

On This Day – February 16, 1997: In Your House 13 – Final Four: Why Don't They Do This Again?

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Date: February 16, 1997

Location: UTC Arena, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Attendance: 6,399

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

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Austin is declared the winner and therefore the #1 contender. HOWEVER, Gorilla Monsoon doesn't like this so he makes a match for this PPV which he dubs Final Four. Austin, Hart, Taker and Vader, the final four men in the ring in the Rumble, would have a match at the PPV for the right to go to Mania. Ok,

that's all well and good. However, there was a special Thursday edition of Raw where Shawn forfeited the title, citing a knee injury and a lost smile.

That night he had been scheduled to face Sid in a title match, so instead of just naming Sid Champion, the four way match at the PPV was now for the title with the winner facing Sid the following night on Raw for the title. Did you get all that?

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Marc Mero vs. Leif Cassidy

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Sable has got her classic look down now: long blonde hair, one piece black leather outfit, big earrings and sunglasses. Just...dang. Anyway, Cassidy is already in the ring so how good are you expecting this match to really be? I actually like Cassidy's stuff better than Mero's. Let that sink in for a bit. Your psychology for this match is Cassidy works on Mero's knee. Mero is your face here...I think.

Actually it's more like Sable is the face and Marc is hers but that's neither here nor there. Snow really can carry a match when he's allowed to. It's not something anyone cares about though as it's Leif Cassidy vs. Marc Mero but Snow (Cassidy in case you didn't pick up on that) is handling this very well.

Everything he does makes sense and has a point to it. There's

no noticeably stupid moves anywhere which is a very nice break. He goes after Sable though and Mero rescues her. After this he hits like three moves and no sells the knee injury to hit his shooting star press to win it.

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As for the speech, here's my take on it: you can believe him or not, and I personally think that he was at least half telling the truth, but he's made it clear that the knee was

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HHH is a twig at this point, maybe cracking 245 soaking wet. Rocky was still a rookie at this point but you could see the star in him just begging to get out with a gimmick change. HHH was on the verge of stardom but not as naturally. Early on the botch a baseball slide spot but HHH does a great improvised spot where he turns it into a drop toehold. This is a pretty

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Promo for Mania airs.

Kevin Kelly interviews Vader who says he'll be taking down all three men tonight. Paul Bearer says the same thing.

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The person that stood out the most though was the referee. He was just flat out bad here. He kept taking forever as he kept wanting people out of the ring etc. and while that's fine to try to keep going, he took it way too far. Whenever there was a cover he'd check the two partners before he went to make the count. That's a waste of time and looks bad. Also during the match the champions kept fighting, eventually seeing Bulldog intentionally clothesline Owen hard.

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WWF Title: Undertaker vs. Vader vs. Steve Austin vs. Bret Hart

Lawler keeps asking what lucha libre means (the Spanish announcers keep saying it) and JR says rough wrestling for some reason. This is actually an over the top rope battle royal but you can also be eliminated by pin or submission, which is a very interesting twist. I'm not sure if I like it or not. It takes away Vader's weight advantage but why would you try to pin someone when you can just knock them out of the ring?

Bret of course gets a prematch interview. He says nothing can stop him from taking the title tonight. Bret's jacket really is cool. JR says that even Wrestlemania wasn't this exciting. Suuuuuure. Starts off with both singles feuds being renewed. Very quickly Vader and Taker figure out that going through the ropes is legal. Everyone just beats on everyone with them trading partners which further supports my orgy theory from earlier.

Leaving the ring was critical here I think as it opens up a lot of alternative possibilities for these guys which is certainly a good thing. Vader gets cut BAD around his left eye. Like it looks as if it fell out and there's just a hole there that's shooting blood out of it. I finally found where it was and it's not pretty. Within a few seconds he takes a

chair to the face and he hits his eye on the stairs, right on the corner.

They fight all over the arena and all fight each other at least once and in some cases twice. That's what makes this match work as well as it is: you can keep the fighting fresh. Austin even breaks out a top rope clothesline which never stops making my head shake given how bad his knees got later in his career. After that we cut to the floor where VADER HAS BRET IN A SHARPSHOOTER. What the heck???

Those things happen within a few seconds of each other. Dang I need my medicine after seeing that. Sadly enough it was a better one than the one Rock would use later in his career. We're at 12 minutes and no one is out yet. That's another thing that's making this great is all four are in there for over half of the match so far. It's more or less Bret wrestling Austin and Taker fighting Vader now.

Bret sets Austin for a belly to back suplex and Austin BACKFLIPS out of it. DANG Austin was awesome before he got hurt. Vader's eye is freaking sick right now. This whole thing is absolutely brutal and it's a great match so far. We're at fifteen minutes and it's still all four guys in there. Just as I finish typing that Austin is thrown out as Bret Hart uses what we would now call the FU to eliminate him. Bret Hart used an FU. Sly can never see this moment.

