

Monday Nitro – March 12, 2001: Best Left Forgotten

Monday Nitro #281

Date: March 12, 2001

Location: Knoxville Civic Coliseum, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

It's Greed week and that means we'll likely hear more about Dusty Rhodes and his rather unfunny stipulation for Sunday's tag match. Other than that it's time for the final push towards the pay per view, which hopefully means more of the pretty good Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page feud. Let's get to it.

We open with the new Mr. Electricity Jeff Jarrett coming out for a chat but Dustin Rhodes sneaks up on him and we're off in a hurry. Jeff comes back with some right hands of his own but stops to yell at some fans. Speaking of the fans, this is a really oddly designed arena as it has the lower level of seats, then what looks like an eight foot high black wall around the arena and then the upper levels. Dustin comes back with ten punches in the corner and then the Dustbuster (Shattered Dreams) to put Jeff down.

A security camera shows most of the Magnificent Seven arriving. Buff Bagwell has a camcorder to really hammer home the NWO overtones.

After a break we see Buff filming a documentary on the team, which Flair keeps calling the elite. Ric brags about the team and talks about how he's been waiting for this moment for twenty years. He goes on about how awesome his career was and how he's learned to be the greatest at everything he does. This turns into a speech about how much better he is than Hogan, Savage and Piper because he's still here. The screen starts messing up as we hear about Scott Steiner's hit list. Jarrett comes in to complain about them not having his back. The team tries to calm him down but Ric has a plan.

We look back at Dustin beating Jarrett down, all those minutes ago.

The announcers make sure to point out that Midajah is back with the Magnificent Seven.

Now we look back at Canyon overturning M.I. Smooth's limo.

The new owners might be at ringside tonight.

Recap of the first round of the Cruiserweight Tag Team Title tournament.

Tony tells us something has happened in the back and spends the next fifteen seconds asking if we have the video.

Midajah has been laid out. I really hope this becomes something soon enough as otherwise that would be yet another name brought back while people like Crowbar are rapidly released as cost cutting measures.

Cruiserweight Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Jung Dragons vs. Elix Skipper/Kid Romeo

The Dragons get jumped to start with Skipper using the Matrix to avoid a cross body. That always looks cool. A springboard enziguri drops Romeo but it's way too early for Yang Time. Instead Yang dives onto Romeo and Skipper with Kaz doing the exact same thing. Elix comes in and throws Kaz with a double underhook suplex.

A spinwheel kick to the hands puts Skipper down as that black wall is really getting distracting. Until the camera pans back you can't see more than about four rows. Everything breaks down and a Liger Bomb into a neckbreaker gets two on Yang. Romeo's Last Kiss (Snow Plow) gets the same, followed by Yang and Elix falling out to the floor. Back in and Yang Time misses, setting up the Play of the Day to send Romeo and Skipper to the finals.

Rating: C+. This didn't last long enough to get sloppy and everyone flew around to make the match entertaining enough. Romeo really doesn't seem like the big deal WCW thinks he is but putting him straight into a title picture like this is one of the best things they could do for him this early.

The Magnificent Seven blames each other for Midajah's attack. Scott wants

to see Buff's video.

Lance Storm/Mike Awesome vs. Mamalukes

It's a big brawl to start and they're quickly on the floor with the Canadians taking over. Things settle down with Johnny dropkicking Storm out of the air and handing it off to Vito for some bad looking right hands. Storm comes back in with a springboard missile dropkick, followed by the Awesome Bomb for the pin.

Johnny gets beaten down until Hugh Morrus and Konnan make the save.

Here's Stacy Keibler pushing a baby carriage. PLEASE don't let this mean David Flair is coming out next. Her baby has taught her to be happy in her life and nothing makes her happier than her man: Shawn Stasiak. Well....it's better than David. I think. Stasiak poses while Stacy takes off her long gray dress to reveal little black one, meaning it's time to dance. They pull out the baby and it's a bunch of pictures of Stasiak. Shawn: "He looks just like me." Stasiak insults the fans for being tattooed losers so here's Bam Bam Bigelow to interrupt. Bigelow challenges him to a match on Sunday as Stasiak bails.

The Magnificent Seven look at the footage. The tape shows all the guys leaving for some reason and a hand moving the camera before Midajah screams. Scott is furious.

Here's Booker T. with something to say. Booker has had a great time since getting back but the Magnificent Seven has been getting on his nerves. He wants one of them out here right now for a fight. This brings out Scott Steiner to answer on behalf of someone but he's cut off by Diamond Dallas Page. Scott doesn't want to hear it and says if Page interferes in this match, he loses his title shot on Sunday.

Booker T. vs. Lex Luger

Luger runs in through the crowd and attacks without a bell ringing. Such villany. There's a torture rack as the referee comes in to call for the bell. That would be the OPENING bell though and Luger hasn't won yet. Luger charges into a boot in the corner and a side slam gets two for

Booker. They head outside with Luger whipping him into the barricade before getting two off a slam. A suplex keeps Luger's offense at its high level and we hit a bow and arrow with Luger's knee in Booker's back. Booker fights up and grabs a rollup out of the corner for two, followed by the normal kicks. The Bookend gives Booker the clean pin.

Rating: D. Booker was trying here but when your opponent's big move is a suplex, you're kind of limited in what you can get out of a match. Luger is just so worthless right now and he can't retire soon enough. At least he's been putting people over lately, albeit years later than he should have been.

Post match Rick Steiner comes in for the beatdown, only to have the Cat make the save. That save is cut off by Canyon and the good guys are beaten down until Page makes the real save with a chair. The post match stuff was more interesting than the match.

Evan Karagias vs. Shane Helms

Shane's big entrance is still cool. They trade forearms to start until Helms counters a hurricanrana into a sitout powerbomb for the first two count. Evan is right back up and missing a top rope Lionsault, only to come back with a suplex for no cover. A good looking Sugar Smack gets two for Shane but Evan hits him with a DDT and a top rope corkscrew splash for two of his own. A quick Nightmare on Helm Street sets up the Vertebreaker to give Shane the pin.

Rating: C+. Fine match but it was "you do a spot, I do a spot" until the Vertebreaker ended it. To be fair though that's part of the problem with having the same guys fight each other so many times. You're going to run out of stories to tell and eventually it becomes just an exchange of moves instead of a flowing match.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. comes in to plant Shane with a brainbuster post match.

Smooth punches out Disco and takes his match with Canyon.

We recap the Rhodes Family vs. Flair/Jarrett match.

Last week Dusty and Dustin talked about the match with Dusty clearly

having no idea what to say. The difference though is he can keep going long enough until he finds a coherent thought and get to the point. For instance he starts babbling about how they're going to Greed on Sunday but can't connect that immediately.

He says things like "well let me tell you" and "the point is" until he eventually says greed is about money, which Jarrett and Flair have enough of so it's time to take them down. It took a long time to get there but it made enough sense which sounds better than having someone write some stupid line for him. You can see that he's thinking through it the entire time and can see the process as he goes.

Flair and Jarrett say they'll win.

Kanyon vs. M.I. Smooth

Smooth is suddenly limping and barely able to walk after punching out Disco with ease earlier. Kanyon drops him with a single shot and this doesn't seem to be a match. Tony: "We may see the end of a man's career here." Kanyon is going to beat him so badly he can't drive anymore? The beating continues for a bit until Kanyon goes to leave but Smooth gets to his feet and says bring it. Kanyon blasts him in the head with a chair twice in a row so Smooth crawls over to him so it's two more chairs to the head. Smooth STILL WON'T STAY DOWN so Kanyon finally leaves.

That's one of the dumbest segments I've seen in a long time. So there was no match in the first place (fine) but four hard chair shots to the head can't put this guy down? Screw Diamond Dallas Page getting the shot. Apparently the answer to conquering Scott Steiner is to put Smooth the Limo Driver in the title match instead. What does this accomplish though?

Kanyon vs. Cat is the match at Greed and there's no reason to believe that Smooth will be involved so what did this change? Kanyon is a villain? We already know that. Was it to give Smooth a rub? Why not give it to a regular wrestler? Nothing was improved here and that's one of the many problems WCW has had over the years: wasting segments on people who don't need them. Oh and again: Crowbar was a cost cutting measure but Smooth can keep a job.

Rick Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Non-title but first of all we need Scott Steiner to call Page stupid several times. Then he talks about the Earth rotating on a 51 degree angle, meaning the sun will be on his right and the dark side of the moon on his left while he eclipses Page. I could listen to the inside of Steiner's mind for days.

We're ready to go after a break with Page sprinting to the ring and clotheslining Rick down. Another clothesline puts him on the floor and Page hits a much better looking plancha than someone his age should be able to hit. Back in and Page gets crotched as they're flying through this match. That pace abruptly stops when Steiner takes over and sends Page into the barricade. A belly to belly gets two on Page but he crotches Rick against the post.

Page hits the Diamond Cutter but Steiner lands on his knees (kind of), which is more than enough justification for him to cover Page and completely no sell the #1 contender's finisher. I think he was supposed to hold onto the ropes and send Page to the mat in a crash and it was just too much effort for Rick to put in. Instead Rick gets two off a bulldog as Scott Hudson runs to the back to cover some breaking story. The Steiner Driver is countered into the Diamond Cutter (sold this time) but Animal comes in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This is a great example of one guy not being able to carry a match. Page was trying to have a good match but Steiner was just there, doing his normal stuff and barking without even being able to get the Diamond Cutter spot right. It gets really annoying watching people like Rick (or Luger earlier) clinging to these spots because of their names and absolutely nothing more.

The Seven run in but we cut to the back to see Cat and Booker T. on stretchers. Back in the arena, Page is destroyed with a pipe shot to the back and the Recliner to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. For a regular show this was passable but for a go home show for a pay per view, this was just a step above a disaster. The only major story that got any real focus was Page vs. Scott Steiner. Booker

and Rick only interacted in a big post match brawl, the Tag Team Champions didn't even appear, Smooth isn't in a match on Sunday, the cruiserweight stuff was its usual filler material and Team Canada vs. the Mamalukes was just there. It also doesn't help that the last scene is Page getting beaten down by Steiner, which doesn't exactly fill me with hope heading into the title match.

This show was a mess with the usual bad matches from people on top but it was made even worse by the lack of storylines being played out. The new owners showing up was mentioned once and then forgotten, Midjah's attacker was teased for the first half of the show and then forgotten and then there's Stacy and Stasiak which is best left forgotten. For all the good things WCW has going on at times, there are so many more things dragging it right back down.

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