

On This Day: April 22, 1996 – Monday Nitro 1996: One Match For All The Titles

Monday Nitro #32

Date: April 22, 1996

Location: Albany Civic Center, Albany, New York

Commentators: Eric Bischoff, Bobby Heenan, Steve McMichael

Well after last week's horrible show we're back with a very similar card. However on this one we have Benoit vs. Guerrero so this should be better already. The main event is the same though with Flair/Giant challenging Sting/Luger for the tag titles. Apparently if Flair gets pinned tonight he loses the world title to the pinner and if Luger gets pinned he loses the tag and TV Titles. Interesting I guess. Let's get to it.

McMichael's dog has the glasses where the eyes are on springs. Oh my aching head.

Public Enemy vs. American Males

Bischoff gives away the results of Raw which is always an interesting thing to see. Also of course next week would be a taped Nitro but who cares? Public Enemy puts a table up at ringside pre-match. Bagwell is going to be in a movie apparently. I wonder if it's hard or soft. We actually talk about Slamboree a bit which is a first I believe. The Males clear the ring and hits some decent dives to further their advantage.

We talk about Brian Pillman who has been in a car wreck, which is what

kind of led to his death. Grunge vs. Riggs is the official starting match. Dropkick puts Grunge on the floor and a double dropkick puts Rocco down for no cover. Off to Bagwell for all of four seconds and a wristlock before Riggs comes back in. Grunge vs. Bagwell again with Grunge choking away.

Now Rocco in with a Lionsault for two. These teams are tagging in and out very quickly. After a brief beatdown, Bagwell gets a cross body out of the corner for two. This hasn't been much of a match at all. Swanton Bomb (kind of) by Rocco misses and it's time for Riggs to come in. He and Grunge come in at the same time and Riggs gets a forearm for two. Everything breaks down and Public Enemy throws Riggs over the top which is a DQ this week so that's it. Egads.

Rating: F. The match was boring and then the ending made it even worse. This company changed the rules for over the top every week and here it happened to be a DQ. It's a weak DQ and a cheap ending to give Public Enemy the loss. If you want a DQ then let the hardcore crazy people be hardcore and crazy. Not that hard.

Bagwell goes through a table post match.

We get the first round draw for Lethal Lottery at Slamboree. Hooters Girls help out here for some reason. This is "random" mind you.

Barbarian/Bobby Walker vs. Meng/Hugh Morrus

Big Bubba/Stevie Ray vs. Fire and Ice (yes a regular team was "randomly" drawn. That's the second one drawn)

Ric Flair/Randy Savage vs. Arn Anderson/Eddie Guerrero (awesome pairings

there)

Slamboree sucked if you didn't get that.

Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero

Benoit charges him into the corner and taps him on the jaw like a little boy. Eddie, ever the showman, does exactly the same thing. Benoit hits the floor and Eddie teases a big dive so Benoit backs off. Smart psychopath. Back in the ring for some nice technical stuff as you would expect. Benoit hits a chinlock and we take a break. Back and we're still in the chinlock which is always a weird thing to see. Bischoff swears it's live so it's hard to say.

We hear about the Cruiserweight Title tournament which is mainly happening in Japan (allegedly) because WCW wasn't that smart. Belly to back by Eddie gets him out of the hold, only for a suplex to hit him for two also. Apparently Savage is being restrained in the back by cops. They slug it out as we talk about Savage some more. Eddie is sent to the floor and comes back in with a top rope rana for two. In the corner Eddie tries a sunset flip but Benoit kneels down on it and grabs the ropes for the pin.

Rating: C+. Well they had better ones, that's for sure. Not a bad match and the lack of time due to the commercial hurt it a lot. The only think I can say here isn't Benoit vs. Guerrero. I don't think they're capable of having a bad match so what were you really expecting here?

Some WCW suit comes out and says Savage needs to play nice. Savage gets

in his face and says something about blowing up city hall. The suit says get a therapist. This was, in a word, pointless.

