

Monday Nitro – November 3, 1997: On The Road To Two PPVs

Monday Nitro #112

Date: November 3, 1997

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 15,366

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

We're closing in on Starrcade and most importantly we have a main event signed up for it. Sting signed the contract on Tuesday and the match is officially set. I'd be shocked if we hear about anything else tonight, even though we have a PPV coming up in the near future. Tonight looks like another show with a ton of matches on it like last week. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from the "press conference" from last night with Sting signing the contract (while not looking at the paper) before pointing the bat at Hogan and walking away.

Eddie Guerrero/Dean Malenko vs. Rey Mysterio/Steven Regal

Now there are some interesting pairings. Dean and Rey start things out and head to the mat very quickly to trade submission attempts. The masked man hooks a hammerlock and Malenko can't figure him out this time. Off to Regal vs. Eddie with Regal taking over with a forearm to the back of the head. Regal is acting like his usual heelish self which makes the team all the stranger.

A dropkick to the knee slows Regal down though as do various kicks to said knee. Regal comes back with a cross body of all things and it's off to Rey with a springboard rana for two. Back to Malenko who is immediately sent to the floor by a headscissors. We get face (I think?)

miscommunication with Rey accidentally running into Regal, allowing Eddie to powerbomb Rey down. Guerrero goes up but Dean puts on the Cloverleaf for the tap out by Mysterio.

Rating: C+. With the talent in there did you expect this to be anything but entertaining? The three way feud with Malenko vs. Guerrero vs. Mysterio was very entertaining as the matches more than backed up and even surpassed whatever the stories were between the three guys. Good opener here.

Regal kicks Mysterio post match because he's a villain and would eventually have the trunks to prove it.

Fit Finlay vs. Dave Taylor

A quick armbars takes Taylor down but it doesn't lead anywhere. Raven and company are here as is their custom. Finlay takes him down to the mat again and hooks a nerve hold complete with fishhooking the mouth. Taylor comes back with some forearm to the face and a headscissors to speed things up a bit. A gutbuster puts Finlay down again but Dave misses a cross body, allowing Finlay to tombstone him down for the pin. Short but physical as these European matches usually are.

We get a phone call from Bischoff who is annoyed at the announcers talking down about Hogan for allegedly ducking Sting. Hogan has offered Sting a bunch of title shots and Sting hasn't showed so Hogan isn't a coward. In a weird twisted way, that makes sense. Eric brags about the success of the movie and gets in a jab at McMahon for running a Best of Survivor Series show but the movie destroyed it.

Yuji Nagata vs. Psychosis

Nagata fires off kicks to start but gets dropkicked down for his efforts. Psychosis can't follow up though, presumably due to boredom at spending

that much time around Nagata. Yuji heads to the floor to confer with Sonny Onoo, only to have the masked dude dive over the top to take out Nagata. An apron legdrop gets two back inside but as Psycho tries a top rope rana Nagata shoves him down and fires off some hard kicks. A powerbomb puts Psychosis down again but he pops up for some kicks to take Nagata down. Instead of covering though he goes after Onoo, only to be kicked by Yuji and finished by the Nagata Lock.

Rating: D+. The match was ok but as always I don't get the appeal of Nagata. I understand that his Japanese stuff is better, but that doesn't translate over well to America. He's very dull and just kicks people before putting them in his leg lock. Oh and he works for Sonny Onoo, like almost every other foreign heel in the cruiserweight division.

Raven is in a classroom and talks about never following the rules as a child.

TV Title: Perry Saturn vs. Disco Inferno

Disco is defending and this is Saturn's in ring debut. The champion jumps him to start and pounds away, only to be suplexed down to give Saturn control. A hammerlock belly to belly suplex takes Disco down again and it's off to an armbar. Saturn legdrops the arm and puts on something like a cross armbreaker. The Eliminators leg sweep gets two and it's off to more arm holds. Saturn keeps changing them up every few seconds to keep things moving. We get a quick ECW chant as Saturn hits a quick kick to take Disco down.

A clothesline sets up a suplex but Saturn stares at Raven instead of covering. Off to a Fujiwara armbar before standing Disco up and driving a knee into the arm to put him on the mat again. Back to the armbar but Disco comes back with a quick clothesline for two. Saturn shrugs it off and superkicks him in the back of the head to get control again. A perfect release German suplex puts Disco down again as Larry compares Saturn and Raven to Arn and Flair. Saturn hooks a tiger suplex and the

Rings of Saturn gives us a new champion.

Rating: C. This was a total squash and a great way to put Saturn over as a killer. Disco wasn't a long term champion and was just a goofy character who lucked his way into the title, so this was basically an extended version of the Honky Tonk Man/Ultimate Warrior formula. Saturn looked great here.

The Flock celebrates post match and Raven throws Richards to the floor because he can.

Ric Flair rants about wanting to beat up Hennig at World War 3.

Here's Hall with something to say. After the survey he shifts his attention to Syxx and Nash being injured. After glossing over them he move son to Larry Zbyszko who apparently used to be good but now can't even beat Eric Bischoff. Larry gets out of the commentary booth and has a contract ready for a match with Hall right now. Naturally Hall won't sign it as we go to a break.

Scott Hall vs. Chris Jericho

After throwing a toothpick in Jericho's face, Scott is taken down to the mat with an armdrag. The announcers talk about World War III and the winner getting a title shot at SuperBrawl (which would wind up being Souled Out). Jericho takes him down by the arm and Larry is suddenly his biggest fan. A big right hand puts the Canadian down and there's the fallaway slam for good measure. Hall loads up the Outsider's Edge but Jericho pushes off the top rope and flips down in front of Scott. A small package out of nowhere gives Jericho the completely clean pin and the biggest win of his career. The crowd goes NUTS.

