

On This Day: September 23, 1996 – Monday Nitro: The NWO Runs Things. Into The Ground.

Monday Nitro #54

Date: September 23, 1996

Location: CSU Convocation Center, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 4,308

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

As mentioned on the previous show, this is the one where everyone not named Savage is in Japan. Eric, ever the lunkhead, mentioned this last week and the NWO knows about it. Expect a lot of unusual names on this show and a lot of matches that no one would ever want to see. Oh and a lot of the NWO as well I'm sure. Let's get to it.

Tony holds up an ad that is allegedly in the USA Today, talking about Nitro being taken over by the NWO tonight. Larry talks about parasites.

We get clips of fans tearing up NWO stuff.

Konnan/Kevin Sullivan vs. Brad Armstrong/Juventud Guerrera

The two Mexicans start us off and Konnan takes it to the mat. Juvy is like "screw that in Spanish" and fires off a plancha and slingshot leg to speed things up. And there's the 187 to stop that quickly. Sullivan won't tag in so Konnan has to keep fighting. Armstrong comes in and cleans house a bit but there's a powerbomb. Sullivan finally makes a tag and here are the NWO sign guys. Sullivan gets a pin. That's literally all he did in the entire match: walk in and get a pin. Pretty much a squash match.

The Dungeon beats down Konnan for no apparent reason post match. And then they stop and help him up. It was an initiation according to Sullivan.

We get some clips from the end of last week's show where the NWO said they were coming for Savage this week. Savage says he's a marked man and if that's what it takes to get at Hogan, that's cool with him. He's the last hope for WCW and says he volunteered to stay here tonight on his own. As for Liz, and I quote, "The only thing we have in common is that in a thousand lifetimes, we might be goldfish swimming in the same water." Kids, don't do drugs.

Mike Enos vs. Chris Jericho

We're told that it's Harlem Heat vs. Outsiders for the titles at Havoc. They start fast and Jericho gets slapped, as does Enos. Enos channels his inner JYD and gets on all fours to headbutt Jericho. Pretty basic match so far as we talk about Savage and the NWO. Larry says there was something else Savage said that Larry didn't like. He doesn't bother saying what that is, but I guess that's an exercise left up to us.

They go to the floor and it's all Enos. He loads up the steps and suplexes Jericho onto them, which isn't a DQ I guess. Three minutes after he initially brought it up, Larry says it was the last hope for WCW line that he didn't like. Off to a bearhug and then a powerslam for two. All Enos so far. Jericho gets put into a Boston Crab which isn't ironic yet. Over the shoulder backbreaker now but Jericho counters into a sunset flip for two.

Missile dropkick puts Enos down and up to the corner we go. He sets for a super rana but Enos powerbombs him out of it (not as exciting as it sounds) for two. In a pretty cool ending that I don't think I've seen before, Jericho counters a powerslam into something like a powerslam of his own (better than it sounds) for the pin. That looked pretty sweet

actually.

Rating: B-. Much better match here than I was expecting. Enos was fine for what he was supposed to be here: a power guy acting as a foil for Jericho to look good against here. The ending was good too and it's always fun to see a guy like Jericho getting one of his first big breaks on national TV. Fun match that did things simply but well.

Pat Tanaka vs. Glacier

Tanaka comes out to what would become Goldberg's music. The guy that got the music became one of the biggest stars ever while Tanaka became the referee for Micro Championship Wrestling. It's snowing again and we hear about Larry being a black belt also. Think they'll be kicking a lot? Larry explains what the fist behind the hand for the bow means (wanting violence to be the second choice). They avoid kicks for awhile until Tanaka hooks a sitout powerbomb. Ignore that as a spin kick ends this in about 30 seconds. Glacier won in case you're really stupid.

Tag Titles: Harlem Heat vs. Public Enemy

Arn vs. Lex is announced for Havoc as well. The champs jump them and double team Rock for a bit. Booker vs. Rock to start but it's off to Grunge quickly. We take a break and come back with Heat in control now. Booker crotches himself on a kick attempt though and it's a not hot tag to Grunge. Big clothesline puts Johnny down (it's Booker T/Stevie Ray vs. Johnny Grunge/Rocco Rock if you've been confused so far) and it's off to Ray.

