

= WrestleMania III =

WrestleMania III was the third annual WrestleMania professional wrestling pay @-@ per @-@ view event produced by the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) . The event was held on March 29 , 1987 , at the Pontiac Silverdome in Pontiac , Michigan . There were twelve matches , with the final event being WWF World Heavyweight Champion Hulk Hogan successfully defending his title against André the Giant .

WrestleMania III is particularly notable for the WWF 's claiming a record attendance of 93 @,@ 173 and the largest recorded attendance of a live indoor event in North America at the time . This record itself stood until February 14 , 2010 when it was surpassed by the 2010 NBA All @-@ Star Game , and the only WWF / E event with an official higher attendance was WrestleMania 32 . Both of the latter events were held at AT & T Stadium . The event is considered to be the pinnacle of the 1980s wrestling boom . The WWF generated \$ 1 @.@ 6 million in ticket sales . Almost one million fans watched the event at 160 closed circuit locations in North America . The number of people watching via pay @-@ per @-@ view was estimated at several million , and pay @-@ per @-@ view revenues were estimated at \$ 10 @.@ 3 million , setting a record for the time .

= = Background = =

Like all other WrestleMania events , WrestleMania III was promoted for several months in advance . The main feud stemmed from André the Giant 's turn and betrayal of his ally , the WWF Champion Hulk Hogan , which began when Hogan was presented a trophy for being the WWF Champion for three years , and André , his good friend , came out to congratulate him . Shortly afterwards , André was presented a slightly smaller trophy for being " undefeated in the WWF for 15 years " and Hogan came out to congratulate André , but ended up being the focal point of the interview . Annoyed by this , André walked out during Hogan 's congratulation speech and not long after that , on an edition of the interview segment Piper 's Pit , Bobby Heenan , a long @-@ time Hogan adversary , announced himself to be André 's new manager . André then challenged Hogan to a title match at WrestleMania III and attacked Hogan , ripping off Hogan 's T @-@ shirt and crucifix necklace .

Another main feud leading up to the event was between Ricky Steamboat and the Intercontinental Champion Randy Savage . The feud began during a title match between the two when Savage attacked Steamboat as he greeted fans at ringside . Savage then pushed Steamboat over the security rail and delivered an elbow shot that thrust Steamboat 's throat into the rail and dropped the ring bell onto his throat from the top rope , injuring his larynx and sending him to the hospital . This resulted in a long , bitter feud that lasted for six months , included several bloody match @-@ ups and finally culminated at WrestleMania . George " The Animal " Steele was in Steamboat 's corner , having developed a crush on Savage 's valet , Miss Elizabeth .

Billy Jack Haynes and Hercules Hernandez ' feud started when Bobby Heenan continuously taunted Haynes , telling him that Hercules was the real master of the full nelson ; which came to a boiling point when Hercules attacked Haynes on an edition of Superstars of Wrestling , which led to their match at WrestleMania . This battle was advertised as the " Full Nelson Challenge . "

Another heated feud leading up to this event was between Harley Race and the Junkyard Dog . When The WWF Wrestling Classic became the King of the Ring tournament , Harley Race went on to win the tournament and began referring to himself as " King " Harley Race , and coming to the ring in a royal crown and cape to the ceremonial accompaniment of the classical music piece " Great Gates of Kiev " by Modest Mussorgsky . After each of his victories , Race forced his defeated opponent to " bow and kneel " before him . Usually , Race 's manager , Bobby Heenan , forced the defeated opponent to " bow and kneel " by grabbing his hair . Junkyard Dog protested Race 's self @-@ proclaimed monarchy in the WWF and stated there would never be a complete ruler in the WWF , which led to a match on Saturday Night 's Main Event , in which the King and his manager both tried to make Junkyard Dog bow for them . This set the stage for the WrestleMania match , which included the stipulation that the loser had to bow to the winner .

On January 26 , 1987 , The British Bulldogs lost the WWF Tag Team Championship to The Hart

Foundation in a match that saw the Dynamite Kid so debilitated with a back injury that he was virtually carried to the ring by Davey Boy Smith and did not see much physical action . Danny Davis was the referee and allowed The Hart Foundation to use illegal double @-@ team maneuvers . After being given some time off to recuperate , the Bulldogs continued their rivalry with The Hart Foundation when they teamed up with Tito Santana against the Foundation and the referee @-@ turned @-@ wrestler Danny Davis in a six @-@ man tag team match at WrestleMania III . The match was billed as a revenge match with Santana 's inclusion due to Davis being the referee in the Boston Garden in early 1986 when he had lost the Intercontinental title to the Macho Man who used a foreign object to get the win .

Rock singer and Detroit native Alice Cooper was in Jake Roberts ' corner during his match with The Honky Tonk Man . The Honky Tonk Man had attacked Roberts with a guitar on Roberts ' interview segment The Snake Pit , which legitimately injured Roberts ' neck . This event began Roberts ' turn into a babyface as well as the feud between the wrestlers , which culminated in their WrestleMania match .

The feud between Adrian Adonis and Roddy Piper began when , following a leave of absence from the WWF , Piper returned to find his Piper 's Pit segment replaced by The Flower Shop , a segment hosted by then @-@ effeminate wrestler Adrian Adonis . Piper , who returned as a face , spent weeks crashing Adonis ' show and trading insults , leading to a " showdown " between the two segments that ended with Piper being assaulted and humiliated by Adonis , Piper 's former bodyguard Bob Orton , and Don Muraco . The trio left Piper with his face covered in red lipstick , lying in the middle of the remnants of the destroyed Piper 's Pit set . In response , Piper stormed the set of Adonis ' show and destroyed it with a baseball bat . This led to their Hair vs. Hair match at WrestleMania III , which was billed as Piper 's retirement match from wrestling before becoming a full @-@ time actor .

= = Event = =

Vince McMahon claims that as he was about to announce " Welcome to WrestleMania III , " he felt the spirit of his father Vincent J. McMahon , who had died three years earlier . After McMahon welcomed the audience , he introduced Aretha Franklin , who opened the show singing a rendition of " America the Beautiful . "

The first match of the night was The Can @-@ Am Connection versus Bob Orton and The Magnificent Muraco (with Mr. Fuji) . This match ended when Rick Martel gave Don Muraco a high cross @-@ body with Zenk on his hands and knees giving Muraco what Gorilla Monsoon called " A little schoolboy trip from behind " allowing Martel to get the win for his team .

The next match that aired was Hercules (with Bobby Heenan in his corner) against Billy Jack Haynes in the " Full Nelson Challenge . " The match ended when Haynes locked Hercules in the full nelson outside the ring and both were counted out . After the match , Bobby Heenan assaulted Haynes by kneeling him in the back , and Haynes chased Heenan into the ring , where Hercules then blindsided Haynes with his chain , hitting him a number of times with it before locking him in a full nelson of his own .

The Mixed Tag Team Match between King Kong Bundy and his midget team of Lord Littlebrook and Little Tokyo against Hillbilly Jim and his own midget team of The Haiti Kid and Little Beaver was next . King Kong Bundy 's team was disqualified when Bundy attacked Little Beaver , because Bundy was not supposed to be in the ring with the midgets . Bundy attacked Little Beaver after Beaver had " attacked " him on occasion during the match and finally got caught .

The " Loser Must Bow " match between the Junkyard Dog and Harley Race (with Bobby Heenan and The Fabulous Moolah) followed . Prior to the match Gene Okerlund interviewed Heenan , Race , and Moolah backstage , where Moolah predicted that Junkyard Dog would have to bow to the King as he is supposed to do . Bobby gave Moolah the crown and told her to put it on the King 's head after the match , " As only the Queen of Wrestling can do " . Junkyard Dog came out to the ring to a big ovation in the Silverdome . During the match , the two battled back and forth , with Race even trying unsuccessfully to give the prone Dog a falling headbutt which naturally failed . Following this

Race recovered enough to give the Junkyard Dog a belly to belly suplex when he was distracted by Bobby Heenan to get the win . Due to the pre @-@ match stipulation , he did a little bow and then hit Harley Race with a steel chair . After attacking Race , Junkyard Dog took the King 's royal robe and left the ring with it in hand to a standing ovation .

The next match was The Dream Team (with Luscious Johnny V and Canadian strong man Dino Bravo) against The Fabulous Rougeaus . Raymond Rougeau started off the match by locking up with Brutus Beefcake . The two men later tagged out , and Greg Valentine brawled with Jacques Rougeau as Bravo looked on from the outside of the ring . Raymond performed a sleeper hold on Valentine and was followed by Beefcake jumping off the ropes and accidentally hitting the Hammer with a double axe handle . The Rougeau Brothers gave Valentine a double team move , but the referee was arguing with Beefcake . The match ended when Dino Bravo jumped off the top rope and hit Raymond while he was pinning Valentine , then rolling Valentine on top of him for the win . The Dream Team argued for most of the match , which led to Greg Valentine and Dino Bravo departing together , without Beefcake .

Footage of an interview with Roddy Piper was aired as Piper made his way to the ring to face Adrian Adonis , who was accompanied by Jimmy Hart , in Piper 's retirement match . Piper and Adonis began the match by attacking each other with Piper 's belt . Adonis put a sleeper hold on Piper in the middle of the ring and released the hold thinking that he won the match . When Jimmy Hart got in the ring to celebrate with Adonis , Brutus Beefcake came to the ring to help Piper recover , and Piper attacked Adonis and performed a sleeper hold of his own . Piper got the victory , and after the match was over , Brutus got in the ring and cut Adrian Adonis ' hair as Piper held Jimmy Hart down . After being woken by Beefcake and seeing himself in the mirror he had brought to the ring that Piper was holding , Adonis hit the mirror and chased Piper around the ring before leaving the ring in embarrassment with Hart using his jacket to cover Adonis ' head .

Up next was a six @-@ man tag team match featuring former referee Danny Davis (in his debut as a WWF wrestler) and the WWF Tag Team Champions , The Hart Foundation , against The British Bulldogs and Tito Santana . As a referee Davis ' bias towards heel wrestlers had led to the Bulldogs losing the tag titles to the Harts and also led to Santana losing the WWE Intercontinental Championship to Randy Savage . The Bulldogs had many near @-@ falls , yet Jim Neidhart broke up most of them . After all three members of the Bulldogs / Santana team had got a measure of revenge on Davis , all six wrestlers ended up brawling in the ring . Danny Davis recovered and hit Davey Boy Smith with Jimmy Hart 's megaphone and pinned him for the win .

Butch Reed 's pay @-@ per @-@ view debut against Koko B. Ware , was the following match . Reed won the match with a rollup after a high cross @-@ body from Koko . After the contest , Reed 's manager Slick got in the ring and attacked Koko B. Ware with his cane , but Tito Santana quickly rushed to the ring and stopped Slick , ripped some of his clothes off . Slick retreated as Reed got back in the ring , only for Reed to get a double drop kick from Koko and Santana .

The next contest was a title match involving reigning WWF Intercontinental Champion Randy Savage (with Miss Elizabeth) and Ricky Steamboat (with George Steele) . The match itself lasted for nearly fifteen minutes At one point , Savage was about to use the ring bell as a weapon but was stopped by Steele who knocked him off of the top rope . When Savage attempted to give Steamboat a scoop slam , Steamboat reversed it into a small package to get the win and become the new WWF Intercontinental Champion , marking the first time in WrestleMania history that the Intercontinental Championship changed hands . This match is considered by many to be one of the greatest matches in WWE history .

The tenth match of the night was between The Honky Tonk Man (with Jimmy Hart) and Jake Roberts , who along with his pet Python " Damien " , had Detroit native Alice Cooper in his corner . When Jake went for the DDT , Honky Tonk Man 's manager Jimmy Hart pulled Roberts ' legs , and the Honky Tonk Man rolled up Roberts from behind , held on to the ropes , and pinned him for the win . After the match Roberts narrowly missed hitting Honky with his own guitar , smashing it against a ring post and causing Honky to run off down the isle , leaving Hart alone in the ring . Alice Cooper got in the ring and with Roberts ' holding Hart in a Full Nelson , attacked him with Roberts ' python Damien .

Howard Finkel then introduced Gene Okerlund to the crowd . Okerlund then announced the record indoor attendance of 93 @, @ 173 .

The Iron Sheik and Nikolai Volkoff (with Slick) were in action next , against The Killer Bees . Slick asked all of the fans to rise to respect Nikolai Volkoff 's singing of the Soviet National Anthem , and when Volkoff began singing , Jim Duggan came to the ring with his two @-@ by @-@ four , which had an American flag attached to it , got on the microphone and said that Volkoff was not going to sing because America is the land of the free and the home of the brave . While the match ensued , Duggan stayed at ringside . When The Iron Sheik locked a camel clutch on Jim Brunzell , Duggan , who was chasing Volkoff around the ring and finally into it , stopped and hit an unsuspecting Sheik across the back with his two by four in front of the referee , resulting in The Iron Sheik and Nikolai Volkoff winning the bout by disqualification .

In what was billed as the " biggest main event in sports entertainment , " the match pitted WWF Champion Hulk Hogan defending the title against André the Giant (with Bobby Heenan) . Howard Finkel introduced the guest ring announcer , Bob Uecker , who in turn introduced the guest time keeper , Entertainment Tonight host Mary Hart . The fans booed André heavily and pelted him and his manager Bobby Heenan with trash as they rode the cart to the ring . In contrast , Hogan , who walked to the ring , came out to a huge ovation . Approximately two minutes into the match , Hogan attempted to bodyslam André , but he was unable to lift The Giant and nearly lost the match when Andre fell on him and almost pinned him . After the match had battled back and forth , André gave Hogan an Irish whip to the far side of the ring and attempted a big boot on Hogan , but Hogan ducked it and came off the ropes to give André a clothesline to take him off his feet for the first time in the match . Hogan then " Hulked up " and scoop slammed the 520 @-@ pound Giant before hitting the ropes and executing his patented leg drop pin to get the win and retain the championship .

= = Aftermath = =

Roddy Piper went on to film Hell Comes to Frogtown and They Live and made sporadic appearances on television before finally returning to host a Piper 's Pit segment at WrestleMania V. Piper continued to be active in professional wrestling at various points for more than two decades . The first televised match between André and Hulk Hogan after WrestleMania III was on The Main Event on NBC on February 5 , 1988 , drawing a record 33 million viewers , making it the most watched match in North American professional wrestling history . The angle surrounding this match was that after winning the match , André ended Hogan 's four @-@ year reign as WWF champion with the help of a worked screwjob finish involving twin referees Earl and Dave Hebner . Their feud culminated in a rematch at WrestleMania IV as part of a tournament to crown a new champion (both ended up being disqualified during the match for using a steel chair in front of referee Joey Marella) . The Hogan / Andre match at WrestleMania IV was the first ever WrestleMania rematch .

Randy Savage continued to challenge Ricky Steamboat for the Intercontinental title in rematches at house shows across the country . Steamboat eventually lost the title to The Honky Tonk Man , and not long after , Savage became a babyface and feuded with Honky Tonk over the title .

Twenty years later , WrestleMania 23 celebrated WrestleMania III by returning to the Detroit metropolitan area , showing footage from WrestleMania III , having Aretha Franklin (" Who 's Zoomin ' Who ? " by Franklin was the theme song to WrestleMania III) sing " America the Beautiful , " and having Kane scoop slam The Great Khali . WrestleMania 23 had the highest buyrate of any WrestleMania in history , before getting beaten by WrestleMania XXVIII .

Also in 2007 , WrestleMania III was re @-@ released on DVD . The DVD included pre @-@ WrestleMania interviews and matches , including the battle royal from Saturday Night 's Main Event that Hercules won , and optional pop @-@ up trivia facts about the event .

WrestleMania III was re @-@ released on DVD on March 12 , 2013

= = Reception = =

The event has received positive reviews . In the years after WrestleMania III , the Savage vs. Steamboat match has been ranked by critics and other wrestlers as one of the greatest matches in professional wrestling . Pro Wrestling Illustrated and Wrestling Observer Newsletter named it 1987 's Match of the Year . IGN ranked it at number 6 in their Top 20 Matches in WrestleMania History . Steamboat described the match as " the moment in time that defined me as a wrestler . " Thomas Golianopoulos of Complex Sports ranked it at number two in his list of the 50 Greatest Matches in WrestleMania History , citing that " Both guys worked lightning fast and everything from Steamboat 's aggressiveness to the involvement of George " The Animal " Steele played off their part . " Current WWE superstar David Otunga picked it as WWE.com 's Five @-@ Star Match of the Week in December 19 , 2012 .

Incidentally , the Hogan vs. Andre match received a negative four star rating from Dave Meltzer and the Wrestling Observer Newsletter named it the " Worst Worked Match of the Year . "

While the WWE and Silverdome management have always maintained that the 93 @, @ 173 figure is correct , Vince Russo continues debate among wrestling fans as to what the true attendance was on the day . Also , Russo claimed that the 1992 SummerSlam at Wembley did 79 @, @ 127 . The record would be decisively broken by WrestleMania 32 in 2016 . Bleacher Report commentator Jason Savage responded to allegations of the attendance dispute by noting that a pictorial analysis showed that there no covered bleachers or empty sections during the event and that the Silverdome , which had a seat capacity of 80 @, @ 311 for football games , was able to add approximately 13 @, @ 000 additional seats .

Officially Wrestlemania III ranks as the second highest attended event in WWE history , ahead of the 80 @, @ 676 who attended WrestleMania 29 at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey in 2013 , the 80 @, @ 355 who attended SummerSlam 1992 at Wembley Stadium in London , England and the 80 @, @ 103 who attended WrestleMania 23 at Ford Field in Detroit , Michigan . But behind Wrestlemania 32 at the AT & T Stadium in Arlington , Texas in 2016 with an alleged over 101 @, @ 000 in attendance although Meltzer claims the actual number was between 93 @-@ 94 @, @ 000 .

= = Results = =