

Monday Nitro – March 24, 1997: Prince Iaukea Main Events

Monday Nitro #80

Date: March 24, 1997

Location: Duluth Convention Center, Duluth, Minnesota

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

Another Nitro this week with another stacked card of eleven matches. There isn't much different from last week as Hogan is still afraid of Sting and the main feud is still Page vs. Savage for the PPV. Flair is still out with an injury as he would be for the next six weeks or so. There just isn't much to talk about at the moment and there won't be for a few more months. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's challenge from Savage to Page.

Opening sequence, which still has Hogan in the red and yellow as the featured person.

Larry Hennig is here.

US Title: Dean Malenko vs. Konnan

Dean is defending and has a big bandage over his left eye. Apparently tonight DiBiase has ordered WCW to give Savage a TV Title match vs. Prince Iaukea. Konnan takes him to the mat and grabs a leg hold which Dean escapes into a standoff. Konnan hits him in the back as we hear from Syxx about Dean Malenko. It's implied that Eddie and Syxx have something going on. Konnan powerbombs him down for two. Dean comes back with a leg lariat but Konnan hooks La Majistral for two. Konnan misses a "dropkick"

off the top so Dean can grab the Cloverleaf to retain.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here as the match existed to let Syxx talk. Dean was awesome at this point and could hang with anyone, which is why his match with Benoit at Spring Stampede was probably a good idea. Konnan looked better than usual here but he would join the NWO later in the year and ruin whatever he had going for him.

Dean thinks Eddie and Syxx are in cahoots.

We get a clip from Uncensored of Wrath debuting and attacking Glacier after he beat Mortis.

Mortis vs. Jerry Flynn

Dang I thought this was Jerry Lynn at first. They trade missed kicks until Mortis runs him over with a shoulder block. Flynn kicks him down but Mortis hits a reverse mule kick in the corner to take over. Since he's not that smart, Mortis poses on the ropes and Flynn kicks him down to take over. Jerry charges into a superkick though and a spinwheel kick puts Flynn down again. A middle rope Fameasser gets two but Flynn powerbombs him out of the corner to take over again. Mortis kicks him down twice and the Flatliner (Samoan Drop from the middle rope) gets the pin.

Rating: D. This is a match where the styles contrasted badly. Martial arts vs. martial arts isn't a pairing that is going to work most of the time and when one of the guys is Jerry Flynn, the match is going to be pretty bad most of the time. Mortis was a character that was hard to use properly because he was pretty one dimensional and was only there to torment Glacier. His offense was pretty good though.

La Parka vs. Juventud Guerrera

La Parka has a sombrero, what looks like a skull covered bathrobe and a belt with a skull larger than his head in the middle. Juvy hits a spin kick to start but La Parka comes back with his strut. This would be the start of his more famous personality. Juvy knocks him to the floor and hits a HUGE dive to the outside to take Parka out. Back in a springboard missile dropkick gets two but La Parka takes him down with a clothesline.

A springboard moonsault completely misses (even Tony says so) but it gets two anyway. A spinwheel kick puts Juvy down to the floor and a bit dive puts Guerrera down again. Juvy comes back with a (mostly missed) springboard flip dive followed by an attempted top rope rana, but Parka powerbombs him down from the top. La Parka goes up and hits what we would call the Whisper in the Wind for the pin.

Rating: B-. When all else fails, let two luchadores go out and show off for the crowd. These guys were flying all over the place and looked great doing it. It got the crowd going too which is more than almost anything did last week. La Parka wasn't quite known for his high flying but he did it well enough here. Good stuff.

We get a clip from Souled Out with the Steiners winning the titles, only to get screwed out of them the next night. Bischoff was then suspended a few weeks ago so he can't return the titles later. The Outsiders ran the Steiners off the road in a car wreck and then laid out Rick Steiner. This was a very well built feud, but the problem was the Steiners never got the big win over the Outsiders, so the payoff was never there, making the whole thing a letdown to the fans.

The Steiners say they're ready for Spring Stampede, in a match that never happened because Scott Hall no showed the show.

