

Monday Nitro – December 15, 1997: This 3 Hour Thing Isn't Going To Go Well

Monday Nitro #118

Date: December 15, 1997

Location: Independence Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

Attendance: 9,320

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

We're really getting close to Starrcade now with just two more Nitros to go before the biggest show in the company's history. The majority of the big matches are set for the show now so we're just finalizing things now before the pay per view. I'm not sure if we're going to hear the rest of the card before then but it could go either way. Let's get to it.

Apparently Bret Hart is here tonight. Cool. It's also a three hour show. Not cool.

Here's the NWO and they immediately look under the ring for Sting. Vincent looks into the rafters with binoculars in a bit that shouldn't be as funny as it is. With the inspection out of the way, Bischoff introduces Chono who presumably talks trash in Japanese. Hennig says this is NWO country and he's the best thing the NWO has ever produced. Hogan calls Sting a coward and says Sting will never come face him one on one. They were a bit more concise tonight.

Vincent vs. Ray Traylor

As soon as the bell rings Vincent walks into a spinebuster followed by a splash in the corner. The Flock arrives. A belly to back suplex puts Vincent down and the Boss Man Slam (now called Traylor Trash) ends this in a hurry.

Traylor wants to know where the NWO is. Based on what happened on Saturday Night, apparently they're in a six man tag against him and the

Steiners. Makes enough sense.

We see Flair's comments from last week about how he's the real best there is, was and ever will be.

Video on Nash vs. Giant for Starrcade.

The Nitro Girls dance at the announce table.

TV Title: Disco Inferno vs. Yuji Nagata

Disco is defending. Nagata starts firing off some kicks as Larry goes onto a BIG rant about how this town was built on the backs of various legends like Flair, Rhodes, Magnum and himself. The idea of grouping Larry with those men is hilarious. Anyway Disco pounds away but Sonny Onoo's distraction lets Nagata suplex him down for two. A rolling Liger Kick puts Disco down and some shots to the throat have Disco in a lot of trouble.

Nagata gets two off a forearm to the face but walks into an atomic drop. A knee lift gets two for Disco as does a gordbuster. Sonny tries to interfere but gets caught in a Chartbuster (Stunner), followed by a Stun Gun and Chartbuster to Nagata to complete the Steve Austin Special and retain Disco's title.

Rating: C. Not bad here as Disco's on and off push continues. For a guy who was nothing but a comedy character when he started out, he had some serious success over the years. The match was nothing to see here but Disco looked confident and like someone who belonged a bit higher up on the card.

Fit Finlay vs. Dean Malenko

Eddie is on commentary again here. Dean stares him down during the entrances as Tony thinks that's a challenge. Malenko takes Finlay down by the arm but gets caught in a quick headlock. A slam gets two on Dean and it's off to a nerve hold. Dean fights up as Eddie calls Dean a very boring person. That's the understatement of the century. Dean snapmares him down and puts on a chinlock with a knee in the back.

We hear about a tag match Eddie and Dean were in a few weeks back with Eddie ranting about how the people wanted to see the Frog Splash and not the Texas Cloverleaf. Finlay fights back with some forearms to the face but Dean whips him into the barricade. Back in and Dean can't powerbomb him as Finlay kicks him in the forehead. Eddie: "Dean looked like his wife told him they were going to have twins."

Finlay hits the rolling fireman's carry senton for two but Dean comes back with a rolling cradle for two. Eddie leaves the broadcast booth, thereby taking away the most entertaining part of the match. Guerrero heads to ringside and distracts Dean out of the tiger bomb. Finlay tombstones Dean down for the pin.

Rating: C. Decent match here with hilarious commentary from Eddie. As far as I can tell the Cruiserweight Title match isn't set yet for the PPV but you can tell it's coming. Either way it's a very entertaining feud and the match is bound to be a fun one. Finlay continues to be that kind of veteran you can put in this spot and get a decent match out of him, which is very valuable.

Video on the NWO beating up Roddy Piper, who hasn't been around in months.

La Parka/Psychosis vs. Rey Mysterio Jr./Juventud Guerrera

La Parka is in yellow for some reason here. Juvy and Psychosis start things off with Guerrera hitting a top rope rana to take over early. A standing version does the same but La Parka kicks him in the back of the head to slow Juvy down. Apparently this is under Lucha Rules, meaning going to the floor is the same as a tag. Psychosis hits a guillotine legdrop followed by a belly to belly for two on Guerrera. La Parka powerbombs him down for two more as we're actually getting the tag formula out of this.

