

Monday Nitro – July 27, 1998: I Want To Buy The Crowd A Drink

Monday Nitro #147

Date: July 27, 1998

Location: Alamodome, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 19,109

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

We're getting closer to Road Wild and nothing has been announced as of yet. It's clear that Jay Leno is going to be involved in some way, even if the fans don't seem that thrilled by the idea. Unfortunately that means we're probably going to see another NWO talk show because wasting ten minutes of their only major TV show of the week on a segment to set up a match with a talk show host is fine in WCW. It may have made money at Road Wild, but it's making for some very dull television. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Hall and Nash fighting last week which led to a Wolfpack vs. Black and White brawl, which led to Sting and Nash losing the tag titles to Hall/Giant. There's also a clip of Bret beating DDP for the vacant US Title.

We get a voiceover (sounds like Scott Hudson) recapping last week, which is pretty much what we got in the first video.

Nitro Girls in white cowboy hats. I could get used to this.

Tony promises us something that will be among the biggest moments in the history of our sport: Goldberg is going to talk.

Here's the Black and White minus Hogan, Bret and Bischoff, probably with a lot to say. The announcers are already talking about Jay Leno non-stop. Hall thinks Nitro being in San Antonio is just too sweet, much like the new tag team champions. He's going to be sick if he has to keep hearing about Nash being upset, so how about we have a big NWO vs. NWO match at Road Wild?

Brian Adams tells the fans to shut up and recognize how awesome the Black and White really is. He tells us about being in Japan and hearing about Goldberg's fluke win over Hollywood Hogan. Adams got on a plane and begged Hogan to let him prove that Goldberg is a fluke. Therefore, Adams is getting a title shot tonight which hopefully lasts about 18 seconds.

We get clips from Bischoff's talk show last week.

Back from a break with the Flock in the ring and Raven talking about how things were supposed to be different than it was in high school. He's still despised and attacked by people like Saturn and Kanyon though. You know, part of society's norms. This brings out Saturn who is sick of hearing Raven cry. If Raven wants to cry, stand up so Saturn can give him something to be upset over. Kanyon runs out to get a piece of Saturn but gets suplexed down. Saturn picks Raven up for the Death Valley Driver but gets caught in a Flatliner from Kanyon. It's not clear if Kanyon meant to save Raven or not.

Barbarian vs. Jim Duggan

Duggan chants USA a lot before clotheslining Barbarian out to the floor. Back in and a double ax handle drops Barbarian again but he gets a boot up to stop a jogging Duggan. Jim comes back with right hands in the corner to little effect but he has to deal with Jimmy Hart. Barbarian kicks Hart by mistake, allowing Duggan to grab a rollup for the fast pin.

Post match Hugh Morrus jumps Duggan but Meng comes in to beat up Morrus. Duggan gets the board to clean house and offers Meng a handshake, getting

a Tongan Death Grip in return.

Bischoff's house band is warming up.

There's another horrible looking car in front of a star parking spot outside.

It's time for NWO Night Cap and the keyboard player now has NWO glasses. Eric shakes hands with his fans ala Leno as we're already two minutes into this. Joke topics tonight include Japanese Viagra, Monica Lewinsky, Jay Leno's chin, bikers, Steve Urkel being NWO Black and White, the chin again, Leno not being funny, and growing sheep bladders in a lab.

Oh and now we get a COMEDY SEGMENT. It's Headlines, which is showing various accidental puns in newspapers. The fans are booing this out of the building. Remember, they paid for a ticket to sit through this segment. Even Liz in a dress isn't enough to save this but it keeps going anyway.

Now we get our special guest: Hollywood Hogan. Hollywood talks about how Bischoff is dominating late night and gives a birthday shout out to Nitro Nick. Bischoff shows us a clip from the real Tonight Show with band leader Kevin Eubanks talking about Bischoff making fun of Leno in a badly scripted conversation. We get a clip in the clip of the original Night Cap, which are the same clips we saw earlier tonight.

Leno makes fun of Hogan's beard and says he's seen better wrestling on Jerry Springer. Jay makes jokes about Hogan's age and need for Viagra before we go back to an annoyed Hogan and Bischoff. Hogan says Leno's lawyer should plead insanity for Leno because Jay has gone way over the line. He gives Leno one more chance to back off or Hogan is going to come to the Tonight Show and shut him up. Bischoff promises to show what happened when Karl Malone stepped into Hogan's world. We're FINALLY done after nearly seventeen minutes spent on this segment. I'd love to see the quarter hour ratings for this show.

More Nitro Girls with Fyre stripping off a suit in a solo routine.

Nitro Party video.

Time for more talking with Gene bringing out a limping DDP for a chat. Gene says Page put the title on the line last week even though he was injured. Page says it was Hogan that attacked him last week because he's scum. Hogan shouldn't hunt what he can't kill, because Page's mission is to now eliminate Hollywood from the wrestling world. Hogan can keep running, but one day he'll feel the BANG.

Nice recap of Malenko vs. Jericho, setting up tonight's last chance match for Malenko.

Tony hypes up the Goldberg interview again but the Black and White has something to say. Dusty Rhodes is back and heads over to the announcers' table with Hall and Norton. Hall says if Nash doesn't want a fight, how about sending Sting out to face him later? Dusty goes on a rant against Larry for talking too much trash about the NWO. Therefore, Larry is under a gag order tonight, meaning Dusty gives Tony an actual gag.

Scott Norton vs. Jim Neidhart

Norton no sells some forearms and powerbombs Neidhart for the pin in 15 seconds. I'd assume Norton will be Goldberg's supper one day soon. Neidhart is already walking to the back before Norton is out of the ring. That's some pretty poor selling.

Video on Goldberg.

The interview is hyped up again.

We go to the back for the back for Goldberg's walk to the ring but he doesn't come out. Doug Dillinger comes in and sees NWO graffiti all over

the walls and the room ransacked. Goldberg is nowhere in sight.

Hour #2 begins at about 9:15.

Here's Bret Hart for even more talking. He talks about how wrestling has become full of pimps and thieves and somewhere he doesn't want to be, until now. Bret doesn't want to hear about Page's injuries because Page got in the ring last week. There's one more person that he needs to address from last week and that's Sting. Bret has a lot of respect for Sting and especially likes his taste in moves. There's one thing that is least Sting down the wrong road and that's all these people out there. Bret is Sting's friend and will show him the right way.

Crusierweight Title: Dean Malenko vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho is defending and this is Dean's last chance at the title. Jericho dropkicks Dean out to the floor to start and sends him into the barricade to take an early advantage. Back in and Chris tries a top rope dropkick but dives into a dropkick from Malenko. Dean goes up again for a sunset flip but Jericho rolls through into the Liontamer. Malenko is quickly into the ropes and rolls out to the floor for a breather. Jericho hits a nice dive to take him out and we go to a break.

Back with Jericho kicking Malenko into the ropes but Dean takes over with a leg lariat. Malenko ducks a victory roll attempt and German suplexes Chris down for two. Jericho comes right back with a reverse suplex and the Lionsault to Dean's back for two. The fans are into this match. A release double underhook powerbomb sets up the Cloverleaf but Jericho is too close to the ropes.

Malenko gets crotched on the top but he counters Jericho's superplex into a DDT off the top for three but the referee waves it off because Jericho had the rope. Chris rolls to the floor and pulls out a foreign object but Dean stomps him down in the corner before Jericho can swing. The referee gets poked in the eyes and Dean takes the knucks away. He knocks Jericho

out as the referee clears his eyes out, drawing the DQ.

Rating: C+. Really fast paced match here though the ending is kind of puzzling. Why would you have Malenko get beaten/screwed out of the title every single time, only to have him lose the final match? Jericho has dominated the feud as far as being the better character, but shouldn't Malenko have gotten to keep the title at least once?

Gene swears that we'll get the Goldberg interview soon. Apparently Goldberg is fine and in the locker room.

The Nitro Girls are in the crowd.

Long video on Road Wild, focusing on country singer Travis Tritt performing. Again with the celebrities.

Steve McMichael vs. Curt Hennig

McMichael throws Hennig around to start but Curt snaps McMichael's throat across the top rope. Mongo comes back with a powerslam but a Rude distraction lets Hennig hit the PerfectPlex for the win. Another 90 second match.

We look at another clip from the Tonight Show with Leno bringing out a Hollywood Hogan impersonator who is too old to move.

