

Monday Nitro – March 31, 1997: It's Going To Be A Long Summer

Monday Nitro #81

Date: March 31, 1997

Location: Roanoke Civic Center, Roanoke, Virginia

Attendance: 8,709

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

Man I haven't done one of these in forever. We're getting close to Spring Stampede, so close in fact that it's this Sunday. The main feud at the moment is Page vs. Savage because Hogan didn't want to defend the world title on PPV for about four months. Tonight will likely just be a lot of build up towards that show, which is going to be very hit or miss. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week with Savage vs. Iaukea. I'm still not sure why they didn't just let Savage have the belt so he and Page could fight over it.

The NWO has arrived sans Hogan, Bischoff and Hall.

Lex Luger/Giant vs. Rick Fuller/Roadblock

The graphic says Luger/Giant are tag champions but that hasn't been the case for weeks. Giant and Fuller start things off. Fuller is a big guy who looks like a taller Rhino. Roadblock is even bigger but to the point of being fat. Giant throws Fuller into the corner and clotheslines him before bringing in Lex. Luger works on the arm but gets poked in the eye to bring in Roadblock.

A splash in the corner has Luger in trouble as the fat man is rolling quickly. Lex ducks another clothesline though and there's the forearm to the head which may or may not have steel in it. Luger doesn't tag Giant when he has the chance and Roadblock knees him in the ribs. A legdrop gets two for Roadie and it's back to Fuller. That goes nowhere so here's Roadblock again. A splash misses and here's Giant. He kicks both guys down and does it again with a double clothesline. Giant chokeslams Roadblock as Luger Racks Fuller to end it.

Rating: C. What the heck was this? You have Roadblock and Rick Fuller in there and you get a somewhat entertaining match? This was two guys who were big and fat (somewhat so in Fuller's case) moving very well and showing off a bit. The match was a total surprise and took what should have been a squash and made it entertaining. Fun stuff here all things considered.

Harlem Heat, as in the guys in the fourway with Luger and Giant on Sunday, come in and we have a brawl.

After a break, Harlem Heat says they want respect. Somehow this takes almost two minutes.

Women's Cruiserweight Title Tournament First Round: Meiko Satomura vs. Toshie Uematsu

Yeah this title existed. The title would be decided on the Sunday show soon after this and then would never be mentioned on American TV more than maybe twice afterwards. It would be retired later this year, probably due to the fact that putting women in weight classes is a bad idea. I think Meiko is in red here. If so she takes over to start with a dropkick and hits a forearm in the corner.

Toshie comes back with a slam and a Daniel Bryan moonsault out of the corner. That gets horribly botched so she does it again a bit better. Meiko goes up but gets armdragged down and a top rope splash gets the win

for Toshie. She would win the title and take it to Japan where it was completely forgotten.

Psychosis vs. Villano IV

Time for the random Cruiserweight match of the week. They trade wristlocks to start and Psychosis is put on the mat. He tries to spin out of it but Villano grabs a headlock to counter. I love basic stuff like that. Tenay shows off his knowledge of wrestling, explaining where the name Villano comes from (it means Villain and comes from Villano I being the villain in an El Santo movie). Psychosis headscissors him down and hits a spinwheel kick to a crotched Villano.

A big corkscrew plancha to the floor takes Villano down again. Back inside and Psychosis tries a jumping DDT off the top but gets caught in something like a side slam for two. We cut to the back where the NWO is talking. They say they're going to take care of business. Wallstreet walks out on them and now it's back to our match. Villano misses a moonsault and a superkick sets up the guillotine legdrop for the pin. We didn't see enough to rate but what we saw was solid.

Here's Flair for a chat. He talks about being in Roanoke and brings out Piper. Piper says Flair's ears are growing like Pinnochio. He makes sex jokes about Flair and Flair thanks Piper for humbling himself enough to come here. Flair says they're friends but Piper can never claim to be the best wrestler alive. There are 100 people today that call themselves the best but none of them call Piper out. Flair talks about getting the Nasty Boys out of here in 93 (huh?) and talks about Piper putting Hogan to sleep twice. Piper says Flair hasn't been beaten ever and they agree to take on everyone together. I have no idea what I just saw.

TV Title: Prince Iaukea vs. La Parka

La Parka kicks him down to start and hits a moonsault for two. Prince avoids a charge and La Parka's shoulder hits the post. They head outside

and the champ (Iaukea) is sent into the barricade. La Parka puts the Prince in a chair on the floor and dives through the ropes to take him out. Prince doesn't seem that interested in selling so they head back inside. We get an awkward sequence of running the ropes and Iaukea superkicks him down.

The champ misses a cross body off the top though and it's back to the outside. La Parka baseball slides the chair into Prince's head which draws a bell, but the match keeps going with Parka hitting a big dive to the floor. Back inside and the fans are booing this out of the building. La Parka gets the chair and Prince dives into it off a cross body. He doesn't sell it AT ALL, covers La Parka, and retains.

Rating: D-. I have no idea what I just saw in back to back segments. This was very awkward and from what I can tell, that's mainly due to Iaukea. He wouldn't sell most of La Parka's stuff and on top of that the referee looked confused during the ending. These two were on different planets out there but La Parka's high spots looked good.

Steven Regal vs. Chris Jericho

Regal says Iaukea will be eating through a straw after Sunday. The brilliant fans chant USA for an Englishman and a Canadian. They go to a wristlock and Regal does his usual awesome sequence of rolling on his back and kicking Jericho's hand away to break it. Jericho knocks him to the apron and hits the springboard dropkick to put him on the floor. Back in and the move that would become known as the Lionsault gets two. Regal tries a cobra clutch but Jericho ducks and superkicks him, followed by a rollup for a BIG upset.

Regal beats the tar out of him and hits a top rope butterfly suplex post match. Jericho gets put in the Regal Stretch and Renegade makes the save. Scratch that as he charges but pulls back without being touched. Joe Gomez comes in and breaks it up but gets beaten up by Regal. Billy Kidman comes in to help but gets headbutted. Lenny Lane gets beaten up as well.

Hour #2 begins and we get the traditional recap.

Mr. Wallstreet leaves.

Women's Title: Debbie Combs vs. Akira Hokuto

Hokuto is defending and Combs is some old chick with big blonde hair. She turns her back on Hokuto who kicks her in the back to take over. Hokuto chokes her in the ropes and Sonny gets in a shot of his own to Debbie. Combs hits what is supposed to be called a gutwrench suplex for two and a cross body gets the same. Hokuto doesn't care and grabs a German suplex (called a tiger suplex by Tony) and "he" (Tony again) beats her to retain. This was short.

Madusa says Roanoke rocks and says she'll win the title on Sunday. Hokuto beats her down because no one wants to hear from Madusa.

The announcers talk about Sting a lot and we get a video on him.

We recap the Horsemen arguing last week.

Jeff Jarrett/Steve McMichael vs. Amazing French Canadians

After Bobby makes fun of the Virginia state song, we're starting with Oullette vs. Mongo. Things break down quickly and Mongo cleans house, including dropkicking Rougeau to the floor. Rougeau vs. Jarrett now and double teaming takes Jarrett down. Jeff shrugs that off and dropkicks Oullette, followed by a tag to Mongo. I think it was supposed to be the hot tag but when the match is a minute long so far I don't think you can have a hot tag. Public Enemy runs out and jumps the Horsemen, but Colonel Parker steals Mongo's briefcase from Grunge who stole it last week. Rougeau gets the case and hits Mongo with it for the fast pin.

Debra complains about breaking some nails. Oh and the Public Enemy have

bad breath and lice. My goodness what did they do the Horsemen? Mongo accuses Jarrett of hitting him with the case. If only there was some way to see the match again and find out what really happened.

Hugh Morrus vs. Chris Benoit

Woman is looking very good here. Morrus jumps him to start but Benoit comes back with chops. A powerslam puts Benoit down but he gets up before Morrus can try No Laughing Matter. Benoit pulls him off the ropes and hits a quick German for a pin. This didn't even last 90 seconds.

Sullivan and Jacqueline come in and it's a big brawl. Jackie hits a top rope splash on Benoit but Woman crotches her. Flair finally comes in for the save and gets by far and away the biggest ovation of the night. Arn Anderson gets in Sullivan's way and they have an awkward staredown before Sullivan leaves. Benoit says that Sullivan is leaving soon and Benoit is the new generation.

We get another quick recap of Page getting beaten down last week.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Lance Ringo

Ringo is more famous as the almost equally forgettable Sick Boy. He brings the Playboy or Penthouse with Kimberly in it with him, making him more awesome than any other jobber in a long time. Page beats him up to start but gets clotheslined on the top rope. Ringo hits a springboard dropkick to put Page down, but DDP gets up and hits what we would call a TKO but here it's a Diamond Cutter for the pin. Squash.

Post match Page talks about his wife being in Playboy and how proud he is of it. He's not proud of what Liz and Savage did to Kimberly at Uncensored though, and he's going to snap into Macho Man's world. Cue Savage and Liz with Randy asking if Page has any family jewels to go with his diamonds. How did no one else ever make that joke? Page: "I'll make

sure to bring the lady, because you're bringing the tramp (meaning Liz).” There was great chemistry here and I want to see them fight now.

High Voltage vs. Steiner Brothers

Kaos and Scott start and Scott throws him around with ease. Off to Rick and the barking begins. Rage sends him to the floor and rams the injured ear into the post. Kaos hits a slingshot legdrop to the back of Rick's head followed by a neckbreaker for two. Rage misses a good looking springboard Swanton and it's off to Scott. After some power displays, the FREAKING STEINER SCREWDRIIVER ends Rage. If you've never seen that move before, look it up. It's one of the most painful looking moves of all time.

Rating: A+. It had the Steiner Screwdriver in it, thereby making it awesome. This was barely long enough to rate and it was a squash for the most part so that's all I've got.

Syxx and Nash come to the announce table and say the rest of the NWO A-Team has bailed to see the premier of Dennis Rodman's new movie. Nash sounds really mad here and that ends the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This wasn't much at all. While it did a decent enough job of setting up Spring Stampede, the stuff they were offering on that show isn't interesting enough for me to care. As annoying as Hogan can get, when he's not around this show gets very dull very fast. This show wasn't bad but this is a really boring few months for Nitro and it's only going to get worse.

Here's Spring Stampede if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/05/02/spring-stampede-1997-the-nwo-civil-war-begins/>

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