

Monday Nitro – September 8, 1997: The March To War

Monday Nitro #104

Date: September 8, 1997

Location: Wisconsin Center Arena, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Attendance: 8,596

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

It's the go home show for Fall Brawl which I don't think we have much of a confirmed card for. It's pretty clear that Luger, Page, Hall and Savage will be in WarGames but other than that we don't have much confirmed. This week's show has to be better than last week's or at least less dull. Hopefully this won't be a bunch of whining from the announcers for two hours again. Let's get to it.

We open with the Nitro Girls dancing in the ring with Tony running down the card for tonight.

Tony tells us that Flair is on Team WCW along with Luger and Page for WarGames. He starts to talk about the Horsemen parody last week but gets cut off by Eric Bischoff. Eric says run the tape but after a few moments, the tape cuts off and we see the Horsemen at the desk instead. Mongo (booed because he used to be a Bear (and a Packer) and we're in Packer country) wants to fight right now and the Horsemen march to the ring.

They want the NWO right now so of course no one comes out. Hennig says that since he's the enforcer of the Horsemen, it's his job to get revenge. Flair says that last year was the first time that he was embarrassed to be a pro wrestler. Oh just wait Slick Ric. Just wait. Flair says that he's not leaving until he gets his hands on Bagwell, Syxx, Konnan and Nash.

Post break the Horsemen are being escorted out of the ring.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Eddie Guerrero

During the entrances, Tony says that the new commissioner might be named tonight. Eddie grabs Rey's arm to start but gets tossed around to break the hold. Guerrero comes back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker before cranking on the arm some more before we go to break. Back with Eddie cranking on the arm some more until Rey breaks out and pounds on Eddie, only to get slammed back down.

Guerrero slides to the floor for no apparent reason, allowing Rey to dive down onto him to take over. Tony of course talks about the NWO and basically ignore the match while Tenay tries to keep the focus in place. Back in and a moonsault press gets two on Eddie but Guerrero catches a top rope cross body in a slam for two of his own. A BIG powerbomb takes Rey down again for two more, as does a butterfly powerbomb. Eddie busts out the Gory Special, but Rey rolls off his back to escape. Rey escapes powerbomb attempt #2 and heads to the apron, hitting West Coast Pop out of nowhere for the win.

Rating: B-. These two are guys that you always expect a good match out of. They would have a masterpiece at Halloween Havoc and while this is nowhere near that one, it's still a solid back and forth match and a good choice for an opener. Also, can anyone take a powerbomb as well as Rey Mysterio? He sells them really well.

DDP says he wants respect and thinks both he and Luger have earned said respect. Tonight it's Luger vs. Page so Team WCW can get along on Sunday. Luger says ok but don't hold anything back.

Hugh Morrus vs. Disco Inferno

This is fallout from last week. Hugh pounds him down to start with

clotheslines and headbutts, followed by a good looking spinwheel kick. The future Tough Enough trainer misses a corner splash though and crashes out to the floor for a bit. Back in and Disco slaps him because Disco isn't that bright. Cue Alex Wright for some dancing as Morrus loads up No Laughing Matter (moonsault). Wright slides in the belt, but Disco puts it face down on his chest to injure himself. Like I said, he's not that bright. Morrus gets the pin over the idiot.

Wright and Disco argue post match.

The NWO makes fun of the Horsemen again and apparently it's Konnan/Bagwell vs. two Horsemen tonight.

Cruiserweight Title: Brad Armstrong vs. Chris Jericho

Before the match here's Eddie to say that last week he should have gotten a shot. He asks Brad to step aside here but Brad basically ignores him and jumps the champ to start things off. Apparently the winner of this has to defend against Guerrero on Sunday anyway. Dang Eddie is greedy isn't he? And didn't he lose earlier tonight anyway?

Jericho blocks a monkey flip to send Brad to the floor, followed by a suicide dive from the champ. Back in and Jericho charges into a boot followed by a tornado DDT from Armstrong for two. Jericho comes back with a standing Lionsault for two followed by the missile dropkick to send Armstrong to the floor. Not that it matters as Eddie runs in for the DQ.

