

On This Day: Monday Nitro – April 1, 1996: Bobby Heenan's Swan Song

Monday Nitro #30

Date: April 1, 1996

Location: CSU Convocation Center, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 7,000

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Eric Bischoff, Steve McMichael

We're in the eighth month of Nitro and finally into the 30s of the shows. The company moves towards Slamboree which hasn't been mentioned yet but there's some stuff to get through first. This is kind of a dead period for a few weeks so there isn't much to say about this one. Let's get to it.

We open in the ring with Sting and Giant just about to start us off here. Well ok then.

Giant vs. Sting

This would be the main event of said Slamboree PPV. Giant swings but misses as we're told that this was supposed to be Sting/Giant (why?) vs. Harlem Heat but Jimmy paid off the actual team. Sting hammers away but can't get anywhere with him. Cross body just bounces off Giant which always looks cool. Sting manages to send him to the floor but Giant grabs him around the throat for a chokeslam from the apron. Sting manages to get a dropkick to send Giant flying to the floor. Luger runs in to help Sting and it's thrown out. Too short to rate.

Cue the theme song.

We see a clip from before the show with Jimmy paying off Harlem Heat to leave their tag title opportunity. Wait why would Giant be Sting's partner when Sting and Luger are champions?

Flair defends against Luger later.

Nasty Boys vs. Road Warriors vs. Steiner Brothers

Rick vs. Knobbs to start us off in a rare (for this period and company) three way dance. Things quickly break down with Knobbs vs. Animal. I wish they were doing the version of this they were doing later in the history of the company where it would be three guys in the ring at once. Scott gets a pumphandle slam to Hawk for no cover. Hawk rams into the post shoulder first as this is kind of hard to follow.

Back in and the shoulder is fine. Hawk takes Scott down with a neckbreaker and a fist drop for two. Animal vs. Scott now and Animal is sent into Rick who drills him and gets two after being tagged. WOW that was a badly written sentence. Sags apparently tags in and the Nastys beat up Scott. They're tagging in and out insanely fast here. Hawk fights Sags on the floor and now has a choke on Rick in the ring. I have no idea how they keep jumping but they're not editing it or anything. It's that big a mess.

Knobs hammers away on Rick and we take a break. There's an explosion of

pyro in front of a Nitro logo which probably scares half the crowd to death. Back with Rick vs. Animal. Now Sags just runs in when Animal tags Hawk. Ok so I'm not completely insane here. Knobs covers Hawk for two somehow. I've been watching this and I have no idea how we're getting from point A to point B.

Sags and Scott come in and make that Animal vs. Rick. I want this to end very badly as it's getting very annoying. Now Knobs is in there. You're supposed to tag I think but it doesn't seem like they are. Knobs sends Rick HEAD FIRST into the post. That looked sick. Now Public Enemy comes out and hammers everyone. In the insanity Scott pins Knobs to win. What the heck ever man.

Rating: F. In a match you're supposed to be able to tell what's going on. This was like something out of ECW's worst nightmares. Terrible match and there was no way to tell what was going on as the rules kept being thrown out. Horrible match so of course it got about 15 minutes. Get on to ANYTHING else.

Hulk Hogan/Booty Man vs. Arn Anderson/Kevin Sullivan

Gee I wonder who wins here. After the entrances we take a break, complete with an ad for the Power Plant, set to what would become La Parka's music. Heenan says tonight is his last night on Nitro for some reason. Booty Man vs. Anderson to start us off. They head to the floor with Anderson ramming him into the railing. Hogan (I think debuting the long tights here) takes Anderson's head off with a clothesline. Scratch that as he had them at the PPV.

Off to Booty Man vs. Sullivan now as we're just waiting on the hot tag to

Hogan here. Hogan finally comes in and gets ZERO reaction. Anderson takes him back to the corner as we continue to talk about Heenan leaving. I don't remember that at all but I doubt anything comes of it. Hogan gets a hot shot of all things and a double noggin knocker to make sure we're still in the Hogan comfort zone.

Back off to Booty Man with Woman SCREECHING for Anderson to come on. Come on who? Uh I mean what. Yeah that's it. Booty Man hammers on Sullivan on the floor and then goes back in for a sunset flip on Arn for two as Sullivan saves. Woman claws at Booty's eyes (did I really just say that?) as we hear about how Woman wearing white is supposed to be bad.

Booty Man is sent to the floor again and we get into a standard heel formula with Booty Man playing Ricky Morton. And never mind as Hogan is tagged in rather fast. Still no reaction but the human sun is in there now. Liz, looking AWESOME in a leather skirt and thigh high boots, tries to help Anderson. Kimberly gives Hogan a show and it goes into Sullivan's eye to end this.

Rating: D. Another weak main event level tag match here with nothing going on for the most part. It's more Hogan vs. Horsemen/Dungeon to further prove that the NWO was desperately needing. I think the vast majority of people were just done with this feud but they kept it going anyway. Didn't like this one at all.

Booty Man goes back to get the shoe and gets beaten down a bit.

Gene comes in to talk to the winners and Booty Man says he has an idea. Why do I have a feeling it involves bags of cocaine? Apparently it's a gimmick match of some sort.

WCW World Title: Lex Luger vs. Ric Flair

No show on the 8th apparently. Debra McMichael is in the front row which would eventually lead to foreshadowing. Luger challenging Flair for the world title just feels right. Flair struts a lot to start as you would expect. Luger overpowers him as you would also expect. Well at least they're doing things simply to start. Press slam sends Flair down. This is about the same opening of their matches they always had which is fine.

Flair gets in a shot and works Luger over in the corner. Luger fires away with clotheslines and Flair takes a break. Back in and it's a straight thumb to the eye to put Luger on defense again. Luger gets going again as this crowd is DEAD. They've been this way all night though so it's not just the match. Luger chases the girls off and Flair is able to get a knee in to take over for about the fourth time.

Bischoff uses the term stomping a mudhole which Austin certainly wasn't using yet. Heenan talks about taking some time off to relax which I think would set up him being the coach for the Horsemen at the Great American Bash. Figure Four goes on and Luger almost gets pinned in it. Luger gets up and a sunset flip gets two. Superplex to Flair and Luger growls at him. Powerslam hits and Woman pops up with a cup of coffee. Rack goes on but Liz has the referee. Coffee to Luger's eyes sets up a rollup (and feet on the ropes of course) for Flair to retain.

Rating: C-. This was there for the sake of having a main event. That's not so bad but at the same time it could have been more. These two could have a passable match in their sleep which is a good thing. At least it wasn't that bad, but it was there for the sake of being there which is

never a good thing. Not awful though.

Heenan says goodbye to the announcers. He has one more thing to say. APRIL FOOL'S! That was awesome as I totally forgot it was April 1.

Overall Rating: D. I wasn't into this one at all. They were seemingly running around like crazy with no real idea of where they were going with this. It's not their worst show but it clearly wasn't one of their better ones. That week off probably helped them a lot as they needed time to recharge. Pretty clear they had no plan for Slamboree other than Lethal Lottery, which sucked. Weak show tonight.

Remember: no show for April 8. Next show will be the one dates April 15.

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