WrestleMania (sequentially known as WrestleMania I) was the first annual WrestleMania professional wrestling pay @-@ per @-@ view event (only in selected areas) , produced by the World Wrestling Federation . It took place on March 31 , 1985 , at Madison Square Garden in New York City . The attendance for the event was 19 @,@ 121 . The event was seen by over one million viewers through closed @-@ circuit television , making it the largest showing of an event on closed @-@ circuit television in the United States at the time .

The show consisted of nine professional wrestling matches . In the main event , Hulk Hogan and Mr T defeated Paul Orndorff and Roddy Piper . Also , Wendi Richter (accompanied by manager Cyndi Lauper) defeated Leilani Kai to win the WWF Women 's Championship , and Nikolai Volkoff and The Iron Sheik defeated The U.S. Express (Mike Rotundo and Barry Windham) to win the WWF Tag Team Championship .

= = Background and promotion = =

During the 1980s , Vince McMahon 's World Wrestling Federation (WWF) 's main competition in the professional wrestling industry was from Jim Crockett Promotions . McMahon countered Jim Crockett 's successful Starrcade pay @-@ per @-@ view , which began airing in 1983 , by creating the WrestleMania franchise .

For the first WrestleMania , Vince McMahon began cross promoting with MTV , which aired two wrestling specials . The first one was The Brawl to End It All , aired on July 23 , 1984 , in which a match from a live Madison Square Garden broadcast was shown on MTV . Wendi Richter defeated The Fabulous Moolah to win the WWF Women 's Championship on the card , with Cyndi Lauper on her side . At The War to Settle the Score , which aired on February 18 , 1985 , Leilani Kai , accompanied by Moolah , defeated Richter , again accompanied by Lauper , to win the Women 's Championship . Aside from Lauper , other celebrities also appeared during the buildup to and at the event ; most notably Muhammad Ali , Liberace (with the The Rockettes) and Major League Baseball manager Billy Martin all appeared during the main event .

Two other championships were also defended at WrestleMania: the WWF Intercontinental Championship and the WWF World Tag Team Championship. Prior to the event, Greg Valentine had feuded with Tito Santana over the belt. Valentine defeated Santana on September 24, 1984 for the championship. Mike Rotunda and Barry Windham won the WWF Tag Team Championship three months before WrestleMania from the team of Adrian Adonis and Dick Murdoch.

In the months leading up to the first WrestleMania , Roddy Piper began a talk @-@ show segment on WWF television entitled " Piper 's Pit " . On one episode of the show , he hit Jimmy Snuka over the head with a coconut , leading to a feud between the two men . As part of the storyline , Piper recruited Bob Orton to be his bodyguard . On another episode of Piper 's Pit , Piper spoke out against the burgeoning Rock ' n ' Wrestling connection , which led to a confrontation with Hulk Hogan . In February 1985 , the two men faced each other at The War to Settle the Score , where Hogan won by disqualification after interference by Paul Orndorff and Mr. T. Their on @-@ going feud led to their match at WrestleMania .

As part of the promotion for the event , Hogan appeared on Hot Properties four days prior to WrestleMania , where he put host Richard Belzer into a front chinlock ? a move that cuts off the flow of blood to the brain . Belzer , however , fell to the floor unconscious and began to bleed profusely . His injury required eight stitches . Belzer later sued Hogan for \$ 5 million , but they eventually settled out of court . The night before WrestleMania , Hogan and Mr. T hosted an episode of Saturday Night Live to help promote the event .

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= = Event = =
= = = Preliminary matches = = =
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Gene Okerlund opened the event by singing "The Star Spangled Banner." The originally intended singer, a celebrity guest that Okerlund and Vince McMahon refused to name, failed to appear.

The first match was between Tito Santana and The Executioner (Buddy Rose). Santana won the match after applying a figure four leglock on The Executioner. Following the match, King Kong Bundy, accompanied by Jimmy Hart and Special Delivery Jones (Conrad Efraim), made their way to the ring. After crushing his opponent against the turnbuckle and landing on him stomach @-@ first, Bundy pinned Jones. The WWF 's official time for the match is a then @-@ record time of nine seconds (a record since surpassed by The Rock defeating Erick Rowan at WrestleMania 32), although the match actually lasted closer to 24 seconds.

