

WWF Heavyweight Wrestling – January 13, 1966: Sometimes Simpler Is Better

WWF Heavyweight Wrestling

Date: January 13, 1966

Location: National Arena, Washington D.C.

Commentator: Ray Morgan

I've got another show here from the same era and the main change here is that Bruno is in the house. He's not in the ring but just seeing him in his early glory years is a very rare thing, when you consider the only match most of you have seen of his is likely the battle royal from Mania 2 or the Showdown at Shea cage match. Anything from this era, even not as a wrestler, could be interesting. Let's get to it.

After an intro about the card tonight and hearing about the card for Monday's house show, we're ready to go.

Steve Stanlee vs. Curtis Iaukea

Stanlee is called Mr. America here. Iaukea is a heel and a big fat islander. He also has someone who might be the top heel manager in Bobby Davis. Curtis starts fast with big clubbing blows to send Stanlee out to the floor. Back in and Iaukea stomps him down again, allowing Davis to choke away a bit. Off to a chinlock followed by a headscissors by the guy that weighs nearly 400lbs. Back to the floor as the squashing continues. We head back in and Iaukea hits a splash for the pin.

Rating: D. Just a long squash here as Stanlee disappoints America. Iaukea would be a pretty successful monster heel over the years, often getting title shots against Sammartino. You might remember him from 1995 WCW, portraying the Master in the Dungeon of Doom. Why they picked him I'm not

sure but whatever. Match was nothing of note.

Hector Serrano vs. Tomas Marin

This is 2/3 falls. Ok Serrano is the shorter one. Got it. I'm pretty sure Marin is the face here but I'm not quite sure. Feeling out process to start with Serrano hitting a forearm when he should be breaking clean. Marin headlocks him down and Hector is ticked off. Serrano shakes his hand and declares himself a gentleman before smacking Marin in the face. Now there's a good heel.

Marin takes him down by the knee and cranks on it for a bit. Serrano comes back with a kind of monkey flip before being taken right back down again. Hector grabs Serrano's arm to take over and politely asks the referee to not bother him. Marin fights up and is ready to fight now so Hector hides in the corner. We get a crisscross culminating in a one footed dropkick and a crossbody by Marin for the first fall.

The second fall starts with Serrano taking Marin down with a snapmare and dropping some knees. Apparently Freddie Blassie has sent Bruno Sammartino a telegram saying he's coming for the title. Sammartino ripped it up and Vince McMahon is trying to set up the match. See how easy it is to set up a match? Tomas puts on a chinlock followed by a rolling body vice. Serrano comes back with a shot to the knee and throws Serrano out to the floor. I guess that's not a DQ here.

From the apron, Marin shoulders Serrano a few times and his a decent looking slingshot splash for two. Hector chills on the floor for a bit. By a bit, I mean he walks around for like three minutes. He finally gets back in and is immediately knocked right back outside. They do the exact same thing again as the announcer talks about driving safely.

Back in finally and Serrano runs a bit more....before heading to the floor for the fourth time. Oddly enough when Hector comes back in he GOES OFF on Tomas, hitting a bunch of headlock takeovers. The fourth one or so

though is countered into a belly to back suplex to give Marin the pin and the win.

Rating: C-. Decent match here and Serrano did a good job of getting heat from the crowd, but at the same time it was a REALLY long match that didn't need to go as long as it did. Neither guy was anything special and odds are they were there because they were Puerto Rican. That was a common idea back then: have guys that are there to play to an ethnic group. It worked really well for the Italian people with Sammartino.

Tony Altimore vs. Antonio Pugliese

Bruno is in his cousin Antonio's corner. This is odd: the announcer talks about Antonio having just arrived from Italy, despite him being in a match last week. Odd indeed. This is one fall to a finish. Antonio controls the arm to start and puts on a full nelson. Altimore keeps countering but Pugliese keeps putting the hold right back on. Back to the arm as the match continues a relatively slow pace.

Off to a chinlock by Antonio as he makes Tony crawl for the ropes. Antonio puts on a bearhug but Altimore is against the ropes. Tony: "WE BREAK CLEAN IN THIS COUNTRY!" Antonio speeds things up and flips over Tony's back before hitting a pair of dropkicks to send Altmiore to the floor. Back in and Antonio cranks on the arm a bit more before Tony comes back with a forearm in the corner. This fires up Pugliese and he pounds away on Altimore in the corner before hooking a quick side rollup for the pin.

Rating: C. Decent main event here with Antonio continuing to look strong soon after debuting. Apparently he would later wrestle under the name of Tony Parisi who is someone I've heard of. Anyway, not bad here as the fans were WAY into Antonio because of his relation to Bruno. That's called giving a rub and you hardly ever see it again.

Post match Tarzan Tyler (future half of the first ever WWF World Tag Team

Champions) comes out...and does nothing at all.

Post break Altimore and Tyler say they think Bruno is in trouble against Baron Mikel Scicluna.

Overall Rating: C+. Another pretty fun show here which flew by. It only runs about fifty minutes and we got three pretty long matches out of that. Even though we didn't see Baron and Bruno interact, they did a decent job of building up the match later in the month. It's pretty clear how the TV shows were used to set up the major house shows and that system would work for years. Pretty fun stuff here.

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