Time to talk about Savage again and we have a table from nowhere set up on the floor. Grunge is knocked to the floor and hit his back on it on the way down. Well that sucks. A Harlem Side Kick hits Grunge for two and we cut to the back to see the NWO arrive, now in two limos. At least it's a chinlock that we're missing which is an old school technique for

getting around this kind of stuff. It was usually used when there was a fight in the crowd or something. Whenever you see fans looking elsewhere, you'll often see a veteran go into a rest hold to make sure the fans don't miss anything. That's how a good wrestler thinks.

The hot tag brings in Rocco and he cleans house as well as a dirty man like he can. He fires off a bunch of right hands but runs into the Heat. The Hangover misses for the most part (Booker's back landed on him instead) and we get a near fall due to Grunge's foot being on the ropes. There's a small package on Booker and Rock reverses it for the pin and the shocking title change.

Rating: D+. The match sucked but this was the kind of surprise that was designed to make you think anything could happen. They lost the titles like two weeks later so that Harlem Heat could defend against the Outsiders so it's not like this lasted a significant amount of time, but it was a good surprise and I was legit shocked when it happened.

Second hour begins.

Greg Valentine vs. Randy Savage

Eric says there's a new NWO member tonight. I can't think of who that would be as the next member wasn't until October and it was nothing of note unless I'm totally overlooking someone. Valentine jumps him and that doesn't work all that well. They go to the floor with Valentine having his token control period. We hear that Super Calo has injured his elbow in a dark match so he's out for awhile. Savage clocks Valentine with a chair twice and that's a DQ. The whole point of this is coming down the aisle though.

Here's the NWO and it's beatdown time. A Jackknife puts him down and Savage is in trouble. Giant grabs a mic and introduces Hogan. They beat him down even more and drop a leg on him. They even beat him with a Slim Jim. Hogan talks about

Savage being bald and they spraypaint the top of his head.

They storm the announcers' booth and Bobby runs with Tenay. Eric can't get away though and the announcers sit down with him. They debut their head of security: Vincent. That would be Virgil from WWF. To be fair, no one cared about him or had heard of him in years so it's not like this meant anything.

Ok so the NWO will be running the commentary for the rest of the night. Eric keeps trying to leave but can't get away. They debut the NWO Nascar car which used to be the WCW car. Kyle Petty is the driver.

Jim Powers vs. Michael Wallstreet

Giant is the new announcer. Hall and Nash leave the booth and DiBiase sits down instead. The Outsiders are beating up Powers now so there's no match.

Randy Anderson walks out so Nick Patrick says he'll do all the refereeing.

Giant chokeslams Powers again and we cut to Hogan in the back, spraypainting something. He comes down the hall and runs into the Nasty Boys. Hogan gives them his hotel key and says tonight they won't be fighting the Outsiders because they can talk some business with Hogan later. A defection is implied.

Jim Duggan vs. Syxx

It's supposed to be Ron Studd but that doesn't happen as Hogan and Nash beat him down in the aisle. We hear what might be the debut of the NWO theme song. Hogan jumps in on commentary which is something that is very rare to hear. Duggan takes over to start and gets the USA chant going. You know, Syxx is from Minnesota. Wouldn't a USA chant help him as well? The three point clothesline hits but Giant pulls Duggan out and hits one of the worst chokeslams I've ever seen on the concrete so that Syxx can get the pin. He had no other

offense.

NWO Sting vs. Bo LaDue

LaDue has never had another televised match as far as I know. Sting does the usual Sting stuff and no one buys it. Splash and Deathlock end this.

Hogan talks about Savage a bit.

High Voltage vs. Outsiders

This is part of the NWO Tag Team Tournament. The French Canadians are supposed to be the opponents but the Outsiders come out next so the French dudes run. I have no idea what there is to say about this. Hall beats on one of them, Nash beats on one of them, we take a break, we come back with more beatings, we get a Brooke/Nick reference, Hall suplexes Rage off the top, a Jackknife pins Kaos. That match lasted about 11 minutes.

Rating: F. Yeah it's a squash, yeah it's supposed to be dominant, yeah it was really boring.

The NWO talks for a few minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is one of the benchmarks where you can see that everything is about TV instead of being for the live audience. Can you imagine how bored they've been for the last two hours of this show? Nothing has happened at all. The whole thing was about the NWO and they have no idea that Vincent is the new man either. This was all for the TV show, which is fine but it takes the crowd out of stuff quickly. Not a good show, but a lot of that is due to everyone being in Japan.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete 2001 Monday Night Raw Reviews at Amazon for just \$4 at:

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for just \$4 at: