

On This Day: August 9, 1997 – Road Wild 1997: Hogan Chases The Title

Road Wild 1997

Date: August 9, 1997

Location: Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, Sturgis, South Dakota

Attendance: 6,500

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Dusty Rhodes, Bobby Heenan

Back to the motorcycle place and to the shock of everyone, Hogan ISN'T champion! He lost the title to Luger on Monday just before this match. That's always been surprising because you would think they would just have Sting break the year and a half reign. Instead they went with this which is questionable but it was a bit of a breather at least. There isn't much else to talk about here so let's get to it.

Harlem Heat vs. Vicious and Delicious

That's Norton and Bagwell. Buff and Booker get us going here. Booker hooks the arm but Bagwell dropkicks him into the corner and it's off to Norton. Ray comes in for a power vs. power brawl and Norton gets slammed. Back to Booker for a suplex which gets two but a spin kick is countered into a kind of powerbomb. Buff cleans house for some reason but Booker knocks him to the outside.

Booker hooks a chinlock which is a heel move but since they're against the NWO, wouldn't that make them faces? Bagwell fights up and hits a clothesline to set up the tag to Norton. Stevie breaks up the tag as I can't get over the heel/face dynamic being so backwards here. Cue Jackie to really make this match great. Harlem Heat had been promising a surprise before this and I guess it's her.

Bagwell comes back from the beating with a powerbomb of all things and it's off to Norton off a hot (?) tag. Vincent's interference fails so Ray beats him up. Norton hits Booker with the shoulderbreaker but Jackie interferes enough to let Booker side kick Norton down for the pin. What an odd match.

Rating: D. I'm not sure what the idea here was but it really didn't work all that well. First of all, the heel/face dynamic was completely backwards here, as the NWO team wrestled as faces. Harlem Heat wrestled as heels and had Bagwell in trouble most of the time, plus Norton got a hot tag and the Heat had a manager interfere. Oh and Jackie sucks but you already know that. I don't know what was going on here but it didn't work.

DiBiase talks about how awesome his team of Steiners are.

Konnor vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

This is a Mexican Death Match, which I think means knockout or submission only. Konnor is NWO also. Apparently it's a Mexican Grudge Death Match and it's No DQ. That's the only rule apparently. Rey has a bad leg coming in. He speeds things up to start and hits a springboard missile dropkick to take over. That's quite a leg injury. Konnor drops him on the buckle and hits a clothesline to the back of Rey's head to take him down.

Konnor hooks a leg lock and Rey screams a lot. Mysterio gets sent to the floor and tries to jump over Konnor to come back in, but he hurts his knee again. A chopblock puts Rey down again and it's time to crank on the leg. The leg work continues for awhile as there's not much to say. Konnor puts on leg hold #19 and goes after Rey's mask. A powerbomb puts Rey down so he can get a better attempt at it.

Konnor gets the mask off but can't get it completely off, so Rey gets in a weak shot to the ribs and puts the mask back on. Rey's offense is pretty bad due to the injured leg and his double springboard moonsault misses badly. Konnor kicks the

knee out again and this needs to end soon. There's a modified Stump Puller (he puts Rey's legs in figure four position but sits Rey up and sits on the neck, pulling back on Mysterio's legs) but it keeps going as Konnan gets bored. Mysterio comes back with a quick rollup for two. Rey goes up but gets caught in a cradle DDT and the Tequila Sunrise for the tap.

Rating: D+. So why was this no DQ again? It was never mentioned or used at all. The leg work was ok enough and the match wasn't all that bad, but for a DEATH match, there wasn't anything deadly about it at all. If this were a regular match it would have been ok enough, but don't add the gimmick names if there's nothing special about them.

Mean Gene has gotten a tattoo. My goodness.

Dean Malenko/Jeff Jarrett vs. Steve McMichael/Chris Benoit

This is an elimination tag for no apparent reason. The Horsemen feud is STILL going on and mainly is between Jarrett and McMichael, neither of whom got over because of it. Jarrett and Benoit start and Jarrett wants little to do with that so it's time for Dean. Benoit runs him over and Dean slows things down. That doesn't last long as Benoit starts running again, but misses an enziguri. Dean misses an elbow and it's a standoff.

They fight over a victory roll and Dean gets two off a small package. Benoit tags in Mongo who charges into a drop toehold. Dean hits the ropes but gets kicked in the back for the Horsemen to take over. They keep alternating on him for a few minutes with Mongo using a variety of side slams, which are some of the only moves he was decent at. Jarrett runs from Mongo as Mongo tries a tackle at Dean. Malenko jumps over him and makes the tag to Jarrett, who is terrified.

Jeff, the US Champion, comes in and pulls Mongo on top of himself and intentionally gets pinned. THE US CHAMPION PEOPLE! So now it's a handicap match so Dean goes crazy to start,

grabbing some fast rollups. Benoit reverses a tombstone and hits the Swan Dive but it's back to Mongo for more beating. Tombstone finally ends this.

