to Sag some more). The fans liked Ferris well enough though so it worked for an opener, but it's not something that holds up all that well.

Post match Ferris gives a rather "I'm happy to win" promo and sucks up to the crowd.

Boris Zhukov vs. Steve Olsonowski

Zhukov has Sheik Adnan Al-Kassie. After a weapons check, Boris hides in the corner and then on the floor. It doesn't last that long as we hear about great football days at the University of Minnesota. Steve grabs a headlock and then a headlock takeover as we're on the mat early in this one. The announcers use this as a way to subtly talk about the AWA action figures (or dolls in this case), though Boris' head going into the corner and possibly the post gets their attention.

Another flying headlock takeover gets two as Boris gets caught on the mat again. The fans start chanting something as the headlock keeps going, though at least they're moving and trying to do something with it. They get back up with Steve losing a top wristlock and getting his arm sent into the corner. The arm is wrapped around the rope as a fan is LOSING IT over the referee not doing enough to help Steve. He's so loud that the

camera looks at him for a bit as Boris pulls on an armbar.

A headbutt lets Boris wrap the arm around the post and it's right back to the armbar. Back up and Steve misses a charge into the buckle, meaning it's a different kind of arm crank for a change. Steve finally makes the comeback with chops and a backdrop for two. An atomic drop gets the same, this time with the Sheik putting the foot on the rope. Steve misses a middle rope elbow so Boris drops his own for the pin (a fast one at that, with Sheik shoving the foot off the rope) at 13:10.

Rating: D. This could have been a lot worse as Steve is someone I've started to like as I watch these things. He wrestles a nice enough match and can do all the basics quite well. Boris was your run of the mill Russian heel and while the arm stuff made sense and even played into the finish, it went on for a long time and wasn't exactly interesting.

Greg Gagne/Leon White/Scott Hall vs. Larry Zbyszko/Super Ninja/Mr. Saito

You might know White better as Vader. Larry has been having some issues with referees as of late and got to pick his own referee here. We wait around for some reason but hang on as Larry needs to yell about a man being wrongly accused and having to overcome the system. Ninja kicks Gagne down to start and follows with a thrown before it's already off to Larry. This doesn't go very well for the villains as Greg gets two off a backslide. The referee (who looks to be Jerry Sags of the Nasty Boys and yes indeed it is) has to deal with White though, allowing Saito to kick away in the corner.

We hit the choking on the mat for far longer than any human should be able to survive before it's off to Ninja for a missed legdrop. That's not enough for the hot tag though as Ninja kicks Gagne down and grabs a nerve hold. See, he uses holds like that because he's from Japan and that's what masked Japanese villains are supposed to do. Gagne kicks Ninja away and does the same to Larry, allowing the tag to White.

House is cleaned in a hurry and a running powerslam gets two on Saito with Ninja making the save. Zbyszko comes in and gets crushed in the corner, followed by the big splash for two more as Saito makes a save this time. Hall comes in for the first time to a nice reaction and Saito

bows to him. Thankfully Hall doesn't go for it and grabs a headlock instead. A shot to the knee puts Hall down but he's fine enough to hit a knee lift for two on Ninja.

The villains change again though and tie Hall up in the ropes so Zbyszko can...get picked up and carried over to the good corner. Gagne comes in and it's Zbyszko in trouble with everyone taking a shot at him. Since the tags need to continue without anything happening, Saito comes back in for a Scorpion Deathlock/Figure Four hybrid to start in on Hall's leg. Ninja tries an Indian Deathlock but gets small packaged for two instead.

It's back to Zbyszko, who gets slammed down because he's the very weak link of the team. Gagne comes in again and gets beaten up as well as this just keeps going. Saito drives him into the corner and stomps away, allowing Zbyszko to come in and actually not screw something up! This time it's an abdominal stretch but Gagne hiptosses his way out of it and we look at a fan telling Zbyszko that he sucks. Hall and Saito come in with Hall grabbing a bearhug but Ninja makes the save.

That earns him a bearhug but Saito throws salt in Hall's eyes for...I'm not sure actually but the match ends at 15:41. Saito covers him while grabbing the trunks but he lets go, then people try to break it up, then the camera cuts away and we hear three slaps on the mat. Before the third goes down though, another referee (Scott LeDoux, a regular wrestler) comes in to say something to the original referee. Zbyszko comes after LeDoux and it's a brawl with the good guys clearing the ring.

Rating: D+. Well that was a lot. This was fifteen minutes of people just going back and forth with nothing tying the match together and no flow to it whatsoever. Everyone was fighting everyone and while the energy was there, the ending was a mess and I'm still not sure what happened.

Post match the villains leave and White beats up the original referee. LeDoux talks but I can't make out a word he's saying. The announcers say they don't know who won the match either. They try to recap everything and you have to give them points for hitting the chaos they were shooting for.

AWA World Title: Curt Hennig vs. Nick Bockwinkel

Bockwinkel is defending and Billy Robinson is guest referee. They grapple to start with neither getting anywhere early on. The announcers are still talking about the six man tag and don't remember Ninja pinning Hall. That's probably because Saito was the one covering him but that's just a detail. Bockwinkel hits some shoulders but gets slammed down for one. That's enough to send Bockwinkel to the floor for a breather, which makes a lot of sense for him.

Back in and Bockwinkel grabs a top wristlock as we cut to a rather bored looking fan. The hold stays on for a good while, which also makes a lot of sense for Bockwinkel. They go down to the mat as a few fans shouting from the crowd are drowning out commentary. Hennig reverses into a hammerlock and starts in on the arm with the Bockwinkel not being able to bridge out of it. The hold is released and Hennig hammers away instead before sending him into the buckle over and over.

