

# Superstars of Wrestling – January 8, 1988 – DiBiase's Latest Purchase

## Superstars of Wrestling

Date: January 8, 1988

Location: Sun Dome, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jesse Ventura, Bruno Sammartino

Now a lot of you may have read some of my Superstars reviews from a few years ago, but in case you haven't, here's the basic idea: this is the A show of WWF at the time. Everything happened here and it was all that mattered. I have almost every show from January 88 – June of 88 and I'll probably get a lot more so we'll go through the first Rumble (which meant nothing), me being born, Hogan losing the title, Wrestlemania IV, and that's about it since there were no PPVs between Mania and the debut of a new show called Summerslam. Let's get to it.

Vince brags about Tampa for some reason and we get the opening sequence.

We're going to get clips from SNME where Andre interfered in Hogan vs. Bundy.

## Islanders vs. Jerry Grey/Lanny Poffo

Heenan has a dog leash with him which has no dog on it, which is a jab at the British Bulldogs. Poffo reads a poem before the match. Tama and Poffo start. The Bulldogs say they still can't find Matilda. All they care about is if she's ok. They want Tunney to do something about her missing. We can't see half of the ring due to the window they're in. Tama is back in and working on Grey. He dropkicks Grey down and Haku kicks Grey's head off for the pin. Total squash. Expect to hear that

a lot in these reviews.

Tunney says he's going to take action because no one knows where Matilda is. Heenan warns him to stay calm. Tunney says until we know where Matilda is, the Islanders are suspended.

#### Willington Wilkins vs. Jake Roberts

Jake should kill him for such a horrible name. Vince and Jesse talk about the Islanders as Jake mauls Willington. Short clothesline and DDT end this quickl.

Time for the house show ads. This is for the MSG Show on January 25. Hogan/Bigelow vs. Virgil/DiBiase is the main event. Duggan comes in and says that he's ready for Harley Race and the 2x4 will be there with him.

#### Dino Bravo vs. Scott Casey

Bravo is very strong and that's about it. He's also Canadian. Frenchy Martin in an inset says he speaks a lot of languages. Bravo runs over Casey and clotheslines him down. Casey gets a few moves in but Bravo hits his side suplex. Instead of pinning him with that, a belly to back suplex ends it. That was odd.

There's a Boston Garden show later tonight and the main event is Rude vs. Hogan. Rude doesn't care about the fans and says it's about fighting and he'll beat Hogan up for the title. He's going to do a striptease around Hulk's body. Hey if that's what you're into man. That match is on one of Hulk's DVDs and Best of the WWF Volume 20. One of the dates is wrong also because that show was on the 9th and this was labeled as the 8th. It might be a syndication thing though.

#### Sam Houston vs. Terry Gibbs

Houston is Jake Robert's real life half brother and likes to dance. Headlock takes Gibbs down. Gibbs was supposed to be a big deal (ok that's a stretch but a deal of some sort) but he

was never anything more than a jobber. Danny Davis says he's waiting on Sam Houston. This was probably the high point of Davis' singles career. He had more luck as a tag team guy. Gibbs comes back with a neckbreaker and a hard whip into the corner. A HHH knee takes Sam down but Gibbs gets slammed off the top and the bulldog (Sam's finisher) ends it. This was more competitive than most Superstars matches but still too short to grade.

We get clips from SNME where Andre came in after a Hogan title defense and choked Hogan down again.

DiBiase and Virgil are in the arena and Ted says this isn't over yet. He wants the WWF Title and he gets what he wants. DiBiase brings out the man that is going to bring him the WWF Title: Andre the Giant. Heenan is with him and DiBiase buys Andre's contract for what I believe would be later revealed for \$1 million. Now the interesting thing is that later on, Heenan bought Andre back for \$100,000. See why he's called the Brain? Heenan avoids a few years of beatings from Hulk and scores a \$900,000 profit.

### Sivi Afi vs. Butch Reed

JIVE SOUL BRO BABY!!! The announcers talk about Muraco saving Billy Graham from Reed and the One Man Gang. Out to the floor and Afi goes into the railing. Reed goes up and kills him with the flying tackle for the pin.

### Demolition vs. Jim Evans/Mike Richards

This is heel Demolition with Fuji in their corner. Richards gets destroyed to start as Jesse recommends that Evans run. They take turns ramming Richards' head into boots. A quick neck crank sets up a double Stun Gun and the Decapitator ends this quick. More squashing.

