

WWF Wrestling Challenge – November 1, 1986: All The Talent

Wrestling Challenge

Date: November 1, 1986

Location: War Memorial, Rochester, New York

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

These shows continue to be easy watches and are making me want to see some of the live events where the feuds are blown off. That means they're doing something right and I could go for seeing more of this stuff to see if they can keep it up in the short term. That's tricky to do so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Here's what's coming this week.

Intercontinental Title: Randy Savage vs. Billy Jack Haynes

Savage, with Elizabeth, is defending and commentary points out how rare it is to a title match on TV, which is rather true. Haynes shrugs off a wristlock to start and grabs a headlock. That's broken up and Savage sends him hard into the buckle for two. Haynes fights up and hits a clothesline, setting up the full nelson. Savage swings and hits the referee, who calls for the DQ and the bell at 4:55.

Rating: C. Not much to see here, with the biggest story being the crooked referee. That is something that could go rather big if done properly and they seem to be on their way. Haynes could have been just about anyone in the role as Savage could work well with everybody. It wasn't much of a match, but at least it moved a bigger story forward.

Post match Davis clarifies that Hayes swung Savage into him so Savage wins. Monsoon: "IT WAS SNEAKY!"

We get a Wrestlers' Rebuttal from Hulk Hogan, who knows the fans believe in him. Orndorff is the one in the wrong and the fans want Hogan to destroy him.

Islanders vs. Mike Sharpe/Terry Gibbs

Gibbs and Tama start things off with Tama knocking him down. The insert promo from the Dream Team talks about how the Islanders are supposed to play hockey. Everything breaks down and Sharpe takes over on Tama, with a double back elbow putting him down. It's off to Haku to clean house, including planting Sharpe. A top rope splash gives Tama the pin at 2:55.

Davey Boy Smith introduces Matilda, who we've already met. Dynamite Kid comes in to say they're ready for any team, including the Dream Team.

George Steele tried to order fast food but could only say EAT. Well yeah.

Nikolai Volkoff/Iron Sheik/Hercules Hernandez vs. Lanny Poffo/SD Jones/Corporal Kirschner

Slick is here with the villains. Poffo does not like the Soviet National Anthem and reads a poem about how we should chant USA. Jones hammers on Volkoff to start and hands it off to Poffo to pull on the arm. Slick talks about how Hercules is going to win the WWF Title as Kirschner comes in, only to get suplexed by Sheik. Hernandez grabs the backbreaker (torture rack) for the submission at 1:23. I would have bet on Jones taking the fall there.

The Killer Bees think they deserve a Tag Team Title shot. B. Brian Blair is excited about an upcoming youth amateur wrestling tournament in his hometown. Nothing wrong with that.

Hart Foundation vs. Pedro Morales/Tito Santana

Jimmy Hart is here with the Harts. Neidhart knees Santana in the ribs to start but Santana is back up with a quick dropkick. Jimmy trips Santana down and we get an insert promo from Jimmy talking about how he would NEVER use the megaphone to cheat. Morales comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner, allowing for some assisted choking. A backdrop gets Morales out of trouble and it's off to Santana as everything breaks down. They all fight to the floor and it's a double countout at 2:52. That's a surprise for the Harts, who were quite the up and coming team.

We're off to the Snake Pit with Jake Roberts saying this is a special week for him. He brings out quite the big deal guest with Roddy Piper, who gets to join the NEW Pit. Piper makes it clear that he doesn't like either kind of snake (meaning Damien and/or Roberts) but Roberts wants him to touch Damien. With that not happening, Piper decks Roberts and leaves.

Rougeau Brothers vs. Tiger Chung Lee/Barry O

Raymond works on a top wristlock with O to start before they both miss elbow drops. Dino Bravo pops in to say he's the only worthwhile Canadian wrestler and the Rougeaus make him sick to his stomach. Lee comes in to take over on Jacques as Heenan asks which Rougeau is in the ring. Monsoon: "That's Jacques." Heenan: "Who cares?" Raymond comes back in and Le Bombe de Rougeau finishes O at 1:55.

