

Monday Nitro – February 24, 1997: Better Wrestling, Better Show. Why Is That So Complicated?

Monday Nitro #76

Date: February 24, 1997

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

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

It's after SuperBrawl now and we're on the way to Uncensored, which had a very unique and what I thought was a very entertaining main event. That's in three weeks though so for now we'll stay on this show. Piper lost last night after Savage became the newest member of the NWO. Yeah I'm as shocked as you are. Other than that not a lot happened other than Luger and Giant beginning what I'm sure will be a LONG tag title reign. Let's get to it.

Public Enemy vs. Jeff Jarrett/Steve McMichael

Jarrett beat Mongo last night to become an official Horseman. Rock is now bald and starts with Mongo. That goes absolutely nowhere so a double tag brings in the other guys. Grunge puts him down with a swinging neckbreaker and Rock comes back in to work on the shoulder. Rock misses a charge in the corner and Jarrett stomps away on him. Off to Mongo for nothing and Jeff comes back in. Jeff leapfrogs him and Mongo takes out Rock's legs twice in a row. Rock tries a leapfrog but gets powerbombed down. Here's the briefcase but he hits Jarrett again, allowing Rock to get the pin.

Rating: D+. This feud just wouldn't end no matter how long it kept going for. At the end of the day though, Jarrett and

Debra weren't interesting at all but they kept forcing those two and Mongo down our throats all summer. Jarrett FINALLY went back to the WWF and Mongo stopped getting TV time to end it, but that's months away.

Cue the Horsemen to the ring to yell at Mongo. Anderson rips him apart and Flair is mad. Flair says we need to be a team. Anderson says that everyone is getting stronger while we're getting weaker. Jarrett and Mongo are the only two healthy Horsemen so Anderson makes them shake hands.

Jim Duggan vs. Galaxy

Galaxy is somewhat more famous as Damien. Tony says this will be a classic. We need to have a chat about what that means. Galaxy is just tiny compared to Duggan. Duggan throws him around and backdrops him with ease. Out to the floor and the fans are into Jim here. Duggan beats up Galaxy on the floor and no sells Galaxy's limited offense in the ring. Three Point Clothesline and the taped fist get the pin. Nothing but a squash.

Post match Duggan challenges Hogan.

Hugh Morrus vs. Joe Gomez

Gomez takes him into the corner to start and breaks clean. Morrus takes him into the corner and pounds on him. See who had the better career and figure out what the smart move to make is. Gomez tries to speed things up and grabs an armbar which defeats the purpose of speeding things up. A dropkick puts Morrus down and it's back to the armbar. Morrus catches a leapfrog into kind of a spinebuster to set up No Laughing Matter for the pin. This was nothing again.

We get some stills of last night's Sullivan vs. Benoit match. It was another wild brawl. I don't remember Woman looking good like this at all from this era.

Ice Train vs. La Parka

We get an inset interview from Teddy Long to Jackie of all people. La Parka starts with rapid fire kicks but Train runs him down and hiptosses him for two. Train keeps running him over but La Parka hits an enziguri to take over. Top rope spinwheel kick gets two. World's Strongest Slam gives Train the advantage again and a corner splash has La Parka flattened. The masked man comes back again with a spinwheel kick (he likes that one) and Train is knocked to the floor. A big corkscrew plancha takes him out and they head back inside. Train hits a HUGE clothesline and a splash for the pin.

Rating: D+. I liked Ice Train but this didn't work all that well for me. I seem to remember these two having a match a few weeks ago that was better than this. Not much to this but the power vs. speed idea is something that it's hard to screw up. Given who was in this, it was what you would call a pleasant surprise.

Chris Jericho/Eddie Guerrero vs. Faces of Fear

Jericho and Guerrero faced each other last night for Eddie's US Title with the champion retaining. Barbarian and Jericho get things going. Eddie comes in with a cross body but his cover is easily shrugged off. Off to Meng who shrugs off all of Eddie's offense and headbutts him down. BIG (not HUGE) powerbomb plants Eddie but he comes back with a headscissors which allows the tag.

The small guys double team Meng but it doesn't get them very far. A backsplash gets two but Meng kills Jericho with a belly to back. Barbarian hits a superplex to the Canadian but Jericho manages a rollup for two. Meng will have none of that though as the Faces (of Fear) hit their backdrop into the powerbomb spot which is always cool.

There's the double headbutt but Eddie makes the save. Jericho finally avoids an elbow drop and it's off to Eddie. Everything

breaks down and it's time to fly. Jericho loads up a Lionsault but Barbarian stops him from trying (he would have missed by a mile anyway). Dean Malenko comes out and shoves Eddie off the top, right into Meng's boot for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was pretty good here but you again had power vs. speed with the speed team being a very good combination. Based on that alone you're going to have a good match. Malenko lost the title last night because of Eddie so so there's your explanation for the interference. Fun match.