Meng vs. Jim Duggan

Apparently in the main event partners can pin partners. Oh dear. After a break before the match, Meng is on the floor hiding a bit. Back in and Duggan hammers away, only to have Meng run away again. Dude, Meng used to be a monster and unstoppable and now he's running from Jim Duggan who punches him in the head. I give up. Duggan hammers him down and Meng goes to the floor again.

Bischoff runs down the WWF results again as Heenan FREAKS over the idea of Flair having the world, tag and TV titles. Bischoff talks about Hogan for no apparent reason as they're really trying not to talk about this all punches all the time match. Duggan starts no selling until Meng finally beats him down a bit. Now Meng's head hardens about 10 times in the middle of the match and we hit the nerve hold.

Duggan fights up and we go right back to the nerve hold. This is basically turning into a match by who wants to sell less. Duggan hammers away as Meng gets back up. Three Point Clothesline misses and Meng pounds even more. Big boot gets two for the Tongan and Duggan hits the floor to wrap his hand up in tape. A shot with that is enough to get the pin.

Rating: D. I wanted to hate this but there's something kind of fun about two big guys just hammering away on each other until one goes down. It's a horrible match and the selling is laughable but there's something kind of fun about it for some weird reason. I think you'd have to see it to get the appeal.

More Slamboree stuff.

Dick Slater/Robert Eaton vs. Disco Inferno/Alex Wright

Steven Regal/Belfast Bruiser vs. VK Wallstreet/Jim Duggan

Yes, there were two regular teams, two teams of people that hated each other, and other opposite pairings. And this was legitimately said to be random. I have no idea how to respond to that but it's great.

TV Title/Tag Titles/World Title: Ric Flair/The Giant vs. Sting/Lex Luger

All titles on the line, whoever is pinned loses the title to whomever. Flair is world champion, Luger is TV champion, Sting/Luger are tag champions. Flair hits on Debra one more time. Savage pops up to chase after Flair but gets arrested of course. Sting and Giant start us off. Apparently Giant has been offered a tryout with the Detroit Lions. Not a bad idea actually.

Luger and Sting double up to clear the ring and the challengers take a breather. Back to Luger vs. Flair as Luger shows off his arms. Luger takes over with clotheslines and it's Flair Flop time. Sting vs. Giant is announced in a grudge match which hasn't really been a grudge. Off to Sting who has his usual good mini match with Flair.

Slam off the top sends Flair flying. Superplex sends Flair out to the floor again as a kid that is maybe 8 wants to punch him. Stinger Splash

against the railing misses though (of course. You would think he'd learn after awhile) and it's off to Sting vs. Giant again. Why in the world would Flair want to be in the room against Sting? Have Giant go in there to try to win the tag titles and don't run the risk of losing the world title.

Mini-hot tag to Luger who cleans house. Giant grabs him for a chokeslam but Sting comes off the top with a chop block. Giant still has the grip on Luger so Sting hammers away which FINALLY breaks the grip. Woman slips hot coffee to Flair again and it goes into Giant's eyes for the CHEAP DQ.

Rating: D+. I hate matches like these where the whole thing is set up and they use a back door to avoid having to do something major. Not a horrible match but I hate the ending which is going to drive me crazy in the coming year. Also having the same ending two weeks in a row is just lazy booking.

Flair begs off Giant as Gene comes in for a chat with the big man. Giant wants the title and Flair says apologize or else. The Giant goes after him and the champion bails.

The announcers say the title match is on for next week and talk a lot to wrap things up.

Overall Rating: F+. Other than Eddie vs. Benoit, this was awful. It was incredibly clear that they had no clue what they were doing from week to week. Thank goodness some things would change the next week and then about five weeks from here everything would change forever. Terrible show and quite possibly the worst in the entire series to date. That would of course get shattered later, but this was pretty bad.

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