

Monday Nitro – April 28, 1997: Cutting Nitro Down To An Hour Is A Good Idea

Monday Nitro #85

Date: April 28, 1997

Location: Norfolk Scope, Norfolk, Virginia

Attendance: 9,467

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

This is a special edition of Nitro which only runs for an hour due to the NBA Playoffs airing after the show. That being said, after the debacle of last week's show, cutting this in half is probably best for everyone involved. We're still creeping towards Slamboree and the main event that only WCW seems to care about. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from Starrcade 1993 with Flair beating Vader for the title.

Here are Piper and Flair to open things up. They head to the announce table and say they want the NWO tonight.

US Title: Prince Iaukea vs. Dean Malenko

Jarrett says he'll win the title from Dean at Slamboree. So even he doesn't think Iaukea has a chance here. Dean immediately takes him to the mat to start and grabs a headlock. They trade armdrags and Iaukea hooks an armbar. Larry points out how stupid it is to try to take Malenko to the mat and he appears to be correct as Dean quickly escapes and elbows Prince in the corner. Iaukea comes back with a superkick for two but Dean powerbomb the tar out of Iaukea for two. A powerslam sets up the Cloverleaf for Malenko to retain. This was basically a squash.

Cruiserweight Title: Juventud Guerrera vs. Syxx

Syxx is defending. Juvy speeds things up to start and a headscissors put Syxx on the floor. A spinwheel kick hits Syxx in the throat but Guerrera botches a flip out of the corner. Syxx hits one of the best looking spin kicks I've ever seen and Juvy is in trouble. There's the Bronco Buster and a vertical suplex gets two for the champ.

A top rope double ax gets two for Syxx but as he goes up again, Juvy crotches him. Guerrera slips off the top again before driving Syxx's head into the mat on a rana attempt. Juvy tries a flip dive attack but kicks Waltman right in the mouth. FREAKING OW MAN! Syxx finally has enough and the Buzzkiller ends this quick.

Rating: C-. Sweet goodness this was a match of two different wrestlers. Syxx looked fine out there but Guerrera looked almost dangerous in the ring, botching nearly everything he tried and probably hurting Syxx on that flip move. It's so strange to see Syxx wrestling at all and it's at least giving these other Cruiserweights something to fight for.

Lee Marshall does his thing with the road report.

Here are Syxx and the Outsiders to the announce desk. Hall might debut the name Wolfpac here. They don't care what the old guys say, but if the old guys want to fight at the PPV, it'll cost 75% of the gate money.

Chris Benoit vs. Steven Regal

This should be good. They fight over a wristlock to start with Regal doing his usual amazing counter while laying on his back and spinning around using his feet. Off to a test of strength grip with Regal being shoved down, only to nip up and escape. They trade pinfall reversals and for some reason we go to a wide camera shot. Blood maybe? And here's Sullivan for the DQ. I mean, why would we want to see Benoit and Regal

tear the house down when we can get Benoit vs. Sullivan continuing a feud that has been going on since July?

Meng shows up to save Sullivan and puts Benoit in the Tongan Death Grip to take him down.

Savage says he'll beat up Page.

Amazing French Canadians vs. Lex Luger/The Giant

Luger vs. Oulette to start things off with Lex controlling with basic power, but the Canadians hit a double team hot shot to take over. The Outsiders have accepted Piper and Flair's challenge for later tonight. Jacques slams Luger down and Lex is in trouble, but not enough to get elbowed off the middle rope by Oulette. Hot tag brings in Giant and it's a chokeslam for the pin on Jacques as Luger Racks Oulette. Not long enough to rate but more competitive than you would have expected, at least for awhile.

Video on the Bears vs. the Packers to hype up White vs. McMichael.

Steve McMichael vs. Barbarian

Barbarian jumps Mongo as he comes through the ropes and we're off fast. It's so fast that Tony ignores the match and reads house show ads. Mongo knocks him into the corner, only to get his head kicked off a second later. Out to the floor and Mongo is sent into the barricade and then into the post. Back inside and a piledriver gets two on McMichael as the announcers argue over whether or not football players make good wrestlers. Barbarian argues with the referee, Debra slides in the case, the referee somehow misses the thud and Mongo wins.

Rating: D+. I can appreciate the idea of giving Mongo what should have been a natural feud with White, but a match like this isn't making him

any better in the ring. This was basically a Barbarian squash until Mongo hit one illegal shot for the pin. It was just over three minutes though, which is about Mongo's shelf life in a match, which makes it all the more amazing that he and White got fifteen minutes at Slamboree.

Here are Flair and Piper for the fight with the Outsiders. Flair says he knows he can take Syxx because he's had more title reigns than Syxx has had women. The NWO music hits but it's an NWO paper drop from the ceiling instead. They say "Tradition Bites! NWO 4 Life!" Nash, Hall and Syxx finally come out and Flair beats them all up in the aisle. Piper lets him fight all three at once until the numbers catch up with Flair. After about a minute of Flair getting beaten up, piper comes in for the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show wasn't bad, but it wasn't that interesting. The fact that this was just an hour helped it a lot as we didn't have time for nonsense that no one wanted to see and was only there to fill time. The longest match is less than five minutes long, but that's understandable in this case. The problem with the show though was that the main story isn't that interesting with the six man at the PPV being worthless and did anyone care about White vs. McMichael?

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