

Monday Nitro – May 17, 1999: Save Us Raven!

Monday Nitro #188

Date: May 17, 1999

Location: Five Seasons Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

After taking last week off, we're ready to get the fallout from Slamboree. I'm sure people have been on the edge of their seats to see if Nash has given the title back yet or to see the return of Eric Bischoff so we better not waste much time. The other major story coming out of the pay per view is Flair losing control to Piper and then being fired after a screwy ending. Let's get to it.

We open with Flair and company arriving at the building. They head to the office and Robinson replaces Piper's name with Flair's.

Here are Flair and the entourage to the ring as I feel we have a theme going here. Anderson starts things off, saying the Horsemen will get the Tag Team Titles back tonight. Flair tells us what everyone knew at Slamboree: Bischoff had no authority to change the decision so Ric is still the boss. If Ted Turner doesn't get Bischoff out, Flair is going to let Jane Fonda (Turner's wife) ride Space Mountain.

As for tonight, it's Flair/Robinson vs. Savage/Gorgeous George and Nash is defending against DDP. This brings out Page to endorse Flair as President and accuse Nash of having Bischoff in his pocket. That's a pretty empty pocket if you listen to what Flair just said. Page says he has his own backup (fans: "GOLDBERG! GOLDBERG!"): Bam Bam Bigelow. We're having a new champion tonight because Flair says so.

DJ Ran.

We get a sitdown interview with Bischoff, who talks about WCW being #1 for 88 straight weeks. Now things are more competitive though so he needs to get back on track. He's learned from his mistakes and won't make them

again.

We get a video on Kevin Nash challenging Bret Hart for a match on the Tonight Show. Meaning a ring would be set up in the Tonight Show studio and the match will air on NBC one night at 11:30.

More Eric, this time talking about him not being sure if he had authority at Slamboree, but knowing it was the right thing. Nick Patrick was right too.

We cut back to the announcers...who throw it back to the Bischoff interview. WCW gave him the big break he needed in 1993 and now it's time to give back.

Piper and Bischoff arrive.

Tenay is now on commentary.

Bret Hart will be on the Tonight Show tomorrow night to respond to Nash. However, he will NOT be on WCW TV anytime soon.

Clips of Gorgeous George vs. Charles Robinson.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Evan Karagias

First match and it's only forty minutes into the show. Rey is defending and the ring looks bigger than usual. They start off awkward with Rey sending him into the corner but stumbling, followed by Evan messing up a Flair Flip and having to jump to the apron instead. Evan misses a springboard spinwheel kick and gets covered for two before hitting a springboard cross body for two of his own. Rey knocks him into the corner for the Bronco Buster before a top rope hurricanrana retains the title. I waited 40 minutes for a two minute opener?

We go to Flair's office and in walks....Sgt. Buddy Lee Parker? Ric offers Parker an office and a secretary if Parker lays down for David tonight. See, every promoter has pushed their kids and Flair is going to push David down the fans' throats until they're sick of him. His words actually. Parker agrees and Ric brings in Torrie and David to explain his plan. Flirting with Torrie ensues of course.

Here's Booker T. to talk about the TV Title situation at Slamboree. He doesn't care about Stevie Ray, because he wants to fight Rick Steiner for the title tonight. Not much more to this one.

David Flair vs. Sgt. Buddy Lee Parker

Robinson is refereeing in Flair trunks and a regular shirt. For those of you that don't remember him, Parker is a career jobber who later became an insane trainer in WCW. He's the guy that told Batista he had no future in wrestling. Parker grabs a headlock to start and gets one off a clothesline. They head into the corner where Sarge can hammer away even more, drawing the Horsemen up to the apron. Flair misses a horrible elbow drop but Buddy misses a top rope knee drop. The Figure Four makes Parker give up. Well more like Charles rings the bell as soon as the hold goes on but whatever. Parker sells the heck out of the leg.

Charles Robinson/Ric Flair vs. Gorgeous George/Randy Savage

Why Flair and Robinson went to the back instead of just staying in the ring isn't clear, though I'd assume it's so there won't be as much time to spend on wrestling. Flair grabs the mic and says he wants George out here at ringside for the next match. Apparently Madusa will be taking the place of an injured George. So why mention George in the first place?

Charles Robinson/Ric Flair vs. Madusa/Randy Savage

Savage says Flair and Robinson will pay for injuring George's knee. Robinson struts a bit before locking up with Madusa. She easily takes over with an armdrag and leg sweep, drawing in the big guys to stare at each other. Robinson actually springboards off the middle rope into an armdrag to take her down but Madusa takes his head off with a forearm.

Off to Savage vs. Flair for the biggest reaction of the night so far. I mean it even beats Evan Karagias's pop. Savage hammers away in the corner but Flair kicks him in the knee and tags in Robinson. This goes as well as you would expect with Robinson being thrown across the ring and then getting beaten up by Madusa. A kneeling piledriver (a tombstone but with Robinson facing the crowd) puts him down again and it's off to Flair. Madusa takes him down and rides him around the ring, only to get belly to

backed down.

