

Halloween Havoc 1994: When Hogan Tries



IMG Credit: WWE

Halloween Havoc 1994

Date: October 23, 1994

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 14,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

Someone requested this show and I haven't watched any WCW in a VERY long time now. It's as good of a time as any as I could go for a little pallet cleanser. Hulk Hogan has shown up and that means it's time to put everything around him. You have to get rid of some big names at the same time, so the big main event is Hogan vs. Ric Flair in a cage, title/career vs. career. Hint hint. Let's get to it.

The opening video is a weird music video deal about Hogan vs. Flair. Just imagine what WCW would come up with in this situation and you know what you're in for.

I do miss that Halloween Havoc logo with the two sides coming together and the light shining.

The announcers welcome us to the show and Heenan, in a neck brace, talks about great things that have come out Detroit, mainly focusing on

wrestling. All of that is going to pale in comparison to the END OF HULKAMANIA right here tonight.

T. Graham Brown, the latest country singer that WCW thought people would care about, sings the National Anthem.

TV Title: Johnny B. Badd vs. Honky Tonk Man

Badd is defending and WOW I always forget that Honky Tonk was in WCW because it's just so random and terrible. Like, this was low even for WCW. Hold on though as Badd has to launch the Badd Blasters (confetti guns) before we can get going. Honky Tonk hides in the corner to start before Badd wristlocks him down and drops a leg on the arm for a bonus. The always funny atomic drop lets Badd mess with Honky Tonk's hair and it's time for a breather on the floor.

We'll use said breather to look at Sting on the WCW Hotline (if you're a real fan, you know the number and charges by heart). Not hear him mind you, but watching him talk. Back in and Honky Tonk sends him into the buckle, followed by an elbow to the face to put Badd down. We're in the chinlock less than three and a half minutes in, which is a really bad sign in the first match of a pay per view.

Honky Tonk chokes on the ropes and we FINALLY acknowledge one Muhammad Ali in the front row. But we have time for T. Graham Brown??? Badd gets two off a sunset flip and we hit the chinlock at five minutes of the ten minute time limit. The comeback doesn't take long as Badd hits a pair of slams but misses an elbow, allowing us to hit the chinlock again. Badd is up again with more rights and lefts, only to get sent into the ropes with three minutes left.

Never being that smart, Honky Tonk throws him outside and drops an ax handle as time keeps going by. Back in and we hit ANOTHER chinlock as Heenan is nearly screaming at Honky Tonk to GET GOING ALREADY. Badd makes another comeback and sends him into the buckle with less than a minute to go. The Kiss That Don't Miss misses and Honky Tonk hits a belly to back suplex (Heenan: "COVER HIM!!!!") gets no cover. They roll around on the mat until time expires at 10:02.

Rating: F. Are you kidding me? They had a ten minute match and needed THREE CHINLOCKS to get through the thing? I know Honky Tonk Man was an awesome heel at one point but come on already. Badd's finisher is a punch and you can't work an armbar? This felt so far out of place and comes off like one of Hogan's buddies getting a job and absolutely nothing more. Terrible match and now I'm supposed to want to see them fight again in a rematch? Is there any wonder why it was so easy to fire Honky Tonk Man?

Badd beats him up post match.

Video on Hogan vs. Flair, including the masked man who attacked Hogan in a recreation of the Tonya Harding incident. That was supposed to be Mr. Perfect but contractual issues kept it from happening. Also, Mr. T., the guest referee in tonight's main event, may be in cahoots with Ric Flair.

Heenan isn't worried because Flair can just go for the knee and he's guaranteed to win.

Tag Team Titles: Pretty Wonderful vs. Stars And Stripes

Pretty Wonderful (Paul Orndorff/Paul Roma) are challenging against Marcus Bagwell/The Patriot. Orndorff and Patriot start things off with a lockup that goes nowhere. Heenan thinks Patriot is Al Gore as everything breaks down early on. Bagwell is left alone in the ring as Heenan thinks we have a long way to go yet. Back in and Orndorff gets caught between both champs so it's Roma coming in and getting his arm cranked.

Roma slams Bagwell down, runs up the corner and turns around for a top rope forearm to the chest (cool). Heenan: "What a great cat burglar he'd be." Bagwell is back up and grabs an armbar, setting up a top rope sunset flip for two. Orndorff comes in and gets taken down as well as the champs are way too fast for them to start. A few slams put Orndorff down again and a clothesline puts him outside.

