

Monday Nitro – November 25, 1996 – He's Buff, He's The Stuff... And That's About It

Monday Nitro #63

Date: November 25, 1996

Location: Wimomico Civic Center, Salisbury, Maryland

Attendance: 3,278

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay, Larry Zbyszko

Back to WCW here as we're into the Eric Is Evil period. We're also a night after World War 3 which Giant won, earning him a world title shot. Other than that there isn't much else to report from the show, especially not like a 6 page review of it. We're on the road to Starrcade now, which will wind up being another non-title main event. Let's get to it.

We open with the opening sequence which still has Hogan in it in the red and yellow.

Tony and Larry talk about the contract signing between Roddy and Hogan. It's officially signed for Starrcade. We also start a US Title Tournament tonight.

US Title Tournament First Round: Arn Anderson vs. Lex Luger

That's quite an opener. They slug it out to start and Lex knocks him to the floor very quickly off an attempted shoulder block. Arn has taped ribs. Back in and Lex works on the arm, instead of going after the ribs which his finisher focuses on. Has there ever been a smart muscle guy? The arm work goes on for awhile and the fans aren't all that thrilled with it.

Anderson fires off some shoulders to the ribs of Lex. Luger kicks Anderson in the ribs and then goes right back to the

arm. When Larry Zbyszko is telling you that you're missing the point, you know you're in trouble. That's not a knock on Larry, but he rarely went past pointing out the obvious. We take a break and come back with Lex breaking a chinlock. Arn keeps up the offense and we go to the floor.

Anderson almost punches the post but stops himself just in time. Lex grabs him and slams Arn's back into the post then into the ring. It only took him about eight minutes to get the idea. Back in a suplex puts Arn down and Lex calls for the Rack. Instead we hear Giant talking about how he's the US Champion which is the most wanted title in the world. Lex and Arn keep at their usual stuff and Lex can't quite Rack him. They go to the floor where Lex manages to Rack him. It's a double countout.

Rating: D+. This was a far better match once Luger realized he had a brain and worked on the body part that was injured coming in. Giant getting involved didn't really add anything to the match but he'll probably be popping up for the rest of the tournament. Arn was on the verge of being gone and his last regular singles match would be in January.

We get some stills of Dragon vs. Mysterio last night where Dragon kept the J-Crown. We get the same from Jericho beating Patrick, which I think was the NWO's first loss, if you consider Patrick an official member at this point. Jarrett lost to Giant as well and Sting beat Jarrett up.

Here's the NWO but I don't see Hogan. Bischoff talks about being powerbombed in Baltimore back before Hogan joined. He realized that he wanted to be part of the power rather than consumed by it. A few days later, he met with Hall and Nash and joined up. As for the guys in the back, everyone has 30 days to transfer their WCW contracts to NWO contracts or they're voided.

As for Piper, don't get out of hand or deal with Bischoff. As

for the US Title, possession is 9/10 of the law. The American Males come out and Bagwell joins the NWO. Bagwell takes Riggs out and the fans cheer for the NWO.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Disco Inferno

Page takes him down immediately and crotches him on the top rope. Disco grabs a pair of swinging neckbreakers and that's about the extent of his offense. Page spins around the shoulders and wins with the Diamond Cutter. Just a squash here.

Page talks about how it's clear why the NWO wants him but he isn't in it yet. As for being friends and neighbors with Hall, Nash and Bischoff, that doesn't mean he's a member either. He doesn't seem thrilled with Eric's recent actions though.

TV Title: Steven Regal vs. Tony Pena

Pena is more famous as Villano IV but he's out of the mask here. Regal grabs the arm to start but Pena flips out of it. Regal flips out of that as well and takes over again. Pena gets in a few shots and a DDT for two. Regal easily takes him down and the Regal Stretch ends this. Nothing to see here.

Rick Steiner, being seen for the first time in months, says he and his brother have been in Japan. He says the Steiners are WCW but he wants to know what's up with Sting.

US Title Tournament First Round: Konnan vs. Eddie Guerrero

Eddie speeds things up and sends Konnan to the floor. There's his signature big dive to the outside to give him control. Hour #2 begins and Tony walks up to the broadcast booth. Konnan comes back with the rolling clothesline and chokes in the corner. Konnan takes him to the mat and then powerbombs him for two. Fisherman's DDT gets the same.

Eddie comes back but Konnan stops him with a gutwrench bomb for two. Off to a leg lock as Brain compares the Guerreros to

the Three Stooges. Konnan goes up but jumps into a dropkick. Eddie goes for the Frog Splash but Konnan pops up and a superplex gets two as Konnan picks him up. He sets for the Power Drop but Eddie rolls out of it and lands on Konnan for the pin to advance.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match at all here with Eddie really getting to showcase himself around this time. Konnan picking him up was kind of an odd choice for him but I don't think he was ever a cerebral guy. They did a decent fast paced match here and Konnan busted out some decent power moves, which is stuff he isn't that remembered for but did pretty often.

