

Fall Brawl 1997: WCW Gets Beaten Up Again

Fall Brawl 1997

Date: September 14, 1997

Location: Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Attendance: 11,939

Commentators: Ton Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

THINK THAT'S A LONG ENOUGH LOCATION??? With so many WCW shows left I'm going to start hammering more of them out by doing the remaining versions of various shows, starting with the last three Fall Brawls, as in 97-99. Anyway this is more or less the last classic WarGames and the roster for it more or less sucks. The main perk of this show for old school fans is that there are three matches over 15 minutes. Anyway let's get to it.

The opening video is about Flair and the Horsemen with Anderson inducting Hennig into the Horsemen. Also the NWO making fun of the Horsemen in a hilarious parody. That's about it apparently.

Heenan in a bowtie is a weird look.

Cruiserweight Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho is champion and Eddie is freshly heel and dominant up to this point. The double ring setup is always a nice touch. Eddie bails to the floor and covers his ears to avoid the booing. Technical stuff to start us off with Eddie getting frustrated. Very slow start here but they have a ton of time to work with so it's fine. Eddie gets some HARD chops in the corner so Jericho is like screw that and chops Eddie down.

Chris works on the arm and the fans want...something. Back to

the mat with Jericho working on the arm some more. Eddie tries to speed things up a bit so Jericho LAUNCHES him into a hot shot across the top and hits the Lionsault for two. Eddie counters an armbar into a smaller version of the same thing Jericho did earlier. Nice little psychology there. Modified Backstabber and Eddie holds onto it for a bow and arrow style move.

Belly to back gets no cover for Guerrero. There's a surfboard and I still don't see how that move is physically possible. Oh never mind as he hooks it with a chinlock instead of the regular move. Jericho gets up, only to be taken down by a European uppercut. Hilo works on the back even more. Gory Special goes on and Jericho is in trouble. Jericho reverses into one of his own and slams Eddie face first.

They slug it out and Jericho takes over, hitting some clotheslines in the corner. Eddie walks the ropes ala Old School but gets crotched on the top. Jericho hits his springboard dropkick and tries a Piledriver on the apron. Instead he shifts to a powerbomb but drops Eddie backwards onto the top as Jericho drops to the floor. It's kind of hard to describe.

Back in the Canadian hits a German to the Latino for two. Eddie pops up and hits a spinning Rock Bottom but Eddie can't follow up. Powerslam gets two for Jericho. Spinwheel kick gets two. Flapjack by Jericho but Eddie reverses La Magistrol for two of his own. Jericho hits a double powerbomb and puts Eddie on top. Chris tries a superplex but Eddie reverses into a cross body out of that. Frog Splash gives Eddie the title.

Rating: A-. Gee what a shock: you give Eddie and Jericho 17 minutes and you get an awesome match. Eddie was the freaking man at this point as six weeks later he and Rey would have what is arguably the best WCW match of all time at Halloween Havoc. Great match with a ton of awesome spots and a fast pace. Sadly, the rest of the show just wishes it could be this

awesome.

Jeff Jarrett is doing an interview on WCW.com. He would be back in the WWF in like 5 weeks. You can chat with Jarrett right now! Get off your couch and go to your computer and talk to him!

Harlem Heat vs. Steiner Brothers

Larry Z is on commentary now instead of Tenay. This is a #1 contender match, even though the Outsiders never actually defended the titles. I don't mean against the #1 contenders. I mean they never defended them period. Basically a team would be #1 contenders for a few weeks then there would be another match to determine new ones. Jackie is with Harlem Heat and DiBiase is with the Steiners. Scott was about to start his slow heel turn but it wasn't quite here yet.

Stevie and Scott start us off. Stevie hammers away and Steiner is like boy please and hammers away on him. And never mind as Stevie kicks his head off. Side slam gets no cover. Booker looks all ready for a tag but that might be a better match so we'll stick with Stevie. Scott overpowers him for a bit but Booker busts out a full nelson of all things to take over.

Suplex puts Scott down but Booker jumps into a belly to belly and the Steiners clean house. Rick comes in to hammer away on Booker but it's off to Scott quickly. Big spin kick puts Rick down and it's off to Stevie. Rare to see the Steiners tagging in and out that much. The Steiners get all physical on them but Scott gets caught by a pretty sweet kick by Booker to send him to the floor.

Stevie chokes away and Jackie continues to be worthless. Rick tries a save but it's time for Scott to play face in peril for awhile. Big forearm gets two. Hot tag to Rick who cleans house. He hits the bulldog off the top on someone but it's the wrong man. Heat Seeker (Doomsday Device but with a dropkick instead of a clothesline) gets two on Rick. A German

suplex/clothesline combo ends Ray quickly after that.

Rating: C. Meh match here as it's really just a tag match. It's not bad or anything but you can only see the same two teams fight so many times before you get tired of it. I'd have liked to see Harlem Heat get a shot but the Steiners and Outsiders were joined at the hip for the most part so that wasn't going to happen. At least the Steiners would split in February.

TV Title: Ultimo Dragonvs. Alex Wright

This was one of the worst title feuds you'll ever see and so it went on forever. The matches were ok but at the same time it just went on and on and it was never really interesting. Wright is champion here. Oh and Wright is kind of heelish now. There are four commentators now. Long feeling out process to start as I have a feeling we're in for a ver long one here.

Wright hits the floor for a breather and comes back with a headlock. Dragon speeds things up and fires off the kicks, sending Wright to the floor again. Back in Wright hits a Stun Gun and takes over again. Spinwheel kick gets two and Wright hits a pancake (Piledriver but you fall forward instead). Off to the chinlock as it's clear we do in fact have a lot of time here.

That gets broken up and we go right back to it again in case you forgot what it looked like I guess. Belly to back gets two and we HIT THE CHINLOCK AGAIN! Dragon wakes up a bit and hits a crossbody followed by some kicks. A spinwheel kick misses though and Dragon goes down again. The fourth chinlock in less than five minutes goes on as you have to start questioning why they've been given this much time when you could cut the match in half to have an extra match. Larry says a lot of people used to kill the clock like this, which is a nice line considering he's legendary for it.

Make that the fifth chinlock. When that's your best move,

methinks you're not that good yet. Wright dances out of a sunset flip attempt and dances even more. Dragon knocks him off the top but misses a dive, eating feet instead. We head to the floor and Wright shows that he's not that smart as he stands in place for the Asai Moonsault against the guy who invented it and turns around. How could you screw that up? Seriously, how could you screw that up???

Back in and Dragon takes over with a rana for no cover. That looked bad too. Back to their feet and things speed up a bit with Dragon getting a butterfly suplex for two. Tiger suplex gets two. Dragon sets for the super rana but Wright reverses. Dragon reverses the reversal into a powerbomb out of the corner for two. Mutaesque Moonsault gets two. Another rana is reversed into a sunset flip in a nice bit of psychology there.

Wright counters a dive with a dropkick to the ribs but Dragon reverses a belly to back into a cross body for two. Small package gets two. La Magistral gets two. Wright wants his German suplex finisher but Dragon reverses. Super rana hits but he can't get the Dragon Sleeper. Regular sleeper is countered into a jawbreaker by Wright and the German suplex gives the German the win.

Rating: C. If this was about a ten minute match instead of the 18 they had, this is FAR better. The last 5 minutes or so were really good but before that it was rather boring. It's not bad mind you, it's just really boring. Wright would lose the title 8 days later to Disco Inferno of all people so it's not like this meant anything. Still though, nearly 20 minutes for these two was WAY too long.

Gene is schilling the hotline for later and Team NWO for later runs past. Methinks shenanigans are coming. Gene goes to see and Curt Hennig is down on the floor. Say it with me: HE'S TURNING ON THE HORSEMEN TONIGHT.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Dean Malenko

Winner is supposed to get the US Title shot next month but that wouldn't happen due to various things. Jarrett sends Debra to the back for no apparent reason. Technical stuff to start as you would expect with Jarrett taking over for the most part. We're about five minutes in now and there is nothing to say in the slightest. Jeff has worked on the arm for awhile and other than that it's just a low gear exhibition.

Dean gets a nice dropkick to take over and never mind as we're back to the boring stuff. I'm talking about just standing there with a headlock for like 20 seconds and then taking it to the mat for another minute or so. Thankfully they speed things up a bit and Dean takes over, ramming Jeff into the buckle a few times. Bah there's a sleeper to end that run. It might have sped up for about 30 seconds and then it's right back to the slow stuff.

Double axe off the top hits and there's a superplex for Dean. It's probably good to have him in control as Jeff is Memphis through and through and that makes for some rather boring matches at times, especially when there's no real feud between these guys. Memphis heat is based on hatred and when there's nothing there, it doesn't work for the most part.

German suplex by Dean looks to set up the Cloverleaf and there it is but that might be interesting so we go to the ropes to break that up quickly. Debra is here now for no apparent reason and both guys go to the floor. Dean goes back in and hits a baseball slide to send Jeff down again. Time for the knee work but Jeff takes over again and works on the knee a bit himself.

Dean is able to counter a cannonball drop to send Jeff out to the apron. Back to the floor again with Jeff being sent into the railing. Suplex back in is reversed into a cover by Jeff for two. Dean gets a sleeper which is reversed into a suplex for no cover. Jeff goes up and jumps into the boot but catches

himself and grabs the leg in an attempt at the Figure Four. Dean rolls it up for two and Jeff gets a neckbreaker for two. Pinfall reversal sequence gets some nice counters but Jeff gets a chop block and the Figure Four ends this.

