

Monday Nitro – October 26, 1998: WCW Needs A Map

Monday Nitro #160

Date: October 26, 1998

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

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

Halloween Havoc is over and not a lot has changed. Hogan beat Warrior in one of the worst matches of all time, Goldberg kept the World Title in a good match over Diamond Dallas Page, Rick Steiner is still an idiot (though he won the Tag Team Titles in one of the only changes) and Nash walked away instead of beating Hall. We're four weeks away from World War 3 which will set up Starrcade. Let's get to it.

We open with stills of Bret vs. Sting from last night.

Nitro Girls.

Tony talks about the overrun from last night, saying about 10-20% of the houses didn't see the end of Hogan vs. Warrior or the title match. WCW has held meetings all day and came up with two options. One would be giving away the replay for free. Quote: "No. A lot of fans bought the show and saw all eleven matches. We don't want to give the whole thing away for free." Nice to see them just say "we want your money instead of making it right."

Therefore tonight at 9pm we're going to see the World Title match in full. Tony insists this isn't a ratings ploy and proves it by saying the match will start at 9pm rather than the end of the show. Why not have a meeting to find out who decided Tony should say this on air and have them listen to how stupid it sounded? Larry says sometimes technology is out of control and just wait until the KY2 bug hits.

Alex Wright vs. Stevie Ray

Stevie has dubbed himself the enforcer of the NWO. He runs over Kaos to start and yells at the camera before kicking Kenny in the face. Stevie misses an elbow drop as Tony drones on about the technical issues. Kaos hits a springboard shoulder block for two but here's Buff to throw Stevie the Slap Jack. Kaos is knocked out and the Slap Jack is enough for the pin.

Rick Steiner comes in for the save as Tony says Rick single handed won the titles. "It's one of those things you only see when you watch a WCW pay per view." I wouldn't be bragging about what you get when you watch a show at this point Tony. Rick grabs the mic and says he has to pick a partner, so if Kenny is interested in some revenge, he can be a partner if he wants. Kaos says his partner is out with an injury and it would be an honor to defend the titles with Rick. This was always a bizarre choice to me as Kaos just lost a match and had no history at all, so let's make him a champion. Even the replay shows him getting pinned.

Opening sequence.

Kanyon vs. Prince Iaukea

Raven is with Kanyon as Tony talks about the World Title match replay for about the 6th time so far. However, even though it was cut as well, we're not going to see the end of Hogan vs. Warrior because "it was too disgusting to show on television." He's talking about Hogan failing to light Warrior on fire (the second time he couldn't get it to work if you're counting), which happened after the match. These jokes are writing themselves tonight.

Kanyon does his schtick before the match and jumps Iaukea when he doesn't get the response he wants. Tony says they can't show you the ending to the Hogan match and Tenay adds that it's not up to TNT standards. Kanyon

gets two off a rollup and puts on a chinlock until Iaukea sends him to the floor. The Prince goes up top and dives at Canyon, despite him standing four feet from where Prince aimed. Prince backdrops out of a piledriver on the steps to get the announcers talking about the match for the first time. Back in and a springboard flip attack gets two on Canyon but he grabs the Flatliner for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was better than I was expecting but at the end of the day, Prince Iaukea isn't going to win a match on Nitro at this point. The flip dive did look cool but there are a ton of guys on this roster that can do the exact same thing. It's always nice to see Canyon get a win as well.

The Nitro Girls are at the announcers' desk.

Gene calls the Horsemen to the ring. There's no Mongo in sight and Flair says he was a casualty in Vegas but will be back by the end of the night. That's an odd statement. Gene finds it interesting that Bischoff isn't trying to keep the Horsemen off TV but here's Bischoff in person. He says he'll admit if he's wrong, and he underestimated how much Flair means to all of these people. The fans clearly want to see him wrestle and that's what Flair will be doing tonight. Flair says line them up and he'll be ready in ten minutes.

Nitro Party winner from Hampton, Virginia.

The announcers talk about some of the other big matches last night and show us stills of Nash vs. Hall.

Alex Wright vs. Barry Horowitz

Wright takes him down with ease to start but charges into an elbow in the corner. A jumping kick to the face puts Barry down and Alex goes up, only to jump into a boot. Barry gets dropkicked off the top and a great

looking neckbreaker gives Wright the win.

We look at stills from Hogan vs. Warrior. Of course this is ok to talk about but Heaven forbid we show it.

Wrath vs. Sick Boy

Sick Boy actually drops Wrath with a spinwheel kick but Wrath chops him back into the corner. Wrath puts on a chinlock before throwing Sick Boy out to the floor. A slingshot shoulder block gets two on Sick Boy but he comes back with a suplex into a swinging neckbreaker. Wrath completely no sells it to complete the squash.

