

Monday Nitro – February 23, 1998: The Roll Stops

Monday Nitro #128

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Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

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

We're finally past SuperBrawl and Sting is the undisputed world champion. We also have a new member of the NWO in the form of Scott Steiner who finally turned on his brother last night to give the Outsiders the tag titles. Things are interesting in WCW at this point as we're heading into Uncensored in a few weeks. Let's get to it.

We open with DDP, Booker T, Flair and Hart all talking about Scott Steiner turning.

Gene Okerlund asks Rick Steiner about his brother turning but Rick has nothing to say.

Here's Luger with a mic in hand. He congratulates Sting for winning the title but says there's a black cloud over WCW in the form of the NWO. Rick Steiner must be hurting because he lost a brother last night. Luger wants to beat some sense into Scott but gets Curt Hennig instead, starting a match.

Curt Hennig vs. Lex Luger

Luger throws him around a bit and armdrags Hennig down to the floor. Luger pulls him back in but here's the now blonde Scott Steiner for the DQ.

Steiner lays out Luger with a belly to belly and chokes him a bit while

posing. Luger comes back with the forearm but Buff runs in while Hennig is just watching. Rick Steiner runs out and beats up Buff which sends Scott running away. The NWO B team comes in to beat down the good guys until Sting repels down to make the real save. A bunch of WCW jobbers plus Booker and Benoit come out to check on Rick and Lex.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Hammer

I'm assuming this is non-title. Page is taken down by a quick headlock takeover as the fans are all over Lodi. Back up and Page hits his knee lift/swinging neckbreaker combo for two but a Diamond Cutter is easily countered. A middle rope clothesline puts Page down but Hammer stops to pose. Page fires off rights and lefts in the corner but gets thrown off the middle rope. The discus lariat takes Hammer down again and a middle rope Diamond Cutter is good for the pin.

Rating: D+. There wasn't much to this one but the fans are white hot tonight. Page is one of the few people that figured out you only need one big move to get over and he milked that idea for years on end. Hammer is the perfect kind of guy for Page to beat in a quick match and is yet another example of a random opponent being better than being repetitive.

Hogan and Bischoff talk to someone in a limo before coming out to the arena. Hollywood yells about how he had Sting beat last night and how he paid off Nick Patrick but Patrick did his job anyway. Sting is nothing special and Hogan will prove that tonight by letting Hall have a shot at the title so Hall can give it back to Hogan where it belongs.

Now on to Savage who knocked Hogan out with "a ten pound crowbar" last night, so Hollywood wants a cage match at Uncensored so he can kick Savage out of the NWO once and for all. Savage pops up in the crowd and a few catchphrases later we have a match, but it's going to be Hogan kicked out of the NWO once and for all.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Kaz Hayashi

This is Hayashi's debut. Feeling out process with Kaz taking over via a quick headscissors and an armdrag to send Dragon to the corner. The Dragon headstand sets up a dropkick out of the corner and Dragon fires off the kicks to the back and chest. Kaz dropkicks him to the floor and hits a corkscrew dive to take Dragon out again.

Back in and a good looking moonsault gets two on Dragon and a standing rana gets the same. Dragon can't hook a German suplex so he goes with La Majistral into a leg bar but Kaz is in the ropes. A dragon suplex gets two for Kaz but he gets crotched on the top. Dragon's super hurricanrana and the Dragon Sleeper are good for the submission.

Rating: C+. I love going back through these old shows and seeing fun random matches like this one. Hayashi looked very good here and gave Dragon a run for his money. Kaz would eventually fall through the cracks in the cruiserweight division and become pretty worthless but at least he had a good debut.

Call the Hotline to hear an interview with Sting!

Nitro Girls.

Nitro Party winner.

Chris Benoit vs. Raven

Benoit stalks him to the ring in a callback to their match on Thunder a few weeks ago and the brawl starts in the aisle. Chris takes over and whips Raven so hard into the barricade that you can see it bend. Benoit chokes him with Raven's own jacket and whips him across the ring but Raven avoids the Swan Dive, giving Raven two. Raven bulldogs Benoit onto a chair for two before baseball sliding the chair into Benoit's head.

The fans are all over Raven here and he takes too much time going up,

allowing Benoit to smack the chair back into Raven's face. Raven is tied up in the corner after being whipped into the chair so Benoit rolls some Germans for two as Kidman runs in for the bell. I say bell because it can't be a DQ under Raven's Rules and the chair was used for over half the match. Then again I doubt WCW thought it that far through.

Rating: C. The usual physical brawl here with an ending that doesn't make a lot of sense. Questionable DQ aside though, the chair shots were good here as yet again the weapons don't overshadow the intensity between the two guys which makes for a much better match. The problem these two have is their first match is never going to be topped so even the decent matches like this one look a little weaker.

