

Monday Nitro – October 20, 1997: The Streak Had To End Sometime

Monday Nitro #110

Date: October 20, 1997

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Attendance: 5,950

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

We're finally at the go home show for Halloween Havoc and the show is on the hottest streak it's been on since it first started. We've had three weeks straight of good to excellent show and hopefully things continue in that direction from here. After last week it's very clear that Sting vs. Hogan is coming in the very near future but tonight it's the final push towards Hogan vs. Piper in the cage. Let's get to it.

We open with the NWO b-team laid out in the back. We see the letters DDP spray painted on various things along with Piper t-shirts and ball bats on the ground.

In the arena Hogan and Bischoff storm the ring, yelling about improper leadership from Piper and various other things in general. Hogan calls it a bunch of crap and Savage joins in for more yelling. The announcers of course laugh.

There's a cage above the ring.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero

Eddie is defending in match #4857 of about 58379 between these two. Eddie shoves him to start so Benoit runs him over with a shoulder block. They

chop it out before Benoit launches him into the air in a release flapjack. Benoit stomps away in the corner but Eddie comes back with strikes of his own. Very fast paced stuff so far. A dropkick puts Benoit back into the corner but Eddie misses a charge and is launched face first into the buckle. The Canadian chops away in the corner and knocks Eddie out to the floor.

Back in and Guerrero snap mares Benoit down before taking some skin off with a chop. Benoit will have none of that though and puts Eddie on the apron before chopping him into the barricade. A suicide dive takes Guerrero out and we take a break back with the champion holding an abdominal stretch but Benoit arm drags out of it.

Eddie comes back with a headscissors and more chops in the corner. We're told that Hennig is still US Champion after last week's messy ending which is the wrong call but whatever. Benoit tries a tornado DDT out of the corner but gets sent into the middle buckle for his efforts. The Frog Splash retains the title clean.

Rating: B-. Really solid opening match here with both guys chopping the tar out of each other every time they were in the corner. Benoit knocked himself silly by hitting that buckle so the Frog Splash was academic. Good match here but that goes without saying when it's these two. Their chemistry is some of the best of all time and this was no exception. Somehow, this was Eddie's worst match of the week by miles and miles.

We get the ending of the US Title match last week which somehow keeps the title on Hennig. That was a pretty bad screwup.

Bill Goldberg vs. Wrath

Wrath's entrance takes about two minutes to get through. The match: spear, Jackhammer, pin in 20 seconds. Wrath didn't even get his helmet and coat off. We also get an error from Tenay who calls the Jackhammer a combination suplex and powerbomb instead of a powerslam. This would be

back in the day when Tenay was the smartest guy in wrestling and might have made one error a month if he was having a bad night.

Goldberg shouts WHO'S NEXT in the aisle before getting in a staredown with Mongo who is coming out for his match. Sounds like Goldie has a feud coming.

Steve McMichael vs. Mortis

Mongo jumps Mortis to start and Vandenberg is freaking out on the floor over possibly losing two matches in a row that fast. Mongo pounds away in the corner but Vandenberg protects his investment by tripping up Mongo, allowing Mortis to hit a quick Flatliner (Samoan Drop off the middle rope) to get control. A Death Valley drier gets the same and McMichael is thrown to the floor. The suplex from the middle rope (just the rope, not in the corner) brings Mongo back in for two but Mongo shrugs it off. He hits a few three point shoulders and the tombstone for the pin on Mortis out of almost nowhere.

Rating: D+. This was on the higher end for Mongo although I'm not sure this was the best way in the world to set him up for a match against a machine like Goldberg. Somehow Mongo would be around until 1999 and would still get to hang out with Ric Flair until the very end. I'm not sure what the appeal was of the guy other than his football stuff, because it certainly wasn't anything of note between the ropes. This wasn't awful though.

Raven is at a playground and talks about his bad childhood. He sits on a slide as he talks about this, which prompts a quick sidebar: why do we not get promos on location anymore? Taking people outside of the arena can add a lot to the promos, if nothing else just for a change of scenery. Look at HELL NO having their segments in a meeting room. It worked far better than it would have in the back and got funnier results when we put these guys in the real world. Why don't we see more of that?

Time for Lucha Libre and the Mexican Luchadores. This time we focus on Rey Mysterio who talks about how he used wrestling to get out of a barrio in Mexico City. He got his name from his uncle but has surpassed his uncle's success. Rey talks about how important the mask is to him but isn't sure what would happen without being able to wear it. Nice way to tie this into the match on Sunday.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Yuji Nagata

Nagata pounds away to start and the kicks start ripping into Juvy seconds after the bell. A big boot to the face misses though as Raven and the Flock arrives. Juvy charges into a powerbomb but elbows out of a German suplex grip. A quick rana puts Nagata down for two and Juvy chops away. Nagata misses a charge in the corner and gets caught in the back with a missile dropkick. I might as well watch this match on mute as the announcers are talking about the NWO non-stop. Onoo crotches Juvy as Dragon comes out to take care of Sonny. The Nagata Lock ends Juvy in a short match.

Dragon goes after Onoo but runs into Nagata for some double teaming by the evil ones.

Los Villano vs. Damian/???

We don't find out the partner as Giant comes out and destroys everyone in sight. Giant talks about Kevin Nash lying about being the true giant of wrestling. The luchadores try to fight the Giant and get powerbombed for their efforts. The build for one of Starrcade's big matches begins.

Savage talks about Page and the PPV. Short and nothing out of the ordinary here.

TV Title: Disco Inferno vs. Rey Mysterio

Mysterio speeds things up to start and gets a fast rana for two. Rey charges in again but gets caught in a powerbomb for no cover by the champion. Disco heads to the floor for no apparent reason and allows Rey to hit a baseball slide. Back inside and a sunset flip gets two on Disco so Rey goes to the apron. He hits a kind of messed up cross body and loads up the West Coast Pop but Eddie comes out for the DQ.

Eddie goes for the mask, but who cares about that because IT'S JACKIE TIME!!! She comes out to beat up Disco and the champion runs. Please get to Sunday so we can move on to ANYONE but Jackie.

Hour #2 begins.

Here's the NWO again with Hogan going on a RANT about how Page, Piper and Sting are cowards for what they did earlier tonight. Bischoff says no one is leaving the arena tonight until those three get out here. Trash is thrown and Eric says that Vince is afraid of him. I have no idea what that has to do with anything but it's the end of a short appearance from the bad guys.

US Title: Curt Hennig vs. Dean Malenko

Hennig is still champion coming into this. Curt is a big banged up from being attacked earlier so he's in slow motion tonight. They both grab a fast hammerlock but Dean is in better condition so he rolls the champ up for two. Hennig bails to the floor for a bit to clear his head before getting droppkicked down back inside. After that gets two we take a quick break.

Back with Hennig suplexing Dean down for a quick two. Dean fights up and hooks a chinlock which isn't exactly something you would expect from a good guy. Back up and Hennig tries to fight back, only to get caught in a belly to back suplex. Thankfully the NWO is involved in this match so the announcers actually give it some attention. Dean goes up top and hits a cross body for a VERY close two, only to walk into the HennigPlex for the

pin a few seconds later. Oddly abrupt ending.

Rating: C. Not either guy's best work here as the match never really got going. They were going through the motions pretty bad here which is really surprising given how awesome Malenko was back in 1997. Hennig would be facing Flair in the future to get him back to matches that actually mattered. At least Dean got to hang in here with someone on a higher level.

Nitro Girl time.

Scott Norton vs. Ray Traylor

Oh come on. Did THIS match really need a rematch? Seriously? As the match starts, Traylor has to scare off Vincent, allowing Norton to hit a fast (kind of?) powerslam for two. We get the slow offense that you would expect from Norton: knees in the corner, clothesline, clubs to the back, all in slow motion. Ray comes back with a splash in the corner and a spinebuster, followed by a fat man enziguri of all things. He hits his sliding uppercut before going up (?) and hitting a fat man cross body, only to get painted in the eyes by Vincent. A clothesline ends Traylor.

