

Monday Nitro – December 8, 1997: You Can See The Cracks Forming

Monday Nitro #117

Date: December 8, 1997

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

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

We're into the final three shows before Starrcade so the card really should start to fill out now. The main event tonight is Hall vs. Page which has a history from the early 90s which I doubt we'll hear about. Other than that we're hopefully going to get some new matches announced for the PPV as the card is pretty thin at the moment. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about Larry vs. Bischoff for a bit to open things up.

Konnan vs. Ray Traylor

Konnan immediately runs but gets punched down in the corner with ease. A powerslam sends Konnan to the floor but he pulls Traylor to the floor for a quick slugout. Ray is sent into the steps and Konnan pounds him down back inside. A DDT gets two for Konnan....and there go the lights. They come back up a few moments later and Konnan is out cold. Ray cautiously puts his boot on Konnan's chest for the win. Not enough to rate here but it was dull while it lasted.

We see Rude helping in the beatdown of Page last week.

Steve McMichael vs. Barbarian

Mongo grabs a headlock to start and hits a quick shoulder block to take

over. A hard shot to the back of Barbarian's head actually hurts him and we cut to the Flock in the crowd. Barbie comes back with a big boot to send Mongo to the floor followed by some whips into the barricade and apron. Back in and a kind of pumphandle slam gets two on Mongo and Barbarian goes up top. His flying clothesline jumps into a shot to the face and Mongo grabs the tombstone out of nowhere for the pin.

Rating: D. After a year and a half, Mongo should be better than he is here. He's been in the ring with some solid talent over this time and he's just not getting any better. Barbarian is a generic heel but he's not bad in the ring. Mongo dragged him WAY down here and the whole Mongo experiment is clearly not working.

Post match Meng runs in and puts Mongo in the Death Grip.

Gene suggests that no one respects Disco for losing to Jackie. Disco says he's tired of hearing about it. I think everyone is tired of hearing about Jackie in general.

Buff Bagwell comes out and challenges Luger because he's buff and we're in Buffalo. Seriously, that's what he said.

Prince Iaukea vs. Dean Malenko

Eddie comes out to do commentary again. After a quick feeling out process to start, Malenko snaps off a good dropkick and goes after the knee. Prince fights up and hits a quick clothesline to send Dean to the apron. Back in and they trade nearfalls as Eddie is ripping into Dean like there's no tomorrow. A double clothesline puts both guys down but it's Dean up first for the double underhook powerbomb and the Cloverleaf for the fast tap out. This was just a step above a squash.

Nitro Girls.

Nash says he's the real giant of pro wrestling and that Giant is one dimensional.

Giant says he's the real giant of pro wrestling and that he's going to chokeslam Nash.

Nitro Girls.

Chris Benoit vs. Lodi

Again this is supposed to be Raven but he's not here tonight so it's the yet to be named Lodi instead. Tony has a name for him and calls him Load-Eye. Benoit knocks him off the apron to start and chops Lodi up against the barricade. They head inside with Benoit talking trash to the Flock and chopping the skin off of Lodi's chest. Benoit hits his hard clothesline to take Lodi down and loads up a superplex. The Swan Dive and Crossface end this destruction as Benoit impresses again.

The Flock doesn't run in because Raven isn't here to lead them. Benoit grabs a mic and tells Raven to get out here and take a beating like a man. He promises to teach Raven what abuse is really about.

Here's Ric Flair who says Hall, Nash and Hogan would get theirs at Starrcade. As for Hennig, Flair wants him in a cage at the PPV. Gene asks about Bret Hart and Flair calls him the real greatest of all time and invites Bret to come to Nitro. Oh wait actually Flair is the best ever and comparing Bret to Flair is like comparing John Elway to Jim Kelly. Hey look who is in the front row: Jim Kelly!

Randy Savage vs. Hugh Morrus

Savage knocks Jim Kelly's hat off and Morrus jumps Macho to start. Kelly and teammate Bruce Smith get in some shots of their own and this is all before the bell. They head inside and I think we're underway. Morrus hits

a running clothesline in the corner and shouts insults about the NWO.