Ric goes after the leg but gets small packaged for two. Another belly to back sets up the Figure Four but Savage comes in to break it up. The distraction lets Madusa hit Flair low and bring in Savage to clean house. Big and Little Naitch get slammed off the top rope and Madusa beats up Ric on the floor. Randy goes up and drops the elbow on Robinson, cracking some of Charles' vertebrae and collapsing his lung in the process, for the pin.

Rating: D. Remember at Slamboree where George and Robinson tried really hard and had a watchable match? Well this was nothing like that. There were a lot of botches and near botches with Savage's actually causing a bad injury. The springboard armdrag does make things a little bit better though. I mean, IT'S CHARLES ROBINSON DOING A SPRINGBOARD ARMDRAG.

DJ Ran.

Gene brings out Piper to talk about the whole presidency ordeal, which is all that seems to be happening on this show. After sucking up to the Iowa crowd, Piper has a top ten list for why Flair shouldn't be President. Some of the highlights, read off a piece of paper:

5. Flair thinks Hilary Clinton is the Phantom Menace.
8. He made Dr. Kevorkian want to commit suicide.
10. The Nitro Girls say he's now the 60 second scab.

Now Piper wants Bischoff to come out so he can yell about not buying Eric's apology. Ignore that Eric was out before Piper even said his name. Gene says Bischoff is still an executive, even though he doesn't seem to have any actual power. Eric apologizes for what he's done over the years and vows to turn everything around. This brings out Savage who demands Bischoff give him a title shot tonight.

Piper tells Savage to wait his turn so George hits him with the crutch and Savage piledrives him. Savage slams Bischoff and loads up the big elbow but Nash comes out to break it up. Randy throws out a challenge to Nash and thinks Nash should just hand the belt over. Nash implies that

the girls are hookers and says handing the belt over before was a political move. He accepts the challenge for a title match at some point in the future.

Clips from the three main events at Slamboree.

Hardcore Hak vs. Fit Finlay

Somehow this sounds like a welcome change of pace. That's how far I've sunk. This is set up by Hak babbling about being hardcore and Finlay popping up on the screen to challenge him. They hit each other with the mic and then a kendo stick before Hak brings in a ladder. Finlay nails him in the head with it a few times and we take a break.

Back with Finlay being bulldogged through a table before he hits Hak in the throat with some kendo stick shots. Finlay flips him into the ladder in the corner and goes to hit him low but Nick Patrick won't allow it. Wouldn't that be within the rules of this match? Finlay beats on Hak even more and hits his low blow until Knobs comes out to send both guys through tables. Patrick throws it out and this feud MUST CONTINUE!

Rating: F. So hardcore means most stuff is legal but not everything, Brian Knobs is still getting a push, Hak is still getting paid to pretend he's a "wrestler", they're still fighting each other in circles, and now we're not even getting winners to these messes. This is what I sat through after an hour of Nash/Piper/Flair/Savage. I'll take the Test vs. Meat match that was going on over on Raw at this point any day.

TV Title: Booker T. vs. Rick Steiner

This HAS to be better. Rick will suck like he has after 1995 or so but Booker is bound to be....unconscious in the back. Steiner says Booker can't beat anyone without his brother and issues an open challenge to the locker room. Cue Sting for a brawl around ringside with Steiner in early trouble. We actually get a bell so I guess we have a title match.

TV Title: Rick Steiner vs. Sting

Sting does his bulldog but misses the Stinger Splash. Rick pounds on him in the corner and on the mat but Sting just pops up. They fight to the

floor, only to have Sting get sent into the post. The floor mats are peeled back and Rick loads up a suplex onto the concrete. As is almost always the case, Sting reverses to prevent a probably concussion and chokes Rick with the TV cable. They head back inside where Sting hammers away with clotheslines until Scott Steiner comes out to yell at Sting. Cue Lex Luger to save his buddy as the match is thrown out with no one actually interfering.

Rating: D-. This was much more of a brawl than a match but somehow this might have been the most entertaining thing all night. Why we need to set up Rick Steiner vs. Sting and old guys vs. old guys is something only WCW could answer, but hopefully Booker gets to do something interesting soon.

Luger and Sting send the Steiners running as we're flashing back to SuperBrawl I.

Konnan vs. Curt Hennig

Feeling out process to start with Hennig doing a random cartwheel before getting bulldogged down. A basement dropkick does the same and Konnan hammers away in the corner. Curt comes back with chops in the corner but gets chopped down as well. Hennig goes to the floor, tells Heenan he's wearing new boots, and pulls his singlet aside to seemingly check his nipple.

On that we go to a break and come back with Konnan hammering away in the corner. Curt takes him down and stomps at the head a bit which isn't as interesting as examining his nipples. A VERY loud chop puts Konnan down in the corner and some choking gets two. Hennig starts working on the leg with an Indian deathlock as this continues to be all over the place. The referee breaks it up for Hennig putting his hands on him so Curt keeps stomping away.