High Voltage vs. Public Enemy

See how deep the tag division used to be? Public Enemy cleans the ring out quickly until we get down to Rocco vs. Rage. High Voltage takes over

and it's off to Kaos with a double ax off the top. Back to Rage who slams him down but misses a standing moonsault. Double tag brings in Kaos and Grunge (what names these teams have) and Public Enemy cleans house. They hit a springboard version of the Quebecers' Cannonball but opt to put Rage on the table instead. A springboard dive puts Rage through it and here's Jarrett with the briefcase to the head of Grunge so Kaos can get the pin.

Rating: D. This was barely long enough to rate and it was nothing of note. High Voltage was usually the jobbing team so this was a pretty sizable upset at the time. The match was there to further the Horsemen vs. Public Enemy, which was a feud I'm sure dozens of people were dying to see. The double team flip dives weren't bad though.

Giant talks about having to possibly face Lex in the four corners match at the PPV. For some reason they had a four corners match with Harlem Heat vs. Luger vs. Giant with the winner getting a title shot which didn't wind up coming for about three months. Giant doesn't want to fight Lex and Lex says he can feel the balance of power shifting because of Sting.

Super Calo vs. Psychosis

Psychosis starts with a spin kick but Calo fires off kicks to the chest to take over. He climbs the corner but his spinning cross body winds up being more of an armdrag. Psychosis crotches him on top and hits a spinwheel kick to the back of the head. Crucifix gets two for Calo and he dropkicks Psychosis to the floor. Back in and Psychosis slams him down and hits the guillotine legdrop for the pin. It's as out of nowhere as it sounds.

Rating: D+. Not much here as the match was sloppy at times and the ending came out of absolutely nowhere. Calo controlled most of the match until Psychosis hit one move and then his finisher. This was a far cry from the other cruiserweight match earlier in the night so it's not as easy as it

looks.

Hour #2 starts so we hit the recap button even though there isn't much to recap.

Chris Benoit vs. Hugh Morrus

Brawl to start as Tenay says this is a real life feud with Benoit vs. Sullivan. Morrus hits a gorilla press on Benoit followed by a running corner splash. We get what sounds like a MORRUS chant. Benoit comes back with a release German but Konnan shoves him down when he's loading up the Swan Dive. No Laughing Matter gets the quick pin.

Sullivan comes out for the three way beatdown but Malenko, who isn't a Horseman yet, comes out for a failed save. Flair comes out for the real save in his first physical action in almost six months. Benoit and Malenko stare each other down.

Faces of Fear vs. Harlem Heat

This is a rematch from Saturday Night which was thrown out for something involving Luger and the Giant. Booker and Barbarian start things off. They get into a power struggle, won by the Samoan. The Faces of Fear double team Booker to the floor as the Heat are in trouble early. Back in and Booker hits a spinning cross body off the top for two. Off to Stevie who uses his usual array of stomps.

Meng comes in and will have none of Stevie's bad offense so he hits him in the face. Back to Barbarian as Stevie is in trouble. Never mind as a big boot to the face puts Barbarian down. I know Stevie has never been considered brilliant but apparently he doesn't know his Samoan stereotypes. A middle rope ax kick puts Barbarian down but Meng comes in for a double headbutt to take over on Booker. Booker tries a slam but Meng falls on him for tow.

Booker gets taken into the wrong corner and it's off to Barbarian for more punishment. Side salto gets two. Back to Meng for an abdominal stretch but Sherri's distraction lets Stevie come in sans tag, which is just fine apparently. Booker comes back in almost immediately, being launched off the top onto Meng for no cover. The side kick gets two on Meng. Meng hits a sitout powerbomb out of nowhere for two and everything breaks down. Meng misses a charge in the corner, hitting Sherri in the process, which allows Booker to grab a fast rollup for the pin.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches where if you cut out about two minutes of it, the match would be a lot better. It's also very apparent how much more talented Booker was than Stevie, as Booker carried the offense for his team while Stevie did little more than stomp on either Samoan at any given time. The Faces of Fear were great in the jobber to the stars tag team role.

