

Monday Nitro – September 27, 1999: When Good Matches Happen To A Bad Show

Monday Nitro #207

Date: September 27, 1999

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 11,919

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

It's time to continue into this downward spiral that Nitro has become. Tonight they have a major six man tag with Hogan/Hart/Flair teaming up to face Luger/Sting/Page. Keep that in mind. This is one of the few times that the show has set up a major match a week in advance and actually hyped it up. I'll come back to that later. Let's get to it.

We open with Hogan arriving in a limo to sign autographs for fans. Sting sneaks up on him and speaks in a kid's voice for a distraction. Hogan, ever the genius, falls for it and gets hit in the knee with the ball bat. They're changing the main event aren't they?

Quick recap of last week's major events.

The announcers preview the show and oh man Heenan does not sound good. This could be a long night.

Tenay tries to talk to Hogan but Hulk gets inside anyway.

Sting says he isn't done with Hogan tonight.

Before the first match, Heenan goes on a RANT, ripping into WCW for being a mess and telling him how to talk. From now on the Brain is back and he isn't putting up with this nonsense. That's quite out of nowhere.

TV Title: Ernest Miller vs. Chris Benoit

The ring looks WAY bigger tonight for some reason. Like bigger than a

modern WWE ring. Cat is challenging after asking for a title shot and doing his usual schtick. Benoit chops away to start and Miller immediately bails to the floor. Back in and Chris misses a charge into the corner and things slow down. Miller has "Godfather" on his tights. I would make a joke about that being a lawsuit but it probably was at this point. More kicking and choking ensues as Miller is rapidly running out of offense to go through. A sunset flip gets two for the champ but he walks into another superkick.

For a change of pace, Sonny gets in some kicks on the floor. The lack of Revolution backup tells you all you need to know about Miller and Onoo's standings. Back in and Benoit ducks the Feliner and scores with a clothesline, only to have Sonny try a choke. Even the referee doesn't think enough of Miller to make it a DQ. Miller's loaded shoe kicks Onoo by mistake and it's the German suplex followed by the Swan Dive and Crossface to retain the title.

Rating: D+. It's nice to see Benoit get a win and for the TV Title to be defended as it was intended to be for years. Miller losing is always a fun thing to see, which really does make him decent as a heel. Yeah he's annoying and limited in the ring, but the point of a heel is to see them get what's coming to them, and that's what you saw here. Nothing great but an acceptable match that the fans could get into.

Sid has chokeslammed and powerbombed a lot of people.

Vampiro vs. Buff Bagwell

Thank goodness the Clowns are gone. Buff, now minus the mustache, takes a kick to the face early on and Vampiro stomps away a lot. In the vein of Ernest Miller, Vampiro goes up top for a kick this time to really vary up his offense. Bagwell finally starts going with a monkey flip before nailing him with a clothesline. Vampiro's hurricanrana is countered with a powerbomb and they head outside with Vampiro sending him into the steps.

A chinlock goes nowhere as Heenan rips into Bagwell for the new facial hair. Buff fights up but walks into the Nail in the Coffin, which is just a regular move now. Vampiro misses a guillotine legdrop and Buff starts

his comeback, only to walk into an enziguri. They head to the corner for a superplex but Buff shoves him off and hits the Blockbuster for the pin. So NOW Buff's face push starts and will take him up the card right?

Rating: D. These lower midcard matches are death for Nitro. There's no reason for them to be taking place, they don't go anywhere, and the best part about them are Heenan's rants about how stupid so much of this stuff is. That being said, I'll take this a hundred times in a row over the Clowns in the ring again.

The announcers talk about Goldberg for a bit and we hear a voice (which sounds quite a bit like Dustin Rhodes) call out to Tony. There's a window shown and the voice says the darkness is coming. Well if the best it can do is go after Tony Schiavone, it won't be lasting long.

And now, to a funeral parlor for the funeral of Lex Luger. As in the guy in the main event tonight. He's laying in a casket but his ghost appears to describe himself as a great man and a great champion. We cut to a cemetery and a woman in black, presumably Elizabeth, throws flowers into a grave. It's off to the arena with the woman in black being revealed as Elizabeth of course. She comes to the ring to reveal Lex Luger, who is officially renamed as the Total Package. Same guy and the same gear, but now he doesn't have wrist tape. Literally, identical other than the tape.

