

Great American Bash 1992: Holy Sweet Goodness What Were They Thinking?

Great American Bash 1992

Date: July 12, 1992

Location: Gray Civic Center, Albany, Georgia

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jesse Ventura

Oh geez it's this show. I knew I avoided this one until the very end for a reason. This show is ALL about the NWA World Tag Team Titles with a single match (Vader vs. Sting for the title) now being a part of it. Bill Watts was in charge here and he knew the right idea was to bring the NWA back in. That being said, NO ONE but Watts and JR wanted that kind of wrestling, but who cares about that right? Let's have perfectly clean and straight mat based wrestling for three hours! I'm sure I'll find something to complain about later on. Let's get to it.

Before I forget, the Miracle Violence Connection, comprised of Terry Gordy and Steve Williams, are already in the semi-finals, having beaten the only other possible winners of the tournament, the Steiners, at a Clash of the Champions which was ALSO all about this stupid tournament.

Oh and one more stupid thing: the Steiners were the WCW Tag Champions coming into the tournament. The MVC beat them between the Clash and this show, meaning the only team with a realistic chance to win this thing will have all the tag titles and will have already beaten their only solid challengers. Gee, it's almost like this is a REALLY FREAKING STUPID IDEA. But this is WCW in 1992, where everything is brilliant and no one wants to see people like Sting and Brian Pillman and the Steiners right?

One of the Japanese guys is out with an eye injury so Shinya Hashimoto is

replacing him. Ok then.

Here are the brackets.

Williams/Gordy

Brian Pillman/Jushin Liger

Nikita Koloff/Ricky Steamboat

Hiroshi Hase/Shinya Hashimoto

Fabulous Freebirds

Dustin Rhodes/Barry Windham

Steve Austin/Rick Rude

Dang this is going to be horribly boring.

Bill Watts says there are different rules tonight in different matches. Sting vs. Vader can't come off the top rope but in the tournament you can. He cites the National League and the American League in baseball having different rules to explain it. See, this is where the NWA mentality falls apart: this isn't a real sport. In baseball or whatever, there's interest in seeing who is better. In wrestling, that's REALLY boring and no one in modern times is interested in it. But hey, the NWA was doing SO well at this point that clearly we needed to bring that mentality back right?

NWA Tag Title Tournament Quarter-Finals: Ricky Steamboat/Nikita Koloff vs. Brian Pillman/Jushin Liger

This should be good. Thankfully a match with three high fliers has the top rope made legal. Pillman and Koloff get us going and Brian bounces

off of him a lot. He tries a front facelock and is easily placed on the top rope. A dropkick works a bit better and Koloff misses a charge, giving Brian a rollup for two. Off to Liger who works on the arm, as does Pillman who is tagged in quickly.

Back to Jushin who realizes power isn't going to work so he fires off some dropkicks instead. Koloff runs him over and brings in Ricky to a BIG pop. Dang Steamboat vs. either of these guys would have been excellent. Liger gets thrown out of the ring and onto Pillman but it's Pillman still legal. Steamboat works on the arm and then clotheslines Brian down. Pillman finally gets a tag and a double dropkick puts Steamboat down.

Liger vs. Steamboat now and they're moving as fast as you would expect them to. Never mind as Koloff comes back in for his hit one move and stare offensive series. Back to Pillman vs. Steamboat which is certainly a more interesting match. Pillman takes him down and drops an elbow for two. Things speed up on a dropkick but then it's back to a headlock by Brian. Liger comes in with some rapid fire kicks and the moonsault for two.

Tombstone kills Steamboat but he somehow kicks out at two. A flip dive gets two but Steamboat suplexes him down and tags in Koloff. Now Koloff hooks a chinlock, which is a popular move so far. Back to Steamboat who hits a series of backbreakers followed by a powerslam for two. Pillman made the save which I think makes them the heels in the match. Koloff hooks a chinlock on Liger before tagging Steamboat back in for a fist off the top.

