

Monday Nitro – May 25, 1998: The Kind Of Show Nitro Needed

Monday Nitro #138

Date: May 25, 1998

Location: Roberts Memorial Stadium, Evansville, Indiana

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone, Larry Zbyszko

We're still getting closer to the Great American Bash and the main story is still which side will Sting pick. In other words, we're almost in the same place we were at this time last year expect now Sting can talk. We've also got Hogan/Hart vs. Savage/Piper for the big showdown tag match which isn't the most thrilling prospect in the world. Let's get to it.

It's Memorial Day, meaning this is the two year anniversary of Hall jumping the guardrail.

We open with the Nitro Girls as Tony brags about this being three hours again. Oh freaking joy.

The main event tonight is Sting/Luger vs. Giant/NWO Sting. This is supposed to beat Austin vs. Vince/Dude Love mind you.

We get clips of the end of last week's show as well as Thunder, showing that Sting isn't with the Giant. The NWO Sting came out to fool no one on Thunder and attack Luger. The announcers act like NWO Sting is a new idea for reasons of general incompetence.

Opening sequence.

Here's Raven to call out Mortis, promising to send him running for his mother's care. This brings him to Saturn, who has been Raven's friend since childhood. Raven drove him to school when Saturn was too poor to

afford a car and was there when Sheila broke his heart in the eleventh grade. Raven is willing to do anything to keep Saturn's friendship, including firing the Flock. He fires every one of them and DDTs Lodi when he protests. Raven gets on his knees and begs/demands that Saturn come back.

Glacier says he's great and wants to fight Saturn over the superkick. He created the kick and can destroy it. This somehow takes almost a minute and a half.

More Nitro Girls.

The announcers talk about Booker vs. Benoit having a best of seven series for the TV Title shot at the Bash. This leads to a video of Stevie Ray returning last week and telling Booker to stand his ground.

TV Title: Fit Finlay vs. Mike Enos

We're only about half an hour into the show for the first match so at least they're not wasting time or anything. Finlay forearm him in the chest to start before taking Enos to the mat in a chinlock about thirty seconds into the match. A knee to the face gets two for Fit and he slams Enos' chest into the apron.

Back in and Finlay pounds away even more but gets clotheslined down to a surprising pop. Enos drops him throat first on the top rope for two but Finlay comes back with the rolling senton. Mike comes back with a fallaway slam for two but they botch the heck out of a powerslam with Finlay landing on Enos' legs. Enos is grabbing his leg so Finlay hits a quick Tombstone to retain.

Rating: D+. Enos showed some fire out there until the horrible blown spot at the end. I'm not sure why the fans were cheering for him but maybe they're just sick of Finlay on TV every week? Anyway this was just your

typical TV Title match, meaning it was nothing worth seeing but filled in five minutes well enough.

CALL THE HOTLINE!

Glacier vs. Saturn

Glacier kicks away at the ribs and sweeps Saturn's legs out to give us a standoff. Saturn takes Glacier's legs out just as easily so Glacier comes back with chops to the ribs. A hook kick to the jaw puts Glacier down and it's off to a headlock. Glacier comes back with a big boot to the jaw but Saturn sends him into the corner for rapid fire kicks.

The fans are into Saturn here but Glacier kicks him in the face again. A spinwheel kick puts Chilly McBoring down and here's Raven at ringside, drawing a RAVEN SUCKS chant. Saturn's top rope splash hits knees and here's Hammer to beat up Raven. Hammer gets on the apron but gets kicked down by Glacier, allowing Saturn to hit the Death Valley Driver for the pin.

Rating: D. These battles of martial arts are getting less and less interesting every single time. The key difference with Saturn though is he used it as part of his offense while guys like Glacier and Miller used nothing but martial arts, making them one note characters. Saturn on the other hand wound up rubbing elbows with Benoit and Guerrero in the WWF while the other two were barely heard from again.

Raven DDTs Hammer on the floor.

We see Savage accepting Piper's offer to team up at the Bash.

Here are Vincent, Brian Adams and Vincent with something to say. Giant does Hall's Hey Yo and asks the fans to shut up so he can make his point. He calls Nash a coward and wants to face him right here tonight, one on

one. After being called out about three times, here's Nash who doesn't look intimidated at all. He's alone tonight and says he'd love to take care of Hogan's three fluff boys.

Nash punches down the lackeys but a stalemate with Giant allows them to get back up for the beatdown. This brings out Lex Luger along with the rest of the Wolfpack. Konnan takes off his shirt and throws it to Luger who puts it on to the biggest pop he's gotten this year. So who is left as a top WCW guy? Sting and Piper?

