

Monday Nitro – January 11, 1999: The First Of His Kind

Monday Nitro #171

Date: January 11, 1999

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Attendance: 13,024

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

Tonight we should be finding out some of the matches for Souled Out. Why should it be tonight? Well that's because tonight is the go home Nitro for the pay per view. In its infinite wisdom, WCW had Starrcade, then Flair winning power the next night, then the Fingerpoke of Doom the next week, then Souled out less than two weeks later. The only match announced so far is David/Ric Flair vs. Hennig/Windham. Our big story at the moment is Nash vs. Giant to be the real big man of the NWO. Flair also promises to deal with the team tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Hogan announcing Nash vs. Giant for tonight. One might think putting this on the pay per view would be a good idea, but why do that when you can do it for free with four days' build?

Here's Flair for the opening chat. Gene asks him about the match at Souled Out and Flair lets out a huge MEEEEEEAN WOO! BY GOD GENE because Bischoff hates it. Flair talks about he and his son coming to get some of Windham and Hennig on Sunday. This brings us to Hogan, who is signed up through 2001, so he's not going to Hollywood or the White House. Good to see Flair keeping his sworn enemy around for two years.

Flair also brings out JJ Dillon as the Chairman of the Executive Committee, along with more money, a new car and a

female limousine driver. JJ makes his first match: Hogan defending the title at SuperBrawl against someone to be named by WCW. On Sunday, we're also getting Goldberg vs. Hall in a shock stick above the ring match for the main event.

Ric has one more piece of business to tend to: the LWO. They come out minus a few members (Gene: "Que Pasa?") and Flair calls them the most talented people in the world. He knows Eddie is in the hospital right now with a broken leg and knows the NWO had something to do with it. That's something I miss in wrestling. Why do we have to know the real reason someone is hurt or injured? Blame it on someone else and make a story out of it.

So what if the real story is online? Is it that much harder to believe than some of the other gaps in logic/stories you hear on TV? Look at the injury to Daniel Bryan (in 2014 in case you're reading this in like 50 years). Instead of having him announce his broken neck and then get beaten down by Kane, don't have him mention anything and have Kane attack him. Kane looks like a monster, Bryan gets off TV, everyone wins.

Anyway Flair tells them to take the shirts off and join the WCW bandwagon. They're promised money, cars, women, or whatever else they want. Most of them take the shirts off and Flair promises to go to Tijuana with Juvy next week. Rey won't take off the colors ironically enough, but who needs Rey Mysterio when you have a Villano and Damien? We're STILL not done though as Flair knows we're a match short so he puts himself in a match with Curt Hennig.

Video on Flair and tradition. He gets to list off people like Jack Brisco and Wahoo McDaniel because that's what half of his promos are about.

The announcers talk for a bit and hint at Eric Bischoff having a new assignment.

Clip of the LWO getting beaten down on Thunder.

Gene brings out Saturn because we don't have enough talking to open this show yet. Saturn talks about how great Flair is before saying he got ripped off. He wants a rematch with Jericho and gets both Chris and Ralplus. Jericho says the record books show two straight fair wins over Saturn and now Perry is out here caterwauling like a ten year old.

Saturn is crying so much he should be wearing a dress. That's a good idea and Jericho pitches a third match and if Saturn loses, he wears a dress for the rest of his career. Saturn says no but Jericho runs his mouth long enough to get the deal made. Chris is worried that Saturn doesn't have the legs to make the dress work.

The Cat vs. Perry Saturn

Scott Dickinson is referee because this story won't die. Miller tries a sneak attack to start but gets suplexed down and hammered on in the corner. A ticked off Saturn pounds away with right hands but Dickinson physically pulls him off. The announcers try to tell us a history between Saturn and Dickinson but they lose me as soon as I remember it's about a mostly bald referee.

