

Monday Nitro – April 21, 1997: Nash Explains Why The NWO Makes No Sense

Monday Nitro #84

Date: April 21, 1997

Location: Saginaw Civic Center, Saginaw, Michigan

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

We continue the marathon of shows between Spring Stampede and Slamboree and the big story tonight is the decision regarding the future of Eric Bischoff. Other than that, there isn't much here as we're heading towards Slamboree with a meaningless six man tag team main event. Nothing on the card looks like anything of note at all. Let's get to it.

James J. Dillon arrives to open the show. He doesn't really mean anything other than being a legend at this point.

Hogan is FINALLY out of the intro sequence.

US Title: Yuji Nagata vs. Dean Malenko

I think this is Nagata's company debut so he doesn't mean much yet. Dean takes him down to the mat and puts on a headlock. Yuji counters into a headscissors, followed by an enziguri and a chinlock. Reggie White is here again so let's put the camera on him for about ten seconds. Dean hits a jawbreaker to escape the hold and suplexes Nagata down for two. We hit chinlock #3 in the third minute of the match, this one with Dean in control.

Nagata escapes and puts on a modified STF but after letting it go, Yuji walks into a leg lariat for two. Nagata tries some kicks but gets caught

in a dragon screw leg whip. The injury doesn't last long as Yuji superkicks Dean down and hits an overhead belly to belly for two. Nagata misses another kick and Dean drops an elbow on the leg before throwing on the Cloverleaf to retain.

Rating: C. When they weren't using the chinlocks this was a pretty fun match. Dean was on fire in 1997 and there was almost no one he couldn't have a good match with. Nagata would come back later in the year and have an incredibly dull feud with Ultimo Dragon. I understand that these guys are Japanese legends and are incredibly talented, but it takes a lot more than a resume in another country and a six minute match on Nitro to get people to care about you, and most of the guys from other countries never got the chance to prove otherwise.

Glacier vs. Ciclope

Glacier's entrance takes longer than the match as he kicks Ciclope in the head and pins him in about thirty seconds.

Post match Glacier does more of his posing stuff until Wrath (not yet named) comes out. The distraction lets Mortis come in and jump Glacier from behind. Mortis steals Glacier's helmet which is like 700 years old or something. They try to injure Glacier's eye as this goes on WAY too long. When the fans spent the entire match chanting GLACIER SUCKS, giving this whole beatdown nearly four minutes was a bad idea.

Tony tells us that JJ Dillon is the new head of the executive committee. This brings out Nick Patrick to give his reasons as to why he should be let back into WCW. This isn't exactly Benoit and Mysterio from last week in the opening segments.

TV Title: Ultimo Dragon vs. Bobby Eaton

Eaton pounds him down to start for a surprising early advantage. Dragon

fires off the kicks though and Bobby has no idea what to do. You would think after hanging out with Stan Lane for so many years he would be familiar with martial arts. Sonny offers a quick distraction and Eaton gets dropkicked to the floor. Onoo kicks Eaton into the barricade and sends him back inside for the super rana and the Dragon Sleeper to keep the title in Japan.

Regal says he isn't dating Sarah Ferguson and that he'll get the TV Title back. He actually would, which makes you wonder what the point was in having Dragon win it in the first place at all, when Dragon would win it back a few weeks later.

Meng vs. Chris Jericho

Meng immediately clubbers him down and all of the fans look at something in the crowd, presumably a fight. Jericho and Meng chop it out with the savage taking over. Chris hits a middle rope dropkick but Meng won't go down. Meng hits a belly to back suplex for one and then chokes a bit. The fans are finally sitting down. Now they look at something else. Geez what is going on over there?

Jericho hits a spinwheel kick but Meng won't go down. An enziguri misses for the Canadian so he tries a standing Lionsault. Meng literally stands there while Jericho hits him and slides down Meng's body. This is getting embarrassing in a hurry. The Canadian hits a German on the Tongan for two but a rana attempt is countered into a hot shot. Tongan Death Grip gets the win for Meng.

Rating: D-. Oh this was bad and the majority of that seems to be on Meng. He wouldn't sell ANYTHING here, as Jericho was hitting all kinds of kicks but Meng would just stare at him. I'm assuming this was the beginning of Meng push #84 which would likely wind up going nowhere at all.

Jimmy Hart says that was a message to Benoit, who faces Meng at Slamboree. Oh so there was a point to it. Sullivan and Jackie (about as

close to falling out of a dress as you can be without being censored)
come out to talk about Benoit too. When is the retirement match already?
This time Sullivan rants about his kids and says something about sorority
sisters for his daughter. Meng goes after Sullivan for no apparent reason
but Jackie gets in his way. Meng speaks English and says that if it
wasn't for her, he would take both of them. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THIS
STABLE?????

Video on Benoit.

Steiner Brothers vs. Public Enemy

Before the Steiners come out we cut to the back where the Steiners are
fighting with the Dungeon of Doom. The Steiners are the hometown boys
here and their dad is here. Rick and Grunge start with Grunge being
powerslammed down almost immediately. Off to Rocco who grabs a headlock
but Scott tags himself in. He picks up Rocco and throws him at Grunge out
of a gorilla press in a scary power display. Back to Rick vs. Grunge
after the Public Enemy bails to the floor for a bit. A double clothesline
puts Rick down but Rocco misses a flip dive off the top. Not that it
matters as Konnan/Morrus run in for the double DQ.

Hour #2 begins so we get the usual recap.

