

Monday Nitro – May 24, 1999: Disaster

Monday Nitro #189

Date: May 24, 1999

Location: BI-LO Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

The big story tonight is the return of Hulk Hogan, which somehow sounds like a breath of fresh air. Randy Savage has been pushed as a killing machine because he wants the title, but he's gone back and forth on being good or evil in the last few weeks. He helped the heel Page keep the title for reasons that aren't clear, then he feuded with Flair as a face, and then just started going after Nash without ever having a big evil moment. Either way he's dragging the company through the floor, but to be fair almost everyone else is too. Let's get to it.

We open with an In Memory Of graphic for Owen Hart and a three bell salute.

We recap the Steiners becoming the super evil brothers and squaring off with Sting and Luger last week.

Recap of the main points of last week's show and Thunder with Savage beating up five guys on his own.

Bigelow is yelling at Raven and Saturn and reminds them about getting a partner. DDP runs up with a 2x4 and the champions get beaten down. Old guys over young guys again.

Nitro Girls.

Tony says his thoughts and prayers are with the Hart Family.

Van Hammer vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Both guys are already in the ring so I don't see this lasting long. Hammer is now just a basic big man and looks a bit like a biker. He

throws Chavo around to start hammers away in the corner. A big boot drops Chavo but he comes back with a dropkick and drop toehold. That earns Chavo a press slam but he slips down the back into a sunset flip for two. A suplex and legdrop get the same for Hammer but Chavo escapes the cobra clutch slam. Chavo tries a Thesz press and gets caught in a bearhug, followed by the Flashback (Alabama Slam) for the pin. Total squash.

Video on Randy Savage.

DJ Ran.

Gene brings out a banged up Disco Inferno who is wearing sunglasses to cover up a black eye. He didn't care for Savage's "traveling show of pimps and ho's" attacking him on Thursday and says he can get Savage in touch with Nash. Savage has been going after the young talent in the company and thinks it's because Randy is afraid of them.

This brings out Ernest Miller of all people to dance and tell Disco to be a man. Disco wants Cat out of his face (would he prefer DJ Ran all up in his area?) and the fight is on. Nick Patrick comes out but is quickly knocked to the floor so I don't think this is a match. Miller goes after the eye with a show and other referees come down to get Disco out. We cut to the Black and White locker room for the "Miller is talking about you" bit with Norton, because that's still a thing. Norton chases Miller off.

Mike Tenay goes into Flair's office.

Video on Nash.

Flair and Anderson are with El Dandy and offer to elevate his status for a loss to David tonight. Buddy Lee Parker comes in and asks for the office and secretary he was promised. Instead he's given a Gold's Gym membership and an offer to fight Benoit tonight. Parker takes it and says he won't lay down again.

Gene brings out Mike Tenay who has an update on the Randy Savage situation: he's getting the World Title shot at Great American Bash. Ric Flair storms out and talks to a woman in the audience, saying her mom rode Space Mountain twenty years ago and maybe she'll get to tonight. As

for business, Savage has injured Charles Robinson and Flair is thinking about banning the top rope elbow as punishment. He's the ONLY man in WCW with power so Bischoff and Piper can tell their stories walking. Now it's time to make some future stars. Flair loses his voice while saying this, maybe realizing how bogus what he's saying is.

El Dandy vs. David Flair

During the entrances, Tony announces that the Tonight Show match has been canceled, meaning Nash may be here tonight. Dandy gets taken down by a shoulder and clothesline as David can barely even run the ropes properly. He avoids a dropkick though and backdrops Dandy with ease. A nice looking suplex gets two but Dandy smacks him in the face. Anderson sneaks in for a spinebuster, setting up the Figure Four for the win. Again, it really doesn't look like the guys are throwing the matches, making this story a bit confusing.

Gene brings out Buff Bagwell who agrees that Savage is scared of the younger guys. Savage can come after him anytime, but tonight it's about getting the TV Title. I could get behind a young vs. old story.

Here's a five minute package on Eric Bischoff's rise to power in WCW and joining the NWO. We're nearly halfway through this show and have seen two matches but we have time for a guy who presumably has no power.

Battle Royal

Ciclope, Kaz Hayashi, Prince Iaukea, Johnny Swinger, Juventud Guerrera, Villano V, Damien, Kidman, Psychosis, Lash Leroux, Blitzkrieg, Evan Karagias

The winner gets a shot at Rey next week. Juvy falls down on the way to the ring. I guess he tried to watch the show and started falling asleep. It's a huge brawl to start with everyone sending everyone else to the ropes for attempted eliminations. Damien slams Blitzkrieg and Villano gets knocked down by something the camera misses. Iaukea works on Kidman near the ropes as Leroux is almost put on by Psychosis.

