

On This Day: October 28, 1996 – Monday Nitro: Roddy Piper Is Our Only Hope. RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

Monday Nitro #59

Date: October 28, 1996

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 6,300

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

We're FINALLY done with Halloween Havoc and the big reveal: Roddy Piper is back. Hogan and he literally talked until the show went off the air last night and neither really said anything. Tonight we begin the road to World War 3 which wasn't a world title match for Hogan because he took that show off I guess. Hogan vs. Piper wouldn't happen until Starrcade where the ending was pretty stupid. Oh and the Outsiders are tag champions now. Let's get to it.

Larry is in a sport coat and a Superman t-shirt. He and Tony talk about Piper arriving last night. The still of Hogan's face is GREAT.

TV Title: Steven Regal vs. Juventud Guerrera

Sting, in white facepaint, is watching from the rafters. Oh here we go. Some NWO fans come in with signs and the fans all react. Juvy and Regal hit the mat and wait for things to calm down. Syxx pops up in the crowd with a mic. The match basically stops and Syxx says he'll be Cruiserweight Champion. Now the match gets going again as Syxx gives Sting a recruitment speech. Juvy snaps off a rana and a dropkick. He loads up the 450 but Regal moves. The Stretch ends this

quickly. Too short to rate, especially with the match just stopping for about 45 seconds for Syxx.

Tony is about to interview Regal but talks about Sting first. Sting gets up and walks away.

We get some stills from Luger vs. Anderson last night.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Mike Enos

I don't like Enos' chances. Enos slaps him almost immediately and they go to the floor. Page sends him into the barricade to take over. Back in a Batista Bomb gets two. Top rope clothesline hits an we've got Outsiders. Page points at them so Enos can take over. Enos points at them and maintains control. I guess he's better at time management than Page is. Enos points at them again and hits a powerslam again. He loads up a Bulldog powerslam but takes too long, letting Page hook the ropes and counter into a Diamond Cutter. The Outsiders seem pleased as Page gets the pin.

Rating: D. Eh it's just a three minute match so how bad can it be? This would start the angle that made Page a star which I've been mentioning for months. See? I'm not crazy. Enos had signaled that the running powerslam was his finisher, which is impressive since I didn't know he had one. You learn something new every day.

Stills of Dean winning the Cruiserweight Title last night from Rey.

Dean Malenko vs. Jim Powers

There's a player from the Suns in an NWO shirt. Psicosis comes out to watch the match. Powers controls to start with headlocks but Malenko uses the technical stuff to get us to even. They go to the mat and Powers grabs an armbar. Dean is a heel here if you're not familiar with this period. Off to a chinlock as Nick Patrick has a sore neck and argues with Teddy

for awhile. Powers makes a brief comeback with an atomic drop and clothesline for two. A right hand gets two. Knee lift puts Dean down and a powerslam gets no count because Patrick is arguing with Teddy. Dean rolls Powers up for the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here other than to continue the Patrick is a bad referee and is feuding with Teddy Long storyline. I don't remember what Patrick has against Long but I guess we'll get to it soon enough. Powers is fine at what he's doing which is just easily jobbing to people, but he's pretty boring. Granted that's his job so it's hard to complain.

Still of the Dungeon vs. Horsemen last night. The Horsemen won but Benoit and Mongo got laid out. Sullivan and Woman had words but we don't know why yet.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Ricky Morton

Memphis explodes! Jarrett controls early but Ricky works on the arm. Morton hits a spinning crossbody out of the corner for two. Jarrett suplexes him down and Tony plugs World War 3's ticket info. Top rope cross body is rolled through for two but Jeff hooks a neckbreaker to keep control. Figure Four is rolled up for two. A knee crusher sets up the Figure Four and it's over.

Rating: C-. Again not bad but just there to get Jarrett on TV. He was so painfully uninteresting at this point and I don't think anyone cared about him at all. They basically did the same thing with Hennig like a year later and it actually worked. Jarrett didn't get over as a serious guy until he ditched the country music, but that was years away.

Giant, with the US Title which isn't his, says he had Jarrett last night but Flair saved him. He runs down the Horsemen, saying that Jarrett will be chokeslamed soon. Jarrett says bring it on. He says it after Giant leaves but he does say it. Jarrett also becomes the probably 58th person to say WCW has

to unite to face the NWO.

Amazing French Canadians vs. High Voltage

High Voltage starts off fast and beats up every French Canadian in sight. Rage vs. Oulette start us off. We launch fireworks to remind the fans that the show is two hours long, because the wrestling match going on doesn't tell them that the show is still going. Savage isn't here tonight. The foreigners take over and hit the Rougeau Bomb onto Kaos and then load up the Quebecers' Cannonball finisher before the Nasties run in for the DQ. Too short to rate but it was just there to give the Nasties two teams to beat up.

The Nasties yell about Hogan and swear revenge. They don't belong to WCW, just like Sting and Piper. They'll always be Nasty though.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Jimmy Graffiti

Graffiti jumps him and hits an electric chair drop for two. Rey comes back with a springboard moonsault for two. A rana takes Graffiti to the floor but Rey is sent into the railing. Graffiti gets up on the apron and hits a flip dive to crush the more famous one. Chinlock by Graffiti but Rey casually gets up, speeds things up and hits West Coast Pop for the pin.

Rating: D+. All of these matches have pretty much been interchangeable tonight. Nothing has lasted more than about 4 minutes and nothing has been really interesting. Everything has been focused on what happened last night and it's really slowing things down. The matches haven't been bad, but they're all coming and going with nothing really happening at all.

Lee Marshall is in Grand Rapids, Michigan to hype up the show.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

Please give them more than four minutes. We have like 40 left in the show not counting commercials so it's not like they

don't have time. Benoit is all taped up from the beating last night. After a break we're ready to go. Mongo and Debra come out just a few seconds into it, apparently to watch out for the Dungeon. We get an inset interview from Jimmy Hart and Kevin Sullivan who say there's something about Woman which is going to be revealed soon.

Eddie is banged up too so the match consists of them both trying to get going but every time they do something physical they have to stop and lay on the mat for a long time. Benoit goes after Eddie's bad ribs. Back in and Eddie is in agony. Benoit hooks on a seated abdominal stretch but since he's hurt, Eddie fires off an armdrag which really injures Benoit.

Back to that stretch after some more slowly moving around. I don't remember what caused Eddie's injuries but I think it was a match with DDP. Wikipedia says I'm right so there you are. Eddie wakes up and pounds away in the corner but he has to pause again. He hits something that looks like a flying headbutt and both guys are down. Woman offers a distraction and Mongo pops Eddie in the ribs with the briefcase so Benoit can steal the pin.

Rating: C. This is a hard one to grade. As far as a match, it's dull due to having to go very slowly. However, it would have been REALLY stupid to have them go out there and fly all over the place after we saw at least Benoit get mauled last night. I'll go with right in the middle because the match made sense, but it was still kind of boring.

Nick Patrick and his attorney have an "interview", which means the attorney is rude and spins things. It's Jericho's fault apparently. Jericho comes out and calls BS, saying Patrick is NWO. The attorney suggests Jericho needs anger counseling. Teddy comes out and blasts the attorney so the attorney threatens a slander lawsuit. This just goes on and on for like 4 minutes.

Booker T vs. Lex Luger

This would be a very different match a few years later. There's no Stevie or Colonel Parker with Booker. There must be a LONG segment planned to close the show because we have well over 20 minutes not counting commercials, so it was probably about 9:30 when this match started. Colonel Parker has a quick promo, saying his gaffe last night (came in with the cane, Hall stole it and clocked Stevie with it for the titles) is all just blown out of proportion.

Lex takes over to start with pure power and sends him to the floor. Booker takes over back in and Sherri yells at the basketball player outside, saying he can help Booker win. Booker gets knocked to the floor again and things slow down one more time. Lex pounds him down in the corner and is acting more aggressive than usual. Lex hits a forearm and we take a break.

Back with Booker holding a chinlock. Wow a match getting over ten minutes. I don't know how to handle this. Booker takes over and hits some of his basic stuff as Eric seems to drool over the idea of Piper being WCW. The Hangover misses and Lex calls for the Rack, but Sting pops up in the crowd and stares Luger down. Lex jumps into the crowd and runs after Sting for the countout loss.

Rating: D+. This was an elongated version of what we had going on earlier. Nothing to see here but they had a lot of time so they let them go for awhile. The problem is Booker wasn't ready to do this yet so the match was pretty boring. It's not that bad but it was again there just for the ending.

Eric talks about Piper calling WCW and asking for five minutes to confront Hogan. Here's the whole segment from last night which basically says that Piper is as big a star as Hogan and Hogan is terrified. They talk forever and Hogan keeps backpedaling. Why Giant didn't destroy him is still beyond me.

This goes on for about ten minutes. The line of "If they didn't hate me so much do you think they would have loved you so much" is pretty dead on though. They cut off the ending due to time.

Here's the NWO to offer a rebuttal to last night because they didn't talk enough there. Hogan gets a spotlight and says he told you so. As for Savage, he respects him due to carrying the burden of WCW. Hogan implies sex with Liz I think. After about two or three minutes he addresses Piper. He lies about what we just saw (classic heel move) and says Piper is scared. DiBiase says Hollywood is going to entertain us now so Hogan poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. I really wasn't feeling this one. Everything here was kind of a big recap show for Halloween Havoc. Nothing at all was advanced in the main event as the whole ending was just a quick thing from Hogan which goes nowhere. I still don't get why they went with Hogan vs. Piper in 1996 and then in 1997, but it made them a fortune so it's really hard to question them. It doesn't pick up for about three weeks though.

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