

Monday Nitro – February 2, 1998: This Feels So Familiar

Monday Nitro #125

Date: February 2, 1998

Location: Alamodome, San Antonio, Texas

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

Much to my surprise, this is the first time Nitro has ever been in Texas if the announcers are to be believed. We're on the way to SuperBrawl and Sting vs. Hogan II but the main story continues to be the NWO falling apart. Savage is almost off the team due to fighting with Hogan and Nash is being fined to death. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from the end of last week's show with the NWO taunting Savage as he was in the Scorpion Deathlock.

The Nitro Girls dance to open things up in the arena.

Tony promises that the main event will be one of the biggest ever in our sport: Sting vs. Savage

Juventud Guerrera vs. Psychosis

Larry says San Antonio is the home of the first luchador: Santa Anna, who rode up and beat John Wayne and Richard Widmark. Psychosis armdrags him down to start and here comes the Flock to their usual seats. They're a very tardy bunch. Juvy takes it to the mat with a headscissors and another to send Psychosis to the floor as we take a break. Back with Psychosis in control and putting on a bearhug.

Psychosis goes up but dives into an atomic drop, allowing Juvy to hit a gorgeous top rope hurricanrana for two. A victory roll from the top gets

two for Guerrero and they trade pinfall reversals until Psychosis hits a reverse suplex to take over. Juvy falls to the floor but dropkicks Psychosis out of the air on a dive attempt. Back in and the 450 is good for the pin by Guerrero.

Rating: C. This was the usual WCW formula for opening a show: take two cruiserweights and have them do high spots for six minutes to fire up the crowd. Why WWE never used this idea is beyond me because it's something that always worked. The Texas crowd was very appreciative of this as well.

The announcers talk about Page vs. Benoit for the US Title on this week's Thunder.

Here's Page with something to say. He sees Benoit as one of the most underrated wrestlers on the planet and Page respects him. It's because of Benoit's work ethic that Page wanted to give him a title shot. Gene asks if Page is worried about Benoit's history of crippling people but Page isn't scared. Benoit deserves a shot at the title and since the fans want to see it, Benoit gets a shot.

Video on the Giant being injured. Nash has been fined \$150,000 for the powerbomb at Souled Out and each additional powerbomb will cost the same.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Kidman

Kidman jumps him to start but Dragon does his handstand in the corner. The masked man comes back with his hard kicks including a hard one to the back. The Dragon Sleeper goes on but a Lodi distraction lets Saturn break up the hold. Both guys get near falls but it's Kidman taking over with a chinlock. Dragon jawbreaks his way out but gets kicked right back down. They slug it out with Tony calling this a complete match. That's an odd way to describe things but it's hard to tell what Tony is thinking at times.

Dragon gets a boot up in the corner and puts on a half crab but Kidman is next to the ropes. With Kidman still down, Dragon puts on a headscissors from behind and takes Kidman to the mat (they're both face down) before reaching back to pull Kidman's arms forward while holding his neck in place. Basically it's Cattle Mutilation but with Dragon rolled forward 180 degrees and Kidman nearly standing on his own head.

Kidman rolls out of the hold and catches Dragon in a sitout spinebuster for two. A springboard bulldog and a clothesline get the same on Dragon but he's able to crotch Kidman on the top rope. The super Frankensteiner sets up the Dragon Sleeper for the tap out by Kidman.

Rating: B-. That submission hold alone makes this a good match but they were both looking great out there. I don't think I ever remember these two fighting before and that's a shame given how good these two were together. Dragon has kind of fallen off the planet in the last few months so it's nice to see him around some more.

Post match the Flock destroys Dragon with Saturn laying him out with a German suplex.

Ad for Monday Nitro on Playstation. If I remember correctly that game SUCKED.

Here's Nash to discuss the major fine announced earlier. He was sitting in the back earlier tonight when he saw Kidman use a modified powerbomb called a tiger bomb ("I'm not Tenay but I think that's what it's called.") and wants to know where Kidman's fine is. Kidman isn't going to get a fine though because it's the man instead of the move that gets fined.

Nash doesn't really mind though because at Souled Out, he dropped Giant on his skull and put him out. If WCW wants to fine him, he can pay anything they ask for. Nash is going to keep using the powerbomb and there's nothing WCW can do about it because he's just too sexy and too

sweet.

Hour #2 begins.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Super Calo

Before the match Jericho gives himself a thank you for putting Mysterio on the shelf. Feeling out process to start until Calo gets aggressive and pounds Jericho against the ropes. Jericho comes right back with a suplex and a chinlock as Calo's offense is already over. The champion dropkicks the knee and hits a backbreaker for two before chopping Calo in the corner.

A hard clothesline looks to set up something off the top from Jericho, but Calo shoves him down to the floor and hits a dive to take both guys out. Calo suplexes the champion back in and gets two off a springboard dropkick. He goes up again for the top rope headscissors but Jericho rolls through and hooks the Liontamer to retain.

Rating: C-. What's with the cruiserweight showcase tonight? Calo was fine for a spot title match like this as he was one of the resident jobbers of the division but could still put on a decent match like this. Jericho is starting to feel it in the ring to go along with the awesome character work at the moment.

TV Title: Booker T vs. Steven Regal

Booker cranks on the arm to start before kicking Regal in the face to take over. Regal realizes that going toe to toe won't work and grabs a cross arm choke, only to have Booker roll out and connect with a flying forearm. Regal ducks another shot and takes Booker down with a European uppercut before getting two off a rollup. Back up and Booker hits a spin kick to the face followed by the ax kick for two. Another flying forearm misses but Booker suplexes him down and hits the side kick to retain.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't bad but there wasn't any real flow to it. They didn't really click as Booker was doing almost nothing but strikes while Regal was just doing random moves. It wasn't boring but it came off as a series of moves instead of a wrestling match if that makes sense.

Konnan vs. Hugh Morrus

Hugh is a face here in one of those turns that just kind of happened when no one was watching. Morrus starts fast with a delayed gorilla press slam and Konnan rolls to the outside. Back in and Konnan hits his rolling clothesline and a low dropkick to put Morrus down.

They actually get into a battle of leg trips with Morrus putting him down and dropping some elbows for two. A powerslam puts Morrus down but a Vincent distraction lets Konnan powerbomb him out of the corner. That's another \$150k assuming they actually remember one of the biggest stories on the show. An armless Pedigree is enough to finish Morrus.

Rating: D. This is the problem with having three hours to fill: you get to sit through matches like this getting five minutes. Konnan was one of those guys who wasn't interesting in the ring at all and Morrus was just enough of a star that he wasn't squashed in quick fashion. The announcers didn't react to the powerbomb at all.

Here are Hall and Rhodes for the survey with WCW winning by a hair. Hall says that we're coming up on SuperBrawl VIII so there have been seven beforehand. Every year, the winner of the battle royal has gotten his title shot (not exactly as 1995 was for the title and in 1996 the winner got the shot at Souled Out) but this year Roddy Piper is messing with the system. Dusty rants about how it doesn't matter who Hall fights because the party never stops with the NWO.

Scott Hall vs. Jim Neidhart

Before the match, Louie Spicolli says he'll fight for Hall. Scott uses the distraction to hit Neidhart with the mic and takes over early. He pounds on Neidhart in the corner but Jim comes back with forearms to the chest followed by a nerve hold which has Hall nearly out cold inside of ten seconds. Dusty gets on the apron for a tag and the distraction lets Hall hit the Edge for the pin.

Post match the NWO beats down Neidhart until British Bulldog makes the save.

Here's Luger to talk about his No DQ match against Savage at SuperBrawl. Luger is all fired up and that's about it. Seriously this was like 45 seconds long.

We look at the Nitro Part Pack winner.

Goldberg vs. Mark Starr

Quick leg locks, gorilla press into a powerslam, spear, Jackhammer, Starr is done.

Steve McMichael vs. British Bulldog

This is a rematch from last week. Before the match, Mongo says that we're in his country of Texas tonight. They immediately brawl to the floor with Bulldog in full control. Back in and Bulldog clotheslines him back to the floor before throwing him into the steps. They fight up the aisle for a double countout in about a minute.

The brawl keeps going by the announcer booth with Mongo getting the better of it.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to open the third hour. Bischoff says that he goes berserk when he thinks about the fines. Hogan says that Nash watches

his back and the fines will be paid no matter what. He says they're \$50,000 each which goes against what Tony said earlier. As for Savage, he's on his own against Sting tonight.

Hogan brags about beating Sting twice despite the unfair treatment of the referees. Why is Nick Patrick suspended when he's proven how skilled he is over and over? Hogan wants Nick Patrick to referee the SuperBrawl match because he was never found guilty of anything. Hogan guarantees a win and that's that.

Disco Inferno vs. Raven

Raven says there are two rules: there are no rules, and give someone the DDT. Disco is sent to the floor as the bell rings and Raven hits a dive over the top. Back in and Raven armdrags and drop toeholds Disco onto a chair before sitting in the chair for a rest. Disco uses his brain and clotheslines the seated Raven for two. A swinging neckbreaker and a belly to back suplex get the same as Heenan praises Disco.

Raven comes back with a belly to back of his own, followed by a third straight belly to back from Disco. Raven tries a fourth in a row but Disco falls on top of him for two. Inferno pounds him down in the corner as Raven smiles some more. Back up and Disco ducks his head and the Evenflow (now officially named that) is good for the pin.

Rating: C. This was better than I expected with Disco showing some good intensity out there. For a guy who was a comedy character he did pretty well for himself over the years. Raven is becoming more and more entertaining every time he's out there and is so into the character it's unreal. This was a nice surprise after a long stretch of dull and short ones.

More Nitro Girls.

Buff Bagwell/Kevin Nash vs. Steiner Brothers

Scott and Buff get things going with Bagwell hooking an armdrag and posing a lot. Scott runs him over with a shoulder and the release tiger bomb for no cover. Rick comes in sans tag to make fun of Bagwell's poses in a funny bit. Scott cranks on Bagwell's arm but Nash gets in a cheap shot from the apron to take over. Nash comes in and chokes away in the corner before it's back to Bagwell for a reverse chinlock.

Kevin hits the side slam for two and there's the big boot for good measure. Back to Bagwell for another chinlock before Nash comes in to try the powerbomb. Rick makes the save but Scott still can't/won't tag. Scott knocks Buff down and looks at Rick but turns around and hits a quick Frankensteiner on Bagwell for the pin.

Rating: C. As is the case with most Steiner matches around this time, this was almost all storytelling instead of about the match itself. In a strange way, you could argue Rick is the selfish one. The team wins when Scott won't tag out, so isn't it best for the team that Rick gets to stand on the apron all the time?

Rick yells at Scott post match.

Randy Savage vs. Sting

Michael Buffer does part of his signature entrance in Spanish. Sting is billed as being from Huntington Beach, California which is a first for him I believe. Spotlights go up towards the ceiling as Sting comes down. Why didn't they do that at Starrcade? Sting gets to the ring and Savage immediately bails to the floor and the brawl starts outside.

Sting's attire is very weird looking here. He's wearing tights and a plain black singlet top with nothing on his arms or hands. He looks like he didn't get finished dressing. The Stinger Splash hits the barricade

and Savage rips the turnbuckle pad off. Back in and Sting no sells a piledriver but the Stinger Splash hits the exposed buckle. Randy drops the elbow but Hogan comes in to break up the pin for the DQ.

Rating: C-. This was more of a fight instead of a match but it was still entertaining stuff. The style fit Savage better at this point as he was a loose cannon and matches meant nothing to him at all. The idea of having Sting beaten in the middle of the ring is another dagger to his importance, but by this point the moment is passed anyway.

Luger comes out to make the save and stands tall with Sting to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This felt like a modern day Raw. There's good stuff in there, but the extra hour of filler stuff drags the good stuff down. The NWO falling apart is interesting and the cruiserweight stuff at the beginning was more than enough for good wrestling. Throw in Benoit getting a title shot in a logical move and the show is good stuff. Again though, the filler really drags this show down.

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