

MSG Classics TV report w/ Brawl to Settle it All and Hogan vs. Valentine

Our first MSG Classic this week is from July 23, 1984. The show featured a rare appearance by Antonio Inoki and Hulk Hogan's third WWF Title defense at the Garden. Our announcers are Gene Okerlund and Gorilla Monsoon. However, the most important bout on the card was the WWF Women's Championship match with The Fabulous Moolah defending against Wendi Richter in what was billed as The Brawl To End It All. This was a highly successful program and Vince McMahon's first attempt at using mainstream celebrities in wrestling angles. The first match we get is Hogan defending his title against Greg "The Hammer" Valentine. Less than a year prior to this match, Hogan was a top star for the AWA while Valentine was involved in a classic feud with Roddy Piper in Jim Crockett Promotions. As noted, this was only the third Hulk Hogan appearance at MSG since winning the title the previous January. It's your typical Hogan match with him dominating early until Valentine countered a headlock with a back suplex. Really slow match from there with just a ton of punches, forearms and stomps. Finish came when Hogan nailed Valentine with an awkward forearm as Valentine came off the top rope. Hulkster followed with the legdrop for the win.

Up next is WWF World Tag Team Champions Dick Murdoch and Adrian Adonis, The North-South Connection, defend against Sgt. Slaughter and Terry Daniels. Slaughter was red hot at the time (more on this later) and was coming off a classic feud with the Iron Sheik. This is surely the best of the three matches and crowd is pretty hot for everyone except Daniels, who uses actual wrestling moves in the match which was pretty rare for the WWF those days. Murdoch and Daniels had pretty good chemistry together and came off as two "legitimate tough guys." Of course, this was before Adonis became a gay florist.

Slaughter does a weird spot where he draped Daniels over his shoulders and, using the extra weight, gave Murdoch a knee drop. Finish came when Adonis pinned Daniels after Murdoch got him with a flying knee drop. Post match saw Slaughter and Daniels clear the heels from the ring. Slaughter left the WWF shortly after, and was followed by Daniels to the AWA. Finally, we have The Brawl To End It All with WWF Women's Champion The Fabulous Moolah with Cpt. Lou Albano defending against Wendi Richter with Cyndi Lauper in her corner. Lauper was, at the time, one of the top selling pop acts with her hit, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun." The previous year, Cpt. Lou Albano made a cameo appearance in the video for the song. Vince McMahon capitalized on the opportunity and soon Lauper appeared on WWF TV taking exception to Albano's sexist remarks. Like the McMahon-Trump angle, each one chose a wrestler to represent them. Moolah was 61 at the time of the match so keep your expectations low. The match was awful but the crowd was in to it, especially when Albano and Lauper were involved. The finish was really bad with Richter winning in a bridged pin. But it wasn't one of those bridges where it was obvious to the crowd so it came off extremely flat. The Brawl To End It All aired on MTV and pulled a very impressive 9.0 rating. It was a huge step forward in bringing the WWF into the mainstream attention. Interestingly enough, according to most online sources, the card only drew 15,000 to MSG which would have been the lowest of the twelve cards that year. Most of the cards that year sold out and required the Felt Forum to accommodate the overflow for crowds in excess of 20,000. These included cards without Hogan and the WWF's top draw at the time was probably either Slaughter or Andre The Giant. The card wasn't competing with a major sporting event as it wasn't hockey, basketball or football season and the Mets and Yankees weren't very good that year. I checked the weather report and there wasn't any rain so maybe the ticket prices were increased or the main event turned the crowd off. The rest of the card: Sika pinned Ron Shaw

The Iron Sheik pinned Tony Garea
 WWF IC Champion Tito Santana fought Bob Orton to a draw
 Bob Backlund defeated Butcher Vachon via submission
 WWF Martial Arts Champion Antonio Inoki pinned Charlie Fulton
 Paul Orndorff pinned Chief Jay Strongbow Afa pinned Rene Goulet
 Antonio Inoki won a 20-man Battle Royal Chris Marullo Chrismarullo81@yahoo.com Undercard results, match times and attendance figures courtesy of www.thehistoryofthewwe.com