

= Over the Edge ( 1999 ) =

Over the Edge ( 1999 ) was a professional wrestling pay @-@ per @-@ view event produced by the World Wrestling Federation ( WWF ) and presented by MCI 's 1 @-@ 800 @-@ COLLECT , which took place on May 23 , 1999 , at Kemper Arena in Kansas City , Missouri , United States . It was the first event not to be promoted under the " In Your House " series of pay @-@ per @-@ views , which typically occurred in months not occupied by the WWF 's biggest events ( Royal Rumble , WrestleMania , King of the Ring , SummerSlam , and Survivor Series ) .

Owen Hart was scheduled to face The Godfather for the WWF Intercontinental Championship during the event . Wrestling under his Blue Blazer gimmick , Hart was to make a superhero @-@ like ring entrance , which would have seen him descend from the arena rafters into the ring . He was , however , released prematurely when the harness line malfunctioned , and fell more than 70 feet ( 21 m ) into the ring and died . Criticism later arose over the WWF 's decision to continue the show after Hart 's accident . In court , his widow Martha , children , and parents sued the organization , contending that poor planning of the dangerous stunt caused Owen 's death . WWF settled the case out of court , paying US \$ 18 million to his widow , children , and parents . Due to the accident and controversy surrounding the event the Over the Edge name was retired . The event was also not released for home video viewing until the launch of the WWE Network in 2014 .

In the main event , The Undertaker defeated Steve Austin in a singles match ( with Vince McMahon and Shane McMahon as the guest referees ) to win the WWF Championship . Of the six scheduled bouts on the undercard , two received more promotion than the others . The first was a singles match , in which The Rock defeated Triple H . The other was an eight @-@ man elimination tag team match , which featured The Union 's ( Mankind , Ken Shamrock , Test , and the Big Show ) victory over the Corporate Ministry ( Viscera , the Big Boss Man , and the Acolytes ( Bradshaw and Faarooq ) ) .

= = Background = =

Over the Edge was the culmination of various scripted plots and storylines . Before the event , several WWF professional wrestling matches and stories were played out on WWF programming : Raw is War , SmackDown ! , and Sunday Night Heat . These narratives created feuds between various wrestlers , casting them as villains and heroes .

The main narrative for Over the Edge continued the events that unfolded at Backlash , WWF 's previous pay @-@ per @-@ view event , held on April 25 , 1999 . There , The Undertaker abducted Stephanie McMahon , the daughter of chairman Vince McMahon . The Undertaker 's price for Stephanie 's return was control over the wrestling organization . His plans were thwarted , however , by the WWF Champion , Steve Austin , who rescued Stephanie and denied The Undertaker his ransom . This plot development set up a feud between the two wrestlers , which would be settled in a standard singles match for the Championship at Over the Edge , in which both Vince and his son Shane , who had aligned himself with The Undertaker , would serve as the guest referee . Originally Shane had named himself the sole referee of the match , but WWF commissioner Shawn Michaels made Vince the co @-@ referee in order to level the playing field . WWF further built up the rivalry between The Undertaker and Austin by having them attack each other on WWF programming , before their showdown . On May 3 , 1999 , The Undertaker threw Austin off the stage , and two weeks later , the WWF Champion was handcuffed by his title 's challenger to a crucifix , which was raised above the ring .

Another feud created for Over the Edge involved Triple H and The Rock , who would meet each other in a standard singles match at the event . Triple H had interfered in one of The Rock 's matches , and later threw him off the stage . The script called for The Rock to portray an injury to his arm that required him to wear a plaster cast . Shane , acting his role as co @-@ owner of WWF and ally of Triple H , further aggrieved The Rock by forbidding him to wear the cast for Over the Edge .

The pay @-@ per @-@ view event featured the buildup of a rivalry among two stables , groups of at least three wrestlers . The two groups were the Corporate Ministry and the Union . The Corporate

Ministry was formed when the Corporation merged with the Ministry of Darkness ; the Corporate Ministry consisted of Viscera , the Big Boss Man , and the Acolytes ( Bradshaw and Faarooq ) . Throughout the month of May , the Ministry was involved in matches with Mankind , Ken Shamrock , the Big Show , and Test , and in retaliation , the four wrestlers formed the Union stable . The WWF continued to enhance the feud over several weeks , which included a brawl among all eight wrestlers on May 10 , 1999 . The evolving plot led to the promotion of an eight @-@ man elimination tag team match between both groups at Over the Edge . In this bout , the team that eliminated all of its opponents would win .

