

Monday Nitro – February 16, 1998: WCW Really Was Good Back Then

Monday Nitro #127

Date: February 16, 1998

Location: Tampa Fairgrounds, Tampa, Florida

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

It's the go home show for SuperBrawl but more importantly Louie Spicolli died the day before this show of a drug overdose and choking on his own vomit. I'm not a fan of the guy but that's a shame no matter how you look at it. As for the show tonight, the main event is Hogan/Savage vs. Sting/Luger in a preview of two matches on Sunday. Let's get to it.

We open with the ringing of the bell in Spicolli's memory. Simple but classy.

Clip of the end of Thunder with the big brawl between WCW and the NWO.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to open the show, flanked by the majority of the team. Hogan continues his theme from Thunder of the ABC's of people they're coming after. A is anyone that supports WCW, B is for Bret Hart and now C is for the corporate gaga against the NWO. Hogan says it's the corporate people who are holding the NWO back, but there's no amount of money Hogan won't pay to take over the world, and that includes making Nick Patrick the referee for Hogan vs. Sting III.

The D stands for the Dummy that is the Macho Man. Hogan already beat him last week but Savage didn't even have the guts to apologize for turning his back on the team. The one thing that really put him over the line though was sucker punching Hogan last week on Thunder. Cue Savage who says he'll beat Sting and Luger on his own and then he'll beat Hogan up

himself, but he'll leave a little bit so Hogan can make the apology himself. Hogan says he'll be the one beating his partner up and Eric calls Hogan the Heavyweight Champion of our world to end things.

George Steinbrenner is in the audience.

Goldberg vs. Hugh Morrus

Tony asks Larry about Louie Spicolli but Larry says to let it rest. That's the only thing to say if you have to bring it up. Jimmy Hart chases Hugh down the aisle and says there's an offer Morrus can't refuse. Whatever that means it seems to fire Morrus up. Hugh comes up to Goldberg during warmups and the brawl is on. Morrus gets in some quick shots but Goldberg escapes a suplex and the two moves connect for the pin. Usual Goldberg stuff.

Video on the Steiners winning the tag belts last week.

Hall and Nash come up to the broadcast booth with Nash wanting to know why they have to wait until Sunday for their title rematch. Nash rants and raves about WCW politics keeping the Outsiders from what belongs to them while Tony says it's not his decision. Larry gets up but Nash threatens to unplug his dialysis machine. Zbyszko threatens to make Hall scream and that's about it.

Mark Starr vs. Sick Boy

A Lodi distraction allows Sick Boy to jump start the match. A slam sets up that sweet springboard dropkick and Sick Boy is looking good so far. Starr is suplexed down and choked on the ropes for a bit but he makes the quick jobber comeback. Lodi trips him up though and a Pedigree ends Starr quick. Sick Boy had some potential but he was never more than a jobber in the over crowded WCW.

Public Enemy vs. Outsiders

WCW seems to win the survey but it's close. Hall starts with Grunge and there's the toothpick throw. Scott drives in shoulders as the toothpick is stuck in Grunge's beard. Grunge hits a quick backdrop for two and it's off to Rocco who covers Hall and tags right back out. Everything breaks down and it's a big boot for Rocco and a chokeslam for Grunge. Grunge takes Hall to the floor and loads him onto the table but Dusty makes the save. Hall puts Johnny on the table and Nash powerbombs Rocco over the top and through Grunge for the DQ.

Nash is arrested and chants Attaca. The fines for the powerbombs are now at \$200,000.

Nitro Party winner.

Nick Patrick compares himself to Bill Clinton and is considering Hogan's offer to join the NWO due to being locked out of WCW.

Mike Enos vs. Barry Horowitz

Barry jumps Enos off the apron to start which is probably his only chance. He fires off some right hands but walks into a backbreaker once inside. A pumphandle slam puts Barry down and Enos drives some headbutts into his back. Horowitz gets a quick rollup for two but walks into a powerslam for the pin. Was Enos contractually guaranteed one win in his run or something?

Mongo and Bulldog get in another fight in the back.

Second hour begins.

Bret Hart is here for the first time in nearly a month.

La Parka vs. Yuji Nagata

Nagata immediately takes him down with kicks and chops in the corner but La Parka comes back with an enziguri. A spin kick sends Yuji to the floor and the place is WAY into La Parka. The skeleton guy hits a big dive to take Nagata out on the floor in a rare high spot. Not that announcers could stop talking about Hart and the PPV for five seconds to call it but that's to be expected. Back in and Parka tries another cross body but gets rolled through for two. Some clotheslines take Yuji down but he rolls away from top rope splash.

A cross armbreaker is quickly escaped so Yuji sends him to the apron. La Parka hits yet another high flying move with a corkscrew plancha before heading outside to get the chair. Nagata's manager Sonny Onoo distracts the referee as Disco Inferno runs out and hits the Chartbuster on La Parka due to the chair shot from Thunder. The Nagata Lock is good for the submission back inside.