Liger escapes and makes the hot tag to Pillman so things can speed up a bit. It's not often that someone speeds things up over Liger but Pillman can do just that. And never mind as it's back to the freaking headlock! Back to Liger who hits a cartwheel into a cross body for one. Back to Koloff who loads up the Sickle (running clothesline finisher) but Pillman breaks it up.

Brian comes in legally and hits a dropkick for two. Koloff throws him over the top but Pillman lands on the apron so it's not a DQ. Brian hits a springboard clothesline and a top rope missile dropkick for two. He hooks a sleeper but Koloff jawbreaks his way out of it. Off to Liger vs. Steamboat again which has been the best combination of the match so far.

Ricky gets two off a missed Steamboat dropkick as does Liger off a backslide. Brian gets a blind tag and a slingshot crossbody for two. Steamboat hits a suplex to put both guys down. Pillman goes up but gets crotched, but he manages to come off with a crossbody, but Steamboat rolls through for the pin.

Rating: B-. Expect to hear the following a lot in this review: this would have been better if they cut out five minutes. There are seven matches on this card and only two matches don't crack fifteen minutes, with one of them clocking in at 14:54. This was one of those twenty minute shindigs and it didn't need to be at all. Koloff didn't do much here and I'm not quite sure why he and Steamboat were partners. They were in WarGames together but that's about it. The match was good but like I said, it didn't need this much time.

NWA Tag Title Tournament Quarter-Finals: Fabulous Freebirds vs. Hiroshi Hase/Shinya Hashimoto

There's a possibility this is out of order as I've found two different match orders in different places. This might be the third match on the card but I'm not sure. Either way it doesn't make a ton of difference as the other match is up next anyway. Hashimoto is a huge guy who throws a lot of kicks. Hase is pretty good, whereas the Birds are just kind of there. Hayes and Hase get us going and it's time to strut.

Hayes controls with a headscissors on the mat but Hase escapes with ease. Off to an armbar by Hayes and Garvin gets the tag. Hashimoto comes in and things slow down. This is a horribly bad contrast of styles here and I don't really expect that much from it. They head to the mat and this

isn't going to be pretty. You can see the big problem with tournaments shining through here: there's no story to any of these matches so they're just wrestling matches which may be good and may be bad. That makes it hard to get into them almost every time.

Hase comes in for a few seconds before Hashimoto comes in for his famous kicks. Hayes comes in to pound away with "American right hands", a JR trademarked term. Hayes hooks a quick armbars but Hashimoto hits him in the throat to escape. Hase hits a gutbuster and shouts a bit. Back to Shinya for more kicks which is about all his offense consists of. A fallaway slam suplex gets two on Hayes.

Michael gets double teamed in the corner as the announcers talk about skunks. The Japanese guys get thrown together and won't get out of the ring. Hayes punches them down and tags Garvin as everything breaks down. Hase hits a northern lights suplex on Garvin to advance.

Rating: D. This was bad and uninteresting. Hase was good but when you're the only watchable guy in the whole match (yes I know Hashimoto is a legend), there's only so much you can do. This was nothing at all and thankfully it was the shortest match of the show. The Japanese guys got loudly booed by the southern crowd of course.

Bill Watts announces the NWA World Title tournament in Tokyo to crown a new champion to replace Flair who bailed to WWF. It only took them eleven months to crown a new one, because finding eight guys to have a title tournament is so hard. After WCW left the NWA it would take over a year to have the next tournament. And they wonder why they pretty much died around this time. Watts wants a unification match with Sting which would never come.

NWA Tag Title Tournament Quarter-Finals: Barry Windham/Dustin Rhodes vs. Steve Austin/Rick Rude

Rude is US Champion and Austin is TV Champion. There's a story to this

too as it's fallout from Dangerous Alliance vs. Sting's boys. Rhodes and Windham are both in red for some nice team unity. Austin and Windham start things off with a feeling out process. They had been feuding lately so I don't know why they would need to feel each other out. Austin grabs a quick rollup for two so Barry punches him in the face to take over.

After the Alliance chills on the floor for a bit, Austin comes back in and gets headlocked down. Rude and Rhodes come in with Rick pounding away in the corner. Dustin comes back with an armdrag/bar but Rude reverses into a chinlock. Dustin reverses a tombstone attempt into one of his own for two. Off to Austin who stomps away to take over. Ventura says he never broke a rule in his life in a funny bit.

