

Monday Nitro – December 28, 1998: Who's The Boss?

Monday Nitro #169

Date: December 28, 1998

Location: 1st Mariner Center, Baltimore, Maryland

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

Starrcade is gone now and the main story coming out of the show is Nash stopping Goldberg's winning streak last night and winning the World Title. Other than that we saw Bischoff beating Flair in the big match of their feud, because Heaven forbid Bischoff's ego not get stroked at the biggest show of the year. We close out an up and down year tonight so let's get to it.

We open with the announcers talking about the big matches from last night and get to see Eric's Greatest Hits, which is basically Eric kicking Flair in the head.

Nitro Party winner.

Here are Miller and Onoo to talk about how he's going to whip somebody. This brings out Jericho and Ralphus of all people, but they're just here to introduce Cat's real opponent.

The Cat vs. Shiima Nobunaga

Jericho and Ralphus are in Shiima's corner. Chris: "COME ON DO SOME KARATE!" Tony points out that Nobunaga doesn't speak English which makes this funnier. Miller and Jericho have mics during the match but don't say much of anything. Cat kicks Shiima in the face and catches him in a powerslam. The Feliner is good for the pin in less than 90 seconds. I'm not sure what the point of this was.

Stills of Goldberg vs. Nash last night.

Clip of Flair having a heart attack, even though that wasn't a focal point of the match at all last night.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Norman Smiley

They circle each other to start until Chavo goes to talk to Pepe. Norman grabs a wristlock as the announcers talk about Nash not seeing Hall interfere. A clothesline puts Chavo down and it's time to dance. Chavo comes back with a dropkick to put Smiley on the floor and rides the horse around the ring. Back in and Norman takes him down again, setting up the Big Wiggle. There's the swinging slam and Norman fires an arrow into the air. Chavo gets caught in a chinlock before dancing out of a sunset flip.

Larry officially christens the dance the Big Wiggle to make this show historic. Now it's time to dance with Pepe but that's just going too far and sends Chavo into a frenzy. The fans don't mind but it's a nice idea at least. A middle rope bulldog drops Smiley and it's time for Chavo to dance. Norman runs him over and grabs the horse, asking it who's your daddy. Smiley gets crotched on the top rope and slapped in the face, but the horse distraction lets Norman slap on the Conquest for the win.

Rating: D. For dancing of course. The match was nothing special with the dancing taking up WAY too much time. It's fun to see it happen once but they hit about seven or eight times. That's just way too much and it stops being funny after about two. At least Norman won though as his moderate push continues.

Clip of Raven leaving last week.

Booker T. vs. Fit Finlay

Finlay doesn't feel like waiting and blasts Booker during the

posing on the buckles. He hammers away and they head outside where Booker nails a quick kick to the face and whips Finlay into the barricade. Oddly enough there's no talk of Finlay's match last night. It's almost like it meant absolutely nothing at all and even Finlay's mom wouldn't have wanted to watch it. Back in and Finlay grabs a quick slam for two and we hit the chinlock.

Booker fights up with some elbows and a clothesline before nailing the side kick. Some knees to the ribs have almost no effect on Finlay as he comes back with a jawbreaker and European uppercuts. Booker is sent into the corner but comes back with the spinning sunset flip for two. Finlay nails an atomic drop and sends Booker outside, only to have Booker come back with another sidekick and the missile dropkick for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not bad here but Finlay has really fallen back to earth after his nearly worthless TV Title reign over the summer. It's the best match of the night so far though, which is likely due to who was in the ring. I still can't get my head around the fact that Booker didn't make Starrcade but Finlay did. Finlay is definitely talented enough but it didn't make any sense.

Here's Flair with some luggage for the first important moment of the show. He says he doesn't deserve this kind of a welcome because Bischoff beat him last night. Last night he went back to the hotel, called Arn, got drunk, then called his wife because it was over. He got on the plane and the flight attendant asked him what he wanted. Well Flair wanted to go to Baltimore so he's right here tonight.