Ciclope gets taken down but not out by a top rope hurricanrana.

Blitzkrieg takes Leroux out with a hurricanrana of his own but falls outside for a double elimination. Good timing too as the ring was too full. They keep slugging it out on the floor as Kidman clotheslines Iaukea out. Since this is WCW though, here's Hugh Morrus to come in and destroy everyone in sight. Everyone jumps on him but he's able to throw out Damien, Swinger, Psychosis, Ciclope, Kaz and Evan.

That leaves Juvy and Kidman in the ring, because Heaven forbid anyone other than those two get pushed against Mysterio. Kidman goes after Morrus as Juvy bails, but for once Morrus is able to powerbomb Kidman in half. No Laughing Matter cruses him again and Morrus goes up for a second, but Rey runs out and dropkicks Morrus to the floor. There's no bell, but since Kidman is the only guy left in I'm assuming he wins. Either that or WCW just managed to have a battle royal end in a no contest.

Rating: F. For failure because there's no other word to describe it. The cruiserweight division is a disaster right now as no one but Juvy, Rey and Kidman are consistently pushed and now Hugh Morrus, a jobber to the stars, beats up about six guys with ease before another runs away from him? On top of that, we're now heading towards Kidman vs. Mysterio AGAIN? Assuming Rey even has a challenger that is. What a mess.

Here's Piper to really get things going. We get some standard cheap heat with mentions of the local baseball team and Piper saying he's had about fifty fights in this town and two or three of them were in the ring. Piper doesn't care for Bischoff's apologies but his real issue is with Randy Savage. Well of course it is. He lays down on the mat and calls out Savage but gets the girls instead.

Piper asks Miss Madness how she won the title before asking George where Savage is. She says he's being honored and Piper makes Slim Jim jokes. He yells at all of them until Flair comes out for a save, earning him a beating. This brings out Page and Bigelow to lay out Piper for some reason. Page says Flair owes him, so Flair gives him a Tag Team Title shot at Great American Bash. Ric also makes another match between him and Piper for the show because...oh you know the drill by now.

Benoit and Malenko are in the back watching what just happened. Dean wants to know where their title shot is and thinks you have to be over 45 to get a push around here. Dean Malenko: wrestling's smartest man. Benoit thinks Flair is for Flair and Dean says every man is for himself. That might do it for the Horsemen.

Video on Luger and Sting's history together, going back a long way.

Piper is getting his ribs taped up and says he wants Flair/Page/Bigelow vs. himself and two partners. Gee I wonder who they'll be.

Tony says WCW is partnering with Tommy Boy Records to merge wrestling and music. They're about fifteen years too late but that's WCW for you.

Curt Hennig comes out and tells Tony to turn him on. His headset you see. Curt doesn't like rap music but did like beating up Konnan recently.

Video on a Tommy Boy Records wrestling themed party.

Chris Benoit vs. Buddy Lee Parker

Hennig is still on commentary and talks about how young guys like Benoit aren't respecting the veterans that came before them. A black arm band can be seen on Chris' arm for Owen. Parker actually gets in a few shots in the corner to start and I don't see him getting in much more offense.

As you would expect, he charges into a boot in the corner and gets caught in the Rolling Germans. Benoit chops the fire out of him in the corner before hitting a quick belly to back suplex. Parker comes back with a powerslam, only to get drop toehold into the middle turnbuckle. The Swan Dive sets up the Crossface and Parker taps very quickly.

Rating: D+. It's always fun to see Benoit run someone over like this. Parker was older than dirt at this point and had been getting beaten up for years now. That's probably why he was such a jerk down in the Power Plant. The match was just there for Benoit to show how awesome he was, because somehow that wasn't an established fact to the WCW brass at this point.

TV Title: Rick Steiner vs. Buff Bagwell

Before the match we get a chat from the Steiners. Scott rips on WCW, saying they suck with Heenan saying "good point." After bragging about the Red and Black, we get a perfect Scott line as he calls himself the US Champion and Rick the United States Television Champion. Bagwell charges the rings and hammers away at both Steiners, actually knocking Scott out to the floor. A quick dropkick puts Rick down but he starts going after Buff's neck to take over. He ties Buff in the Tree of Woe so Scott can choke away from the floor.

Bagwell comes right back with a neckbreaker of his own, only to have Scott trip him from the floor. Scott gets in a few shots and Rick knocks Bagwell out to the floor with a Steiner Line. The brothers pull the mats back and Rick actually piledrives Buff on the floor. Things are about to get even worse with Scott holding Buff's neck across the barricade as Rick goes up top....and we've got a Sting monster truck in the aisle. Lex Luger, in a Sting mask for some reason, is driving. We cut back to the ring and Sting is there with his bat as we go to a break.

Rating: D. ANOTHER match ends in a DQ or a no contest because Heaven forbid anyone have to job around here. At least the stuff with Rick was short, though I'm still waiting on Goldberg to come back and fight the Steiners for what happened to him at Slamboree. Instead we're getting Sting and Luger teaming up until Luger turns heel again and starts yet another feud between them.

Hennig is still on commentary and ripping on rap, so here's Konnan to start a fight. They brawl into the ring with Konnan beating the tar out of Curt.

Mike Tenay is in the ring and calls out Jimmy Hart and Curt Hennig. Jimmy wants Mysterio out here right now to explain what happened earlier. Morrus complains about the same guys having the same matches for four years now and he wanted to mix it up a bit. Again, they need to stop saying things that the critics are saying. Rey starts brawling with Morrus and uses his usual springboard based offense until Jimmy trips him up. Hugh crushes him in the corner and plants him with a huge powerbomb. They get a chair but Konnan and Kidman come in for the save.

Here's Hollywood Hogan for his big return from knee surgery. He's still in a big knee brace and on crutches but is being all heelish anyway. Hogan praises Nash because they're both part of the Pack and says he's coming for Page. We get a reference to Raw, called the XXX Wrestling on the other channel. Hogan is the master of politics and has seen the people talking in the back, so he'll return soon brother.

Nash comes out for a chat because Heaven forbid we get another match. After sucking up to the crowd ala Piper, he gets to the point of Savage running around like a crazy man after the World Title. Nash isn't hard to find: he'll be the guy with the big gold belt for a long time to come. This brings out the girls again with George's leg hurt again. Why she's wearing high heels while on crutches isn't clear but at least she looks good.

Nash talks to George, saying he's seen her wrestle but he's rather see her box. The girls go after him and break a crutch over Nash's back but it doesn't seem to have much effect. Savage coming out and nailing him with the belt does have an effect though. We get the lipstick on the face thing again which is still kind of stupid.

Roddy Piper/???/??? vs. Ric Flair/Diamond Dallas Page/Bam Bam Bigelow

After a break, Malenko (in street clothes) and Benoit come out be Piper's partners. Piper has his ribs taped up from the attack earlier and thankfully is sporting a black armband of his own. Unless I missed it, that's the second of the entire show. Page and Malenko get things going but Dean wants Flair instead. Once Flair is in, Benoit wants to fight instead. They take turns chopping each other's chests off until Benoit backdrops him down.

Benoit cleans house and clotheslines Bigelow out to the floor as everything breaks down. Flair finally gets back in and backs into his own corner, which Heenan calls a bad neighborhood. A thumb to the eye and chop put Benoit down and the Jersey boys come in to take over. Bigelow headbutts him down for two before Flair comes in for a low blow. Page has to break up a backslide but Bigelow misses the top rope headbutt. The hot tag brings in Piper and here are Raven and Saturn to go after the Jersey

guys for the DQ.

Rating: D. FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THINGS GOOD AND HOLY STOP WITH THE FREAKING DQ ENDINGS! You can't get a clean ending to any main event match around here and I'm getting sick of it. Also, why in the world did we need Piper out there? To give former World Tag Team Champions credibility? Heaven forbid Piper isn't around every two seconds to make things feel big.

It's a huge brawl post match with the good guys getting the better of it. Piper puts Flair in the Figure Four as Benoit stomps on him. Ric bails and we cut to the back where Hogan is standing over a fallen Page to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. Oh sweet goodness this got old in a hurry. There were FIVE matches in three hours. Think about that for a minute. Nothing broke ten minutes and they can only give us five matches, one being a battle royal that ended in a no contest? Obviously there were major outside circumstances to it, but the ratings results for this night: Nitro's 3.1 losing to WWF's 7.2. Nitro hadn't been that low for a regular show in over two years and Raw only topped that once in the entirety of the Monday Night Wars. This was a disaster for Nitro and a sign that things had to change.

Luckily for them, there actually was a glimmer of hope here. This idea of old vs. new, albeit the same thing they did with WCW vs. the NWO three years ago, has something to it as you can see the battle lines being drawn. Unfortunately some of those lines are just Piper's wrinkles BECAUSE HE WON'T JUST GO AWAY, but there's something there. Granted I have have no confidence in WCW because the old guys won't lose once in awhile but it's better than nothing.

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