Hogan is having his knee looked at when Sting comes in and nails him with the bat again.

Dean Malenko vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

Douglas tells Dean to take care of this guy but Dean doesn't want "his kind of help". Saturn and Benoit are cool with this decision and leave but Shane gives a look that says "well screw you then." Mysterio sends the Animals to the back and we get a one on one match. They start fast as you would expect by trading shoulders and armdrags into a standoff for one of the best exchanges WCW has had in months.

Malenko is sent to the apron and they head up top for a crash out to the floor. Back in and Rey escapes a reverse suplex into a rollup for two but his springboard hurricanrana attempt is countered in a big sitout

powerbomb. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two and the Cloverleaf goes on, but we need to watch Rick Steiner and Sid arrive. Mysterio gets to the ropes and grabs a crucifix for the fast pin before Sid can come out and ruin another good match.

Rating: B-. Of course this match doesn't get any time because we need to see Hogan getting hit in the knee again because once wasn't enough. Again, when you just have the talented wrestlers wrestling, the show gets so much easier to sit through. I could have watched another ten minutes of this but that's simply not allowed in WCW.

Malenko shakes his hand post match and leaves as a good sport.

Goldberg vs. Hugh Morrus

Time for an anniversary match. After the full on entrance, Goldberg busts out a very good looking dropkick and a superkick to send Morrus out to the floor. A hard whip sends Morrus into the steps and Goldberg takes him back inside for a powerslam. Heenan continues to be a huge Goldberg fan, even now that the filter is off. Jimmy tries to offer a distraction and Hugh sends Goldberg outside, allowing Sid to sneak in for a chair shot to the back.

A top rope elbow gets two for Morrus but he's a bit shaken up from the impact. Stomping and choking ensues as Goldberg's leg is bleeding. Morrus slams Goldberg to quickly stop a comeback bid and loads up No Laughing Matter. In a repeat of Goldberg's first match, he kicks out at two and hits the usual for the pin.

Rating: C. This was far better than I was expecting, even though it wasn't all that great of a match. The Sid stuff is already old but at least they're pointing at something instead of just having him beat up random luchadors. Morrus was good for a decent match when he needed to pull one off, which is why he wound up with his upcoming punny name.

Goldberg wants Sid.

An ambulance leaves the arena, presumably with Hogan inside.

More Nitro Girls Search stuff with good looking women who still aren't

Stacy Keibler.

Evan Karagias vs. Berlyn

Penzer reminds us that the fans are not to make any noise during Berlyn's match. You can tell Bischoff isn't in Tony's ear as he points out that demanding something means Berlyn doesn't get what he wants. Berlyn hammers away in the corner but Evan comes back with some generic cruiserweight style offense.

The evil German hides away but pokes Evan in the eye and slugs him down even more. A running knee and nice overhead belly to belly have Karagias in trouble but he's still able to crotch Berlyn on the top. Evan hits a high cross body for two as the announcers keep focusing on the bodyguard. Said bodyguard nails Evan in the back, allowing his boss to get the win with a neckbreaker.

Rating: D. Berlyn is going absolutely nowhere and it's pretty clear that they're shifting the focus over to the bodyguard instead. I can't say I blame them as he at least has an intimidating look and could cause some damage. Other than that though, there isn't much to get fired up about for either guy as Berlyn is just horribly boring in the ring.

Berlyn goes after Evan again post match but Brad Armstrong makes the save, only to get beaten down as well. I like Armstrong, but he's the clearest sign possible that Berlyn is done.

Goldberg breaks into Sid's locker room and steals his keys from an attendant.

David Flair can't find Torrie.

Tag Team Titles; Harlem Heat vs. Kendall Windham/Barry Windham

The Windhams are challenging for Heaven knows what reason. Tony continues to screw up continuity by saying Booker was a multi sport athlete in high school. This goes against Tenay's often repeated line about Booker only being in the marching band. Somehow I have a feeling I'm the only person to pick up on that. Booker superkicks Kendall to start and hammers him down with ease. It's almost like one guy is a Hall of Famer and the other

guy is there because he has a famous brother.

