

Monday Nitro – March 3, 1997: Worst Show Of The Series So Far

Monday Nitro #77

Date: March 3, 1997

Location: The Omni, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 13,693

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

We're closing in on Uncensored and we need to get the main event established already. So far we know it's Team WCW vs. Team NWO but if my memory is right, tonight we'll hear about a third team being added. This show would be going against Raw in Germany which had Bulldog vs. Owen in one of the best TV matches ever, so I think Nitro is going to lose in the quality war tonight. Let's get to it.

The NWO arrives in what looks like a Hummer limo. After they come in another limo pulls up, containing Dr. Harvey Schiller, the real head of Turner Sports. Again with WCW's idea of having real suits with no connection to the business playing themselves.

Hugh Morrus/Konnan vs. Jeff Jarrett/Steve McMichael

Morrus and Jarrett get us going and it's time to talk about the Dr. that showed up earlier on. Jarrett speeds things up and takes Morrus down with a shoulder and an atomic drop. Morrus comes back with right hands and brings in Konnan with the rolling clothesline. Morrus tries a spinning cross body while Konnan holds Jarrett, but Jeff low blows K-Dawg and Konnan takes the fat man. Mongo cleans house but here's Public Enemy. Jarrett swings the briefcase at Rocco but it blasts Mongo for the pin.

Rating: D-. How many weeks in a row have we seen these two have some kind of a mishap that leads to a pin? It seemed to go on for months on end and it would continue over the summer. Jarrett didn't get over because of this and he made the right move by jumping to the WWF in the fall.

Here are Anderson and Flair to complain about the miscommunication. Jarrett says that he's Horsemen material but Flair gets in his face. Ric says Jarrett is making Flair look bad. Now THAT says a lot. Mongo yells a lot and Debra starts talking, drawing some LOUD booing. She doesn't want to be on a losing team so GET IT TOGETHER.

Rick Fuller vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Fuller is a big guy standing probably 6'7. Page works on the arm to start followed by a belly to back. Fuller powers him down and drops a leg for two. The fans chant for DDP so he hits the spinning clothesline to take Fuller down. A slam is reversed into the Diamond Cutter for the easy pin. Fuller had a good look.

Page talks about the NWO beating him down last week and focuses on Savage in particular. He tells Savage to snap into the Diamond Cutter.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Ray Mendoza Jr.

That's Mendoza, not Mysterio and he's more famous as Villano IV. Mendoza tries to make this a technical match by taking it to the mat which makes sense against Guerrera. Juvy is like screw that in Spanish and hits a pair of ranas to send Mendoza to the floor. The plancha misses though and Mendoza takes over again. Back in an overhead belly to belly gets two. Juvy takes over and hits a springboard legdrop for two.

Off to a chinlock so the guys can catch their breath which is fine. Back up and a victory roll into a rana gets two for Juvy. Mendoza gets backdropped to the floor and they ignore

the DQ rule because they want to. Juvy hits a suicide dive but Mendoza kicks away at him anyway. A slingshot rana brings Mendoza back in and they both go to the corner. They both go up and Mendoza gets crotched. A spinwheel kick puts him down and the 450 (to the knees) ends this.

Rating: D+. This was a lot sloppier than you would expect. The match wasn't bad but other than Rey, you could more or less throw any Cruiserweight from another country and throw him in these spots and it would be about the same. Then again, this was still pretty new stuff at the time so it's ok.

Kevin Sullivan, Jackie and Jimmy Hart take over the announcers' desk and Jackie takes credit for Benoit and Woman not being here. She challenges any man on the roster, throwing out names like Hogan, Nash and Savage. Why is she allowed to talk? Who thinks it's a good idea?

Hank Aaron is here.

Mike Enos vs. Dean Malenko

Malenko is all fired up here because of Eddie ticking him off and costing him the title if I remember right. He chokes Enos in the corner and takes out the knee. They head to the floor and Malenko works on the leg using the barricade. Back in and Enos finally gets in a knee lift to slow Dean down. And never mind as Dean takes the knee out again almost immediately. Malenko hits a top rope cross body but Enos rolls through for two. A clothesline puts Malenko down but a splash misses. Enos tries a slam but Dean small packages him for the pin.

Rating: D+. Basically just a squash but it was fun to see Dean going OFF like this, showing emotion for almost the first time in his career. He would pick up the US Title at the PPV, which should have been a step up in the card for him and to a degree it was, but he never really moved past that. To be fair, Malenko didn't exactly have the charisma to get much higher.

Dean says he'll do that to anyone that gets in his way.

Here's Bischoff who says he would love to put up the NWO's belts at Uncensored because they're awesome like that. As he brags about how great the NWO is, here's Harvey Schiller. Once we actually explain who he is (he's in charge of Turner's Sports and Bischoff's real life boss), he says that Bischoff has to follow rules which he hasn't been doing. Therefore, Eric is SUSPENDED. This was a big deal and it was one of the first big shots that WCW got back against the NWO. And of course WCW capitalized on it and won the war within 4 months right?

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Ultimo Dragon

Eddie is defending. The fans chant USA and it's a feeling out process to start. Eddie takes him down with a headscissors but gets sent to the floor. Sonny tries to fire some kicks but Eddie is having none of that. He will however have some of Dragon's kicks, including a spinwheel kick to take him down. Eddie rolls through a cross body and even though his feet are in the ropes, Dragon's shoulder was up and Eddie is rolling on top of Dragon, the pin counts. That was a major botch of some kind and Eddie looks stunned by whatever happened.

Eddie says he's tried to apologize to Dean so here's Malenko in the flesh. Dean says he knows what Eddie's true colors are and Eddie has no idea what's going on. They yell a lot and that's about it.