Hour #2 begins with the first mention of the NWO turning two tonight.

Chris Jericho vs. El Dandy

Jericho goes right at Dandy as he gets in the ring and drop toeholds him into a side roll for two before getting caught in something resembling a spinebuster. Dandy misses a missile dropkick and gets caught in the Liontamer for the win in about 60 seconds.

Post match Jericho demands that the fat JJ Dillon put down the pizza and come out here to address some concerns. Jericho babbles on for awhile and demands to be reinstated as Cruiserweight Champion. JJ talks about contract terms but doesn't exactly cover what Jericho was asking about. He's not going to overrule anything though until Jericho shows him some kind of a precedent. Jericho freaks out as usual.

We look at Luger joining the Wolfpack again.

Konnan vs. La Parka

La Parka does his dance so Konnan chops away, only to get clotheslined down for two. Konnan avoids a dropkick in the corner and drop toeholds La Parka into the middle buckle. Another clothesline puts Konnan down on the floor and a big dive from the top is kind of blocked to put both guys

down. Back in and La Parka dives into a pair of boots to the face and Konnan scores with an X Factor. The 187 sets up the Tequila Sunrise and La Parka taps. Short match and nothing special.

More Nitro Girls.

We get a home video from Mortis who says that Mortis is dead and he's now known as Kanyon. He talks about the imitation of Tommy Dreamer's chair shot heard round the world at Slamboree and calls it the chair shot heard round the world. Kanyon says he can get to Raven at anytime.

Here's Roddy Piper for the insane speech of the week. Gene doesn't think Piper and Savage can get along as a team but Piper calls Savage a Village People throwback and says they have to get along. The one good thing about standing next to Savage: you never look like you're having a bad hair day. Piper won't be singing Y-M-C-A at the Bash so here are Savage and Liz to protest. They yell at each other a lot and Savage rants about Piper screwing up at Slamboree, drawing a RuPaul reference from Piper.

They're about to agree to work together when Bret Hart comes out and says this is a big collusion between himself and Piper. He claims that Roddy came to him before the PPV and wanted to screw Savage over and reverse the decision later. Bret says he owes Piper one and leaves so Savage is ready to fight Piper right now. Piper says let's fight and then says that Bret is lying through his teeth. He'll fight Savage after the tag match at the PPV but they have to work together to get through that. Savage seems to agree.

Heenan joins commentary.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Kidman

They slug it out to start and run the ropes with Kidman catching him in a sitout spinebuster to take over. Kidman charges into some boots in the

corner and gets taken down with a hard clothesline. Juvy rips off Kidman's shirt and chops away before snapping off a great looking headscissors. They head to the floor with Guerrera hitting a sweet dive to the floor to put both guys down.

They head back in but Lodi grabs Juvy's leg, allowing Kidman to hit a quick X Factor for two. Kidman gets more aggressive than he has in months and stomps away in the corner. A great looking (there's a lot of that going around in this match) dropkick puts Juvy down and we hit a quick chinlock to give the guys a breather. Back up and Kidman hits another wicked clothesline to take Guerrera down.

A slingshot legdrop gets two on Juvy but Kidman yells at the referee, allowing Juvy to hit a clothesline of his own. Kidman comes back with an elbow to the jaw for two and a reverse suplex puts Juvy on the apron but he gets up top for a flying spinwheel kick for a close two. The fans are WAY into this. Kidman comes back with a powerbomb into a faceplant for two more and a release German suplex puts Juvy down again. Kidman goes up but Juvy dropkicks him out of the air, setting up the Juvy Driver and the 450 for the pin.

Rating: B. GREAT match here and the best match Nitro has had in months. These two were beating the tar out of each other and hitting everything they could in a ten minute span. This is the kind of stuff that you can put out there and offer an actual alternative to what Raw was doing at the time. Instead of having old people talk, have two guys in their early 20s and tear the house down. That's senseless though, right?

More Nitro Girls.

Nitro Party video.

The announcers talk about what's happened so far tonight, focusing on Luger's jump.

We recap Brian Adams attacking Rick Steiner, putting him out for several months. Apparently Scott Steiner is looking for acting roles in Hollywood.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Eddie Guerrero

Chavo is now Eddie's willing lapdog, which is what Eddie had been wanting from the beginning. However now that he has it, Eddie seems almost scared of his nephew. Chavo gets on the mic and says that this is his match because that's how Eddie works. He tells Eddie to slap him and tries to start an Eddie chant. Eddie finally gives in and lets Chavo have the match.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Chavo makes sure to fold up the Eddie shirt before we can get going. A headlock doesn't get Chavo anywhere so Dragon comes back with the kicks and the corner headstand. Dragon hooks a stump puller and then a modified Koji Clutch to torture Chavo a bit and send him out to the floor.