Orndorff finally gets Bagwell down with a headlock and it's Roma dropping an elbow to really put him in trouble. A little too much taunting lets Bagwell knock Roma into the corner though and it's Patriot coming back in to work on Roma's arm. Bagwell cranks on the arm as well but gets driven into the corner so Orndorff can get in a cheap shot from the apron.

Roma's top rope elbow to the ribs keeps Bagwell in trouble as the assortment of forearms and punches continues.

The announcers ignore the match to talk about sights of Detroit and Hogan vs. Flair because Roma slowly beating up Bagwell isn't all that interesting. Roma goes WAY too high on a dropkick and misses Bagwell, who gets in a headscissors but Orndorff cuts him off again. At least they can do the formula stuff well enough, even if the execution isn't the best.

A hard clothesline drops Bagwell again and Orndorff sends him face first into the mat. Bagwell blocks a suplex though and gets over for the hot...well not a tag actually as Patriot just comes in and everything breaks down. The Yellowjacket suplex (fisherman's suplex) has Orndorff down so Roma comes in off the top with an elbow to break it up and give Orndorff the pin and the titles at 13:47.

Rating: D+. This was pretty dull at times but it was miles ahead of the opener. Patriot was one of about a million partners Bagwell had (Like last year, when he and 2 Cold Scorpio lost the titles to the Nasty Boys at Halloween Havoc 1993 in the exact same finish. WCW was not good with fresh ideas.) and it's not like the team was all that big of a deal. Orndorff was another of Hogan's friends but at least he was a bigger star, better in the ring and had been pushed before Hogan showed up. Not a very good match but I can go for the formula stuff most of the time.

Ric Flair, during his fairly forgettable time with Sister Sherri, promises to take care of Hogan tonight when everything is on the line. It's to prove the greatest of all time and the price is right. What a random catchphrase but Sherri was always a bit out there. Flair: "Sayonara!"

Heenan swears Hogan is gone after tonight.

We recap Dave Sullivan vs. Kevin Sullivan. They're brothers and Dave is kind of stupid so Kevin yells at him for wanting to be like Hulk Hogan. Dave finally stood up to him so Kevin beat him down, setting up the match. There's just one problem: Dave is on a short list for worst wrestler of all time.

Dave Sullivan vs. Kevin Sullivan

Dave comes out to "I Want To Be A Hulkamaniac" and wears a Hogan bandanna and robe. The fans...don't care, including those in their own Hogan gear, because this really is that bad of an idea. Dave shoulders him to the floor to start and takes off the robe to reveal a Hogan shirt and red and yellow gear. Kevin clotheslines him down as we hear about those being the same boots that Hogan wore when he beat Andre.

They head outside with Dave going into the post as Heenan talks about wanting to bash kids in the head. Back in and Dave charges into a boot in the corner, allowing Kevin to hit a running crotch attack on the ropes. Heenan: "They used to do this at dinner over who took the last chicken leg." Kevin chokes with a Hogan bandanna so Dave fights back and does the same, setting up the big boot. That's enough for Kevin to try and make up, allowing him to get in a cheap shot. It's back to the floor with Kevin posting Dave...who rolls back inside and beats the count for the win at 5:15.

Rating: D-. E pluribus gads this show is becoming a nightmare. Not only was the match terrible but the whole thing was designed to be a Hogan tribute character. It wasn't enough to have Hogan be the star of the promotion but he needed a bad wrestler to pay tribute to him every few seconds? Terrible match and an even worse idea as the awful show continues.

We recap Dustin Rhodes vs. Arn Anderson. Dustin had been dealing with the Stud Stable and needed help. For reasons of pure stupidity, Dustin asked Anderson to be his partner, more or less guaranteeing that he'd turn on Dustin in the process. Then THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE DID, because it's what Anderson does. It's just his nature you see. Anyway, Dustin got his dad Dusty to help (in an awesome, underrated promo) so they could win WarGames but now it's the showdown for revenge.

Arn Anderson vs. Dustin Rhodes

Anderson has Meng and Colonel Parker in his corner. I do miss the horribly bad but still catchy "Well They Call Him The Natural" theme for Dustin here. WCW always had bad original music and it's kind of a guilty

pleasure. A lockup sends Anderson into the corner and let's look at a boxer at ringside. They get separated for a bit until Dustin gets in a snapmare, meaning Anderson needs to complain about a hair pull. That's fine with Dustin, who pops him in the jaw with a right hand.