DiBiase talks about Andre and how he'll get the title soon. As for Jake Roberts tonight, he's cunning like Ted but DiBiase

isn't worried about him.

**Overall Rating:** D+. With these shows, you can never really go based on the wrestling because nothing is competitive but that was just the way things were back then. This was fine for the most part and we got a huge moment with Andre and DiBiase hooking up. This was huge because DiBiase was really just a guy talking before this but now he had a guy that can beat Hogan. This was huge.

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## **Best of the WWF Volume 14 – Here Is Your Winner.....Bobby Heenan?**

### **Best of the WWF Volume 14**

Host: Gorilla Monsoon

Commentators: Craig DeGeorge, Bruno Sammartino, Jesse Ventura

I found the rest of these that I have to do so I'll be doing four batches of two each to finish them up. Due to how annoyed I got with the Clash series though, I'll be doing other shows in between. Anyway this tape would be from late 87 so Hogan is on the verge of losing the title and we're just before the Survivor Series or maybe just after it. Let's get to it.

Rougeau Brothers/Brutus Beefcake vs. Dream Team/Johnny Valiant

This is a dark match from a Superstars taping in Indianapolis.

Ray vs. Dino to start us off. Dino keeps running as you would expect him to. Valentine tries to cheat by holding Ray but Ray avoids the jumping knee. The place ERUPTS on something that simple. It's amazing how you never see that anymore. Beefcake comes in and goes for Greg's hair, resulting in the heels congregating on the floor.

Valiant, a manager remember, hides on the floor. Beefcake gets caught in the corner and even Valiant gets in some time on offense. Beefcake grabs a sleeper on Valentine but Valiant makes the save. Both Rougeaus come in and pound on Bravo as the place loses its mind. Boston Crab by Ray is broken up by Valentine, which draws Ray into the bad corner.

Back to Greg who gets a shoulderbreaker for two. In a pretty impressive power display, Ray counters a piledriver into the position for an Alabama Slam, but instead he walks towards his corner with Valentine on his back. Greg doesn't let him get the tag but still it was impressive. Ray is on the floor and we're clipped to a later point of him on the floor. Bravo drops another elbow and we're clipped to Valentine in there instead.

Back to Bravo and Dino hammers away. This is the WWE 24/7 version so the big WWF Superstars of Wrestling banner is censored. Off to Johnny V and they just kind of let Ray tag in Brutus. He and Jacques clean house and it all breaks down. The heels are all thrown together and a pair of dropkicks send the non-managers to the floor. Valiant is put in the sleeper and we're done.

**Rating:** C. This was fine. You never see stuff like this in modern wrestling and that's a shame. There's nothing too bad here and it was just a six man tag. The fans get to be happy and the faces get a win. There's no bigger plan here and none of the guys really seem to be all obsessed about moving up the card. All that matters here is getting a win. Why can't we see more of that?

Beefcake paints Valiant's hair post match.

### Ron Bass vs. Ricky Steamboat

This is a Wrestling Challenge match here, which is the equivalent of Superstars today. I don't recognize that commentator. One of them is Mike McGuirk (female announcer), one is Nick Bockwinkel and I don't recognize the third. I think it's current TNA boss Bruce Pritchard. We'll go with that. Bass is a cowboy and gets caught with a top rope chop to send him to the floor.

Bockwinkel talks about whether or not top rope moves should be banned. Give me a break. McGuirk is talking about how handsome/good looking Steamboat is. Ok then. Bass takes over and hits a chop for two. Powerslam gets the same. Swinging neckbreaker gets countered and both guys are down. Steamboat counters a suplex into one of his own. They slug it out from their knees and then ram heads. Sleeper is countered by Bass and they go to the floor. They brawl to a double countout.

**Rating:** F. Horribly dull match here as both guys were in about -5th gear the whole time. Steamboat was coming back from the time off where his wife had a baby (and he lost the IC Title as a result) so maybe it was rust. This was awful though and probably the worst Steamboat match I've ever seen.

Steamboat actually wins via countout, in case you were going to write me a very angry letter.

### Koko B. Ware vs. Danny Davis

In MSG here. Davis is an ex-referee and has Jimmy with him. Davis pounds away to start as we have Heenan, Hayes and Gorilla on commentary here which is a nice change of pace over what we just had to sit through. Anyone else think they're stretching for Best of the WWF with this? Davis fires away on him but Koko easily knocks him back outside. Back in, Koko backdrops him, we go back outside. By this I mean Davis hides

out there.