Rating: C-. At least La Parka is getting a push, albeit a tiny one. The guy got over with some ridiculous stuff but the fans like him and that's all that matters. Yuji wasn't too bad here and Disco coming out makes sense given the events of last week. The high spots were good here and it was a more entertaining match than I was expecting.

We hear Hogan's comments about Bret Hart from Thunder.

Nitro Girls.

Kidman vs. Ultimo Dragon

Kidman jumps Dragon to start and takes him down with a back elbow. Dragon is backdropped into the corner headstand before hooking a rolling sunset flip for two. A hotshot puts Dragon down and Kidman sends him flying with a headscissors. Dragon is taken down again by a headlock takeover as this

is surprisingly one sided. Ultimo finally comes back with a headscissors and the rapid fire kicks.

A giant swing of all things puts Kidman down and they trade rollups for two each. Dragon catches him with a spin kick to the face and the top rope hurricanrana takes Kidman down. Kidman counters the Dragon Sleeper into a Michinoku Driver for two but the third attempt at the Sleeper is good for the tap out.

Rating: C. This took a few minutes to get going but it picked up by the end. Kidman could go when he had a good opponent to work with and that was certainly the case here. This match is also an example of one of WCW's other strengths: everyone has a very distinct look. It's rare to see two people in WCW who dress similar as their outfits are unique and stand out. That's a very helpful touch.

After some footage of DDP saving Benoit on Thunder, here's Page with something to say. Page talks about how competitive the two of them are and how Benoit wants to stand on his own two feet. Page however had to make the save because he wants Benoit at his best come SuperBrawl. On Thursday it's Benoit/Page vs. Saturn/Raven (it took Page a few tries to get the names right), and here are the Flock members to jump Page but Benoit makes a save before anything happens.

Meng vs. Barbarian

This is the brawl you would expect it to be from the start with both guys on the mat pounding away. Back up and Barbarian charges into an elbow in the corner but Meng's clubbing is countered by a whip into the corner. They pound on each other even more with Barbarian taking him into the corner and both guys shouting a lot. Headbutts have no effect on both guys but Meng staggers him with a big boot. Jimmy Hart breaks the wooden chair over Meng's head to no effect so Meng puts him in the Deathgrip. Barbarian hits four straight Kicks of Fear to put Meng down for the pin.

Rating: C. This falls into the category of entertaining nonsense.

Sometimes there's nothing more fun than having two monsters beat the tar out of each other for a few minutes. Barbarian kicking Meng in the head over and over was a good idea to end the match and it made for entertaining TV. What more could you ask for from this pairing?

More Nitro Girls.

Disco Inferno vs. Perry Saturn

La Parka runs out and destroys Disco with the chair during Disco's entrance. Rick Martel comes out and wants the match against Saturn despite having a TV Title match tonight.

Rick Martel vs. Perry Saturn

Martel takes over with a quick armdrag and we head outside with Martel sending him into the post. Back in and Martel fires off knees in the corner but a flying headscissors is countered into a hot shot. A missile dropkick gets two for Saturn but he jumps into a punch on another high risk attempt. Martel spinebusters him down but Kidman's distraction lets Riggs knock Martel out. The Rings of Saturn get the academic submission as Martel is out of it.

Rating: C-. The more I see of Martel the more impressed I am. He comes out of retirement to put on consistently decent to good matches including an impromptu one here. It's another good example of WCW having such a deep talent pool that they can have interesting stories with decent matches up and down the card.

Bobby Eaton vs. Curt Hennig

Speaking of throwing some veteran out there, here's Bobby Eaton for the first time since April. They trade slaps to start until Hennig chops him

out to the floor. Rude throws him back in so Hennig knee lifts Bobby back to the floor so Rude can throw him in a second time. Let's do that sequence one more time in case you didn't get the point already. Back in and Eaton takes advantage of Curt yelling at the fans by clipping the knee. Tony lets us know that Hennig has been gone because of his knee so there's some psychology thrown in. Not that it matters as Hennig hooks the PerfectPlex for a pin out of nowhere. Glorified squash.

Baseball legend Wade Boggs is here.

Hour #3 begins.

Tat Titles: Vicious and Delicious vs. Steiner Brothers

As always here, Scott Steiner will only be referred to as Scott and Scott Norton will only be referred to as Norton. Rick starts with Buff and we're into the posing a few seconds in. Buff quickly slams him down and does his strut, but Rick comes right back with an overhead belly to belly suplex. Off to Scott for a quick chinlock but it's quickly back to Rick vs. Norton in a power match.

Rick takes Norton down with a clothesline before it's back to Scott for another chinlock, this time with a knee in the back. Back to Rick for a wristlock but Norton shoves him into the corner, only to miss a charge in the opposite corner. Buff finally does something right by distracting Rick long enough for Norton to shove him to the floor and then into the barricade. Back in again for a neck crank from Norton and a choke from Bagwell. Rick ducks a clothesline and powerslams Buff down. Everything breaks down and Rick hits the bulldog on Bagwell but the NWO comes in for the DQ.

Rating: D. There wasn't much to this one as Norton/Bagwell were the NWO jobbing tag team and therefore no threat to the belts at all. The fact that the Outsiders were getting their rematch on Sunday didn't give me much hope for new champions either. It was interesting to see Rick

dominating the ring time though as the Steiners' troubles continue despite them winning most of their matches.

Scott makes the save with a chair.

TV Title: Rick Martel vs. Booker T

They talk some trash to start but Martel jumps Booker from behind. Rick yells at the crowd as he pounds on Booker but gets caught in a backdrop. Booker kicks him out to the floor as the fans tell Martel he sucks. Back in and Martel walks into a spinebuster, sending him right back to the floor. Booker works the arm back in the ring and gets two off a knee drop. Rick gets to his feet and catches Booker in a hot shot to take over before sending Booker to the floor.

Martel gets in some cheap shots on the floor before putting on a chinlock to slow things down. There's the Quebec Crab but Booker is quickly in the ropes. A spinwheel kick takes Martel down but the referee is bumped. Cue Saturn to go after Martel but Booker kicks him off the apron. He hurts his knee in the process though and Martel puts on the Crab for the submission and the title.

Rating: C+. Martel has something special going here as his comeback hits a big milestone. This three way feud is interesting stuff as you Saturn's logic is questionable (he can beat Martel but not Booker so why help Booker?), Booker has a case for a rematch and Martel turned to get the title.

Here's Bret to answer Hogan's statements about costing him the title. Bret disagrees and says that Hogan is scared of him. If Hogan wants to find him, Bret isn't going anywhere and all Hogan had to do was say his name once. Hogan has been ducking him for years and it's time for them to step into the ring.

This brings out the debuting Brian Adams (Crush from the WWF) who says he has Bret's back anywhere anytime. He offers Bret his hand....and here's the NWO for the beatdown. Adams is of course part of the NWO, shocking no one with a brain. Hogan comes in for the big beatdown but Flair comes out for the save. This could and likely should have been the start of a Starrcade program between Bret and Hogan.

Here's JJ Dillon to mediate the TV Title issue. He has all three guys come out and makes it Booker T vs. Martel with the winner of that defending against Saturn later in the night.

Chris Benoit/Dean Malenko vs. Chris Jericho/Eddie Guerrero

Benoit trades chops with Guerrero to start, sending Eddie running away to Jericho. Jericho comes in but has to be convinced to take the belt off. Benoit runs Jericho off and it's Malenko vs. Eddie now with Guerrero being launched onto the top rope. Dean picks him up in a powerbomb but drops Eddie over the top rope instead, causing the heels to have a quick meeting. Back in and Dean drops Eddie with a flapjack before bringing in Benoit for the snap suplexes.

Eddie tries to slide through Benoit's legs but gets grabbed by the hair and pulls him up into a German suplex. Dean is in with a Boston Crab to annoy Jericho and everything breaks down. Eddie hits the brainbuster on Dean but Benoit makes the save with the Swanton. Jericho comes in with a missile dropkick to Dean but Benoit breaks up the Liontamer attempt. Eddie dives onto Benoit to take him out as Dean misses a dropkick. Jericho loads up the Liontamer but Dean rolls through into a pinning combination for two. That counter is countered into a rollup but Dean counters the counter into the Cloverleaf for the submission.

Rating: B-. These four continue to have the match of the night and the crowd reactions to Jericho vs. Malenko are getting louder and louder. With Benoit rising up the ranks to challenge for the US Title and Guerrero being his usual awesome self, these matches are rapidly becoming

the highlight of the shows.

Bischoff says Hogan is paying Nash's fine.

Hollywood Hogan/Randy Savage vs. Sting/Lex Luger

Savage jumps Sting and Luger in the aisle to start the fight and Hogan sends Sting into the barricade. Hollywood hammers on Sting inside but Sting comes back with right hands to send Hogan out to the floor. Savage and Luger head into the ring now with Savage choking on the ropes.

They're the official starters but when Savage goes to tag Hogan he's out on the floor with Bischoff. Hollywood gets on the apron so Randy tags him with a forearm to the back. Three elbow drops get a near fall on Luger but Hogan's legdrop misses. Hot tag Sting and Hogan is almost immediately in the Scorpion. Here's the NWO as the match is thrown out.

Rating: D+. Did you really expect anything else here? There's nothing wrong with setting up the two PPV main events in one TV match as it kills two birds with one stone without doing the same match twice. This was your usual NWO style brawl and the match itself only lasted a few minutes but it was entertaining enough to get by.

Hogan and Savage go at it as Flair and Hart come out to clear the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. They did a good job of setting up SuperBrawl but a lot of this stuff could have been cut out. If this show was just two hours it would have been one of the better episodes they've had in a long time. Most of the stories are clicking and WCW continues to be on a roll at this point. Another good show this week.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at: