

Monday Nitro – December 20, 1999: This Is Rock Bottom

Monday Nitro #219

Date: December 20, 1999

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 8,915

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

We're just past Starrcade and.....I have no idea what we're supposed to do now actually. Bret is still World Champion, Sting is out of action again and the rest of the show was pretty much a big waste of time with short matches that went nowhere or that only Russo and company care about. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Piper calling for the bell on Goldberg to end the title match against Bret. Yes, that's their big idea: Montreal part 58.

So you might be asking how the big fallout show starts. After last night, we're ready to start on the new road forward for WCW. I promise, I'm not making this up. This is really how this show began.

Here are Madusa and Spice for a chat. Madusa brags about being the first female Cruiserweight Champion and how the women of WCW are taking over with their T&A. Right now she wants any man in the back to come out here so she can neuter him. As luck would have it, Buzzkill is in the crowd campaigning for equal rights, so Madusa calls him to the ring for a title match right now.

Cruiserweight Title: Madusa vs. Buzzkill

Madusa takes the sign and blasts Buzzkill in the head, followed by the missile dropkick for two. The German suplex is blocked though and Buzzkill dropkicks her down. The Russian legsweep should have the title won (because it's a Russian legsweep) but Spice has the referee. In the distract, Spice throws in a foreign object and Madusa knocks Buzzkill silly, setting up the German suplex to retain.

I need a minute here. After last night's disaster of a Starrcade, Vince Russo, the man who actually takes credit for the Attitude Era, decided that the big idea was to open Nitro with a match between a comedy character and Madusa, who is flat out saying she has one of the most popular titles (well at least it used to be) in the company because of how she looks. That's their big way to open the post-Starrcade Nitro. Imagine if the night after Rollins cashed in Money in the Bank or after Bryan overcame the Authority, we opened with a Nikki Bella promo and match. That's basically what they did here and it's making my head hurt.

The announcers talk about Goldberg getting screwed last night. I'll set the over/under for use of that word in this story at about 6,000.

Russo tells Curt Hennig to get rid of Hugh Morrus tonight. Why Russo has issues with Morrus isn't clear, but I'd bet it's a nuance of a plot point that I missed in Russo's 19 segments a night. Creative Control is sent to find Piper.

Speaking of Piper, he arrives with his assistant and son because of reasons I don't want to be told. The kid tapes Piper's wrists and Creative Control comes to collect him.

Hugh Morrus vs. Curt Hennig

Before we get started, it's time for an another angle that no one will care about but we need to force it in there anyway. This time it's Shane being beaten down by a guy in a Scream mask with what looks like a pipe. As for the match, here's Tony's take on it: "I've never been so confused coming out of a WCW pay per view." I can't believe I'm saying this, but preach it Tony. Morrus slugs Hennig into the corner to start as the announcers don't explain Hugh's issues with the Powers That Be, likely because they don't exist.

After a big running splash in the corner, Morrus gets distracted by some old guy in a hospital gown who wanders from the crowd to the ramp. For the love of.....JUST HAVE A WRESTLING MATCH! Morrus goes outside and helps the man he calls Pop to the ramp so he stays out of harms' way. Hennig gets in a few shots as Pop comes back down to ringside. In the distraction, Hennig hits the PerfectPlex for the pin.

Rating: D-. I would ask why this is happening and what this is supposed to mean, but I really, really don't care. Hugh Morrus is getting a story now? Apparently about his father who just wanders around ringside after leaving a hospital? As usual, Russo doesn't get that you have to make us care about a person before you just throw them into a story that makes no sense on the surface. I don't care about Hugh Morrus because he's never done anything worth caring about. Therefore, I don't care about his Pop or whatever they're doing with him. Again, just let them wrestle and THEN come up with a story.

Pop checks on his son, who is still down after a devastating suplex.

Piper is in Russo's office where Russo talks about Piper making some sort of deal with the devil, meaning Piper can't touch Russo. It's not over though because Piper has to go out there and tell everyone that he sold out and that Russo had nothing to do with it. So who did he sell out to if Russo wasn't involved? That question is immediately wiped from my memory as Russo says that Piper will take his heat. Piper talks about going out there to "shoot on the marks" and how he and Hogan built this sport. The audio screws up so I can't hear the rest of it but do I really need to?

So to recap: Russo is the mastermind behind screwing Goldberg out of the title and gave Piper something in return for ending the title match last night and now Piper has to go and take the rap for it. This is going to be a SHOOT, because all those times where Piper was evil and made his big name were just him acting and we should believe how much he cares for wrestling? Can we go back to Hugh and Pop?

And now, a word from Tony Schiavone about how Vince McMahon screwed Bret Hart out of the WCW Title. Russo worked for McMahon at that time, so rumors are speculating that Russo scripted the ending to that match. I don't even know how to respond to that so we'll move on to Tony talking about how Kevin Nash is defending Goldberg in the locker room. You know, the SHOOT locker room.

