

Monday Nitro – April 6, 1997: Hogan And Sting Save Nitro Again

Monday Nitro #82

Date: April 7, 1997

Location: Von Braun Center, Huntsville, Alabama

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

Back to Nitro and it's the first night after Spring Stampede. Almost nothing has changed as that was one of the least important shows in recent memory. We're now on the way towards Slamboree which will set the bar even lower as Hogan's spring/summer vacation continues. Hopefully this is a more interesting show than last week. Let's get to it.

Tony and Larry suggest there's turmoil in the NWO. This would be the first of about 87 times this was potentially happening. We get a lot of stills from the main event last night with Nash power bombing Nick Patrick after the pin was counted for Page.

Konnor/Hugh Morrus vs. Psychosis/Alex Wright

Wright and Morrus start us off and the fans seem rowdy tonight. Alex uses the Daniel Bryan moonsault out of the corner and works on the arm of Morrus. Off to Psychosis as the announcers talk about having an opening to beat the NWO now. Konnan comes in illegally but walks into a superkick that didn't appear to connect from Psychosis. A better looking top rope spinwheel kick puts Konnan down and Psychosis takes Morrus down on the floor as well.

Morrus comes in and with nothing better to do, we go split screen to show Page arriving earlier today and looking hurt. A powerslam gets no cover on the masked man and a middle rope elbow misses for Morrus. Double tag

brings in Wright and Konnan and Alex cleans house. A top rope cross body gets one on Hugh but Konnan hits him with a neckbreaker and No Laughing Matter (moonsault) gets the pin on Wright.

Rating: D+. Not much here but it wasn't bad. The Dungeon of Doom was about a year and a half past their expiration date and they would never mean anything again. For that matter you could say the same for Wright and Psychosis as well, but they had some moderate success. Not a lot to say here.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Steven Regal

No entrances for either guy but at least we got that nifty set of stills from Madusa vs. Hokuto. Regal takes over to start and sends Rey out to the floor and into the barricade. Back inside and we're told the NWO has arrived. Naturally we look at this instead of the match. I know they're a bigger deal but this gets on my nerves. You could EASILY show this between the matches and nothing would be any worse. Hogan and Bischoff talk about problems in the family and it's only the two of them plus DiBiase and Vincent.

Back in the ring, Mysterio sends Regal to the apron but misses a charge. Regal goes up top but takes too long, allowing Rey to hit a springboard headscissors for two. West Coast Pop doesn't connect properly and only gets two. Regal takes him down and puts on the Regal Stretch but Rey makes the rope. For some reason during part of that hold referee Randy Anderson had his hand on the back of Rey's head. Regal won't break the hold and it's a DQ.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here again but at least we could see most of the match instead of having most of the time being spent on the NWO buying a newspaper or whatever they're doing this week. Regal was snapping at this point but I don't remember anything coming out of it, which is a shame as he was good at being psycho.

Prince Iaukea comes out for the save but Regal beats him down and puts him in the Stretch too. The totally calm look on Regal's face as he tortures Iaukea and punches him in the face is borderline chilling.

The rest of the NWO arrives. Savage is on crutches.

We recap last night's bizarre one on one match for the tag titles which was basically Rick Steiner being squashed by Kevin Nash. This led to Ted DiBiase getting upset by the amount of punishment Steiner received.

Ice Train vs. Chris Benoit

Woman is continuing to look good here so at least the squash won't be a total loss. Benoit pounds away to start but walks into a press slam from Train. Benoit starts chopping away but Ice Train yells at him and clotheslines Benoit down. Train puts on a chinlock as we go split screen to see Hogan throwing the belt down and the NWO gets in an argument.

Savage seems to be the one with the most issues here. Nash walks away and Norton says get it together. Back in the ring Woman takes Teddy Long down and a Benoit DDT gets the pin. It was barely long enough to rate in the first place and since we missed a good piece of it for an NWO argument I'll pass on a rating. It was exactly what you would expect though.

We get a video on the premiere of Double Team, which is Dennis Rodman's new movie. This is shown because the NWO was there, which brings up a question: the NWO is supposed to be a totally different organization from WCW in storyline terms right? So why would WCW show this stuff? There's no disclaimer saying that the NWO paid for this and Tony intros it, so why would they show it?

Hector Guerrero vs. Kevin Sullivan

Hector is a dead ringer for Eddie and may actually be more talented in

the ring than Eddie was. Sullivan pounds Hector down to start and knocks him to the floor so Jackie can slam him which is supposed to be impressive for some reason. Back in the ring and Sullivan keeps up the assault and then throws him out to Jackie for more of her punches and another slam. The Tree of Woe and double stomp end this quick, and by that I mean the guy that got in all the offense so far, as in Sullivan, wins, in case that was too complicated for you.

Here's the NWO with something to say. DiBiase says there are clearly problems here and we need to fix them now. Hogan says that Nash has a problem with this and throws the belt down again, saying it means nothing. Nash says that he has no problem with Rodman as he used to be a ball player too. But he spent Easter Sunday in a hotel room with Syxx which was a big problem for some reason.

Hogan says next Easter they'll go on an NWO Easter Hunt, but for now he wants to know where Hall is. Nash says Hall is NWO for life but Hogan wants to fight right now. Nash talks about Hogan joining Hall and Nash and about how they're NWO for life. That apparently buries the hatchet but Savage is mad. The fans want Sting. Hogan says he doesn't want to fight Savage so get it together. Savage says ok but he and Bishoff are on probation with each other. That settles things apparently.

