

Monday Nitro – December 1, 1997: Bischoff Gets What He Wants

Monday Nitro #116

Date: December 1, 1997

Location: Knoxville Civic Auditorium, Knoxville, Tennessee

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

We're less than a month away from Starrcade and Hogan is running out of time. Last week the NWO got to beat up another Sting mannequin because they have nothing else to do anymore. As for tonight we've got DDP vs. Hennig again which will likely set up the US Title match for the PPV. Let's get to it.

As the announcers talk about Larry checkmating Bischoff in the game of human chess, here's Bischoff to open the show. He says that there's no long term deal to fight Larry because that was a one night only deal. However, if Nitro is put on the line, maybe we can work something out. Since this is before WCW lost its mind though, Larry doesn't have that power.

Rey Mysterio vs. Juventud Guerrera

Eddie Guerrero comes out to join the commentary booth. Feeling out process to start with both guys trying to gain wrist control. We get a pretty slick test of strength sequence with Rey flipping Guerrera all over the place and both guys bridging up at a two count. Rey tries a rana but gets dropped throat first onto the top rope to take over. Off to a leg lock by Juvy before he dropkicks the knee out.

Mysterio comes back with an enziguri as Eddie is really calm and collected on commentary here. Juvy crotches him on the top rope and ranas him out of the corner for two. Rey tries a German but Juvy backflips out and hits the Juvy Driver for two. Guerrera misses a charge in the corner and gets caught in an electric chair drop for two. West Coast Pop gets

the pin for Rey a few seconds later.

Rating: B. Lack of knee selling from Rey aside, this was a very solid match. As is often the case, the best idea you can have is to let two talented guys have five minutes to show off for the crowd. Good, solid match here with both guys getting to show off their numerous skills, which is something WCW was excellent at when they let it happen.

Wrath vs. Hugh Morrus

Feeling out process to start with both guys trying to show off the power. Morrus takes over for a bit but Vandenberg trips him up, allowing Wrath to knock Hugh to the floor. Wrath hits a sweet flip dive off the apron to take Morrus down and we go back inside. A top rope clothesline gets two for Wrath as we see Mortis wrap a chain around his boot. I think you can see the rest of this coming: Wrath holds Morrus for a kick with said boot but gets blasted in the head himself, allowing Hugh to hit No Laughing Matter (moonsault) for the fast pin.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to say they hate Sting and fans that wear Sting masks. Hollywood yells at an old lady and the old lady yells at him, sending Hogan back. Somehow this takes five minutes.

Yuji Nagata vs. Prince Iaukea

Oh joy. Prince takes him to the mat by the wrist but has to escape a bodyscissors and it's a standoff. Off to a headlock on Yuji which transitions into a chinlock, only to have Nagata pick him up and drop Prince backwards. Prince is thrown to the floor for some kicks by Sonny Onoo before going back in for a rake of the eyes from Nagata. The announcers are ignoring this as they likely should. Nagata throws on a leg lock for a bit before Prince fights up, only to be dropped in a belly to back suplex for two. Yuji loads up a superplex but gets shoved off, allowing a high cross body to get the pin for the Prince.

Rating: D+. I actually stayed awake for that. The match was fine but as always with these two it's really difficult to get any interest going for them. Prince is somehow even less interesting than Nagata as his entire character is that he's from I think Samoa. That's the entirety of his

persona and when he's just ok in the ring, that's really not much to go on.

Nitro Girls.

Faces of Fear vs. Harlem Heat

Barbie and Stevie start things off with Ray pounding him down into the corner. A suplex puts Barbarian down and it's off to Booker for the two count for some reason. It's off to Meng for some clubberin on Booker in the corner, only to be caught by the side kick and the ax kick for no cover. Barbarian kicks Booker into the corner for a tag off to Ray and another brawl breaks out with both guys going down. Jimmy Hart and Jacqueline get into it a little bit as it's hot tag to Booker. He cleans house with a bunch of kicks as everything breaks down. Meng puts the Death Grip on Stevie but Booker rolls up Barbarian for the fast pin.

Rating: D+. Not bad here and the ending was a nice surprise. These are two teams who fought so many times that it got boring watching them over and over again. Booker would be on the verge of splitting off into his singles career due to Stevie injuring his ankle so this was one of the last matches for the team for a long time.

Post match Meng still has the hold on so Booker gets a wooden chair. Meng sees him coming and shoves his hand through the chair to put the Grip on Booker. Nice visual there.

It's hour #2 so here are the Outsiders with something to say. During their entrances, Tony talks about how awesome Sting masks are and since there are so many of them, clearly these are WCW fans and not NWO fans. Hall does the survey and Nash talks about paying the price for challenging the NWO. Big Kev says that if you're WCW, you're Lee Harvey Oswald (his word not mine) and the NWO is Jack Ruby with a bullet to your stomach.

Scott Hall vs. Disco Inferno

During Disco's entrance we see the old lady from the Hogan entrance for some reason. Hall shoves him down to start and messes with Disco's hair.

Disco comes back with some hard right hands in the corner but Hall shrugs him off before hitting some of the loudest chops you'll ever hear to take over. Tony brings up the Sting masks for the third time in ten minutes as Hall hits a chokeslam for no cover. Nash gets in a clothesline as Hall does his Giant Frankenstein bit. Back in and the fallaway slam sets up the Outsider's Edge for the easy pin. Total squash.