Other feuds that received less promotion and culminated into matches at Over the Edge include Billy Gunn versus Road Dogg and the Blue Blazer versus WWF Intercontinental Champion The Godfather for the title in standard singles bouts . Mark Henry and D 'Lo Brown versus WWF Tag Team Champions Kane and X @-@ Pac in a tag team match for the championship , Hardcore Holly versus Al Snow in a Hardcore singles match for the Hardcore Title , and a mixed tag team match involving Val Venis and Nicole Bass versus Jeff Jarrett and Debra were also advertised .

= = Event = =

Before the event began and aired live on pay @-@ per @-@ view , an episode of Sunday Night Heat aired live on the USA Network . In a standard match , Meat defeated Brian Christopher , while the Hardy Boyz ( Matt and Jeff ) defeated Goldust and the Blue Meanie in a tag team match . In the final contest , Vince McMahon and Mideon fought in a singles match that ended in " No Contest " , when the Corporate Ministry attacked Vince and broke his ankle in order to prevent him from refereeing the main event match .

= = = Miscellaneous = = =

Jim Ross and Jerry " The King " Lawler were the English commentators for the event , while Carlos Cabrera and Hugo Savinovich were the Spanish commentators . Howard Finkel acted as the ring announcer . The referees included Tim White , Mike Chioda , and Teddy Long . Other officials include Vince McMahon , Pat Patterson , and Gerald Brisco .

= = = Preliminary matches = = =

After Sunday Night Heat , the pay @-@ per @-@ view began with a tag team match , in which the WWF Tag Team Champions Kane and X @-@ Pac defended against Mark Henry and D 'Lo Brown . During the match , Henry lifted X @-@ Pac and rammed his back against the steel ring post at ringside . Afterward , Brown and Henry simultaneously attacked X @-@ Pac , which led Kane to launch himself from the top turnbuckle onto Brown and Henry . After the competitors reentered the ring , Kane performed a chokeslam on Henry , lifting him by the throat and slamming him down . Kane then pinned Henry to retain the WWF Tag Team Title . Next was the hardcore singles bout ? a match allowing no disqualifications or countouts . WWF Hardcore Champion Al Snow defended against Hardcore Holly . Holly and Snow began their bout in the ring but were scripted to move their brawl into the arena stands . From there , they proceeded to the backstage area , and into the concession stands before returning to the ring . The fight was decided when Snow lifted Holly onto his shoulders and threw him through a wooden table . Successfully covering and pinning Holly , Snow retained the WWF Hardcore Title .

The next scheduled match was a singles match for the WWF Intercontinental Title between The Godfather ( champion ) and the Blue Blazer . As Hart descended into the ring on a safety harness , the equipment gave way , and he fell . Emergency medical technicians ( EMTs ) rushed him to the hospital , but he was pronounced dead on arrival . The show was halted for 15 minutes before it continued with the next match . The fourth scheduled contest was the Mixed tag team match that featured Val Venis and Nicole Bass facing Jeff Jarrett and Debra . At one point , Jarrett gained possession of a guitar and attempted to hit Bass with it , but Venis took the guitar away and lifted

Jarrett from behind to drop him onto the mat ; he then pinned Jarrett . In the fourth match of the evening , Billy Gunn defeated his former tag team partner Road Dogg , after hitting him with the time keeper 's hammer .

= = = Main event matches = = =

The fifth match was the eight @-@ man elimination tag @-@ team match between The Union and the Corporate Ministry . Test was eliminated by pinfall after Bradshaw performed a high @-@ impact forearm attack " Clothesline from Hell " on him . Bradshaw was then eliminated by submission as a result of Ken Shamrock 's ankle lock . Afterwards , Shamrock was eliminated via disqualification as a result of attacking the referee . Then , Faarooq was eliminated by pinfall after the Big Show executed a chokeslam on him . Only one member of each team remained after Viscera and the Big Show failed to return to the ring within ten seconds , and were counted out as a result . The Union won the match after Mankind forced Boss Man to submit with the Mandible claw . It was at this point that the viewers at home were told by Jim Ross that Owen Hart had died . The final match on the undercard was a standard match that featured Triple H and The Rock . Continuing the storyline of The Rock 's injured arm , Triple H was scripted to target and attack The Rock 's arm . Towards the final moments of the bout , Triple H asked Chyna , his valet , to retrieve a folding chair . The referee , however , took it away from him , which led to an argument between Triple H and the referee ; the mishap prompted Triple H to push the referee down . The referee disqualified Triple H for this action ; thus , The Rock won the match . After the match , Mankind ran in to save The Rock from Triple H and Chyna .

