WWWF Heavyweight Wrestling – May 9, 1965: The Great Great Grandfather (Includes Full Show)

WWWF Heavyweight Wrestling
Date: May 9, 1965
Location: Capitol Arena, Washington D.C.
Commentator: Ray Morgan

Well this is a little out of my normal range. This is basically the WWF grandfather, as it's the promotion that would morph into the WWF several years later. I've done some of these shows before and they can be very interesting, though something this old is going to be more than a bit different. Let's get to it.

Ray Morgan welcomes us to the show and says it's the second half of the show, though this seems to be about the regular length. We hear the card with some familiar names, with Morgan casually holding a cigarette because 1965 was a very different time.

Before the first match, we get the card for an upcoming live event, which sounds rather awesome. The announcer also references something that happened here "tonight", which has me wondering how this show worked.

Tomas Marin vs. Bill Watts

Yes that Bill Watts and the fans DO NOT like him to put it mildly. Watts jumps him from behind to start and hits a forearm to put Marin on the floor early on. The knee drop sets up some jumping stomps and Watts sends him hard into the

corner. Marin is tossed over the top as commentary says this is the second hour of the show.

Watts drops him onto the apron and then kicks him outside, leaving Watts to shout to the crowd in a great heel touch. Marin's comeback lasts all of three seconds as he misses a dropkick and gets kneedropped again. The bulldog (called a bulldozer) gets two, as Watts pulls him up, followed by some elbows to the back ("50,000 watts" according to Morgan in a good line). Another bulldog finishes Marin at 5:06.

Rating: C+. Yeah it's easy to see the greatness in Watts, as he clearly got the idea of connecting with the fans. The people clearly hated him and let him know, which made for some great moments. The match is just a squash, but Watts looked like a star, which is why he was such a big deal for such a long time.

Chief Big Heart vs. Tony Newberry

Big Heart is your traditional Native American and Newberry is billed as a Big Game Hunter. Newberry jumps him from behind to start but Heart fights back and pulls Newberry's vest over his face. The big chops send Newberry outside where he yells a lot before coming back inside. Newberry tries to get the vest off again and Heart fires off more chops, much to the crowd's approval.

A big chop sends Newberry back to the floor, where he finds…what looks to be a foreign object but Heart beats him up again. Newberry takes the leg down to finally get control and a leglock keeps Heart down. Heart chops his way to freedom and Newberry hides in the ropes, meaning it's time for more chops.

A half nelson (you don't see that very often) has Newberry in more trouble but he gets in some judo shots. That just fires Heart up and the war dance is on, meaning even more chops. One heck of a chop puts Newberry down and the Bow And Arrow makes him give up at 8:25 (with Newberry tapping, though that didn't

mean anything for almost thirty years).

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I was expecting, with the deal with the vest being a nice touch. The thing is that while they were both rather gimmicky, you could instantly understand what you're getting. It might be a bit more simplistic than most matches but it was easy to understand. That's a nice feature and it helped the match overcome its only so great action.

Argentina Apollo vs. Bob Boyer

Apollo takes him down by the arm to start and they go to the mat. A fight over what we would call a Tombstone results in Boyer being sat on the apron and a pat on the head. Back in and they go back to the mat to grapple over the leg. That's broken up with a grab of the ropes and the fans seem to appreciate the clean break. Well that's rather nice of them. Apollo takes him down by the arm for a change so Boyer grabs the leg and twists for a smart break.

Boyer works on the arm and it's time to talk about upcoming shows. A backdrop puts Apollo down but he misses a splash, allowing Apollo to crank on the arms. They both go to the mat and tie their legs together with neither being able to get anywhere. A rather painful looking leglock has Boyer in more trouble, with Boyer having to turn it over to make the rope for the break.

Well kind of as they're so tied up that it takes a bit longer than usual. Even the referee is confused about what to do as they're really that stuck. Apollo finally stands up and grabs Boyer's leg, spinning it around to get him back up. Boyer has to rub some feeling back into his leg before they shake hands and we're finally back to normal.

Apollo cranks on the leg again and then cartwheels around into another leglock for a nice sequence. The half crab goes on, but Boyer slaps him on the back, which makes Apollo let go as

he thought it was the referee. Eh smart move. A snapmare puts Apollo down and some jawbreakers make it worse. Back up and they run the ropes until Apollo hits a crossbody for the pin at 14:22.

