

On This Day: June 30, 1997 – Monday Nitro: Staredown Of The Future

Monday Nitro #94

Date: June 30, 1997

Location: MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

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

This is probably a bigger show than the PPV from earlier in the month, or at least it's being treated as such. There are two major debuts tonight and apparently Hogan is going to be here too. Other than that, the card is pretty much stacked with a lot of big names in action. This arena would host a bunch of PPVs so it has a big show feeling to it. Let's get to it.

Tony does a quick intro and it's off to Gene who brings out Naitch. Before Flair can talk we hear Piper's music but instead it's two women carrying a Piper mannequin. Flair starts to talk but the girls drop the mannequin. Apparently this is all that's left of Piper after the girls had him all night long. One girl isn't sure why Piper is called Hot Rod, because he isn't hot. Oh these are Flair chicks for sure.

Flair says Piper crossed the line last week when Piper tried to tell Flair how to wrestle. That's what he said? Thanks for clearing it up. Gene asks the girls if Flair is really the sixty minute man. Girl: "More like 30 seconds." Flair immediately picks up the kilt and pretends he didn't hear that line. He holds a funeral for Piper and the girls take Gene's clothes off. He says his mother in law is watching so Flair struts a bit. This heel turn by Flair was way out there and it didn't work on most levels.

The announcers tell us about Jericho winning the Cruiserweight Title two nights ago and then it's right back to talking about Flair, who faces Piper at the PPV.

Cruiserweight Title: Juventud Guerrera vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho is defending his newly won title. That's probably the biggest win WCW has had over the NWO to date. They trade wristlocks to start but no one can get control. Jericho hooks a bow and arrow hold on the mat followed by a headlock. Juvy tries a moonsault but misses Jericho, who hits a belly to back suplex for two. A regular suplex gets two as well and Guerrera is put in the Tree of Woe followed by a baseball slide.

Jericho walks into an elbow but Juvy misses a springboard dropkick to put him right back down. Jericho misses a charge and hits the floor, where Juvy hits a HUGE dive to take him out. A release German suplex by Jericho sets up a double powerbomb but it only gets two. Instead it's the super Frankensteiner by Jericho into the Liontamer for the submission win to retain the title.

Rating: C. This was basically a squash with Juvy being a jobber out there. Jericho winning the title was a big shock but to their credit it felt like a big deal. Guerrera was good at what he did and would become one of the best in the division for years to come. I was kind of surprised by how one sided this was but it wasn't bad at all.

Post match Gene comes in to talk to Jericho and Chris puts the title on Gene's shoulder. There's an image for you. Jericho says this is a WCW belt and it's back where it belongs. Syxx comes out and says the NWO still recognizes him as champion. He says Jericho can have another match for the title right now, and a brawl breaks out. Post break security pulls them apart and Alex Wright is in the aisle. He's tired of not getting interviews and not getting title shots. Wright says he has a better body than Luger and that's it.

Dean Malenko vs. Eddie Guerrero

Eddie jumps Dean as he's coming through the entrance and rams him into the steps. They head into the ring as we hear about Los Gringos Locos, Eddie's team with Art Barr in Mexico. Dean is in trouble as the bell rings and Eddie suplexes him down. A back elbow puts Dean down but the slingshot hilo misses and Eddie is sent to the apron. Guerrero goes up and gets crotched followed by having his tornado DDT countered.

Eddie gets launched face first into the buckle and a backbreaker gets two for Dean. A WICKED powerbomb puts Eddie down but Dean wants to beat on him more instead of pin him. Here's Chavo to ringside and then to the apron as Malenko is loading up the Cloverleaf. Eddie shoves Dean into Chavo, followed by the brainbuster and Frog Splash for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was more about storytelling than the match, but the match wasn't half bad. These two have been going after each other for weeks and it's a good idea to have the first match end with some questionable means. It continues the story and was good at the same time. What more could you possibly want?

Mysterio is with Gene and says that he's tired of being pushed around by Nash and the Wolfpac. It started when he was launched like a dart into a trailer and then powerbombed during his match with Syxx. Rey wants a match with Nash and the big man comes out to laugh and accept the challenge.

Here are Bischoff and Hogan with something to say. Eric is on a motorcycle because he enjoys being on them. Hogan talks about beating down all of their enemies and partying with Rodman (not here) later tonight. The party is the highlight of the interview. Pretty much Hogan had nothing to say here.

TV Title: Hector Garza vs. Steven Regal

Regal is defending, in case someone actually needs clarification. Regal, now in a singlet, tries to take Garza down with a Boston Crab to start. When that doesn't work, Regal pounds away in the corner to take over. Garza comes back with a forearm but Regal takes him back down and struts a bit.

They head to the floor for a second which goes nowhere so Garza low bridges him back to the floor. Garza loads up the Corkscrew Plancha and we go wide to get a better look at it. This is a bad idea as Garza COMPLETELY misses Regal, barely grazing the champ's shins. Back in and a moonsault hits Regal's knees and the Regal Stretch retains the title.

Rating: C-. This was a fine enough way to kill off six minutes I guess

but there's nothing to it beyond that. Garza was about as much of a one move guy as you could possibly have and when that one move looked bad in a match, there wasn't much else he could do. One thing you did get almost every week was a random pairing like this. There's nothing wrong with that because you can throw something out there and see what works. If it doesn't, you lose six minutes and that's it. WWE seems to be trying this with Cesaro lately and it's a good idea.

The Steiners want their match with the Outsiders accepted tonight. Didn't they already win the #1 contendership? Why would they need a match to be accepted? This brings out the NWO en masse. Hall says he has a contract right now and the Steiners sign it without reading it. The contract says that the Steiners have to beat Chono and Muta before they get their shot. I'm sure THAT will be the last match before the title match right?

Super Calo vs. Psychosis

Calo knocks him to the floor and Psychosis stalls a bit. Sonny Onoo, Psychosis' manager, distracts Calo and Psychosis takes over. Back in and Calo powerslams him down but gets enzigured to the floor. Psychosis goes up but missed a double ax handle, landing face first on the barricade. FREAKING OW MAN! Calo suplexes him back in as they try to do the Warrior/Rude finish from Mania 5, but Sonny misses the foot, making Calo look completely inept. Too short to rate but it was pretty pedestrian stuff.

Post match Calo beats down Psychosis but La Parka comes out and breaks a wooden chair over Calo's back for the second time. Juventud Guerrera comes out for the save.

Hour #2 starts.

Steve McMichael/Ric Flair/Chris Benoit vs. Buff Bagwell/Masahiro Chono/Scott Norton

Bagwell and Flair start things off and we get a strutting competition. Buff pounds on Flair in the corner and it's off to Mongo who has a dumb look on his face. Mongo gets caught in the wrong corner but he comes back with right hands to Chono. Back to Flair who pounds away for about five

seconds before Benoit comes in to a nice reaction. Chono kicks him down but stops to argue with Flair, allowing Benoit to clothesline Chono down and hit the Swan Dive. Everything breaks down and Vincent comes in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here as the whole match wasn't even four minutes long and had the NWO DQ as required by WCW law. Also I'm not sure what was accomplished here at all, but on a shot this big I can understand the matches being this short. It isn't fun to sit through but it's understandable.

High Voltage vs. Mortis/Wrath

Wrath pounds on Kaos in the corner and things break down in about twenty seconds. A top rope clothesline puts Kaos down and the squash is on. Glacier and Miller come to ringside and the distraction draws Wrath to the floor, allowing Cat (Miller) to kick Mortis in the face and give High Voltage the big upset.

A limo is in the back. Presumably this is the impact player. The door opens, the camera zooms in on it, and the door closes.

Road Report.

Raven is in the front row and the announcers all know who he is. He's mentioned as a champion from elsewhere but ECW isn't mentioned by name of course. Tenay thinks he might be the Impact Player or Page's mystery partner.

US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Konnan

I think this is for the title but I'm not sure. Jeff pounds him down to start but misses an enziguri, allowing Konnan to hit a low dropkick to take over. Jarrett comes back with a DDT but Konnan takes it to the mat and hooks a kind of abdominal stretch on the mat. Konnan loads up a Figure Four but a rake to the eyes breaks it up. Here come the Horsemen who distract Konnan and allow Jeff to take the knee out and put on the Figure Four...which is almost immediately turned over. Jeff turns it back over and Flair helps Jeff with some extra leverage for the tap out.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here again with another match feeling like pure filler. I just hope this doesn't lead to more problems for the Horsemen as that story has been going on for about a year now. Jarrett never clicked at all in WCW and he felt forced in there as a Horseman. How many US Title shots is Konnan going to get anyway?

Post match Jeff brags about everyone he's beaten but Flair says Jarrett is off the team. Halle-freaking-lujah. Jarrett says you can't do that. Flair is like dude, I'm Ric Flair. Debra runs her mouth for a bit and Jarrett says he's going to put Flair out. Benoit talks about how Jarrett blew his chance. This didn't make a ton of sense, but anything that gets Jarrett out of the Horsemen is cool with me.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Kevin Nash

Rey goes right at him and takes Nash down, but a sunset flip goes about as badly as you would expect it to for Mysterio. Nash LAUNCHES Mysterio across the ring and the Jackknife ends this quick. So Mysterio stands up to the NWO and is promptly destroyed. Thanks for wasting our time on that guys.

Nash drops Mysterio again and hits the referee too. Konnan comes out as Nash powerbombs Rey a third time. Nash leaves and Konnan puts on the Tequila Sunrise, apparently joining the NWO. Mysterio is taken out on a stretcher.

Tenay goes to talk to Raven but Raven won't say anything.

Diamond Dallas Page/Lex Luger/The Giant vs. Randy Savage/Outsiders

Main event time. We take a break before the match starts and come back to see the NWO still not letting WCW in, just like what we saw before the break. Luger and Giant finally get in and the match gets going. Page goes right for Savage and WCW rules the ring to start. Hall gets in a shot on Luger, and according to wrestling law, the rest of the NWO takes over at the exact same time. All six guys are still in the ring and I don't think we've had a bell yet.

Savage and Page fight to the floor before getting right back into the

ring. We still haven't had two people alone in the ring yet. Luger goes down so Giant headbutts both Outsiders down at the same time. Giant charges at them both but gets backdropped to the floor. Here comes Hogan and Page Diamond Cuts Savage. Hogan blasts Luger with the belt on the floor and apparently he took Giant out with it earlier. Page gets beaten down and I think the match is thrown out. It never started I don't think so I won't rate it, but it was just a big brawl anyway.

The NWO destroys Page as Hogan walks around on the floor. Savage hits a second elbow and Sting is in the crowd. Savage hits a third elbow and another Sting drops in from the rafters. Hogan bails and Sting clears the ring. Curt Hennig walks down the aisle and the show ends with him doing nothing at all. Raven jumps the guardrail, which is some of the only main event interaction I ever remember him having in WCW.

Overall Rating: C+. This is a back and forth show. It feels like a big show for sure, given all of the matches they had on here and some of the stuff they had going on, but nothing on here is anything more than ok from a quality standpoint. That being said, we had a lot of stuff on here and it certainly feels like a big show, which is what they were shooting for. The ending looks really interesting, but the important question is how will they follow up on it.

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