Rating: C+. These two were working well together with some solid back and forth stuff. Unfortunately it didn't get to go anywhere because Armstrong was there to fill in a spot, but he could fill in a spot quite well. With Mysterio back and Eddie going after the title, the Cruiserweights are about to come back with a vengeance. Good stuff here and I wouldn't mind seeing more from these two.

Hour #2 begins and it's time to dance.

We recap Hogan beating up JJ from last week, which brings out Bischoff and Hogan. Eric introduces him as the champion of the universe before handing the mic to Hogan. Hollywood says everyone is here to see the NWO. Yeah that's pretty much true. Flair isn't the man apparently. I don't remember him saying that lately but ok then. Hollywood says no one is going to touch Bischoff again. He's kind of all over the place here. The Horsemen are going down tonight apparently. Finally, Hogan says he'll put the title on the line RIGHT NOW against Sting.

Hogan poses....AND HERE'S STING! He falls REALLY fast and hits the barricade...and it's a mannequin. This causes Tony to have to act concerned and he makes Stephanie McMahon look Oscar worthy. Hogan freaks out and says that's not what is supposed to happen and a stretcher comes out. The NWO picks Sting up and puts him limp body in the ring as Tony gets what's going on. Hogan drops a pair of legs and Bischoff, now in a referee's shirt, counts the pin.

Lee Marshall does his schtick.

Faces of Fear vs. Steiner Brothers

Scott starts and immediately walks into a powerslam from Barbarian. That's not something you see that often. A double tag brings in Rick to face Meng and the Steiners clear the ring for their signature running around the ring pose. Of all teams that face the Steiners, the Faces of Fear actually are the ones smart enough to rush the Steiners when they're posing and get the advantage.

We wind up with Meng vs. Rick with Meng hitting the dropkick which always impressed Jesse Ventura. Off to Barbarian for another powerslam for two as Rick is in trouble. Back to Meng who gets caught in a sunset flip of all things. That goes nowhere so it's back to the Barbarian for a double headbutt from the monsters. Off to a chinlock by the Tongan which doesn't

last long as Rick fights up and hits a Steiner Line. The third slam of the match by Barbarian looks to set up the diving headbutt but Rick dodges.

The hot tag brings in Scott who cleans house until everything breaks down. Barbarian gets caught in a belly to belly superplex from Scott but Meng puts Rick in the Tongan Death Grip. Cue Harlem Heat along with Mortis/Wrath for the double DQ. Heenan: "Why do the NWO guys never fight each other like this?" Oh don't worry Bobby. They will, and in different color shirts!

Rating: C+. The Faces of Fear were on a mini roll at this point and would have a surprisingly good match with Mortis and Wrath on Sunday. The Steiners would continue to spin their wheels against Harlem Heat while they waited to be able to win the titles they should have won about five times already. Another decent little match here.

Scott Hall vs. Super Calo

Hall wants Calo to take his glasses off, even though I believe they're painted onto his face. Calo gets a shot in on Hall in the corner and that's about the extent of his offense. Hall sends him to the floor before going back inside and cranking away on both arms. The fallaway slam from the middle rope sets up the Outsider's Edge to end this squash.

Post match Big Bubba comes in to face off with Hall and lay him out with a spinebuster. Vincent comes out and takes a Boss Man Slam before Hogan himself comes out. Boss Man stares him down but poses in the corner, allowing Hall to hit the Outsider's Edge and lay him down. Total time for Traylor to stand tall: about 83 seconds. Hogan calls him the Big Loss Man.

Dean Malenko vs. Psychosis

Apparently the winner of Malenko vs. Jarrett on Sunday gets a shot at the US Title at Halloween Havoc. They head to the mat quickly and why would you ever do that against Dean Malenko? Psychosis breaks a headscissors and gets up, only to get caught in a standing armbar. Psychosis tries a leg lock but Dean is in the ropes before it can be on full. A dropkick puts the masked dude on the floor and as they come back in, a fan tries to come in. Referee Mark Curtis, who might weigh 110lbs soaking wet, KNEES HIM IN THE HEAD and chokes him down until security takes him out.

