

Monday Nitro – March 22, 1999: Get the Coffin Ready

Monday Nitro #181

Date: March 22, 1999

Location: Club LeVela, Panama City, Florida

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

It's Spring Break Out and things are kind of fresh for me as well. I did every show so far this month in the span of a week so this is my first WCW in weeks. That might be the best thing possible as WCW is getting harder and harder to take. However, it seems like we're setting up a fourway between Flair, Goldberg, Hogan and Nash, which sounds pretty awesome actually. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Flair ranting about how awesome he is as champion and boss, affirming his heel turn and setting up the four way standoff from last week. It still doesn't look like Flair walked out.

The pool setting is always cool.

We see clips of the threeway hardcore match at Uncensored. I have no idea why as it has nothing to do with the opening match.

Bull Payne vs. Van Hammer

Payne is a bald guy in leather and Hammer is a hippie. Hammer takes him into the corner to start and we're already getting a BORING chant. A shoulder block and baseball slide put Bull on the floor and they try to throw each other in the water. Back in and Payne headbutts Hammer a few times as Tenay shills his Hotline. A double clothesline puts both guys down before Hammer is sent to the floor for another clothesline. Payne

gets two off a frog splash but walks into a cobra clutch slam and the Flashback (whip spinebuster) for the pin.

Rating: D. Again, this is how they decided to use their hour advantage on Raw. The match was really dull stuff too as I have no idea who Payne was and I have almost no reason to care about Hammer. This was a Saturday Night match but instead it's the opening contest on Nitro. It's becoming more and more obvious why this company is falling through the floor.

Video of Mysterio winning the Cruiserweight Title last week in a great match.

Mysterio is here live and talks about how much he loves this party town. Kidman can have a rematch at Spring Stampede.

Clip of the Miss Nitro contest. Buff Bagwell and Saturn are judges.

Music video on the beach stuff.

Disco Inferno, in an intertube, doesn't like this town because a girl in a wet t-shirt contest was heavier than he was. The interviewer (Ricky Rachman, the guy doing all the Spring Break stuff tonight) doesn't care for Disco's video so here it is again. A match is made for Spring Stampede.

Video on Scott Steiner and Buff Bagwell splitting up.

Finlay goes to see Rick Steiner and they want to fight tonight. This lasted eight seconds.

Video on the four way staredown and main event tag match from last week.

Goldberg did some stuff with NASCAR this week.

Hak interrupts the Goldberg package and wants to be known as "Hardcore Hak: the King of Extreme." If the fans think Goldberg is extreme, he'll show you extreme tonight.

60 seconds with Goldberg.

WCW is returning to QVC (home shopping network) with special guest Sting.

Psychosis/Silver King/El Dandy/La Cucharacha vs. La Parka/Damien/Lizmark Jr./Super Calo

Tenay isn't sure who Cucharacha is, though he's in a Konnan flannel shirt. I think you can figure it out from here. Cucharacaha starts with La Parka and everything breaks down just a few seconds in. Dandy and Silver King nail a double dropkick before it's off to Psychosis for a guillotine legdrop and two. La Parka comes back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and everything breaks down again. We wind up with Damien throwing Dandy around until it's a standoff.

Back to Cucharacha vs. Calo with the newcomer getting kicked in the face. Lizmark comes in and misses a splash in the corner, allowing King to chop him over and over. Lizmark misses a moonsault and gets superkicked as Tony says they're missing a lot of their moves. King is knocked outside for a big plancha from Lizmark. La Parka and Psychosis throw themselves to the floor and Calo dives onto Psychosis for good measure. Back in and literally everyone but La Cucharacha misses a dive until La Cucharacha Stuns all of his opponents and pins Damien.

Rating: D+. This was odd indeed with the missing sequence being the big moment at the end. Why in the world would you have a bunch of guys look inept for the sake of a comedy angle? I'm sure you can guess who was under the mask but why do that when he's already got a story going on?

It's Disco Inferno if that wasn't clear.

Video on the Mr. Nitro competition.

Regular opening for hour #2.

Nitro Girls.

Flair and JJ were outside earlier today and Flair wants to wrestle tonight. He's going to challenge the entire company in a lottery style drawing. Ric whispers to JJ to put in a lot of cruiserweights.

Dusty Rhodes is now a consultant and doesn't think much of Flair's recent actions. After the issues with Bischoff, Flair promised to make Dusty Rhodes the Commissioner of WCW. Then it became him replacing Larry Zbyszko but that didn't happen either. Maybe Dusty should have replaced Mike Tenay, but that was another oversight. Dusty calls himself a rap master and says Flair is eating off a table that Dusty set. Flair may be commissioner, but Dusty is still the bull of the woods.

Gene brings out Flair but before the champion can get anywhere, Raven of all people interrupts and asks for a title shot. Flair almost immediately grants a title shot, but makes it Raven/Kanyon vs. Benoit/Malenko for the Tag Team Titles. Kanyon isn't here tonight so Raven says he'll beat them himself. That was very abrupt. Flair keeps going and says he'll put everyone's name in a hat and draw out a name for a World Title shot.

The announcers recap the top stories.

Rick Steiner vs. Fit Finlay

I believe this was supposed to be hardcore but it isn't announced as such. They fight up against the ropes to start with Finlay nailing him with some uppercuts. Steiner takes him down to the mat with ease and tries to wrap Finlay up, only to have Fit roll to the ropes. A nerve hold has Rick in trouble and we take a break. Back with a slow motion slugout until Finlay cranks on Rick's arms. Rick is sent to the floor and pounded in the chest, followed by a top rope ax handle back in the ring. There's almost no effect though as Rick comes back with a Steiner Line and a belly to belly, followed by the

Steiner Bulldog for the pin.

Rating: C-. Better match than I was expecting here but nothing all that great. At the end of the day, this had the same problems that Nitro had with almost every show has at some point or another: why should I care? They built this up with both guys saying they were tougher and then we see them fight for four minutes in a nothing match. That's the best they can do? I see no reason to care about this and the match was nothing all that special.

Nitro Girls.

Vampiro vs. Juventud Guerrera

Juvy chops away to start before nailing a nice headscissor takeover. Something like an AA takes Juvy down and a powerbomb out of the corner gets two. Guerrera sends him out to the floor and we take a break. Back to this very slow match with Vampiro chopping in the corner and backdropping him out to the floor. A belly to belly gets two on Juvy and Vampiro cranks on his leg for a bit to no effect.

Vampiro hits a nice helicopter bomb but misses a twisting moonsault instead of covering. Juvy misses a springboard legdrop but pops up and slams Vampiro down. Vampiro crotches him to break up the 450, setting up a gutwrench superplex for two. It doesn't matter all that much as Juvy nails a wicked Juvy Driver for the pin.

Rating: D+. The more I see of Vampiro the more I wonder what I was thinking back in the day. He doesn't hold up and seems to not care in the ring for the most part. It takes a lot to drag Guerrera down at this point but Vampiro did it. Maybe he'll get better when he gets some mic time, but this really didn't do it for me.

Rachman brings out the winner of Miss Nitro: Julie Williams, some college chick who isn't all that great looking. She

doesn't know how to talk but the NWO comes out with its own army of women in swimsuits. They chase Rachman off and say it's time for the NWO Miss Spring Break contest. There's a woman missing so Hogan does some counting. The fans want tops removed, but Nash says he can't because it's too cold. He asks for the eighth woman to come out and here are David Flair and Samantha.

She takes off her dress and of course blows away every other girl in the ring. Rachman is brought back in and introduces Miss Nitro again, but Nash wants him to announce a Miss NWO. When he won't Nash loads him up for the Jackknife but gives him one more chance. Rachman immediately picks Samantha (Nash: "Sable eat your heart out.") and this finally ends.

Goldberg vs. Hardcore Hak

Hak hammers him out to the floor to start but Goldberg no sells left hands back inside. Another leverage move sends Goldberg outside again for more punching but Goldberg slaps on a cross armbreaker back in the ring. That goes nowhere so Hak brings in the weapons, which only seem to tick Goldberg off. The Russian legsweep is easily countered and it's the spear and Jackhammer for the easy pin. This was typical Goldberg.

Gene brings out Bret Hart for a chat. Bret talks about being upset over losing his reputation. He's been here over a year and he's already sick and tired of people like Flair sticking his nose in Bret's business. Okerlund brings up a possible match with Hogan but Bret doesn't think it's ever going to happen.

Gene tries Kevin Nash instead, but Bret says he's proven he can beat Nash for years now. With those names going nowhere, Gene suggests Goldberg. Bret accuses Goldberg of never being in the ring with a real technical wrestler. He wants Goldberg to get in the ring with him one time and says he could beat Goldberg in five minutes. This is already more interesting

than anything else Bret has done in WCW.

Nitro Girls, dressed as male wrestlers for some reason.

Horace vs. Vincent

From what I can tell, Raw was airing Rock vs. Mankind at this time. Vincent says Horace is just a nephew, earning him a forearm to the face. Horace hiptosses him out to the floor and a big boot puts him right back outside again. Back in and Vincent grabs a quick neckbreaker for two, only to walk into another big boot. Stevie Ray comes out as Vincent and Horace ram heads. Ray shoves Horace into a small package, giving Vincent the pin.

