

Monday Nitro – March 19, 2001: The Series Finale (Pretty Much)

Monday Nitro #282

Date: March 19, 2001

Location: O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Florida

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

Greed has come and gone and it should be interesting to see where things go with this final real show before next week's grand (work with me here) finale. Scott Steiner is still World Champion after demolishing Diamond Dallas Page because that's what Scott Steiner does, though it does raise the question of who is left for him to beat. In theory that would be Booker T., who became US Champion for the first time last night. Let's get to it.

We open with an In Memorium tribute to Diamond Dallas Page, complete with Taps and a shot of a flag at half mast over video of a trailer park.

Quick look at last night's main event.

Here's the Magnificent Seven (well four, counting Midajah) to open things up. As they're on the way to the ring, we're told that Eric Bischoff will be calling in later. That should be interesting for a change. Scott says Page is now on the same list as Sting, Kevin Nash, Sid Vicious and Goldberg and demands that the fans pay homage to him.

Ric brags about beating Dusty and Dustin around Jacksonville last night and says Dusty isn't here tonight. Dusty and Dustin pop up on screen to say Flair is going to kiss something tonight. After a challenge from Steiner, Dusty says someone is here to fight Steiner instead. Cue Booker T., who Scott says he beat so bad that Booker forgot where the barbershop is. Booker promises to get his hands on Steiner tonight.

Buff Bagwell and Animal are in the back with Buff accusing Lex Luger of

being the attacker. The cameraman is told to follow Luger around all night.

Jason Jett vs. Disco Inferno

Hudson talks about Jason Jett's win last night as we see his win on Thunder. Of course they can't get it right with three shows left. Disco has Mike Sanders with him. Jason spins him down with a headlock and a sitout powerbomb for two. Sanders offers a distraction though and it's time for dancing.

A facebuster sets up more dancing and a delayed near fall before Disco starts in on the knee. Yet another distraction allows Sanders to come in and be quickly dispatched so Jett can slam Disco down, setting up a standing moonsault for two. Sanders tries to come in but hits Disco by mistake, allowing Jett to hit the Crash Landing for the pin.

Rating: D+. Jett continues to be interesting but this is pretty much it for him unless he's got a final match on Thunder. Disco losing because of a stupid blunder is the perfect way for him to go out, but he deserves some credit for being around as long as he was. He debuted on one of the very first shows and made it all the way to the end on a glorified comedy character. There wasn't any real future for him in the WWF or anything but Disco is someone who deserves more credit than he gets.

Ric Flair and Jeff Jarrett are having a chat as the documentary cameraman (whose identity isn't entirely clear actually) sneaks in a shot through the crack of a door.

Here's Shane Helms to challenge Kidman to a rubber match for the Cruiserweight Title.

Cruiserweight Title: Shane Helms vs. Kidman

Kidman is challenging. They run the ropes to start with Helms sending him outside and following with a big flip dive. A good looking high cross body gets two for the champ but Kidman gets the same off a belly to back. They're moving out there so far. A BK Bomb plants Helms for two as we're told that next week is the season finale. Helms stops a charge by raising

a boot and ducks a clothesline to grab the Vertebreaker and retain the title.

Rating: C+. This was too short to be really good but they were flying around at high speed for the few minutes they had. Kidman looked good as always but it was clear that Helms was just flat out better than anyone else in the division at this point. He's a great option for the final champion and I'm glad he had a long career after WCW went under.

Post match Chavo Guerrero Jr. comes out for the brawl until Kid Romeo and Elix Skipper run down to help Guerrero. Rey Mysterio makes the save and the good guys (including Helms) clear the ring.

Lex Luger has been laid out so the cameraman goes to find Buff or Animal to help.

Bam Bam Bigelow has been granted a rematch with Shawn Stasiak. For the love of all things good and made of pickle flavored ice cream, WHY?

Buff and Animal ask if Luger saw anything. Animal freaks out because this needs to stop and Rick Steiner is the next suspect.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Stacy is now just Stacy instead of Stacy Keibler and despite the Miss Hancock outfit. Before the match we get a quick Shawn and Stacy Show with Shawn saying he's ready to beat Bigelow up again so he and Stacy can get down to the real business. Bigelow throws him around to start but gets pounded in the corner. Who knew Shawn had that in him? A clothesline actually drops Bigelow but he intercepts Stacy's hairspray. Ever the nice guy though, Bigelow doesn't use it and opts for the Greetings From Asbury Park for the pin.

The replays shows a virtually empty upper deck, which is only the fourth section away from the ring.

Post match Stasiak says he wants one more match but Bigelow wants the pot sweetened a bit: if he wins, Stasiak has to get a tattoo. Shawn agrees, despite thinking it was going to be Stacy at the time. Wouldn't Stacy getting one be a bigger draw? Well to be fair they're going out of

business so that's hardly their biggest problem.

Here are Scott Steiner, Flair and Midajah to the ring where a table has been set. Terry Taylor is there also but Scott throws the chairs out and grabs him by the shirt. Cue Booker T. to the stage so he's clearly not a Red Rooster fan. Booker introduces the phone call from Eric Bischoff, which can be heard in the arena.

Bischoff has been trying to acquire WCW but they've hit some roadblocks that may be brick walls. Next week might be the last night of wrestling on the Turner networks so next week will be a Night of Champions, meaning every title will be on the line. That includes Booker T. vs. Scott Steiner in a title vs. title match. Also, any former World Heavyweight Champions are invited to the show next week and please bring your boots with them. As for Ric Flair, he will be giving Dusty that kiss tonight no matter what. Bischoff will be there next week and hangs up.

Steiner signs the contract for next week as Booker has made it to the ring. Scott jumps him before Booker can sign and beats him down with the pipe. Security comes in and gets laid out as well but Booker pops up and hits the ax kick on Scott. Booker gets the pipe but Steiner bails with Flair and Midajah, leaving Booker to say his catchphrase, which is then played again at the start of his theme song.

Buff, Animal and Luger go to see Ric (who obviously hasn't been out to the ring yet when this was filmed) and Jeff. Ric says they're going to regroup but there will be no kissing.

M.I. Smooth vs. Kanyon

Kanyon jumps Smooth (in wrestling gear here) during his entrance but gets powerslammed down. Smooth has to keep pulling his straps up as they head outside with Kanyon getting chopped around the ring. Back in and Smooth splashes him in the corner but Kanyon gets a Russian legsweep for two.

Kanyon goes Flair by asking for the time and dropping a low blow behind the referee's back. A slingshot elbow gets two on Smooth as Kanyon looks bored. Maybe it's the whole psycho character but he needs to find a better way to show emotion. Smooth powerbombs him but misses a charge

into the post, allowing Kanyon to go grab a chair. Animal runs in and DDT's Smooth with the Cat coming in for a save after the pin.

Rating: D-. What the heck was that? Kanyon looked bored out of his mind and after Smooth no sold all those chair shots last week but now he loses in five minutes to a DDT from Animal? I always liked Ice Train back in the day so it was cool to see him get a mild push over the last few weeks but that's not quite how I was hoping he would wrap up his career.

Cat makes a tag match for Thunder.

Dusty Rhodes eats more burritos.

Rick Steiner vs. Konnan

Steiner really doesn't seem to mind that he lost the US Title. They're on the floor in less than ten seconds and for some reason Rick is in bright blue. They trade whips into the barricade before Rick runs him over back inside. We're firmly in the Rick Steiner formula now with Steiner slowly walking around and occasionally hitting Konnan before staring out at the crowd.

Konnan comes back with a faceplant but Rick completely misses a clothesline. It's sold anyway and Konnan looks like a moron as a result, despite the clothesline being about a foot above his head. Rick stands over him again before putting Konnan's arm between Rick's legs and laying down, which apparently is an armbar. As the fans try to get their head around how Rick can actually be that lazy, Shane Douglas comes in for the DQ with a cast shot to Steiner's head.

Rating: F. For that armbar alone. Of all the people who wouldn't be seen again for years anywhere outside of a reunion show or some bad TNA pay per view, I think I'll miss Rick Steiner the least. The guy was part of a great team at one point but ever since he's become a singles wrestler, he's turned into one of the biggest embarrassments I've ever seen in a wrestling ring.

Rick is back up ten seconds later to be knocked outside by Hugh Morrus.

Bagwell, Luger and Animal accuse Rick of being the attacker and are

thrown out after an argument.

Team Canada is ready to win a non-title match and earn a Tag Team Title shot.

Ric assures Jarrett that he'll make the right decision.

Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo vs. Team Canada

Non-title. Storm and Palumbo start to some USA chants. Chuck fires off some great right hands and dropkicks Storm out to the floor. Back in and it's off to Sean vs. Mike with O'Haire ducking a clothesline and hitting a perfect spinning kick to the face for two. Lance comes in for some right hands and a suplex to set up Awesome's slingshot splash for two more.

Awesome clotheslines Storm by mistake but Storm comes off the top to stop a tag attempt. Back up and Sean hits a fireman's carry throw on Storm, allowing the hot tag off to Chuck to clean house. It's a shame that the crowd isn't reacting to most of this as they're having a good match.

Everything breaks down and Awesome eats the Jungle Kick but Storm breaks up the Seanton Bomb. Storm gets a chair kicked into his face but Awesome cracks Palumbo in the head with another chair. The shot was so close to Nick Patrick's head that even Tony has to ask how Patrick didn't hear it. The Awesome Bomb gives Mike the pin on Palumbo. That's your Tag Team Title match next week.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot better than I was expecting to as O'Haire and Palumbo have turned into a good team here in the final few weeks. Team Canada isn't bad either as Storm and Awesome have good chemistry together and the rematch should be fun next week, even if it barely means anything. You need a good wrestling match like this to boost a show and this one did just that.

Here are Jarrett and Flair for the big closing segment. Flair tells Dusty to come out here right now but it's Dustin instead. Ric wants the old version so Dustin introduces his dad who comes out with a donkey and I think you get the joke. In case it's not clear, the back of the donkey

says "Dusty's A**". Apparently the donkey, named Old Silver Dollar, has had about 300 burritos today, which I can't imagine is healthy for him.

Flair sends Jeff to do it instead but Jarrett says no way. Dustin gets beaten down but here's daddy for the save. The villains send Dusty into the barricade and go over towards the donkey. Dustin makes another save and Flair does indeed kiss Silver Dollar to end the show. I get the idea here but wouldn't Flair being made to do what was implied all night be more embarrassing? This was funny enough but it was a downgrade in a way.

Overall Rating: C+. You have to keep in mind that this show is basically part one of a series finale. On that front, it wrapped up several stories though I'm still curious to see if they tell us who the attacker was. The wrestling here was up and down as has become the standard in WCW with a lot of the problem still being Rick Steiner putting on another horrible match and dragging the show down with him. Overall though, this was an easy night to sit through as they're just flat out saying they're done after next week.

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