The next match was between Ricky Steamboat and Matt Borne . Steamboat took the early advantage in the match @-@ up , until Borne flipped him over and slammed him to the mat using a belly @-@ to @-@ belly suplex . After performing a flying crossbody Steamboat pinned Borne for the win . After the match ended , David Sammartino , accompanied by his father Bruno Sammartino , and Brutus Beefcake , accompanied by Johnny Valiant , made their way to the ring . The action favoured both contestants , as each wrestler alternated having the advantage . After Beefcake threw David Sammartino out of the ring , Valiant lifted him up and slammed him to the cement floor . He then pushed Sammartino back into the ring before being attacked by Bruno . A short while later , all four men began fighting in the ring , and the match ended in a no @-@ contest .

The first championship defense of WrestleMania was between Junkyard Dog and the reigning WWF Intercontinental Heavyweight Champion Greg Valentine , who was accompanied to the ring by his manager Jimmy Hart . Junkyard Dog began the match in the offensive position , performing headbutts and punches on Valentine . As the action went back and forth , Hart climbed on the ring apron , where Valentine accidentally hit him . Later , Valentine pinned Junkyard Dog with his feet on the ropes for leverage , which is an illegal maneuver . As a result , Tito Santana ran down to the ring and explained to the referee what had happened and the match was restarted . Junkyard Dog eventually won the match by count @-@ out as Valentine failed to re @-@ enter the ring . Valentine , however , kept his title as titles do not change hands through count @-@ out .

The following match was for the WWF Tag Team Championship . Nikolai Volkoff and The Iron Sheik , accompanied to the ring by Freddie Blassie , challenged the reigning champions , The U.S. Express (Mike Rotundo and Barry Windham) , who were accompanied by Lou Albano . The U.S. Express dominated the early part of the match until Volkoff and The Sheik began to gain the offensive advantage over Rotundo . Rotundo then tagged in Windham , who performed a bulldog on The Sheik . After nearly being pinned , The Sheik hit Windham in the head with Blassie 's cane as the referee had his back turned . After Volkoff got the pin , Volkoff and The Sheik were crowned as the new tag champions .

= = = Main events = = =

The next match on the card was a \$ 15 @,@ 000 Body Slam Challenge between André the Giant and Big John Studd , who was accompanied by Bobby Heenan . The stipulation of the match was that André the Giant had to body slam Studd to win \$ 15 @,@ 000 , and if he failed , he would be forced to retire . After beginning the match in the defensive position , André countered with chops and a headbutt . From then on André controlled the match and after weakening Studd 's knees with multiple kicks , André was able to lift Studd over his shoulders and execute a body slam to win the match . After André collected his prize money , he started throwing the money out to the audience . Heenan , however , grabbed the bag holding the remainder of the winnings and ran from ringside . As a result of the match , André was able to continue his career and his WWF undefeated streak was unscathed .

After all the men had left ringside, it was time for the WWF Women 's Championship match between Wendi Richter, managed by singer Cyndi Lauper (with her manager David Wolfe), and Leilani Kai, managed by former champion The Fabulous Moolah. Shortly after the match began, Moolah grabbed Richter as she was outside on the floor, but Lauper saved her from an attack. Kai

then performed a flying crossbody from the top rope, but Richter used Kai 's momentum to roll @-@ up Kai in a pinning position. With this pin, Richter became the new Women 's Champion.

The main event and last match of the night pitted Hulk Hogan , the reigning WWF Champion , and Mr. T , accompanied by Jimmy Snuka , against Roddy Piper and Paul Orndorff , accompanied by Bob Orton . Professional boxer Muhammad Ali was the special guest referee (on the outside of the ring) , New York Yankees manager Billy Martin was the guest ring announcer while Liberace (accompanied by The Rockettes) was the guest time keeper . First , Piper , Orndorff , and Orton made their way to the ring as drums and bagpipes played , causing the crowd to boo . Crowd favorites Hogan , Mr. T , and Snuka made their way to the ring next . The match began with Mr. T and Piper in the ring and the two traded blows . Mid @-@ way through the match , all four men began brawling in the ring , and Muhammad Ali punched Piper in an attempt to restore order . After the match 's order was restored , Orndorff and Piper had the offensive advantage . As Orndorff locked Hogan into a full nelson , Orton climbed the top rope to attempt to knock out Hogan . Instead , Orton mistakenly hit Orndorff , and Hogan pinned him to win the match . In frustration , Piper knocked out the in @-@ ring official , Pat Patterson before he and Orton retreated backstage leaving Orndorff alone in the ring with Hogan , Mr T and Snuka .