Rating: C-. Everything without Jarrett in there was fine. When Mongo is better than you in a match, you need to get out. Thankfully Jarrett would jump to the WWF in about two months. This country music entrance that he had and all the stuff with Miss Debra didn't work AT ALL, so they pushed it for the better part of a year. It just dragged everything down and no one ever cared. Jeff didn't get interesting until he became a jerk with short hair in 1998. Then he was bearable.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Alex Wright

Wright is champion. Feeling out process to start with Wright running to the ropes. The fans chant gay slurs at him as the feeling out continues. Jericho charges at Wright which gets him nowhere. Some chops and right hands put Wright down on the floor and we stall some more. Back in Wright grabs a headlock which is quickly broken and Jericho hits a spinwheel kick to send Wright back to the floor.

As Alex comes back in, Jericho crotches him and hits the springboard dropkick to send him to the floor for a third time. Jericho finally gets bored and dives out to the floor to take Wright down. Wright sends him into the steps to take over and adds a suplex on the outside. Coming back in, Jericho LAUNCHES him off the top with a slam which gets two. Off to a headlock by the challenger. He goes to the arm instead as things slow down.

Wright comes back and counters a leapfrog with another spinwheel kick. The champ dances again as Dusty says a win here could drive a stake into the heart of the NWO. Ok then. Alex takes forever to set up a moonsault and Jericho rolls away. Lionsault hits Wright's back but he adds a senton backsplash before getting two. Jericho's double powerbomb gets

a delayed two. Wright grabs a suplex for two and Jericho counters the German suplex into a cradle for the same. Wright reverses a rollup into one of his own with tights for the pin.

Rating: C-. It was slow paced for the most part but it was ok. The ending however sucked and it keeps up with the running theme of the night: not a horrible match but it's nothing that you would ever want to see again. It's also not great but it could have been far worse. That makes it the worst kind of match: just ok and mostly boring.

Syxx vs. Ric Flair

After a lot of stalling and taunting, we get an armdrag and it's time for more stalling. Syxx controls a bit but misses a charge to send himself to the floor. Flair slows it down and Syxx does some of his usual stuff. Flair chops him down but Syxx comes back with a spin kick to the back of the head to take him down. Bronco Buster hits and it's off to a chinlock. This is a really boring match so far.

Guillotine legdrop gets two. Back to the chinlock as this match needs to end already. We go to a wide shot of the crowd because the director is getting bored of the match too. Flair starts his comeback with his strikes but Syxx hits an enziguri to take him down. A flip dive misses and it's time to go for the knee. Figure Four goes on but Syxx is in the ropes. Buzzkiller (Crossface chickenwing) is broken up so here's another Bronco Buster. Flair puts his foot into Syxx's crotch, rolls him up and uses the feet on the ropes for the pin.

Rating: D. Whatever man. This went nowhere at all and was full of rest holds that didn't do anything to excite the crowd. Syxx was so boring around this time as he knew he didn't have to do anything because he was friends with the big shots. Also great to see Flair wasted on a midcard match instead of putting over some young guy. Very boring match.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Curt Hennig

This is a grudge match for some reason. We get a very quick brawl on the floor before they head back in for the bell. It's a slugout to begin and Page spins Hennig around BY HIS HAIR. Hennig gets to do his slide into the post balls first spot. Page goes up but Curt falls onto the ropes to crotch him. There's the necksnap and Hennig puts on a spinning toehold.

A quick sleeper is broken up by Page and he hooks a spinning sunset flip for two. Hennig clotheslines him down for two. A kickout lands on the referee so Hennig takes off the buckle pad. Page gets rammed into it but there's no cover. Perfectplex gets two. Page starts his comeback and loads up the Pancake, but Hennig's foot hits the referee. Cue Flair who comes off the top but walks into the Diamond Cutter. Another Perfectplex gets the pin. Page can kick his feet but can't lift a free shoulder?

Rating: C. This was just ok and it's pretty easily the best match of the night. Page and Hennig had good chemistry but there wasn't much to do here. Flair coming in didn't help anything at all but he was recruiting Hennig into the Horsemen which eventually resulted in what else? Hennig joining the NWO. Not a bad match but this show is pretty much beyond saving at this point.

Call the Hotline!

Promo from the NWO. It's one of their pretaped deals.

According to Tony, the next three matches are the biggest in WCW history.

The Giant vs. Randy Savage

Nothing special to the match, but it's the third biggest match in company history at worst. That would include being ahead of Luger winning the title on Monday I guess. Savage is NWO and Giant is one of WCW's main soldiers against him. Savage stalls like the true Memphis man that he is. He gets in and tries to

slam Giant which fails of course. Giant works him over with his usual power stuff until Savage heads to the floor.

That goes badly for him as well with Giant picking up the human shield known as Liz and moving her to the other side. Back in Savage takes out the knee and gets Giant down. He wraps the knee around the post and stomps on the knee some more. Double ax gets two but the second attempt is countered into a chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was just a step above a squash but that's ok for the most part. Giant would move on to feuding with Nash soon after this in one of the stupidest and most pathetic displays I can remember in a long time. Anyway, the match was short enough to keep from getting boring which is more than I can say for the rest of the show.

Tag Titles: Outsiders vs. Steiner Brothers

So here it is. After seven months of screwjobs, cheating finishes, no matches and everything else, the Outsiders have to face the Steiners for the titles. There is no reason for anything but new champions (the Outsiders are defending) here, so you should know what's coming already. The Steiners come out on motorcycles, so let's look at the fireworks instead! Scott and Scott get us going. For the sake of sanity during this match, Scott Hall will only be called Hall and Scott Steiner will only be called Scott.

Hall punches him down but Scott comes back with a butterfly suplex and everything breaks down. The Steiners clear the ring and they do their pose. Off to Rick vs. Nash with the giant trying Snake Eyes, only to get reversed into a suplex to put him down. Off to Scott but Hall's distraction allows Nash to kick his head off and take over. Nash does the running crotch attack to the ropes and Scott is in trouble.

Off to Hall who hits his fallaway slam for two. Abdominal stretch goes on and the Outsiders cheat of course. Hall knocks

Scott off the apron and it's more dominance by the champions. Back to Nash for some chinlockery. Now for a change of pace, Hall comes in to give us the exact same thing. Scott picks Hall up and drops him down with an electric chair. Nash breaks up the tag again and Scott's beating continues.

Big boot gets two. Nash does the leg choke in the corner but another big boot (this one with the left leg for some reason) misses. Scott can't make the tag as Hall comes in with an elbow to the back. Outsider Edge is escaped and Scott hits a belly to belly to put both guys down. Hot tag to Rick and house is cleaned. Here comes the Steiner Bulldog to Hall and Nash pulls the referee out for the DQ. Yes, that's the real ending.

Rating: D. Screw it. Seriously SCREW THIS COMPANY. There is ZERO reason at all to do this other than for the sake of screwing over the fans and the Steiners and keeping the belts on the Outsiders because they want them. The Steiners would win the titles in a few months (on Nitro of course) and no one cared because THEY SHOULD HAVE WON HERE. There is no reason for the titles to not change here that isn't a service job for the NWO. Just freaking stupid and a big part of why the company was starting to reach trouble.

WCW World Title: Lex Luger vs. Hulk Hogan

It's strange seeing the title on Luger for the first time. He never wore that belt back in the day despite chasing Flair for it for about four years. Feeling out process to start with both guys trading power moves. Luger runs him over so Hogan grabs the arm. Now Luger grabs Hogan's arm. A few arm drags send Hogan to the floor and we take a breather on the floor. Back in the ring Hogan sends him into the corner and takes some control.

A slam and elbow drop get two. Off to a chinlock about six minutes into this. That's a bit early no? Luger blocks a ram

into the buckles and gives Hogan ten for his effort. Out to the floor and Hogan chokes away with a cord. We head back in and Hogan chokes in there instead. Off to a bearhug which evolves into the test of strength, which ends with a low blow to Lex.

Hogan is basically out of offense now so he just smacks Luger around with really basic slaps to various parts of the head. Big boot gets two. Luger no sells a suplex and makes his comeback but Luger takes him right back down. The legdrop misses and Lex fires off his clotheslines. Cue the NWO and despite three of them getting in the ring and a fourth getting on the apron, that isn't a DQ. Cue Sting (the announcers are sure that it's the real one, even though he's black) who hits Luger with the bat and the legdrop gives Hogan the title back.

Rating: F+. Whatever here man. It's a bad ending to a bad show. Hogan clearly had no business being out there for 16 minutes because he didn't have anything to use after the end of his five move offense. The title change on Monday meant nothing and the ending here is stupid due to the announcers not noticing the incredible tan that Sting has gotten I guess.

It's Dennis Rodman of course. The last eight minutes or so are the announcers freaking out and Hogan celebrating. Oh and they spraypaint the belt in the back and initiate Rodman into the NWO.

Overall Rating: F. You know until the end of this, I would have been ok with just saying that this was boring but not all that bad. Then they had the two IDIOT endings like they did which was more of the same. It was clear by this point that the NWO was about to cripple the company. Based on this it's no surprise that the WWF would be starting to draw closer.

It wouldn't happen for about 8 months, but once the WWF took over again, they wouldn't let go (mostly) because WCW was that stupid. This is a great example of it, although the tag match

is much worse than the main event from a booking perspective. The main event's booking makes sense due to Sting in December, but the wrestling was just awful. Terrible show.

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