Jack Tunney announces that the company is officially looking into Danny Davis' ability to referee.

Ricky Steamboat vs. Moondog Rex

Steamboat grabs a headlock to start but Rex powers up and sends him into the corner. A quick rollup out of said corner gives Steamboat the pin at 1:25. Well that was short.

The Dream Team want the Tag Team Titles back and do not like being compared to dogs. Valentine: "WE'RE THE DREAM TEAM!"

WE'VE GOT DOLLS MADE OF US!" Valentine goes on a rant about how the Bulldogs are going to have to deal with them and the titles are changing.

Here's what's coming next week.

Roll those highlights.

Overall Rating: C+. There were some weird choices for the decisions on here but the talent alone made it work. This show had appearances or matches from Randy Savage, the British Bulldogs, the Hart Foundation, Ricky Steamboat, Roddy Piper, Ricky Steamboat and more. That is an absolute murderers row of talent and just seeing them do basic matches is a lot of fun in a short span. It might not have been a great show, but it was nice to see all of these people in one place.

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WWF House Show – April 22, 1985: The Better Sequel

WWF House Show

Date: April 22, 1985

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 18,000

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Gene Okerlund

This is one of those random house shows that was put up on the WWE Vault channel and there is a good chance that it was put up forty years to the day. We are just a few weeks after the first Wrestlemania and that means it is time for the fairly unexplored fallout period from the then biggest show of all time. Let's get to it.

Junior Heavyweight Title: The Cobra vs. Barry O

Cobra is defending but doesn't have the belt here, which has commentary confused. O (short for Orton, and he has a nephew named Randy) jumps him to start fast, with a slam and jumping elbow getting two. Cobra gets sent outside, followed by a neck crank back inside. A running in place powerslam gives O two and we pause for O to grab his own head. Cobra breaks out of a front facelock and slugs away, setting up a slam into a legdrop for two.

O kicks his way out of a sunset flip but gets caught in a headscissors, which has Monsoon annoyed at the referee for checking for a choke. That's broken up and O hammers away, only to get backdropped into an armbar. As commentary talks about the various champions and contenders, O breaks out but gets caught with a top rope forearm to the head. A middle rope knee gives Cobra two but O gets in a shot of his own.

O's rope walk splash misses and Cobra just starts slugging away with forearms, setting up a jumping spinwheel kick (that was a big spot in this era). A stomp to the stomach has O bailing to the floor for a needed breather before coming inside to beg for mercy. O grabs the leg for a spinning toehold but Cobra is right back up with another spinning kick. A dropkick puts O on the floor, setting up the slingshot dive. Cobra suplexes him back inside but misses a top rope backplash. Back up and Cobra grabs a jumping hurricanrana for the pin to retain at 13:20.

Rating: B. Oh man this was starting to get really good in the end but they went home when they should have. The biggest issue here was the clash of styles, as Cobra was wrestling a more lucha style match while O was your traditional heel. Cobra was WAY different than almost anything you would see here and O kept up with him as well as he could. This was a lot of fun and WAY better than I would have expected.

Tatsumi Fujinami vs. Matt Borne

You know, because we needed another big international star. Fujinami isn't interested in a handshake to start so they fight over a lockup and go to the ropes. Some forearms have Borne down as commentary talks about Fujinami's footwork. A headlock takeover lets Fujinami crank on him a bit, with Borne getting up. Fujinami backflips out of a suplex and we're right back to the headlock takeover.

Back up and some shots to the face have Fujinami in trouble for a change, allowing Borne to yell at the referee. The chinlock goes on, allowing Borne to yell at commentary for a change. The choking continues so commentary talks about Jack Nicholson (Okerlund: "One of the biggest athletic supporters in southern California."). Fujinami fights up, only to get pulled back into a headscissors as I'm not sure if this is the best way to use his talents.

