

Monday Nitro – December 18, 2000: They've Still Got It

Monday Nitro #271

Date: December 18, 2000

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Attendance: 2,872

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mark Madden

Since even WCW isn't stupid enough to hold a TV show on Christmas night or New Year's Day, this is the last Monday Nitro of 2000. It's also the night after Starrcade and a grand total of nothing happened. Steiner is still World Champion, Goldberg is still undefeated (and still feuding with Lex Luger for whatever reason) and the Insiders are still a thing because of reasons. Let's get to it.

Ric Flair welcomes us to the show and talks about how awesome tonight is going to be. We'll be seeing Buff Bagwell vs. Goldberg but more importantly we're going to find out who is going to challenge Steiner for the World Title at Sin. Flair implies that it might be multiple opponents, which would at least be a bit more interesting.

Quick recap of last night's show with a traditional highlight package.

Opening sequence.

Shannon Moore vs. Shane Helms

Winner gets the title shot and for some reason Helms doesn't get an introduction. They shake hands and start with a fast paced pinfall reversal sequence before Shane turns things up by throwing him over the top by the hair. Shannon pulls him to the floor for a hurricanrana, only to get powerslammed off the top for two. The X Plex (arm trap German suplex) gets two on Shannon before he misses a hurricanrana, allowing Shane to get in a great looking top rope sunset flip for two. Instead the Vertebreaker puts Shannon away with ease.

Rating: B-. This was the old school cruiserweight formula with both guys just doing high spots to wake the crowd up. It's sad that the company had to go out so soon after this as the division was definitely undergoing a renaissance around this time and it could have been interesting to see where things were going.

Chavo runs in to go after Shane but gets laid out as well.

Hugh Morrus yells at Lash for saving Chavo last night.

Here's Scott Steiner with something to say. Scott thinks Flair is taking his job as CEO way too seriously because he can't handle being an average champion by comparison. Steiner dominates while Flair had to squeak by and being CEO is a tough job because Flair can't find any wrestlers to fight him. Maybe Flair can convince Diamond Dallas Page to get a sex change so he has the balls to face him. That line was allegedly a shoot and led to a fight in the back where Steiner went after Page's eyes and caused Page and Nash to walk out.

This brings out Ric to say he's going to make Sin's main event a three way match with a mini tournament tonight to decide on one opponent. Ric isn't going to announce who the four participants are so Steiner doesn't lay them all out. On top of that, there's going to be a mystery opponent who will be here tonight.

Jimmy Hart does his DJ challenge.

Buff Bagwell laughs at Goldberg spelling "stuff" wrong when he signed a copy of his book. Now Bagwell is here to save the company and has formed a new tag team called Totally Buff. Before Luger can say anything, Scott Steiner comes in and almost begs Luger to help him find out who is in the mini tournament.

Hardcore Title: Terry Funk vs. Meng

Meng is challenging and has Paisley/Kwee Wee with him. Funk pops up on screen to call Meng out to the back for a fight in a cage. Meng heads back to fight him and it's just in the regular places instead of a cage. I guess old people who are here for no apparent reason are false

advertisers as well. They hit each other with some weapons and Funk gets handcuffed. Funk actually begs off, only to say Meng has a big nose.

We get the hit/walk sequence with Meng beating him back into the arena and then the ring. Funk gets in a trashcan shot of his own but Meng shrugs it off and sets up a table. Meng's splash goes through the table instead of Funk but that's not sold either. The Death Grip goes on, only to have Crowbar come out and hit Meng with the monkey wrench to give Funk the pin.

Rating: D-. How much good can come from a man in his mid 50s being hit with a trashcan? Apparently quite a bit in WCW's eyes as they seem perfectly happy to let it happen here and then again in his next title defense. It's almost like they're turning this into a joke, like almost everything else around here.

Crowbar, again with the crazy man look, wants Funk and the title at Sin.

Now Steiner wants Jarrett's help as well.

Vito wants to know where Reno's family values are. He's coming for Reno and the Thrillers.

Crowbar tells Mike Awesome to drop the 70s stuff. Didn't he already drop that nonsense?

Lance Storm vs. Rey Mysterio

This is the first qualifying match for the #1 contenders match. Before the match, Storm says it's time for him to win the one title he's never won. Rey has taped ribs coming in but still headscissors Storm down and grabs a rollup for two. Storm gets knocked into the corner and the referee takes a shot to the leg in what seemed like a real injury. A Lionsault hits Storm's raised knees and Storm gets two of his own off a backbreaker.

They head outside with Rey being sent hard into the barricade as they're going with a very simple and logical formula here. Back in and Rey scores with a clothesline (not a move I remember him ever using), only to get caught in an abdominal stretch. Rey gets out again but misses a

springboard splash to hurt the ribs even further. A headscissors puts Storm on the floor and Rey hits a running flip dive into a seated senton because Rey Mysterio is Spanish for what bad ribs. Now the springboard splash connects for two but a quick Mapleleaf makes Rey tap.

Rating: B. Take two talented wrestlers and let them have a good wrestling match with a simple story. What else were you really expecting out of something like this? It's also cool to see Storm get a chance at a slightly higher spot up on the card. I was really liking this and again I got WAY more out of a basic wrestling match like this over one of the multiple wild brawls last night at Starrcade.

Mike Awesome vs. Jeff Jarrett

This is the other qualifying match, but first of all let's have Awesome call himself a love doctor crossed with a career killer. I'm not sure how to take that one but it sounds like an upgrade. Awesome throws him up into the air for a big crash and a near fall, followed by a release German suplex. A Stunner across the top rope sends Awesome to the floor and Jeff puts him face first into a chair. Mike drive him back first into the apron a few times before going over to the announcers' table to complete a requirement.

A powerbomb is broken up with a low blow however and Jeff gets in that dropkick of his for two. Awesome shrugs it off (well it was just a dropkick) and gets two off a Batista Bomb. Mike uses a lifting Pedigree of all things (Stevie Ray's Slapjack, which I guess is fair game now) for two but the referee gets bumped a few seconds later. Jeff gets the guitar but it's quickly taken away, only to have Jarrett pull out another one to knock Awesome silly for the pin.

Rating: C-. Nowhere near as entertaining as the previous match as Awesome really isn't someone who does well outside of the high impact style, which isn't exactly Jarrett's forte. It wasn't terrible or anything but that guitar shot is turning into one of the most overused finishes I've ever seen.

Steiner goes after Jarrett in the back but Jeff says he wants in the title match to watch Steiner's back.

Glacier is still returning and Norman Smiley dances in happiness.

Shane Douglas wants to fight Hugh Morrus again on Thunder and wants the Misfits involved. He's hired Kronik to make sure everything is all nice and fair.

Clip of Goldberg on the Man Show.

Awesome freaks out in the back.

No Nitro for the next two weeks.

The Cat vs. Alex Wright

For some reason Cat asks Wright to dance some more. Alex does so but Cat says he'd rather see Madden get in the ring and dance. Thankfully that goes nowhere (the last thing we need is Madden thinking more people care about him) and it's Cat missing his kicks to start. Alex throws him out to the floor as Madden gets up and runs away, likely due to the announcers talking about the Insiders for reasons that aren't exactly clear. They trade drink shots as Madden is now back on commentary and a big Wright fan.

Back in and a Saito suplex gets two for Alex and it's right back to the floor. They go inside again as it's clear that Wright doesn't have much of an idea of what to do with this much time. An armbar goes nowhere so Alex cranks on the other arm. Cat gets up for a quick Feliner and the pin.

Rating: D-. You know, you can come up with a lot of reasons why WCW wasn't anything worth watching around this time and this is another added to the pile: a lot of the wrestling was absolutely horrible. It's never a good sign when the only good thing about a match is the fact that Ms. Jones looked great. Horribly uninteresting stuff here as people shouldn't be repeating spots in a six minute match.

The Thrillers arrive in a limo.

Scott Steiner beats up some cruiserweights because they're around and not doing anything else.

Here are the Thrillers for a chat. Sanders makes trailer park jokes and then stands around wasting time. Eventually he says they give the children something to look up to and men a reason to get in the gym. Mike rips on the Insiders for not being here tonight and says they'll be defending the titles at Sin.

Their opponents will be...announced later as here's Ric Flair to brag about how many women he would get back in the Horsemen days. Anyway, Perfect Event is awesome but they'll be involved in a tag team battle royal on Thunder to determine the #1 contenders. This took WAY too long to get to the point but you had to expect something like that with Sanders on the mic.

Buff Bagwell vs. Goldberg

It's a chase to start but Luger is waiting on the floor with a chair to hit Goldberg for the DQ at about thirty seconds. Why not hit Bagwell so Goldberg loses via DQ? Oh and a better question: WHY IS THIS FEUD GOING TO THREE FREAKING PAY PER VIEWS???

Goldberg gets beaten down until Sarge comes in for the save.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Lance Storm

The winner goes to the title match at Sin. Feeling out process to start with Jarrett hiptossing him down but getting kicked away. Jeff takes him into the corner but gets tossed to the floor. Storm misses a dive to the floor and tweaks his knee, setting up a very quick Figure Four. The hold is turned over again and Storm gets two off a crucifix as this is the most technical match WCW has had in months. Jeff throws him onto the top for a superplex and a near fall. Jarrett's enziguri misses and he has to get over to the ropes to save himself. A Stroke out of nowhere sends Jeff to Sin.

Rating: C. This was BEGGING for five more minutes but we were lucky enough to get the Cat vs. Alex Wright instead. Other than that it was a fun match though with two guys who can work a basic yet still entertaining style as well as anyone else. It wasn't a classic or anything but what else were you expecting here?

Post match Steiner runs out and demands to know who the mystery man is. He heads to the back and sees Flair but a masked man jumps him and beats the champ down to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. I'm as shocked as you are but there was a heck of a show and a masterpiece by WCW's standards. They kept the stupid things on low tonight and just had wrestling matches that advanced stories and helped set up the pay per view. Given that they're out of two weeks of Nitro due to the holidays, this was a night where they had to get A LOT done and believe it or not they actually pulled it off. This is likely the final good episode and I can actually live with that.

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