Miller kicks him in the leg and poses a lot before we hit the chinlock. A dropkick to the knee puts Perry down again (Tony calls it a knee to the ribs because he's stupid in 1999) but Saturn comes back with a quick suplex. He hits a frog splash but Dickinson is with Sonny Onoo, allowing Jericho to come in and hit Saturn with a shovel. It knocks Saturn into Dickinson though and that's a DQ.

Rating: D. Did Saturn run over Bischoff's dog or something? He's plummeted through the floor since the biggest push of his career and it seems like it's just going further and further. I don't know why I'm surprised, but I don't see why the Dickinson stuff is needed at all. This same story could be told with just Jericho.

Jericho puts Saturn in a dress.

We see Flair ranting about Bischoff on Thunder.

Opening sequence, about 40 minutes into the show.

Nitro Girls.

Time for more not wrestling as we see Bischoff arriving in Atlanta for a meeting with WCW and Turner brass. Bischoff's security card doesn't work so he has to call the receptionist to get in. It's funny you see. He has to sign in and this is humiliating I guess. Security guard: "Mr. Bischoff..." Eric: "Do you know who I am?" Security guard: "No sir." Eric is shown waiting presumably for hours for Flair and ranting to the new receptionist.

Ric will finally see him and apparently the secretary has a new house and stock options. Flair is in Bischoff's old office, complete with a robe hanging from the coat rack. Bischoff liked a few moments of last Monday and claims no responsibility for what happened with the NWO. Flair promises to spend ninety days (isn't it like 80 now?) making Bischoff as miserable as he can. Ric gives Bischoff all of the personal stuff he left in the office and assigns him to the ring crew. Bischoff gets to ride in the truck down to Knoxville. This ate up over eight minutes for one joke. Tony promises more on this later.

Now it's back to Gene who has a cake. He brings out Chavo Guerrero Jr. and of course Pepe....for the horse's birthday. We get a huge HAPPY BIRTHDAY sing a long until Norman Smiley comes out to bring some sanity to this show. Actually scratch that as he's upset about not being invited and wants to make amends with the horse. Smiley of course attacks Chavo, sends him into the cake and does the Big Wiggle. This still isn't done though as Norman takes Pepe outside and throws him in a conveniently placed wood chipper.

Hour #2 begins with us looking in on Raven playing Backgammon with James (Sandman). Raven asks to see his high school yearbook and is told it's in the garage. He goes to find it but instead finds a folded up picture of Roddy Piper. James asks what that is but Raven quickly brushes him off.

The NWO motorcade arrives and the Black and White wants to know why they didn't get such a nice entourage. Hogan, thankfully without the flannel shirt, walks to the ring flanked by the Hell's Angels. The bikers rev their engines a lot then leave so Hogan can talk. Hollywood talks about being under contract and winning the title in a hard fought battle. He'll still be president of course.

Nash, a former Tennessee Volunteer, promises to show the world who the real giant is. Scott Steiner says he'll beat up Diamond Dallas Page and threatens to hurt Schiavone if he calls Page the People's Champion again. He promises to show Kimberly what it's like to be with a real man. Hogan thanks the Angels and that's it. This interview proved one thing: we're not getting an explanation for the NWO's merging are we?

Kaz Hayashi vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

A quick headscissors puts Kaz down and gets sent to the floor for a big old flip dive over the top. Back in and a slingshot headscissors drops Hayashi again but here's Lex Luger to attack Kaz for the DQ after less than two minutes.

Luger wants to know why Rey didn't take the shirt off and decks the "helpless" Rey (Tony's word as Rey was standing there looking at Luger when Lex jumped him, because there's no way a small guy could ever fight a big one). A quick comeback is thwarted by Luger as the announcers make it sound like Rey is 12 years old and worthless.

Konnan calmly walks down for the save but doesn't attack Luger. Instead Konnan says there's no point to attack Rey because he's no threat to the NWO and doesn't have a title

they want. Luger says he (Luger) wasn't in Konnan's video so they don't have to do everything together. Nash comes in and the beatdown is on. Hall zaps him a few times and Konnan is off the team. The fans want Sting but get no one.

We see Hogan making Giant vs. Nash tonight.

Here's Giant with something to say. Giant admits that he was suckered in by Macho Man (who hasn't been seen since that one appearance) and he's sick of Hogan complaining about it. Tonight, he's fighting to get a piece of Nash and then a piece of Hogan. He's about to unwrap himself from the wrong things he's gotten caught up in.

Booker T. vs. Lenny Lane

This is what we've waited for? Feeling out process to start with Booker grabbing a headlock and easily taking Lane down. A running forearm puts Lane on the floor and Booker rams him into the barricade. Back in and Lane scores a boot to the jaw and a bulldog but stops to showboat. T. shrugs them off and it's a side kick, the ax kick, the spinebuster and another side kick to pin Lane.

Rating: D+. This was nothing special and there wasn't all that much to it. At the end of the day, we're an hour and a half into this show and this is the longest match we've gotten so far and the rest has been a lot of talking. Booker continues to fight his way through the card and is getting no recognition for it. Is there any shock that so many people left?

We get an NWO produced sitdown chat between Hogan and Nash talking about how awesome their match was. Tony brings up a good point: Why did Flair allow this to be on the show?

Recap of the Hell's Angels being here and not doing anything earlier.

TV Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Scott Steiner

Steiner is defending and Page has walking pneumonia. Scott shoves Page into the corner a few times but gets caught by the driving shoulders and some right hands. Page fights off both Steiner and Bagwell to finally fire up this crowd. Bagwell breaks up a superplex attempt and Page is in trouble. The beating begins as Steiner throws him to the floor and stomps away before sending Page into the barricade.

Back in and a running kick to the head has Page in even more trouble as the crowd is already dead. The spinning belly to belly gets two and Scott yells at the referee for counting slowly. Off to a chinlock for a few moments before a hard clothesline sets up Scott's pushups.

Bagwell gets in some cheap shots on the floor but Page nails Steiner with a discus lariat for a quick two. Steiner charges into a boot in the corner and Page makes his comeback with right hands and clotheslines. The Pancake connects but Vincent comes in for a distraction so Steiner can shove Page into the referee. Bagwell throws powder into Page's eyes so Vincent takes a Diamond Cutter. Page thinks it's Steiner, even though Vincent is wearing a shirt, allowing Steiner to hit some bad chair shots to set up the Recliner for the three arm drops.

Rating: D. I waited this long for a match this bad? It wasn't so much the action but that it's the same NWO formula we had for so long but with an ending instead of the lame run in. I feel sorry for this crowd as they've sat through a very boring show and now they get this match as one of the features on this show. Also what was the point of the powder? They could have done the exact same thing without Page being blinded.

Goldberg talks about Starrcade being a big mistake when he thought Nash would have a faie match. He won't make that mistake again. Ignore the fact that it wasn't cheating as there were no disqualifications.

We see Bischoff setting up the ring earlier. This is supposed to entertain us somehow. Seriously it's just several minutes of the guy in charge of the ring yelling at Bischoff for being slow and Bischoff insulting him.

Another clip of Nash winning the title and the end of last week's show because we have to fill this show with as many replays, videos and interviews as we can.

Now it's a REPLAY OF BISCHOFF PUTTING UP THE RING. Just....wow.

Scott Hall vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

The fans aren't interested in the idea of Goldberg getting shocked again. Bigelow runs him over to start and stops the driving shoulders with a clothesline. A poke to the eye has Bigelow in trouble and Hall slowly hammers away in the corner. Another clothesline puts Hall down and a delayed vertical suplex gets the same. Disco Inferno comes out for a distraction as Wrath shoves Bigelow off the top. Inferno slides Hall a taser which the referee somehow doesn't hear, even though the cameras pick up the sound, allowing Hall to fall on top for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was somehow even less interesting than the previous match with punches and clotheslines before two run-ins and an electric stick got the pin in a four minute match. I'd guess this sets up Wrath vs. Bigelow at the pay per view, which puts us at I believe four matches for the show.

More from Goldberg, saying Nash knows he can't beat him on his own. Luger's turn surprised Goldberg more than anyone else for some reason.

Wrath and Bigelow got in a fight in the back to set up their match. Not that we get to SEE this or anything, but here's a clip of Nash nearly killing Giant a year ago.

Nitro Girls.

Ric Flair vs. Curt Hennig

Feeling out process to start with Flair slapping him in the face a few times. Despite hating Hennig, Ric goes for a hammerlock and struts a bit. A backdrop puts Flair down and Barry Windham is at ringside less than a minute in. David Flair comes out to even things up as well as he can and we go to a break. Tony: "The tape machines are rolling." Heenan: "BUT NO ONE IS RUNNING THE MACHINES!"

Back with Hennig eating an elbow in the corner but slamming Flair off the top. Curt slaps on the Figure Four but Ric pokes him in the eye to escape. Hennig sends him outside for a Flair Flop right in front of David. They send each other into the barricade until Flair takes him inside for a suplex to put both guys down. Back up and they collide to put each other down again. Ric sends him outside and Barry nails David. They get back in and Ric puts on the Figure Four, drawing in Barry for the DQ.

Rating: D+. I can only give it that because it's slightly better than the previous two matches. The opening part of the match drove me crazy though as Ric is supposed to hate Hennig but treated him like any run of the mill jobber at the beginning. The idea of Ric and David wrestling a tag match together makes my head hurt, but that could just be the migraine that this show is giving me.

Goldberg says the phrase is now Who's Left. He finally says Hall is first.

Nitro Girls.

Giant vs. Kevin Nash

Buffer says this is the home of the NCAA Champions of the Universe. Giant seemed like he quit the NWO earlier but comes out to their music here. You can't blame them for not remembering that as their minds are still recovering from the

comedic genius of Eric Bischoff using a wrench and carrying ropes. The trade poses to start and a headbutt staggers Nash before Giant stomps away in the corner. Nash avoids a charge and gets two off a big boot and an elbow drop.

Kevin hammers away in the corner as Tony points out that Sunday is the first WCW Souled Out rather than the third NWO Souled Out. I'd still love to hear the meetings where WCW thought people would care about which organization was putting on the pay per views at any point after the first Souled Out when it was still a new idea. Nash hits the picture frame elbow in the corner and Hall gets in a shot of his own.

We get a nice power display as Nash slams Giant but the bigger man powers out of the Jackknife attempt. Hall comes in and gets taken down as well before splashing both of them in the corner. A double headbutt puts them down and Hall gets chokeslammed. Nash pulls out a wrench (apparently the same one Bischoff used earlier in the day, which is treated as a big deal for some reason) to knock out Giant, literally with the referee looking right at them, for the pin.

Rating: D. And that's it for Giant in WCW. It's really hard to feel bad for him when he went on to become a multiple time World Champion and multimillionaire in the WWF, but it's always bothered me that Giant never got to beat Nash even once. Giant would be 27 a month after this and still has a pretty high profile job fifteen years later. This is the start of a trend for the WWF: taking young stars from WCW instead of the older veterans. Giant would be the first of many and it would slowly chip away at WCW's future.

Giant gets spray painted to end the show, giving me a flashback to two and a half years ago.

Overall Rating: F. This was one of the worst shows Nitro has ever produced. The best match of the night was either Booker T.'s glorified squash of Lenny Lane or Flair vs. Hennig in a

nothing match ended with a run-in DQ. Other than that it was a night of recaps, unfunny comedy bits as Bischoff is humiliated, and videos that don't go anywhere.

One thing I don't think WCW ever got: most fans really didn't care about the tradition that they kept talking about. Their idea of tradition seemed like the same old people instead of the same old style, and that just wasn't going to work. It was an idea when the NWO was a different offering, but now that idea has gotten stale as well. With both options being dull, why should I watch?

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