

Monday Nitro – May 26, 1997: Star Power Is The Key To This Show

Monday Nitro #89

Date: May 26, 1997

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 6,484

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

We're back to the regular two hours again and that might be something good in this case. Also Hogan is here tonight which always helps make the shows feel bigger than they do without him. We're coming up on the Great American Bash in three weeks and odds are we'll get the main event announced tonight. Let's get to it.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to open the show. Hogan's beard appears to be infecting his head and is growing at an alarming rate. This is the one year anniversary of Hall jumping the guard rail. Bischoff says he's checked under the ring and there's not Sting this week. Hogan talks about partying in the Bahamas with Nick and Brooke, which are names that don't mean anything at this point. Hogan runs down Sting and Eric says that Sting is just afraid of Hulk. Hogan says he's going to be looking around and if he finds anyone in Sting makeup, he's going to take them out.

Hector Garza/Juventud Guerrera/Super Calo vs. Ciclope/Damien/La Parka

This is under Mexican rules, which means if you go to the floor, another member of your team can come in just like a tag. La Parka and Juvy get us going with Juvy taking over with a quick spin kick to the face. Juvy goes up but his cross body is caught and La Parka struts over to the corner and sets Juvy up top. Juvy comes back with a big top rope rana to send Parka to the floor.

Off to Ciclope as Larry complains about the Mexican rules because "we're not in Mexico." Sometimes common sense is the best approach. Calo comes in to replace Parka and hits a headscissors to send Parka to the floor. Calo hits a HUGE suicide dive to send both guys into the crowd, giving us Damien vs. Garza. Garza is basically here for one move: a corkscrew plancha to the floor. The idea is that he's going to hit it but you don't know when or how many people he'll take out.

Everything breaks down and it's almost impossible to tell who is legal as four people came in at the same time when Garza and Damien went to the floor. It appears to be Calo vs. Damien now with Calo in control, only to take his eyes off Damien and get jumped. Off to Garza who speeds things up but gets sent to the floor.

Everyone goes to the floor and it's time to fire off the dives. Garza hits his big corkscrew plancha, prompting Larry to ask if Garza thinks he's Captain Planet. Turner property or not, that's the best Larry can come up with? Damien tries a seated senton back inside but Garza catches him in a powerbomb and hits a standing moonsault for the pin.

Rating: B. This is pretty much the textbook definition for a lucha libre spotfest and there's nothing wrong with that. Other than Juvy, none of these guys have stood out but they know how to fire off all kinds of flips and dives. While not a great match from a technical standpoint or anything like that, it was fun and the dives were great. That's what you want to do with an opener too. Good stuff here.

Alex Wright vs. Psychosis

This is Wright's first match after his heel turn last week. Wright flips around to escape a wristlock but Psychosis does the exact same thing. A jumping kick to the face gives Wright control again and he pounds away in the corner. Psychosis comes back with a moonsault press for two followed by a top rope spin kick to the back of Wright's head for one. Wright bails to the floor and dances a bit, only for Psychosis to bust out a

mostly missed moonsault to take both guys out. Back in and the guillotine legdrop pins Wright.

Rating: D+. This was pretty messy. Also why in the world would you have Wright lose completely clean after a heel turn last week? The announcers are pushing this as a huge upset and to be fair it probably is. The match had almost no flow or story to it at all and the big spots didn't hit. Not terrible but really messy.

Sonny Onoo still has a surprise for Chono tonight but won't say who it is. Sonny tries to sign Psychosis as he leaves and Psychosis is interested. As Sonny gloats, Madusa comes out and wants a Women's Title shot. She says she'll do anything for it and immediately regrets saying it. Sonny says she'll get the shot at the Bash but if she loses, her career is over. She agrees and that's it.

We get a quick look at Ernest Miller and his martial arts background.

Wrath vs. Mark Starr

Total squash with Wrath throwing Starr all over the place, including out to the floor so Mortis can get in some shots. Wrath does look awesome and has a great name, but this feud went on so long that it killed whatever he had going. A top rope clothesline kills Starr and a bicycle kick sets up the double arm Rock Bottom to end the massacre. Apparently that move is called the Death Penalty.

Konnan vs. Villano IV

They're going really light on the promos tonight. Hugh Morrus talks about how he doesn't like Konnan anymore, which I think happened at Slamboree. Konnan and Villano shake hands before Konnan hits him in the ribs to start. Konnan pounds him into the corner and fires off a dropkick. He shouts VIVA MEXICO which apparently fires up Villano.

After a brief comeback, Villano shouts VIVA MEXICO as well. Not that it really matters as Konnan hits an Alabama Slam out of the corner to stop the momentum dead. Here's Morrus but security stops him in the aisle. The 187 (fisherman's DDT) kills Villano dead and Tequila Sunrise (half crab with armbar) gets the win for Konnan.

Rating: C-. Just a squash here as Konnan was a guy who had a decent place in the midcard. The next step for him of course: put him in the NWO where he got lost in the shuffle. He was a Mexican wrestler who could actually wrestle a style different from the dozen or so other luchadores they had which gave him something to offer. Then it went nowhere because the NWO didn't have enough lackeys.

Konnan runs down the Dungeon and Sullivan post match.

Masahiro Chono vs. ???

Sonny comes out to introduce the surprise: The Great Muta. Chono is NWO. We get a LONG stall at the beginning of the match, during which Larry announces that the Japanese are in fact a different race. No contact in the first minute. Or in the second minute. Muta puts on a VERY weak headlock. So weak that Chono just ducks out of it and Muta doesn't move his arms. Sonny freaks out on Muta, Muta sprays mist in his eyes, and Muta joins the NWO. Well no one had joined in a few months so I guess we needed someone else to inflate the ranks.