Now Flair wants Bischoff to hear him out for the very last time. Flair rips off his jacket and shirt, takes out another suit from the luggage and throws it down. There's a third suit with ties to match but Flair is ranting about living the life of a king because the people have allowed him to. Now he

unbuckles his belt, saying it cost him \$2,000. There's a \$30,000 Rolex to match and now he's ripping up \$100 bills.

A shoe is launched into the crowd and there go Flair's pants. He struts around in boxers and drops a knee on the mat before screaming that he isn't leaving until he and Bischoff get something straight. Flair offers his house, cars and every dime he has to Bischoff if Eric will fight him one more time tonight. One more condition though: if Flair wins, he's in charge for ninety days. Why wasn't THIS the match for Starrcade?

Flair's first act if he wins: detatch Eric's head from Hogan's censored. Ric goes on another rant about WCW vs. the NWO before going to his last piece of luggage. This time it's handcuffs and he attaches himself to the ropes. We go to a break with Flair still yelling for Bischoff. If the camera goes off, he'll be missing his clothes when it comes back.

Back with the boxers still on and Flair saying W00. He goes off on Bischoff again and now Eric is on his way. Eric laughs at the handcuffed Flair who can't reach him at all. Bischoff talks about all the things he's done to Flair recently and takes the money from the mat. He says Flair is going to die of a heart attack. Flair: "When I die of a heart attack, it'll be on your girlfriend pal!" The challenge is accepted for later tonight.

Nitro Girls calendar.

Nitro Girls.

Barry Windham vs. Prince Iaukea

Windham goes right after him to start but gets caught by a dropkick and some lame right hands. That's fine with Barry as he pops Iaukea in the jaw and suplexes him down for two. Back up and Windham no sells some more right hands and hits his old jumping DDT. Instead of covering though it's a belly to back

suplex on Iaukea before Barry throws him outside to continue the beating. Back in and Iaukea's comeback goes nowhere, setting up Windham's bulldog for the pin.

Rating: D. Total squash here with Barry never even breaking a sweat. Iaukea has done almost nothing in a year and is really just filling in a spot on the card. Yeah he's a former TV Champion, but he's still one of the least interesting people I've ever seen on a wrestling show. Barry didn't look great but it could have been worse.

A security guard talks about the stun gun Hall used last night being very powerful.

Souled Out ad.

DDP comes out and brags about beating Giant last night. He talks about the two main matches from Starrcade and that's really about it. He'd love to work for Flair.

Konnan is arguing with Disco Inferno when Nash and Luger come in. After yelling at Disco even more, Nash offers Disco a deal: if he can beat Nash's handpicked opponent tonight, Disco is on the team. Nash says he has to go and make things right.

Eddie Guerrero/Juventud Guerrera vs. Billy Kidman/Rey Mysterio Jr.

This should be good as it's fallout from the two Cruiserweight Title matches last night. Guerrero, Guerrera and Mysterio are in the LWO but Rey doesn't want to be. Mysterio comes out with his LWO shirt folded in his hand. Kidman is Cruiserweight Champion. Eddie throws Juvy into the corner just after the bell but Guerrera backs away without fighting back. Rey and Eddie get things going with Eddie running him over and then suplexing Rey to the mat.

Back up and a Japanese armdrag sends Eddie running into the corner to cower in front of the referee. Guerrero brings

Guerrera into the ring with a slap to the face but Juvy backs away from Kidman. The backing off doesn't seem necessary as he clotheslines Kidman down but Eddie doesn't feel like coming back in. Kidman avoids a charge in the corner though and suplexes Juvy down before tagging Rey back in. There's the Bronco Buster in the corner as Eddie is lounging in his team's corner without looking concerned.

Juvy crawls over and tags Eddie in with Guerrero going nuts to take over. Everything breaks down with Eddie and Juvy taking over, only to have Rey nail a springboard dropkick to knock Juvy into Eddie, sending both of them to the floor. Rey and Kidman hit stereo flip dives to take everyone out. We take a break and come back with Juvy holding Kidman in a chinlock but getting caught in a bulldog out of the corner.