This brings out Kevin Nash, who talks about living by a code in wrestling. There are certain rules you have to live by no matter what

happens. Yes people, KEVIN NASH is talking about ethics in wrestling. Just go with it and maybe it'll be over soon. There are two groups of people behind the curtain: the boys and the office. The boys are all a fraternity and the office doesn't care about any of them. Nash doesn't care about Goldberg, but what happened last night was....a word they don't actually censor. TV-14 it is I suppose. Hart screwed one of the boys and now he has to pay.

Creative Control says Nash is the biggest politician in the locker room. So yeah, it's clearly a big worked shoot (in case it wasn't obvious before) and the audience, after sitting through Madusa vs. Buzzkill and Hennig vs. Morrus/Pop gets to hear a lot of stuff that is probably going over their collective heads while Russo jerks off to this nonsense because it makes him feel so much smarter than everyone else. I understand what they're talking about and it's just so dumb.

Tank Abbott vs. Jerry Flynn

No holds barred of course. They trade slaps/punches before shoving the referee, drawing out security to break it up. Flynn is put in handcuffs and Tank knocks him out cold. This didn't last a minute and the fans are rightfully booing it out of the building.

Goldberg arrives.

Here's the Revolution for what is actually the most interesting part of the show so far. Douglas talks about how the Revolution was proven right at Starrcade, but we pause for a word from Saturn about Tootsie Pops. He calls out Jim Duggan to denounce America, but Jim doesn't want to do it. Instead, Duggan says he lied and gets beaten down. The Revolution goes to burn the American flag but the Filthy Animals (minus Eddie) return for the save. Great. It's this feud again. Shane's look of shock when the Animals came out (walking at about half a mile an hour) is great.

Here's Piper for his big explanation as Goldberg and Hart watch from backstage. Piper lists off some of the evil things he's done in the past before going into a mini rant against Russo's writing. Couldn't they just call it like, match making? Anyway, Piper knows people just want to see the wrestlers fight. After listing off his accomplishments from the 80s,

Piper says he's a real fighting and quits. His son comes out to walk to the back with him, but Goldberg comes out to block their way.

Goldberg has stayed up all night trying to make sense of this (now THAT is probably a shoot comment). He's looked up to a few guys all his life and until last night Piper was on that list. Piper made the wrong decision last night but Goldberg doesn't think Piper would ever sell out. Roddy apologizes and things seem to be a bit better until Bret comes out to pick it up all over again. As far as he's concerned, there's no point in blaming Piper and the title is vacant. Bret goes to the back to tell the Powers That Be what they can do with their title. Keep shooting people. You'll hit something eventually, though it's likely your own foot.

Post break, Hart yells at Russo, but the boss says that was an attempt at making up for Montreal. Yes seriously, THAT'S THEIR BIG STORY. Bret throws the belt at Russo so he makes Hart vs. Goldberg for tonight. Nice to see them continue their tradition of airing the same match the night after Starrcade. I mean, it's gone so well before.

Meng/Norman Smiley vs. Fit Finlay/Brian Knobbs

Hardcore of course. So why would Meng want to team with Smiley here? My question is quickly answered as Meng goes after Smiley before their opponents come out. Knobbs and Finlay come out to watch as the announcers try to explain the psychology. Apparently Knobbs and Finlay want Norman to keep the Hardcore Title so they can take it from him with less of a fight.

Therefore, we're supposed to ignore the two of them knocking Smiley out cold with a pipe so Norman could pin him with one hand last night, proving that they could beat Meng with ease. As for the match, Norman gets chased through the crowd, objects are thrown, a bathroom is invaded, Norman's head is put in a toilet and Knobbs gets the pin.

Rating: F. We're over an hour into this show and this is the second best match of the night so far. I'm not sure if it's good or horribly stupid that they're trying to add psychology to this division. Yeah there's an idea to it, but the idea is stupid. The joke isn't funny though and Meng

was just kind of there most of the “match” as everyone else was “fighting.”

Piper tells his kid to wait in the limo and gets a ball bat.

Video of the Artist Formerly Known As Prince Iaukea’s recording session where he doesn’t actually sing. Somehow this sounds like one of the more logical things on the show.

Hart is walking and runs into Piper. Bret tries to talk but Piper is back to babbling to himself.

Maestro vs. Evan Karagias

It’s a flashback to the NWO days as the announcers ignore what’s going on in the ring to talk about the backstage stuff. Maestro runs him over to start but Evan hits a springboard spinning cross body. Evan rains down right hands in the corner until he gets dropped throat first across the top rope. We get a bit of a tease as Maestro loads up a chinlock but slaps Evan in the face with both hands instead.

