

Monday Nitro – February 3, 1997: Piper Says Yes

Monday Nitro #73

Date: February 3, 1997

Location: Mid-South Coliseum, Memphis, Tennessee

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

It's my 9th birthday and the best they can give me is freaking Memphis? Anyway we're getting close to SuperBrawl which means it's close to Piper's return which I'm sure dozens are clamoring for. Giant and Luger have seemingly formed a bond to fend off the NWO which would result in a tag title shot for them at the PPV. The card looks ok at best so let's get to it.

Here's the NWO to open things up which shouldn't shock you in the slightest. It's Hogan too so this must be something important, like the announcement of a new wacky family adventure motion picture. I mean, we could be talking Mr. Nanny 2 levels here. Roddy is going to be here tonight and is going to be offered the title shot if he wants it. Gee, I wonder what the announcers are going to talk about all night. Coffee prices in Columbia?

Hogan says the NWO is on a mission from God. Oh no. They've recruited the Blues Brothers now? He talks about all of the big business and entertainment deals that he's working on, like one in Germany and a huge one in June. His movies might be funnier in German. Not that I speak German but it might be funnier to make up my own dialogue. Hogan says he'll put the title on the line tonight if Piper wants a shot here. Is this supposed to make me want to keep watching? Did they see Starrcade? Piper isn't here yet.

The announcers debate this breaking news.

Ray Mendoza Jr. vs. Ultimo Dragon

They trade flipping counters to wristlocks and Dragon speeds things up enough to send Mendoza to the floor. Dragon hits a dive to send Mendoza into the railing. Back inside and a legdrop gets two for Dragon. The announcers are going on about that Gaelic stuff Piper said a few weeks ago, which they finally got a translation of: "The battle is not over until you get home." Mendoza hits a clothesline and back elbow to take over. Dragon comes back with a quick rana and then the super rana off the top which gets a big reaction. The tiger suplex gets the pin.

Rating: C. This is something that WCW was really good at during this time: pulling in guys for one off appearances and keeping the big matches from happening on free TV. Mendoza is a guy that I don't remember seeing before but he had a decent match here and Dragon gets to look good. This is something that could fix a lot of WWE's headaches today.

Billy Kidman vs. Glacier

Kidman is still just a jobber at this point. We're told that Luger/Giant get a title shot at SuperBrawl. I wonder if they'll let them keep the titles this time. I for one know that after seeing the champions lose two weeks ago that I can't wait to pay to see the Outsiders face WCW's latest super team. Kidman dropkicks him but Glacier nips up and hits a standing leg sweep. It works in No Mercy so it can work here. Tilt-a-whirl slam puts Kidman down and Glacier hits a bunch of strikes to knock Kidman to the floor. Kidman comes back in with a slingshot headscissors but he jumps off the top into a superkick for the quick pin.

NWO denim jacket: \$90.

Eddie is defending against Dean on Saturday Night. Why is that not on Nitro???

Ice Train vs. La Parka

Tony says Ice Train is on fire. Wouldn't that be a bad thing in his case? Teddy is still in his chubby phase here. It's really impressive how much more healthy he looks today. Was he ever out of work in wrestling? He's been around almost continuously for almost 25 years now. La Parka is the heel here which is strange as it's usually the speed guy who is the face. Train hits a chinlock as Larry says that being run over by Ice Train is like being run over by a truck.

La Parka fights out of the chinlock and hits a top rope spinwheel kick to send Train to the floor. A flip dive takes Train out and they head back inside. Ice Train looks totally lost when he's not on offense. A clothesline puts La Parka down but he pops back to his feet and runs up the ropes for a spinning cross body. Train mostly catches him into a World's Strongest Slam and puts on a headscissors on the mat. We cut to the back and see the Outsiders standing over an unconscious Luger and holding pipes. Belly to belly suplex gets two for Train and it's back to the chinlock. Another Strongest Slam and a splash get the pin for Train.

Rating: C-. You know this wasn't the worst match in the world. When I was a kid Ice Train was always a favorite of mine and for a generic power guy he wasn't terrible. This was a peculiar choice for a match as they sounded like they were pushing La Parka as a somewhat big deal but from what I can tell this was his second straight loss after debuting. Not too bad here, but it was more of a backdrop for the Luger attack which is ok, as it was only on screen for a few seconds.

Here are the Horsemen for the weekly soap opera to further their split. Benoit is here tonight but there's no AA. Woman is looking quite good here. Benoit talks about how the Horsemen have been going through adversity through injuries and a lack of unity. That's not a total loss though as it's taught him who he can trust. He knows he can count on Mongo,

Anderson and Flair and the girls. Woman likes things too but doesn't like Jackie that much. Just remember that Jackie is getting her leftovers. Mongo draws a ton of booing and says that he's got Benoit and Flair's back any time they need it.

He asks the fans if they'd like to see him take the place against Jarrett tonight and the fans aren't that thrilled. Debra has to talk about beauty pageants and how great she is. Can we get Fifi back instead? Apparently Jackie has a leather face because when they were handing them out, Jackie thought they said cases. Flair gets a HUGE ovation and says that the Horsemen are reunited and Anderson is healing up. Sullivan, Benoit had to take over for Flair because Woman wore him out so you don't want to take on the Crippler. That's uh...good Naitch.

We get a clip from last week of the Steiners having their newly won titles stripped from them. We also see the Steiners beating the Faces of Fear.

Harlem Heat vs. Steiner Brothers

The Faces of Fear and Public Enemy are sitting in the crowd to watch. Were they really not allowed to be in the back to watch on a monitor? Booker and Scott get things going with Scott taking him to the mat. Booker nips up and kicks his head off but Steiner comes back, brings in Rick and the Steiners clear the ring. Larry gets in a line to make up for the train/truck line earlier. Tony: "We need to fight fire with fire." Larry: "You fight a fire with water."

Stevie comes in to face Rick and pounds him down but Rick fires off a suplex. Back to Scott for a quick chinlock and it's Rick time again. Stevie sends him into the ropes and the Side Kick gets two. Rick catches a leapfrog into kind of a powerslam and makes the tag to Scott. Stevie is legal and on the floor as Scott hits a butterfly suplex....and the Faces of Fear and Public Enemy run in for the double DQ.

Rating: C-. This was getting good when they had the stupid finish. The talent for this division was there for the most part but since the Outsiders never defended the titles other than at the occasional PPV, there's really nothing to be gained from all of these matches. No one was touching the titles but the Outsiders for a long time so what difference does it make?

Hour #2 begins so it's time to recap the earlier evening. This makes sense as they probably have some people that are just tuning in. It's better than airing it again 3 minutes after it happened.

Mike Enos vs. Dean Malenko

Dean takes him to the mat which annoys Enos. Enos kicks him in the ribs and takes him down to the mat with a headlock. Heenan says that if Piper doesn't take up the challenge from Hogan, he's just another skirt wearing movie star. Gee that's such an evil thing of him to say. It's nothing like every other insult he's ever thrown at Roddy. Dean works on the arm and hooks a modified Fujiwara Armbar. Syxx comes through the crowd and steals the Cruiserweight Title. Enos hits a powerslam and sets for a regular slam which Dean reverses into a small package for the pin.

Rating: C-. Again this was here for the angle instead of the match but it's nice to see them having an angle that pertains to the guys in the match. Syxx would win the title soon after this which would result in the same problem the tag titles had: he would never defend the thing so the other matches didn't mean anything.

Lee Marshall is in Jacksonville.