Bockwinkel bails to the floor but this time pulls Hennig down and wraps the leg around the post. Back in and it's off to the leglock, which again goes on for a good while. Hennig: "My leg! My leg!" Another Figure Four attempt is reversed into a small package for two so Bockwinkel wraps the leg around the rope. Back up and Hennig knocks him to the floor, meaning it's time for Bockwinkel's arm to go around the post.

The arm is fine enough for Bockwinkel to ram Hennig into the buckle a few times as the announcers remind us that Robinson is a thing in this match. Some knees to the ribs give Bockwinkel two but Hennig goes right back to the arm. We're clipped to the two of them fighting to the floor with Bockwinkel ramming him into the apron a few times. Back in and a forearm give the champ two, followed by Hennig's sunset flip for the same.

The good looking dropkick gets the same, though the camera was on the crowd at the kickout for no logical reason. Hennig's ax handle (finisher) gets two more but the referee gets bumped (oh here we go). Hennig hits something off camera for no count and has to counter the piledriver with a backdrop over the top (there it is). Back in and Hennig slams him (Dick: "That youth is paying off." Good thing Curt invested in it then.) to set up the missile dropkick but Robinson calls for the bell and the DQ at 19:18 shown. You can feel the energy go out of the arena as they know

what's happening again.

Rating: B. These guys were getting going and once you get around the long form rest holds, you can see a good story in there with the scientific veteran against the young athlete. Hennig was having to get in his shots here and there but Bockwinkel had the better overall plan. It made for a good match but the ending killed it, as always in the AWA. Also, what does it say that they ran this match on two out of three Christmas nights

Post match Hennig calls that BS refereeing and the fans agree. The announcer explains the DQ and tells the fans how lucky they were to see such a great match. Hennig continues to rant until Verne Gagne comes in to say it's up to the referee's interpretation of the rules. It never ceases to amaze me how the AWA seems to enjoy taking away the fun and energy from the fans at every chance. Bockwinkel says there's no such thing as being fair in wrestling so Hennig needs to learn from his lessons.

Jimmy Snuka vs. Colonel DeBeers

DeBeers is from South Africa and tries to swing his flag at Jimmy, earning himself a running headbutt. A shot to the face cuts Snuka down though and DeBeers stomps away, which just annoys Snuka a bit more. The headbutts have DeBeers in trouble and he's even busted open. You don't do that in a match against someone like Snuka, who hits a top rope right hand to the head. Snuka hammers away and shoves the referee for the DQ at 3:37.

Rating: D. I've always liked DeBeers a little bit but this was just a match for the sake of a match. The lack of time didn't help either as they flew through the whole thing, which made it feel more like an angle advancement than anything else. That's fine, but it's kind of a weird place on the card for such a thing.

Post match Snuka keeps beating him up but DeBeers bails before the Superfly Splash.

We take a break to build the cage.

Tag Team Titles: Midnight Rockers vs. Doug Somers/Buddy Rose

Somers/Rose are defending and it's in a cage with Billy Robinson as guest referee again. Joined in progress with the Rockers sending the champs into the cage as Sherri Martel (champs' manager) yells about various things. Somers is busted open early as Sherri is literally trying to chew into the cage. Another ram into the cage gives Shawn two on Somers so it's off to Rose.

That means Rose gets to go into the cage as well, drawing blood of his own. Marty comes in for a situation that even he shouldn't be able to mess up, meaning it's another whip into the cage for Somers. It's already back to Shawn for a top rope shot to the head as this is completely one sided so far. Rose finally rakes Marty's eyes for a breather but gets crotched on top to put the champs in trouble again. Somers breaks up a cover at two and the champs...still don't take over as Marty slugs away with right hands to get out of limited trouble.

Marty powerslams Somers and Shawn hits the top rope elbow for two as this is a very long opening beatdown. After a hard stare and some spitting at Rose, Marty runs Somers' head against the cage for the sake of some more pain. Sherri wants it stopped as Shawn rubs Somers' blood on his face. A headbutt below the belt finally gives Somers a breather and Rose sends Michaels into the cage. Rose's DDT (called a front piledriver) gets two on Shawn with Marty having to make a save.

Somers sends him into the cage as Shawn is very busted as well. Sherri shouts what sounds like some rather non-PG slurs at Shawn as the beating continues. A fan throws a drink on Sherri as Rose gets the slowest two in the world from Robinson. Shawn gets in a headbutt and knee lift to drop Somers, allowing him to fall into the tag to Jannetty. Rose tries to get out so Marty pulls him back over the top. With Rose down, Marty hits a high crossbody on Somers for the pin and the titles at 17:21.

Rating: B-. The blood helped a lot here and you can tell there's a history between the teams. The rematch of this was on Shawn's From The Vault DVD and that one was a lot of fun too so you know they have something special between the teams. I liked this more than I was

expecting to and it made for a good main event.

Post match Somers and Rose knock Shawn outside and beat the heck out of Jannetty. Shawn finally gets in and makes the save as the champs leave. Yeah Somers and Rose are the champs because this wasn't a title match. See, I thought "it's a battle for the Tag Team Titles" meant it was a title match and the fans seemed to agree with me. But that might be fun so we can't have that, especially when the Rockers would get the titles less than a month later.

Overall Rating: D+. I don't know how much more of these AWA Christmas shows I can take. They're just not my style and take so long to get through with one boring match after another. Some of the bigger stuff was good but those lower level matches are nightmares most of the time. SMW was good stuff, though it's the kind of thing that is going to take some time to get used to. There are worse sets of shows, but these weren't exactly strong.

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