

WWF New York City House Show – August 7, 1976: In Which Stan Hansen Gets Squashed

WWF House Show

Date: August 7, 1976

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

Attendance: 22,000

Commentator: Vince McMahon

This was added to the Network recently and I almost always enjoy these older shows. There's something about going this far back into history and seeing how things really were back in a different era. The main event, or at least the featured match as the last match wasn't always the biggest, is Stan Hansen challenging Bruno Sammartino in a rematch of their original rematch at Showdown at Shea. Let's get to it.

A note on the Network says this isn't the complete show. I'll try to let you know if anything is missing as far as I know.

Vince welcomes us to the show and explains the main event.

Johnny Rivera vs. Jose Cadiz

The ring announcer says there are nine matches on- the card but I can only find eight. Maybe something is missing from the records or maybe they're counting a 2/3 falls match as two matches. He also has some of the worst charisma I've ever heard. It's also weird to see the referee in khakis and such a dark atmosphere.

Rivera grabs some armdrags to start and Cadiz is already frustrated. A headlock slows things down a bit and this is just such a culture shock compared to modern stuff. Cadiz fights off the mat and puts on a fireman's carry with some choking at the same time. That's not cool with a fan who is seemingly well known to both Vince and the rest of the crowd. Rivera flips over the back and dropkicks him to the floor for a

breather.

Back in and something like a Wasteland gives Cadiz two but Rivera spins up into a sunset flip for two. Rivera misses a flip splash and gets covered for one as this is trying to speed up a bit. A few snapmares set up a chinlock from Cadiz as Vince is surprised that someone can do this well in their Garden debut. Rivera fights up and gets the better of a full nelson before a not terrible ankle scissors gets two. Cadiz grabs a headscissors on the mat but Rivera just backs away for the escape.

Back up and Rivera snaps off a hurricanrana but misses a dropkick, allowing Cadiz to bite his face (no reaction from Vince on that). With nothing else working, Cadiz ties him into the ropes for a running knee to the ribs. How dastardly of him. Rivera slips out and gets in a dropkick before grabbing a chinlock of his own. That's finally enough as Rivera hits a few dropkicks and a high crossbody for the pin at 10:41.

Rating: C. These are going to be on a slightly sliding scale as there's such a difference in eras at this point. The match wasn't horrible but it would have been better served with about three minutes cut out. Rivera had some nice high flying (for its time) stuff and Cadiz was more of a vicious heel than I was expecting. Not terrible here but Rivera kept slowing down instead of stringing much together.

SD Jones vs. Johnny Rodz

Rodz is more famous as the trainer of Tommy Dreamer and the Dudleyz among others. They trade control on the mat to start with Rodz likely choking to take over. We hit the armbar for a bit and Rodz pulls whatever he can to stay in control. Jones finally shoves him off and Rodz backs off in the corner like a good heel should. Some stomps and a middle rope kick to the back of the head gives Rodz a one count but he hurts his hand punching Jones in the jaw.

Rodz wants time out so Jones delays a bit before sending Rodz into the corner. That's kind of nice of him in a rather mean way. Rodz gets in a cheap shot and some middle rope elbows to the neck but Jones shrugs it off and knocks him into the corner without much effort. They very slowly slug it out (it's only been eight minutes) until Rodz tries a bridging

German suplex but Jones lifts his shoulder to pin Johnny.

Rating: D. This really didn't work as they didn't have much to offer other than punching each other. Jones looked like someone who was there for charisma (a common trait back in the day) because all he seemed to do was throw punches and then counter a suplex for the pin. Rodz was billed as Unpredictable but he wasn't much outside of the norm. Pretty dull match and the fans didn't seem to care until the ending.

Tag Team Titles: Executioners vs. Jose Gonzalez/Dominic DeNucci

Two out of three falls and DeNucci (Mick Foley's trainer) and Gonzalez (the guy who murdered Bruiser Brody) are challenging. The Executioners are your standard monsters in masks but they're played by Killer Kowalski and Big John Studd. Gonzalez and we'll say #2 (normally Studd and that's clearly him) start things off with #2 grabbing a headlock and grinding the much smaller Gonzalez down.

It's off to #1 vs. Dominic with the rather popular DeNucci getting cheered as he chops and slugs away. Double teaming keeps Dominic down and we have a double stomach claw to show that it really is 1976. The champs slowly take turns hammering on Dominic in the corner and it's off to another stomach claw. Dominic finally gets over for the hot tag off to Gonzalez as everything breaks down.

The Executioners are whipped into each other for a BIG reaction and Gonzalez slams #1 for two. A sunset flip gets the same and it's back to Dominic for some double arm shots to the back. #1 gets tied in the rope and Dominic goes for the mask but can only get it over the chin. A catapult sends #1 into the corner and #2 gets slammed for two as everything breaks down again. The referee gets Gonzalez out of the ring and that means a double backbreaker puts DeNucci away for the first fall at 10:12.

After a brief breather, DeNucci bails into his corner and almost seems scared of the Executioners, which makes them quite the imposing force. #1 sends DeNucci's back into the corner over and over before stomping away as the champs have a target. Now it's a back claw, which makes it look more like a massage than anything painful. Gonzalez finally comes in to

try for a save, only to not be there when Dominic gets over for a tag. Man you had ONE JOB.