His orgasm would flood Missouri. Taker gets knocked to the floor so we continue our orgy match with Bret and Vader getting it on for awhile. I will now pause to attempt to erase such a mental picture. Ok I'm back now as Vader goes to the top in a dumb move. Why would you do that when being knocked to the floor eliminates you?

Bret stops him and lands a superplex from the top rope which is freaking insane given A) how long they've been going and B) the fact that Vader's fat needs its own zip code. Taker breaks

up the sharpshooter on Vader which makes no sense at all and even the announcers question it. Austin comes back out and beats up Hart some more to pretty much secure the fact that he'll be winning this.

Vader again goes to the ropes for a Vader Bomb but Taker sits up and hits an uppercut to the little Vaders to eliminate him so we're down to Bret vs. Taker. Austin is still around after a chokeslam and for some reason he stops the tombstone. Taker and Hart both go for Austin but Taker is too slow.

He turns around and is clotheslined out to make Bret the champion again. Sid comes out for the staredown after Taker storms off. Sid says let's do it right now as we go off the air in the middle of the showdown. I like that ending as it leaves us on a cliffhanger for tomorrow's show.

Rating: A. This was a very fun match and the key to it was you knew there was going to be a new champion at the end so you had to watch all of it. Another key was that no one was eliminated until over half of the match was gone. This kept things fresh and made you want to stay until the very end to see how everyone went out. The leaving the ring was key as well as it allowed three separate one on one matches to occur throughout the match. Great match indeed and very fun.

Overall Rating: B-. First two matches were pretty bad but the other three more than made up for them. By the middle of the main event I was hooked. The second half of the show was great with another solid Rock/HHH encounter, a solid and surprising tag match and a great main event. Overall this show started slowly but kicked it into high gear at the end. Not great but certainly fun, this is worth a watch someday but don't make it a top priority.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my 1998 Monday Night Raw Review ebook on Amazon at:

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Those things happen within a few seconds of each other. DAng I need my medicine after seeing that. Sadly enough it was a better one than the one Rock would use later in his career. We're at 12 minutes and no one is out yet. That's another thing that's making this great is all four are in there for over half of the match so far. It's more or less Bret wrestling Austin and Taker fighting Vader now.

Bret sets Austin for a belly to back suplex and Austin BACKFLIPS out of it. Man alive Austin was the cat's meow before he got hurt. Vader's eye is freaking sick right now. This whole thing is absolutely brutal and it's a great match so far. We're at fifteen minutes and it's still all four guys in there. Just as I finish typing that Austin is thrown out as Bret Hart uses what we would now call the FU to eliminate him. Bret Hart used an FU. Sly can never see this moment.

His orgasm would flood Missouri. Taker gets knocked to the floor so we continue our orgy match with Bret and Vader getting it on for awhile. I will now pause to attempt to erase such a mental picture. Ok I'm back now as Vader goes to the top in a dumb move. Why would you do that when being knocked to the floor eliminates you?

Bret stops him and lands a superplex from the top rope which is freaking insane given A) how long they've been going and B) the fact that Vader's gut needs its own zip code. Taker breaks

up the sharpshooter on Vader which makes no sense at all and even the announcers question it. Austin comes back out and beats up Hart some more to pretty much secure the fact that he'll be winning this.

Vader again goes to the ropes for a Vader Bomb but Taker sits up and hits an uppercut to the little Vaders to eliminate him so we're down to Bret vs. Taker. Austin is still around after a chokeslam and for some reason he stops the tombstone. Taker and Hart both go for Austin but Taker is too slow.

He turns around and is clotheslined out to make Bret the champion again. Sid comes out for the staredown after Taker storms off. Sid says let's do it right now as we go off the air in the middle of the showdown. I like that ending as it leaves us on a cliffhanger for tomorrow's show.

Rating: A. This was a very fun match and the key to it was you knew there was going to be a new champion at the end so you had to watch all of it. Another key was that no one was eliminated until over half of the match was gone. This kept things fresh and made you want to stay until the very end to see how everyone went out. The leaving the ring was key as well as it allowed three separate one on one matches to occur throughout the match. Great match indeed and very fun.

Overall Rating: B-. First two matches were pretty bad but the other three more than made up for them. By the middle of the main event I was hooked. The second half of the show was great with another solid Rock/HHH encounter, a solid and surprising tag match and a great main event. Overall this show started slowly but kicked it into high gear at the end. Not great but certainly fun, this is worth a watch someday but don't make it a top priority.