We get some more stills from last night.

Big Bubba vs. Rick Steiner

Bubba takes over quickly but Rick hammers him to the floor and drops a double axe on the top of his head. Back in the ring an elbow drop gets two. There's a German for two. Sting pops up at the top of the arena and comes down the steps. The Steiner Bulldog hits but Rick knocks Bubba to the floor instead. Sting comes through the crowd and hops the railing. He lays Rick out with the Death Drop and Bubba gets a splash for the pin. Not enough to rate but it was there for the storyline rather than the match.

Lee Marshall is in Dayton this week. Apparently he got beaten up last night.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Psicosis

Ultimo Dragon comes out to watch. Feeling out process to start and Psicosis throws him over the top. That isn't a DQ for whatever their reason is this week. Back in the guillotine legdrop gets two. Psicosis tries Splash Mountain but Rey hits his signature rana out of it for the pin. This was uncharacteristically short for a cruiserweight match.

Time for the Hogan/Piper contract signing from the night before. This is straight footage from the PPV so I'll be copying and pasting it from that review.

Piper comes out with a contract in his hand. Bobby suggests that Piper is a bigger movie star than Hogan. I'll leave that for you guys. Bischoff, Vincent and DiBiase come out sans Hogan. The next night Bischoff would say either join us or have your contracts voided which went nowhere but it got Bagwell to join.

Bischoff has power of attorney for Hogan so he can sign for Hogan. In a great bit of continuity, Piper shoves Vincent aside and tells him that he taught Vincent how to fight. Piper trained Vincent (Virgil in case that doesn't ring a bell) to fight for his first match back in 1991. Piper says he can wear a leather jacket because he's tough enough to unlike Bischoff. Piper really does come off as a tough guy here and this really did feel big. The problem was he actually had to wrestle.

Piper more or less says he doesn't care about a count out or a DQ but just winning and here's Hogan, Liz, Hall, Nash, Syxx and Giant. Bobby thinks Piper is outnumbered. I wonder if it was the 9-1 odds that made him think that. Hogan gets on the mic and lifts Piper's skirt, showing the scar Piper has from a hip replacement. Why not just hold a big sign above their heads saying OLD GUYS?

Hogan signs the contract which Piper brought with him. For no apparent reason the match was NON title and when Piper won with a sleeper, he didn't win the title. To say the fans were ticked would be an understatement. Piper jumps Hogan but gets caught. Hogan gets a chair and hits the weakest chair shot ever to the scar. Good to see the NWO is only taking ten minutes on this segment.

Alex Wright vs. Jeff Jarrett

They fight over a wristlock to start as the announcers talk

about Hogan vs. Piper non-stop. Wright speeds things up which is like Kryptonite to a Memphis guy. Jarrett hits a snake eyes to break the momentum but Wright hits a spinwheel kick (first move called by the announcers at 90 seconds in) and a slingshot splash for two. A side kick misses in the corner though and the Figure Four ends this. Not much here but Wright was always someone I liked watching.

We go over some stills of the battle royal last night with the ending being Luger vs. five members of the NWO and eliminating all but Giant, who he did manage to Rack.

Faces of Fear vs. Harlem Heat

Stevie vs. Meng to start us off. Meng pounds him down and they be clubberin Tony! A big boot from Ray takes him down and the Harlem Side Kick drops Barbarian. In a really impressive move, Meng backdrops Booker into a powerbomb by Barbarian. That looked awesome. Everything breaks down quickly but it settles into Meng vs. Booker. Stevie comes in to kick Meng in the head which doesn't have much effect. They go to the floor and the NWO runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Not much here but the point of it was to have a bunch of guys out there so that the NWO could run in. It wasn't bad for the most part and a power brawl is always worth at least a glance. The Faces of Fear would get a mild push until the end of the year and I've heard far worse ideas. Having some Island Monsters is a tried and true method for a tag team so why not them?

The NWO beats down all four of them and Tony makes a statement: "There is no way WCW can beat down a gang like this." The NWO here is Vincent, Syxx, Hall, Nash, Giant and Bagwell. That's a formidable team, but WCW's roster has what, let's say 30 guys? Are you telling me that five guys apiece can't take down Vincent or Bagwell? I get that the NWO was smart, but why did it take years for WCW to just send the

whole locker room out there and beat the stuffing out of the NWO? I get why you can't do that from a booking perspective, but why not from a kayfabe perspective? Was that ever answered? Posing ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't a horrible show but it was more about holding the fort than anything else. They have awhile before Starrcade and without Hogan and Piper here, there wasn't much going on. Bagwell joining didn't mean much and neither did the whole contract issue as I think it only added a handful of new guys if that. Nothing great tonight but it certainly wasn't a bad show.

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