The main event was a singles match in which WWF Champion Steve Austin defended against the Undertaker . Originally , Shane and Vince McMahon were supposed to be the guest referees , but due to storyline purposes , Pat Patterson , an accomplice of Vince McMahon , replaced Vince , who had had his ankle broken earlier in the event , in order to prevent Shane from helping The Undertaker . Patterson , however , was unable to officiate the entire match after the Undertaker executed a chokeslam on him . The Undertaker and Austin wrestled inconclusively until Austin hit The Undertaker on the head with a folding chair . As Austin went to cover the Undertaker , Gerald Brisco , another accomplice of Vince , came down to the ring to replace Patterson and officiated the unsuccessful pinfall attempt by Austin . Like his partner Patterson , Brisco was unable to officiate the entire match after the Undertaker attacked him . Vince then came down to the ring as another referee replacement , but when Austin forcefully pulled the Undertaker 's head over his shoulders to perform a stunner , Shane prevented him from performing a three count . As Vince and Shane argued , Austin got up and confronted Vince at which point Shane shoved Vince into Austin , who fell into a roll @-@ up by The Undertaker and then performed a fast count to give him the victory and the WWF Title .

= = Owen Hart accident = =

When Owen Hart was to challenge The Godfather for the WWF Intercontinental Champion 's title , he was performing as the Blue Blazer . The character was a superhero gimmick that parodied various wrestlers . At Over the Edge , Hart was to emulate World Championship Wrestling ( WCW ) wrestler Sting 's ( Steve Borden ) ring entrance by descending from the arena rafters into the ring . The entrance was successfully tested on the November 15 , 1998 , episode of Sunday Night Heat ; however , during his descent at Over the Edge , a cable disengaged from the safety vest he wore , and he fell more than 70 feet ( 21 m ) from the rafters into the ring . As he fell , his chest landed on one of the ring 's padded turnbuckles . The accident was not viewed by television viewers . A pre @-@ recorded interview video was shown at the start of Hart 's descent , and when the broadcast returned live , the cameras quickly turned away from the ring to the audience . Soon afterward , Jim Ross , one of the commentators of the event , informed pay @-@ per @-@ view viewers that Hart had fallen from the rafters , that the incident was " not a part of the entertainment " and that it was " a real situation " . EMTs came down to the ring and gave Hart CPR , but he showed no response to

the treatment . Bringing Hart out on a gurney , the EMTs boarded the heavily injured wrestler into an ambulance and took him to a nearby hospital in Kansas City .

After the incident , the event was halted for 15 minutes , until Vince McMahon and other WWF Corporate officials made the decision to continue the event . Hart 's coworkers , professional wrestlers and other miscellaneous workers , appeared somber after Hart 's fall as they continued to do their jobs . An hour after the event restarted , Ross informed pay @-@ per @-@ view viewers that Hart had died at the age of 34 at a nearby hospital . The fans in attendance were not told any information about what had happened to Hart , and they did not hear the announcement of his death .

" Ladies and gentlemen , earlier tonight here in Kansas City , tragedy befell the World Wrestling Federation and all of us . Owen Hart was set to make an entrance from the ceiling , and he fell from the ceiling . I have the unfortunate responsibility to let everyone know that Owen Hart has died . Owen Hart has tragically died from that accident here tonight . "

= = Aftermath = =

After the event , in response to Owen Hart 's death , the WWF canceled the encore presentation of Over the Edge via pay @-@ per @-@ view , and they also canceled four live events in Canada and one in Illinois . Information about Over the Edge from the WWF ( now named the WWE ) is sparse because the event was never released on VHS or DVD due to Hart 's death . In 2014 , the event was shown in an edited form on the WWE Network . On May 24 , 1999 , the day following this event , a tribute to Hart was held on Raw is War in St. Louis , which the WWF called Raw is Owen . For this show , all storylines and rivalries were stopped , and wrestlers were given the option to wrestle or not . The show also featured interviews and testimonies from his coworkers and highlights of his professional wrestling career . Hart 's funeral service was held on May 31 , 1999 , in Calgary , Alberta , Canada , and it was attended by family members , friends , and over 300 wrestlers who were acquainted with him . Following the funeral , Hart was buried in Calgary 's Queens Park Cemetery later that day . Three weeks after the event , his widow , children , and parents sued the WWF for causing Owen 's death with a poorly planned stunt ; they claimed that the harness system was defective . After the court case had extended one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years , a settlement was reached on November 2 , 2000 , when the WWF agreed to pay his widow , children , and parents US \$ 18 million . The manufacturer of the harness system had also been named as a defendant in the case but was dismissed from the case after the settlement was reached .