Rating: D-. This story was fun for awhile but now it's just another boring string of matches that keeps going with no end in sight. Stevie won the bad match at Uncensored to become the boss and now that just doesn't mean anything. This isn't entertaining anymore. Now it's just one more reason to change the channel to Raw.

Brian Adams comes out and yells at Ray post match.

It's time for the drawing for the World Title shot later in the night. The wrestlers are around the pool with numbered cards. JJ pulls out #23 and it's that jam up guy El Dandy. However, Dandy is hurt so he gives his card to Rey Mysterio Jr. Flair says Rey isn't in this because he's a champion and yells at JJ for screwing up. Rey won't leave so Flair says this is at his own risk. Mysterio will get a shot later tonight.

Video on the Horsemen, set to the Hardcore Holly's music. I've heard that in several packages before so it must be public domain.

Tag Team Titles: Raven vs. Chris Benoit/Dean Malenko

Raven is going this alone. Thankfully the Horsemen didn't

leave after being in the ring before the commercial and stomp Raven as he comes in. It's officially Benoit starting but Malenko quickly comes in for a double spinebuster. Dean puts on the Cloverleaf in the middle of the ring but lets it go for no apparent reason. Benoit comes back in and hooks the Crossface but lets it go as well.

A powerbomb/top rope clothesline combo knocks Raven senseless but Saturn walks down to the ring and gets in the champions' faces. He suplexes Benoit and Malenko but Benoit breaks up the Rings of Saturn. Things settle down with Dean nailing a leg lariat on Saturn before bringing Benoit in for some chops. The Horsemen keep control with a snap suplex from Benoit and a chinlock from Dean.

A double back elbow drops Saturn but Raven gets up and starts cleaning house. Everything breaks down and Saturn rolls through the Crossface into the Rings of Saturn, drawing in Dean with a belt, but Raven nails him with the other belt. The bell rings and the fans think it's a submission but the referee says it's a DQ for the belt shot.

Rating: C-. The match was entertaining but it really doesn't make the new champions look all that great. Then again this is WCW where they turned the World Champion and Tag Team Champions heel about a month after they were the hottest acts in the company because...why did they do that again? Anyway this should set up a rematch at Spring Stampede.

We recap the Miss NWO contest earlier and I can't complain about Samantha in a swimsuit.

Video of Flair stripping Scott Hall of the US Title and announcing a tournament. We also get clips of Meng beating Bam Bam Bigelow in the first match on Thunder.

US Title Tournament First Round: Scott Steiner vs. Chris Jericho

This has potential even though it's heel vs. heel. Jericho comes out wearing a sash with Japanese writing on it. Steiner shoves him around with ease to start before dropping to his knees to pose. He takes too long though as Jericho pops up and springboard dropkicks Steiner out to the floor.

Jericho goes outside though and is sent into the steps for his efforts to give Steiner control again. Back in and another missile dropkick puts Steiner down for two. Jericho gets the same off a middle rope back elbow followed by the Lionsault for the third straight two. Steiner easily counters the Lioneater and hits Jericho low, setting up the Recliner for the submission.

Rating: C-. Much better match than I was expecting, even though it was clear Jericho's soul died about two months ago. I can't blame him for leaving when he did as WCW wasn't going to do anything with him. Steiner didn't seem particularly motivated here either, but the action wasn't half bad.

WCW World Title: Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Ric Flair

I'll only refer to Flair as champion. Rey offers a handshake but Flair tells him to get out of here. Feeling out process to start until Rey trips him up and nails a legdrop before sending Flair into the corner. There's the Flair Flop but Ric throwing Rey out to the floor. That goes nowhere as Rey comes back in with a dropkick and a bad looking springboard seated senton for two.

We get a chase on the floor with Arn Anderson nailing a clothesline to give Flair control. A knee drop has Rey in trouble and Flair grabs a leg for two. Rey gets two of his own off a quick rollup but Flair stomps him down in the corner. A big elbow drop sets up some right hands to Rey's unmasked face. Rey fights back again and hits a dropkick, followed by the top rope hurricanrana, only to have Anderson pull the referee out to the floor for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was another nothing match with the guys going through the motions for about seven minutes before the lame ending. Mysterio clearly wasn't going to win the title and Flair didn't even go after the leg. It fits in perfectly with the theme of the night: a watchable match that meant nothing.

Flair is sent into the pool to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The show was watchable in spite of itself. As I said in the main event, there was no effort or energy put in all night. Everything interesting that happened last week was absent here in favor of one off matches that didn't set up anything. Goldberg vs. Hart coming sounds good, but the rest of the show was meaningless, although not horrible.

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