Off to Barry vs. Stevie with the latter in control as we take an early break. Back with Hennig working over Booker on the floor before throwing him in for a beating from Kendall. A DDT drops Booker and everything quickly breaks down. In the melee, Stevie hits Kendall in the knee with a title belt behind Booker's back, giving T. the pin.

Rating: D+. These teams have fought so many times that there's nothing left for them to do. As I've said before, there are so many teams around WCW but this is the only combination we ever get. A simple change of pace on the booking staff could do wonders for this company, which we're inching towards every single day. Whether that's a good thing or not is yet to be determined.

Goldberg calls a towing company. Your top star of the future ladies and gentlemen.

Rick Steiner vs. Van Hammer

This was supposed to be Hammer getting a US Title shot but Sid must be afraid of vengeance from Slamboree 1993. Rick Steinelines him to the floor and Rick laughs as he beats the tar out of Hammer. Back in and Hammer keeps getting beaten up before grabbing a quick Flashback for his first offense. Charles Robinson breaks up the cobra clutch slam because Heaven forbid Rick Steiner have to look bad for more than ten seconds. Steiner tells Robinson to look the other way so he can kick Hammer low, setting up the Bulldog for the pin.

Rating: F. So in other words, WCW built up a match (kind of) for the US Title but instead of giving us something that might involve a new guy getting into the title picture, we got ANOTHER Rick Steiner squash that no one wants to see. What in the world does anyone see in this guy that makes them want to push him down our throats as more and more people change the channel?

Here's Bret for a chat. He got hit by a ball bat a few weeks ago but he's just a little banged up. He's back in the ring and thinks Hulk Hogan is the Elvis of wrestling. Seriously? I don't really disagree with the

statement but it's not something Bret would ever say. Cue Flair, who Bret immediately praises as well. That's not quite as much of a stretch but still doesn't fit. Flair says they need to take care of Sting/Luger/Page tonight and takes off the jacket to pose. He'll ride Liz too if she gets involved. I can't say I blame him after how she looked earlier.

Heenan talks about the mask vs. hair match tonight and says no one cares if Kidman is bald.

Torrie is in the Filthy Animals' locker room when David calls her. He doesn't like the other male voices and hangs up. Dude, you had her for like six months. Go out on that high note because you knew it wasn't going to last forever.

Sid is told Goldberg stole his car keys.

Perry Saturn vs. Konnan

Konnan hiptosses him down but gets caught in an armbar for his efforts. A superkick staggers Konnan but he blocks a suplex attempt. That's some of the hardest work I've seen Konnan do in years. The rolling clothesline is countered into a Tazzplex and it's back to the armbar, sending Konnan into the ropes. Who would think a match between two bald guys could be this watchable? Back up and a double clothesline puts both guys down as we take a break.

We come back with Saturn cranking on the arm again, sending Konnan right back to the ropes. A top rope elbow gets two for Saturn but Konnan grabs a powerbomb out of nowhere for the same. They head back to the corner with Konnan hitting something like a reverse Razor's Edge, setting up his usual finishing sequence. Cue a bunch of luchadors and the Filthy Animals for a big brawl to throw the match out.

Rating: C+. The match was far better than I was expecting but the run-in finish hurt things as usual. Who would have thought Konnan could keep up with someone like Saturn though? That's quite the surprise and a flashback to when Konnan actually could work a decent match. I'd assume this ties into the mask vs. hair match later but given that it's WCW I doubt they've thought it that far through.

Sid goes to his car but doesn't find the keys. He heads back inside as the tow truck arrives.

Post break, the tow truck pulls the car away.

Here's Page for a chat. Page says he's married to the most beautiful woman in the world and that's why the people hate him. He mentions Luger being gone and the Total Package taking his place, only to call him Luger a few seconds later.

Various celebrities are here, including one of the members of ZZ Top.

Quick recap of Psychosis vs. Kidman in the mask vs. hair match which was thrown together by Chavo Guerrero.

Kidman vs. Psychosis

Hair vs. mask and Psychosis has Juventud and Chavo in his corner. Psychosis hammers away on him to start and they're quickly on the floor. The outside stuff goes nowhere so they head back inside where Kidman scores with dropkicks. Psychosis sends him right back outside for a slingshot moonsault but Kidman goes for his mask. That's not the nicest thing in the world to do and pretty out of character for Kidman.

The referee yells at him, allowing Psychosis to get two off a DDT. A dropkick to the side of the head has Kidman in even more trouble and a top rope hurricanrana gets two. The other luchadors get in some cheap shots on Kidman on the floor, setting up a top rope spinwheel kick for another two count. Kidman misses a dropkick but grabs a quick sunset flip. They head to the corner with Psychosis hitting a sitout gordbuster to drop Kidman again but we still don't have a bald guy yet.

Kidman comes back with a powerslam and loads up the Shooting Star, only to have Juventud pull Psychosis to the floor. Chavo plants Kidman with a tornado DDT for two and Juvy sneaks in with a Juvy Driver for an even closer two. Psychosis is so stunned that he thinks he can powerbomb Kidman. The Filthy Animals come out to take care of the luchadors, allowing the Shooting Star to get rid of the mask and blow the roof off the place. That's kind of a surprising reaction.

Rating: B+. Again, give two talented guys ten minutes to work and let them fly all over the ring before soaking in a great reaction from the crowd. This will of course be followed by the fans not caring about the main event because of whatever reason you care to pick for this show. This was a really fun and fast paced match though with some great near falls.

Kidman quickly rips the mask off and there's a huge brawl.

Sting, Luger and Page are coming to the ring. Luger stops dead and starts chuckling until Page says the red light is still on and Luger keeps walking. Just.....yeah.

Bret Hart/Ric Flair vs. Sting/Total Package/Diamond Dallas Page

Because this show clearly has enough power to pull a bait and switch. Sting shoulders Flair down to start before hitting a gorilla press. Just like last week, if you watched this match as a stand alone, you would never know Sting had recently turned. Flair avoids a Stinger Splash so it's off to Luger vs. Hart. The Canadian takes over as Heenan makes more jokes that don't make sense.

Bret starts up the Five Moves but Page breaks up the Sharpshooter before it can do much. Everything breaks down for a bit with Sting nailing a running clothesline. Tony brings up Liz sending an official memo to the announcers, forbidding them from calling her man Luger. It's a shame he doesn't bring up Bret injuring all three guys last year because that might make things more interesting.

Luger chokes Bret in the corner before Sting draws in Flair, allowing Hart to get double teamed. A double clothesline puts Sting and Hart down and it's a hot tag to bring in Flair. It quickly settles down to Flair suplexing Sting and going for the leg. Hart takes out Page and Luger but Kimberly sneaks Luger the ball bat which nails Flair for the DQ.

Rating: D. Totally standard tag match which wasn't even advertised because WCW is so much better than WWF about giving what they advertise. Remember when that was Tony's big talking point every week? Nothing to see here as this was more running around in circles before the "money"

matches at the pay per view. Just more dull stuff here that didn't advance anything.

David Flair runs in and gets beaten down. We cut to the back where we see an empty ambulance and Hogan limps out as his partners and David are destroyed. Hogan cleans house, gets the bat, and sends the villains running. Screw off WCW. Seriously, it's 1999 and Hogan is still destroying everyone while Flair and Hart look like mere mortals. Was there ANY reason to not have Hogan in this match?

Sid goes to his car....and it's been completely crushed. He shouts for Goldberg as we go off the air and I shout about why Sid was actually in the arena despite having nothing to do tonight.

Overall Rating: C. There are some very good moments on this show but the bad ones drag it back down to reality. The same problems continue to plague this show: a main event with no heat and Goldberg being wasted on a feud people don't really want to see while Rick Steiner suddenly has match making power and gets to pick who he beats up in the ring without ever selling for more than five seconds. Two of the three big matches being changed didn't help either, which brings me back to something I brought up at the beginning.

So with the big main event match announced in advance, here are the final ratings for the shows this week. Monday Night Raw: 6.8. Monday Nitro: 3.0. To put this in perspective, back on Christmas night 1995, Raw only beat Nitro by 2.5. On that night, Nitro wasn't on television. From what I can tell, this is the second largest margin when both shows were on in their regular time slots in the entirety of the Wars so far. Of note, the only time that beat it was built around the return of Hulk Hogan. Somehow, neither week taught WCW a thing and that's a bit reason why you don't see Nitro every Monday night.

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