Hour #2 starts.

Savage talks about his feud with Page. Apparently he wants a rematch at the Bash, which may or may not already be set. The idea is that Savage was embarrassed by a guy in his first main event match at Spring Stampede and it's driving him crazier than he already is.

Here are Page and Kimberly with a rebuttal. The match is already signed

apparently. Page has the crutch that was broken over his back by Hogan. He talks about how he's under Savage's skin and how he owes Hogan a Diamond Cutter. Page owes Savage even more though and he'll get that at the Bash. Kimberly says she's keeping the pieces of the crutch as a memento. She also has some of the hair that Savage pulled out of her head. Page says you don't mess with family or his wife, and Savage messed with both. See, this is how you build up a match. I want to see these two fight now.

Barbarian vs. Jim Powers

Powers fires off some basic offense to start but can't take Barbarian down. A clothesline takes Powers' head off and Barbarian sends him out to the floor for some more beating. Back in and they chop it out with Barbie taking over. Powers gets in some boots but he doesn't jump far enough coming off the middle rope so Barbarian can catch him in a powerslam. A big boot ends Powers.

Rating: D. Powers is FINALLY done after this, not appearing on Nitro for over a year after this. Why we needed to have Barbarian get a squash win on Nitro is kind of head scratching but it was something different than they've had in the rest of the show. Meng has been doing some singles stuff around this time so maybe that's why.

Benoit comes out post match and wants Sullivan back soon. Hart says Barbarian is ready for Benoit right now so Benoit takes his jacket off and gets in the ring. Hart says next week.

The Giant vs. Jerry Flynn/Johnny Swinger/Rick Fuller

The jobbers have to tag here so what are you expecting to happen? Swinger starts and can't do anything. Flynn can't do anything so it's off to Fuller who is by far the biggest guy on the team. After Fuller gets beaten up, all three come in with Flynn and Fuller getting belly to back suplexed at the same time. There's a chokeslam to Swinger, there's one

for Fuller, and there's one for Flynn. Giant pins all Swinger and Flynn at the same time.

Luger and Giant are in the ring and we hear about an open contract issued by Hogan and Rodman for the PPV Luger talks about being an NBA fan and watching Rodman. At Uncensored, Rodman came into the WCW world and Luger would like to invite them back. Luger issues the challenge for the PPV and Giant says they're ready. I'm missing something because that match wound up happening at Bash at the Beach. Maybe that's what they meant or maybe it was changed.

Lee Marshall does his road report jazz.

Here's Syxx to talk about Flair. He shows us a video from last week of him and the Outsiders beating up Flair before bringing the Outsiders out. Hall and Nash have the newer design of the tag titles which I've always liked better. They make fun of Piper and say Piper couldn't make Hogan sleep unless they showed him Piper's latest movie. To the shock of everyone, Hall and Nash offer to defend the titles. The opponents aren't the shock. It's that they're actually defending the belts. They want Piper and Flair so they can retire them once and for all.

Jeff Jarrett/Steve McMichael vs. Harlem Heat

Before the match we get a quick recap of Kevin Greene running in last week. Booker and Jeff start things off but it's off to Mongo before anything happens. Mongo runs him over but Booker won't tag out. Booker escapes a belly to back suplex but gets punched in the face and clotheslined down. Off to Jarrett as Greene is on commentary now. Stevie comes in and pounds on Jarrett in the corner before slamming him down. We cut to the commentators so we can see that Greene is in fact wearing a football jacket.

Off to Booker vs. Mongo again with the Horsemen taking over. Booker misses a charge into the corner but Stevie blasts Mongo in the back of

the head to put him down. Stevie uses the power stuff to take over on McMichael before it's back to Booker for a chinlock. Harlem Heat double teams to draw in Jarrett which allows for even more double teaming.

Stevie puts on another chinlock so we cut to the announcers again. Mongo comes out of nowhere with a powerslam to Booker and it's hot (?) tag to Jarrett. Jeff fires off dropkicks to take over and everything breaks down. Mongo realizes Greene is with the announcers and walks off for a brawl. Jeff puts Booker in the Figure Four but Stevie breaks it up and a Hart Attack with Booker hitting a side kick instead of a clothesline gets the pin for the Heat.

Rating: D+. This was long and not interesting. The problem is there's no reason for these guys to be fighting and the main story of the match was about the football players fighting, which I don't think anyone was interested in seeing. Just like last week: these matches have almost no meaning because the Outsiders never defend the belts, so these guys are all fighting for nothing.

Jarrett says that might be the last straw.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to end the show. Hogan says the title is on the line right now if Sting wants to face him for it. Bischoff says unfortunately Sting isn't here tonight. They turn their backs to the camera and Sting pops up through the mat. And of course it's the fake one and the announcers are fooled.

The NWO Sting stays on his knees in front of Hogan and nods when asked if he's half the man Hogan is. He bows down to Hogan and the real Sting repels into the ring. There's a Death Drop for Bischoff and Hogan falls over the bowing fake Sting. The real one beats up the fake one and here come the troops. Sting flies into the rafters again to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This started off hot but slowed way down afterwards.

Having Hogan around helped a lot and you can see that they're building to Sting vs. Hogan eventually. I don't think anyone expected it to take another seven months, but it was worth it in theory. As for the rest of the show, it wasn't bad but as always, the show is better when the bigger names are in play.

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