Dustin clotheslines him down and kicks Austin to the floor. These two had some very underwhelming matches so hopefully this is better. Rhodes throws him back in and hooks an abdominal stretch. Windham comes in with a top rope lariat for two. Austin gets in a shot to the back and loads up a superplex but gets headbutted down. Rude comes in sans tag and he hits....my goodness he hits a missile dropkick for two. A piledriver gets the same on Barry.

Austin comes in off the top to break up the tag and hits a suplex for two. Off to the chinlock for awhile until Rude comes in for some power. He slams Barry down and swivels his hips a bit. A front facelock goes on but Windham quickly breaks it. Austin saves another tag as Jesse talks about being on the proper side of a turnbuckle. Now when's the last time you hear analysis like that?

Barry gets a brief comeback but charges into a boot which gives Austin a rollup for two. Off to a chinlock by Austin to space out the match again. Austin cheats with feet on the ropes to draw in Dustin which lets Rude cheat even more. They do the switch without a tag which is the usual good heel stuff. Back to Austin as the Alliance continues to look good. Barry pops back up and a double clothesline puts both guys down.

Austin suplexes him down to prevent the hot tag one more time. Rude comes in to pound away some more, this time with knees to the ribs. Barry gets the ultimate offensive move in on Rude: the atomic drop. They hit heads and Barry falls into the hot tag. Dustin cleans house, including a jumping back elbow off the middle rope, making this comeback awesome. Everything breaks down and Dustin gets the pin on Rude with a top rope clothesline.

Rating: B-. Another good but overly long match here. The match having an actual story to it helped a lot, as did both teams being pretty awesome. They worked the formula here and they worked it quite well, which is why something like this always works: when it's done well, it's impossible to screw up. It's even better with talented guys.

Here are the updated brackets:

Gordy/Williams

Steamboat/Koloff

Windham/Rhodes

Hase/Hashimoto

Harley Race says Vader is ready for Sting tonight and the Little Stingers are going to be disappointed.

NWA Tag Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Ricky Steamboat/Nikita Koloff vs. Miracle Violence Connection

Terry Gordy and Steve Williams in case you were wondering. They're the WCW World Tag Champions because WCW is stupid and won't think ahead long enough to realize there's no point to putting the titles on the same team. Steamboat and Gordy start things off and Gordy takes it to the mat. You'll hear that a lot with this team. Steamboat armdrags him down but

Gordy doesn't feel like being on the mat so he gets up and walks Steamboat over for a tag to Williams.

Williams is a former Oklahoma football player so JR rattles off his entire resume in record time. Williams doesn't really feel like selling either and he keeps fighting up from the mat while in Steamboat's armbar. Steamboat and Gordy now and scratch that as it's off to Koloff for some power on Steamboat's side. Hey look: an armbar. They go to the mat but Williams drags him into the corner again. The MVC guys just do not want to stay in one place at all.

Koloff and Gordy collide but no one goes anywhere. Williams comes back in and hooks a chinlock which makes this uninteresting match even more boring. This is basically an amateur wrestling match with both guys trading very basic holds. You can hear JR stroking it to this stuff from here. Off to Williams vs. Steamboat with NOTHING going on. That's the problem here: there's WAY too much standing around with nothing going on. Steamboat fires off chops in the corner but Williams shrugs them off and brings in Gordy.

Gordy runs him over with a clothesline and then both of the MVC runs him over with a clothesline to mix things up. A double suplex gets one on Steamboat as the referee realizes there was no tag. So why did he not mind earlier? Williams takes it to the mat (shocking!) and cranks on whatever hold that is. Steamboat grabs a DDT and it's a double tag to Koloff and Gordy. Williams comes back in almost immediately and takes Koloff down, locking on a headscissors.

