

Monday Nitro – May 5, 1997: Hogan Is Back. He Didn't Do Much But He's Back.

Monday Nitro #86

Date: May 5, 1997

Location: Jenkins Center, Lakeland, Florida

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Larry Zbyszko, Bobby Heenan

It's another hour long show this week which was a nice change of pace last week. We're finally getting close to the end of the build to Slamboree which has gone on way too long now. I believe Hogan is back tonight which will help a lot with the levels of interest on these shows. If nothing else the main event is better than Mongo vs. Barbarian. Let's get to it.

We open with Flair, Piper and Greene at the announce table but there's a banner that says "Tradition Bites! NWO 4 Life!" behind them. They freak out before they say anything and we go to the opening sequence.

Back with the three guys in the ring and there's another paper drop like last week. Piper goes on a rant about last week and the 75% of the gate demands the NWO made. He doesn't carry a purse so that's fine with him. JJ comes out and says the NWO is getting 75% and Piper has to deal with it. Didn't Piper just say it's ok with him? JJ leaves and Flair says he'll be ready in Charlotte. There won't be a single pothole in the road.

Public Enemy vs. Konnan/Hugh Morrus

Public Enemy's music started while Flair, Piper and Greene were still in the ring and Flair walked past them as they came out. Are they in a time crunch or something? Both teams bring out tables and it's a brawl to start. They almost immediately head to the floor and Jimmy Hart is put on

the table but Konnan makes a last second save. Public Enemy loads up two tables on top of each other and Grunge dives through both, but Konnan was pulled out before the collision.

After all that, it's time for an actual match to start. Rocco hits a standing moonsault onto both guys for two but Konnan powerbombs him down. There's a table set up in the middle of the ring but as Rock goes up to splash Konnan through it, Morrus superplexes him through Konnan through the table. Even though Rock is on top of Konnan, Morrus covers Rock for the pin.

Rating: D. I was tempted to not rate this but it was long enough. I have no idea how this wasn't a DQ in there somewhere but even though it wasn't, the match was still a mess with a confusing ending. I guess the idea was to fire up the crowd, or to just copy ECW, but either way it was a big mess and it didn't make a ton of sense.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Syxx

Hall, Nash and Syxx come out in jeans. Rey is looking around and Syxx gets in a spin kick to start. The Bronco Buster is countered by a kick and the Outsiders come in. Hall gets in a shot to the back and hits the Outsiders Edge. Syxx wins with the Buzz Killer in about a minute. How bad are the referees tonight? Somehow he didn't notice the two huge men in the ring at the same time?

JJ and Nick Patrick come out to break the hold but the NWO comes out as well. Eric tells JJ to get out of here because JJ has no power. Good grief what is the point in JJ even existing if they're just going to flat out tell us he has no authority? Syxx yells about McMahon because that's edgy.

Lee Marshall does his road report.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff with something to say. Hogan runs his mouth about the Wolfpac and calls out Sting but no one answers. That's all from Hollywood at the moment.

Steven Regal vs. Meng

This is fallout from Regal trying to help Benoit from getting beaten down last week. They go at it immediately and sweet goodness are they going at it. Meng pounds Regal down in the corner but Regal fires right back with punches that stagger the monster back. Not that it matters as here's Kevin Sullivan, who Regal goes after for the DQ. This lasted about 40 seconds but there was more action in it than most matches you'll see on Raw in a given week.

Meng puts Regal in the Tongan Death Grip post match. Sullivan gets him to drop it and Regal starts beating on them again. The Death Grip stops him cold. Regal looked awesome here.

Video on DDP vs. Savage.

Here are Page and Kimberly. Kimberly looks great in a white dress, even though she stumbles down the ramp. Page talks about being in a lot of bar fights over the years, but none of them were as bad as the one at Spring Stampede. Kimberly refutes Savage's statements that she loves him, but here's Savage in the crowd. He tells Kim to stop calling him and that's about it.

Alex Wright vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jeff immediately armdrags him down and struts before we go to some chain wrestling. A swinging neckbreaker puts Wright down and Jeff hits the running hip attack while Wright is in 619 position. Wright comes back with aggression but then stops to dance. Debra's distraction lets Jarrett chop block Wright and the figure four ends this fast.

Time for NASCAR stuff. There's an announcement coming in two weeks regarding WCW and NASCAR. Oh joy.

Glacier vs. Lizmark Jr.

Superkick, Lizmark is pinned, 17 seconds.

Post match James Vandenberg (James Mitchell of TNA fame), Mortis and Wrath come out for the big heel beating.

Harlem Heat vs. Lex Luger/The Giant

Apparently Luger was injured in Japan by the NWO so it's Giant on his own. Giant says he has a partner to replace Luger though.

Diamond Dallas Page/The Giant vs. Harlem Heat

Savage pops up as Page comes out but Page steals a crutch from him. Hogan jumps Page from behind with the other crutch and Page is in trouble. The NWO comes out to beat on Page. Where is Giant? Oh he's in the ring getting ganged up on by the NWO. Flair and Greene come out as well but get beaten down. Piper comes in once everyone else is down and is promptly beaten as well. Hogan runs his mouth to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Nitro is in a bad stage at this point as the shows aren't really good or bad but rather just kind of there. The star power helped a lot here as this felt like stuff that actually mattered. The problem with that is it's the same stuff we've seen time after time. JJ continues to mean nothing at all which would be the case for a good while to come. The NWO stuff is back to what it used to be, which is to say that it's repetitive. Nothing of note would really change until August, and even that was just for five days. The show being an hour was a big help here though, as two hours would be too much.

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