

Monday Nitro – December 23, 1996 – What's In The Announcers' Water To Make Them This Stupid?

Monday Nitro #67

Date: December 23, 1996

Location: Macon Coliseum, Macon, Georgia

Attendance: 4,900

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

It's the go home show for Starrcade and one of the last shows of 1996. I can't believe I've actually gotten this far in this series. Anyway, as usual the wrestling isn't the focus here but then again, it isn't supposed to be on a go home show. I'm looking forward to next week's show a little bit more though because of reasons we'll get to next time. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip of a match from 5 weeks ago where Benoit beat Eddie with a nice sunset flip.

US Title Tournament Semi-Final: Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero

There's no Woman. Winner of this gets Page on Sunday for the title. They start off fast and Benoit takes him down with a shoulder block. Eddie comes back with chops in the corner as Tony can in fact confirm that Benoit is back from Germany. Gee thanks Tony! Taskmaster says that he's the real chess master and that he's got Benoit in his trap. Page joins commentary. After cutting away from the match for the Sullivan promo, we cut to the announce table to watch Page sit down.

Benoit hooks a headscissors on the mat but Eddie reverses into

a headlock. Eddie keeps that headlock for awhile despite Benoit's best efforts to get out. Page talks about the Guerreros: Hector, Chavo, Mondo, Harpo, Zeppo and so on. They go to a test of strength position on the mat with Benoit on top. Eddie gets a rollup for two as we take a break. Back with Eddie getting LAUNCHED onto the top rope in a huge Stun Gun.

A big belly to back gets two for Benoit as he yells as Eddie about who he is. He says he's not Sullivan for some reason. A big powerbomb gets two. Off to a chinlock as Page is doing very well on commentary. He sounds like he's having a blast. Eddie grabs a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker out of nowhere and loads up the Frog Splash but Benoit stops him and hits a superplex to put both guys down. A delayed cover gets two.

Benoit pounds him down but Eddie gets all fired up. Benoit drapes him across the top rope and covers for two but he grabs the ropes so it's broken up. They go to the corner with Benoit trying a belly to back superplex but Eddie knocks him off and jumps off into a spinning Frog Splash to go to Starrcade.

Rating: B+. This is the best match I've seen on Nitro in a very long time. Eddie and Benoit of course has classic after classic and this was a very good one. The Frog Splash at the end was great and Benoit was feeling it with that high impact stuff. Very good match and an awesome opener. Eddie would win the title on Sunday.

Here are the Horsemen for some talking. Anderson says that a focused Benoit wouldn't have lost. Last week he had to sit through a beating from Sullivan because he was the one sitting on a couch when the husband got home. Anderson goes on a rant against Benoit but Debra decides to cut him off and say no one likes Woman. She has plenty of friends that Benoit can have an affair with. Benoit says he doesn't appreciate being told things like that because he was one of the ones that helped reunite the Horsemen. He actually tells Debra to talk to the hand as Mongo comes in to stop him. Flair has to play

peacemaker.

Here's the NWO with Hogan, Vincent, Ted and Liz. We get a spotlight on demand and Hogan says he smells Piper Mania. He's the biggest star in the world, Hollywood loves him, Piper is a coward, etc. Tony says Piper isn't here tonight. Now I know a lot of you would expect me to rant and rave about how stupid it is that WCW would have the go home show without the face in the main event of the biggest show of the year there, but at this point, why would you be surprised? It's late 1996 and Hulk Hogan vs. Roddy Piper is the main event. Hogan poses to "entertain" the people.

Trailer for Marked Man, which somehow proves that Piper is a bigger star according to Tony.

Tombstone vs. Lex Luger

Tombstone is 911 from ECW. This is your standard monster vs. hero match as Lex gets overpowered but then growls a lot and comes back. The Rack ends this quick. Not quite a squash but close enough.

Giant comes in post match and Lex hammers on him a bit. He gets Giant in the Rack but the NWO comes in. Lex drops Giant and runs.

Here's a video from last week where there were two Stings. We also get a clip from the ending of the show where the WCW guys jumped Sting and that proves he's NWO in WCW's stupid minds.

JL vs. Rey Mysterio

The match is discussed for all of 4 seconds as we talk about how WCW needs a leader. JL sends him to the floor as JL misses a dive. Rey hits a rana off the apron to pop the crowd but Tony doesn't even stop talking about Starrcade. Springboard legdrop gets two for Mysterio. Rey tries a rana but gets caught in a sitout powerbomb for two. Mysterio comes back with

a moonsault press for two. Top rope rana sends JL to the floor and a suicide dive takes both of them out. West Coast Pop misses and JL tries La Magistral for two. JL goes up but Rey hits a super rana for the pin.

Rating: C+. Not bad again here but the focus being on Hogan vs. Piper for the most part got annoying. By that I mean it got annoying about an hour ago. At this point it's expected every time there's a match. Rey was so fun to watch at this point before his knees turned into something that is jealous of pudding's toughness.

