

Monday Nitro – February 26, 2001: Down The Stretch They Come

Monday Nitro #279

Date: February 26, 2001

Location: Lakefront Arena, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

We had a pretty good show on Wednesday so maybe we're in for something a bit better than usual this week. The big story is Diamond Dallas Page as the latest great hope against the Magnificent Seven and at least the big match should be better than the mess of Steiner vs. Nash. Let's get to it.

We open with Kronik having been laid out in the back and Doug Dillinger accusing Totally Buff and Team Canada of being behind it. Ric comes in to tell Doug that he's got this. Tony doesn't seem convinced.

Scott Steiner beats up a backstage worker for not knowing where Diamond Dallas Page is. As luck would have it, Page is in the arena and calling Steiner out at the same time. Steiner hits the ring and calls out Page with some insults to the fans. Page is still in the crowd and says he's just playing mind games. One of those guys Steiner beat up and put in the hospital is on his way back here tonight to get a piece of the champ. Page says there's only some Cajun Crazies in between him and Steiner so come get him. Good stuff here from Page as he's easily the best of all the good old boys at this point.

We get the brackets for the Cruiserweight Tag Team Title tournament.

Rey Mysterio Jr./Kidman

Johnny Swinger/Jason Lee

Evan Karagias/Shannon Moore

Jamie Knoble/Scotty O.

Elix Skipper/???

Air Paris/AJ Styles

Jung Dragons

Kwee Wee/Mike Sanders

Cruiserweight Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Rey Mysterio Jr./Kidman vs. Johnny Swinger/Jason Lee

Lee was a regular in OVW and HWA but never did anything on the national stage. Swinger was in a fairly good tag team with Simon Diamond in ECW. Mysterio and Kidman get jumped as they get in the ring with Lee getting two off a sitout Rock Bottom. Kidman shrugs it off and feeds Lee into Rey but a Lionsault hits raised knees. Swinger poses over Rey and gets two of his own off a swinging neckbreaker.

A collision allows the double tag to bring in Kidman and Lee as everything breaks down. The baseball slide low blow sets up the Bronco Buster for two and Rey clotheslines them both off the apron. Not to be outdone, Kidman hits a shooting star off the top to the floor. Back in and the modified What's Up into the Kid Crusher puts Lee away.

Rating: C+. Totally watchable match here, even if the ending was never in doubt. Kidman and Mysterio are the kind of dream team that should win this whole thing or at least make the finals before an upstart heel team cheats to win. Kidman looked like his old self here, which means he was one of the most entertaining things around.

Here's a solemn Cat with something to say. Cat hates Kanyon for what he did to Ms. Jones last week and it's going to take everything to get to Kanyon with all the people he has to hide behind. It doesn't matter what it takes because Cat will fight through everyone to get his hands on Kanyon. Therefore he's stepping down as Commissioner because he can't be accountable for what he does.

This brings out Flair (Which can only refer to Ric again since that whole

“David is kidnapped” thing was dropped without any real resolution.) to say Cat is finally getting it. Cat can’t beat them or join them so all he can do is whatever Flair says. He can have Canyon at Greed so Cat tells him to get away. Flair wants to deal with Cat himself and there goes the jacket. Cat hits some horrible looking shots to an area around the collarbone and knocks Flair to the floor. Ric makes Cat vs. Rick Steiner for tonight.

Konnan, talking to someone off camera, is ready to find some soldiers to fight the Magnificent Seven.

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

Non-title. Before the match, Sean accuses the Canadians of attacking Kronik. Storm and Awesome aren’t afraid of the threats of murder so we’re joined in progress after a break. Palumbo jumps over Sean’s shoulders to land on Awesome’s ribs so it’s off to Storm, who is thrown down with a fall away slam.

The Canadians are smart enough to double team Palumbo in the corner to take over but Lex Luger’s entrance music plays to distract them. During the confusion, Canyon sneaks in and hits a Flatliner on O’Haire. Heel miscommunication (with Storm leaving a leg lariat short and landing at Awesome’s feet) doesn’t cause many problems as Storm grabs the Mapleleaf on Palumbo for the win.

Rating: D+. Can Lex Luger just go away? He wasn’t even here and he’s still getting annoying. I’m not sure I understand where they were going with this idea but I’m sure it’s going to lead to some faction war because that’s what WCW does these days. At least O’Haire didn’t take the loss here as it seems they have plans for him instead of just treating him like another guy.

O’Haire wants Canyon tonight.

Flair tells Canyon to go get him.

Earlier today, Page said Steiner isn’t taking his legs and talked about breaking Steiner down mentally.

Rick Steiner vs. The Cat

Non-title again. Steiner clotheslines him down for an early two and they head outside to avoid any more of this wrestling stuff. Back in and Rick kicks him in the face before hitting the chinlock. Rick rips away at the face until Cat hits some kicks and a legsweep for one. The referee goes down so Cat hits an enziguri to send Rick outside. That means it's time for our hero to choke with a cord, drawing out Totally Buff for the save. As they should as that was ridiculous cheating. Hugh Morrus comes out for the save and a Feliner puts Rick away.

Rating: D. Of all the people they could have put over Rick, they picked the Cat? I really don't get the love affair with the guy as they seem to think Cat is the greatest thing that has happened to WCW in years. He's good on the mic but at some point you have to have a good match. Not a great one, but you would think he would have at least cracked good in the years he's been around here.

Scott Steiner runs in for the beatdown and Page's save attempt fails. This brings out the returning Booker T. to go after Scott as the good guys clear the ring. After some weak insults from Scott, Booker throws out a challenge for a six man tag.

Booker T./The Cat/Diamond Dallas Page vs. Scott Steiner/Totally Buff

Did Morrus just dissolve? Flair jumps in on commentary as the good guys control to start. Things settle down with Cat uppercutting Buff in the throat and Page getting two off a Batista Bomb. It's off to Luger and Booker with the latter hitting a hook kick to the air next to Luger's face for two. Cat comes back in (not a good idea) and Luger takes him down with the running forearm.

The bad guys take turns on Cat, including Scott getting in a chair shot to the face. We hit the double arm crank minus any actual cranking which sets up missed tag. Cat finally hits a jumping kick to Luger's jaw and the hot tag brings in Page, who is cut off just as quickly. Luger's powerslam getting two doesn't agree with Flair. A double clothesline allows the real hot tag to Booker as everything breaks down.

Scott and Booker have the big slugout with Booker getting the better of it and scoring with a missile dropkick for two. We get the return of the Spinarooni but Totally Buff beats Booker down. Cat gets caught in the Recliner but there's a Diamond Cutter to Steiner. Buff gets in a Blockbuster on Page but he walks into the Bookend. A quick ax kick puts Steiner away.

Rating: B. Cat aside, this was a wrestling match which got time and stayed hot during the entire second half. It's so rare to see the wrestling actually being treated like something serious and setting up a potential challenger to the World Title. I had a good time with this match and Booker looked sharp in his return.

Back from a break and Scott is livid, wrecking everything he can find.

The good guys are proud of their win.

We recap Dustin Rhodes vs. Jeff Jarrett which seems to be more about Dusty Rhodes than anything else. Dustin turned down a spot in the Magnificent Seven so the team started going after him. This included Jarrett imitating Dusty in an unfunny segment last week to further set Dustin off. They fight tonight.

Dustin is ready to get his revenge.

Shannon Moore vs. Shane Helms

Evan Karagias is in Shannon's corner. Shane starts very fast with a TKO onto the knee and a neckbreaker for no cover. A running sitout powerbomb out of the corner (dubbed the Sugar Bomb for a stupid name) gets two on Shannon but he kicks Shane to the floor for some cheap shots from Evan. Back in and a Whisper in the Wind gets two for Shannon but the Bottoms Up is countered into the Vertebreaker for the quick pin.

Rating: C+. This could have gone longer but the short time forced them to cram in everything they could into just a few minutes. Shane is getting a lot of well earned praise around this time but Shannon has been on a very strong roll of his own. I could have done with more of this and less of Evan but we seem to be stuck with him for some reason.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. comes out for the beatdown and leaves with Evan and Shannon.

Kid Romeo is still coming.

Kanyon vs. Sean O'Haire

O'Haire sneaks in from behind and crossbodies Kanyon to the floor as this feels more like a fight. Back in and Sean slowly hammers away until Kanyon hits him low in the corner. A middle rope Russian legsweep puts both of them down but O'Haire no sells a middle rope Fameasser. Kanyon misses a top rope splash, only to grab a sitout Alabama Slam for two. O'Haire throws him up in a fireman's carry and something like a reverse AA (O'Haire slammed him back down instead of flipping him over. You might remember it as the Widowmaker in his WWE run.), followed by the Seanton Bomb for the pin.

Rating: C+. More good stuff here as this has been one of the best shows they've had in a long time. O'Haire looking good is a very smart idea as WCW desperately needed to set up some guys for the future. Sean is one of the best possible ideas as he has the look, the energy and (most of) the in ring ability. It's not like they have many other options anyway.

The post match replay shows Booker pinning Scott by mistake.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Jeff Jarrett

Ric is guest referee and we get a quick Dusty impression from Jarrett before Dustin comes out. Dustin is as mad as you would expect him to be and knocks Jarrett to the floor to start. Ric won't allow some right hands in the corner though and Jeff cheap shots Rhodes to take over. They head outside with Dustin hammering away even more, followed by a superplex for the slow two count.

Ric low bridges Dustin to the floor and we get the sleeper reversal sequence to check that box off the list. Dustin's powerslam sets up a piledriver for the next slow motion two. That's finally enough for Dustin who loads up Shattered Dreams to Flair but has to block the guitar shot. Ric hits Dustin low and the Stroke gives Jeff the pin.

Rating: D. I wasn't feeling this one with the old crooked referee stuff throughout the match. It also doesn't help that Dustin vs. Jarrett is the least interesting story they have going on the show right now. I don't know why I'm supposed to care about Dustin Rhodes and the family feud with Flair all over again but it's really not working, especially with Dustin not exactly lighting the world on fire.

Page, Cat and Booker chase the villains off to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. There's a fresh energy here and while I have zero reason to believe it's going to last, this was a very easy show to watch. The wrestling worked very well throughout with the main event alone holding it back. The cruiserweights were on point all night and the six man was one of the better matches they've done in a long time. Good show here and hopefully they can keep it up over the next month.

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