

Monday Nitro – June 2, 1997: When Savage Is On, He's One Of The Best Ever

Monday Nitro #90

Date: June 2, 1997

Location: Hara Arena, Dayton, Ohio

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

It's hard to believe we're almost halfway through 1997. I'm digging this idea of doing four shows at once as you get through the storylines a lot faster which is good when the stories are really dull, as they have been lately. Sting and Hogan is clearly being set up as a huge match somewhere in the future, which is the start of probably the biggest angle in the history of the company. Hopefully we get more of that tonight. Let's get to it.

Hall and Syxx are in the ring to open the show. Hall says that the fans have been asking for more of the NW0 because they're the reason everyone is watching. They say they won at Slamboree and that Flair is recuperating in the La Brea tar pits. Hall calls out Flair for a fight but we get JJ Dillon instead. JJ says Flair is on his way here and tonight it's Flair vs. Hall. Hall says no but if he doesn't do it, then the Outsiders are stripped of the belts.

Opening sequence.

Alex Wright vs. Glacier

Wright wisely jumps Glacier during his elaborate entrance and takes over early. A spinwheel kick takes Glacier down and Wright pounds away in the corner. He stops to dance though and Glacier gets in some kicks, including the Cryonic Kick for the fast pin.

Post match here's James Vanderberg for a distraction along with Mortis and Wrath who are spotted before they come in. The beatdown begins but Wright wants to get some revenge. That bell ringing over and over again is really annoying. Mortis aims a kick at Glacier but kicks Wright instead. Glacier fights both monsters off.

Buff Bagwell vs. Joe Gomez

Bagwell pounds him down and grabs the rope to avoid a Gomez dropkick. Bagwell talks to the camera for awhile before walking into a bad dropkick by Gomez. Joe throws some bad punches in the corner but gets dropped into the buckle and thrown out to the floor. Scott Norton, Buff's partner, gets in some shots and sends Gomez back in for the Blockbuster and the pin by Buff.

Rating: D. Gomez was never in another match on Nitro and that's a good thing. The guy just wasn't that good and it's pretty clear to see why he never amounted to anything. Bagwell wasn't much better, although the Blockbuster has always been a favorite move of mine. Just a squash here but it was pretty bad looking while it lasted.

Mike Tenay gives us a quick profile on Ernest Miller.

We get a clip of Roddy Piper's latest movie.

Hugh Morrus vs. Prince Iaukea

Konnan jumps Morrus on his way to the ring. Morrus pounds him down but he's a bit shaken. They mess up a spot where Iaukea is supposed to slide between Morrus' legs so Morrus swings his leg out wide, but Iaukea runs around instead and runs into Morrus' leg. Thankfully Iaukea rolls him up a second later for the pin. This seems to be an injury angle for Morrus.

Here's JJ to talk about the main event but more importantly that we need

#1 contenders to the tag titles after the PPV. He thinks it's the Steiners, who are barely on Nitro anymore. This draws out Sherri and Harlem Heat who disagree with this ruling. JJ says if the Steiners win tonight, they get the next shot after Flair and Piper. Sherri says that'll get a reaction.

We recap Page vs. Savage with the focus on Page. He talks about losing his first 79 matches and working his way up to become what he is now. He kept getting better and developed the Diamond Cutter, which he used to beat Savage in their first match. I want to see these guys fight again which is a good sign.

Masahiro Chono/Great Muta vs. Steiner Brothers

Five or six years earlier, this is a candidate for match of the year before the bell even rings. Scott and Muta start with Muta firing off a very quick kick to send Scott ducking back into the corner. Scott armdrags him down and it's a stalemate. A suplex sends Muta flying so Muta goes to the strikes. Muta takes him down and we're told that Flair has arrived. Scott butterfly powerbombs and gorilla press slams Muta down, sending him out to the floor.

Rick comes in and Muta bails right back to the floor to hide. Rick stomps on an NWO shirt and it's off to Chono. The two of them have a test of strength but Rick suplexes him down instead of seeing who wins. A Steiner Line sends Chono to the outside and Muta wants nothing to do with Rick either. Back in and Chono gets powerslammed down as Scott takes out Muta. All Steiners so far.

Chono gets back in against Scott and the Japanese guys finally get in some shots to the back to take over. Scott gets the tag to Rick and the NWO guys are taken down almost immediately. The Steiners were in trouble for about 30 seconds. Chono hits the Mafia Kick on Scott and there's a handspring elbow to Muta. Chono accidentally Mafia Kicks Muta and the Steiners load up the double bulldog on Muta. Harlem Heat runs in and

knocks out Rick with a chair, giving Muta the easy pin.

Rating: C-. This was fast paced, but it came off almost like a squash. That doesn't exactly make the NWO guys seem to be any kind of a threat as the Steiners were in trouble for about a minute out of a nearly ten minute match. The ending was obvious given what Sherri said earlier, but it makes sense all things considered.

Post match Harlem Heat says they're the #1 contenders now but JJ says the match is under review. What is there to review exactly? Harlem Heat interfered and the Steiners lost because of it. It's not that complicated, but this is WCW where you need a meeting to determine what color the sky is.

It's hour #2 and after the recap, here's Ric Flair for a chat. Flair rants as you would expect him to and a lot of it is censored.

US Title: Dean Malenko vs. Mr. Wallstreet

Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get any real control. A rollup by Dean is blocked and Nick Patrick yells at Wallstreet for holding the ropes. Patrick yells about using the hair and the match slows down again. Wallstreet sends Dean to the floor as things continue to not get started. Back in and Dean grabs a hammerlock which is quickly broken. Off to a chinlock by the challenger (Wallstreet) followed by an abdominal stretch. Sweet goodness Wallstreet is dull.