Rey comes up to the announce table and says that Sting is WCW. He was defending himself because Rey jumped on him last week. Since that's logical and common sense though, Larry and Tony basically brush Rey off. We even get the Holding Out For A Hero tape from last week. Larry and Tony swear up and down that Sting is NWO. This company deserved to go out of business with how stupid they were. In another WCW gem, here's this exchange. Tony: "Rey we've found that tape." Rey: "Would you please play...." Tony: "WE ARE LIVE WITH THE SECOND HOUR OF MONDAY NITRO!!!" I give up man. I just do.

The NWO has sworn that Piper is here.

They REAIR Hogan's promo from earlier. I rarely do this but I fast forward through this.

Glacier vs. Buddy Lee Parker

Glaicer kicks a lot, chops a lot, then kicks a lot more. He hits his Cryonic kick which Parker kicks out of for no apparent reason. A second one finishes this.

Amazing French Canadians vs. Public Enemy

Tony keeps hyping this as the holiday edition but there's nothing other than a few decorations on the set. The Canadians sing O Canada in French. Tony and Tenay say it's the wrong

words, because apparently FRENCH Canadians should speak English right? Public Enemy jumps them and let's get this over with. Naturally it's not really a match as the Canadians are sent to the floor.

They manage to double team Grunge a bit though as the announcers talk about Hogan vs. Piper. I can live with it in a garbage match like this. We get to an actual match with Jacques beating on Grunge. The Canadians get a table set up but Rocco makes the save. Public Enemy finally says screw it and breaks the table over Jacques for the DQ. Total mess rather than a match so no rating.

We recap Bubba joining the NWO last week.

Konnan vs. Big Bubba

Nick Patrick is referee and he doesn't have a neck brace anymore. Bubba beats Konnan down to start but then goes after Jimmy. This allows Konnan to dive through the dives to take Bubba out. He dropkicks him into the steps and then stands around like an idiot. Patrick takes forever to count so Bubba can come back in and get in a right hand.

The match grinds to a total halt because Bubba doesn't seem interested in hurting Konnan at all. This results in a lot of slow choking which kills the crowd after a hot start. There's a smother and Bubba claims Jimmy hit him, so Patrick throws him out. Konnan makes his comeback and throws Bubba over the top for the lame DQ.

Rating: D-. This started fast but oh my goodness this stopped dead after about 90 seconds. Bubba was so pathetic on offense and the whole thing died once he took over. Konnan wasn't a great guy in the ring but he was trying harder here than Bubba, which really should summarize things for you.

Lee Marshall calls in.

TV Title: Steven Regal vs. Dean Malenko

Dean takes him down to the mat but Regal is like tut tut and takes over. They go into a test of strength position and both nip up to try to escape it. This was before Regal got addicted to everything on the planet and could still be awesome in the ring. Regal takes over with a cravate on the mat. They're still pushing the idea that heavyweights are vastly superior to cruiserweights so Dean is a big underdog.

Sonny Onoo comes out and is quickly ejected so there wasn't much of a point to that cameo. The crowd is pretty much dead for this but the match is fine. Off to a headscissors on the mat as Regal keeps control. Regal shifts over to the arm and into a modified abdominal stretch. They go to the corner and Dean hits a dropkick to take Regal down as Regal comes out of the corner.

Both guys are down now so Regal hooks a full nelson. Regal now goes for his 8th body part, taking out the knee. Dean reverses his half crab into a Texas Cloverleaf attempt but Regal grabs the rope. The American hits a release German to the Englishman to take over. A brainbuster hits...and there's the time limit. Gah that gimmick gets old but at least they didn't announce it.

Rating: C. The match was pretty boring for the crowd because it's heel vs. heel. On the other hand though, the technical stuff was really fun as you had two guys that could pretty much do anything in the ring. The array of submissions got a little old but at least it never got boring, which is a rarity on Nitro half the time.

Rick Steiner vs. Jeff Jarrett

The fans want Sting but they get a Steiner powerslam to start. An elbow hits Jarrett as well as Jeff is in trouble early. He comes back with a middle rope clothesline as the announcers talk about how high the buyrate is going to be. Here's the NWO

Sting (with Heenan actually realizing it's the fake one for once) to try the Death Drop on Jarrett. Steiner hits Fake Sting with a clothesline and Jarrett pins Fake Sting to end this. Why would you cover him? Why would the referee count it? Why am I surprised?

Here's the NWO to close the show. Hogan talks about how he got a verbally written letter from Piper, admitting that Hogan is the icon. Piper's music plays...and it's Bischoff dressed as Piper. He does a bad Scottish accent and talks about Wrestlemania. Bischoff insists that a referee get out here as Tony says wrestling has reached a new low and refuses to call this stuff.

Eric lays down for Hogan and gets pinned with one foot. He bows down to Hogan and here's the real Piper, after probably half the audience has left because they were told he wasn't here. He has a full band with him. And the NWO runs in to beat him down and end the show. Sting watches from the rafters.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is rapidly going downhill. The matches have stopped meaning much of anything, the announcers have reached levels of stupidity that I didn't think existed (which would be crushed in the near future) and the PPVs they build to would get worse and worse, starting with a bad Starrcade coming up on Sunday. The shows are still watchable at this point, although they're getting weak in a hurry.

Here's Starrcade if you're interested:

[Starrcade 1996 – The Main Event Was Non-Title. WHY WAS THE MAIN EVENT NON-TITLE???](#)

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