The announcers talk about Montreal with Tony saying it’s unbelievable that Russo wants to make up with Hart. Evan fights up and counters a hurricanrana into a powerbomb. Symphony gets shoved onto the apron but Evan has a quick change of heart to check on her. The distraction lets Maestro hit a knee to the back for the pin. Symphony is of course fine. Tony: “She sold that knee.”

Rating: D. Total mentions of Evan losing the title last night: zero. Then again it’s fairly clear that there’s no future to the title so losing the belt might have been the best thing possible for Evan. Maestro and Symphony are a nothing pairing but at least they’re not victims of a stalker anymore.

Piper literally destroys the Powers That Be’s office. Piper: “How about Adrian Adonis and Gorilla Monsoon?” And yes, he breaks the fourth wall.

Chavo Guerrero tries to sell Evan a book on how to pick up chicks. Thankfully, this ends in a beating.

Chris Canyon vs. Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Kanyon says this isn't Hollywood and talks about destroying the Triad. Bigelow and Page come out and double team him with Page hitting a Rock Bottom and Bigelow adding a headbutt. A clothesline and another headbutt have Kanyon reeling but Page and Bigelow argue about which finisher should end Kanyon. Page offers a handshake but pulls Bigelow into a Diamond Cutter. It's angle time though as Page drops to the floor, kisses a fan, and leaves. J. Biggs throws Kanyon a briefcase but the referee cuts him off, allowing Kanyon to hit Bigelow with a champagne bottle for the pin.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. They spent the entire summer building up the Triad and then the blowoff (I guess?) match takes four minutes with no announcement on a Nitro? Sounds appropriate to me. At least Kanyon has a new character and he's getting as close as he can to thriving in it.

Bigelow is busted way open and Kanyon is bleeding from the hand. Were they stupid enough to use a real bottle???

Creative Control vs. Kevin Nash

There's no referee so I don't think this is a match. Actually that makes sense given how things worked earlier. Hall accompanies Nash on crutches. Since this isn't a match (no bell), the twins tag. Nash slugs away at Patrick in the corner and kicks Gerald in the face as the tagging part is already done.

The numbers catch up with Nash and Gerald takes him down for a cover but there's no referee. Heenan praises Nash for having the guts to say what he said earlier in the night. They start going after Kevin's knee and the tagging starts up again. Hall gets bored and comes inside for some crutch shots to the twins. Creative Control walks out to end whatever this was.

Luger and Liz are amused at Sting having a broken jaw. Why they're in the rafters and why Luger is dressed as Sting isn't clear but I don't think I want to know.

US Title: Chris Benoit vs. Jeff Jarrett

Another ladder match with Benoit defending because there's no reason not to do it again twenty four hours later. At least it was good last night so maybe it works again here. They slug it out to start and Benoit takes over with a pair of dropkicks. Benoit ties him in the Tree of Woe for a running dropkick but Jeff crotches him against the post to take over. Back up and Benoit is the first to the ladder but he has to side step the baseball slide.

Benoit throws him into the chair in the corner before nailing the back and knee with the same chair. Jeff stays on the floor and holds his leg as Benoit breaks the ladder by stepping on the rungs. Tony: "Someone has gimmicked this ladder!" Tenay: "You know who it is!" Heenan: "Kidman?" The other side's rungs break as well and it's a guitar shot to Benoit as Jeff's leg is fine. He grabs a fresh ladder and wins the title because SCREW YOU BENOIT FANS! YOU'RE GETTING JARRETT WHETHER YOU CARE OR NOT!

Rating: D+. They said the word gimmick for the ladder about ten times in two minutes near the end as the levels of obnoxiousness get higher and higher every single week. Benoit winning the title last night and being in the main event of a pay per view last month already seem to be nothing but memories.

After a bunch of replays, Curt Hennig tells Jarrett that the Powers That Be need to see him.

Sid Vicious vs. The Wall

Sid kicks him in the face to start and takes it outside for some right hands to Wall's face. Back in and Wall hits him right back, only to eat a chokeslam. Cue Berlyn for a distraction, allowing Wall to load up a chokeslam of his own. Not that it matters as Berlyn missile dropkicks Wall for the DQ.

Sid powerbombs Berlyn and shakes Wall's hand to complete the face turn.

Russo tells Jarrett that it's going to happen tonight.

Disco offers to pay the mafia but Tony Marinara's dad tells him he can join the Family or spend the rest of his life in a coma.

Harlem Heat vs. Varsity Club

Rotundo/Steiner here with Sullivan on commentary, where he spends the whole match referring to Rick as Robbie (Rick's real name) because SHOOTING IS COOL AND HIP AND MAKES US SMARTER THAN YOU SO HA! Stevie quickly runs Rotundo over to start before it's off to the partners. Booker kicks him in the face a few times but it's too much to ask Steiner to sell so it's a big clothesline to put Booker on the floor. Things get a bit confusing as the Varsity Club decides they're the Freebirds (they're from the right time period) and start changing places with Rotundo going to commentary.

That lasts all of eight seconds before Mike runs back in and misses a charge, allowing Booker to plant him with a Rock Bottom. Stevie comes in off the hot tag and cleans house but there go the lights because it's Midnight. Ever the genius, Stevie yells at her, allowing Mike to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: D. More mindless brawling here with Booker doing everything he could to make it a match. I still have no idea why the Varsity Club is back as Rick was the only one doing anything, even though he's one of the least likeable people on the roster. I'll give them this though: at least this felt like a match, even with the screwy ending.

PG-13 runs in and attacks the Varsity Club. They can't be serious.

The yet to be named Daffney is getting a Surge when the Misfits come up to hit on her. For reasons of crazy, she knees Jerry Only low and runs off.

Here's David Flair for a chat but he beats up David Penzer first. Flair calls out Vampiro, who says he has no problem with David. Vampiro yells at Daffney but eats a crowbar shot. Jerry Only comes out and takes a beating as well, leaving David and Daffney to kiss.

Buff Bagwell comes out with something to say. He's had a good career in WCW but now he wants some gold around his waist. Gene goes way out in right field and asks about rumors regarding Bagwell and Kimberly Page. Buff pushes the mic away and whispers to Gene, but Okerlund says that

sounds like an admission of guilt. Bagwell admits that Kimberly is a knockout and if Page wasn't a factor, he would, and I quote, "put his stuff all over Kim." He mentions his bed and Page comes out to jump Bagwell.

Piper says goodbye to the locker room and calls Sid a kid. He rambles on about how hard wrestling has been on him and wants the boys to fight back against the Powers That Be.

WCW World Title: Bret Hart vs. Goldberg

The title is officially vacant coming in and Jeff Jarrett is watching on a monitor in the back. Goldberg hammers him in the face to start and chokes with a boot in the corner. They head outside with Goldberg hammering away even more as Bret has been on defense almost all match. Back in and a powerslam drops Hart but he grabs the ropes to break up a leg lock.

Bret starts going after the leg with kicks to the knee before wrapping it around the ropes. The referee goes down because of course he does and Bret slaps on the Figure Four. Cue the Outsiders with ball bats to beat up Goldberg. Bret lets go of the hold and beats on Goldberg as well so Piper comes back to try and protect Goldberg as the referee calls for the bell. There was a cover in there somewhere and Bret has won the title.

Jeff Jarrett comes out with spraypaint and.....THE BAND IS BACK TOGETHER! Bret tries to say something but his mic doesn't work. Everyone celebrates with their new titles to end the show.

Overall Rating: W. That's W for waste. I've watched a lot of wrestling shows in my day (upwards of 4,000 last I checked). In the course of my time as a fan, I don't remember a show that felt like a waste of my time. That has changed after this show. I can live with a show where nothing happens. I can live with a show full of bad matches. I can live with a show where the company loses its way for a night.

That's not what happened on this show. This show was about eliminating every single concept and idea of logic and common sense from what used to be World Championship Wrestling. I'm not going to go into the long, long

list of things this show did that made no sense, as A, I don't have that much memory on this computer and B, I don't think my blood pressure can take it.

Let's sum up the major flaw in logic on this show. The idea is that Russo and company are in charge of booking the show and have turned it into a shoot. Ignoring how absolutely stupid that is to point out (from a kayfabe perspective, wrestling is always supposed to be a shoot), let's go with Russo's theory (I'll ask for forgiveness later). Let's say that Russo has complete authority and is writing himself into this position.

If that's the case, why have any of his guys ever lost a match and why did we need some big conspiracy? Why didn't Russo just book his boys on top the second he debuted? Why are we having some big conspiracy with Jarrett having to win the title back? Why am I supposed to believe anything that happens if Russo is just in charge of the whole thing? Did he book Nash to fight back against his authority or is Nash going into business for himself?

I get that it's what Russo is going for, but it leaves so many ridiculous holes in the story and makes the whole thing so completely illogical that you can't buy into anything going on in this company. Ninety percent of the show is scripted but THIS RIGHT HERE is real? Why should I believe that? At the end of the day, this is wrestling. I shouldn't need a scorecard and a flow chart to keep track of what's going on, nor should I have to hear all these insider terms. This is the definition of too much going on and making things way too complicated.

This stopped being wrestling and became Russo having fun and deciding to make this show his big personal playground. He's removed logic and common sense from this show in order to turn it into some insider fest. I know I say this a lot, but I literally do not think it can get worse than this. They've taken away any the basic core principles of wrestling and made this a B movie. There is however one bright spot to this whole mess: Jim Cornette suddenly makes so much more sense to me.

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