The whole Flock comes in but Page comes out, leading to a threeway brawl. Raven is sent to the floor and the other two want to fight but keep having to take out the Flock.

Hour #2 begins.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Lenny Lane

Jericho comes to the ring in Juvy's mask but has to take it off for the fans to see his gorgeous face. He knows the people want this to be Monday Jericho and JJ is 84% of the way to making the change. The fans are all over Jericho from the bell and the champion isn't pleased with it. Lane dropkicks him into the ropes and kicks him in the back for good measure, freaking Jericho out even more.

A quick suplex gets two for Jericho but Lenny is right back with a clothesline to send him to the floor. Jericho gets back in and celebrates, only to be clotheslined out again. Lane dives on him this time before pounding away back in the corner. A Downward Spiral gets two on Jericho but Chris throws him right into the Liontamer to retain. Short and not much to see but Lane looked good.

The announcers recap the night and we get a clip of Scott Steiner from earlier.

Rick Steiner vs. Vincent

Rick is all over him from the bell, pounding away with kicks and punches. He throws Vincent to the corner and bites him a bit before finishing him off with the Steiner Bulldog. This barely lasted a minute, as should have been the case.

Yuji Nagata vs. Saturn

Feeling out process to start with both guys taking it to the mat. Nagata takes over with his kicks but Saturn comes back with a release dragon suplex. Yuji goes after the leg to set up the Nagata Lock but starting with a spinning toehold. Back up and Nagata is clotheslined down while looking at the crowd but he kicks Saturn's bad leg from the mat.

Off to a leg lock from Yuji as this has been one sided so far. A quick overhead belly to belly gets two on Saturn but he comes back with a head and arm suplex of his own. Nagata hits a Saito suplex but Saturn gets a rope to escape the Nagata Lock. Saturn easily takes him down and the Rings of Saturn are good for the submission.

Rating: C-. This was an odd match with Nagata dominating for over five minutes before Saturn just tripped him down and made him submit. It's like Saturn wasn't even trying and then turned it on for the win. Nagata was similar to Alberto Del Rio here as he only focused on one body part to set up his finisher. It makes sense but it doesn't make the match very interesting.

TV Title: Booker T vs. Renegade

Renegade still has a job? He hasn't been on Nitro in nearly a year and I

can't believe I'm seeing him in 1998. Renegade shoves him into the corner but the champion comes back with some forearms and a spin kick to take Renegade down. A spinebuster gets two for Booker but Renegade clotheslines him into the ropes and chokes a lot.

Renegade puts Booker on his knee after a pumphandle backbreaker before throwing him to the mat like trash. Booker blocks a superplex and comes back with a missile dropkick and the ax kick for two each. Booker is crushed in the corner but blocks a handspring elbow with a Harlem sidekick (missed by about four inches) for two. Another side kick is good for the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. Renegade is just not very good and there's no other way to put it. At least they aren't trying to make him into the Warrior and having him beat far more talented people anymore. The match was nothing to see but given that it's Booker's third match in 24 hours it's easy to excuse him being sluggish.

Konnan vs. Lizmark Jr.

They trade quick rollups to start until Konnan stomps Lizmark down in the corner to a big pop. The referee drags Konnan off of Lizmark, allowing Lizmark to get up top, only to jump into a kick to the ribs. Konnan spends too much time shouting though and Lizmark is able to kick him to the floor. A springboard missile dropkick to the floor takes Konnan down again and the fans are into Lizmark. He gets two off a few rollups but gets caught in the cradle DDT and the Tequila Sunrise gives Konnan the win.

Rating: D+. This was the same formula as the Nagata match with the underdog dominating but losing to a big move in the end. Konnan continues to be over with the crowd but these squash matches tonight are getting a little tiresome. We're at 9 matches and it's not even the third hour yet.

The Nitro Girls dance at the announcers' desk.

Vicious and Delicious vs. High Voltage

Bagwell starts with Rage (High Voltage is Robbie Rage and Kenny Kaos) and takes him to the mat with a wristlock. A hip toss puts Rage down again and it's time to strike a pose. Rage comes back with a shoulder and a dropkick before gorilla pressing Bagwell down. Buff slaps him in the face and it's off to Kaos vs. Norton. Norton runs over Kaos for a bit but gets caught in some double teaming by the electric guys.