Rating: C. Just like in the previous match they went too long and the first ten minutes or so were really boring. Tony calling it great is your standard overhyping but it didn't work at all for the opening half. Dean was awesome in this year but it wasn't on display here. Another match that didn't need to be as long, or on this show in the slightest actually.

The NWO says they'll win and they have a plan. Konnan sounds WEIRD here.

Mortis/Wrath vs. Faces of Fear

You know, because THIS needed to be on PPV right? The Faces (team, not the face/heel aspect which I don't think has a face team in this) are in red for some reason here. Barbarian and Mortis start us off. Mortis hammers away with some success so Barbarian just throws him into the corner like something that is easily thrown. Off to Meng who has a brawl with Wrath for awhile.

Wrath gets a middle rope clothesline and takes over. Back off to Mortis and that doesn't work all that well for him. Off to Barbarian again who hits a headbutt to take over again. Meng backdrops Mortis into a powerbomb in a spot that really wasn't as good as it sounds. Pumphandle slam gets two for Barbarian. Mortis tries to hammer on Meng and it doesn't work in the slightest.

Barbarian goes up again and gets crotched while James Vandenberg (Mitchell) runs from a camera. Barbarian dives into a boot so Wrath comes in for a beatdown. DWI gets two on Barbarian as Meng saves. This is rather boring if that wasn't coming off. Wrath and Mortis take over for awhile and Mortis hits a Fameasser off the top for two. Wrath gets a belly to

back to set up a top rope clothesline/punch for no cover still.

Mortis rams the steps into Barbarian to keep up the dominance. That only gets two back in the ring. This is taking forever to get through. Three man Tower of Doom suplex sends Barbarian flying again. Barbarian is a fun word to type. Wrath and Meng both come in to hammer away on each other with Meng taking over. BIG chop to Mortis. Kick of Fear to Mortis and a powerslam to Wrath gets two. Top rope splash gets two for Meng on Mortis. Double Tongan Death Grip to Mortis and Vandenberg but Wrath grabs a Death Penalty (Rock Bottom) for the pin.

Rating: C+. Surprisingly enough this wasn't that bad. The problem in short though is that this was on PPV for about twelve minutes. Why in the world should this have been on PPV? There was no reason to have them fight it seems, but they did anyway and they got a lot of time. I don't get this one at all and while the match was actually pretty good, that doesn't mean it needs to be here.

The Horsemen are ready for the main event. No Hennig here. Flair rants loudly of course.

The Giant vs. Scott Norton

Giant is waiting on his match with Nash so he needs someone to beat on I guess. Giant calls for the chokeslam before the match even starts. Brawl in the form of a battle of the big men to start us off as you would expect. Giant tosses him over the top and we head to the floor for some more brawling. Norton manages to ram Giant into the post and take over.

Giant hammers Norton again as this is a fairly decent power brawl actually. This doesn't go much of anywhere because the moves are kind of repetitive. Norton gets a rather impressive hot shot on Giant who was indeed flying through the air. Giant takes some corner splashes and Norton gets a belly to back suplex for two. With the help of the middle rope, Giant hits a

nip up. Ok that was pretty cool looking. He goes nuts and hits the Chokeslam to end it quick.

Rating: C. This wasn't too bad I guess but for a match like this, another battle of the big men, there's only so much you can do. Norton wasn't going to win here and everyone knew it but he hit some big moves and the power game was pretty cool. The nip up is awesome and he only busted it out on occasion. Fun match for what it was but nothing you can't see a hundred times with various people in it.

Diamond Dallas Page/Lex Luger vs. Scott Hall/Randy Savage

Literally no transition at all between matches which is kind of odd but it was a WCW thing I guess. Larry talks about how he used to beat up Hall back in the day but still won't say where this was. I guess it's a copyright thing or something. Luger and Hall start us off and with Lex shoving him around a lot. Luger beats up both NWO guys on his own and clears the ring.

Off to Page and Hall works on his arm. We talk about NASCAR for some reason as Page hammers away. Both guys miss clotheslines so Page hits a Pancake, one of his signature moves, and then drills Savage because he can. Hall throws Page around a bit as he becomes the face in peril to fill in time I guess. Page fights out of the corner as we're just waiting on the screwy finish here.

Hall jumps Luger and literally beats him down between the rings. Savage chokes Page a bit and then throws him into the other ring. That isn't a DQ because Page didn't hit the floor. Just get rid of the freaking rule already. They throw him back over to mess up the rule again. Down goes the referee to set up the screwy stuff.

Luger is still between the rings I guess. There goes another referee and Larry goes out to help. Larry glares at him and

Luger pops up for the rollup pin. I mean literally, he pops up from between the rings to roll him up. Screw being legal I guess. That ends it of course. Oh and Larry counts the pin just because. Somehow that counts apparently.

Rating: D-. The match was ok up until the ending and then it all fell apart because it has to I guess. Is it just impossible to have a match end cleanly? Apparently it is because they never seem capable of doing it in this company. Weak ending aside, this was nothing you wouldn't see on Nitro any given week.

CALL THE HOTLINE!

WATCH HALLOWEEN HAVOC!

Team WCW vs. Team NWO

WCW: Ric Flair, Chris Benoit, Steve McMichael, Curt Hennig

NWO: Kevin Nash, Konnan, Syxx, Buff Bagwell

WarGames here and here are the rules for the two of you that have somehow never seen this match. You start off with a guy from each team for five minutes. After that a coin toss will be won by the heels and they get an advantage for two minutes. After those two minutes are up another person comes in from the team that loss the coin toss. You alternate like that every two minutes until all eight are in and then it's first submission (no pins) wins it. Also in a double cage of course.

This is more or less a revenge feud for the Horsemen after the parody that the NWO did on Nitro which was so dead on that it was hilarious while being totally disrespectful. The teams are at ringside here which would go back and forth. Not that it means anything but these entrances are long so I need to fill in space. Also this is the final traditional WarGames match, meaning it's more or less destined to suck.

No Hennig here due to the beatdown earlier. Bagwell vs. Benoit

to start. This should be a massacre and very fun. This is for five minutes remember. Tony brings up a great point: is there NO ONE else in WCW that could be out there? They waste like thirty seconds before Bagwell slaps Benoit. This is young and violent Benoit so how do you think this is going to go for Bagwell?

All Benoit here since Bagwell kind of, uh, sucks. Swan Dive misses so Bagwell unleashes his variety of stomps and sends Benoit into the cage. Bagwell is really weak on offense here. Surprisingly enough they haven't messed with the clock yet. They've stayed in the same ring here for the most part. Bagwell backdrops him into the cage and yells at Flair a bit. Shockingly enough: the NWO wins the toss. Literally, no face team EVER won a coin toss in WCW. Ever. Not even once.

Benoit takes over with about 20 seconds to go and it's Konnan to give them the 2-1 advantage. Benoit seems to like the idea of being in trouble and beats them both up. This lasts two minutes remember. Somehow being down 2-1 makes Benoit do better for a minute or so until the numbers finally catch up to him. Mongo, US Champion at the time, comes in and beats up everyone.

Benoit is perfectly fine. I mean they've only beaten on him for seven minutes so far so do you really expect him to be beaten already? The Horsemen dominate for most of the 2-2 period and it's Syxx in next. And that results badly for him as he gets destroyed by Benoit. Total star making performance by him so far. Crossface to Syxx who taps but it doesn't matter yet.

The NWO finally fights back about halfway through this period. With 40 seconds left here's Hennig with his arm in a sling. Oh just have him wearing the NWO shirt already. Flair comes in and cleans house. Nash comes in after the Horsemen dominate for a good while. He dominates the entire team and Bagwell couldn't be happier. HUGE We Want Sting chant goes up but you

all know the ending already don't you? If not, GO READ A FREAKING BOOK PEOPLE.

The Horsemen take over again before the period ends and here's Hennig. Flair has Syxx in the Figure Four and there goes the sling on Hennig. He pulls out handcuffs and yep there it is. Seriously, did ANYONE buy that he wasn't turning here? Tony of course calls it this huge charade and no one but him agrees.

Benoit is cuffed to the cage as is Mongo. Again, IS THERE NO ONE ELSE IN ALL OF WCW??? Flair is destroyed and a referee brings a microphone into the ring. Nash offers the Horsemen the chance to surrender and they all say no. After a long beatdown they give Mongo the chance to surrender to save Flair from having the door slammed on his head. Mongo gives in and they slam the door anyway. This would results in a huge blood feud between Hennig and Flair and Tony walking off the show the next night. The sight of Flair writhing in pain and holding his head ends the show.

Rating: C. Not the strongest WarGames to say the least, namely due to the Horsemen never being in trouble at all for the most part and the really stupid ending. That being said, WarGames is in itself inherently cool and this is no exception. Benoit looked AWESOME in there but of course he would never go anywhere in WCW until he was about to leave. Definitely not the best WarGames, but the Benoit dominance was a cool visual.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a weird show. It's not bad and the long matches were nice to see. They weren't all particularly good matches or PPV quality but there were no stupid 2 minute PPV matches which helps a lot. Pretty good show overall but definitely not their best. That being said, 1998 would be the beginning of the end so it was nice to see a long show like this one more time before they fell apart.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews