

On This Day: October 6, 1997 – Monday Nitro: WCW At Its Best

Monday Nitro #108

Date: October 6, 1997

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Attendance: 14,357

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

We're about three weeks away from Halloween Havoc and the card is starting to take shape. We're also less than three months away from Starrcade and the biggest match in company history. As for tonight, the main event is Benoit vs. Hennig, presumably for the US Title. Tonight is likely going to be all about building for the PPV, which could stand a bit more work at this point. Let's get to it.

After the usual banter from the announcers, here's the NWO A-Team with something to say. Bischoff plugs Hogan's latest TV movie, Assault on Devil's Island, which debuts later this month. Hogan challenges Sting for later tonight, but he knows Sting won't be here because Hogan is here and that no good dirty Sting is a coward. Apparently CNN is going to become the Hogan News Network as Hogan and the NWO are going to take over all of the Turner organization. They'll be waiting for Piper later tonight and that's about it.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Booker T

Debra and Jackie are in the respective corners. Things go fast to start with Jeff getting the first offensive move in the form of a hiptoss. Booker comes back with a fast kick to send Jarrett out to the floor. The advantage doesn't last long though as Jeff suckers him in and pounds away a bit to take over. The fans think Jarrett sucks as he elbows Booker down. Booker spins right back up though and hits the side kick to take Jarrett down. The crowd is hot tonight.

We take a break and come back with Jarrett getting two off a top rope cross body. A clothesline puts Booker down as does a great looking dropkick. Jarrett is in full control but Booker comes back with a forearm to the face. Booker hits a spinwheel kick and a slam to put Jarrett in trouble. The ax kick gets two but the hook of the leg puts Jarrett's foot on the rope. A clothesline puts Jarrett on the floor and here's Mongo to yell. Debra slaps him so A Mongo chokes Jeff before sending him back inside. Booker grabs a rollup for the surprise pin.

Rating: C. Not bad here but it didn't mean anything as Jarrett wouldn't wrestle again in WCW for years. Thankfully he went over to the WWF and got to bore people on Raw. Booker was still a few months away from his singles push but once it started it kept going and going until WCW went under.

The announcers talk about Hogan vs. Piper at Havoc and say that it'll change wrestling forever. I'm sure it will.

Billy Kidman vs. Alex Wright

Kidman is still a rookie here and looks very nervous. Billy shoves him into the corner to start and gives a clean break. Alex does the same and slaps Kidman in the face. Nice bit of a story there. Wright sends him to the floor and takes the opportunity to dance. Raven is in the front row and has Perry Saturn with him. Back in and Kidman hits a pair of dropkicks to send Wright out to the floor.

Oh wait we need to cut to the back to see Mongo and Debra arguing. Jeff Jarrett comes up and gets yelled at as well. Mongo says he has an idea and we go back to the match. Wright hits a top rope stomp and dances a bit more. A running corner clothesline hits Kidman and a bridging suplex gets two.

The fans look at presumably a fight off camera as Wright hits a clothesline for no cover. Kidman counters the German suplex into a jawbreaker and hits a middle rope dropkick to send Wright into the corner. A bulldog out of the corner gets two for Billy but he stops to look at Raven. The 450 misses Wright and after some dancing, a German suplex ends Kidman.

Rating: C. Decent match here which apparently was a rematch from Saturday Night where Billy beat Alex. The constant cutting away here got annoying but it actually led to something in this case. Wright continues to be someone that seems like he's on the verge of a push but would be in the same place for months.

Ernest Miller vs. Mortis

Now here's a fresh match. Miller takes over with a quick snapmare and a kick to the face for two. Ernest expands his moveset even further by going up top, only to get crotched by James Vanderberg. A top rope Fameasser gets two for the guy in a mask (Mortis) and he even uses the rope for good measure. It's time for kicks because what would these two be without a lot of kicks?