Hour #2 begins.

Scotty Riggs vs. Mr. Wallstreet

This is a fine example of people that remember Nitro being all drama and young guys having great matches. A lot of the time we had stuff like this to sit through. Riggs takes over quickly and hits a double ax to the head for two. Wallstreet sends him to the floor and does nothing out there, so let's go

back inside.

Schiller has officially made the main event for Uncensored, but it's going to be a three way match with Piper having a team as well. We hit the chinlock but Riggs jawbreaks his way out of it. Elbow drop misses and Wallstreet takes over again. Riggs comes back with a middle rope missile dropkick and a top rope sunset flip for two. And here's Buff Bagwell for the DQ because MICHAEL FREAKING WALLSTREET has to be protected.

Rating: D. This got four minutes and a DQ finish. Look at the participants in this match for a minute and let that sink in. Riggs vs. Bagwell was such a pathetic feud and it was about as close to the Billy and Chuck of their day as you can get. Nothing here and for the life of me I don't get why they didn't just have a regular ending.

Piper is here because I guess he heard the announcement about getting a team and warped over. He talks about beating Hogan twice and calls the Outsiders cloned monkeys. Piper has two families: one in Oregon and one here with the fans. He's going to make a third family out of people he....oh sweet goodness not this. He's going to have a series of tryouts tonight and the three winners make his team. Assuming there was nothing set up in a different kind of time frame, this was all set up within the last eight minutes or so. The fans are going to get to decide who makes his team.

Now keep in mind: three of these six guys will headline a WINNER TAKE ALL match on PPV in 13 days. Piper gets down to his trunks and the first guy is....some dude in jeans. Tony: "I have no idea who that is." Piper takes him down in an amateur position and the guy taps to a hammerlock very quickly. That's a thumbs down.

Guy #2 is Horshu, who is more famous as Luther Reigns, who isn't named Horshu yet and would only become a WCW Saturday Night guy in a few years. He fires off some left hands but

gets put to sleep quickly.

#3 is a guy but "some guy with boxing gloves" jumps him. He looks like a cross between Eugene and Steve Williams. Piper has boxing gloves in his trunks for no apparent reason and let's have a boxing match. Piper punches him into oblivion, gets knocked down then beats up Boxing Guy again, until Boxing Guy takes out the legs. The fans are starting to boo. Piper says bring it on and eventually gives the guy a spot on his team.

Wait we're not done with Boxing guy because Piper says the fans are being too harsh so let's fight some more. They take the gloves off and fight for about 20 more seconds before finally giving up on it.

#4 (I guess?) is a big fat guy who REALLY looks like Steve Williams. He's barefoot so Tenay declares him a martial artist. Heenan: "He's barefoot and tattooed. Sounds like the winner of the Miss Kentucky contest." Piper gets kicked down but comes back with kicks of his own. He's a legit black belt in Judo so he actually knows what he's doing in a fight. This is before the letters UFC meant anything though, as they were only on their 12th show. The martial artist (none of them have had a name so far) gets totally gassed but tries to throw Piper out anyway. Piper escapes and gives this guy a spot on the team.

The final guy is John Tenta who at least gets a reaction because people know who he is. After a quick fight, the other teammates get in and it's a big brawl. There's the team I guess. Piper says it's war with the NWO now. Thankfully this lasted about 5 minutes before WCW forgot these people existed and put in Jarrett, Benoit and Mongo instead. This got EIGHTEEN MINUTES. Let that sink in for a minute.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Mr. JL

Prince Iaukea gets to talk during this match for some reason.

Rey takes over to start with a corkscrew dive for two. JL throws him into the air and brings him down into a DDT for a delayed two. He goes up but misses a diving headbutt. They go to the floor and JL hits a flip dive off the apron. Back in and Rey rana's him down for two. Rey finally gets to the apron and hits the West Coast Pop for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D. This was a REALLY awkward match. It wasn't terrible I guess but these two might as well have been wrestling blindfolded. They didn't click at all and it felt like they were going with random moves instead of any kind of match with a flow or story at all. Just didn't work at all.

Madusa is here and says she's been here for more than a year. She threw away a title belt to open up women's wrestling but can't get on TV because of Bischoff. Gee what a shock. This goes on for awhile with her talking about how great women are until Luna Vachon debuts and jumps her.

Here's the NWO in full force with "Sting". Wait that's actually him. Ok then. Eric says that they're not worried about Schiller because they're friends with Ted. Hogan makes fun of Piper's team and Savage says Piper needs a psychiatrist. This somehow takes seven minutes to get through.

Steiner Brothers vs. Lex Luger/The Giant

Rick and Lex get things started as we're rapidly running out of time. Lex takes him into the corner and Rick comes back with punches. Luger shows off the power and down goes Dog Face. Off to Scott as this is the Steiners' first match back from the car wreck. Scott hits a butterfly powerbomb and it's off to Giant who gets the crowd fired up. Rick tags himself in and comes off the middle rope with an ax handle to take him down. A GREAT double suplex puts Giant down for two. Everyone stops to stare at each other and it's NWO time. Sting stands with the NWO and the match just kind of ends.

Rating: D. This was a lot of standing around for the sake of

standing around until the NWO ran in to end the match. These four would wind up being Team WCW at the PPV which would be fine as all four had reason to face the NWO guys. This could have been a big time tag match too.

Piper and company come in through the crowd and the brawl finally gets going to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. This was a horrible show on all accounts. All of the matches were either barely watchable or horrible, there was a nearly 20 minute segment that got booed out of the building, and other than the Bischoff suspension (you know, the guy that was back an hour and a half later saying it meant nothing), NOTHING happened on this show. Terrible episode here and one of the worst in the history of the show.

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