Rating: D. Again, did ANYONE think we needed to see this match? Also, Traylor gets to lose again, making sure that he gets no momentum behind him and making sure that the NWO D team is made to look strong, because we certainly can't have Scott freaking Norton do a job on Nitro right?

Traylor gets beaten down by Hall, Konnan, Norton and Vincent post match.

We get an ad for Assault on Devil's Island. Oh that's going to be bad.

Booker T. vs. Lex Luger

We're still months if not years away from Booker meaning anything. Lex

throws Booker around to start and poses a lot to start things off. T. comes back with a forearm to surprise Luger but Luger comes back with a powerslam. The jumping elbow misses Booker of course (did that thing EVER hit?) but Booker's elbow misses too. He Spinaroonis up though and kicks Lex down before hooking a chinlock.

That goes about as far as a chinlock can go as Lex fights up and ducks a side kick, sending Booker into the ropes. The forearm puts Booker down but he manages to block the Torture Rack. A spin kick puts Luger down but the Harlem Hangover (top rope flipping legdrop) only hits mat. The Torture Rack is enough for the tap out a few seconds later.

Rating: C. Much better than I was expecting here as Booker showed some of the skills that he would get to really put on display months later. Luger continues to have very little to do going into the PPV as we're getting closer to the match with Hall. No Larry or Hall here which is kind of surprising.

Luger has nothing of note to say post match but Larry comes out and says he'll be an impartial referee on Sunday.

Here's Hall for the Survey. You know the drill I'm sure.

Scott Hall vs. Scott Steiner

Hall is Hall and Scott is Steiner here for the sake of simplicity. This is a return match from last week with the Steiners winning the titles. Hall hits the driving shoulders to start things off but Steiner runs him over. Hall comes back with a kind of suplex/backdrop to set up an armbar. Steiner won't have any of this being suplexed stuff so he throws Hall down as well before clotheslining him out to the floor.

We take a break and come back with Steiner messing with Hall's hair. There's a full nelson and Hall looks drunk. Odds are he is so I'm

guessing the hold is working fine. Hall breaks it up by ramming Scott into the corner and clotheslining him down. The fallaway slam gets two on Scott and he makes fun of Giant with a chokeslam. Hall walks around like Frankenstein's Monster before hooking an abdominal stretch. After over a minute of the hold, Hall gets caught holding the rope and the referee breaks things up.

Steiner grabs an abdominal stretch of his own but instead uses it for a pumphandle slam. There's an overhead belly to belly to put Hall down again and a Steiner Line does the same. Hall ducks a second Steiner Line and punches the referee, wanting a DQ. Instead there's a Tiger Bomb from Scott but there's no one to count. Hall comes back though and hits the Outsider's Edge as a hooded black referee comes in to count the pin. It's Vincent if you couldn't tell.

Rating: C-. Not bad here with Steiner getting to show off some skills here. He's about to turn heel and become Big Papa Pump though and end one of the best tag teams ever. Hall was in two feuds at once here which left him kind of in the middle of nowhere, as he didn't get to focus on one or the other. He's spent two weeks fighting the Steiners and now he gets to fight Luger on Sunday. Why they didn't do the tag title change later (or at Road Wild when it would have made sense) is anyone's guess but it would have made things easier.

Here's the NWO for the third or fourth time tonight to close the show. They want the attackers here right now and they prove it by having Bischoff rip on McMahon some more. Hogan gets to plug his movie but here's Sting. By Sting I of course mean "Sting." As he's coming down the aisle, two more Stings come through the crowd and jump the NWO. It's Piper and Page of course. The cage lowers and Sting repels from the ceiling to beat up the NWO to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Well you knew the hot streak wasn't going to last forever. We're limping into the show on Sunday and the cage match is going to reach levels of bad that you didn't think were possible before

this match. As for tonight though, the show was slow and long which aren't two things you want to mix together. There's some good stuff in this but it's definitely an episode you could skip.

Here's Halloween Havoc if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/02/23/halloween-havoc-1997-age-in-the-cage-and-one-of-wcws-best-matches-ever/>

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