

Monday Nitro – July 28, 1997: A Commercial For A Commercial

Monday Nitro #98

Date: July 28, 1997

Location: Charleston Civic Center, Charleston, West Virginia

Attendance: 9,575

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

Back on Monday here as we're getting closer and closer to Road Wild. Hopefully we can continue the roll they're on that started last week. The main stories going are on what side is Hennig on and Luger vs. Hogan, both of which should wind up being interesting ideas. Other than that there are some decent stories going on and I'm enjoying this show more lately. Let's get to it.

The Nitro Girls do their thing.

Curt Hennig/Ric Flair vs. Vicious and Delicious

Hennig (POP) starts with Norton. Scott elbows Hennig down almost immediately and chops him to the floor. We head inside for Hennig's arm work to go nowhere, so here's Flair. Nice job of making your new guy look inept there WCW. Norton runs Flair over and hits a big shoulder block to take him down again. Off to Bagwell but his posing lets Hennig get in a shot to the back of Buff's head to slow things down. Buff pounds on Flair in the corner so Flair chops him down.

Bagwell misses a dropkick and it's Figure Four time. Hennig and Norton get in a fight and Flair lets the hold go for no apparent reason. We take a break and come back with Norton choking Flair in the corner. Flair pounds back at Norton but double teaming puts him down again. Norton and Bagwell double team Flair for a bit but Bagwell gets chopped down,

allowing the hot tag to Hennig. House is cleaned and Syxx goes after Flair. Flair pulls Norton. to the floor and the PerfectPlex pins Bagwell.

Rating: C-. Really basic match here which was designed to put Hennig over. It did a better job at putting Norton over but at least they were trying. Hennig would be the biggest story in the company for the next few weeks, and unlike Jarrett a few months before, Hennig would actually be OVER by the end of it. See what talent and charisma can get you? Jarrett had talent but it wasn't the right character for him at all.

Here's Luger for a chat. By chat I mean strip session to show off how ripped he is. Luger talks about how ready he is for Hogan. However, he mentions a clause in Hogan's contract that says Hogan has to defend his title every so often, so next week it's Hogan vs. Luger for the title.

TV Title: Prince Iaukea vs. Ultimo Dragon

Dragon is defending and runs the Prince over to start. The headstand in the corner mesmerizes another opponent and the champ puts on a reverse chinlock. The wide section of empty chairs that were full during the first match is a telling sign about the interest in this match. Then again, the people in the match could probably tell you the same thing. Dragon loads up the super rana but Prince superplexes him down instead. We get a pinfall reversal sequence before Iaukea dropkicks the champ down for no cover. A superkick gets two and Iaukea blocks the Dragon Sleeper. The second attempt works though and Prince taps.

Rating: D+. Dragon was good but man alive Iaukea wasn't interesting at all. The problem with the TV Title is that it went on guys the fans were given no reason to care about. Dragon is indeed very talented and can put on entertaining matches, but his matches aren't great enough to make people overlook his lack of personality. That's the problem with a lot of the luchadores and other guys in WCW and there was no way around it.

Here's Flair who says that Hennig is officially the newest Horseman.

Here's Hennig who says he's not a Horseman but Flair says Hennig is just laying low.

Texas Hangmen vs. Steve McMichael/Chris Benoit

The Hangmen are Mean Mike and Tough Tom. They're masked guys who I have seen in Memphis wrestling before. Benoit starts with let's say Tom and gets hit by Mike in the back to give Tom the advantage. Off to Mongo who runs over both Hangmen and powerslams Mike down. Some clotheslines do the same thing and we've got a phone call for Tony from the Outsiders. Hall tells Tony he better accept the charges. Tony: "Well if it's 1-800 Collect I will."

They were a sponsor at the time, making that somewhere between clever and eye roll inducing. The match gets ignored as the Hangmen take over on Mongo. Steve comes back with a bulldog and there's the tag to Benoit. The call finally ends as everything breaks down. Mongo can barely tombstone Mike but it sets up the Crossface by Benoit for the win.

Rating: D. Phone call aside, this wasn't very good. The Hangmen were jobbers and that's fine, but the Horsemen looked to have a lot of trouble with them which they shouldn't have had. Not a good match or anything and it didn't showcase the Horsemen. The phone call didn't help anything either, especially since it didn't accomplish anything and it only said the Outsiders would be on the show next week.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Alex Wright

Jericho is defending here. The opening part of the match is ignored for the sake of house show ads as Wright slaps Jericho in the corner. They fight for arm control with the champion taking Alex to the mat. Those big stretches of empty seats in the crowd are kind of distracting. A spinwheel kick puts Wright down and out to the floor, causing the match to come to a halt.

Jericho dives onto Wright but gets suplexed down to change momentum. Wright stomps Jericho down in the corner but misses a top rope knee drop. The Lionsault hits Wright's back but Jericho doesn't cover. Wright goes to the apron and gets put in a sleeper by Jericho who is in the ring. Alex guillotines him down and hits a German suplex for the clean pin and the title.

Rating: C. This was an interesting match as you had Wright losing most of the first few matches after his turn before winning the title completely clean here. The fact that it was a clean pin helps, but I'm not exactly sure what the point was in jobbing him out the last few weeks to give him the belt here. Still though, not bad.

Here are Jarrett, Malenko and Debra with something to say. Dean says he's in with Jarrett and Debra is shaking hands with Wright as he walks up the ramp. Apparently Jarrett was seen with Eddie Guerrero on Saturday Night and Dean isn't cool with that. Jeff says people just want to be with winners. Debra runs her mouth of course. Thank goodness Jeff and Debra would leave in just a few months.