Hall and Nash celebrate like they just won the world title post match.

More Nitro Girls.

JJ Dillon comes out and says that although Zbyszko can't put Nitro on the line, JJ himself can. Bischoff comes out and freaks out but the match is made for Starrcade.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Psychosis

This is what you call an excuse for the announcers to talk about Bischoff vs. Zbyszko and ignore the match. Dragon takes over to start by sending Psychosis into the corner and kicking him in the face for good measure. They seem to botch something as Dragon is awkwardly knocked to the floor where Psychosis hits a good looking guillotine legdrop. Back in and Dragon snaps off a rana before getting rolled up out of a powerbomb attempt for two. Psychosis goes up but gets crotched, allowing Dragon to hit a top rope rana and the Dragon Sleeper for the tap out. Short match.

We see the Nitro Party winner for the week.

Raven says he isn't fighting tonight and sends Kidman in to face Benoit instead.

Chris Benoit vs. Billy Kidman

Lodi, who doesn't have a name yet, comes over the barricade with Kidman. Benoit seems fine with fighting a replacement and chops Kidman down with ease before dropping him on his head with a belly to back suplex. A modified spinebuster sets up a Liontamer but Benoit lets go of it to yell at Raven. Benoit rips Kidman's shirt off and chops away in the corner before stomping him down. While Benoit yells at Raven some more, Kidman comes back with a springboard dropkick to take over.

Benoit will have none of that and sends Kidman to the floor for more chops. Saturn interferes though, allowing Kidman to hit a Shooting Star Press off the apron to take over again. They head back inside and a slingshot legdrop gets one for Kidman and a lariat gets the same. Off to a chinlock but Chris easily counters with another suplex. Kidman blocks a German but Benoit easily puts him down with the Crossface for the tap out.

Rating: C+. Total and complete dominance by Benoit here as this was one of his most impressive performances to date. He looked like he was on a totally different level than the Flock which makes the imminent clash with Raven look all the more awesome. Based on this match alone you can see the pure potential in Benoit that people raved about for years.

Post match the Flock invades and the numbers game lets Raven hit the DDT on Benoit. Saturn puts the Rings of Saturn on Benoit for good measure.

Nitro Girls part 3.

Lex Luger vs. Buff Bagwell

They lock up to start but since neither guy can get an advantage, let's have a posedown. Buff slaps him like an idiot and gets backdropped down for his efforts. After a gorilla press, Luger clotheslines Buff to the outside but Bagwell pulls Lex to the floor and rams him back first into the apron to take over. Back inside we go and Buff hits some basic stuff before putting on a chinlock.

After a quick Luger comeback, Buff clotheslines him down again and kicks him in the injured ribs to keep Luger in trouble. Buff argues with the referee and chokes Luger on the ropes. More pounding down ensues but Buff finally charges into some boots in the corner. Luger does his usual stuff (atomic drop, clothesline, powerslam) and loads up the Rack but Vincent runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D. Slow and plodding match here with Buff trying to get a rub off Luger. That didn't quite work though as Bagwell's offense was so basic that he couldn't get anything going at all. Luger's offense on the other hand has been the same set of stuff for years now yet he's still very

popular. Wrestling is funny like that sometimes.

Both NWO guys are Racked.

NWO announcement focusing on DDP getting beaten up.

US Title: Curt Hennig vs. Diamond Dallas Page

On his way to the ring, Hennig, the champion here, takes both a drink and a piece of paper to the face yet keeps talking trash to the camera the entire time. That's some serious talent. This is apparently a rematch from Saturday Night. Page gets in a quick right hand and a slam to start which send Hennig bailing to the floor. Back in and Page hits a shoulder block and a swinging neckbreaker to take Hennig down but the champion comes back with a shot to the bad ribs of DDP.

Curt slowly works over the ribs and there's the Hennig necksnap. We actually hear Page's real full name as the referee is bumped off....wait what did hit him? Neither guy was anywhere near him but he's down anyway. He doesn't see a cover by Hennig but is back up a few seconds later to look at a chinlock. The hold stays on for a good while as I guess Anderson is recovering. They finally get back up for the discus lariat from Page and here's the comeback. There's the Pancake on Hennig and cue Rick Rude as Page hits the Cutter. Rude pulls out the referee for the DQ and here's the NWO.

Rating: C-. Not great here but since these shows are just killing time until Starrcade anyway, does it really make a difference? Besides did anyone believe the NWO wasn't going to run in to end this match? There would be yet another match between these two for the title at Starrcade to finally blow off the feud so this wasn't much of note.

Post match the NWO destroys Page with Hogan hitting a Diamond Cutter. They put a Sting mask on Page and give him another Cutter on the world title. Hogan talks trash to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Has anything other than the two top matches been announced for Starrcade? Usually that would be a problem but in this case it's ok as the main event is the only thing people were interested in.

The Bischoff vs. Zbyszko match being announced is a big deal as it's the second biggest match on the PPV, but after we've heard Hall vs. Larry built up for months, it's not the match we want to see. Anyway, the rest of this show wasn't bad but it doesn't feel like we're four weeks away from Starrcade at all.

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