

Monday Nitro – April 5, 1999: It's A New Era! And It's Actually Good!

Monday Nitro #183

Date: April 5, 1999

Location: MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

It's a new era (kind of) for WCW as tonight they're unveiling a new set and logo, making a change for the first time in several years. The main story coming into tonight is some announcement by Sting, who will be making his first scheduled appearance on the show since the fall of last year. Let's get to it.

We open with a Sting video from the build to Starrcade 1997 to hype up his announcement tonight.

A new opening sequence (heavily featuring the Nitro Girls) shows off the new logo.

Goldberg is walking through the back with a tumbler full of what appears to be names to be drawn.

The announcers are now at ringside. Tony, now wearing a leather jacket and with his hair a little messier, talks about Spring Stampede coming this weekend. I must have had the dates wrong then as I thought we had another week after this. Good grief they need to hurry then.

Gene brings out Goldberg for a chat. Goldberg still has the tumbler and talks about how he's been getting screwed over ever since losing the title. He wasn't at Uncensored and if it's up to Flair, he won't be a Spring Stampede. Gene says we must be having the lottery that they've been talking about.

I'm not sure what lottery this is but I doubt Gene knows either. The name Goldberg pulls out is going to be his victim on Sunday but here's Nash to interrupt.

Kevin comes out in a hockey jersey and warns Goldberg not to spear him. Nash says that he's been doing this for ten years and people will be talking about him in another ten years because he stopped the Streak. Goldberg tells him not to live in the past, so Nash makes the match between the two of them at Spring Stampede. Goldberg says Merry Christmas.

Arn Anderson is on the phone in Flair's office but can't get someone on the phone. Flair is upset and Arn leaves.

Nitro Girls.

Ricky Rachman hypes the Hotline.

Hardcore Hak vs. Kendall Windham

This is a Singapore Cane match for no apparent reason. They duel to start until Kendall gets in a few shots to the leg to take over. Hak's chuck Chastity nails Windham with a cane and Hak takes over. Windham grabs a swinging neckbreaker for two but Hak puts him down with a backdrop. For some reason he goes outside to yell at someone, allowing Kendall to take over back inside. Some elbows have Kendall in trouble and a big cane shot to the head drops him. The White Russian legsweep gives Hak the pin.

Rating: D. Well that happened. This hardcore stuff is getting boring already and I can see why they switched over to the comedy stuff soon enough. Windham was only like his brother in name only and I'm still not convinced Hak is a wrestler. Thankfully they kept this on the first hour and short. The canes didn't mean much either.

Video on Meng.

Goldberg goes in to see Flair and Anderson but they didn't

send for him. He isn't happy that Luger and Liz are in Flair's office. Flair has a big presidential seal on the wall now.

Anderson goes up to Nash at catering because Flair wants to see Nash.

Video on Konnan vs. Disco Inferno.

Konnan vs. Lizmark Jr.

They go to the mat to start with Konnan rolling him by the arm into a sunset flip for two. Lizmark trips him up in the corner and nails a spinwheel kick for a near fall of his own. A seated dropkick gets two for Lizmark as Tony continues his heel schtick that he started on Thursday. This time he claims that he's the only announcer that puts in any effort instead of just going home. Lizmark takes him to the floor for an ax handle to the back. He's getting in a lot more offense than I expected here. Konnan avoids a top rope splash and they trade rollups for two each. The X-Factor sets up the Tequila Sunrise to make Lizmark tap.

Rating: C-. It's always nice to see some actual effort in a match like this. Konnan vs. Disco isn't the hottest feud in the world but at least it's something that has been given a story. Lizmark didn't do much in WCW but he got to show off a little bit here. This was a nice little surprise instead of the usual.

Anderson and Flair get back to Flair's office.

Scott Steiner video.

Nash and Flair are walking through the office area but go their separate ways. Hogan sees Nash and asks what he was doing with Flair. Apparently it was just business. Hollywood says it better be.

Now Nash is with Charles Robinson (in a suit), who apparently has 4Flair license plates. Robinson leaves before anything can

be said. Hogan pops up again and asks what that was about. Apparently they're having issues over what Samantha said last week. In case you forgot, it was over where or not the Fingerpoke of Doom was "real." So they're fighting over whether or not a poke to the chest was a real victory or staged? Am I understanding this right?

Gene brings out Flair for a chat. Ric talks about Goldberg wanting to be where the champ is now. Nash made a match with Goldberg for Sunday like a man should. As for tonight, Flair is in a good mood and is going to face Hogan tonight for the World Title. This brings out a fired up Hogan who says he'd love to beat up Flair right here tonight. Ric threatens to cancel the match if Hogan touches him but Hollywood is more than willing to let Flair go to the back and get ready.