This hold goes on for awhile as well, because that's how holds work in this match. Koloff misses a knee in the corner and Gordy locks on an STF. Back to Williams for ANOTHER hold, this one in the form of a Boston Crab. That goes on too long so it's back to the STF by Gordy. The Oklahoma Stampede is countered but Koloff's face hits Williams' head. We FINALLY get the tag to Steamboat so things speed up a bit. He goes up but Gordy shoves him down into the Oklahoma Stampede for the pin.

Rating: D-. SWEET GOODNESS THIS WAS BORING! The MVC are these big powerful guys that can mat wrestle, but they're like the Road Warriors with the total lack of selling ANYTHING. They were barely in trouble at all, but the difference with them and a team like Demolition or the Road Warriors is that those teams were exciting. The MVC just laid around on the mat a lot and bored the crowd to sleep. There's no way they were going to lose here either and the show dies (other than when they're not here) as a result. Terribly boring match and you know it's going to be the same in the finals.

NWA Tag Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Hiroshi Hase/Shinya Hashimoto vs. Dustin Rhodes/Barry Windham

Rhodes and Hase start things off but it's quickly off to Windham. Hase asks for a test of strength for some reason and is easily put down. He hits a hook kick to take Windham down before bringing in Hashimoto. They have a test of strength of their own and it's off to Dustin for some ramming into each other. Hase comes in and hooks a modified crossface chickenwing to take Dustin down.

Barry comes in again and takes Hase down, you guessed it, by the arm. Shinya comes in again and hooks on a cross armbreaker. The match slows down even more if that's possible. Dustin comes back in and cranks on the arm as well. And now let's stand around some more until Dustin fires away with some right hands. Hashimoto comes back with a spinwheel kick and it's back to Hase, thank goodness.

They chop it out but that's too interesting so things get slowed down all over again. After Hashimoto did nothing of note it's back to Hase for a Boston Crab. He lets that go for some reason and goes up for a double knee drop which misses. Off to Windham who cleans house. A suplex gets two on Hase as does a powerslam. Everything breaks down and Windham hits the lariat on Hase for the pin.

Rating: D+. This wasn't as dull as the previous match but again there was

nothing at all here. This whole tournament has gone on about as predictably as it could possible go, which makes these already dull matches even less interesting. Windham and Rhodes were WAY better than the Japanese team though.

Ron Simmons says nothing of note.

WCW World Title: Sting vs. Vader

This is one of those pairings that you flat out cannot screw up. It's David vs. Goliath, but that's if David is 6'3 and insanely strong. Actually it's reminiscent of Brock vs. Cena from earlier this year. Vader is a newcomer here other than a few spot appearances. He had a match with Sting a few weeks before this and DESTROYED him. Sting wanted revenge and Vader wanted the title. Sting talks a lot of trash and Vader says bring it.

Vader knocks him into the corner and gets pounded down in a hurry. Sting clotheslines him and Vader smiles. A cross body bounces off the monster and Vader pounds him into the corner. Sting avoids a charge and suplexes Vader down. Another clothesline puts Vader on the floor and the place ERUPTS. This was when Sting was the hottest thing in the world and probably the biggest star in the world (remember that Hogan was gone for about a year at this point) but he had never met anything like Vader before.

Vader gets back in and wants a test of strength. Now Sting has been called a lot of things, but smart has never been one of them. He takes it and I think I can hear him scream from here. Sting pokes him in the eye and pounds away. It helps that Vader is an absolute master of selling and he flies all over the place off a single punch. Sting knocks him to the apron and suplexes him back in. Remember that Vader is about the size of Mark Henry.

A small package gets two for Sting and Vader bails to the floor. Harley

Race freaks out at the cameraman which makes me laugh. Back in and Sting tries a sunset flip but Vader sits down on him to take over. Sting sells it like he's dead so Vader drops an elbow and a splash for two. Vader puts him in the Scorpion Deathlock because he's a jerk like that. Sting finally breaks it so Vader takes his head off with a clothesline for two.

You have to keep in mind that Vader hit harder than anyone else so this offense looks a lot more brutal. Sting hits a Liger Kick of all things followed by a DDT for no cover. They collide and Vader is knocked to the apron, but it knocked Sting silly. Vader tries to go up but Sting kicks him in the ribs to put him down. Sting picks him up off the ropes and drops him with a Samoan Drop for a delayed two. A bridging German suplex gets two.

