

# Hidden Gems: Harley Race And The Voodoo Man

Rather unique pairing this time around.

NWA World Title/WWF Title: Harley Race vs. Billy Graham

Date: January 25, 1978

Location: Orange Bowl, Miami, Florida

Title for title and 2/3 falls. This is from the Super Bowl of Wrestling and Gorilla Monsoon/Don Curtis are guest referees. Before the match, we see a bit of a press conference with the NWA President Eddie Graham (complete with "hello, my name is" name tag) explaining the whole thing. Race and Graham both talk about how great this is going to be and want to prove themselves as the best.

They both sign and we seem to be ready to go. We also get Gordon Solie with both wrestlers, who talk about how they know they can win and become double champion. Race doesn't seem impressed with Graham, even when he takes his shirt off. We finally go to the match, which is narrated by Solie and Curtis. I say narrated because this is a collection of highlights instead of the actual match.

Graham wins the first fall with the bearhug at about 40 minutes (two and a half shown) and Race ties it up at about 53 minutes (after about three minutes shown). Time ran out with Graham mostly done in a sleeper and both guys rather bloody. It seemed like a great match, but you can only get so much out of less than six minutes show and a lot of clipping. Also, and at least partially due to weather, the stadium was horribly empty.

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## Papa Shango vs. El Matador

Date: April 4, 1993

Location: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada

Attendance: 16,891

Commentator: Jim Ross

Now this should be interesting as it is the dark match from Wrestlemania IX and Jim Ross' first ever match in the company. I've heard of this match for years but I don't think I've ever actually seen the thing. Shango drives him into the corner to start and then chokes on the ropes for a bit. They head outside with Matador getting the better of a slugout and hitting a pretty messy high crossbody back inside. Matador cranks on the wrist but Shango tosses him over the top for a big crash.

Back in and a hard clothesline drops Matador, setting up the shot to the rather low abdomen. A dropkick of all things gives Shango two and a side slam is good for the same. Matador is right back with the flying forearm and a backdrop but another running forearm is knocked out of the way (JR: "And I'm sure Bruce will tell me exactly what it is called because I don't know."). Shango misses a top rope elbow though and Matador covers him for the pin at 7:39.

**Rating:** D. This was FAR sloppier than you would expect out of a Santana match but maybe the atmosphere messed with him a little bit. JR was the most interesting part here though and that line about Bruce made me laugh. I'm not sure what this was for, but maybe it was a practice run or something. Either way, he was doing commentary in a toga and that is all that matters.

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