Back in, for some reason Davis wants a handshake but Koko gets him to put his hand on the mat where he can stomp on it. Back to the floor AGAIN. For the love of....THEY DID IT AGAIN!!! STAY IN THE FREAKING RING ALREADY!!! Davis gets in, doesn't touch Koko, and runs back to the floor. Seriously, that's the sixth time in less than five minutes. Test of strength wastes even more time.

Koko dances around, hits a dropkick, and Davis is outside for the seventh time. Koko sends him into the corner but misses what we would call a Bronco Buster to a standing Davis to change control. Davis works on him using stuff that would make Darren Young call it boring. Sleeper goes on for awhile until Koko throws on one of his own. Davis tries a splash but it hits knees. They go out to the floor (9) and Danny tries to go out again but Koko grabs him for a bunch of headbutts. Koko pounds on him and the referee pulls him off, allowing Hart to slip Davis something. The weakest punch ever with an object ends this.

**Rating:** F. Oh brother these last two matches have not been kind to the first one. Having Davis go outside nearly ten times and then the way it finished...oh dear. I get that Davis is a referee and not supposed to be very good, but that doesn't mean that he should be out there for nearly 15 minutes. Horribly dull match that was supposed to be comedy but was missing the funny parts.

### Junkyard Dog vs. Ted DiBiase

Holy Mid-South Batman! Dog backdrops him while his song is still playing to start this fast. From what I can find this is at a Wrestling Challenge taping in Green Bay, Wisconsin. DiBiase is pretty new at this point but hasn't quite hit his stride yet. DiBiase tries to run away and stall. If this turns into another Davis match I might go find some ECW to watch. It

has to be more exciting than this. Ted rams JYD's head into the buckle and that just fails.

Out to the floor as Bockwinkel and McGuirk argue over who has a harder head. I'm not touching that one. Dog gets on all fours for the headbutts but DiBiase rolls to the floor. McGuirk's contribution to the match: "Both men want a win in this match." What would we do without you? Dog works on the arm but misses a falling headbutt to give DiBiase momentum.

DiBiase drops the falling punches. I wonder if that's a momentum deal or what. Why drop them like that? In something you won't often see, DiBiase goes up for the jump into the foot spot, but instead he jumps into Dog's fist. That's a new one. Virgil gets involved and dropped on the floor. DiBiase tries to suplex Dog back in but Dog falls on him but DiBiase rolls through for the pin.

**Rating:** D. Still boring and not a good match at all, but it's way better than the previous one. Know the main reason why? THEY ACTUALLY WRESTLED. Dog was old and slow at this point but he was still a name that you could still get something out of beating. Nothing to see here though and DiBiase would take off soon.

Spiros Arion/Yukon Lumberjacks vs. Andre the Giant/Tony Garea/Dino Bravo

This is from the late 70s. The Lumberjacks are the tag champions and named Eric and Pierre. We're in MSG here and this is 2/3 falls. Very international match here with three Canadians, a Frenchman, a Greek and a New Zealander. Vince is the lone commentator here and actually calls Andre Andre Roussimoff. Eric is the Lumberjack with blonde hair. Got it. He starts with Garea.

Two quick armdrags send Eric running to bring in Arion. I think we're clipped but I'm not sure. This is just punching. Off to Pierre, meaning Garea has fought all three guys now.



Off to a top wristlock and I think the camera is just jumping around a lot. Either that or it's the best clipping I've ever seen. Eric comes in again and gets slammed. The heels finally get Tony into the corner but Andre breaks that up, drawing a DQ for the first fall. I forgot it was 2/3 so that bell was really surprising. Oh wait the Lumberjacks got disqualified for the triple teaming. Ok then.

Garea and Eric start the second fall as well. Bravo comes in for the first time and I've never seen him move that fast. Arion comes in and we get a crisscross. Bravo beats Eric up for awhile but Pierre comes in to take over. A slam gets two. Off to Andre and the place erupts. See, this is something you don't have in WWE anymore: an attraction. Andre was someone that was beloved and the people didn't care what he did.

