

Monday Nitro – September 30, 1996 – All About Racecars!

Monday Nitro #55

Date: September 30, 1996

Location: Gund Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Eric Bischoff, Tony Schiavone, Larry Zbyszko

We're still getting closer to Halloween Havoc here. The card here looks pretty uninteresting other than a few matches sprinkled here and there. This show gets a little boring until we get to 1997 and the focus is totally on the build for Sting vs. Hogan, which I can't say I disagree with from a booking standpoint as it was the biggest match ever for WCW. Let's get to it.

We talk about the NWO racecar and how shocking it would be if Kyle Petty was their driver. You know, for all the NASCAR fans that we had in 1996.

We throw it to Eric who lies about the roots of the company going back to 1905. He talks about tradition and all that jazz which is almost all he knows how to write so there you are. Eric basically cuts a promo here and my head begins to hurt as we have to hear about how he's awesome and we see the focus shifting to him, which would happen a lot more over the next year. The massive NWO chant doesn't help things.

Tag Titles: Juventud Guerrera/El Technico vs. Public Enemy

Technico is Billy Kidman under a mask. Even though they won the titles last week I completely forgot about Public Enemy being champions. Rock vs. Juvy starts us off and this is a squash. The champs hit something like Demolition's old finisher for two. They turn Kidman's mask around and hit the old Quebecers' Cannonball to end this. Quick match here and a

total squash.

Kidman goes through the table.

Benoit and Mongo say if the NWO wants a fight tonight, they'll be ready. For the life of me, how did they never just let the Horsemen go nuts and go to war with the NWO old school, picking off one of them at a time until there was just Flair vs. Hogan? Benoit says he's ready for Rick Steiner.

The NWO is in a hotel and Hogan's son is there too.

Alex Wright vs. Dean Malenko

Dean has Rey's mask which he stole recently. Tony tells everyone that the NWO is at the Marriott in Cleveland. This comes after Syxx could be heard ordering room service and saying the room number in the previous segment, making WCW all the stupider. After some feeling out processes, Malenko takes over with a belly to back as we take a break.

Back with Wright speeding things up and hitting a Japanese armdrag to take over. That doesn't last long as they head to the floor where Dean takes over again. Dean works on the leg but Wright starts his comeback. He and Dean both miss top rope shots but Wrights grabs a cradle for the upset pin.

Rating: C. Decent match here and for TV, this was fine. Wright still never got the push that they always seemed on the brink of with him, although he'd win the TV Title sometime in 97. This wasn't much but Dean would become Cruiserweight Champion again before too long if my memory is right.

We look at Saturday Night where Savage snapped as Liz was standing there watching and being all nervous. Savage beat up Nick Patrick too.

Savage is supposed to come out for an interview but is nowhere to be found.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Jim Powers

Nick Patrick is referee here and has a neck brace on due to Savage's attack. Powers is of course a power guy and this turns into a fight as I think Powers is the almost kind of sort of a heel here. Overhead belly to belly puts Eddie down for a very delayed two. Now let's look at the NWO fans holding up signs. Back to the chinlock and this isn't going anywhere at all. Powers hits a superplex for two. Eddie reverses a powerslam into a German and gets the pin, but the idea is that Powers got a shoulder up in time (he did) but Patrick missed it.

Rating: D. This also went nowhere. The Patrick storyline went on forever but this didn't mean anything without there being a clear heel to cheat for. Eddie didn't have much to work with here either as Powers was a jobber and not a very good one at that. At least Eddie would fight DDP for awhile after this which was a lot more interesting and entertaining.

The NWO is still in the hotel room when the Nasty Boys come in. Everyone talks about Kyle Petty. For the love of chicken wings, NO ONE CARES.

Arn Anderson berates Liz for what happened last week with Savage.

Hugh Morrus vs. Brad Armstrong

Power vs. speed here and about a minute in we start hour #2, which isn't going to distract the fans from the match or anything right? Time for the announcers to talk about Savage for the rest of the match. Oh and also about the Nasty Boys possibly defecting. Eric says he doesn't want to take anything away from this match. Take a guess what he does next. Just take a guess. All the talking about the match for the next minute or so: he counts a pin and says there's a clothesline. No Laughing Matter (two of them) ends this.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't half bad, but the commentary gets really annoying really fast. If I hadn't been looking at the screen, I wouldn't have had any idea what was going on in this. That's WCW for you though: spend the matches talking about other stuff, because it's not like anyone is going to get sick of hearing about it right?

Anderson and Woman yell at Liz about how it's business or something.

Eric leaves out of fear, apparently wanting to go find the hotel the NWO is in...which Tony told us earlier.

