

Monday Nitro – February 5, 2001: After All This Time

Monday Nitro #276

Date: February 5, 2001

Location: Bankcorpsouth Center, Tupelo, Mississippi

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Tony Schiavone

Things are starting to build up towards SuperBrawl and the unbelievably fresh MEGA SHOWDOWN between Scott Steiner and Kevin Nash because that's what's going to get the young'uns talking about WCW as they walk through the airport. If nothing else maybe we can go a full week without Animal squashing two cruiserweights for the sake of....what was the point of that again? If pushing Animal is their idea of drawing money, close the doors now. Let's get to it.

On a side note: I've been doing this series for about five and a half years, have a month and a half to go and NOW they're being put on the Network? Hopefully they at least get the rest of them up before I wrap this show.

We actually open with Flair and Animal in the ring, yelling at Nash in the aisle. They insult each other and Flair tells Nash to come say that to his face. Animal comes to meet Nash in the aisle and is quickly beaten down, leaving Flair all alone to take a big boot. As luck would have it, the rest of the troops arrive in the back with Mike Sanders telling them what's going on.

Nash keeps beating on Flair and starts ripping his clothes off because that's what you do to a man in his 50s. Flair's pants are ripped off, revealing University of Florida underwear. Nash takes down the straps and loads up the Jackknife as the troops come out. They back off due to the threat of Nash breaking Ric's neck but Nash says he has a negotiator with....the Cat.

Nash cranks on Ric's neck as Cat says he's running the show tonight. Ric makes some weird noises which translate to Cat being in charge here.

First up, Steiner will be fighting four cruiserweights in one match tonight. Once he gets done with that, he can fight Diamond Dallas Page. If THAT'S not enough, Steiner can defend the title against Kevin Nash and a mystery partner. If Nash wins, Flair has to resign at midnight tonight. Got all that?

After a break, Flair is still leaving the ring.

Scott Steiner vs. Jung Dragons/Noble and Karagias

The beating is on quickly as Steiner is in street clothes. Yang dares to break up the push-ups with a springboard Fameasser and all four combined finally get in some offense on the champ. Steiner kicks out of a four man cover and it's time for the suplexes. Everyone is out so Steiner puts three of them on top of each other for a triple Recliner for the win.

Rating: F. If this is the new direction for the cruiserweights, they might as well bring back Oklahoma and Madusa to fight over the title instead. If nothing else it might be a bit less embarrassing and one sided than going through this kind of a mess again. Steiner just beat up four people, one of them a former Cruiserweight Champion, in three minutes. Those are four of the people who worked hard and put their bodies on the line at Starrcade in a ladder match and this is their reward about six weeks later. Why would those people want to stick around at this point if this is as good as it gets for them?

Flair rants about what happened tonight.

The good guys are ready and Cat gives Brian Adams a match with Buff tonight.

Rick Steiner is ready to win the US Title. Wasn't the rule that Flair couldn't know about it?

Gene asks Adams about Animal hitting Brian Clark in the head with a chair last week on Nitro, which now apparently has blue ring skirts that say Thunder and has replays with a THUNDER graphic in the corner. Anyway the point is Kronik is tough.

Buff is WAY too fine with this match and Flair is all happy. Totally Buff

vs. Kronik is made for SuperBrawl because let's have them go four times in about six weeks.

US Title: Rick Steiner vs. Shane Douglas

Shane is defending and has a big cast on his hand. A few shots to the head and back have Rick in trouble but the referee takes a chair away from the champ. Rick pops back up and sends Shane outside for a ram into the announcers' table but Douglas gets in a shot on the way back in.

The reverse Hennig necksnap has Rick in trouble for all of five seconds before he starts coming back with the usual. The Steiner Bulldog is knocked out of the air with a cast shot, only to have Rick suplex him a few more times. Shane might as well just quit now as Steiner clearly isn't going to sell a thing for him. The Steiner Driver gives us a new champ in a clean pin.

Rating: D-. Sure why not. I mean you're pushing Scott to the moon so why not give his less talented brother the midcard title? This was basically wiping Shane out as Steiner took everything he had and just shrugged it off, as he does to everyone else around here. Bad match of course, but then again when is the last time Rick had a good one?

Steiner does his catchphrases post match.

Flair tells Chavo Guerrero Jr. that he has a special opponent for him from Mexico.

Here's Dustin Rhodes to say Ric Flair will never forget his name. Ric comes up on screen and says Dustin is fired, meaning his mic is cut and we abruptly go to a commercial.

Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Non-title. They start fast with Steiner hammering away but running into a swinging Rock Bottom for two. The fight heads outside as the announcers talk about how Page's mission is to hit a Diamond Cutter. Not beat Steiner or any nonsense like that, but just hit his finisher to soften Steiner up for Nash. You know, our real hero.

Steiner takes over and puts Page in the Tree of Woe for the upside down choke, followed by a suplex. We hit the elbow into the push-ups but Steiner spends too much time posing, allowing Page to come back with right hands. The spinning belly to belly gets two so Steiner shoves the referee. Page gets in a Diamond Cutter out of nowhere as the referee calls for the DQ.

Rating: D+. The time really hurt this one but I could picture these two having a strong match if they were allowed to actually go somewhere. Page doing his big comebacks against the monster Steiner has potential though I really can't imagine Page pulling it off. The formula would be similar to the famous Goldberg match though and that works just fine.

Page leaves through the crowd but he gets beaten down by Jeff Jarrett and a returning Kanyon.

Back from a break and Page can barely walk.

Jarrett and Kanyon run off in a limo.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. El Nino

Non-title and Nino is a pretty small guy under a mask. Chavo quickly takes him down to start as the announcers point out how few Mexican cruiserweights are left. Chavo runs him over and gets two off a suplex to start. A springboard cross body is countered into a backbreaker for two before Chavo starts firing off chops. Nina sends him to the floor for a nice plancha but stops for a lap around the ring.

The delay lets Chavo suplex him on the floor but Nino snaps off a top rope hurricanrana. Chavo takes him down again and puts on a chinlock as the announcers finally start paying attention again. Nino snaps off a headscissors but takes an ax handle to the back. Back up and Nino does the 619 around the ropes, followed by a sitout bulldog. The springboard seated senton gives Nino the big upset.

Rating: C+. I'm not really sure what the point was in having Mysterio (they weren't exactly hiding it) win here, or why Flair would give him this match in the first place but it's not like Chavo is a champion who

shouldn't be losing here or anything. The match was fine and I'm looking forward to seeing what they can do with some more time, though I'm not wild on having them fight this close to the pay per view.

Of course it's Rey Mysterio.

Lance Storm/Mike Awesome vs. Chuck Palumbo/Sean O'Haire

Non-title. Before the match, Storm promises to become the first Canadian Commissioner at SuperBrawl. Awesome and O'Haire get things going for a chop off until Awesome throws him down with a German suplex. O'Haire rolls to the floor so Mike takes him down with a plancha over the top. In the meantime, Storm missile dropkicks Palumbo down as I'm not sure who I'm supposed to be cheering for as the Canadians are definitely wrestling like good guys.

Back in and O'Haire blasts Storm with a clothesline before Palumbo gets two off a powerslam. Awesome gets drawn in so the champs can stomp Storm in the corner. Not that it matters as Storm hits a leg lariat and makes the tag, only to have Awesome get caught in a hot shot.

Not that it matters as Awesome comes back with a slam on Sean to set up the Awesome Splash with Palumbo making the save. Everything breaks down and it's time to fire off some big kicks. Storm gets poked in the eye and grabs the Mapleleaf on Awesome by mistake. He eventually realizes what's going on but gets sent outside, setting up the Jungle Kick into the Seanton Bomb for the pin.

Rating: B-. If he had even the slightest bit of charisma, Storm could have been money as a face. Awesome on the other hand could have been amazing no matter what role you put him in, save for a fat chick thriller or That 70s Guy. There aren't many names above Awesome on the "What if" list in WCW and it's a shame that he never did anything in WWE either.

Jindrak and Stasiak think that was luck.

Buff Bagwell vs. Brian Adams

There's no bell as Adams superkicks Buff in a surprising bit of offense. The gorilla press and a clothesline put Bagwell on the floor as the

announcers hype up a No Substitution match at SuperBrawl, which is apparently going to lead to a handicap match because Clark is out with an injury. Back in and Buff scores with a dropkick before we hit the chinlock less than three minutes in.

Another chinlock keeps things slow, which is probably best given Buff's questionable motivation from week to week. Back up and a double clothesline lets them lay around even more. You know, in case two chinlocks didn't cover their resting quota. Cue Luger but Clark comes out to intercept him. Buff gets two off a double arm DDT until Animal decks Clark from behind. Adams comes back with a full nelson slam but the bell rings....for a time limit draw....at 5:44.

Rating: F. For five minutes and forty four seconds. Fine enough if WCW just has to have TV time limits back (as if any WCW TV match ever comes close to ten minutes at this point) but how in the world do you get it THAT wrong? I can understand even up to like two minutes but this felt more like a five minute time limit where they forgot to cut the time. I know WCW thinks its fans are the stupidest people on the planet but I think they can tell time. The match was what you would expect from Bagwell vs. Adams anyway so the time was hardly the only problem here.

Adams gets racked post match.

Flair tells Scott Steiner that there's no interference in the match tonight. Steiner doesn't care and goes to the ring. I'm glad Flair's neck is fine after nearly having it broken an hour and a half ago.

Adams says these attacks just make Kronik stronger. He wants Luger on Thunder.

WCW World Title: Scott Steiner vs. Kevin Nash/???

Steiner is defending and the mystery partner is....Rick Steiner because Kevin Nash is a stupid man. I'm assuming Nash gets the title if Rick pins Scott. Rick suplexes him into a right hand from Nash and it's time to go outside. Scott sends Rick into the crowd but gets pulled back in by Nash. The champ begs away until he can hit Nash low and spit at his brother. A backbreaker gets two on Nash but Rick forearms Scott in the back,

knocking him into a side slam. Snake Eyes and a big boot set up the Jackknife but Rick comes in and turns on Nash because of course. Scott pins Nash to retain.

Rating: D. You knew it was coming because, again, WCW thinks its fans are going to fall for the same stuff time after time. I know I've said it before but here it is again: no one cares about Rick Steiner, who somehow got to work twice tonight and picked up the US Title in the process. If nothing else though, I'm scared of who will be the next face to help fight Flair and company, though I'm sure it's likely to be Dustin or Dusty because COWBOYS ARE AWESOME.

The Steiners go to celebrate as Nash says he's got some more left. Cue Page with a chair to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. There was some good wrestling in the middle but having four Steiner matches in a night is a bit too much for me. They're making Scott look like a monster but can anyone explain to me why the cruiserweights had to get squashed? You can't throw the Mamalukes, as in the designated jobbers of the tag division, out there to get beaten up? It's not like they're doing anything else or putting on awesome matches when they're in the ring like the cruiserweights are doing.

I'll give them this though: there's a goal in mind here with getting Scott over as a monster. While it may not be the best story long term, at least it's something and could build up to a big moment when someone takes the title off of him. That's a lot better than proving Vince Russo's MANLINESS or having Sting turn heel despite not really being a heel or whatever else was going on a year or so ago. Now if they can get rid of Rick Steiner and actually have Scott as the top heel instead of sharing the spot with Flair we might get to a more interesting story, but this is a good enough step.

Unfortunately it's not a great show because as usual WCW has no idea how to cut back on the focusing so much on the same story. The stable war thing is getting annoying as WCW has done it so many times but the bigger problem is how they keep hammering that story home. It's by far the biggest thing going on here and if you don't like that, don't bother

watching. That's a WCW/Bischoff trope and it has never worked for me, much like it doesn't here.

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