A backbreaker/legdrop combo gets one on Norton so it's off to Kaos to pound away in the corner. Norton misses a charge into the post but Buff shoves Kaos off the top. Kaos gets double teamed in the corner and Norton sends him into the barricade. Back in and Kaos gets two off a sunset flip and makes the tag to Robbie. He cleans house for a bit and gets two off a belly to belly on Bagwell, but Norton counters a double suplex into an ugly looking botch, nearly breaking Kaos in half. A Doomsday Blockbuster is enough to pin Robbie.

Rating: D+. These matches haven't been that bad but there's nothing to them at all. It's like watching a long Superstars from the 80s but without the promos to carry the show in between. High Voltage didn't look terrible but it's not easy to get into a Norton/Bagwell match. Nothing to see here other than some decent high spots from the losers.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Disco Inferno

Disco dances to start so Eddie lays on the top rope ala Shawn Michaels. Eddie mocks the dancing and the fans are all over him already. Say what you want about his gimmick but Disco is getting over through a lot of hard work. Eddie takes him down by the arm and dances a bit more before atomic dropping his way out of a full nelson.

They slug it out with Disco taking over and getting two off a suplex. Eddie takes out the knee and works it over a bit before heading up for the Frog Splash. Disco pops up and slams him down before getting two each

off a front suplex and a swinging neckbreaker. Eddie goes right back to the knee and crushes it even more with a slingshot hilo. A missile dropkick sets up the Frog Splash for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was an improvement because of the dancing stuff but it still wasn't much of a match. Disco continues to impress despite having one of the most ridiculous gimmicks of all time. Eddie didn't seem all that interested out there but Disco was working hard enough to make it watchable.

JJ Dillon brings out Nick Patrick to congratulate him on a well officiated title match. Was he not listening when he said Patrick took Hogan's money? The guy is on the take but gets approval from the boss?

Ric Flair vs. Brad Armstrong

Friday is going to be Ric Flair Day in Minnesota which is a pretty big honor. Brad takes over with a quick headlock and shoulder block before trying a figure four. Flair easily kicks off but gets caught in another headlock. Flair takes him into the corner and unleashes the chops followed by the strut. Armstrong can't get an O'Connor Roll but takes Flair down with his Russian legsweep finisher. A missile dropkick puts Flair down again but Brad misses a high cross body. Ric asks the referee for the time, kicks Brad low and NOW we go to school for the submission.

Rating: C. This is the same thing we've seen all night but Flair's charisma makes it work. Armstrong didn't need Flair to make him look good and the match was a decent way to spend four minutes. It's also nice to see Flair in the ring again in his first match on Nitro since Souled Out.

We see Nash's powerbomb on Giant from Souled Out.

Here's Giant for the first time in over a month in a neck brace. He says that he's always thinking about Nash every time his neck hurts. Giant is

going to be back in the ring someday and the ban on the powerbomb doesn't mean a thing to him. Nash will pay and that's all there is to it. Good solid revenge promo here.

After a break Gene calls out Brian Adams. Tony is already talking about what an historic moment the opening segment was. Adams cuts Gene off and talks about being here to join the most elite group in wrestling today. Bret Hart isn't worth getting out of your chair for but the fans get out of their chairs as he comes walking down the aisle, unbuttoning his shirt as he comes.

Hart doesn't know what Adams' problem is but there's no need to jump him from behind. Instead Adams jumps Bret from the front and a fight breaks out with Bret getting the better of it. He puts on the Sharpshooter but Hennig comes in for the save. Bret takes him down as well but here's Rick Rude to make it 3-1.

Flair comes out and the NWO is chased away to a ROAR. Flair says that he respects Bret after Bret respected him and he's tired of Hogan and Nash running this place. If Bret ever needs his help, Flair is there for him just like he was Arn Anderson. Bret wants to take out the NWO and is starting with Hennig at Uncensored. Flair thrusts his hips at some NWO fan in the front row as only he could do.

WCW World Title: Sting vs. Scott Hall

We get the entire NWO but there's no Scott Hall. Eric says that they'll leave if Sting will come out on his own and show that he has no backup. Sting walks out (no belt) and the NWO leaves Hogan alone in the ring. Sting is still in the aisle as another Sting comes up behind him. The NWO jumps Sting and lays him out with fake Sting being revealed as Scott Hall. Sting gets the spray paint as Savage runs out, only to be beaten down as well. The debuting Disciple is in the ring with the NWO. To this day I still have to look close at him to realize it's Beefcake. Luger makes the save with a chair to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This was a pretty bad show coming off last night's good PPV. I don't even know where to begin with that ending segment. Not only does Sting not bring the belt with him, but the new champion gets destroyed yet again? The wrestling was nothing special either with a bunch of midcard guys vs. lower card guys which is hard to sit through for this many hours. I hope this isn't a sign of things to come because WCW had been on a roll for weeks now and this stopped it hard.

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