

Monday Nitro – December 25, 1996: They Don't Know Much About Spoilers



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Nitro #17

Date: December 25, 1995

Location: Richmond County Civic Center, Augusta, Georgia

Commentators: Eric Bischoff, Steve McMichael, Bobby Heenan

It's the Christmas show and of course is taped. This is the go home show for Starrcade where we don't hear a word about the show I'd bet. This is an odd thing you get to see especially since this was happening on December 18th. This is going off the Fritz Von Erich idea of "Once you open the presents, what else is there to do?" This worked to put it mildly in WCCW so they're using it here. Let's get to it.

Lex Luger vs. Scotty Riggs

Luger easily overpowers him to start as he goes for the always insane double run through the American Males. What is he thinking??? Mongo flat out says Riggs can't beat him which is rather true. Riggs gets some bad dropkicks to send Luger down and to the floor to scream a bit. They talk about Sting and

Luger to pass the time that this armbar is giving us.

It's still weird to hear about the biggest show of the year being on Wednesday. It's pretty clear they're resting Luger here by having him lay on the mat for the vast majority of this match. Luger goes off on Riggs after getting such a good long rest like that but runs into a boot in the corner. After a small package gets two, a powerslam sets up the Rack to end this.

Rating: D. Lex Luger vs. Scotty Riggs just got seven minutes. Do I need to explain why this is was a very stupid idea? For one thing, give Luger the rest before being in the big match on Wednesday where he has to wrestle twice at least there two. Stupid booking but that's WCW for you.

Gene talks to Sting who says he's tired of being asked about himself and Luger. He also isn't afraid of New Japan.

Sting vs. Big Bubba

Big Boss Man if you're not sure. Sting overpowers him to start but walks into an enziguri to the back of his head which is how it works by definition I guess. Sting shouting to the crowd works as well as anything to get the crowd into a match. Hogan is suspended until the end of the year for his actions last week apparently. What a nice thing to give him: Christmas and New Years off.

Bubba has a chinlock on as we're just waiting for Sting to make his comeback. And yep here it comes. Did anyone not expect that? Bubba gets an atomic drop to take Sting to the floor. In a very cool ending, Bubba goes for a middle rope suplex but Sting rolls through it into a small package to get the pin. I've never seen that.

Rating: C-. Pretty basic stuff here with nothing surprising at all. Guys like Bubba were perfect around this time as they were still names and guys like Sting or Luger could beat them

for a challenge and still look dominant. I think those people are called jobbers to the stars. Shame they barely exist anymore.

Luger and Hart say Luger is the uncrowned champion. Craig Pittman comes up to say Jimmy should manage him. Jimmy says take this quarter and call a manager that needs a few good men (Pittman was a military character.) Again, this goes nowhere.

Dean Malenko vs. Mr. JL

Well this should be awesome. Dean controls to start which doesn't surprise me. JL with a big old dive to the floor as this is the old standard of Dean doing his ground stuff and the other Cruiserweight flying all over the place. Jackknife cover gets two for Dean. Sitout powerbomb gets two for JL. Dean hooks a powerbomb but falls backwards into a hot shot in a nice move.

Dean hits his top rope gutbuster for two which Eric of course calls a side breaker. An entirely screwed up leg lock ends JL. I have never seen that before but it works very well. Basically Dean starts by standing up and wraps his leg around JL's before rolling forward and turning it into a leg bar. SWEET move.

Rating: B-. I really liked this with a lot packed into just a few minutes here. That leg lock was something else and JL flying all over the place to hit all kinds of planchas and dives but getting caught in the end by the wrestler's hold. What more can you ask for than that? Very fun TV match here.

Flair says he's awesome and here's Jimmy Hart. Ah it's about the Dungeon feud again. Hart offers his services for tonight and the PPV. Flair says sure why not.

WCW World Title: Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage

Yes they're giving away the main event of Starrcade 48 hours

before it airs. You can see the stuff that would bite them in years to come appearing here and there. Feeling out process to start which is odd as these two have fought about a thousand times before. Savage gets a figure four on Flair but since he's not Jay Lethal he can't get the submission.

This is a weird kind of match so far. They're kind of scrapping if that makes sense. Flair can't get the Figure Four on so he just kicks Savage in the balls to take over. We take a break with Flair still in control and return with a shot of the crowd. Nice job there guys. Flair is dominating here but there isn't anything special at all here going on. It's not bad but you can tell they're off.

Flair works on the bad arm with old school evil tactics. Savage walks into a second low blow as I feel sorry for his testicles. Flair gets a suplex and might have hurt his arm. We get a second commercial and come back to more Flair dominance. Savage isn't doing much more than anything but punching. The double axe misses to the floor.

Eric talks about how they're leading the WWF and it kind of makes my head hurt. Flair goes for the knee and Savage is in trouble now. There's the Figure Four and the same thing you would expect to happen happens with Savage grabbing the rope. Flair gets slammed off the top as they are totally going through the motions here.

Sleeper by Flair and this is just needing to end. Both go down as I hope we don't have to deal with a run in or something. Flair goes for a Piledriver which is blocked. Top rope double axe puts Flair down again for two. And I was right as here's Luger for the run in for no apparent reason. And here's Sting for the big four way brawl to end the show.

Rating: D. Oh this was weak. The match just went nowhere at all and they were going through the motions. I don't get the idea of having this two days before Starrcade at all because

if nothing else the spots they'll likely repeat then will seem repetitive the second time through. I don't get this and the match was bad on top of that.

Overall Rating: D. Well to say they're focusing on two matches is a huge understatement. This was ALL about the Triangle match and the subsequent world title match. The Japan guys weren't mentioned at all and we now go into Starrcade with nothing of note. I never got the idea behind this booking of the PPV and I don't think many others did either. Bad go home show for what was a pretty odd PPV.

So that's the first year of Nitro. Not a ton happened but a lot of the stuff they did was mind blowing at the time. The whole conspiracy and who turns on who stuff was good sounding on paper but it just never worked in reality due to the total lack of resolution to it. Next year they would go with Hogan vs. Giant and Savage vs. Flair for awhile before we got to the epicness that was the Alliance to End Hulkamania before FINALLY Hall showed up in May to light this place on fire. Not much from a wrestling standpoint, but they were coming.

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