They yell at each other a lot until DDP comes out to interrupt. Page doesn't care for either of them but this is obviously a main event match worthy of the MGM Grand. He has an idea though: let's make it a three way dance. Hogan is willing to make it a handicap match but here's Goldberg before anything can be made official. He wants in the match and grabs Flair but the shirt but Ric gets away and shouts that Goldberg is in trouble. Apparently it's a four way later tonight. Hogan and Goldberg seem to make a deal, saying they'll take out Flair and Page respectfully and then go one on one.

US Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Scott Steiner vs. Meng

This could be interesting. Steiner rips on DDP a bit before the match because that feud just won't die. If Page wanted a piece of him, why didn't he enter the US Tag Title tournament (that's what he said) for the US Title? Steiner brings up the 30 days stipulation from SuperBrawl before talking about a rollercoaster of love. He only needs one night with Kimberly to have her for the rest of her life. If Page wants revenge, he has to give up Kimberly for one night.

Steiner pounds away in the corner but Meng nails him with a superkick to send him outside. Back in and Meng superkicks him again, knocking Steiner back into the corner. Scott asks for time out but comes back with a belly to belly. Both guys head outside with Meng going face first into the barricade. Back in and a slow motion backbreaker gets two on Meng but he fights out of a superplex and nails a middle rope clothesline. More clotheslines and a dropkick get two on Steiner. There's the Tongan Death Grip but Steiner goes to the eyes. A low blow and belly to belly suplex are good for the pin (the feet on the ropes didn't hurt either).

Rating: C. Again I liked this better than I was expecting with both guys getting in some good looking power stuff. Steiner's push to the stars continues, even though he's been the same worker for months now. Meng did his stuff here and went a little bit above and beyond with that middle rope clothesline and dropkick looking good.

Hour #2 begins.

Nitro Girls.

We see a man in a trenchcoat in the rafters but it's just a worker.

Same Sting video that opened the show.

Flair yells at the cameraman for filming him.

Video on Jim Duggan returning from cancer.

Jim Duggan vs. Lenny Lane

Lane hides in the corner to start but gets in a cheap shot to the ribs. Duggan slugs him down and head outside with Lane being sent into the post and announcers' table. More slugging ensues back inside and Duggan nails a suplex for two. Duggan finally drops a big knee to end this.

Rating: D-. This went on far longer than it should have and wasn't entertaining. Duggan coming back is a good story but that doesn't mean he's someone interesting to see in the ring anymore. At least it was someone worthless like Lane taking the loss instead of a bigger name.

Rachman talks about the Hotline again.

Video of Hogan making the battle royal for control of the Black and White.

Battle Royal

Vincent, Brian Adams, Stevie Ray, Horace

Yep it's a four man battle royal and we have to sit through full entrances for everyone. Norton is left out for no apparent reason. It's a brawl to start with everyone hitting everyone else. The crowd is silent and it's not hard to see why. There's nothing but bunching and kicking to go with the lame elimination attempts so far. Vincent is finally thrown out after nearly four minutes of brawling.

Adams suplexes Stevie down and stops to look at Horace. Stevie knocks both of them down and hammers away as this just keeps going. Horace clips Stevie from behind and Adams nails Ray with a clothesline. Adams and Horace get in an argument over who eliminates Ray so Adams nails his former friend with a backbreaker. Adams takes too long trying to slam Horace out, allowing Stevie to clothesline him to the floor. Horace charges into a backdrop to give Stevie the win.

Rating: F. A four man battle royal that took seven minutes to get through. I think you can figure out why this is a failure.

Clip of Saturn and Raven costing the Horsemen the tag belts last week.

Tag Team Titles: Rey Mysterio Jr./Kidman vs. Raven/Saturn

The champions are now in matching undershirts. Saturn shoves Rey into the corner to start but gets taken down by a hurricanrana. Raven comes in without a tag and helps his partner with a Doomsday Device with Saturn hitting a cross body instead of a clothesline. There's no cover though so Saturn hits a middle rope legdrop for two. Mysterio avoids a top rope legdrop and the hot tag brings in Kidman. A sitout Pedigree drops Saturn and a bulldog puts Raven down for good measure. The champions hit stereo top rope splashes for two on Saturn and we take a break.

Back with Saturn in control of Kidman and hitting a wicked overhead release belly to belly to send Kidman to the floor. Raven brings in a chair for the drop toehold and two. A gordbuster from Raven sets up a top rope splash from Saturn as the challengers are dominating. Raven misses an elbow drop and it's off to Rey for the springboard seated senton.

A spinwheel kick puts Raven in the corner and it's a Bronco Buster for Saturn. Raven blocks his with a raised boot. Kidman's lifting powerbomb gets two on Saturn as everything breaks down. Mysterio dropkicks Saturn into the referee as Kidman takes Raven outside. Saturn catches a springboarding Raven in the Death Valley Driver but here are the Horsemen to lay out Raven and Saturn. Dean puts Rey on top of Saturn for the pin.

Rating: B. This was getting really good near the ending, which doesn't make perfect sense. I get why Benoit and Malenko would want to cost Raven and Saturn a match, but wouldn't they want them to have the belts going into their match on Sunday? Either way, this was the best match on Nitro in a few weeks and a much needed pick up after the battle royal mess.

US Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Chris Jericho vs. Booker T.

Jericho is back in due to Curt Hennig being injured. They trade arm work to start with Tony talking about how sharp

Jericho looks tonight. As he says that, Booker dropkicks his head off and takes over. Another kick to the face sends Jericho down but Booker misses a side kick and gets crotched on the ropes.

Jericho's springboard dropkick has Booker reeling but Chris makes the mistake of slapping him in the face. The Lionsault hits feet though and there's the ax kick. Booker nails the 110th Street Slam for two and Booker Spinaroonis up. Scott Steiner comes in with a chair but gets it kicked back into his face. Booker backdrops Jericho WAY over the top as the bell rings for a DQ due to Steiner's interference.

Rating: C-. And that's it for Jericho in WCW. Unless he has some promos coming up, he won't be appearing for them again. I can't say I blame him either as he was a prop here to set up Steiner vs. Booker in another title match on PPV. Jericho is another case of a guy with talent that never got to rise past the midcard scene because that's how WCW worked.

Buff Bagwell vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Now that's alliteration! Buff poses at him to start and is sent into the buckle for his efforts. Some clotheslines and kicks to the ribs have Bigelow in trouble and a big clothesline sends him out to the floor. Back in and Bam Bam chokes in the corner but charges into a boot. Buff faceplants him, only to get headbutted in the ribs to put him down again. A slam drops Bagwell again but Bigelow misses what looked like a Swanton. Buff nails a running clothesline but the referee gets bumped. This brings out Hak and Chastity to nail Bigelow with a Singapore cane and blast him with a fire extinguisher. Buff hits the Blockbuster for a pin.

Rating: C-. I knew Bagwell would work as a face. This wasn't a bad match until the more complicated than necessary finish. This sets up Bigelow vs. Hak on Sunday, but shouldn't Bagwell have a match set up? There isn't much of a midcard act set for

Sunday save for Konnan vs. Disco and a Bagwell match would fill that in nicely.

Video on Nash vs. Goldberg. Very impressive of them to get that ready in two hours.

WCW World Title: Ric Flair vs. Goldberg vs. Hollywood Hogan vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Flair is defending, Nash is on commentary and Goldberg comes out last. Everyone is in the ring at the same time but Goldberg and Page fight to the floor to start. That leaves Hogan to run over Flair with a bunch of clotheslines as he's wrestling like a hero early on. Hogan gets two off one of those clotheslines with Page making the save. Now it's Goldberg beating Flair up on the floor but all four are quickly back inside.

That lasts all of eight seconds as Hogan and Goldberg fight up the aisle and Page clotheslines Flair off the apron. They trade off again and Hogan slams Flair from the top to keep up tradition. The weightlifting belt comes off for some whipping to the champ's back. Ric low blows Hollywood as the fans chant for Sting. Everyone gets back inside again and Hogan clotheslines Goldberg for two. They trade small packages of all things for two each as Flair puts Page in the Figure Four.

Another trade sees Hogan and Page going to the floor as Goldberg press slams Flair. Hogan comes back in to save the champion but gets to fight Goldberg for his efforts. Page can't quite crotch Flair against the post as Goldberg is choking Hogan on the mat. All four head outside and Flair is thrown over the announcers' table. Page and Goldberg head back inside and it's not quite Halloween Havoc.

Goldberg powerslams him down as Hogan suplexes Flair on the floor. All four are back in again but Flair quickly falls back out. Page follows him out as Goldberg suplexes Hollywood. Both guys no sell a bit and Goldberg superkicks him down. DDP comes

back in with a discus lariat for two on Goldberg, earning him a Jackhammer.

Hogan breaks it up but Flair goes after his knee. There's the spear to Page and one for Flair as well. A third spear takes Hogan down but he kicks out at two. Goldberg hits the Jackhammer on Hogan but Nash misses his cue to break it up so Hogan kicks out at two. That wasn't Hogan's fault and thankfully the announcers didn't acknowledge it. Nash comes in and that's a no contest, just as Sting repels from the ceiling.

Rating: C+. This was very energetic but the miscues at the end hurt it. They needed someone else in there to help map the match out though and it became a problem near the end. I get why they couldn't have someone get a clean pin but the no contest is such an annoyance when it happens so often.

Sting points around the arena and we get a video with Randy Savage's voice announcing another fourway at Spring Stampede with Flair defending against Hogan, Sting and Page with Savage as the referee. Because WCW.

Overall Rating: C. This is a show that would have been one of the best ever had they not had the third hour. If you cut out stuff like Kendall Windham vs. Hak, the NWO battle royal (that could have been solved in about a dozen different ways, such as the match they already had last month) and a bunch of the filler stuff, this is a really good show. The Tag Team and World Title matches were both good to very good and that's enough to carry it, though not to greatness. I'm also not wild on Spring Stampede yet but this show did help.

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