A top rope stomp to the back doesn't even get a cover and DeNucci gets over for the tag, which is allowed despite clearly not being seen. Gonzalez cleans house and dropkicks one over the top as the referee has no idea who is legal (fair enough in this case as save for a bit of hair sticking out, the Executioners are nearly identical). With regular strategy not working, Gonzalez just unloads on #1 and keeps ramming him face first into the mat. Simple stuff often does it better. DeNucci comes in to hammer away with some more of those double shots, followed by an airplane spin of all things to tie it up at 19:12 total.

There's a quick break (which might have been missing tape) and we come back with DeNucci punching a dizzy #1 into the corner as the crowd is losing it over this stuff. A backdrop is enough to allow a tag off to #2 and the match just kind of stops for a bit as #1 can't get back up.

We settle down to Gonzalez being backdropped but #1 can't even get up to the top out of exhaustion. It's back to Dominic to slug away on #2 and load up the airplane spin, only to have #1 make the save. Gonzalez and starts cleaning house again but a slam on #2 is broken up by a kick from #1, causing #2 to fall on top to retain at 25:37 total.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I was expecting as Gonzalez was a good fast paced guy while DeNucci, with that odd double strike style, made for a good veteran presence. The Executioners were a good team and would have been better off with Lou Albano talking for him, though he wasn't here for some reason. Good match here and the time didn't actually bother me all that much, which is rather surprising.

Bruiser Brody vs. Kevin Sullivan

Sullivan is billed as popular (right) and Brody is #1 contender in his MSG debut. Brody wastes no time in hammering away on Sullivan whose shots to the ribs have no effect at all. A whip into the corner allows Brody to pound away even more, followed by some no selling of the right hands. Brody throws him up in a rack for the submission at 2:29. Total squash and Brody did little more than forearm/punch until the end. He looks

AWESOME though and that's all that matters.

Chief Jay Strongbow/Billy White Wolf vs. Baron Mikel Scicluna/Rocky Tamayo

Strongbow and White Wolf are a big time team and #1 contenders. Tamayo and Strongbow start things off but hang on a second as we have to wait for the microphone to be raised. Jay starts a crisscross before sliding between Tamayo's legs for a fairly fast paced spot for these days. An armdrag sends Tamayo down so it's off to the Baron, who gets caught with a foreign object. The nitwit of a referee doesn't actually take it away from him so Baron gets in a cheap shot with the object to take over.

Tamayo kicks away from the apron and more foreign object shots have White Wolf reeling as well. It's back to Tamayo as the slow beating continues. The Baron allows White Wolf to roll over for the hot tag to Strongbow and that means it's time for the chops. Everything breaks down and the good guys clean house, capped off by a double chop to put Tamayo away at 5:56.

Rating: C. This was straight Memphis with the foreign object before the Indians (which they were called over and over again during the match) started picking up the pace. That was the most entertaining part of the show so far and it was a face paced ending. I could have gone for more here, which I didn't expect to say in the slightest.

WWF World Title: Bruno Sammartino vs. Stan Hansen

Bruno is defending inside a cage with elimination only to win. Hansen has long blond hair here and it's a very weird look for him. Bruno takes a bit for his entrance and the fans get more and more excited until he finally comes out, getting easily the biggest reaction of the night so far. As you might expect, Stan jumps Bruno as he gets in and the fight is on in a hurry. The place just goes NUTS for Bruno's comeback though and it's easy to see why he stayed on top for so long with this kind of reaction.

A knee to the ribs cuts Bruno off and Hansen stomps away, only to get sent into the cage. The wall rocks backwards, which makes for a cool visual compared to the rigid cage you see today. Bruno kicks away and

even blocks the lariat, sending the crowd into an even bigger frenzy. Hansen elbows and forearms his way to freedom but Bruno is right back with knees to the back to set up a reverse chinlock (which Vince calls a Boston crab).

A quick attempt to escape gets Hansen beaten up even more and Bruno just chokes away. Stan hits him in the throat and goes up as a drunk fan is carried out through the entrance. There's a low blow to Stan as this is almost all Bruno so far. Hansen elbows the cage (which Vince calls the lariat) and Bruno keeps kicking away. Stan goes for the door again and earns himself another beating.

Some shots to the back have Bruno in the closest thing to trouble he's had all match but he sends Stan into the post for his efforts. Hansen is busted open and Bruno takes off Stan's elbow pad (which may have been loaded) to go after the cut. Bruno just unloads on him with shots to the head and Hansen is DONE. Sammartino looks at Hansen as he's draped over the ropes and then walks out to retain at 10:33.

Rating: B-. Sammartino was getting vicious here but this was basically a squash as Hansen only got in a few brief bursts of offense. Other than that it was Bruno kicking the stuffing out of him for about nine out of the ten and a half minutes. It was rather odd to see Hansen destroyed like this but it gives Bruno the definitive win, which is probably the idea they're going for here.