Hour #2 begins so here's Goldberg vs. Page. I don't feel like watching this match twice in four days so this is copied and pasted from the Halloween Havoc review.

WCW World Title: Goldberg vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Page charges right at him a few times and is easily shoved away. An armdrag frustrates Goldberg and they lock up before falling to the floor without breaking it up. Back in and Page tries a legsweep but Goldberg does a standing backflip to avoid it. Men his size should not be able to do that. A bad looking cross armbreaker has Page in trouble and Goldberg shoves him out of the ring to block the Diamond Cutter.

Back in and Page takes him down into a hammerlock but a hard shoulder block puts him on the floor. Page is able to snap Goldberg's throat across the top rope and he follows up with a swinging neckbreaker. A Russian legsweep gets two and we hit a front facelock. Goldberg knees his way out of it and hits a spinning neckbreaker to put Page down. A hard hiptoss puts Page down and a side slam gets two for the champion. Back to the cross armbreaker but Page makes the rope.

A superkick sends Page flying but he sidesteps the spear, sending Goldberg hard into the post. Page gets two off a flying clothesline and the running DDT puts the champion down as well. He calls for the Diamond Cutter but Goldberg nails him with the spear. It injures his arm though and Goldberg can't get the Jackhammer. Page slips behind him and grabs the Diamond Cutter but both guys are down. The fans are suddenly WAY into this as Page gets a very close two. Page tries a suplex of his own but Goldberg counters into the Jackhammer to retain the title.

Rating: B. It's not a masterpiece but it's definitely Goldberg's best match ever. The fans were buying into Page as a threat at the end of the match and that's more than can be said about the vast majority of Goldberg's opponents. To put it simply, this was a good wrestling match. You can't often say that about a WCW main event but that's what you had here.

Goldberg helps Page up post match and poses to end the show.

The announcers praise the match.

Gene goes to Kevin Nash's huge locker room to ask him about leaving Hall laying last night and walking out on the match. Hall himself comes in and Nash says it wasn't about winning and losing. He'll win when Hall is his friend again. The audio keeps cutting in and out. Hall says something I can't make out but they shake hands, only to have Giant sneak in (unless there's another door to that room, Giant was somehow hiding in there and Nash never saw him) and help Hall throw Nash through a wall in a good visual.

Nitro Girls video.

Nitro Girls dance.

WCW likes UNICEF.

Here's the NWO with Hogan looking thrilled. Bischoff talks about how great his life is and presents Horace his shirt as the newest member of the team. Hollywood throws in the weightlifting belt and it's a big celebration. Somehow this takes almost six minutes.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Saturn

Feeling out process to start until Eddie takes him down by the arm. Saturn comes back with an armdrag but Eddie complains of a hair pull. The distraction lets Eddie take him down and stomp away at Saturn's knee. A backbreaker gets two for Eddie but he gets caught in a sitout wheelbarrow slam for two by Saturn. Eddie's tornado DDT is countered into a northern lights suplex for two more but Eddie escapes a vertical suplex into a rollup for yet another near fall. Saturn comes back with a t-bone suplex and a brainbuster but the LWO runs in for the DQ.

Rating: C+. The match was entertaining as expected and the ending actually does something with the LWO for a change. Until now they've all just been wearing the same shirt without actually accomplishing anything. I'd like to see more of this pairing and a finish but this advanced something.

The LWO, including a new unnamed member, lay out Saturn so Eddie can hit a frog splash.

Judy Bagwell is here to talk about how bad her son has been lately. Gene goes through the horrible things Buff have done lately and the Bagwell Family is tired of it. She loves Marcus but is tired of Buff. This was received about as well as you would expect.

Tag Team Titles: Kenny Kaos/Rick Steiner vs. Giant/Stevie Ray

Steiner and Kaos are defending. Kaos goes after Stevie to start but Giant adds in a kick from the apron. A superkick drops Kenny and the NWO takes

over. Off to Giant for a bearhug but Kenny gets over to the corner and makes the tag to Rick. Giant splashes Rick in the corner and chokes with a boot but charges into a boot from Rick. A top rope shoulder gets two on Giant but he launches Rick to the floor on a kickout. Stevie gets the tag and Kaos distracts Giant long enough for Rick to bulldog Ray for the pin to retain.

Rating: D. At the end of the day, Kaos just doesn't fit in here. It's like they drew a name out of a bowl and made him a Tag Team Champion. The match wasn't any good either as it was Kaos being treated like the jobber that he was and Rick hitting a quick move to keep the titles.

Hour #3 begins.

Eric Bischoff has replaced Tenay on commentary and promises the best of Ric Flair tonight. He has a video package of Hogan beating up Flair from Bash at the Beach 1994 for the title. Tony praises Hogan and calls Flair a coward but is embarrassed by what he said. Bischoff says it's proof that Flair will always play second fiddle to Hogan.