Rating: C. There was a good match in there but the extra time hurt it. I liked the technical aspect of things here, with the referee getting confused about untying them being something that felt realistic. It's easy to see why Apollo got a following, as he was quite the athletic star. Cut off about five minutes and this is far better.

Post match….they actually keep fighting, which isn't something you would often see back in the day.

Chief White Owl vs. Steve Stanlee

Stanlee strikes away to start but Owl goes into the war dance and knocks him out to the floor rather quickly. Back in and Stanlee knocks him into the ropes for some slow kicking but Owl gets it into the corner. Owl's clean break earns him a kick to the ribs so he ties Stanlee up in the ropes. Stanlee gets loose and charges right into a forearm to the chest. Well that didn't work. Back up and Stanlee hammers away in the corner so Owl fires off some dropkicks. Owl fights back but the time runs out for the curfew at 6:05.

Rating: C. You can only do so much with the short run time and it was only going to be so good in the first place. It also didn't help that we already had a Native American gimmick on the show. Commentary mentioned that White Own and Big Heart were a team, but it doesn't work so well when you have both of them fighting on the same show. Stanlee is someone I've seen before and I still don't quite get the appeal.

Post match Owl chops him down and is declared the winner by referee's decision.

Morgan talks to an older fan on a cane to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. While this is basically the great great grandfather of modern wrestling, I had a good time with the show. You can easily tell the good guys from the bad guys and the action is fine at times. No you won't be seeing any of the high flying stuff of today, but it's straight up pro wrestling and it still works. While I wouldn't want to watch a ton of it, there is something to be said about seeing the origins of what we watch today.

Results
Bill Watts b. Tomas Marin – Bulldog
Chief Big Heart b. Tony Newberry – Bow And Arrow
Argentina Apollo b. Bob Boyer – Crossbody
Chief White Owl b. Steve Stanlee via referee's decision

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Wrestling From Maple Leaf Gardens – January 17, 1957: What Goes Around Stays Around

Wrestling From Maple Leaf Gardens
Date: January 17, 1957
Location: Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Commentator: Dave Price

I think the title speaks for itself here but the date is what interests me the most. Unless I'm missing something, this is the oldest full show I've ever seen by a pretty wide margin. I'm not even going to pretend to have an idea of what to expect here so this is pretty much a blind trip back several decades. Let's get to it.

Dave Price, our host and commentator, runs down the card and MY GOODNESS that ring is huge. It's probably a good six or more feet bigger than what we see today. That has to be a boxing ring.

Billie Red Lyons vs. Baron Gattoni

We get the official introductions and Price spells the ring announcer's name (Jerry Hiff) for some reason. Lyons is a Canadian mainstay and wrestled until the 80s while Gattoni (a rather stocky guy) was mainly a territory wrestler who never became a big star. Gattoni shoves him around to start and easily gets in a slam as Lyons can't do much with someone his size.

A headlock works a bit better for Lyons until Gattoni runs him over with an elbow to the face. Lyons works on the arm so Gattoni grabs the hair to break it up. Back up and Lyons hammers away on the ropes until a single forearm drops him again. The bearhug goes on and Lyons gives up at 3:50 (Other places list the time at 8:48 so either the other places are incorrect or that's a heck of an editing job).

Rating: C+. Gattoni was a monster with some size and power and I could easily see him being brought in as someone to wreck various people. That's what he did here and there is a good chance that he would be moving on to face one of the biggest stars. It's simple and basic stuff but they sold it well so points for making something work.

Post match Lyons is out and does not move for well over three minutes until a stretcher is brought to the ring. That's some

GREAT selling and makes Gattoni look like an even bigger monster.

Miller Brothers vs. Ken Kenneth/Pat Flanagan

The Miller Brothers are Bill and Ed, with Bill being a future AWA World Champion. Bill and Kenneth get things going and Bill, the smaller of the Brothers at 290lbs, works on the arm to start. That doesn't work so we pause for a meeting with Ed, who apparently advises a hair pull. Bill works on the arm for a change but Kenneth is quickly in the ropes.