Anderson catches him on top though as this is already the best match of the show by about fourteen miles. The superplex attempt is broken up and Dustin hits a top rope clothesline for two. Anderson hits his own shot to the face and drops an elbow before starting in on the leg. It's way too early for the Figure Four though as Dustin kicks him to the floor, where Anderson clotheslines the post by mistake.

Unlike Honky Tonk Man, Dustin is smart enough to go after the arm, which gets pulled a lot back inside. Back up and Anderson ducks a charge to send Dustin crashing hard out to the floor. Anderson does his test of strength on the mat so he can jump down onto Dustin and crotch himself spot (technical term), only to throw in a surprise by having Dustin catch him in a bodyscissors.

That just earns him a catapult into the ropes but Dustin is back up for the slugout. The double clothesline puts them both down but Dustin is up first with a regular clothesline for two. Dustin ducks his head for some reason, though he's smart enough to grab the rope and block the DDT. It's time to go after Arn's arm (as he did to Dustin) but the knee drop misses, allowing Arn to grab a rollup with the ropes for two. Dustin is right back up and grabs his own rollup (without the rope) for the pin at 9:53.

Rating: C+. It says so much when this is the match of the night and it's not even all that great. The wrestling was fine enough but the storytelling carried it as far as it went, as you could see Dustin wanting revenge and Anderson being his usual angry/evil self. I wasn't big on the feud as a whole but what we got here was pretty good. It's certainly better than anything else we've seen on this show.

Post match Anderson beats the fire out of Dustin and leaves him laying. Cue that awful song again!

Hulk Hogan talks about trying to sneak into town with Jimmy Hart and the

Big Brother (as Brutus Beefcake gets ANOTHER name) but there were so many anti-Flair signs all over the place and they just couldn't do it. This is going to be as big as the time Hogan slammed that giant.

He's not worried about Mr. T. possibly being in Flair's pocket because he talked to Mr. T. the other day and knows he's still training, saying his prayers and taking his vitamins. The only thing Hogan is worried about is Flair trying to go after Mr. T. in the cage. Gene brings up all of the celebrities here and Hogan goes on a mini rant about how Flair is all that matters. The three of them have a game plan though and Flair is done tonight.

Heenan and Tony talk about the main event AGAIN. They do know we've already paid to see it right??? Anyway Heenan is convinced Hogan is done and all he'll hear is a WOO.

We recap Jim Duggan beating Steve Austin for the US Title in about fifteen seconds at Fall Brawl. This was when Austin was wearing black, insulting legends and swearing a lot. I'd go with Duggan too.

US Title: Steve Austin vs. Jim Duggan

Duggan is defending. During the entrances, Tony talks about how he went to the Ford world headquarters. This sends Heenan into a hilarious rant about how boring Tony is, because he went to Tiger Stadium when there was no game and then he went to a car company where everyone was laid off. Heenan: "Maybe tomorrow we can go to the park and watch the grass grow!"

Austin jumps him before the bell and unloads in the corner (my goodness it's weird seeing him do the stomping with hair) but Duggan fights right back. A kick to the face cuts Duggan off but he's right back with a quickly broken sleeper. Austin kicks at the knee (Heenan: "Are you watching Mr. Hogan?") to take over and some knees to said knee...don't do much as Duggan kicks him into the corner.

The Flair cannonball onto the leg misses again and an atomic drop puts Austin on the floor. Back in and Austin offers a handshake but gets headlocked instead. That's broken up as well and Austin hits a middle rope ax handle to the head. Duggan punches him out of the air on a second

attempt, which at least breaks up another Hogan vs. Flair discussion.

A quick grab of the referee lets Austin get in a low blow (Heenan: "There goes that trick knee again.") and it's some choking in the corner to keep Duggan in trouble. There's a middle rope elbow as the empty seats are becoming a little more prevalent. Duggan makes the comeback, with Tony hyping him up as the working class hero. The comeback is on but Austin backdrops him to the floor for the DQ at 8:03.

Rating: D+. Duggan is another one of Hogan's friends and the US Title (especially over Austin) is WAY too high for him but he has charisma and can wrestle a basic power match well enough. It wasn't anything good but it also wasn't a nightmare, so we can put this on the higher end of the "new" generation.