Hansen poses on top of the cage and then collapses backwards in a funny bit. Even Vince says this was annihilation.

Bobo Brazil vs. Doug Gilbert

Brazil is 52 years old here because I don't think he was ever actually young. Gilbert jumps Brazil before the bell and hammers away but a kick to the head and the Coco Butt (headbutt) send Gilbert outside for the countout at 35 seconds. Were they running REALLY short or something? Bobo never even took his vest off.

Ivan Putski vs. Skandor Akbar

Before the match, Putski says he wants Hansen. Akbar is far more famous as a manager but he did wrestle too. He looks a bit like Rusev. Putski grinds on a headlock to start and hits him in the face a few times. Grabbing the trunks doesn't get Akbar out of trouble but raking the eyes does.

Vince admires Putski's thighs and calves as Akbar chokes on the ropes. Putski shrugs it off, hammers away, hits the Polish Hammer (running ax handle to the chest) and hits a seated senton for the pin at 2:56. My guess is they had to wrap it up early for the sake of the curfew (in MSG you had to be done in a hurry or the match would be stopped).

I'm not sure what was up with the announcement about the show being in its most complete form as every match was there according to every card I can find.

Overall Rating: C. I liked the show well enough but it was only going to be so good. The version on the Network runs about an hour and forty minutes, though the intermissions to put up and take down the cage are of course gone. There's some good wrestling on here but the 1970s were a VERY different time and it was all about the personalities instead of any of the in-ring work. It's still cool to see all these famous names in their primes though and it's so awesome that the Network is there to let us see all these things. Check out some of these old school shows, if nothing else just to say you saw them.

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WWC Lucha Estrellas – March 9, 2015: Featuring Vince McMahon!

Lucha Estrellas

Date: March 9, 2015

Location: Puerto Rico

Commentator: Nelson Santano

This almost has to be better than the previous show I sat through, as I believe we're still coming up on the big show that they spent half the hour hyping up. Carlito is still feuding with Mighty Ursus but also has to deal with the young guy from last time....whoever that was. Let's get to it.

We open with a shortened version of the same opening from last time, with Carlito destroying the convenience store and flashbacks to the cage match.

Clips of the end of yesterday's main event with the young boy (wearing a mask) coming in and attacking Carlito until La Revolucion ran in to save Carlito. We also get the young guy talking to his brother.

The young guy was on the phone since yesterday.

Opening sequence.

Same Peter the Bad Romance promo from yesterday. Why don't I just watch that show again?

Clip of the ending of Peter vs. Angel Cotto with Peter winning with a

fisherman's driver.

Same house show ad that I've seen like five times in an hour and a half.

And now, back to June 27, 1977 in Madison Square Garden for a WWF match announced by Vince McMahon! Why you ask? Well likely because this is on the Network and more interesting than whatever nonsense I'll have to sit through otherwise.

Chad Nelson vs. Jose Gonzalez

Joined in progress with Chad cranking on the arm. Jose fights up and sends him into the buckle with one of those firey Latin comebacks. This time it's Jose starting in on the arm before four straight dropkicks put Nelson away.

Rating: F. Four dropkicks? Seriously, four straight versions of the same move? This went on nearly ten minutes in full and I can't imagine wanting to ever see either of these guys again. Luckily neither guy ever did anything that I know of and it's fairly easy to see why after a performance like this.

Same promos for the Tag Team Title match from yesterday.

Carlito and the guy on the phone, just like yesterday. They really don't change these things do they?

Puerto Rican Title: Chicano vs. Ricardo Rodriguez

Yes that Rodriguez, who is challenging here. Chicano is very tattooed but has a good look for the most part. As you might expect, Ricardo is quickly knocked to the floor to start and Chicano sends him into the post. Back in and Rodriguez gets in a shot to take over and heads back outside to choke from the floor. We hit a reverse chinlock but Ricardo lets it go to yell at the fans as we go to a break for more promos and house show ads.

Back with Chicano kicking out at two and backdropping Ricardo to get a breather. A huge clothesline gets two for Chicano as the announcers are now doing house show ads. Ricardo hits a jumping knee to the face but

misses a moonsault. He's up fast enough to go up top, only to get shoved back down, setting up a Swanton to give Chicano the pin.

Rating: D+. Chicano looked good and thankfully Ricardo had a shirt on here. This wasn't much of a match but at least Chicano got to show off and hit a good looking Swanton to end it. He would win the Universal Title less than a month after this show, so there was clearly something to him.

La Revolucion runs in to beat Chicano down post match. Apparently Chicano is challenging for the Puerto Rico Title, held by one of the nameless members of La Revolucion.

La Revolucion rants about Chicano.

Chicano rants about La Revolucion.

The young guy gets out of his car and goes to the house of some old guy, presumably for training.

Hey look: ads for a show.

William de la Vega and another guy yell about Superstar Ash.

The old guy talks to the young guy to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. This show comes off like the old Memphis TV show: a glorified commercial for the upcoming arena shows, minus the interesting promos and the cool angles. Maybe the language barrier is messing things up for me, but this really isn't a fun show to watch, even if you can cut out about forty percent of it with the ads and replays from last week.

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