

Monday Nitro – January 24, 2000: The First Of Many

Monday Nitro #224

Date: January 24, 2000

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 12,106

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay

It's actually a big show for once as we're crowning a new World Champion tonight because the idea of waiting for pay per view is a foreign concept in this company. Kevin Nash is already in the title match but Sid has to qualify by beating Jeff Jarrett, who I don't think is allowed to fight for the title. Let's get to it.

This show is dedicated to Bobby Duncum Jr. He had potential.

Nash, Jarrett and Steiner arrive in separate limos with their women for the evening, including Major Gunns and someone who looks a heck of a lot like Victoria/Tara. Scott Hall is here too.

Cruiserweight Title Tournament First Round: Psychosis vs. Kaz Hayashi

The finals are at SuperBrawl, Juventud is out with Psychosis and Kaz gets a jobber entrance. Presumably annoyed by this, Kaz shoulders him down to start and nails a nice release German. An enziguri knocks Psychosis to the floor and Kaz nails a plancha. Back in and Psychosis nails a clothesline before going after the knee.

After a few kicks, it's back to the floor where Juvy gets in a People's Elbow. So we have a fake Rock and a fake Road Dogg. I wonder who they're ripping off next. Back in and Kaz dives right back to the floor to take Juvy out. Psychosis goes up top but dives into a dropkick to the ribs. Well at least they're finally picking things up a bit. And they head back inside where Kaz misses a spinwheel kick and gets rolled up for the pin.

Rating: C-. Well the flying wasn't bad but Juvy's Rock impression, which

still just makes me want to watch Rock, is taking away from everything else in the match. Psychosis, while not the best in the world, was clearly winning here because Kaz just isn't very exciting in the ring. At least the division is getting some attention for a change.

Terry Funk and Arn Anderson arrive.

Nash says Jarrett has failed his physical and can't go tonight, but the boss has a plan.

After a break, Nash makes Funk vs. Bam Bam Bigelow in a hardcore match.

The Wall vs. Kid Romeo

Squash time. We hear about Nash putting out a \$15,000 bounty on Funk. This would be shocking, until you realize that Funk is probably the second biggest face in the company right now. Romeo fires off dropkicks to start and actually knocks Wall to the ropes. He doesn't knock Wall out to the floor as Wall jumps over the ropes to get there but at least Romeo got him halfway. Romeo's plancha barely works but he scores with an enziguri back inside, only to try a sunset flip and get chokeslammed for the pin. Wall barely had any offense until the ending.

Sid thinks something is afoot with the Jarrett absence.

Arn tries to talk to Bigelow but Bam Bam would beat up his mother for \$15,000. Anderson: "It's your funeral."

Scott Steiner and Hall offer the Power Plant guys a chance to fight tonight. Their pick: Al Greene. One of the guys who didn't get picked was none other than Christopher Daniels, who worked a dark match before the show.

Norman Smiley vs. Shannon Moore

Dang I don't know who to cheer for. Norman, in Dodgers gear, interrupts the song, therefore making him the instant heel. It also earns him a quick 3-1 beating until it's just Shannon in the ring. Norman fights up and hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and IT'S DANCE TIME! Moore doesn't care for the spankings and tries a rollup, only to get countered into a

front powerbomb.

It's time to get the rest of the boys involved but Norman is of course way too smart for them (meaning he has an IQ higher than a squid). Shannon is back up with an Asai moonsault to the floor though and Norman is actually in trouble for a change. Back inside and Norman slaps on the namesake Conquest for the submission. It's pretty sad that this is a major upgrade in feuds for Norman, but I'll take what I can get.

Post match it's time to sing again but Moore is still down. Instead, Norman clears the ring and dances for them.

Al Greene vs. Tank Abbott

Abbott knees him into the ribs, punches him in the corner, slams him down, and knocks Greene out with a big right hand for his longest match yet.

Tank yells at his former UFC bodyguard, who Heenan interviews after a break. The bodyguard, who isn't named, says Abbott is a sellout.

Here's Ernest Miller, now with blond hair, who promises to whip everybody as soon as he can get back in the ring. The fat boy in the front row can sit down and it's dance time. How many people in this company dance at the moment?

Greene is loaded into an ambulance and the NWO laughs.

Terry Funk vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Anything goes of course. Bigelow jumps him in the back to start and drags the elder statesman to the arena for some choking with a well placed rope. Some chair shots knock Funk towards the ring but he's still able to avoid the top rope headbutt. They're quickly back on the floor and Funk busts out an Asai moonsault of his own to drop the big man. Now it's Funk with the chair but, ever the crazy man, he tries to headbutt Bigelow and just hurts himself even worse.

Bigelow throws it back inside and this time the top rope headbutt connects, but here are Finlay and Knobbs to help out their mentor (I

guess?). That's fine with Bigelow who easily knocks both guys away and loads up another headbutt. He's a man of limited offense. This time though, Knobbs puts a chair over Funk and Bigelow knocks himself cold, giving Terry the pin.

Rating: D. So Funk is in a hardcore feud and a main event feud, thereby making this company more and more like ECW every single week. The match was exactly what you would expect from these two (both former ECW World Champions oddly enough) and the addition of Knobbs and Finlay doesn't make it any better.

Funk promises reinforcements against Nash on Thunder.

Don Harris vs. Sid Vicious

If Sid wins, he faces Nash for the title later tonight. Harris is replacing Jarrett because....I have no idea why. Sid is smart enough to go after Don before he can even get his jacket off because you know there's going to be cheating here. They head outside with Sid in control, but he takes too long throwing Don inside and the twins are already switching. Ron clotheslines Sid out to the floor and it's another switch. We hit the reverse chinlock for a bit before the twins plant Sid with a double slam. Back up and Sid grabs a chokeslam on Don, who rolls outside for a switch, so Sid powerbombs Ron for the pin.

Rating: D. This is a thing that happened. I'm not sure what else there is to say about it but I'm sure that Nash will be able to tell the twins apart (or that he watched the match. Well in theory as not many other people were) and it's going to be a loophole. Boring match of course, but did you expect anything else from the Harris Twins?

Vampiro vs. Kidman

Torrie comes out wearing basically a zebra print bikini. Vampiro misses a kick to start and they circle each other a bit. A headscissors doesn't do much good for Kidman as Vampiro throws him down with a release powerbomb. We cut to the crowd and OH GOOD LORD NO IT'S DAVID ARQUETTE! Please cut away from him. Please. I can't handle it. Kidman reverses a powerbomb as only he can but he gets planted with a side slam for two.

Vampiro misses the top rope legdrop and Kidman hits a big plancha to take him out on the floor. Back up and Kidman dropkicks him to the floor, only to have a slingshot plancha caught. That's fine with Kidman as he slips down the back and sends him into the post to take over again. Torrie seems way into this. The BK Bomb gets two and Vampiro's DDT gets the same, much to the latter's shock.

A little miscommunication sets up a release Rock Bottom from Vampiro but he gets dropkicked out of the air. That's fine with Vampiro who counters a hurricanrana into a powerbomb for two more. With nothing else working, Vampiro loads up a superbomb but you can't superbomb Kidman (that doesn't have the same ring to it), who hurricanranas Vampiro down for the pin.

Rating: B. Again, WHY IS KIDMAN NOT DOING SOMETHING IMPORTANT??? He just got done with three matches at one pay per view and he's had the best match on the last three TV shows, but he can't get anywhere near the US Title because that's Jarrett's and he can't get anywhere near the TV Title because it was literally trashed a few months ago. Such is life in WCW.

Arn Anderson is on the phone with champ. "Get your pants on. Can you be in Vegas for Thunder?"

Nash gets a massage, which is part of his plan to win the World Title.

Vampiro has something to say but his mic doesn't work.

Total Package vs. Booker T.

Liz does an over the top introduction for Luger, who then babbles on about Sting. Just get him back so he can crush Luger and be done with it. No one can compare to Luger, including Hulk Hogan himself. There's SuperBrawl I guess. Booker comes out and slugs away because he should be moving up the ladder but we need a Road Wild 1997 rematch.

An early Rock Bottom gets two on Luger and the ax kick (good looking one) knocks him silly but Liz offers a distraction. Cue Midnight to take care of Liz, allowing Booker to hit a big side kick, only to have Big T. sneak in with a slap jack to knock Booker silly, setting up Luger's Rack for

the unconscious win. So glad to see Booker getting knocked cold again so the Rack can beat him one more time to set up the big main event Luger vs. Hogan feud that is happening for no apparent reason.

Post match Sting's music comes on and we have a shadowy figure with a bat on the stage. Smoke comes on and whisks him away however. Great. So now Luger is feuding with Sting, Hogan and Warrior.

Vampiro thinks the WWF sabotaged his mic and wants a rematch with Kidman.

David Flair, Crowbar and Daffney have an idea for the upcoming Tag Team Title match.

Tag Team Titles: Brian Knobbs/Fit Finlay vs. Mamalukes

The Mamalukes are defending but before either team comes out, David Flair, Crowbar and Daffney take over all three commentary spots. David takes over Tony's job and actually isn't terrible considering he's sounding normal with a twinge of crazy. Disco is suddenly fine with being with the Mamalukes after trying to make them lose more than once. Daffney thinks they're the Marmadukes and Marmalades. Crowbar: "I'm like Bobby Eaton and you have the mat skills of Sweet Stan Lane."

They shove each other around to start and the challengers get the early advantage. David: "This one time, at band camp, I hit someone over the head with my crowbar." Standards and Practices come out to watch but only Ms. Hancock sticks around. The camera stays on her for a bit before we see Vito working on Knobbs in the corner. Disco and Hancock stare each other down and Crowbar brings up the crimson mask. Crowbar isn't half bad as a play by play guy. "Double ax handle to the chest! That could cave in the upper thorax!"

Both challengers crush Johnny in the corner as David starts dancing on the table. Hancock leaves with David and Daffney following as Finlay hits the Regal Roll on Johnny. Disco offers a distraction so Vito can get in a belt shot for two as everything breaks down. Knobbs throws a chair at Finlay by mistake (Crowbar: "A FAUX PAS!"), setting up Vito's swinging inverted DDT to retain the belts.

Rating: D. Crowbar and Hancock were the highlights of the match. There's only so much you can expect from these four, but they're already better in the ring than Flair and Crowbar, almost by default. You could barely keep track of the match with all the shenanigans though, and that gets old in a hurry.

Here's Nash with something to say, though first he has to steal a fan's sign about Hall being afraid of O'Doul's beer (non-alcoholic). The fans want Goldberg but "he doesn't work here anymore." He and Sid are about to fight but since the powerbomb is so dangerous, it's banned from use tonight. Well Nash already beat Sid in a powerbomb match without using a powerbomb so that really doesn't change much. The NWO is on it's way to Vegas so it's one on one.

WCW World Title: Sid Vicious vs. Kevin Nash

Thankfully Nash just stayed in the ring instead of leaving like so many people (including Nash in the past) have done before. Sid shoves him to the floor to start but Nash cheats to win a test of strength to take over. They head outside again as the announcers actually talk about Thunder being taped tomorrow night. I know it's not exactly a secret but it's not something you hear about that often. We hit the sleeper on Sid back inside because Nash needs to rest a bit.

Tony's logic on the match: a loss here makes the NWO even stronger. Sid's arm goes up after the second drop but he drives Nash into the referee in the corner. A big boot and legdrop set up the hand to the ear to see if the fans want a powerbomb. Cue Jarrett (Nash LIED???) but Sid takes the guitar away to blast Nash, but Sid is smart enough to play possum before crawling over military style for the pin and the title. BIG pop for that.

Rating: D. As I think everyone guessed coming in, this was a slow and mostly dull power match. The ending would have been better suited after a 10-15 minute match, but I don't think the world was ready for Sid vs. Nash getting that much time in the year 2000. I'll give them this though: the idea of Sid outsmarting someone is about as entertaining a bit of fiction as I've seen in a long time.

Confetti falls to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is getting downright tolerable. Above all else they now have a clear focus in the main event, which is more than you could say a few weeks back. Back then there were so many focuses that it was almost impossible to keep track of what was going on. Unfortunately that focus is on Sid, which isn't the most interesting idea in the world.

Other than that there's a more solid undercard being developed, but it would be nice to see some of the people move up the ladder and WAY less emphasis on the hardcore stuff. We get it: you can hit each other with trashcan lids and chairs and Brian Knobbs is totally interesting and worthy of pushing at least in the general direction of the space shuttle. I'm scared to think of who Funk is going to get as a reinforcement, but I'm hoping it's just Sid so we don't have to have anyone else coming in. Or maybe it's Flair, which would work a bit better. Not a good show this week, but at least it's a few steps ahead of where they were.

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