Psychosis goes up but accidentally dropkicks La Parka. That's not enough for a tag again though as Psychosis pops up and decks Rey to keep Juvy in trouble. La Parka misses a splash in the corner and it's finally hot tag to Rey, although the announcers would rather talk about Bischoff. Rey ducks under both guys, allowing Juvy to hit a springboard cross body.

Everything breaks down and the heels are both kicked to the floor, allowing Rey and Juvy to hit stereo flip dives to take them out.

Back in and Juvy hits what the Hardys would call Poetry in Motion for two on Psychosis. La Parka is sent into Psychosis before Rey is launched into a rana for two on the guy in yellow. Juvy and Psychosis go on top with Psychosis trying a slam off the top, only to be turned into a kind of small package off the top for two for Juvy. Guerrera gets crotchted while loading up a Doomsday Device but Rey hits a springboard hurricanrana to the floor to take out La Parka. The 450 from Juvy is enough to end Psychosis.

Rating: B. Take four guys, let them go nuts for seven minutes, listen to the crowd cheer a lot. It worked for the six man matches and it worked here in the four man version. Mysterio and Guerrera worked pretty well together although I don't remember them teaming up all that much over the years until a bit at the end of WCW.

Here's Doug Dillinger who apparently used to be a Charlotte cop. They bring out Arn Anderson to a BIG ovation. Anderson calls this place his home and says that the fans deserve to see Ric Flair, so here's Naitch. Flair says that Anderson is about to make him cry but there are more important things to deal with at the moment. Apparently there was a fund set up today for fallen Charlotte cops and WCW has donated \$15,000 to it to start. That's rather cool. Flair presents them with a check, but now it's time to talk about Hennig. There goes Flair's coat and he wants Hennig tonight, because the NWO can't beat him in Charlotte.

JJ comes out to talk about the stipulations Bischoff wants. Eric shows up and says he wants punches and kicks to be legal. JJ says that's fine as long as submissions count. I know WCW had some weird rules at times but I'm pretty sure submissions have always counted.

Nitro Girls.

Here's Hall for a match but first of all we need the survey. For once, the fans are solidly WCW.

Scott Hall vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho grabs a pair of quick rollups for two each and the Lionsault hits for two more. Jericho dives into the fallaway slam though and Hall takes over. Hall counters a hiptoss and hits a BIG chokeslam for no cover. After doing the Giant imitation it's the Outsider's Edge and we're done quick.

Heenan comes in on commentary.

Meng vs. Steve McMichael

There's no Mongo so we cut to the back and McMichael is out cold with Goldberg standing over him. JJ comes up to yell at him and Goldberg volunteers to go fight Meng. As he comes to the ring though, Mongo pops up and a brawl breaks out.

Tag Titles: Scott Norton/Konnan vs. Steiner Brothers

Blast it with the two Scotts. For the sake of simplicity, Scott Steiner is Scott and Scott Norton is Norton. The Steiners clear the ring early on so let's talk about Bret Hart. Konnan starts with Scott and is gorilla pressed with ease. A belly to belly sends Konnan into the corner and it's off to Rick vs. Norton. Norton charges into a boot in the corner but comes back with a big clothesline to take Rick down.

Rick nails a Steiner line of his own and goes up top for a top rope clothesline for two. He goes up again but pulls a Flair and is slammed down by Norton. After some interference from Konnan, Norton's shoulder breaker is good for two. Off to Konnan who walks into a belly to back suplex as everything breaks down. Scott comes back in to load up the Frankensteiner but Vincent runs in for the DQ.

Rating: C-. Another not great match with another run in ending. For some reason this doesn't surprise me in the least anymore and it's already getting tiresome. Do we really need to protect Norton and Konnan from the tag team champions/ Oh wait Vincent already lost tonight so we can't have another NWO pinfall loss, because then people would stop viewing them as a threat. Or something like that I guess.

Booker T vs. Randy Savage

Stevie was either about to be injured or already was injured so Booker's singles push is on the verge of happening soon. Booker is in regular tights now and not the traditional Harlem Heat attire. He takes Savage down in a hurry and cranks on the arm but Savage comes back with right hands in the corner. Booker knocks him to the floor and then into the front row, only to throw him back into the ring a few seconds later.