Mortis keeps being EVIL by throwing Miller over the top rope while the referee is distracted. How EVIL can he get? Apparently Jackie is getting a TV Title shot at Halloween Havoc. A kind of Russian legsweep gets two for the EVIL one before he breaks up a sunset flip with a right hand. Miller rolls away from a top rope splash though and hits two kicks (I'm as shocked as you are), one being from the top, for the pin.

Rating: D. It would take Miller basically going crazy before he got interesting which makes these earlier matches pretty hard to sit through. The guy just wasn't interesting as you can only take "karate guy" so far as a gimmick. Mortis continues to impress with that wide variety of offense he has. Oh and he's EVIL so that helps.

Savage says he'll beat Page at the PPV.

Scott Hall vs. Hector Garza

This is a rematch from two weeks ago when Garza won in a shocking upset. Hall has taped up ribs for reasons that I don't remember. My guess would be alcohol related. Wait wasn't he on crutches last week too? I think something is afoot. Oh and hour #2 starts. Hall does the survey and Hall says Nash has a bad knee so he's not here tonight. Apparently they were watching Larry Zbyszko matches and laughed so hard that Nash fell over and hurt his knee. Points for a funny line if nothing else.

We take a break and come back for the bell. After said bell Hall decks Garza in the head and I think I know where this is going. There's the fallaway slam but the ribs are hurting a bit. Hall shoves a referee into the corner to allow Syxx to hit a Bronco Buster on Garza. The Outsider's Edge ends this quick as Hall shoves the referee down for a cover.

Post match Hall puts the referee in the Torture Rack and spray paints a Z on his back.

We get a look at Goldberg's two wins over the last two weeks.

TV Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Disco Inferno

Tony, being the schmuck that he is, wonders if this match will change the Disco vs. Jackie match because the (arguable) co-main event of the PPV doesn't change if one guy is a champion or not. Disco grabs a quick armdrag and you would think he just won the world title. They go to a lockup and Page tries an early Diamond Cutter but the champion's slick hair lets him get to the floor.

Back in and Page grabs a quick headlock but gets shoved into the ropes for a hip toss. Disco is actually hanging in this. Scratch that as Page hits a neckbreaker to send Disco to the floor, where he gets hit by a baseball slide and a plancha from Page. Back in and Disco still won't die as he gets an elbow up in the corner to stop a charging Dallas. Page comes back by channeling the power of hair metal and slugs Disco down before hitting the Pancake. DDP treats Disco like the glorified jobber that he is and hits a Diamond Cutter out of a fireman's carry (TKO), only to have Savage run in for the DQ.

Rating: C. Believe it or not, this wasn't that bad. Disco was much better in the ring than he was given credit for, but when you have an awful (or brilliant depending on how you look at it) gimmick like a disco enthusiast, it's kind of hard to get your in ring skills noticed. It was pretty clear something was going to be screwy with the ending but that's weekly TV for you.

Post match Savage sends Page into the post and loads up a piledriver on the floor but Piper comes out for the save. Savage shoves him away so

Piper spits in his face. Somehow this spins Savage around and there's a Diamond Cutter on the concrete. Piper and Page bail into the crowd as the NWO runs out to protect the unconscious Savage. Savage gets taken out on a stretcher as Tony is almost giddy over a man being knocked unconscious.

Post break and here's Piper in the ring with something to say. Apparently if Hogan had twice the amount of hair he had now he'd still be bald. Also Hall is lying when he says he beat Piper (when did Hall say that?) so we get a clip of Piper beating up Hall at Slamboree. Apparently the Outsiders, injuries or not, are going to defend the belts next week or they're stripped of the belts. Also Savage vs. Page is Piper's Rules, which would translate to last man standing.

Cue Bischoff and Hogan with Hogan staring down Piper. The Icon stuff stops now because Hogan is the real icon around here. Apparently everyone is here because of Hogan and at the PPV, Hogan is going to prove to Piper's family that he (Hogan) is the real man. Bischoff fires off a kick to Piper's bad leg and Hogan pounds away. He holds Piper for a Bischoff kick but Piper, elite level ninja that he is, ducks out of the way and Bischoff kicks Hogan. Piper beats on both of them until the NWO runs in for the save and Piper skedaddles.