Post match Hall jumps Jericho and hits the Edge which brings Larry to the ring with the contract.

We get the sixth and I believe final part of Lucha Libre and the Mexican Luchadores, this time focusing on various high risk moves.

Battle Royal

Ciclope, Damien, El Dandy, Hector Garza, Juventud Guerrera, Lizmark Jr., Silver King, Villano IV, Villano V

It's a big brawl to start as you would expect. Everyone uses some kind of high risk move and no one is eliminated for about two minutes. Cue the Giant to chokeslam and toss everyone around. The match is thrown out of course.

Giant talks about being a hungry giant for Thanksgiving and World War 3. He hopes it comes down to him and Kevin Nash so he can shot Nash who the real big man is.

Alex Wright vs. Ric Flair

Feeling out process to start with Wright taking over in the corner, only to be chopped down and backdropped for good measure. Alex rolls to the floor and has to be talked back into the ring by Queen Debra. Back in and Flair chops again, only to be taken down by a spinwheel kick. Wright stomps him down in the corner as the announcers talk about the NWO because it's been a full five minutes since they've done so. A dropkick puts Flair down and some elbows keep him there so Wright can put his feet on the ropes for two ala Flair.

A suplex brings Flair back in from the apron for two. Flair chops away as Tenay and Tony make predictions about who might win the battle royal and who they might fight at World War 3. Alex is sent to the floor and chopped before Flair belly to back suplexes him on the floor for good measure. Back in and Alex goes up, only to get crotched and shaken on the top rope. A suplex puts Wright down and it's the Figure four for the

submission.

Rating: C. Just a quick match here as Flair continues to make people look good even this late in his career. It never ceases to amaze me how smooth Flair is out there. Yeah his stuff is really basic but it works well enough to make even an eight minute match like this work well. Good stuff here in a basic wrestling match.

Ray Traylor vs. Steve McMichael

Traylor works on the arm to start but Mongo grabs a wristlock of his own to take over. A shoulder block puts Ray down and a clothesline puts him on the floor. Back in and the announcers talk about World War 3 a bit more. Traylor takes Mongo down and rams Mongo's knee into the post a few times. Back up and a double clothesline puts both guys down and we've got Goldberg, complete with Mongo's Super Bowl ring. The distraction lets Traylor hit the Boss Man Slam for the pin.

Rating: D. This falls into the boring category rather than bad. It was slow and plodding between two guys that weren't capable of carrying a match at this point. Mongo vs. Goldberg would continue to bore audiences for months while Traylor at least got to have a decent six man tag at Starrcade.

Here are Page and Kimberly for an interview. Page says he's banged up but this is what he loves to do. He claims that Halloween Havoc had the biggest PPV audience ever. I'd love to see some data to back that up. Page was jazzed to fight Savage and Hogan in back to back nights and Hogan couldn't beat him. He'd love another shot at him after winning World War 3.

The Nitro Girls dance a bit.

Tag Titles: Public Enemy vs. Steiner Brothers

This is a Philadelphia street fight with the Steiners defending. The challengers set up a pair of tables on top of each other as they come to the ring. It's a brawl to start before Rick can even get his jacket off. Scott slams Rock to the floor and we get down to Rick vs. Johnny before the partners switch off. There are no tags here so they're coming and going freely. We go split screen with Rick sending Grunge into the steps. Rocco crotches himself and all four are on the floor for a bit.

Johnny sends Rick back into the ring but Grunge punches him out to the floor with a single right hand. Scott and Rocco fight up by the announcers' booth before fighting over to the set. Grunge is choking Rick and the other two are heading back to the ring. Rick gets double teamed and backdropped out to the floor for good measure. Rock hits Rick in the back with a chair and loads him up on the double tables. The Steiners' manager Ted DiBiase pulls Rick out though and it's Grunge crashing through the tables, giving Scott the easy pin.

Rating: C-. If you like the ECW style of brawling, you probably would have liked this. The match didn't do much for me though as it was mainly just punching around the arena and not very entertaining for the most part. Then again, this is in Philadelphia so it's the perfect crowd for something like this.

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We look at last year's World War 3.

US Title: Lex Luger vs. Curt Hennig

Hennig is defending. Feeling out process to start until a hard clothesline puts Hennig down in the corner. Another clothesline puts the champion down and we take a break. Back with Hennig on the floor and yelling with a fan. Back in and Hennig stomps away at the ribs before choking on the ropes.

A clothesline gets two for the champion and it's time for some corner choking. Hennig stomps him a bit and covers for two before it's off to a neck crank. Luger fights up and sends Hennig into the corner for an overblown flip. There's the forearm to set up the Rack but Hennig grabs the rope and they both tumble to the floor as Flair runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. You really would have expected these two to have a far better match than this. I don't ever recall seeing Hennig less motivated than this, which made Luger the workhorse of the match. The ending was predictable which didn't help Hennig's lack of motivation. Not much to see here at all.

Luger yells at Flair to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The show wasn't bad but for the most part it was just there. The building towards the PPV is odd as Starrcade is clearly the huge show but we have to get World War 3 out of the way first. The problem is that's a big show with a big prize on the line, so the build is split between both shows and it's not really working. There was some good stuff on here though.

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