Hour #2 begins and we recap the first half of the show.

Gene brings out Flair for a chat. Flair rants a bit about the NWO and how he's going to take them out. Here's Piper who says he's out of the asylum and rants a bit as well. Flair says Kevin Greene wants to join up with them and I think we've got a six man coming. Piper on the NWO: "They smell like six dead otters in a drainpipe." Greene comes out and praises both guys before going insane as well. This would be the main event of the PPV.

US Title: Dean Malenko vs. Chris Jericho

This should be awesome. Things start off fast and Jericho hits a pair of kicks to take Malenko down. They head to the floor for some more kicks before a missile dropkick gets two back in the ring. A backslide gets the same but Jericho ducks his head and gets powerbombed. There's the Cloverleaf but Jericho grabs the rope. Dean goes up but gets superplexed down. This is the first slow down they've had so far. As Jericho gets up, Dean hits a standing version of Orton's Punt for the pin.

Rating: B. For a three minute match, this was AWESOME. Dean going all evil and kicking Jericho in the face was a good change of pace for him and it would lead to a decent heel run for him. Jericho was starting to get pushed and it would turn into a title run in a few months in a big win over an NWO member.

Public Enemy vs. High Voltage

High Voltage jumps the Public Enemy to start but gets slugged down almost immediately. A double flapjack sets up a double suplex on Rage for no cover. The fans like the arm waving thing the Public Enemy does. Rock and Kaos officially get us going before Rock is sent to the floor for a beating from Rage. Back in and Rock hits a neckbreaker on Kaos for two. Tag to Grunge who cleans house. They head to the floor and Kaos is put on the table. The elbow through said table misses while back in the ring, Rage hits a northern lights suplex for the pin. Short but energetic again.

Public Enemy says sometimes the table works for you and sometimes it works against you but it's all good. Rock challenges High Voltage to a Philadelphia street fight next week. They say they'll get extreme next week.

Prince Iaukea is getting his ribs taped up.

Harlem Heat vs. Steve McMichael/Jeff Jarrett

And there's no Mongo. Booker gets things going in a match that would be for the world title in about three years. Booker runs him over to start but Jarrett comes back with some hip tosses. Jarrett goes to the corner but gets pounded down as the Heat takes over again. Stevie comes in and catches Jarrett in what we would call the World's Strongest Slam. Jeff dropkicks both guys to the floor and things slow down a bit.

Stevie slams him down again and it's back to Booker. The numbers game is catching up with Jeff as Booker side kicks him down for two. Debra has left ringside as the announcers are trying to figure out if Mongo was here earlier or not. The ax kick hits but Booker tags out instead of covering. Jarrett grabs a small package out of nowhere for two and a sunset flip out of the corner gets the same on Booker. A double suplex puts Jeff down for two and Debra is back again. Jeff misses a dropkick and Stevie guillotines him on the top rope.

Even Sherri is getting in some attacks on Jeff, hitting him in the chest and choking him a bit. A quick backslide gets two for Jarrett and he avoids the Harlem Side Kick, crotching Booker in the process. Stevie hits a brainbuster and here's Mongo who looks fine. Stevie misses something off the top and Mongo is on the apron. There's the tag and Mongo cleans house. Jarrett is spent so Mongo tags him back in. Mongo shoves him into the side kick and Booker gets the pin.

Rating: D+. This was a long angle advancement which is a good thing, but it's an angle that wasn't interesting for the most part. At the end of the day, they're fighting about Debra who is just annoying beyond belief. Mongo wasn't any good in the ring and Jarrett was awful as a face at this point. It wouldn't be until he became a male sexist pig in the WWF that he really came into his own.

Jarrett and Mongo bicker post match. Mongo says he wants more pain but never would say where he was.

TV Title: Ultimo Dragon vs. Prince Iaukea

Iaukea is injured from the attack by Regal earlier in the night. He tries to speed things up to start but a slam fails. Iaukea rolls him up for two and a backslide gets the same. Dragon uses his first opening and kicks the Prince in the ribs to take over. Iaukea gets the feet up to take out a diving Dragon but Dragon kicks him in the ribs a few times and pins him quickly for the title. This was basically a squash.

Another package of stills from last night. I'll give WCW one thing: other than the title matches which are obvious, they haven't said who won any of these matches. That's one thing that annoys me about WWE doing this: they'll tell you to buy the replay but they'll explain every single thing that happened. Here at least they're just showing pictures of it but no endings.

Giant vs. Scott Steiner

Main event here, but Konnan and Hugh Morrus jump Scott on the way to the ring. Giant makes the save. Scott didn't wrestle last night either so maybe he was injured. No match.

Here's DDP to close the show. He talks about last night and how no one would have believed that could have happened a few years ago. Page says he's an anomaly and if he had gotten his hands on Savage last night when Savage was hurting Kimberly, he would have killed the Macho Man. Cue Savage on crutches but Hogan follows him out and stops him.

Hogan says this one is on him and the rest of the NWO appears on stage. Hogan rips his shirt off and here's Sting on a zip line and repelling from the ceiling. He stands in the aisle in front of the NWO and holds the bat out at Hogan. Sting hands Page the bat but pulls out another one to point at Hogan again. The NWO cowers to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show worked MUCH better than the previous week's did and that's because the big stars were here. Last week and at Spring Stampede, no one showed up and it felt like an unimportant show. This

show came off like it mattered and even though the PPV would mean nothing again, this was a good start on the six week build to Slamboree.

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