Back to Rey vs. Eddie with the masked man taking over but going after Guerrero instead of the legal man, allowing Eddie to get in a cheap shot to take over. Everything breaks down for a few seconds and Guerrero grabs a powerbomb to put Mysterio down to get control. The match settles down again and it's Eddie chopping away in the corner. Something like the Eye of the Storm into a neckbreaker gets two on Rey with Kidman having to make the save.

In an awesome double team move, Eddie loads up Rey in a powerbomb and Juvy adds a springboard legdrop to drive Rey down even harder. Somehow Rey is right back up though and whips Guerrero into Guerrero's boot, only to have Juvy break up a tag attempt. Eddie is already back up and hammers on Rey, but the LWO heels collide and Kidman comes in off the hot tag.

The champion cleans house and holds up Eddie for a powerbomb as Rey adds a springboard seated senton to drive Eddie down even harder than Mysterio was driven down earlier. Juvy makes another save and everything breaks down. Eddie's powerbomb attempt to Kidman goes badly (of course) but Guerrero is up at two. The BK Bomb puts Guerrero down again and a facebuster

does the same to Juvy. Eddie throws Rey to the floor for a big dive from Juvy, allowing Guerrero to nail the Frog Splash for the pin on Kidman.

Rating: B. This is one of those matches that you couldn't screw up. You took four guys and let them fly around the ring for fifteen minutes while having a story involved as well. What else was going to happen but some awesome work? Those double team powerbomb spots were really cool looking with the powerbomb Eddie took being a big highlight.

That would be about it for the LWO though as Eddie Guerrero would be involved in a car wreck on New Year's Day, putting him out of action for several months. There would be some closure to the team and we'll get to that in a few weeks.

Here's the Wolfpack for Nash's victory speech. He doesn't seem too happy though as he's seen the way the match ended. Nash was there last night for money, power and respect, but apparently money is the root of all evil. He suddenly veers off course to say Disco is facing Bam Bam Bigelow tonight and if Disco wins, he's in the Wolfpack. Back to Hall, who Nash thinks was doing him a favor. Nash respects Goldberg so much that he's willing to put the title on the line again next week in Atlanta. The new champion points out that the belt still has Goldberg's name on it, just like it will going into their match next week. There's the setup.

Disco Inferno vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Bigelow hammers away to start and throws Disco into the corner with ease. Another whip into the corner is followed by a splash and a big slam but Disco avoids the top rope headbutt. The swinging neckbreaker puts Bigelow down and Disco actually nails the Chartbuster for two. Bigelow pops back up and hits Greetings From Asbury Park (over the shoulder reverse piledriver) for the pin in less than three minutes.

Nitro Girls.

Bischoff is warming up with Curt Hennig.

Flair's physician says, in a lot of medical terms, that Ric didn't have a heart attack, but did have toxins in his body, meaning he may have been poisoned. This sounds like backtracking to me, though it does explain a few things. If nothing else it makes WCW look a lot less negligent about the health of its wrestlers.

Bischoff calls the doctor a quack. It sounds like he's nervous that someone would suggest poison.

TV Title: Konnan vs. Scott Steiner

Konnan is defending. Bagwell runs his mouth before the match but Konnan uses the distraction to lay out the NWO Referee. WCW referee Scott Dickinson comes out to referee instead but Konnan has to save him from a Steiner attack before the bell. A quick clothesline sends Steiner rolling to the floor but Buff gives him a pep talk. Back in and Konnan gets planted with a release tiger bomb before Steiner takes it outside. That goes nowhere so Scott throws him inside again and hammers away. Scott stays on him and spits on the Wolfpack t-shirt for good measure.

Konnan is put in the Tree of Woe so Scott can work on the leg a bit before Buff gets in some choking of his own. A belly to belly suplex sets up the push-ups from Steiner but Konnan counters a powerslam into a reverse DDT. The champion hammers away and hits the X-Factor before putting on the Tequila Sunrise. Bagwell tries to make the save but Luger runs out to stop him. The distraction breaks the hold though and Steiner is back up. Luger knocks Bagwell into the ropes and causes Konnan to fall to the floor, allowing Steiner to put on the Recliner for the title.

Rating: D. So why in the world wasn't this match on Starrcade? I'm glad Jericho got on the show, but you would think this would be a better option for the biggest show of the year.

Granted it's not like it matters as it's just more trading wins between the NWO, which really gets annoying after awhile. That awhile was roughly four months ago.

The announcers think Luger is up to something with Steiner.

Nitro Girls.

No Thunder this week due to New Year's Eve.

Brian Adams vs. Scott Hall

Before the match, Scott agrees with Kevin. There are three things that are important in life: money, money and money. He handed Nash the title and then Nash didn't even invite him to the victory party? Hall isn't the man Nash used to know, but Nash isn't the man Hall used to know. The fans chant for Goldberg before we get going.

Adams decks Hall to start and hits a nice backbreaker for two. Hall comes back with right hands but ducks his head and gets caught in what was supposed to be a piledriver but came out more like a pancake. Instead of covering though, Adams messes with his hair and puts on a bearhug. A belly to belly puts Scott again but there's still no cover. Brian finally hits a big boot for two and we hit the nerve hold. The fans think this is boring so Adams just lets the hold go. Hall makes a comeback but can't get him up for the Edge. Instead Brian press slams him, only to pose on the corner. Scott grabs the Edge for the fast pin.

Rating: D-. Nothing here again but at least Hall got a pin instead of being treated like the loser he's been for so long now. He's still stuck in the middle of this never ending story with Nash and the NWO but that's the case for almost every big name in WCW. It's nice to see Adams lose like the jobber to the stars he should be.

Ric Flair vs. Eric Bischoff

Flair being in power for 90 days vs. all of Flair's possessions. There's no Bischoff though as we see him in the back saying no way. Eric comes into the arena to get to an exit but the Horsemen are waiting in his limo to carry him to the arena. Nice move. The bell rings and Flair hits Bischoff low before chopping away in the corner. There's another low blow and some choking as the referee counts especially slow. Not that it matters as Flair throws Charles Robinson down anyway.

The NWO tries to run in but the Horsemen are waiting for them in the aisle. Flair drops some elbows as the Horsemen cut off another group of NWO guys. The Giant finally comes out as the Horsemen are busy fighting and a big headbutt drops Flair. Anderson, Booker T., Konnan and Page come out as a JACKED Randy Savage and a good looking blonde come out in Black and White gear. It's a swerve of course as Savage hits Giant low and clotheslines him to the floor. Flair suplexes Bischoff down and slaps on the Figure Four to become the boss for three months.

Rating: N/A. This wasn't a match but the angle worked very well. This felt like a big moment and a game changer for WCW. That being said, the question should be obvious: why in the world did Bischoff need to get the win at Starrcade? Either have this match last night or have it be a no contest of some sort. This moment taking place is fine, but how many people remember this compared to Bischoff getting the win at Starrcade? This felt like running back to fix an error and it worked to a degree. However, a lot of the damage was already done due to the fans feeling like they had been punched in the stomach the night before.

Tony, Dusty and Larry come to the ring to celebrate as Tenay plays this up as a huge moment. Flair puts on another Figure Four to end the show. Heenan: "I CAN HIT HIM UP FOR A RAISE!"

Overall Rating: C+. This was a hard one to grade because of

the first hour. It took me out of the show after wanting to see where things were going after Starrcade last night. The show wasn't terrible and the ending was especially good, but opening with Ernest Miller followed by Norman Smiley and then Fit Finlay just wasn't the right way to go here and it really hurt the opening part of the show.

On the other hand there's a lot of good stuff here too. Savage coming back was a great surprise and Flair winning control of the company was a change they needed to make. Bischoff being in charge just wasn't going to work and it's nice to see WCW FINALLY getting something to work right. The cruiserweight tag match was good too. This would have been an awesome two hour show if they had switched the order of some stuff, but as a three hour show it's just slightly better than ok.

That's the end of Nitro in 1998 and overall it was more bad than good. The show started off well enough but at the end of the day three hours a week is just too much. There are too many matches on these shows that don't need to be seen and it keeps the good stuff from shining. There are some solid moments in there though with Flair returning and Goldberg winning the title being high points of the year. Nitro would start going downhill in the future, but there were enough good moments in 1998 to give it a shot.

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