Andre here is in the last match of the night (more brilliant booking. Why have him in the middle and let everyone leave after he's been in the ring? More beers and Cokes sold while people wait) and it's a worthless six man tag, but the people want to see him. It's not about some angle or the world title or whatever. It's about Andre and whatever he's doing. The people told the company what they wanted to see and that's who got the big spot. Not the other way around. Very key difference. As for the match, a splash ends it about 10 seconds after Andre comes in.

**Rating:** C-. The match was boring, but it's amazing to see something like Andre when he was still young(ish) and could move. The crowd reacts to him and that's all it needs to be. He didn't have to spend ten minutes sucking up to them. He was cool and the fans reacted to it. What more did you need than that?

### Paul Orndorff vs. Hercules

This is Orndorff vs. Heenan Family, which went on forever and involved Orndorff hiring and firing Heenan twice. Orndorff is

part of the House of Humperdink. Orndorff is a power guy but he's using speed here because he's also smart. Hercules gets in a shot to break up Paul's momentum after he skins the cat. Paul did the skinning if that was unclear. A clothesline gets three twos.

We're in Milwaukee if you care. The fans cheer for Paul but he can't make much of a comeback. Off to the bearhug which is a power man staple of the late 80s. Actually the 80s in general. Bearhug is countered into a small package for Orndorff, getting two. Orndorff makes his comeback and hits the Piledriver (finisher) but Rude runs in for the DQ. This was Rude's first feud as he had only been in the company about three months at this point.

**Rating:** D+. Not a bad match but it didn't have the time to get going. Orndorff was WAY over at this time though and Heenan and his boys were hated so the crowd was very into things here. Orndorff would be retired for the first time very soon after this due to a very bad arm/neck injury he suffered when feuding with Hogan the year before. When you're making somewhere between \$10,000-20,000 a week though, you don't bother taking time off for arm surgery.

### Salvatore Bellomo vs. Bobby Heenan

This is from 1984 and there's no story to it. Heenan just used to be a wrestler on occasion. Heenan bails to the apron of course because he's Bobby Heenan. Bellomo beats on Heenan like he stole something and flips him in the corner. Heenan takes a bunch of dropkicks, including one sending him into the post. Heenan needs a doctor. Back in and Bobby takes even more of a beating.

Bobby actually takes over with a rake to the eyes and a lot of basic stuff. Then again, what are you expecting from Bobby Heenan the Wrestler? They collide and Heenan looks dead. Bellomo drives in some headbutts but Heenan pokes him in the

eyes. Out to the floor and Heenan pops him as he comes back in. A guillotine puts Sal on the floor for the third time. Bellomo tries a sunset flip but Heenan punches him in the face, drops on top of him, AND GETS A CLEAN PIN.

**Rating:** A+. Bobby Heenan got a clean pin. Do you realize what it means for your career when you get pinned clean in Madison Square Garden by BOBBY HEENAN??? The match sucked but totally awesome for surprise value. This is on Heenan's DVD.

### Tito Santana vs. Killer Khan

This is from Houston and I don't know this announcer either. Khan is a guy that is the walking definition of the monster foreign heel. He had a big feud with Andre which we'll get to on one of these tapes and a quick feud with Hogan. One of the announcers is named Paul Boesch who ran Houston Wrestling forever. Apparently the other is Pete Doherty. Khan takes over with power to start of course.

We hear about an upcoming card in about three weeks which sounds a lot better than this one. We also hear about Ted DiBiase, who is actually A GOOD GUY here. Tito gets him in the position for what we would call Shattered Dreams. Some kicks to the thighs result in Khan going to the floor and a fan making fun of him. Tito controls as this is a very bad monster heel.

Off to a hammerlock and Khan looks like he's about to cry. Khan finally gets something like a spinebuster and a middle rope punch. Tito channels his inner Kirk and beats up the KHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN, knocking him to the apron and choking with the bottom rope. A running knee hits Khan but Tito gets picked up and crotched on the top rope...for a DQ? Different time I guess.

**Rating:** D. Another weak match but Khan's best days were already behind him at this point. Nothing to see here and Khan was a really weak opponent here. Hearing about the Angry

Mongolian and Boesch's pronunciation of Tee-Toe was fun though. Still, bad match to end a very boring tape with.

**Overall Rating:** F+. Other than the fun Heenan match (which is only fun for the ending) and the opener which was just ok at best, there's a whole lot of awful on this one. Absolutely terrible tape as they couldn't have made a worse selection of matches. Nothing but cheap finishes that would have had any house show crowd rolling their eyes. Bad tape and certainly not worth seeing.

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