Back in and Booker spends too much time posing but manages to slam Savage down. An elbow misses but Booker spins up and hits the Harlem side kick. Savage rolls to the floor as this is one sided so far. Booker misses a splash onto the barricade and momentum shifts in a hurry. After dropping Booker chest first onto the barricade, Savage throws him back inside for two.

A fan tries to get in but Savage drills him in the head. Booker spins kicks him down and Savage accidentally bumps the referee. The ax kick hits Savage but Liz breaks up the missile dropkick, allowing Savage to knock Booker to the floor. A chair shot to Booker's head allows the big elbow to end Mr. T.

Rating: C+. This was a good solid rub for the single Booker as he beat up Savage for a good four minutes out there. Savage winning was fine though as Booker was nowhere near ready to be a real threat to him yet. Liz getting involved was always strange to see given how meek she was back in the WWF. This is on Best of Nitro Volume 2 I believe.

Chris Benoit vs. Riggs

Again this was supposed to be Raven but it's another substitution. Benoit goes to look for Raven but gets jumped by Riggs instead. Back inside and Benoit gets up an elbow before firing off those hard chops. Benoit's eyes look awesome here. Chris drapes him stomach first across the top rope before headbutting him down on the mat. As in Riggs is on the mat and Benoit leans down to headbutt him.

A chop sends Riggs to the floor again but he gets in a shot on Benoit to take over. The fans are firmly behind Benoit as he gets his knees up to block a Riggs splash back inside. A front suplex puts Riggs down and there's the Swan Dive into the Crossface for the submission. He snapped

that hold on very fast and it looked sweet.

Rating: C+. This story is growing on me and the match that would result would be amazing. This feud should have elevated Benoit WAY up the ladder but of course he would be back down in the middle of the card after it was done because of various factors we'll get to later. Good performance from Benoit here.

Post match Benoit yells at the Flock before diving on them, only to get beaten down and put in the Rings of Saturn.

Here's JJ again to talk to Bischoff, this time about who is referee. They go back and forth between WCW referees and NWO guys with Dillon eventually agreeing to it being an NWO guy as long as he gets to pick which one. Cue Bret Hart who says he'd be honored to be referee, so Bischoff says \$7.5 million. Hart says he knows what it's like to be screwed by a referee before turning around to show a Hart Foundation jacket and leaving. To clarify, about a month after the Montreal Screwjob, the hottest name in wrestling is going to be a referee in a match between Eric Bischoff and Larry Zbyszko. Let that sink in for a minute.

Post break Gene calls out Lex Luger but gets Bagwell instead. Bagwell says Luger can't beat him so here's Luger, saying that he was in the production truck asking for a match with Bagwell. Buff gives about five excuses but after a slap we're ready to go.

Buff Bagwell vs. Lex Luger

Luger runs Buff over to start and backdrops him down. A few clotheslines put Bagwell down again before Lex stomps away. Back up and Lex misses a charge into the corner so Bagwell can stomp away a bit as well. Luger easily fights back and hits his usual clotheslines and powerslam, but here are Norton and Vincent....not for the DQ. Luger fights them off and clotheslines Bagwell to the floor and that's the DQ. Oh they're trying to trick us with the DQ's now. Match was nothing.

Ric Flair vs. Curt Hennig

Before Flair comes out Hennig challenges anyone in the audience to come fight him. He goes on and on for a bit about how he's the US Champion and all that jazz while insulting Flair. After a break here's Ric for the fight...and here's Hall for the DQ maybe ten seconds later. So much for that idea.

Flair manages to fight off the NWO for a bit but Hennig takes him down and puts him in the Figure Four. DDP, Luger and the Steiners come out and the NWO eventually runs off. Page challenges Hennig as Flair limps around. That leg injury was the reason he wasn't on Starrcade, which is a questionable decision to say the least if it's not a legit injury.

The Steiners and Luger take Flair to the back as more fans try to run in but are quickly dispatched. The rest of the NWO comes out so Page bails through the crowd. Hogan and company get in the ring and call out the Stinger. The lights flicker and Sting shows up on the WCW sign at the entrance. He hops down and walks to the ring as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: B-. Pretty good show overall but I'm really dreading the move to three hours. They're already having trouble filling in three hours and that's what we're going to get all the time, PLUS two hours of Thunder every week? It's almost like that's way too much material for one company to produce. Good thing this happened before and no other company on top of the business would try something that stupid again right? Good show this week but it felt long.

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