Cue the Black and White to talk even more. Bischoff promises to fire whoever showed that Leno clip. Hogan says he'll give Page a huge beating to make up for all the bad things he's been saying lately. He's also ready to ride Page real hard all night long. There's a sex tape joke in there somewhere. Hogan accepts the challenge for a match with Page tonight.

Before that though, here's the ENTIRE main event from Bash at the Beach.

The match plus intros eats up nearly half an hour, including a few commercial breaks. I'm just going to copy and paste this from the Bash at the Beach review.

Diamond Dallas Page/Karl Malone vs. Dennis Rodman/Hollywood Hogan

Page and Malone have matching attire, which look like they jumped into a vat of hot glue with their jeans on. They come out to some hip hop song that keeps saying "feel the bang." Malone looks like he's been carved out of granite while Rodman is in a t-shirt and jeans. The basketball players get us going but first Hogan has to take off Rodman's glasses. Rodman runs to the ropes to hide and the fans are all over him. That works so well that they do it a second time. A test of strength doesn't happen as we hit two minutes into the match.

Rodman grabs a headlock but bails to the floor when Malone charges at him. Off to Hogan for a posedown with Hollywood getting frustrated. Malone hooks a kind of standing chinlock (imagine a left arm Rock Bottom but he clasps his hands together and squeezes) before slamming Hogan down. We're five minutes in now and it's off to Page. DDP gets Rodman and shoves him down off a lockup. A shoulder puts Rodman down again as the stalling continues. They spit at each other and Rodman armdrags him down. Somehow we're seven minutes into this match.

They hit the ropes a bit and collide to send both guys down. Back to the headlock by Rodman but Page reverses into one of his own. The fans are clearly getting restless. Rodman leapfrogs Page twice and they collide again to give us more laying down. Malone comes in and kicks at Rodman, sending him over to Hogan for the tag. Karl hooks a top wristlock and shoves Hogan to the mat. Hogan complains of a hair pull and Rodman gets in a cheap shot to get to the whole tag match idea for the first time.

Hogan chokes a lot and slams Malone down before raking the boot over Malone's eyes. Rodman comes in with some elbow drops before it's back to Hogan for a chinlock. Here's Rodman again for some double teaming and a

belly to back suplex from Hogan. Hollywood misses an elbow though and it's hot tag to Page. DDP comes in with a top rope clothesline to Hogan but a cheap shot from Rodman lets the NWO take over again. Hogan chokes away in the corner with his boot followed by a running clothesline.

Rodman comes in for a double big boot and more choking before it's back to Hogan for right hands in the corner. Page hits a quick elbow but Rodman breaks up the tag attempt and puts on a front facelock. Malone plays cheerleader on the apron and we get the unseen and phantom tag tropes to space the match out even more. The big boot puts Page down but he avoids the legdrop and it's hot tag off to Malone.

Clotheslines all around put the NWO down and they both get slams. There's a double noggin knocker followed by Hogan's head going into the buckle. A big boot drops Hogan and it's off to Page for a running Diamond Cutter (Hogan landed on his hands, making the move look horrible). Malone Diamond Cuts Rodman but Disciple sneaks in with a Stunner to Page, giving Hogan the pin and a face pop for some reason.

Rating: F. This was about what you knew it was going to be, though it could have been FAR worse. Malone was clearly taking this seriously which is more than you can say for most celebrities in matches. Rodman looked like your usual celebrity wrestler: decent at the one or two really basic moves he used but pretty worthless otherwise. I've read before that this was originally booked to go nearly an hour, which makes me shiver in fear. I guess Hogan needed this win as a thank you for the mainstream attention he brought in?

Malone gives Disciple and the referee Diamond Cutters (good ones too) and the NWO celebrates like this is a big deal.

More Leno footage, this time with a Hogan midget.

Hour #3 begins, again about 15 minutes late.

Now it's time for the Goldberg interview after stringing the TV audience along for an extra hour. Goldberg has been watching what Hogan has been trying to do around here. What they did tonight crossed a line, so he's going to make Brian Adams an example. This was about 45 seconds long.