After that's settled down, Psychosis kicks Dean to the floor where Sonny Onoo can get in a few shots. Psychosis has to save Sonny from getting killed and we head inside again. Scratch that as we go right back to the floor where Psychosis hits a good looking suicide dive. That and a victory roll get two for Psychosis back inside but Dean takes him down with a leg lariat. Psychosis slams him down and loads up the guillotine legdrop but it only gets two. Sonny argues with the referee, which winds up meaning nothing as Dean counters a rana attempt into the Cloverleaf for the tap out.

Rating: C. Not bad again here as Dean can barely do anything wrong in 1997. Sonny Onoo as a manager was about as worthless as you could get as a manager around this time as he just kind of stood around and yelled at people while throwing kicks that didn't do much damage. Also it's interesting to see the cruiserweights being pushed more and more lately. It isn't likely to last but it's cool while it lasts.

Jarrett comes out and wants to fight right now but immediately runs away.

WE get the reveal of the new commissioner and it's Roddy Piper. He says this is like putting John Belushi in charge of the frat house. Well Bluto became a Senator (and President if you got the anniversary edition) so that might not be a bad idea. Piper says he used to be President of the WWF so tonight he's going to do three things. First of all he guarantees Sting vs. Hogan by the end of the year (BIG pop). Then he says he's facing Hogan at Halloween Havoc in a cage (not as big of a pop). Finally

he's putting the Horsemen in WarGames (moderate pop). Not a terrible start I guess.

Ric Flair/Curt Hennig vs. Buff Bagwell/Konnan

The Horsemen clear the ring to start before we get down to Bagwell vs. Flair. Flair chops away to start but gets clotheslined and backdropped down. I'll give Flair this: he never had an issue with making any kid look good. Off to Konnan for some choking before it's back to Buff. Nice to see the Cuban contingent contributing so much here.

A dropkick puts Flair down again and it's off to the corner for a Flair Flip. Naturally he runs the apron to go up top, but surprisingly enough he isn't slammed down. Instead Buff crotches and superplexes him down for no cover. Buff poses as even Konnan is yelling at him to do something. A top rope elbow misses and it's hot tag to Hennig who cleans house. The NWO is sent to the floor and Bagwell sneaks back in to take out Hennig's knee.

Konnan drops Curt on the steps before getting tagged back in to work on the knee. A kick to the face misses though and it's another hot tag to Flair to face Buff. Tony of course is going nuts about how THIS is how you work together. Flair fires off chops but walks into a powerslam because Heaven help us if WCW gets to look strong over Buff freaking Bagwell. Hennig jumps Buff and Flair locks on the Figure Four but Konnan makes a fast save. A quick PerfectPlex on Konnan gets the win despite neither guy being legal.

Rating: C. Basic tag match here to set up WarGames a bit more which is fine. Hennig looked good and Bagwell continued to look goofy as he always did. Flair wasn't exactly furious here like he said he would be earlier, which makes the match seem like it doesn't mean all that much. Still though, not bad.

Lex Luger vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Luger shoves him down to start as Tony says let them go at it. This coming from the same "STOP FIGHTING AND WORK TOGETHER" guy. Lex cranks on the arm and grabs a headlock before running Page over with a clothesline. Cue the NWO as Page throws Luger to the floor. Page didn't seem to know the NWO was there.

Luger gets beaten up and thrown back in as now DDP sees the NWO. A neckbreaker gets two on Lex and there's the Pancake for two more. Lex comes back with a belly to back suplex and his string of clotheslines. The third one misses though and Lex falls to the floor. Page follows and brawls with the NWO for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was storyline advancement rather than a match. Page and Luger's issues are pretty much done now as they threw up their hands and said forget about it. Well why bother having a conclusion to a storyline when you can just stop working on it at all? They would face Hall/Savage again on Sunday.

Page and Luger beat up the NWO as the Giant comes down to help. WCW stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. For a go home show, this was a pretty solid edition with a lot of at least decent matches. The main issue here is that the Horsemen didn't close the show despite being the Team WCW for Sunday's WarGames. Still though, good stuff here overall with some solid cruiserweight stuff. I don't know what's gotten into WCW lately with them but it's working well.

Here's Fall Brawl if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/16/fall-brawl-1997-wcw-gets-beaten-up-again/>

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