Here are Sullivan, Jackie and Konnan. Sullivan says his strength comes from her and she came to pick him up when he was crumbling. Jimmy doesn't like women in wrestling and thinks Jackie has other intentions. Konnan doesn't care about

any of this and says let's go get the Horsemen. Jackie says she earned her body instead of getting it from a plastic surgeon like Debra.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Renegade

Renegade powers him around to start so Page gives him the Diamond sign. He hits some elbows in the corner and Renegade hits a clothesline in the same place. Renegade goes up but gets crotched and the Cutter ends this quick.

The Outsiders stand on the ramp with pipes. Sting is watching from the crowd and Savage is as well, although on a different side of the arena. Page gets a chair and no one moves for about a minute.

Alex Wright vs. Super Calo

Wright grabs the arm and is quickly countered into one of his own. Wright hits four straight nip-ups to escape and then a jumping side kick with Calo literally just standing there to be kicked in the face. Calo misses a charge in the corner and Wright takes over. Calo comes back with a dropkick to send Alex to the floor and follows with a huge plancha. Back in the ring he tries another but it gets caught by a dropkick. Wright hits a pair of headscissors to send him to the floor followed by an over the top rope dive.

Back in Wright tries to go up but Calo superplexes him down for a close two. Calo puts him up in a superplex position but takes him down with a bad headscissors. A top rope flip dive misses Wright and Heenan is amazed that he doesn't lose his hat. Wright goes up and hits a missile dropkick for the pin.

Rating: C. This is the kind of match that you don't get anymore. There wasn't much of a point to it but it ate up about six minutes and was entertaining. This is much more entertaining than some pointless and unfunny skit in the back which WWE seems to thrive on anymore. Fun match.

Konnan vs. Chris Benoit

They're moving between matches quickly. Konnan jumps Benoit to start for a cheap advantage. Rolling clothesline puts Benoit down and it's total dominance. Konnan puts on some kind of strange submission where he sits on Benoit's head and pulls on the legs. Benoit snaps and fires off some suplexes, setting up the superplex to put both guys down. Konnan comes back with his Powerdrop for two. Benoit hits a release German and calls for the Swan Dive but here's Jackie for the DQ. She doesn't hit anyone but Konnan wins by DQ somehow.

Rating: C+. This was short but pretty entertaining while it lasted. That being said the ending ht it and I got really sick watching Benoit feud with the Dungeon for as many months as he did because it never went anywhere. Also it brought in Jacqueline and that's never a good thing at all.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Steve McMichael

Debra doesn't want the match to happen so Steve drags her to the ring. Jarrett struts so Mongo hits him and we're off and running. Jeff tries to use the speed but gets caught in a powerslam for two. An elbow drop misses and Jeff hits an atomic drop and top rope cross body for two. A dropkick puts Mongo on the floor and Debra won't let him go back in and that's a countout. At least it was short.

Here's Piper with one of his kids. Piper says he's a Rubic's Cube. He'll never be Elvis but Hogan will never be Roddy Piper. Piper says he doesn't get why he should fight Hogan again because he already beat him once. He has his kid say that it's an honor to be in Memphis. It takes a man to be a father and it's time for him to grow up. Cue Hogan as Piper declines the title shot because he has nothing to prove.

Piper freaks out because his son is in there and asks Terry to let him go home. Hogan laughs at the idea that Piper is an icon and says he's never been a world champion. Bischoff and

Hogan make Piper say that Hogan beat him like a drum. Now tell the people that Hogan is the icon. Hogan says Piper is hiding behind a kid so Piper needs to get out of his sport. Piper starts walking away but Hogan slaps him in the back of the head and it's on. He beats down Hogan with ease and takes the belt as Hogan/Bischoff scamper. Piper says ok to the match at SuperBrawl. To their credit, that gets a huge reaction.

Overall Rating: C+. I get what they were going for with the ending but it didn't quite work. Piper snapping and going against what his initial choice was worked and Hogan still wanting more and more out of Piper worked, but for some reason it didn't quite click. Either way we have our PPV match which is the point of the show. Throw that in with some decent wrestling and the show is good, but there's nothing here to make it a great show. Still better than the last several episodes though.

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