Back in and Dragon fires off some kicks to the back but Chavo breaks up the top rope hurricanrana. Guerrero tries to suplex Dragon back in but Eddie hooks his nephew's leg. Dragon can't get the Dragon Sleeper so Chavo chokes him on the ropes, bragging to Eddie that he's cheating to win. The tornado DDT ends Dragon, giving Chavo his biggest win ever.

Rating: C-. This was more angle than match but it's one of the best angles WCW has going right now. Chavo has grown from a generic cruiserweight guy into an interesting character who is getting some wins. It's going to be interesting to see how Eddie deals with the monster he created, meaning the story is a good one. It's very much a Frankenstein story, which has worked for hundreds of years so why not in WCW?

Post match JJ comes out and makes Eddie vs. Chavo at the Bash.

Hour #3 begins.

Cruiserweight Title: Lenny Lane vs. Dean Malenko

Lane makes sure to oil up on the way to the ring. He shoves Dean away and admires his own abs. Very little action in the first minute until Dean takes over with a headlock. That goes nowhere either so Lane takes him to the corner and stomps him down a bit. Dean does the same to Lenny but gets bulldogged down for two. We hit the chinlock on the champion before Dean fights up and elbows Lane in the face. Lane tries a sunset flip and is easily countered into the Cloverleaf to retain the title.

Rating: D+. This didn't work for me for the most part with Dean sleepwalking through the match and Lane not being able to get them anywhere yet. To be fair though Malenko has had some great performances for months now so he's allowed to have an off night every now and then.

US Title: Goldberg vs. Johnny Attitude

Attitude imitates Goldberg on the way to the ring for the only interesting part of the match. Goldberg is now standing in the pyro for the entrance to start a trademark. Typical Goldberg match makes him 90-0.

Chris Benoit vs. Booker T

Match #1 in the best of seven series for the TV Title shot. Benoit takes him into the corner but Booker fires off right hands and backdrops Benoit down. A running forearm puts Benoit on the floor but he catches Booker coming out after him. Back in and Booker spins out of a wristlock and kicks Chris in the face for two.

Benoit comes back by dropping Booker ribs first over the top rope before stomping away and elbowing Booker down. The snap suplex gets two and Benoit hits the chinlock. Some knees to the back set up another chinlock

on Booker before Benoit throws him down like a heel would. Booker gets thrown into the corner and we hit chinlock #3.

Benoit slams him down but misses the Swan Dive to put both guys down. Cue Finlay to ringside as Booker flapjacks Benoit down. Chris avoids a bunch of kicks but can't get the German suplex. Booker comes back with the ax kick but misses the Harlem Hangover. Back up and Benoit snaps on the Crossface to go up 1-0.

Rating: B-. This took time to get going but it was rocking by the end. Benoit and Booker trading bombs for five minutes after spending five minutes on dull chinlocks is fine with me and if I have to watch seven matches of them so be it. Really fun match here as Nitro hits an unprecedented two great matches.

We get pyro and music for the main event.

The announcers talk about Luger joining the Wolfpack.

Lex Luger/Sting vs. NWO Sting/Giant

The NWO Sting is knocked to the floor before the bell and it's Luger/Sting double teaming the Giant. A running clothesline in the corner and a Stinger Splash send the big man to the floor as this is one sided so far. NWO Sting goes in to start against the real version and gets in a single elbow to drop Sting. That's the extent of NWO Sting's offense as Sting pops up and destroys the fake before bringing in Luger for some clotheslines.

A cheap shot from Giant lets NWO Sting take over as the fans are all over Giant here. Off to Giant for a loud chop in the corner and a head knocker (picture a powerbomb stance but Giant jumps in the air to crush the back of Luger's head). Back to NWO Sting who misses a Stinger Splash, allowing for the hot tag off to Sting. A quick Stinger Splash and the Death Drop

are enough to pin the fake guy.

Rating: D+. All things considered, this wasn't horrible. What else are you going to expect with former tag team champions in a glorified handicap match? At this point the match is just a backdrop for the NWO drama with Sting about to pick one of the NWO's to join because who hasn't done that yet?

Post match here's the Wolfpack with an extra shirt. Sting bails for a second before coming back in. He holds up the shirt and looks intrigued but doesn't put it on as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: C+. This is the kind of show that Nitro needed. We had a nice blend of good wrestling and drama with a cliffhanger to end the show. It still doesn't need to be three hours long, but the balancing of drama and action has been severely lacking for months now. Granted having two awesome matches helped things out too.

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