Here's Arn Anderson for what could be a good interview for a change. Gene talks about Anderson's talk with McMichael and Malenko on Thunder a few weeks back and wants to know why he was so hard on them. Anderson says the three of them tried very hard to make it personal with him and it almost worked. Tonight he was going to gauge the mood to see if the Horsemen had one more run. Then he saw Dean lose to a man that he's better than and Mongo have a match with the man that brought down the Horsemen in the first place, only to get beaten too. That's enough for him, so now he's telling them to drop it.

Sting vs. Scott Hall

Sting starts while the ring is still full of smoke from the entrances, taking Hall down with a bulldog. Scott is sent out to the floor for a breather before coming back in with a toothpick to the face. Some right hands set up the fallaway slam for two but Sting shrugs them off and hits three straight Stinger Splashes. There's the Death Drop to set up the Scorpion but here's Bret Hart to distract Sting. He doesn't fight back as Sting beats on him but Hennig and Vincent come in for the DQ. Too short to rate again but this was angle instead of wrestling.

Luger and Nash come out for the save as Bret still hasn't gotten physical at all. Nash loads up the Jackknife on Hall but gets hit low. Bret tries to help Sting up but gets kicked low as well. Bret bails to the floor to escape the Scorpion. Hart never attacked Sting at all.

We look at Buff Bagwell suckering Rick Steiner in, only to turn heel again, wasting some of the most natural sympathy WCW ever had at its fingertips.

Scott Steiner shoves Buff down the ramp in a wheelchair and freaks out because Bagwell is hurt. Buff gets to his feet and dances, annoying Gene even more. Bagwell talks about how serious his neck injury was and Scott praises him for the great acting jobs over the last few weeks. Steiner promises to beat up Rick at Road Wild until JJ comes out to yell at Bagwell. Steiner gets a piece too, with promises of a match against Rick. Scott doesn't seem too scared.

WCW World Title: Brian Adams vs. Goldberg

Vincent distracts Goldberg to start, allowing Adams to hit a top rope shoulder block and a suplex for two. Goldberg hits a belly to belly suplex, three spears (Adams, Vincent, Adams) and the Jackhammer makes it 121-0.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Hollywood Hogan

This could have headlined a PPV. We get a music miscue as Hogan's music starts before Buffer does his intro in both English and Spanish. Hogan jumps him at the entrances as Tenay talks about Page hosting a charity event for school kids in Atlanta. Nothing wrong with that. Page comes back with right hands and some choking in the corner as we're just waiting on the run ins.

Hogan suplexes Page and pounds away with right hands to the head. A clothesline gets two on Page but misses an elbow drop. Page tries to clothesline Hogan to the floor but Hollywood is all like "that's WAY too big a spot for me brother." They fight to the floor and Page has to fight off Disciple. Back in and Hogan hits the corner clothesline, setting up the big boot. Page gets up anyway and grabs the Diamond Cutter, drawing in the NWO for the DQ. Too short to rate (shocking!) but Page was trying.

All of the NWO comes out for a big brawl. Goldberg comes to the ring and beats up the Black and White, only to walk into a chokeslam from Giant to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. And that's being generous. This show was three hours and had seven new matches. Of those seven, ONE was long enough to rate, clocking in at less than six minutes. They spent about 45 minutes (approximately the amount of show time in an hour of programming) on a talk show segment and re-airing a match from PPV. I feel sorry for the San Antonio crowd tonight as they got ripped off tonight.

On top of being really short, how many of these matches meant anything at all? You had two worthless matches, then a good cruiserweight match, a match to advance the Horsemen angle, a match to set up a post match brawl, Goldberg being Goldberg, and a match to set up the post match brawl. Even Raw is better at using its time than that.

Finally there's the Leno stuff. I understand the idea behind bringing in celebrities, but let's think about this for a minute. Last month the celebrities were one of the best linebackers of all time, one of the craziest athletes ever and an NBA player at the peak of his career. This month it's a 48 year old comedian most famous for having a large chin. It wasn't unreasonable to think that Malone could be passable in the ring due to his athletic abilities.

What else could the Leno match be but bad comedy? It's bad comedy setting up bad comedy. Yeah it appeals to the middle aged audience that loved the Tonight Show, but how many of them are going to pay \$30 to watch Leno do physical comedy? On top of that, we haven't even had the match announced yet and next week is the go home show for Road Wild. Not only is it a bad idea, but it's being poorly marketed.

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