

Monday Nitro – September 15, 1997: The Horsemen Lose In Charlotte. Again.

Monday Nitro #105

Date: September 15, 1997

Location: Independence Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

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

It's the night after Fall Brawl and to the shock of no one paying attention, the NWO beat up WCW again last night. This time though they did it with the help of Curt Hennig, who turned on the Horsemen last night and slammed the cage door on Flair's head. The NWO won WarGames after Mongo submitted to make the NWO stop beating on Flair, which of course they did anyway. Halloween Havoc is in about six weeks. Let's get to it.

We open with a shot of Flair in the emergency room and Tony says he can't do the show tonight. Apparently Flair got him into the business and he's too disturbed to do this. Well if that's what we get from Flair having his head crushed, I can't say I'm that upset.

Dean Malenko vs. Disco Inferno

Dean has a bad knee from last night thanks to Jarrett. Disco arm drags him down but walks into a clothesline like the idiot that he is. Malenko pounds away which isn't exactly his norm. A leg lariat puts Disco down but he rakes the eyes to break up the Cloverleaf. Inferno tries a double ax off the middle rope but jumps into a punch to the ribs. Back to the stomping for Dean which is something you almost never get to say.

Disco gets up an elbow in the corner to slow Dean down but charges into a powerslam. Dean hammers away but can't get into it because A, he's Dean

Malenko and B, his knee is messed up. Disco, FINALLY having a brain, goes after the big bandage on the knee. Malenko can barely even run the ropes but he's pulling a Bret Hart as he grabs Disco in the double underhook powerbomb and Cloverleafs him for the win.

Rating: C-. Disco was just a foil here but Dean was selling the knee very well. Note the difference here between his selling and most regular selling: Dean actually changed up his style because of an injury rather than doing his regular stuff and holding his knee. That's a BIG difference and it makes an injury that much more believable.

Eddie is on WCW.com.

Faces of Fear vs. Harlem Heat

Mike runs down the card for the rest of the card and it's rather refreshing over hearing Tony's same stuff over and over. Stevie and Meng start things off and Meng be clubberin. Barbarian comes in illegally and Stevie clears the ring. Off to Booker but the monsters double team him down and take over. A double headbutt keeps Booker down in the corner and it's off to Barbarian.

Raven is sitting in the crowd. Back to Stevie who gets choked down by Meng as things slow down. Back to Barbie for more slow chops and strikes and an even slower choke. Ray comes back with a falling suplex and there's the hot tag to Booker. He cleans house as everything breaks down but Meng gets Booker in the Tongan Death Grip for the win.

Rating: D+. This was a pretty slow paced match that didn't really work all that well. As I've talked about before, there's no reason for these teams to be fighting when no one ever gets a title shot at the Outsiders other than the Steiners on occasion. The Faces of Fear were fine for what they were but they never went anywhere.

Gene talks to Page (and even fires off a Diamond Cutter sign) and apparently it's going to be Page vs. Savage III at Halloween Havoc.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Juventud Guerrera

Rey takes off his mask to reveal another one before giving the original to the crowd. Not only is this cool, but Mike's panicking when Rey unhooked the match was hilarious. Mysterio immediately takes him down for two but Juvy escapes into a headlock. A flying headscissors puts Guerrera down again but Rey gets draped over the top. With Rey on the apron, Juvy hits a running sunset bomb out to the floor in a SICK looking bump.

A suplex back in sets up a slingshot legdrop from Juvy for two. Rey counters a powerbomb into a seated senton for no count as Juvy is in the ropes and things start speeding up. A kind of Sky High from Rey gets two as does a top rope rana. Juvy comes right back with a falling back powerbomb to put both guys down. This is starting to get pretty awesome. Juvy misses a charge into the corner and winds up on the floor so Rey can hit a BIG flip dive over the corner into a seated senton to take both guys out. Back in and Juvy springboards into a powerbomb and a perfectly smooth West Coast Pop gets the pin.

Rating: B. Take two cruiserweights, give them seven minutes and let them wow the crowd. It worked time after time and it worked here again. This was nothing but a spot fest and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's WCW sticking with the idea of something for everyone again and it works here again. Really good stuff here.

Rey says he's coming for Konnan.

TV Title: Alex Wright vs. Steven Regal

Regal is challenging. Wright immediately takes him down with an armdrag and it's time to dance! They trade arm control until Regal takes him down

to the mat with an arm hold of his own. Nice job of trading the same moves there. A big slap to the face staggers Wright so he comes back with European uppercuts from one European to the other.

The crowd actually cheers for Regal which isn't something you often hear. That's a good sign for Wright as a heel if nothing else. Alex dances a bit and Regal dropkicks him down to a face pop. Both guys collide and hit the mat to give them a breather. The challenger wins a slugout but can't get the Regal Stretch on before Alex makes the rope. They trade rollups until Regal is sent into the corner and staggers into a German suplex to retain the title.

Rating: C+. Wright is definitely getting over as a heel and Regal is as solid as ever. This title would bounce around more than any other in the company which made for exciting periods, but the feuds never really went anywhere. At the end of the day, there weren't a ton of feuds going on and that's why the title didn't mean much for a good while.

Ray Traylor will fight any member of the NWO if they're man enough to face him.

Konnan vs. The Giant

Apparently Tony can't bring himself out to do commentary. Still a sweet show so far. Giant tosses Konnan to the floor to start and the beating begins. Konnan tries to fire off some shots but they have no effect. We head to the floor again with Konnan trying to run but getting a headbutt for his efforts. Back in and Konnan is in BIG trouble as he gets slammed down. We head to the floor yet again and Konnan gets in some shots as they come back in, only to jump into the chokeslam for the pin. Total squash.

Hour #2 begins and STILL NO TONY!

Nitro Girls do their thing.

The announcers discuss if the Horsemen are dead or not. Larry is SURE that Curt was in the NWO since he got here.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Stevie Richards

Stevie tunes up the band before getting in the Crane stance from Karate Kid. Page gives him the Diamond sign before starting to pound on the shoulder. A gutwrench gutbuster puts Richards down but Richards manages to guillotine him on the top rope. Raven is watching intently. Richards hits a running elbow in the corner before getting punched in the face for his efforts. TKO ends this easily for Page.

Rating: D. This was just to do more stuff with Raven vs. Stevie, even though Richards wouldn't be around much longer at all. Page was just killing time before the next match with Savage before he could head towards the rest of his feud with the NWO. Actually I think he would be fighting Raven soon too.

Raven slaps Richards and sends him to the floor post match before leaving through the crowd.

Tag Titles: Outsiders vs. Wrath/Mortis

Hall and Mortis start things off with the Outsiders making fun of how over the top the challengers are. Scott cranks on the arm before pounding away but Mortis comes back with a big kick. He then spits on Hall's body, despite wearing an mask meaning the spit would go nowhere. Hall comes right back with the fallaway slam and it's off to Wrath vs. Nash.

Big Kev pounds him into the corner but Wrath throws him into the opposite corner and beats the TAR out of Nash, including getting two off a bicycle kick. Off to Mortis for a Russian legsweep and a middle rope legdrop for

two each. A Syxx distraction lets Nash get in the big boot to both guys. The Jackknife ends Mortis.

Rating: C+. WAY better than I was expecting here, which is what I've wound up saying about every Mortis/Wrath match I've seen so far. Wrath had potential if he never had to talk, but since it was WCW he wound up being fed to people like Nash and Rick Steiner for the sake of making the old guys look good. The fans were getting into this when the Outsiders were in trouble. Naturally Hall and Nash wouldn't be beaten for the titles until January.

Here are Bischoff and Hogan flanked by the rest of the NWO. Flair's music plays and here's Hennig in Flair's red robe. Just getting everyone into the ring took SEVEN MINUTES. Hennig is welcomed into the team and gets hit in the head with a drink. Curt talks about how good it felt to slam the door on Ric's head last night and join the greatest wrestling organization in wrestling history. He gives the robe to Hogan and we get an evil laugh.

Savage says he'll beat DDP at Havoc. Hogan talks about how Piper was President of the WWF and tried to boss him around. I'll leave it to you all as an exercise to figure out how stupid that line is. Now Piper has lied about going home to his family. Hall and Hogan tell Piper to come visit him "down here" (basically the NWO version of Suck It) and say Sting won't be a problem after that. This was nearly 14 minutes of NOTHING.

Video on Piper vs. Hogan.

Cruiserweight Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Ultimo Dragon

Eddie won the title last night. They immediately head to the mat but it's a standoff. With no one being able to get an advantage, Dragon offers a test of strength. Apparently Eddie isn't interested as he kicks Dragon down and then dropkicks him in the mask. Eddie cranks on the arm for a

bit and even throws in an old fashioned hammerlock slam ala Arn Anderson. A few European uppercuts stagger Dragon but Eddie charges into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to reset things a bit.

Eddie sends Dragon into the corner and there's the headstand in the corner. Its hypnotic powers continue to astound and Eddie gets kicked in the face. A BIG running Liger Bomb gets a near fall for Dragon so it's time for a freaking giant swing. Dragon's arm goes out before he can really get going, but he still manages to counter an Eddie powerbomb.

Guerrero tries to send him into the corner but gets caught in a regular sleeper that grows a tail and breathes enough fire to turn into the Dragon Sleeper. Eddie somehow kicks Dragon in the head to escape, followed by a shoulder breaker (psychology!) and the Frog Splash retains. Nice to see the arm work earlier coming back more than once.

Rating: B-. Even more good stuff from the cruiserweights here as Eddie begins his reign on top. Dragon was a good guy to put in a spot like this as he's been established as solid already but isn't going to get the title off Eddie yet. Good stuff here too with both guys flying around but not so much to make it a spot fest. Eddie was on fire back then.

Nitro Girls.

US Title: Steve McMichael vs. Curt Hennig

Mongo is both defending and out for revenge at the same time. He sprints to the ring and the fight is on fast. Hennig decks him fast but Mongo stares him down. He throws Hennig down but McMichael can't even hit a double ax handle right. Hennig takes the knee out and wraps it around the post before cannonballing down onto it ala Flair. Off to a reverse Figure Four but Mongo pokes him in the eye to break out. Hennig takes Mongo right back down and works on the knee even more.

Mongo comes back with some kicks (remember what I said about psychology earlier?) but Curt pounds him down and works on the leg even more. Steve throws Curt into the corner and yells at him a lot before throwing Hennig into the corner for the crotching. Mongo hits some clotheslines and an atomic drop to REALLY emphasize that he isn't selling the leg. Hennig gets rammed into three buckles but avoids the three point stance charge. Mongo hits the bottom buckle (not really but close enough) and the PerfectPlex gives the NWO the title.

Rating: D. To clarify, anything bad about this is ALL on Mongo. He couldn't sell, he couldn't hit a buckle, and he couldn't even hit a freaking DOUBLE AX HANDLE properly. You put your hands together and whack a guy in the back. Thankfully they kept this short and it was clear that there was no way Mongo was winning here. This was pretty much it for Mongo as far as anything important. Also, how weird is it to see the title change completely clean like that?

Overall Rating: B-. More good wrestling here but it's getting annoying seeing WCW get strong one week and then get crushed even harder a week later. Unfortunately once the time came for WCW to get their big win, that got screwed up too. There's some good wrestling here though and the shows were really getting into a groove at this point.

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