Here's Sting, in a tuxedo, for a chat. He's here to sit ringside for the main event so he can have a bird's eye view. Uh, sitting ringside is not exactly a bird's eye view but Sting has never been the brightest guy in the world.

We recap the Guardian Angel (Big Boss Man) vs. Vader in a big man fight for the #1 contendership. They've fought a few times with Vader winning via DQ and then thanks to some cheating. Basically Angel has been screwed over so many times that he's ready to snap.

Vader vs. Guardian Angel

Angel has some members of the actual Guardian Angels (a volunteer crime prevention group, who ultimately made WCW stop using the name) with him during his entrance. Vader goes over to Ali and you can probably hear WCW gasp backstage but Vader drops to a knee to pay his respect instead in a rather awesome moment. Angel beats up Vader's manager Harley Race (he probably loved it) before the bell and then slaps Vader to get things going.

You know Vader is fine with slugging away in the corner and Angel is pounded down in a hurry. Some standing clotheslines rock Angel even worse and a big one puts him on the floor. The splash hits the barricade though and Angel punches him down. Race gets punched again as well, with Angel

slamming Vader on top of him back inside. Back up and Angel punches him a few times but can't knock him down.

Vader comes back with some fast jabs and you can see Ali pointing and smiling. Angel manages a powerslam off the ropes (Vader loved that spot) and a top rope headbutt to the ribs gets two. Back up and Angel gets sent hard into the ropes so the Vader Bomb can connect (Heenan: "Bye bye doughnut breath.")...for two.

That doesn't happen often so Vader goes up again, only to hit raised knees on the second attempt. A spinebuster gets two on Vader and Heenan is stunned at the kickout. The Boss Man Slam gets...no cover as Angel goes after Race instead. That earns Race a suplex back in but Vader uses the distraction to hit a splash for the quick pin at 8:20.

Rating: B. This was a rather fun fight because they did what they were supposed to do here. There was no need to do anything more than have two big guys hit each other really hard until one of them couldn't get up. Angel looked good here, which isn't something you could say very often after early 1991 so it was a nice surprise in a heck of a match.

Boxing legend Thomas Hearns talks about the big fight feel of the main event. I don't think Hearns has any idea what is going on here and he's ok with that.

We recap the Nasty Boys vs. Bunkhouse Buck/Terry Funk, which is fallout from last month's WarGames. The Stud Stable, who lost to the Rhodes Family and the Nasty Boys, beat up the Nasty Boys after the match. Therefore, it's revenge time.

Nasty Boys vs. Bunkhouse Buck/Terry Funk

Tom Parker and Meng are here with Buck and Funk. Sags has a Jack-o-Lantern with him and I don't see this going well. You can add in the Nasty Boys to the list of rather awesome theme songs. The Boys jump them to start and Funk is about to fight Bunk in a funny bit. That means some long form stalling on the floor as Heenan gets to praise Funk (a combination you don't think of very often). Funk and Knobbs start things off with the latter cleaning house early on.

That means Funk can go outside and grab a chair, which is one of those things you learn to fear. Sags comes in and sits on Funk's face, followed by the Pit Stop for a bonus. Now Funk is all ticked off and the fans are rather pleased, with Heenan comparing that to Black Lung. Bunk comes in and they be clubberin on him (Dusty helped set this up so it's even more appropriate) as everything breaks down again.

Funk gets sent outside, hits him self in the head with a chair a bunch of times, and goes over the barricade to yell at some fans because he's the kind of guy you can believe would go on a rampage at any time. Bunk chokes Sags with a rope on the floor and the villains take over for the first time. Everything breaks down and Buck trips Knobbs but gets caught with a foreign object. Meng pulls out his own foreign object but hits Funk by mistake, allowing Sags to hit a piledriver onto the pumpkin for the pin at 7:57.

Rating: C. I had fun with this one and that's all they were going for. The weird part was that it felt like they were setting up a much longer match but just went to the ending. That being said, do you really want to see the Nasty Boys go fifteen minutes against Bunkhouse Buck? Funk was the star here though as he knows how to do the little things so, so well and it's such a treat watching him do his thing. He's one of those guys where I get something out of every match and that's a very rare ability.