Apparently if Mongo beats Jarrett at Havoc, Debra is gone from WCW.

Cruiserweight Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Ultimo Dragon

Eddie is defending. Apparently the main event of Benoit vs. Savage is canceled and it's now Benoit vs. Hennig. After a quick armdrag by Eddie it's off to a test of strength. Dragon goes down, only to bridge his body which won't break even with Eddie's full weight on it. That's so awesome looking. Eddie elbows Dragon down but the challenger pops back up and hits a tilt-a-whirl slam to take over.

Dragon hits a hard kick to the back and puts on a chinlock to kill some time. Eddie fights up and hits a suplex to set up an abdominal stretch. That goes nowhere so Dragon counters a release flapjack into a hurricanrana but Eddie snaps back up. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker puts Dragon down again. That doesn't get sold long either and here are the rapid fire kicks to stagger the champion. Guerrero heads to the floor

where Dragon fakes him out before hitting a suicide dive to take Eddie down. Now it's picking up a bit.

Back in and Dragon gets two off the dive he hit a second ago before putting on the Dragon Sleeper. Eddie gets his feet into the ropes though and Dragon has to break. Dragon puts the champ on the top rope for the super rana, only to get shoved down off the top. A tornado DDT lays Dragon out before hitting (most of) a long Frog Splash to retain.

Rating: B-. This started slow but once it picked up, it picked up BIG. I knew these two weren't going to have a sluggish match as there's just way too much talent out there to not put on an entertaining match. This was also good as Eddie had lost last week and he needed a clean win to keep him looking dominant going into the showdown with Rey at the PPV.

We look back at Hennig vs. Benoit on Saturday Night where Benoit had to fight off an invading NWO. The numbers caught up with him though and Benoit got beaten down.

Chris Benoit vs. Curt Hennig

I'm pretty sure this is non-title. Hennig talks to a fan in the aisle and Benoit jumps him to start. Benoit hits a big hard chop that sends Hennig into one of his usually overdone bumps but he hits his head on the steps. We head inside and the bell rings to start things off. Benoit is in full control and knocks Hennig off the apron and into the barricade. Back inside again and Benoit keeps stomping away before going to the middle rope.

Hennig finally gets in some offense in the form of a dragon screw leg whip to bring Benoit down. The Robinsdale Crunch keeps Benoit down and Hennig wraps the knee around the post. There's a Flair cannonball but Curt uses the railing instead of the ropes. I don't think I've ever seen that before.

We take a break and come back with Benoit hammering away back in the ring. Hennig goes into a RAGE and beats Chris down before taking off a buckle pad. Benoit reverses a whip to send Hennig into the buckle and rolls some Germans for two. Curt comes right back though by sending

Benoit into the same buckle to set up the Perfect Plex for the pin.

Rating: B. Hennig's intensity here made this a better match than I was expecting. These two beat the TAR out of each other and it made for a very entertaining match. The ending was a bit lame but I get why they wouldn't want the newly lone wolf in Benoit to lose clean here. Benoit wanting to hurt Hennig more than beat him was the right move too, making this a very solid main event.

Post match the NWO comes out for the big beatdown but here's Flair to get his revenge and try to destroy Hennig. Flair chases him to the back and into the parking lot but Hennig gets away. Ric comes back into the arena and says this is reality. He says he's been Racked, Scorpion Deathlocked, leg dropped and put to sleep but he's still right here. Flair talks about being Minneapolis born and bred before saying he's the best of all time. He promises to get Hennig at Halloween Havoc if it's booked or not. Flair rants about Hogan a bit to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The wrestling was a bit slower tonight than last week, but this built up Halloween Havoc very well. The show has now gone from a show with barely anything I want to see to a show that actually sounds pretty good in theory. Nitro is starting to click again at this point and it's pretty cool to see.

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