After Over the Edge , The Rock was scripted into a feud with the Undertaker over his WWF Championship . The evolving feud culminated into a standard match at King of the Ring , the WWF 's June pay @-@ per @-@ view event , after The Rock defeated The Undertaker and Triple H in a standard match involving three wrestlers ( also called a triple threat match ) , to earn a WWF Championship match against the Undertaker . At King of the Ring , the Undertaker defeated The Rock to retain his title . After Steve Austin lost his WWF Title , he engaged in a rivalry with Vince and Shane McMahon in retaliation for their interference during his match at Over the Edge . Austin lost the match at King of the Ring , and his 50 % control in the WWF ( kayfabe ) , but before that he scheduled himself in a standard match against the Undertaker for his title on June 28 . Austin won the match and the title . Eventually , the WWF developed a feud with Austin , Mankind , and Triple H over the WWF title , which led to a match at SummerSlam , the WWF 's August pay @-@ per @-@ view event . There , Mankind won the WWF title . Owen Hart ( as his " Blue Blazer " alter @-@ ego ) was booked to win the Intercontinental Title from The Godfather at Over the Edge . Hart 's tag team partner and good friend Jeff Jarrett would win the title a week later on Raw , using Hart 's signature " Sharpshooter " finisher and shouting " Owen Hart ! " upon being handed the belt .

= = = Reactions = = =

Vince McMahon and the World Wrestling Federation received strong criticism for designing the stunt and allowing the event to continue after Owen Hart 's fall . In his weekly column for the Calgary

Sun ? a major newspaper in Hart 's hometown ? on May 31 , 1999 , Bret Hart blamed McMahon for his brother 's death . He " question [ ed ] if this was really necessary " and said , " Shame on you , Vince McMahon . " He also claimed that the tribute show " reeked of disrespect , " stating , " Yes , the so @-@ called tribute where afterward wrestlers point to their crotches and say : ' Suck it ! ' It makes me nauseous . " Other members of the Hart family also blamed McMahon for Owen 's death , claiming that the accident was the inevitable outcome of " an obsession for ratings and revenues . " While in Calgary for Owen 's funeral , wrestler Hulk Hogan stated , " Hopefully something good will happen . Wrestling 's gotten ... way too over the top " . In reference to McMahon , he added , " I hope he learns a lesson from this horrible accident " . Ralph Klein , Alberta 's premier at the time , expressed a hope that Hart 's death would lead to changes in wrestling , stating , " Maybe the various federations will rethink the gimmickry . "

Calgary Sun columnist Eric Francis called McMahon 's decision to continue the event " sick , disrespectful and wrong . But what else would you expect from the WWF ? " He added , " if there 's any justice in this world , McMahon will pay dearly for what his organization has done to further pain the Harts " . Some fans were also upset with the decision to carry on with the show . One man , who left the event with his children upon hearing that Hart had died , claimed , " It was disgusting .... For kids to see that , for this to be so @-@ called family entertainment , for them to just carry on as if nothing had happened , is just sad . " Martha Hart , Owen 's wife , refused to criticize McMahon publicly in the immediate aftermath of her husband 's death . She said that McMahon " absolutely should be there " at the funeral . She also stated , " I 'm a very forgiving person and I 'm not bitter or angry , but there will be a day of reckoning " . Commenting on the WWF 's decision to continue the show after her husband 's death , Martha stated , " After he lost his fight for life they just scooped him up and ordered the next match out . Where 's the humanity ? Would he have wanted the show to go on ? Absolutely not . "

The WWF received some support from people who felt that the company did the right thing by continuing the event . Vince Russo , a WWF script writer at the time , pointed to the fact that Brian Pillman , a family friend of the Harts and a member of The Hart Foundation died shortly before the Badd Blood : In Your House pay @-@ per @-@ view on which he was scheduled to perform in 1997 . After learning of Pillman 's death , Hart went ahead with his match on the show . Russo claimed that this showed that " the night he passed away I 'm sure Owen would have wanted the same thing . " Vince McMahon refused to comment on Hart 's death until he felt sufficient time had passed . When asked if he felt responsible for the accident , he replied , " I have a lot to say and I will say it . I promise you that . But this is not the time to do it .... Give me a few days . Give me to the end of the week . Then we 'll talk . " The day after Over the Edge , the WWF published a message in the Calgary Sun , stating , " We do not have much information as to how it happened and will not know until an investigation is completed . We are all shaken , and to say Owen will be missed is to fall short of a way to fully explain what he meant to us . " Although the WWF had no information , they reported that " Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Hart family . We have to be strong for Owen ; he was an extraordinary human being and consummate performer and knows that the highest tribute that we can pay is to go on entertaining the fans he loved so much . "

= = Results = =