Hour #2 begins and the pyro is back.

Syxx vs. Diamond Dallas Page

They slug it out to start until Page busts out a pumphandle backbreaker for two. That's a new move for him I believe. A neckbreaker puts Syxx down as well, followed by an elbow to put him on the floor. Syxx comes back with some kicks in the corner and there's the Bronco Buster. Vincent comes out but Page avoids the Buzzkill. He hits the Cutter on Syxx but the Vincent distraction lets Hennig come in and blast Page with something in the back of the head. Syxx gets the easy pin.

Rating: D+. This didn't have the time to get anywhere but the match was more about an angle than the wrestling. Page was on such a roll at this point that seeing him lose was actually a shocking sight. Today, you see

people losing almost all the time, which makes wins and losses mean very little.

Tony: "CLEARLY CURT HENNIG IS PART OF THE NWO!" Very clearly indeed.

Dean Malenko vs. Hector Guerrero

This should be good. They head to the mat to start with both guys fighting for arm control. Dean takes Hector down with a snap mare as we hear about a Bobby Heenan personal appearance in Milwaukee. He says he's the human being that made Milwaukee famous, which should get a chuckle out of old school fans. Off to a headscissors on the mat by Malenko but Hector escapes into a modified STF. They trade rollups out of the corner followed by a sunset flip for two for Guerrero. Here are Jarrett and Debra as Dean puts the Cloverleaf on for the tap out.

Rating: C-. Technically fine but this Jarrett stuff is really dull. Allegedly he's trying to form his own team to fight the Horsemen, but at the end of the day it's Jeff Jarrett leading the charge. That makes it pretty hard to get interested in the team at all, especially with Debra getting to talk about them every week. Nothing special to see here.

Chavo Guerrero comes out to check on his uncle and gets beaten up as well.

Konnan speaks Spanish and says he doesn't like Rey. Apparently Rey is filling an Affirmative Action quota. Of Americans? Konnan vs. La Parka later.

Lee Marshall is in Detroit.

Giant comes out for his match but Savage is in the crowd with something to say to him. They've got a match at Road Wild. Giant says what Savage is about to see is just a preview.

Giant vs. Great Muta

The bell rings and here's Eric Bischoff to commentary. Thankfully during his full entrance and the walk to the desk, nothing happened in the ring. Muta fires off some fast kicks but gets caught in the corner and chopped a lot. Giant pounds away in the corner so Muta bails to the floor. Back in and Muta goes to the eyes before firing off some dropkicks. Some more shots to the knees take Giant down and there's the Muta Elbow. Giant shoves him off of a cover and shrugs off some top rope shots. He grabs Muta by the throat and after covering his eyes from the Mist, the chokeslam gets the pin.

Rating: D+. What did you expect from this match? There are only a handful of ways to fight Giant and going after the knee is the most common answer. The covering of the eyes is one of those things that seems to be common sense but no one ever does. Muta is a really talented guy but he was basically a jobber in the NWO. Much like the rest of the show, nothing of note to see here.

Post match Larry Z comes to the announcers' desk and grabs Bischoff. He drags Eric to the ring for a chokeslam to a good pop.

Konnan vs. La Parka

Konnan immediately beats him down and hits his rolling clothesline. La Parka dropkicks him out of the air and hits a legdrop for two. Tony of course is gushing about the chokeslam. La Parka gets a chair with Konnan's name on it but Konnan dropkicks it into his face. 187 and Tequila Sunrise end La Parka. Quick match.

Psychosis comes out for the save post match.

The announcers talk about the world title match next week and we get a phone call from JJ Dillon. Apparently he and the executive committee want

Sting back in the ring by September.

Randy Savage vs. Scott Steiner

Savage slaps him in the face to start before shoving referee Randy Anderson into Scott to take him down. Steiner comes back with a gorilla press slam to send Savage to the floor. Savage throws a chair into the ring and we take a break. Back with Steiner hitting a belly to belly suplex, sending Savage to the floor. Just like old times, Randy hides behind Liz and sends Scott knees first into the steps.

They fight into the crowd with Scott in trouble. Back to ringside and Steiner is rammed into the barricade to keep Randy in control. We head back inside and Scott catches Savage off the top in another belly to belly. Rick and Liz get in an argument, allowing Steiner to backdrop Savage over the top and out to the floor, which should be a DQ. Now Steiner throws Savage into the crowd, possibly injuring Randy's shoulder.

Back to ringside and they brawl a bit more with Scott maintaining control. Steiner gets two on a small package followed by a butterfly powerbomb for no cover. A Super Frankensteiner puts Savage down but Liz throws in her shoe. Cue the Outsiders for the SHOCKING, yes SHOCKING I SAY, run-in DQ.

Rating: C. This wasn't bad but it was mainly brawling. Scott didn't know how to wrestle a main event style match at this point but his singles push was coming. Granted it was years before it actually worked but they were trying at least. The ending was obvious because the announcers were so sure that the Outsiders weren't there that they had to be there. As usual, not much to see here.

Post match the Outsiders beat down the Steiners until Giant makes the save. He calls out Nash but Nash hides behind security. The security steps aside and says go get him....but we're out of time. Well we could see Nash get in, but we need to see Giant chokeslam Bischoff one more time to

end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The show wasn't terrible but this felt like a big commercial for next week's show which in theory is a commercial for the PPV the following Saturday. On top of that, considering there's a world title match the next week, there wasn't a lot of focus on it. It seems more like Giant vs. Savage is the world title match when you look at how much hype they got. The matches here were nothing special either.

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