

Superstars – January 26, 1997: Bowl Me Over (Includes Full Show)

Superstars

Date: January 26, 1997

Location: Cajun Dome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Attendance: 6,075

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jim Cornette

This is a random show that popped up on the WWE Vault but it seems to be football themed. In this case we have the Superstar Bowl, which is apparently an elimination tag match. That should make for an interesting show, with the bonus of the Royal Rumble taking place a week earlier. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Shawn Michaels regaining the WWF Title at the Royal Rumble.

Opening sequence.

Commentary runs down the card.

Godwinns vs. Nation Of Domination vs. Doug Furnas/Philip LaFon vs. Owen Hart/British Bulldog

This is the Superstars Bowl (meaning an elimination tag), Bulldog and Hart's Tag Team Titles aren't on the line, and Sunny is guest timekeeper. LaFon and Bulldog start things off with LaFon pulling him down into a kneebar, sending Bulldog straight to the rope. Bulldog pulls him out of the air but can't get the powerslam.

Furnas comes in to take Hart down but Hart is right back to crank on the leg. A slap brings in LaFon, which means Hart and Bulldog can stomp on Furnas as good heels should. Phineas tags

himself in to suplex Hart onto LaFon but Crush breaks up the Slop Drop. A dropkick sends Phineas into a rollup to give LaFon the elimination at 3:53.

We take a break and come back with Bulldog clotheslining Faarooq so Furnas can get a quick two. A missed charge lets Furnas armdrag Crush and let's go split screen so Hunter Hearst Helmsley (with his butler Curtis, better known as Mr. Hughes) can talk about his match tonight with Ahmed Johnson. They shouldn't be in the same ring together, but there are proper showers and soap here so it can happen before their title match at In Your House.

Back in the ring, Furnas hurricanranas Hart down but gets his head kicked off with an enziguri for two. Bulldog comes in and throws Furnas into the corner, where Crush comes in to hammer Furnas down. A backbreaker drops Furnas and it's back to Bulldog for the delayed vertical suplex. Bulldog picks him up again but Faarooq sneaks in with a chop block to give Furnas the fluke pin at 12:22. We cut to Honky Tonk Man trying to recruit Rocky Maivia and we take another break.

We come back with Furnas fighting out of a chinlock and go split screen so Ahmed Johnson can call the Intercontinental Title the "people's title". Cornette thanks Johnson for taking time away from his job as a UN interpreter (ha) and come back to Faarooq being punched out of the air (Cornette knew that was a bad idea). LaFon comes in to clean house until Crush belly to back suplexes him out of the corner. Furnas takes Crush out to the floor but Faarooq grabs the Dominator to pin LaFon at 19:06.

Rating: C+. It was perfectly acceptable, but the tag division was hardly in a good place at this point. Bulldog and Hart were good, but Furnas and LaFon just never connected. While they were definitely talented in the ring, they weren't the kind of team who was going to become a big deal. There wasn't really anything unique about the match either, though I can go

with having something special for a big day.

We look at the controversial ending to the Royal Rumble (with Steve Austin slipping back in and winning), setting up the outstanding Final Four match at In Your House.

On Raw, Bret Hart went on a great rant against Vince McMahon about Steve Austin. Believe it or not, he doesn't like Shawn Michaels either and since he can't get an opportunity, he quits.

Later in the night, Austin says Hart hasn't quit complaining since he got back. He should just go back to Canada because the only man he can beat is his wrinkled old man.

Also later in the night, Gorilla Monsoon set up the four way at Final Four. This brought out Austin to complain about the whole thing and threatened Monsoon as well. Hart returned and brawled with Austin, as was his custom.

The four in the match brawled to end the show.

Here is Hart in person for a chat. He doesn't want to be remembered as a loser or a quitter but he hates Steve Austin. He's looking forward to Final Four though because he can beat all three guys at once. This place is kind of like King Of The Hill and he's almost got his hands on the prize at the top, but there are three people stomping on his fingers. They won't stop him though, because he will be the WWF Champion for the fourth time. This was Hart trying to say "yeah I'm still my old self, forget that whining on Monday."

We look at Savio Vega turning on Ahmed Johnson and joining the Nation Of Domination. Naturally he wasn't here earlier because of the taping schedule but that's not something we talk about.

Ahmed Johnson vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Non-title and Curtis is here with Helmsley. Johnson shoves him down with ease to start and then hits a running shoulder. This

allows us to do little more than have Johnson stand in one place, which is a good idea. Johnson clotheslines him down and hits a kick to the ribs, followed by an ax kick (with the far leg for some reason). Helmsley knocks him to the floor and we take a break as Goldust and Marlena are watching in the back.

We come back with Helmsley dropping a knee for two as frustration is setting in. Johnson manages a suplex and wins a slugout, which has Helmsley making a hand signal. That's enough for Curtis to come in with a belt shot but Johnson sends Helmsley outside on the kickout. The spinebuster looks to set up the Pearl River Plunge but Curtis runs in for the DQ at 13:38.

Rating: C-. I was a huge Ahmed Johnson fan back in the day but my goodness that man was a special kind of terrible. He would make the most basic stuff look awkward and was usually at his best when he wasn't doing much. That's not exactly a great sign, and the ending didn't make me want to see these two fight for the title again. It's no wonder why Johnson got such a huge push, but it's also no surprise that it really didn't work for him in the end.

Post match Johnson Hulks Up to take out Curtis as Goldust runs in to brawl with Helmsley to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. It was a nice look back at a time of transition in the WWF, but that doesn't mean it was a particularly good show. The Superstars Bowl was a bit of a treat but the long Raw recap and the not exactly noteworthy main event didn't help. I do like seeing a random episode from this time as it's such a flashback and different from just putting up Raw, though a better show would be nice.

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