

Monday Nitro – March 20, 2000: We'll Need More Papa Shango

Monday Nitro #232

Date: March 20, 2000

Location: O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Florida

Commentators: Mark Madden, Tony Schiavone

Uncensored has come and gone and I think we're all a little bit better because of that. I'm not entirely sure what you would call the big story coming off the show but I guess Scott Steiner returning for the second time this year is up there. It's not a good time to be a WCW fan at the moment and last night gave me no reason to think that is going to change anytime soon. Let's get to it.

Earlier today Sid arrived to a small mob of fans who are thrilled that he's still World Champion. Maybe WCW wouldn't be in so much trouble if they didn't fund such massive brainwashing experiments.

Opening sequence.

Gene brings out Sid Vicious to open things up. Madden is already ripping on Hogan for coming out to help Sid when Sid didn't need it, which sounds like we should be leading up to Sid vs. Hogan, which makes sense and would probably suck the least out of any match they could throw at us at this point. Sid is glad to finally have Jeff Jarrett off his back and loves the fact that he got to prove Jarrett wrong last night. In a sudden side trip, Sid says it doesn't matter what you do to a pig because it's still a pig. But what if you make it into pork chops?

Cue Jarrett because this feud MUST continue. Jarrett has pinned Sid three times in the past so it's clear that he has Sid's number, and Sid is only still champion because of Hogan. Sid says bring it but Jeff says he wants another title match, which Sid won't give him. Instead, Jarrett has a solution: a tag match, and if Jeff pins Sid, he gets another shot. If he

can't though, he never asks for another shot again. The fans LOVE that idea but Jeff wants to introduce us to his partner first.

Of course it's Scott Steiner, who would seem to be the newest member of the NWO and with some tape over his mouth with the word CENSORED written across it. Threats are made but Sid says he doesn't need a partner, even though he could find one really easily. Cue Hogan of course, to talk about being the baddest man the NWO ever had. Hogan has seen Sid carrying the belt tall and proud, so Sid is the man to get WCW back on track. I love that they're just admitting that WCW is in trouble on national TV. The match is on. There's a joke there about Hogan and Teddy Long but I'll let you guys fill in the punchline yourselves.

Tony gives us a quick recap of Uncensored. How can a thirty second speech sound so boring?

Tonight: Sting vs. Flair. Somehow that sounds like the best idea they've had in weeks.

Luger tells Flair to take care of Sting tonight while he takes out Vampiro. Flair rants about both of them and it's very nice to see Vampiro being thrown into the deep end like this. You have to try that at some point, which is (arguably) the biggest knock against WCW over the years.

Ricky Rachman and Spring Breakout are still coming. Be still my beating heart.

Chavo Guerrero says he's back to get the Cruiserweight Title and get his finances in order. He steals Gene's wallet to help himself out.

Chris Candido vs. Lash Leroux

Paisley and the (silent) Artist are on commentary. Before the match, Candido calls himself the greatest example of a pure wrestler going today, because he doesn't need a gimmick, costume, catchphrase of a trashy valet. Oh I'm guessing she's coming later. Lash dropkicks Candido down to take over in a hurry but Chris quickly makes the ropes to hide. A dropkick and shoulder put Candido down again, only to have him come back with an enziguri.

Candido scores with a nice delayed vertical suplex as Madden talks about Candido winning a 10-1 handicap match. Madden: "I think Big Josh was involved." Candido's guillotine legdrop gets two as we discuss Madden wearing purple. Lash's comeback is quickly stopped and a top rope superplex sets up a swan dive to give Chris the quick pin. Nice debut here and they can't get Artist away from the title soon enough.

Lane and Rave ask Miss Hancock who she's found to replace them. Hancock promises to debut them on Thunder: Los Fabulosos.

Fit Finlay vs. La Parka

Time for some chair dancing and VOICEOVER GUY! La Parka talks about being in the hizzouse and the 1414, meaning one for him and one for his homies. Finlay has one chance to leave before La Parka knocks the Lucky Charms out of him. La Parka tries to beg off and says that's not his voice but Finlay beats him up anyway.

The masked man gets dropped throat first across the top rope, which might clean up some of those vocal issues. A HUGE back elbow to the jaw puts La Parka down again but Finlay goes to the floor for no apparent reason, only to avoid a plancha. Back in and La Parka loads up a crane kick, only to take a Regal Roll for another quick pin. At least La Parka is funny.

Kidman and Booker talk strategy. Madden talks Torrie's cleavage.

Vampiro takes the cast off his hand and bangs it against the wall. The concrete kind, not the monster.

Stills of Wall vs. Bigelow, which Tony calls a collection of painful bumps.

Gene brings out David Flair and Daffney for a special message for America. This could be, dare I say it, interesting. David drags out a table and I don't see this ending well. He talks about Bigelow and Crowbar sharing a hospital room so he wants Wall out here right now to put him through that table. There goes the neck brace and here comes Wall, who no sells a fire extinguisher blast from Daffney and chokeslams David through the table. The announcers say David can join Bigelow and

Crowbar in their hospital room. Well no wonder he can't get healthy if he gets injured in Gainesville and goes all the way to Miami for treatment.

Tony: "Right now it's our Wolverine Boot Stomp of the Night! Ok I guess it's not!"

To take your mind off that, here's a centerfold of Torrie in the latest WCW Magazine.

Tag Team Titles: Harris Twins vs. Kidman/Booker

The Twins are defending. Madden brings up the NWO only needing one more belt to have them all, which makes me realize how horrible that group really is as I do not care in the slightest. Booker kicks Ron down to start and we get an early Spinarooni. Off to Don vs. Kidman with the bald guy doing a very weak tilt-a-whirl....I guess you can call that a slam. At least it sounds better than tilt-a-whirl gently lay down. Booker comes in to take out both Twins and hits a bad looking Rock Bottom for two on Ron (jump dude), followed by the Bodog from Kidman. That's enough for the Twins as a belt shot draws the DQ.

Torrie gets on Don's back but gets thrown down, earning Don a chair to the head.

The Mamalukes tell Disco to get them a rematch or he's out. Disco says it's really their fault so Vito says Disco is out.

Total Package vs. Vampiro

So much for Vampiro's push. Before the match, Luger tells Vampiro that this is his welcome to the major leagues but he only has a wiffle ball bat. Vampiro sneaks in through the crowd for an enziguri to start fast but Luger goes low to take over. What looks to be a Rack attempt is turned into a belly to back suplex before Luger starts kicking at the bad arm. Vampiro tries going to the floor but Luger drives an ax handle into the back and posts him for good measure.

Back in and Luger drops him with a gorilla press, which means he must be running out of moves to use. Vampiro comes back with a bunch of kicks as Tony is STUNNED that Vampiro could get in offense on someone like Luger.

A top rope clothesline gets two on Luger but here's Ric Flair, who is quickly dropped by an elbow. The distraction is enough for Luger to get in a bat shot though and the Rack is good for the submission.

Rating: D+. Dang that was close. Vampiro was getting close to get over as a young face here but Luger took him out just in time. Standard WCW formula here: the young guy gets close but can't get the win because it just wouldn't work to let Vampiro get a fluke win because it might hurt Luger's spot, as if he actually might not be near the top of the card until he dies. I mean, he was a big star like eight years ago.

Sting makes the save.

Scott Steiner says it's hard to keep a hard man down and rants about Hogan being as successful as he was because of people like Steiner behind him.

More Rachman.

Nitro Girls.

Dustin Rhodes is tired of being held down by the old guys so he's taking them out one by one, starting with Curt Hennig tonight.

We see clips of a press conference after Uncensored went off the air last night. Oh man let's get this over with. Sid wasn't surprised by anything Jeff threw at him last night but here's Hogan to officially endorse Sid but the spotlight is taken away from Sid and he doesn't seem thrilled. This is of course totally different than the Wrestlemania VIII press conference where Hogan stole the spotlight from Sid to get on his nerves back in 1992.

Norman Smiley vs. Hugh Morrus

Smiley is past his demon phase but has gone with something far more terrifying: a Florida Gators jersey. Smiley grabs a cravate to start but Morrus elbows him in the jaw to break up the spanking dance. A butterfly suplex is countered into a sunset flip to give Norman two but another elbow puts him down again. Some dancing elbows (he's a man of limited offense) get two for Morrus as he pulls Smiley up. A powerslam gets the

same treatment before No Laughing Matter ends the destruction. That's what Smiley gets for getting popular when WCW doesn't want him to. Serves him right for the hard work.

Demon comes out to check on Norman but gets laid out too. So we have the popular Norman, the guy with a pop culture connection, and the one step above average power brawler. Guess who gets to stand tall.

Hennig says he'll beat Dustin because he's unbeatable. That doesn't mean he'll beat Dustin. They could just go to a draw, which means Dustin wouldn't win but Hennig wouldn't lose. Hennig really should get these details right.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Curt Hennig

Hennig still has a cast on. Rhodes takes him into the corner to start as Madden declares himself a Rhodes fan for how Dustin ripped on Hogan. Hennig comes back with a neckbreaker and right hands, followed by the necksnap. A big right hand knocks Curt to the floor and Dustin slams the cast into the barricade before ripping the cast off for the DQ. Really, that's a DQ?

Dustin hits the referee but Hogan makes the save. Hogan and....midcarders? Huh? I mean HUH??? Tony: "Thank God for Hogan."

Sid promises to win tonight and tells Jimmy to make sure no one comes to the ring tonight.

Sting says he has to fight Ric at least one more time, but tonight Team Package is split right down the middle and, I quote, "Team Package is like two peas in a pod." That was the funniest unintentional line in months, or maybe I'm just desperate for anything remotely amusing.

Tank Abbott vs. Barbarian

Meng is watching backstage and says not long now Tank, not long at all. WHY CAN MENG TALK??? I know he has before but again, MONSTERS DON'T TALK. Slugout to start with Barbarian getting the better of it but Tank slams him down and puts on a front facelock before the big punch knocks Barbarian out. Just a longer version of Tank's usual stuff.

Flair starts talking as he walks to the ring but we cut to Sting for more walking.

Ricky Rachman is a thing for the third time tonight.

Sting vs. Ric Flair

This is Sting's first match on Nitro since December. They start with a basic sequence as Sting shoulders him down, knocks Flair to the apron, clotheslines him to the floor and clotheslines him on the floor for good measure. The Stinger Splash against the barricade misses though (that's up there with Flair's....whatever off the top) and Ric takes over.

Back in and Flair punches him in the jaw to drop Sting, possibly wanting to knock off Sting's beard at the same time. It's time to no sell chops though with a pair of press slams, including one off the top. Cue Luger who gets beaten up as well and it's Stinger Splashes all around, setting up the Scorpion to make Flair give up.

Rating: C-. Flair vs. Sting is one of those matches that automatically receives a higher rating by definition. It's just a hard pairing to screw up because they're both talented and have fought so many times that it's almost impossible for them to screw up out there. I have no idea why we're still seeing them fight, but the terrifying reason is that they're one of the few combinations that still might work around here. You know, of course omitting any pairing of old vs. new because those are just out of the question.

Luger and Flair beat Sting down until Vampiro makes the save.

Scott Steiner/Jeff Jarrett vs. Sid Vicious/Hulk Hogan

If Jarrett gets pinned, he can never ask for a title shot again, but if he pins Sid, he gets the next shot. Jeff ejects the girls again and tells them to warm up the jacuzzi. Hogan and Jarrett get things going with Hulk hammering away and sending Jeff face first into Sid's boot. Sid and Hogan take turns on Jeff's arm before Hogan goes back to his comfort zone of right hands in the corner. At least they look better than last night's batch.

Steiner breaks up a chokeslam attempt and the bag guys take over with the bicep curl elbow getting two. Scott charges into a boot in the corner and the tag brings in Hogan to clean house. The fans chant for Hogan and Sid isn't happy. The big boot drops Jarrett and Hogan loads up the legdrop, only to charge into a chokeslam....for the pin due to reasons that I don't want to understand.

Rating: D. So now they're just flat out ripping off the main event of Wrestlemania VIII, right down to the tag match that set it up. Sid is a heel now, meaning the top faces are once again Hogan and Sting with.....Vampiro in third place I guess. Bad match, but like I said earlier, do they have a better option than Hogan vs. Sid right now? Hogan vs. a monster is as simple of an idea as you can have, even in 2000.

Sid talks trash to Hogan to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. WCW at this point is in a weird place as they're getting the most out of what they have, but the ceiling is so low on what they can accomplish that it's not saying much. This was more watchable than Uncensored as they're keeping the wrestling short, but the stories are just not doing it. They're such basic ideas with people who can't back it up in the ring and that's not going to work in either the short term or the long term.

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