Here's JJ for his introductory speech, which isn't even good enough to
put in the ring. Tony interrupts him to ask about Nick Patrick. JJ says
he'll consider the reinstatement. As for Bischoff, he has no authority
but he still has a contract and he can still be around. JJ goes into a
bunch of legal jargon and for some reason Mr. Wallstreet and Big Bubba
are under contract to WCW instead of the NWO. Bischoff comes out and says
bite me. Eric explains how great he is and how he doesn't care what
anyone else says.

JJ says Eric has made the center of the wrestling universe WCW instead of
Stamford, Connecticut. Eric says bite me. JJ says this isn't acceptable

but Bischoff leaves. Since it's JJ Dillon, he talks about shoes to close things out (old school fans will get that reference). Absolutely nothing was accomplished here, but thank goodness they got a wrestling guy to be the authority figure so that A, people know who he is and B, he knows how to talk in front of a live audience.

Scotty Riggs vs. Jeff Jarrett

This is a rematch from Saturday Night which the world was waiting for. Jarrett lost on Saturday and beat him up post match so we needed a second match. Riggs charges in and gets beaten down by Jeff. A swinging neckbreaker and release gutwrench suplex put Riggs down followed by the move that would eventually be called The Stroke.

Riggs gets in some quick offense but Jarrett backdrops him to the floor which isn't a DQ because we're not enforcing that rule right now. Time to look at Reggie White as Jeff misses an enziguri. Scotty's top rope cross body gets two and here's Mongo with the briefcase. White jumps the railing to stop him and Mongo runs away. Jeff takes out the knee and a quick Figure Four gets the submission win.

Rating: D+. This was barely above a squash and was pretty much here for the White vs. Mongo stuff. At the end of the day, I'm not sure who cared about White vs. McMichael but it's something different than the Horsemen arguing over Debra which makes it a huge improvement. Well maybe not huge but it's better at least.

Cruiserweight Title: Syxx vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

Syxx is defending. Nash is the only NWO backup here so far. Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get an extended advantage. Rey takes him to the mat with a headlock and Syxx slaps the mat but it doesn't count as a tap for no apparent reason. Back up and Rey slaps him in the face before headscissoring Syxx down. Syxx gets in a kick and drops that fast leg to take over.

More kicks in the corner set up the Bronco Buster which isn't named yet. That would be Syxx hitting it as Rey hadn't yet adopted the move. The champ hooks an abdominal stretch but gets caught holding the ropes. After Rey is sent to the floor for a second, Syxx misses another Bronco Buster back inside. A somewhat messed up West Coast pop gets two and a top rope rana sends the champ to the floor. Nash comes in and kills Rey with the Jackknife (which the referee somehow didn't notice), allowing Syxx to put on the Buzz Kill for the easy win.

Rating: C. Not bad here but the ending sucked. Seriously, how could the referee not notice Rey slamming into the mat two feet away from him? Syxx would hold the title for a few more months while Rey did his thing for the foreseeable future. Either way, this was fine but the ending was about what you expected.

Dillon comes out post match and yells but nothing comes of it. Rey is taken out on a stretcher.

Video on Luger.

Hogan is in a movie and we take a look at him on set.

Here's the NWO again with something to say. Syxx talks about how Flair and Piper were out here last week talking about respect. He wants to know what kind of respect it is to rip off the Nature Boy gimmick from Buddy Rogers. Nash isn't worried about Piper because he looked down the road the old guys paved and saw nothing but potholes.

He goes on a big rant about backstage politics, talking about how people's kids were getting pushed and that was it. Then they went to New York where everyone was trying to get the business out of the funk the old guys left it in. Nash talks about how Piper and Flair are going to have to beat respect out of them because this is their generation now. Where do I even begin?

First and foremost, this is 1997. I'm writing this review in the year 2012 and odds are if you're reading this, you knew what Nash was talking about. That being said, you're probably in the minority of wrestling fans that got what Nash meant. Now imagine how small a percentage that was back in 1997. At the end of the day, most wrestling fans either A, didn't get what Nash was talking about and/or B, don't care what he's talking about.

This was the period where the "real" stuff was brought into play more and more and it's a big reason why things started to go downhill a few years later. Most of the fans, especially WCW fans, wanted to see Hogan get beaten up and the NWO get what was coming to them. The problem was that was the logic on paper.

Then you get promos like this one, where the NWO paints themselves to be the young guys who are being treated badly and make themselves the heroes. It all got way more confusing than it needed to be, and when you make things too confusing in something that's supposed to be fun and mostly mindless entertainment, your audience is going to stop caring.

As if that's not enough, listen to what he was talking about: people that took over the business and wouldn't leave anything behind for anyone else. Nash's boss in the NWO is HULK FREAKING HOGAN. So not only would most fans not have gotten what he meant, but the ones that did would see him as a hypocrite. Then on top of all THAT, this set up a totally meaningless six man tag which didn't mean anything and was never mentioned again after Slamboree.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Psychosis

The luchador hits a dropkick and goes up, only to get pulled into a Diamond Cutter for the pin in less than a minute.

Savage pops up in the crowd and implies Kimberly is in love with him but nothing comes of it.

Here are Flair, Piper and Greene to close the show. They call out the NWO and Hall finally returns to stare at them. The B Team gets beaten down to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. What a worthless show. From the Nash promo to the short (longest topped out at 6:01) and dull matches to JJ Dillon being treated as less than nothing on his first night as WCW boss, this was absolutely horrible. Slamboree would wind up being perhaps the most pointless show in the history of WCW which is saying a lot when you think about it. Terrible show tonight with absolutely nothing of value.

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