Remember, this guy is 450lbs and Sting is throwing him around like Angle throws AJ around. Stinger Splash hits as does the second one, but Sting knocks himself out on the post. That only gets two for Vader as the fans are losing their minds over this. Sting swings wildly but falls down on a missed right. He's totally spent so Vader powerbombs Sting's corpse to win his first world title and SHOCK the crowd. This would be like Ryback destroying Punk for the title.

Rating: A. Keep in mind that the average rating for this pairing starts at a B instead of the usual C. The match is measured on how far above that they can get. This was one of their better one, as it was so over the top and fun that it was impossible not to get into it. Sting had no idea what he was doing against Vader yet and it would take him a few months to really get the hang of it. Their Starrcade 92 match is about as perfect as this kind of match can be. Vader would only hold the title for three weeks before Ron Simmons took it away from him and held it for five months. Vader's real reign came in 93, holding it for most of the year.

Vader says he's awesome and that Sting is done.

NWA World Tag Team Titles: Miracle Violence Connection vs. Dustin

Rhodes/Barry Windham

The Steiners come out before the match starts and are promptly thrown out. Dr. Death (Williams) and Windham get us going. Nothing of note happens there so it's off to Gordy. Dustin finally does something by pounding away with elbows to the head. Gordy ties him up on the mat but it's quickly off to Windham who hooks a figure four. Once that gets broken up it's off to Williams and they go to the mat for more grappling.

That goes nowhere so it's back to Gordy who runs over Barry some more, getting two off a clothesline. Rhodes comes in and fights Williams over a top wristlock but Dr. Death cheats by pulling him down by the hair. Gordy comes in with the STF again, which he calls the Oriental Twist. Dustin fights up and puts on a sleeper but Gordy makes a fast tag so he doesn't have to sell or anything.

Williams takes it right back to the mat and cranks on another chinlock. JR goes on a small rant about how tag ropes should be used more, because that's the most interesting thing he can talk about right now. That's not sarcasm if you couldn't tell. Gordy comes back in and puts on a Boston Crab which is broken up by Barry. Williams hits a powerslam for two and Dustin just walks over to make the tag.

Barry speeds thing up a bit and hits a pair of suplexes for two on Williams. And never mind as he hooks a sleeper to waste even more time. Dr. Death immediately rams him into the post to break the hold and puts on a chinlock. Barry suplexes out of it but Williams blocks the tag. Williams hooks on a front facelock which fires up JR way too much. Barry collides with Gordy and suddenly I want to listen to some Motown.

Windham gets up and Williams knocks him into the corner for the tag to Dustin but he gets knocked down almost immediately. Williams puts on ANOTHER front facelock to make sure the crowd isn't woken from their slumber early. Gordy gets two off a clothesline. The Oklahoma Stampede is broken up by a Windham dropkick but Dustin's bulldog is broken up. Dr.

Death kills Dustin with a lariat to complete what was close enough to a squash.

Rating: D. Again, this was technically sound but it was dull. The MVC dominated the vast majority of this and most of that was them on the mat with some kind of hold on Dustin or Windham. That may be what pure wrestling is, but DANG is it ever boring. Also this makes no sense, as now the MVC has all of the titles and has defeated all of their challengers, so where do they go now? Instead, COMMON SENSE would say have Windham and Rhodes (or better yet the Steiners) win here and build to a unification match, but instead let's have Oklahoma/Japan dominate.

Williams says Japan is happy. Gordy says they're awesome.

Jim and Jesse wrap things up.

Overall Rating: D-. Any show with Sting vs. Vader on it can't be called a failure, but the rest of this certainly can be. There was no point to any of this at all and the whole thing existed to show us how great Williams and Gordy were. The problem is NO ONE CARED ABOUT THEM except for Watts and Ross. The matches just weren't interesting at all and unless you REALLY like boring tag matches, this show didn't have much for you at all. This was a horrible show and terribly boring all around.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews