

WCCW Television – March 3, 1984 (David Von Erich Memorial Show): I Can Really Pick Em



IMG Credit: WWE

WCCW TV

Date: March 3, 1984

Host: Bill Mercer

So as mentioned, I'm picking these ten WCCW shows at random...and this is the David Von Erich Memorial Show. Back in the early 1980s, David was a great star and on his way to being the NWA World Champion. Then he passed away on a trip to Japan due to a drug overdose (contrary to what the Von Erich family said but in line with what everyone else said) and the promotion basically took a bullet. This is the first show dealing with the fallout so let's get to it.

This is listed as being in the most complete form possible, which likely means something was removed for music copyright reasons.

Opening sequence.

Mercer is in a black room to introduce the show and talks about how much we all miss David.

Music video on David, including him in the woods and playing high school basketball and football.

Mercer talks about some of David's accomplishments and big opponents.

We see an undated clip of David vs. Harley Race in a non-title match. David has him in trouble until a headbutt and knee drop put David down. More knees connect as we're about ten minutes in. Race misses the middle rope headbutt and David gets the Claw (family finisher), apparently for the first time in his career. The blood starts flowing in a great visual and Race is out to give David the win, though I could have sworn they mentioned a first fall earlier.

Harley Race says if David hadn't passed away, he would have been World Champion. That's about as strong a level of praise as you're going to get.

From Star Wars June 1983, David beats Jimmy Garvin (his longtime rival) to win the Texas Title and Garvin and Precious (Garvin's valet) for a day. This one goes on for a few minutes but is mainly spent in a long chinlock. We don't actually see the finish but David had a sleeper on.

Garvin, with Precious, talks about how well he knew David, to the point where he knew what David had for breakfast.

From an undisclosed date, David, Ice Man King Parsons and Kerry Von Erich vs. the Freebirds in one of roughly 1985382 matches the Von Erichs had against the team. This one is just a few seconds.

Michael Hayes (leader of the Freebirds) says this is going to be their only public statement. It was a tragedy and even the Freebirds know they lost a great warrior. The one thing David did was fight for what he believed in, and you have to respect that. The feud will never end though because there's only room for one of them. This was as kayfabe of a response as you could and given the nature of their feud, I can live with that.

NWA World Title: Ric Flair vs. David Von Erich

Flair is defending on Christmas night 1983 in Reunion Arena in Dallas. An

armbar has David in trouble as Flair shouts at the crowd at the fifteen minute mark. Some covers with the hold still on get two and Flair is getting ticked off at the pace of the count. David gets the sleeper on until Flair belly to backs his way out. It's too early for the Claw though as Flair blocks the grip and heads up top, but it's exactly the same result as it has been throughout his career.

The real comeback is on with right hands in the corner and a jumping knee to the face gives David two. Flair has had it with this and throws David over the top for the DQ...which the referee refuses to call. Back in and David gets two off a small package, followed by a suplex for the same. The Flair Flip in the corner sets up the Claw in the middle of the ring and the clip ends before the match is over. David would win by DQ. I won't rate the match when we missed the first fifteen minutes, but what we got here was very good and you can see the star power in David, who had both the look and the work.

Flair talks about how they had professional differences but he knew David was a tremendous competitor and a tremendous man.

David Manning (WCCW referee) talks about how talented David was.

Another David video, this one about the family and growing up on the ranch. A lot of horseback riding ensues.

On the ranch, Fritz and the other sons, without looking at the camera, talks about how great a life David had and how much living he did in 25 years. He also talks about how big a star Mike can be because of how much he looks like David. They talk about how a Von Erich will win the World Title at some point in the future. The majority of this was about one of the boys becoming champion instead of David, which was quite the head trip.

Now we get a more traditional interview with Fritz, talking about David growing up with a love of the outdoors. He talks about what a great way it is to raise his children but says life goes on, even without David. Without being a Christian, this would have been incredibly hard. After talking about being with David in Heaven again one day, Fritz goes into a speech about how Mike will be a huge star for looking just like David.

Kerry or Kevin will be the next World Champion and do it as a tribute to David's memory.

The funeral for David was open to the public so they could say goodbye to him and the fans' support meant a lot to Fritz. He's made some mistakes raising them, but they're not sissies. One more discussion of David in Heaven wraps us up. This was another nearly disturbing interview as Fritz seems to brush the death off for the sake of "oh well, business must go on".

One more music video wraps things up.

The credits show a yellow rose and we end on an In Memory Of graphic.

Overall Rating: C. What in the world do you say to something like this? The wrestling wasn't the point but my goodness this was hard to watch as Fritz kept talking about how business needed to keep going and how one of his kids was going to be World Champion. It was clear that David would have been a big star if given the chance, but egads things downhill in a hurry. While it was a rough spot at the time, it was yet to be known how terrifying a place the promotion had become.

This one is very sad, but the story would get even worse when the actual details came out. It's interesting (and understandable) that they don't actually mention anything about the details of David's passing. Maybe they were still in shock (understandable) or maybe they didn't want to tell their version of the events yet. Either way, it's a very depressing moment, but it's even worse when you see where things would be headed because of the environment.

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