Off to another leg lock but the referee breaks it because....why did he break that hold? Konnan wasn't in the ropes and there's no hair to pull. Back to the corner for more chops but Konnan comes back with a catapult into the buckle. The referee goes down and here's Savage AGAIN to go after Konnan because he's Nash's buddy. At least Savage explained this one on the way to the ring. Hennig knocks Konnan to the floor and Savage

sends him into the steps, setting up the HennigPlex for the pin.

Rating: D. You know, I'm a pretty big Randy Savage fan and have been for years. He used to live in Lexington and my uncle worked out at the same gym that he and Lanny Poffo worked out at. I really like the guy, but I'm SICK of him on this show! The guy is taking over the show on this night and it's getting really dull to watch. On top of that the match was a mess with the guys being on different pages and doing little more than chopping for most of the match.

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

Raven and Saturn are defending and have Kanyon with them. Dean and Saturn feel each other out to start until Malenko is sent out to the floor and Saturn superkicks an invading Benoit down. A big dive takes Chris out again and Malenko gets caught by something like Total Elimination but with a clothesline instead of a kick to the face. Back to Benoit who slugs it out with Raven, who actually gets the better of it. He puts Benoit on his shoulders for a cross body from Saturn for two as the fans are finally into something tonight.

Chris comes back with a hard clothesline and tags out to Malenko, who quickly walks into a t-bone suplex. The champions hammer away even more before Raven hooks a chinlock on Dean. Malenko fights up and brings in Benoit who unloads on Raven with chops. That's fine with Raven who comes back with Three Amigos and a tag to Saturn for a guillotine legdrop.

Back from a break with Dean leg lariating Raven but getting rolled up for two. Benoit gets two off a snap suplex before hammering away in the corner. Raven just crawls over and makes the tag to Malenko as the announcers talk about the Steiners vs. Luger/Sting. Heaven forbid they talk about the Tag Team Title match right in front of them. Saturn gets sent to the floor for a brawl with Malenko but has to sidestep a baseball slide, sending it right into Dean instead.

Back inside and the Horsemen start in on Saturn's knee as the fans are all over the challengers. Benoit cranks on the knee and Dean comes back in to stomp away at it. Now the fans think this is boring because their minds have been so numbed by Piper and Savage that they don't recognize a

good match in front of them. Saturn comes back with a release belly to belly suplex and makes the tag to Raven.

Kanyon hands him a chair but it's quickly thrown to the floor as Raven front suplexes Dean for a top rope splash from Saturn. Everything breaks down and Benoit suplexes Raven but misses the Swan Dive. Kanyon gets on the apron, accidentally allowing Anderson to nail Raven with the tire iron. Dean goes up but Kanyon shoves him into the Death Valley Driver to retain the titles.

Rating: B-. It's not a great match but this was pure gold after the disaster that I've had to sit through for the last two hours. Hopefully this moves Raven and Saturn off to some new challengers and the Horsemen off to a higher spot on the card so we can get some fresh blood up there. Good back and forth match here with all four guys hitting each other very hard.

We follow the champions all the way to the back where Bam Bam Bigelow is watching. He and Kanyon jaw a bit.

WCW's graphics continue to suck as we see Nash with the title superimposed over his shoulder and his arms crossed. At least tuck the strap under the arms.

WCW World Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Kevin Nash

Another PPV title match you don't have to pay for. They slug it out to start with Nash taking him into the corner for some elbows to the face. A big clothesline puts Page on the floor but he's quickly back in to get forearmed in the face. Another clothesline gets two for Nash but Bam Bam Bigelow comes out for a distraction. Page hits a clothesline of his own for two and Nash is in trouble. He chokes the champion with some tape before going to the top for a flying clothesline. Popular move in this match.

Off to a nerve hold and a chinlock on Nash as the cameraman slips with no one near him. A swinging neckbreaker and Russian legsweep get two each for Page. Nash sends him into Bigelow on the apron and busts out a rollup for two. A big boot drops Page and here's Bigelow into the ring to get

beaten up as well. Savage runs out to jump Nash and that's a DQ to retain the title.

Rating: D+. Ton of clotheslines aside, this was one of the more watchable matches of the night. Page is likely on his way out of the main event and into a tag team with Bigelow, which is about as random of a pairing as you could ask for at this point in WCW. Yeah they're both from New Jersey but Bigelow has been in hardcore matches for months while Page has been World Champion. Bigelow is a decent enough choice for an enforcer so it's not bad, just odd.

All three hammer on Nash and the girls hand Savage lipstick to put on Nash's face. A fan runs in and gets beaten down. Savage drops the big elbow to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. If not for that tag match, this would be one of the worst shows I've ever seen. Between the endless Savage vs. Nash stuff that we're going to have another month of to the horrible Cruiserweight Title match to hardcore matches being thrown out and Booker being laid out in the back, this was a very long show to sit through. We're firmly in the horrible period for WCW now, and the fact that it's only going to get worse for a long time terrifies me.

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