Here are the Horsemen, as in Benoit and Flair, to talk about Anderson being attacked last week. Benoit thinks it was Sullivan but wants to know why Malenko made the save earlier. Flair offers Piper the spot on the team again.

Madusa vs. Malia Hosaka

This is another of those random WCW women's matches. They shove each other to start and Hosaka puts on a Boston Crab. The fans chant USA as Tony talks about Glacier for some reason. Off to a chinlock by Hosaka which is pretty easily countered. She tries a rolling cradle but Madusa stands there instead of falling down. Madusa grabs the bridging German for the pin. Too short to rate but this was pretty bad.

Jim Duggan vs. Renegade

Apparently Renegade was too rough on Saturday Night against Riggs. This is part of Renegade's heel turn which was one of the most questionable decisions ever. Not that it was a bad idea, but because no one was sure

why someone gave Renegade an angle at all. Wait if he's a heel now why is he slapping hands? Duggan beats up an NWO sign with his board. Duggan is in gold boots here for some reason. He sets to wrap his fist with tape but throws it to the fans instead.

Feeling out process to start with Renegade not really acting any differently than he usually did on these shows. Tony implies that WWF might be trying to steal Renegade for some reason. If so then they're picking a bad guy to steal as Duggan hammers him down and then into the corner to take over. They try a bulldog out of the corner but Duggan falls down like a headlock takeover. Off to a chinlock followed by the cartwheel elbow in the corner. Duggan gets another roll of tape for the punch to the head for the pin.

Rating: F. Chris Jericho, Eddie Guerrero, Rey Mysterio, Diamond Dallas Page, Giant, Luger and I could go on. These are people that didn't have a match this week but these two guys got to be on TV with a heel turn for Renegade in the process. Then they have Duggan beat him? What in the world was the point of this?

Video on Sting and how WCW needs him.

Steiner Brothers vs. Amazing French Canadians

The Canadians do the national anthem before the match. Scott and Pierre start us off and Steiner hits a butterfly powerbomb to take over. The Steiners clear the ring but Scott gets in trouble for a bit. Pierre slams him down but jumps into the boot of Scott. There's the tag to Rick and everything breaks down. The idea is that Rick is still messed up because of his ear injury from the car wreck. Jacques piledrives Rick but Colonel Parker misses his flag pole shot. Cannonball hits Rick but there's no referee. Parker's boot is thrown in but Rick intercepts it and blasts Pierre for the pin.

Rating: D-. Another horrible match here with no point to it at all. The

Canadians were just not that good and certainly weren't interesting at all. Then again it may have been Colonel Parker and his annoyances that kept me from caring here. Either way the match was bad with neither team seeming interested at all.

TV Title: Prince Iaukea vs. Randy Savage

Main event time. The full NWO comes out because Randy Savage needs support against Prince freaking Iaukea. Nash shouts to HBK on the way to the ring. Apparently the title challenge isn't just a one off thing. The NWO can challenge for any title anytime forever. Prince hits a shoulder for two and Savage hits the floor.

Back in and Iaukea hits a springboard cross body for two. A top rope cross body misses and Savage clotheslines him on the top rope to take over. Savage drops the elbow but pulls him up at two. Page runs in for the DQ, because why would he want to face Savage for the TV Title? To be fair I guess the idea is that he wanted to hurt Savage no matter what. I can live with that.

Rating: D. Unfortunately this was long enough to rate. Iaukea was so freaking boring and bland that there was almost no way to care about him. Savage facing him here was such a weird matchup as it was in essence a squash match for a title, which isn't something you often see. This was nothing but a way for Page to run in though.

Page gets destroyed to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This really was a tale of two hours. The first one was good and had some solid action, but the second hour was just dreadful, with bad matches that weren't interesting at all. I mean come on, Prince Iaukea in the main event of a show? Thankfully there's only one more episode before Spring Stampede so we can move on to the next boring PPV build. This show was a chore to sit through, at least in the second half.

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