

Monday Nitro – April 10, 2000: Kevin Nash Said It Best

Monday Nitro #235

Date: April 10, 2000

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Attendance: 9,074

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Scott Hudson

It's kind of hard to preview this show as it's all about the company being reset. Russo and Bischoff are coming in to a bigger reception than Hogan back in 1994 because they're writers and therefore more important than anything else. Since WCW is stupid, this is also the go home show for Spring Stampede, which has nothing set up so far. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Most of the roster is in and around the ring to start. More come out as this isn't the most thrilling start. Jeff Jarrett gets to talk first because we're just lucky that way. He came here to be the WCW World Champion but his master plan got derailed by some good old boys who couldn't compete in his league. Jeff gets to the point and calls for the man himself: Vince Russo.

The Long Island accent with a Russo attached talks about making the WWF what it was before coming here to beat Vince McMahon at his own game. Within a few weeks, the new blood of WCW was making a change, but then the good old boy network kicked in. All the political BS in the back brought Russo down and all those people are sitting at home watching him now.

Then they decided that a change had to come and Russo was sent home. Even some of the wrestlers knew the change would suck. The Radicalz knew it and left. Scott Steiner knew it and got suspended. Well now the good old boys network is gone and it's time for the young guys to rise. This brings out Bischoff and they hug, giving us the new power team. The good old boys network screwed both of them over with Bischoff listing Diamond

Dallas Page, Sid Vicious and Hulk Hogan in particular.

We see Sting, Luger, Sid and Page watching on a monitor in the back. Bischoff goes on about Hogan, even apologizing to everyone in the ring for how much trouble Hogan caused them. Now Bischoff wants to see the old guys so here they come. "What's up Sid? No softball game?"

Page doesn't know what Eric is smoking so Bischoff tells him to screw off. Bischoff takes credit for rebuilding Sting's career as the announcers sound like they're in awe of this. A level playing field where everyone has to earn their spot is promised but first Russo has something to say to Ric Flair. After promising to wipe Flair off the bottom of his shoe, Russo drops the bombshell: all titles are vacant.

The bored crowd chants for Goldberg as Sid says he won't give up his title. Bischoff comes up to him and threatens the end of Sid's career. "What's the matter Sid? Can't find your scissors?" Madden: "WOW!" The fans are silent so Bischoff repeats the line. Amazingly enough, the fans are still silent. Sid finally hands it over and Eric announces that all champions will be crowned at Spring Stampede.

That one part where Bischoff mentioned an inside reference and no one reacted sums up this show thing. This was a twenty minute segment made up almost entirely of insider stories and statements that went over the heads of probably 98% of the audience. What good old boys network is he talking about and how did they ruin what Russo had going on? Yeah I know what they're talking about because it's 2015 and this is all ancient history. How many people had any idea what they were talking about in 2000? Also of course ignore the fact that this is Russo yet AGAIN blaming everyone else for his ideas bombing.

This was a long segment to set up the new Russo and Bischoff regime and let them get in their shots at Vince and all of their other enemies (read as anyone else who has ever had a different idea) as the fans are left sitting there wondering what in the world is going on. Finally, it really doesn't instill me with confidence when the new writers who are supposed to save the company are basically saying "yeah this is too complicated for us to fix so let's just reset the whole thing instead of booking our

way out of it.” That’s quite the opening impression.

Hogan arrives.

During the break, all the wrestlers in the ring left.

Sting and Hogan talk about what just happened and Sting says Bischoff might as well have just kicked Hogan between the legs. Sting: “I’m not ribbing you.”

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Total Package

This isn’t a tournament for the title, but rather a tournament to face Jeff Jarrett for the title on Sunday. Page’s music stops halfway through his entrance and he has no pyro. Because he has to prove himself you see. Prove himself in the World Title tournament he’s already in that is.

Luger, as in the guy who was out most of last year and hasn’t had an important win since Halloween Havoc, doesn’t have music either as he comes to the ring as one of five potential World Title winners. It’s ten minutes after the promise of a level playing field and they’re already defying their own logic. In case you’re wondering, Page’s last major win would probably be.....well also at Halloween Havoc.

The match starts slow with both guys looking like they’re in their 40s who are out there for a healthy paycheck. The announcers ignore the match to talk about Bischoff riding Hogan’s coattails in another argument that no common fan would care about. Luger stomps Page in the corner and chokes with a boot as Madden makes fun of Page as is his custom.

Some backbreakers have Page in trouble AND IT’S ANGLE TIME! Buff Bagwell comes out with full music and pyro to distract Luger, allowing Page to get in a low blow. Tony: “What’s going to happen next in this program? It’s only segment two!” Luger and his gonads of steel shrug off the low blow and Page gets powerslammed, only to have Buff go after Liz for a distraction. That would be the second distraction of the match and it allows Page to Diamond Cut Luger for the pin. He gets about half a second of music before they cut it off again.

Rating: D-. Oh man this show is going to SUCK. They had a four and a half minute match between two veterans who have to prove themselves and it took two distractions and a no sold low blow to put Luger down. This is going to be the old Russo idea of running an angle or three in every match because the fans are too stupid to just watch a match without some bonus entertainment to carry them through. Oh and great: we might even get Luger vs. Bagwell out of this. Again. For like the dozenth time.

Hogan can't find Bischoff.

Hennig asks Russo why he isn't in the World Title scene. Russo gives him Jarrett tonight and if he wins, he gets in the World Title match on Sunday. So there are officially three semi-final matches for two spots in a final? Now they're ignoring the laws of numbers.

Here's Tank Abbott to say he's a shootfight and not a wrestler. Well we've known that for months but at least it's confirmed. Tank came here for Goldberg and what a coincidence that Goldberg got hurt the week Tank arrived. Starting tonight, he's going to beat up innocent bystanders until Goldberg comes back. First up: Mark Madden, who loses his shirt in the beating.

Jarrett tells Russo that it better be good.

Kidman tells Torrie he wants to do this.

Hogan is given directions to Bischoff's office. These three scenes took a combined 15 seconds.

Hogan finds Bischoff and they talk in an office.

Here's Kidman with a microphone. He feels like he's been handed a get out of jail free card because he and the rest of the New Blood (of course it's an official thing now) have been held down by the old guys. Kidman wants to talk about Hulk Hogan, who has been talking about him a lot lately. Hogan doesn't have the heart and talent that Kidman have and it's taken all those years of spotlight to give Hogan that grotesque orange tan. He calls Hogan out and wouldn't you know it, Hogan is walking past a monitor in the back.

Hogan comes out and thankfully Hudson explains what the heck Kidman is talking about, because Kidman certainly didn't go into details about it. Again: WCW assumes that all of the fans are on the internet reading everything. Hogan says Kidman gives the young guys in this business a bad name. He brings up Torrie and Kidman goes after him, which Tony declares as the world turning upside down.

They fight to the floor with Hogan getting the better of it (expected) and beating Kidman up even more back inside. Cue Bischoff with a chair. Hogan runs his hand over his eyebrow and gets hit with the chair, drawing blood right where his hand went over the eyebrow. I remember seeing that as a kid and yelling at my TV how fake it looked. Kidman gets a cover and pin with Bischoff counting the three, in what is probably the only time Hogan lays down for him, or anyone for that matter.

Ric Flair arrives.

Hogan wants Bischoff and Kidman and swears a lot.

Flair watches the opening segment in the back and comes to the ring. Ric talks about Russo growing up as a Flair fan (not likely in New York but whatever) and now he thinks Flair is old. In this town, Brian Griese (current Denver Broncos quarterback) throws a lot of touchdown passes but that doesn't make fans forget about John Elway because in this town, Elway is the man. Flair was always great at throwing in the sports analogies and getting easy pops (not a bad thing) for them.

Bischoff has the guts to walk up to come to Ric face to face and he isn't wasting money on attorneys again, so get out here right now. Instead Flair gets Scott Steiner, who calls Flair's teeth crooked. All of the WWF's current champions came from WCW (no, they didn't) because Flair and company ran them off. Steiner puts in some fake teeth to do a Flair impression, allowing Shane Douglas to return and attack Flair.

Kevin Nash returns on crutches.

Bret Hart is in the crowd.

Flair is looking for Douglas.

As luck would have it, Douglas is with Gene, who gets more emotional than you'll ever see him over what Shane just did. Douglas says that was the beginning of Flair's road and he's going to do whatever he wants.

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Sid Vicious vs. Sting

Now this would be the semi-finals to advance to the final for the final as opposed to the semi-final for the final. Got that? These guys get their music all the way to the ring because Russo and Bischoff have already forgotten that story. Sting sidesteps a charge to start and kicks Sid onto the turnbuckle, setting up a splash to send Sid outside. Sid comes back and mocks the crowd a bit as I had already forgotten he turned heel a few weeks ago. Back in and Sting's splash hits knees (not feet as Tony calls them) to keep Sid in control.

A cobra clutch slam gets two before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Cue the Wall with a table and the referee gets put down. Sid powerbombs Sting (now the Millennium Bomb. I kind of dig that name actually) but gets chaired in the back. Wall chokeslams Sid through the table and that's a countout because SID'S BODY LAYING ON A BROKEN TABLE isn't enough to make the referee think anything is up.

Rating: D. These two have been having decent to good matches for eleven years and it took Vince Russo less than seven minutes (longest match of the night of course) to screw that up. Wall going after Sid could be one heck of a mess, but at least it's another young guy getting a push against a veteran.

Here's Ric Flair to challenge Shane Douglas for later tonight. Not next week, not at the pay per view, not at some point in the future. Tonight, because Russo doesn't understand what it means to build to a match. That being said, Flair is the only person here who hasn't sounded stupid. It's almost like he knows what he's doing.

Hogan is still on a rampage.

Back from a break and Hogan is still on a rampage and beats up Shannon Moore and Shane Helms for not knowing where Kidman is.

Clip of the Ready to Rumble premiere.

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Jeff Jarrett vs. Curt Hennig

I guess this is a tournament match. I mean, the winner goes to the title match on Sunday so why not. They start brawling in the aisle despite no personal issue between the two of them. Curt takes him over to the announcers' table for a beating before Jeff clotheslines him down inside. We get the Jarrett sleeper/suplex sequence but here's the debuting Shawn Stasiak (formerly Meat in the WWF) to what sounds like Curt Hennig's old Mr. Perfect music.

The distraction makes Hennig throw a wild back elbow which Jarrett ducks and the referee gets bumped. I can't say it hit the referee because it didn't come close but Little Naitch went down anyway. Stasiak comes in and mostly fails at lifting Hennig up for a fireman's carry before dropping him in what can be most accurately described as a reverse F5. It was so botched that there's really no describing the move. The Stroke gives Jeff the pin.

Rating: D+. For those of you counting, this is the third match that has ended as a result of someone interfering. It's clear that WCW has decided they know what we want as wrestling fans and if we object we're not giving them enough of a chance. The match could have been good had it been a match and not a punching fest, but these two are just wrestlers and no one would want to see that.

Hogan is storming through sky boxes to find Bischoff.

Nash tells someone to get here if they can.

Sting says he is loyalty and he's coming after Russo's golden boy on Sunday.

Ric Flair vs. Shane Douglas

Both guys are in street clothes. They're quickly on the floor with Ric firing off chops, followed by a low blow back inside. Hudson goes off about Douglas talking trash about Flair on the dirt sheets as Shane kicks Flair low. Cue Russo with a bat to hit Flair and that's a DQ.

Russo steals Flair's watch.

Here's Kevin Nash, who immediately rips on the new bosses who are trying to be wrestlers and screw over some of the boys. He wants to know what happened to that sweet little wrestling show we had every Monday? Like, where is the Dog when you need him? Nash has been talking to Hall, who wants to come back soon. Neither Bischoff or Russo would be here if not for he and Hall, especially Russo who they had to save from Shawn Michaels over and over. This brings out the debuting and reigning ECW World Champion to beat Nash down. Awesome wants some of this opportunity that Russo and Bischoff are offering.

Hogan is on the phone in his limo and demanding Kidman soon. The Hummer (from last summer, now white instead of black) comes up and crushes the limo. Bischoff and Kidman get out and celebrate.

WCW World Title Tournament Final: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Sting

The winner gets Jarrett on Sunday so Jeff is on commentary. Page is thrown outside to start before a pair of Stinger Splashes put him down again. The Deathlock is broken up by an arm in the ropes and Page gets two off a belly to belly. Jarrett goes after Kimberly so Page head outside, allowing Vampiro to run in give Sting the Nail in the Coffin. A Diamond Cutter sends Page to Spring Stampede.

Rating: D. I'm almost done with this show. It's almost over. If I can get through a few more minutes, this will finally be over. Then I can watch ANYTHING ELSE and see a different finish, because it's clear that we're going to be seeing a lot of the same things over and over again and it's going to get more and more annoying every week. This was just a brief workout until the ending happened, as all the matches have been so far.

Jarrett swings the guitar at Page but hits Kimberly instead.

After a break, Jarrett comes out for the closing speech. He talks about six days before his destiny is fulfilled when he is finally crowned WCW World Champion. Cue Page to beat Jarrett down but Scott Steiner hits the ring to make it 2-1. Luger, now a face I guess, comes in to help Page but Bagwell, Vampiro and Wall came in. By George WE'VE GOT STABLE WARS!!!

Sting's save doesn't work as Booker T. (yes T.) comes in to help the New Blood. The New Blood obliterates the Millionaire's Club as Russo and Bischoff come out to watch. They go to leave but an angry Bret Hart is waiting for them to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. I can't call it a failure because they had an idea but that doesn't mean it was a well executed idea. Nash summed it up best: what happened to the wrestling show? It's very clear that under Russo and Bischoff, this has stopped being a wrestling show and is now just a poorly written drama.

The idea of having the youth vs. the old guys is solid, but when the stuff like "they have to earn their music and pyro" is literally forgotten fifteen minutes after it starts and the stories are almost all based around dirtsheets that wouldn't be frequently read today, those stories are quickly forgotten. That's Russo in a nutshell: yeah there are ideas there, but the ton of horrible stuff on top of them crush any positives.

Either way, this show was not good. It had a lot going on, but that doesn't mean it's a good show. Spring Stampede feels like it has the potential to be an even bigger disaster and I'm terrified to think what we might have to sit through in order to form Russo and Bischoff's vision for WCW.

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