Kenneth seems hesitant about a handshake so Bill grabs a full nelson and Ed gets in a cheap shot from the apron, followed by some rather evil choking. Bill works on the leg but the referee shoves him away, allowing Flanagan and Ed to come in for a change. Flanagan is rather energetic and some mule kicks have Ed bailing out to the floor. A tag on the floor doesn't count so Ed has to come back in, much to his chagrin.

Flanagan manages to send the Millers into each other before Ed takes him down by the arm to slow the pace. The arm cranking continues and Ed kicks him in the ribs, only to get caught pulling the trunks. That's good for a break…so Ed is right back on the arm. Makes sense. Flanagan reverses into a headlock but Ed breaks it up with a shot "right in the tummy".

Bill comes back in to work on the arm again and drags him into the corner, which draws Kenneth in for a failed save attempt. Bill throws Flanagan around and monkey flips him, only to get hiptossed down for two. It's off to Ed, who takes Flanagan down and starts working on his leg. Some cannonballs down onto the leg set up some generic cranking but Flanagan grabs a quick backslide for two. That's enough for the tag off to Kenneth…but the referee doesn't see it. I've always loved that spot and there's something awesome about seeing it so long ago.

Bill is right there to cut the tag off again and he switches

to an armbar to keep Flanagan down. Bill's big right hand misses though and he takes quite the tumble out to the floor so Ed grabs a choke from the apron. The referee GRABS ED BY THE FACE to pull him off but Flanagan fights out on his own and throw Bill. We even get a bit of a strut and a backdrop gets two, with Ed making the save.

A sunset flip (upside down cradle according to commentary) gets the same and they go to some grappling on the mat. It's FINALLY off to Kenneth but Ed comes in as well as things reset. Ed gets in a bodyscissors and chokes a bit, even staying with the hold as he's on his back and Kenneth is on his feet. It's finally broken up so Bill kicks away on the ropes a bit. A torture rack of all things goes on, with Bill passing Kenneth over to Ed for the same hold. They pass him back and Kenneth is finally done at 18:53.

Rating: B-. It was far longer than I was expecting but dang this really kind of worked. It was a simple story and they were working with what would become a pretty standard formula. There was no hot tag in the end or anything like that but it was about the big monster team wearing the good guys down until the finish. The best thing I can say here is that it didn't feel like a nearly twenty minute match, which is quite the good sign.

Post match the Millers beat on Kenneth and Flanagan a bit more before leaving.

<u>Edouard Carpentier vs. Steve Stanlee</u>

Carpentier was a huge star and an outstanding high flier while Stanlee was a guy who started back in 1947 and has a cool ring jacket. Stanlee isn't having a handshake to start so Carpentier backs him to the ropes, where Stanlee trips him down. Carpentier trips him down for a change and Stanlee complains about a non-existent hair pull. Some grappling goes to the mat and Carpentier gets two off a rollup, leaving

Stanlee frustrated.

Stanlee's armbar is escaped with a backflip and he can't figure out how Carpentier is doing this stuff. A headscissors is escaped with a handstand, followed by Carpentier nipping up to escape a reverse front facelock. Stanlee works on the arm a bit, only for Carpentier to do the same (not to his own arm of course). Back up and Stanlee tries his own flip and lands square on his back, with the referee even laughing at him.

Stanlee goes for the arm again and has a bit more success this time, managing to keep Carpentier down for a bit. That's reversed into an arm crank from Carpentier, who rocks back and forth in quite the motion. Stalnee gets out and hammers away before grabbing a reverse front facelock. Carpentier backflips over him and lands on top in kind of a reverse DDT for the pin at 5:25.

Rating: B-. Carpentier is one of those guys who was WAY ahead of his time and you can absolutely see the star power in there. He could do the flips and impressive looking moves but also had a good physique to back it up. I haven't seen much of him but everything I have seen is very impressive, which shouldn't be a surprise given his reputation.

Post match Stanlee jumps him again and gets beaten up again, leaving an angry Stanlee in the ring.

Overall Rating: B-. This is one of those things that is absolutely fascinating to me as it's almost seventy years old but they're doing quite a few of the same things that you'll see in modern times. It's a completely watchable wrestling show and I had fun with the whole thing. That's one of the cool things about wrestling, as while it has evolved over the years, so many of the elements are still the same. They were on display here and it was quite the easy watch with a bunch of people you might not have heard of before.

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