= = Aftermath = =

Approximately three months after WrestleMania , on July 6 , 1985 , Greg Valentine lost the Intercontinental Championship back to Tito Santana in a cage match . At about the same time , Nikolai Volkoff and The Iron Sheik lost the WWF Tag Team Championship back to The U.S. Express . They held the title until August , when the team of Brutus Beefcake and Greg Valentine , later known as the Dream Team , became the new champions .

After André the Giant defeated Big John Studd at the event, Studd formed a tag team with King Kong Bundy, and the duo faced André and Hulk Hogan on a number of occasions. Later, the team of Studd and Bundy teamed up in Handicap matches? a two against one wrestling match? against André, which renewed the feud between André and Studd.

In late 1985, Wendi Richter lost her WWF Women 's Championship in controversial fashion. She wrestled a masked female wrestler known as The Spider Lady, who pinned Richter to win the title. After the match, the Spider Lady was revealed as the Fabulous Moolah. This finish was a screwjob, i.e. one participant (in this case Richter) was unaware of the planned title change. Richter left the WWF shortly after, and Moolah held the title for approximately two years.

In a new storyline after WrestleMania , Roddy Piper began training Bob Orton as a boxer . Hulk Hogan accepted a challenge on the behalf of Mr. T to face Orton in a match on the February 15 , 1986 edition of Saturday Night 's Main Event . After Mr. T won the match , Orton and Piper attacked him , leading to a boxing match at WrestleMania 2 between Piper and Mr. T. At the second annual WrestleMania , Piper was disqualified in the Fourth round .

= = Production = =

The attendance at the event was 19 @,@ 121 . In addition , the event was seen by over one million viewers through Closed @-@ circuit television , making it the largest event on closed @-@ circuit television in the United States at the time . A technical glitch ended the closed circuit broadcast early into the showing at the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania . To appease angry fans who pelted the screen with garbage , WrestleMania was broadcast in its entirety on local ABC affiliate WTAE @-@ TV two weeks later .

WWF announcer Gene Okerlund sang " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " , and Gorilla Monsoon and Jesse Ventura called the action . Okerlund also did interviews backstage , and Alfred Hayes did interviews near the entrance to the locker room , right outside the ring . Howard Finkel was the ring announcer . The opening theme for the event was the instrumental portion of the Phil Collins and Philip Bailey hit " Easy Lover " , while the closing theme for the credits was " Axel F " by Harold Faltermeyer . Celebrity guests in attendance included Billy Martin , Cyndi Lauper , Mr. T ,

Muhammad Ali, and Liberace accompanied by The Rockettes.

= = Reception = =

John Powell of Slam! Wrestling rated the event as average, citing that it "wasn't the greatest ... ". Despite his overall rating, he praised several moments, including Orton hitting Orndorff with his cast, King Kong Bundy 's win, and André the Giant throwing the money into the crowd. Powell, however, listed Mr. T wrestling as his least favorite moment of the pay @-@ per @-@ view. He claimed the main event match, in which Mr. T took part, was humorous despite its lack of technical wrestling.

In contrast , Pro Wrestling Illustrated awarded the main event match its annual PWI Match of the Year honor . The event was also included in a July 2007 special that aired on the MSG Network titled " The 50 Greatest Moments at Madison Square Garden " , ranking at # 30 . In the December 2002 issue of Wrestling Digest , the main event match @-@ up was listed as number five in the most memorable twenty @-@ five matches of the past twenty @-@ five years . Echoing John Powell 's thoughts , Kevin Eck of Wrestling Digest stated , " The match itself was far from a technical @-@ wrestling classic , but it delivered in terms of entertaining the crowd . " In another Wrestling Digest article , written by Keith Loria , the main event was ranked third in the top ten matches in WrestleMania history . In contrast to Powell , Loria believed that Mr. T " proved to be an adequate grappler " .

= = Results = =