Cruiserweight Title: Kidman vs. Juventud Guerrera

Kidman is defending. Neither guy can get control off a wristlock but Juvy fires off elbows to the head and sends Kidman into the buckle. Juvy goes up top and shoves Kidman down before getting two off a missile dropkick. A brainbuster gets two more for the challenger and we hit the chinlock. Kidman fights up but gets caught in a Rocker Dropper for two. Juvy's headscissors is countered into a wheelbarrow slam for two more.

Kidman tries a belly to back suplex but gets countered into a sitout bulldog, followed by a cross body for two. Juvy goes up but gets dropkicked out of the air, setting up the Shooting Star. Guerrera is able to get to his feet and crotch Kidman, followed by a top rope hurricanrana for a VERY close two. Kidman counters a powerbomb into the sitout powerbomb and the Shooting Star retains the title.

Rating: B-. This started a bit slow but the ending sequence was great. Juvy looked great in the ring and Kidman was in over his head for most of the match. The counter to the powerbomb looked good and the Shooting Star was even better. Kidman is nailing the division right now and having solid match after solid match.

Ad for Sting and Randy Savage tapes.

Here are Scott Steiner and Buff Bagwell to brag about their physiques. Bagwell says this is for the women: your job is to cook and clean and take care of your man. Scott wants JJ Dillon out here right now because he wants a match with Rick tonight. JJ comes to the ring and Scott accuses him of thinking Rick is the better brother.

Dillon says he has no favorite but Scott wants to know why the new referee came in to help Rick win because he thinks JJ had something to do with it. JJ says buy the replay to see what happened. Scott stays on it and JJ says he didn't send the referee but would have if he had the chance. Steiner kicks him in the gut and puts him in the Recliner until security makes a save.

Here's the Warrior because this hasn't gone on long enough. Hogan had the chance to face a challenge last night but failed again. Last night will haunt Hogan forever (understatement of the year) because there's a difference between beating someone up and defeating them. Warrior beat Hogan up last night and the bull pinfall doesn't change it. Warrior calls himself a gatekeeper and says the time is near on the same Warrior channel.

Hogan comes out and Warrior is ready to go but Horace stops his uncle from getting in. Horace gets beaten up and sent to the floor. Giant comes in and gets the same so Hogan gets in. Warrior ducks a big boot and hits a shoulder to the ribs. Bischoff is knocked off the apron and the NWO runs.

Lex Luger/Konnan vs. Scott Steiner/Scott Hall

It's a brawl to start as the Wolfpack is out for revenge for Nash. Konnan and Steiner fight to the floor with Konnan getting caught in the Recliner outside. Steiner adds a chair to the ribs as Luger and Hall fight in the aisle. I don't think a bell ever rang so this isn't even a match. Steiner beats on Konnan in the ring but Konnan comes back with a clothesline.

All four guys go to the floor and Konnan gets laid out again. Luger gets double teamed in the ring and a chair is brought in. Konnan comes in for the save as there's no referee in sight. Luger nails Hall with the chair and Racks him but Steiner breaks it up and we take a break. Not a match but a fun segment.

US Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Bret Hart

Bret is defending and gets a quick two after countering a slam. They trade arm work until Page gets two off a rollup of his own. A neckbreaker gets two more for Page but Bret knees him in the ribs. Bret hammers away at the ribs and chokes on the ropes as the announcers talk about Sting's injuries last night. We hit the chinlock on Page for a good while but he fights up with a jawbreaker for two.

Page gets crotched on the top and Bret brings him down with a gorgeous superplex. Hart misses a charge into the buckle to give Page two but Bret scores with the legsweep and middle rope elbow. Page is up at two and Bret is getting frustrated. Another jawbreaker has Bret in trouble and Page rams him into the buckle. Bret counters with a low blow that takes out both Page and the referee. The champ pulls out a foreign object but Page ducks a big swing and hits the Diamond Cutter for the pin and the title.

Rating: C-. This really didn't do it for me but it wasn't horrible. It felt like they just wanted to get the match over with but had to fill time. It's nice to see Page get a clean(ish) pin for a title and to take

it off Bret who just didn't care at this point. The match didn't work though as it just jumped into the Bret control with very little beforehand.

Bret goes off with chair shots post match and works over his knee before putting on the Sharpshooter. Page's screams really make it that much better. Bret works the knee over with the chair even more until Goldberg makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. You can see things getting in trouble from here as the earlier matches were nothing to see and the rest of the show felt like they were trying to figure out what to do next. There was some fallout from Halloween Havoc, but at the same time it was like they had no idea where they wanted to go. That's a problem going into a big battle royal show as there's no story to a match like that. The show had good points but it didn't work for the most part.

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