Borne cranks away for a bit before hammering away in the corner. A front facelock keeps the bored fans all the more bored, as does Borne cutting off the comeback attempt. Fujinami finally fights out of a chinlock and hits a dropkick for two. A clothesline puts Borne down again and a bridging German suplex finishes him off at 11:31.

Rating: D+. Gah what was that? This was the clash of styles I was expecting in the opener and it was rough to see as a result. Borne was wrestling a basic style and didn't let Fujinami do much of anything. You're only going to get so much

out of any legend when you have Borne holding him in a front facelock for so long and it killed anything they could do here.

Jimmy Hart is ready for King Kong Bundy to wreck Swede Hanson. Bundy says Hanson is tough but he'll look small when they're in the ring. Then it's time for Hulk Hogan.

Swede Hanson vs. King Kong Bundy

Hanson is a big guy from North Carolina. They fight over a lockup to start as we hear about Bundy's nine second win at Wrestlemania, because timing isn't wrestling's strong suit. Hanson gets in a shot of his own to rock Bundy and the fans rather approve. Back up and Hanson is rocked with a running forearm but he comes back with a forearm to stagger Bundy again.

Bundy rakes the eyes though and slowly hammers away before sending Hanson face first into the buckle. The slow beating continues as commentary lists off the reasons this company is so awesome. Hanson starts Hulking Up (as Monsoon puts it) and some chops put Bundy in the corner. That's cut off by a quick Avalanche into a big elbow to give Bundy the pin at 4:38.

Rating: C-. While still not a good match, this was Hanson making Bundy sweat a bit more before Bundy put him away. You could clearly see that Bundy was being built up for something bigger down the line and that would probably be someone in red and yellow. Having him beat various people over and over would build him up and that's what we saw here.

British Bulldogs vs. Rene Goulet/Johnny Rodz

This is the Bulldogs' MSG debut as the new generation is coming in. Rodz and Kid start things off but we pause for Goulet to do his thing with his glove. Actually Goulet starts and they lock up after nearly a minute of shenanigans. Kid's headscissors doesn't get him very far so he spins around into

an armbars to take Goulet down instead. Smith comes in and actually gets shouldered down before Rodz throws her over the top.

Back up and Smith hits a quick dropkick before a knee to the ribs cuts him off again. Kid comes in with a missile dropkick for the save (that didn't look great) into a nipup (that looked better), followed by a gutwrench suplex for two. Rodz breaks up the chinlock and Goulet comes back in for a knee drop. Kid avoids a diving headbutt though and it's back to Smith, who is taken down as well.

Rodz elbows Smith down but misses a legdrop, meaning the vertical suplex can connect for two. It's back to Goulet, who grabs a test of strength on the mat, only to get monkey flipped away. Smith muscles Rodz up for the running powerslam and then fireman's carries Goulet. Kid climbs onto Goulet's back and hits a top rope headbutt to pin Rodz at 8:12.

Rating: B-. Not a great match, but you could tell the Bulldogs needed some better opponents. They were a great example of a team with a nice balance of power and speed and it worked well. The finishing sequence alone felt like something different than anything else you would have seen around this time and if you get them the right competition, it would go great.

Ricky Steamboat vs. Moondog Spot

Steamboat starts fast with a hiptoss into a pose into a chop to the floor as the fans seem to like Steamboat so far. Spot stays on the floor long enough that Steamboat goes outside and counters a headlock into a posting. Back in and Spot takes over with a shot to the face and an atomic drop, setting up the chinlock. That's broken up and Steamboat gets his usually great looking sunset flip which is blocked with a shot to the head.

It's back to the chinlock as you can see why the Moondogs

aren't so well remembered in the ring. Back up and they collide for a double down, with Steamboat not being able to slam him either. Spot's shoulder breaker gets two so he goes up, only to get slammed back down. Steamboat strikes away, setting up the high crossbody for the pin at 7:25.

Rating: C+. Steamboat knows how to make a comeback like no other and that was the case again here. Spot wasn't exactly great in the ring but at least he was able to be a good opponent for Steamboat. Granted it helps when you're in the ring with one of the best ever, as Steamboat was certainly able to make anyone look good.

WWF Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Magnificent Muraco

Hogan is defending (shocking I know) and Muraco has Mr. Fuji with him. There are no entrances here, which means they didn't want to edit out Eye Of The Tiger for Hogan. The place is just nuts for Hogan, even if he's in the always weird looking white gear this time. A hiptoss and jumping knee send Muraco outside, followed by an armbar back inside.

That's reversed into a slam but Hogan pulls him back down into a hammerlock (which didn't seem to be the plan but they made a bit of a botch work fine). A legdrop onto the arm keeps Muraco in trouble and another armbar has what's left of the arm in pain. Back up and Muraco seems to go low, setting up a pull of the leg to take Hogan down.

Muraco starts cranking on the leg but Hogan fights up and hits the corner clothesline. The big elbow misses though and Muraco drops some knees to keep Hogan down. The piledriver doesn't work for Muraco and it's time to Hulk Up, even though Hogan doesn't quite have the sequence down yet. Muraco gets kicked out to the floor and Hogan follows, only for Fuji to offer a distraction. A ram into the apron/post keeps Hogan down for the countout at 13:36.

Rating: C+. This was a way to set up the rematch for the next

month and that's a fine way to go. Muraco is someone who was just big enough to feel like a threat without actually being one, though the fact that he wasn't on Wrestlemania is a bit odd. Nice enough match to set up the ending though, with Muraco surviving most of the Hulk Up, which will make beating him all the better next time.

Post match Hogan grabs the belt and wants to keep fighting but cuts Muraco off from getting the title and chases him away.

Iron Sheik vs. Mike Rotundo

Freddie Blassie and Lou Albano are here too as Rotundo starts fast, taking Sheik down with a slam before he can even get his gear off. Sheik gets choked with his robe and sent outside for a needed breather. Rotundo grabs a headlock on the mat and cranks away a bit, followed by a sunset flip for two.

Back up and Sheik gets in a suplex before knocking Rotundo outside in a heap. A chinlock into a hammerlock doesn't last long on Rotundo, who is back up with an atomic drop. Rotundo grinds away on a front facelock before sending Sheik outside for a change. Back in and Rotundo keeps it on the mat with a headlock, which makes sense for two people with deep amateur backgrounds.

Sheik comes back with some choking and sends him to the floor for a chair shot, which is fine with the referee for some reason. The abdominal stretch goes on, followed by the gutwrench suplex (which someone needs to bring back) but Rotundo manages his own suplex for two. Sheik misses a running knee in the corner and gets rolled up for the pin at 14:32.

Rating: B. This wound up being a heck of a match and probably the best Rotundo match I've ever seen. Sheik is best known as being almost a caricature for most of his career but he could have a good outing when he had the chance. This was a good example of two people having similar styles and meshing well together and that's not a bad way to go.

Barry Windham vs. Nikolai Volkoff

Ah so it's this kind of a show. Albano and Blassie are here again too. Windham works on the arm to start and cranks away at a wristlock. A rollup gets two on Volkoff and he claims a pull of the trunks. To be fair, there is quite a bit of trunk to pull. The arm cranking resumes with an armbar having Volkoff down but he comes back with a shot to the face. Some stomping has Windham in trouble and one heck of a gorilla press sends him flying.

The bearhug stays on the back, with Volkoff lifting him up and smiling about it like an evil powerhouse should. Windham fights out and grabs a sleeper, followed by a dropkick and atomic drop. A headbutt gives us a double down before Volkoff misses a charge into the post. Windham hammers away in the corner but the Iron Sheik comes in for the DQ at 12:29.

Rating: B-. This was another match that took me by surprise as the idea of Volkoff wrestling a good one is quite the odd thing to see. What matters the most here is that both guys were working hard and it was a solid showdown that made me want to see these teams fight again. Which they would, with Windham and Rotundo winning the titles back in about two months.

Post match the beatdown is on until Rotundo makes the save. Not bad for about thirty minutes between two singles matches to set up a tag rematch here. Though a six man tag with the managers would have been fun too.

The Fink hypes up the next MSG show on May 20. We run down the card, with Iron Sheik/Nikolai Volkoff defending against the US Express (Windham/Rotundo) and Muraco vs. Hogan II. There is a bonus match too though, as Brutus Beefcake and Johnny V will team up against David Sammartino (the fans know what's coming and are more than up for it) and...BRUNO SAMMARTINO (and there's the monster pop).

Tito Santana and Junkyard Dog are ready for Greg Valentine and Brutus Beefcake.

Tito Santana/Junkyard Dog vs. Brutus Beefcake/Greg Valentine

Johnny V and Jimmy Hart are both here with the villains. It's a brawl to start with Beefcake and Valentine being knocked to the floor in a hurry. We settle down to Dog and Beefcake running the ropes to start with Dog knocking him down without much trouble. Valentine's cheap shot from the apron doesn't work as Beefcake runs into him, allowing Santana to come in.

Santana whips them into each other again and grabs a chinlock on Beefcake. That's broken up and it's off to Valentine for a gutbuster to drop Santana. The chinlock goes on for a bit before Beefcake sends Santana outside. Back in and Valentine slowly hammers (there we go) away before Beefcake uses the trunks to cut off a tag attempt. Santana fights up and hammers away, which brings in the other two.

Okerlund is begging for a double DQ but we settle back down. That doesn't last long as Santana crawls around and gets over to Dog for the house cleaning. A falling headbutt gets two on Valentine but a second one misses as we settle down a bit. Beefcake and Valentine work on Dog's leg but he gets over to Santana to slug away on Valentine, which just feels right. Santana's big clothesline gets two on Valentine as everything breaks down again. The flying forearm is enough for Santana to pin Valentine at 13:14.

Rating: B-. There are certain pairs who are going to work well together no matter what they do and that is the case with Valentine and Santana. Those two could have turned a boat race into an exciting match and they made this into an entertaining tag match. If nothing else, it's interesting to see what very well may have been the future Dream Team's first match, only a few months before they would win the Tag Team Titles. Solid main event here, as Santana goes from starting Wrestlemania to

closing the follow up show.

Post match the villains beat the winners down.

After a break, the arena clears out and the ring is swept of trash as commentary wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B. This was a heck of a show with some rather good matches (the opener, the Tag Team Title singles matches and more) and stuff to make you want to come back later. It's interesting to see this period as well, as you pretty much don't have much outside of Saturday Night's Main Event to tide you over between the first two Wrestlemanias. The crowd was certainly still hot and it made for a good show here. You could definitely get the Wrestlemania fallout vibes here and that is a good sign for the coming months. I had a lot of fun with this and could definitely go with more from this era, which is critically overlooked.

Results

Cobra b. Barry O – Hurricanrana

Tatsumi Fujinami b. Matt Borne – German suplex

King Kong Bundy b. Swede Hanson – Elbow drop

British Bulldogs b. Rene Goulet/Johnny Rodz – Swan dive to Rodz

Ricky Steamboat b. Moondog Spot – High crossbody

Magnificent Muraco b. Hulk Hogan via countout

Mike Rotundo b. Iron Sheik – Rollup

Barry Windham b. Nikolai Volkoff via DQ when Iron Sheik interfered

Tito Santana/Junkyard Dog b. Brutus Beefcake/Greg Valentine – Flying forearm to Valentine

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