Arn Anderson vs. Chris Jericho

Tony is in on commentary now. This match is the internet's dream match but here we're going to talk about the possibility of Eric joining the NWO. About two minutes in Tony gives us some token chat about the match. Jericho works the arm and Liz is watching in the back. Arn is sent to the floor where Jericho teases a dive but Arn gets out of the way. Chris is a step ahead of him though and puts on the brakes, hitting a shoulder block off the apron.

Woman gets involved to let Arn take over and Jericho's inexperience starts becoming a problem. Arn takes over as Liz walks away from the monitor in the back. Anderson works on the arm but jumps into a dropkick to switch control again. A springboard clothesline sets up a top rope back elbow (love that move) for two. Lionsault misses and Arn grabs the DDT (BIG reaction for that) for the pin.

Rating: C+. Did you expect anything else here other than a good match? Jericho had a lot of the tools he would use later on to become a superstar and Arn was just about to the end of his career here, as I don't think he was active much past January of 97. Still though, good stuff here and Jericho looked like a guy that got caught by a veteran, not someone that got crushed. That can make all the difference in the

world sometimes.

Buy the NWO shirt.

Liz leaves.

Lex Luger vs. Mr. Wallstreet

Luger vs. Arn at Havoc. I've never been a fan of Luger in the black boots. It never worked for him. He takes over quickly on Wallstreet with power stuff and drops some elbows for two. Wallstreet grabs an abdominal stretch and we talk about Bischoff some more. Time for a chinlock as this isn't much of a match as far as being interesting. After that, more chinlock. Luger grabs a rollup after like two minutes for two. This is horribly boring. Wallstreet takes over AGAIN with a clothesline as this needed to end like 4 minutes ago. A suplex is finally countered into the Rack for the submission.

Rating: F+. This got SEVEN AND A HALF MINUTES. There's no reason to have a match with these guys in it go that long at all. Boring match which was about half chinlock. Luger looked like a joke out here and it didn't work at all. Weak match and nothing interesting to see at all.

We recap the entire Sting saga. As a peace offering, the WCW car is now the Sting car.

Rock N Roll Express vs. Faces of Fear

Meng vs. Morton to start with the power guy taking over to start. Morton tries like three sleepers, none of which work at all. Both teams switch off and there isn't much to see here so far. We take a break with it being a stalemate. Look at the car before we go though because you're southern and have to like car racing! Back with a sunset flip not working for Gibson. The second attempt gets two.

Ricky Morton plays himself, taking a piledriver from Meng for two. Morton hammers Meng's head for no apparent reason so

Barbarian kicks him in the face. That's the basic answer for most problems it seems. Powerbomb kills Morton dead but it only gets two. A backbreaker sets up a camel clutch. Do they have camels in Tonga? Morton fires off a cross body out of nowhere for about two.

And never mind as Barbarian takes him right back down again. The announcers are talking about how they want to kill the NWO as the Faces of Fear hit a double headbutt for two. Gibson keeps making the save. I wonder if Morton is like DUDE, let them pin me already! Top rope headbutt misses for Morton and it's a not hot tag to Gibson. The Express tries double teaming and hits the double dropkick to Meng but Barbarian kicks Gibson's head off to pin him.

Rating: D+. Not a terrible match but this went on too long. It was over ten minutes and then there was the time during the commercial that we didn't even get to see. The Express was just old at this point and the whole idea of their team was done about 8 years earlier. Nothing to see here, which is a running theme tonight.

Public Enemy comes out to stop a beatdown and gets destroyed themselves, including an attack on the knee of Grunge.

Back to the hotel room and this is still the same stuff from earlier. The car driver is here too now.

Chris Benoit vs. Rick Steiner

Patrick runs his mouth for some reason before the match. After a break we're ready to go. This turns into a slugout, which we ignore, but that's not the point I guess. The American hits a German on the Canadian to take over. Rick grabs a chinlock after throwing Chris around a bit. Big Steiner Line puts Benoit down as does a powerslam. Debra distracts the referee so Mongo can pop Steiner with the briefcase. Benoit falls on top for the pin. He got destroyed other than that.

Rating: D+. I wasn't getting the idea here. I know they were pushing the idea that the Horsemen weren't going to be outnumbered again, but was there really a need to have Steiner look totally dominant over Benoit here? I really don't get that, as the Steiners were nothing but a tag team while the Horsemen were always tagging or in singles interchangeably. I don't get this but whatever.

The NWO talks even more to end the show. Liz is there with them now. She's joining them so they'll spare Savage....I think. Vince brings in a package and Liz leaves. Savage storms up the hallway and screams at her as she drops a paper. He keeps yelling as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: D-. This wasn't that the show was bad, but my goodness was it boring. There was WAY too much NWO on here with so much of the focus being on that freaking racecar driver. The matches almost all sucked other than Jericho's match and that one was just ok. The ending sets up a nice cliffhanger, but we need to get to 1997 fast, because not much else happens until we get there and to Page's face turn. Bad show and probably the weakest since the NWO arrived.

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