A second charge into the corner misses and Savage dumps him to the floor. Back in and Hugh hits a powerslam for two but Savage avoids a top rope elbow. Randy slams him down for his own elbow but pulls Morrus up at two. Another elbow hits but the lights go out again. About a minute later the lights come on and Savage is out with a Sting mask on. Morrus wins for no apparent reason.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here other than angle advancement at the end. Morrus was one of those guys who was always around but never really did anything of note. This was one of those things he was good for though as Savage got to beat him up until the stuff at the end of the match.

Rude and Bischoff head to the announce table and say they don't buy Schiavone's nonsense. Granted I don't think anyone else did but I get their point. They threaten the announcers and make them do the see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil poses. Ok then.

TV Title: Saturn vs. Disco Inferno

The announcers say we have to take a break because they're scared for their lives. Back with Saturn throwing Disco around as Tony spends the first few minutes talking about how they need to not ignore the match. Saturn is knocked to the floor and Disco sends him into the steps, only to have Saturn drop him onto the top rope back inside. The champ cranks on Disco's arms before hitting a high angle suplex for no cover.

A top rope elbow misses and we head back to the floor again with Saturn sending him into the barricade. Disco Stuns Lodi over the barricade before pounding away on Saturn in the corner. Saturn hits a neckbreaker to take over again, followed by a big suplex for two. Disco counters a powerbomb out of nowhere and Stuns Saturn for the pin and the title.

Rating: C. I have no idea what the point of this was. We spend two months making fun of Disco for losing to Jackie and then give him a clean pin over a killer like Saturn? That's supposed to make us forget about everything he's done for the last few months? The match wasn't bad but the booking makes you wonder what WCW was thinking at this point. I guess the idea was that Raven wasn't there to guide him, but.....Disco Inferno?

We look at another Nitro Party winner.

Nitro Girls.

Buff Bagwell vs. Lex Luger

Bagwell immediately sends him to the floor and poses only to be run over with a clothesline. We get a pose off followed by Luger pounding him into the corner and hiptossing Buff down and flexing some more. Buff comes back with a clothesline and a belly to back suplex before pounding on Luger's back. Off to a camel clutch but Luger fights up and slams him onto the mat as Norton comes out. Luger makes his comeback with his usual stuff (clotheslines, atomic drop, forearm) to send Buff to the floor and as he fights off the NWO, Buff gets counted out.

Rating: D. Bagwell just isn't at this level yet and Lex Luger isn't going to be the right guy to bring him up at all. This is the second week in a row where these two have done nothing of note and it's not really bringing Bagwell up the card at all. Then again no one ever would despite the guy being around for like ten years.

Video on Sting.

Scott Hall vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Main event time. Hall does the survey as the announcers complain about being threatened too much. As the camera goes to the regular shot of the

ring to open the match, someone holds up a HUGE Undertaker cutout which made my head snap around when I saw it. Hall starts with the driving shoulders and we actually hear about Page managing Hall back in the day. They fight over a top wristlock and Hall is sent down to the mat.

Page pounds away in the corner and gets two off a clothesline. Hall comes back with the middle rope bulldog for two of his own and stomps away a bit. The fallaway slam hits for two as the fans are lethargic at the moment. Off to the abdominal stretch as we hear that if Zbyszko beats Bischoff at Starrcade he gets a shot at Hall. As is the custom though, Page counters into a stretch of his own, only to be hiptossed over. The Outsider's Edge is countered into a backdrop and some atomic drops have Hall in trouble. Page pancakes him down but here's Hennig for the DQ.

Rating: C-. They were clearly going through the motions out there with a bunch of signature stuff from Hall and that's about it. This is the problem with WCW anymore: everything is just filling time to get to the run in and the story advancement post match. Why would I get into a match and the near falls when there's probably a 90% chance it's going to end in a run-in?

The beatdown is on and Page is in big trouble. Even Hogan and Bischoff come out for this one. Another Sting dummy falls through the ring and even Hogan points it out this time. Hogan talks trash and has the NWO pull the Sting dummy out of the hole. Hollywood keeps talking trash to the dummy and the dummy stands up. It's the real Sting cleaning house and Hogan is terrified to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Lame matches, little storyline advancement, questionable booking in what advancement we did get. Yep this is the WCW that I knew was coming and didn't want to have to sit through. They're clearly just coasting until Starrcade, which is in three weeks and has three matches announced if my math is correct. Not a good show here and you can see the cracks starting to come out here.

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