Time for hour #2. There's not much to recap so we'll talk about the PPV a bit. Oh ok we can talk about the Horsemen from earlier.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Rey Mysterio

Juvy doesn't mean much yet. Rey tries a kind of backbreaker but Juvy counters into a DDT and a springboard spinwheel kick to take Rey down. Off to a knee lock but Rey kicks him in the face to escape. They grab a test of strength grip and we get a nice gymnastics routine. Rey tries a moonsault press but Juvy ducks underneath and hits one of his own for two. Off to a chinlock which doesn't last long. There's a SWEET springboard into a sunset bomb by Guerrera. Out to the floor goes Rey and Juvy hits a sweet suicide dive. Juvy's rana is countered into a powerbomb and the West Coast Pop gets the pin.

Rating: C+. These two are usually gold together but this was bronze at best. Still though they were the best at this point for the high flying and the flips and stuff like that. Also there was a great bit of commentary in this right before Rey went up for the finish. Tony: "He's going to try something from the top too." Heenan: "Thank you Sherlock!"

Lee Marshall is in Atlanta.

TV Title: Pat Tanaka vs. Prince Iaukea

Tanaka comes out to what would become Goldberg's theme. Slow feeling out process to start as the Prince is very apprehensive. Iaukea tries a kick to the ribs but gets caught in a dragon screw legwhip. Prince comes back with another kick and it's time to stand around. He takes Tanaka down, hits a springboard senton backplash and the top rope cross body retains. Bad match.

Dean Malenko vs. Ultimo Dragon

Dean is all serious to start and drives Dragon into the corner. They go to the mat and trade some quick submission holds. That goes to a stalemate so Dean offers a handshake and pulls Dragon into a clothesline. Dragon gets ticked off and fires off his kick series to take over. Dean trips him up and fires off fists to send Dragon to the floor. Dragon is whipped into the barricade as Malenko is turning heel as the match goes on.

Back in for a chinlock as Malenko is in control. That shifts into a camel clutch but Dragon reverses into a surfboard. This is the seated version with the chinlock instead of the full bridge. Now it's the Indian Deathlock with the bridge. This is getting fun. Sunset flip gets two for Malenko. Tiger bomb gets two for the same. Dragon sends him to the apron and tries the same springboard dropkick that Jericho uses but it TOTALLY misses.

Dean is knocked to the floor anyway but Dragon hits a big dive to take Dean out to make up for the miss. Back in Dragon hits a springboard rana for two but Dean rolls through for two. La Majistral gets two for Dragon. Dean snaps off a release German and chokes Dragon which is completely against his character. Sonny gets on the apron and earns a right hand. Dean keeps choking and gets disqualified.

Rating: B-. As always these two have great chemistry together. Dragon was one of the few people that could keep up with Dean

on the mat but had a different style to him than Eddie or Benoit which made him a more interesting opponent. This was good and it gave Dean a heel turn which was a good thing for him here.

Dean says he's tired of the lack of respect he's been getting. He's coming for Syxx too.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Dave Taylor

Taylor is in a pith helmet, khakis and a vest. Two of those come off to get us to the match. Taylor starts fast but Page knocks him back. Cue the Outsiders as Page hits what we would call a TKO to take out Taylor. No cover though as Page stares down the Outsiders. Savage runs in through the crowd to set up the main event feud of the summer. The match just ended. A fan runs in which goes badly for him. Page gets spraypainted and takes the elbow. Savage officially gets his NWO shirt.

After a break the NWO is still in the ring. Hall talks for a bit about nothing in particular and brings out Hogan. He gives Savage a gift: the now happy Elizabeth.

Tag Titles: Lex Luger/The Giant vs. Harlem Heat

And never mind as Eric comes out and says the titles are going back to the Outsiders because Luger wasn't medically cleared. Luger says he'll do it if all of the titles were on the line at Uncensored. This stipulation would last all of five minutes because it was forgotten the next week. Luger talks about getting a team together which means...oh dear it's THAT segment next week. Sting comes out with the bat and stares at Luger. Then he stares at Hogan, who hugs him to no reaction. Announcers: "HE'S NWO!"

Overall Rating: C+. See, this is what good wrestling gets you. Nothing really happened again here but the wrestling was good. That also made the show go by faster which is always a good thing. The main event would be set up next week in one of the

dumbest segments ever, which would go against one of the best Raws ever. Then again no one was watching Raw at this point so it didn't matter. Better show this week.

Remember to like this on Facebook and follow me on Twitter @kbreviews