Muhammad Ali gets in the ring for a special presentation of a donation to his foundation. WCW boss Bill Shaw gives him a check and Eric Bischoff gives him a plaque. It's so sad to see Ali in such poor health, but you can feel how special it is to see him.

Heenan rants about how Ali and Hearns never became World Champion 11 times. He's a bit nervous you see.

WCW World Title: Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan

Hogan is defending in a cage with both careers on the line and Mr. T. as guest referee. Sherri and Jimmy Hart are here as well and Flair is in the awesome black and white robe (always my favorite). Flair is in red trunks, which almost guarantees a big loss (one of those things that I read once and can never unnotice it). Hogan starts fast by sending him

into the corner, followed by the ten right hands. He even goes up top for some choking, which is enough for T. to yell at him.

The chop has no effect and Flair is sent into the cage a few times. Flair gets smart by going after the bad knee and we cut to Sting, with the reflection of the match being seen in his sunglasses for a cool shot. Hogan gets sent into the cage and there's a knee drop to the head. Back up and Hogan sends him into the cage three times in a row, only to have T. yell at Hogan again.

Flair uses the breather to hit a top rope ax handle as Heenan loses it even more. A chop off goes to Hogan and they wind up on the top rope with Hogan choking on the cage some more. Flair goes to the knee again and chops away...with Hogan not having any of it. Hogan rakes the face over the cage and gets two off a belly to back suplex. It's back to the top with Flair going into the cage again but he grabs a quick shinbreaker. Heenan: "OH BABY! Are we going to school???"

Flair starts in with his usual assortment of knee work as Heenan gets more and more excited. The Figure Four goes on in the middle of the ring (Heenan: "COUNT HIS SHOULDERS D*** IT!!!") so Hogan gets fired up (not HULKING up just yet). The hold is turned over for the break but T. gets bumped. Flair hits a belly to back suplex and pulls T. over but there's still no count.

Jimmy pulls Sherri off the cage (getting her skirt off in the process) so she sends him into the steps. Sting pulls Sherri down as well but here's the masked man from underneath the ring to beat Sting up with a pipe. Sherri comes off the top of the cage with an ax handle to Hogan (that was a wild woman), who doesn't seem to mind. Flair gets in a shot to the knee and Sherri handcuffs T. to the ropes.

With the Masked Man on the side of the cage, Hogan is rammed into the pipe and suplexed again. NOW it's time to Hulk Up and it's a double clothesline to Flair and Sherri. Hogan clotheslines both of them again as Sting, Hart and the Masked Man are all gone. A big boot puts Sherri down (!) and Hogan does the real Hulk Up (he didn't really need it here), setting up the big boot to Flair. Heenan: "NOT THE LEG!!!" Hogan pulls

Flair over towards T., drops the leg and retains at 19:25 to send Heenan into tears.

Rating: B+. I was expecting more of the same old Hogan/Flair stuff but they hit another level at the end there and it was rocking in the last five minutes or so. Hogan was trying hard here and it was one of the best matches I've seen him have in years. What matters is it felt big and that's what they were going for. I liked this WAY better than I was expecting to and that's always a nice feeling.

Post match Ali gets to hand Hogan the title before Hogan gets back inside for the celebration. Cue the Masked Man but Hogan catches the pipe shot and hammers away. Heenan thinks it's Arn Anderson but it's....the Big Brother and the fans actually go silent. Brother begs off as Hogan is shocked, allowing Kevin Sullivan and the former Earthquake (I believe making his debut) comes in to beat Hogan down. Heenan dubs Brother the Butcher as Earthquake hits the Earthquake. Cue Sting for the save to chase everyone off.

If this had been ANYONE but Beefcake, they would have been set as this was a very hot angle to end the show. The fans were into it and Hogan sold it as well as I've seen him sell anything not involving Andre. Having Sting under the mask would have made it one of the best angles WCW had done in the pre-Nitro days but as it was, it was just rather good, especially after a pretty awesome main event.

A bunch of replays and a chat from the announcers, with Heenan in tears, end the show.

Roll credits.

Overall Rating: D+. Vader vs. Angel, the main event and the show closing angle did a yeoman's work to try and save this show but my goodness that first forty minutes put them in a terrible hole. It's not a good sign when your first three matches featured one of the worst openers ever, a match whose best part was that it wasn't the opener, and a match nearly as bad as the opener. It's not a bad show overall, but the stuff that is bad is VERY bad and drags down the good stuff.

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