Dean's leg lariat gets two as does a suplex. The Cloverleaf is broken up by a rake to the eyes but Wallstreet misses a charge and goes flying over the top and out to the floor. Jeff Jarrett comes in out of nowhere and trips Malenko for two. Wallstreet doesn't pay attention and gets caught in the Cloverleaf to retain the title for Dean. Patrick was between Wallstreet and the ropes so we have another wrinkle in the Patrick might be crooked story.

Rating: D. I love Malenko but my goodness Wallstreet is dull. I mean the guy does NOTHING but jobber level offense. The other problem is that since he's taken on his current gimmick, the Wallstreet name doesn't mean anything. This was about Jarrett though which makes the match a little more forgivable.

Jarrett wants a rematch with Malenko and says he'll get it next week on Nitro. Dean accepts and here's Mongo. Mongo wants to know why Jarrett came out here without him and won't let Debra leave with Jeff. Mongo rants about Kevin Greene and the people boo Mongo out of the building. Why didn't WCW get that no one was interested in this football stuff?

Damien/Ciclope vs. Harlem Heat

Stevie and Ciclope start things off with the big man stomping Ciclope down into the corner. A slam puts Ciclope down and it's off to Booker for a hook kick. Damien comes in and some Hardy Boys style double teaming sends Booker to the floor. Booker knees Damien down and it's back to Ray as the Heat weren't in trouble long. Booker sends Damien to the floor and stomps away on him against the barricade as this breaks down. Here are the Steiners with a chair to lay out Booker, allowing Damien to hit a top rope splash for the upset pin.

Rating: D+. This match was the same thing we've had all night: a dull match that was waiting for the angle advancement that ended it. Damien and Ciclope wouldn't go anywhere of course but it's nice to see some newcomers get a win, even if it's tainted like this. Obviously this set up Steiners vs. Heat and there's nothing wrong with that. The match was dull though.

Lee Marshall does his thing.

Barbarian vs. Chris Benoit

Apparently Benoit has to run the Dungeon gauntlet to get another match with Sullivan. Benoit takes it straight to the corner and stomps Barbarian down, which is something you almost never see. Barbarian breaks the German attempt so Benoit settles for a release northern lights suplex. Jimmy Hart distracts Benoit and Barbie gets in a shot to take over. There's a piledriver for two on Benoit and Barbarian is frustrated already. Barbarian be clubberin in the corner followed by his always cool release belly to belly superplex. Barbarian loads up something off the top but gets shoved down. Swan Dive and Crossface end this.

Rating: C. It wasn't as good as their match from a few months ago, but this is a pairing that still works. Barbarian is an interesting case as he has a pretty standard gimmick but the guy was continuously employed in a major company for the better part of fifteen years. For a guy like Barbarian, that's very impressive.

Benoit says he wants Sullivan now but Hart says Benoit has to beat Meng in a death match at the Bash.

Scott Hall vs. Ric Flair

Flair goes insane to start and takes Hall down with chops and shots to the knee. Syxx tries to interfere but Flair takes both guys out with ease. Hall slugs Flair but Flair chops him into the corner with ease. Flair is sent into the corner for the Flair Flip but Flair dives off the apron onto Syxx in a kind of Thess Press. Hall gets in a shot to the back and takes over by stomping away in the corner.

Syxx comes in for a Bronco Buster which somehow the referee doesn't notice. The fallaway slam hits for two and the fans want Sting. There's an abdominal stretch and Syxx does the required arm pull for extra leverage. Hall pounds Flair down and puts on the sleeper, only to be countered into a knee crusher. Hall clotheslines Flair down to break up the Figure Four attempt and they're both down. Flair chops away and it's time to strut. Syxx gets knocked off the apron and then crotchted. There's

a low blow to Hall and Flair is rolling. Flair loads up the Figure Four but has to fight off Syxx AGAIN. A belt shot to Flair finally gets the DQ.

Rating: C+. At the end of the day, Flair is one of the guys you know is going to have at least a decent match. It's a rare thing to see one of the higher ups in the NWO have a big time match and putting him with Flair meant this was going to be good. Also it plays into the tag title match at the PPV, making this one of the few matches tonight that actually meant something and the only one that was good on top of that.

Post match Flair gets double teamed and I guess the Horsemen are off hunting elk or something. Mongo and Jarrett FINALLY come out for the save. Mongo takes either a tag belt or the Cruiserweight belt with him as they leave for some reason.

Here's Savage for the final segment of the show. He brings Gene out with him by force and looks extra angry/crazy here. Gene talks about DDP and how Savage is underrating him, so Savage snaps. Gene says someone has to bring Savage back to earth and Savage gets in his face, drawing out JJ. JJ threatens Savage with some undefined punishment before saying he's lost respect for Savage.

Dillon says he expects better from Savage than from the rest of the NWO. JJ talks about how in the old days, Savage would have stood up to Page like a man. Now Savage is hiding in the crowd and isn't being a man. Savage decks JJ and security plus Bischoff come out to pull Savage off. Bischoff talks Savage down in the corner but the fans chant DDP, which sends Savage over the edge again. Bischoff says JJ brought this on himself to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This show wasn't that interesting overall. Savage vs. Page has me wanting to watch their match all over again even though I just saw it a few months ago. Flair's stuff was good too, but other than that there's nothing of interest here. The other matches were all setting

up later stuff and most of them were either bad or too short to be anything. Great American Bash is coming off like a much better show than Slamboree so these Nitros have been a lot easier to get through, but other than the top stuff, most of the matches aren't doing much for me yet.

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Monday Nitro – May 19, 1997: Flair Is Back

Monday Nitro #88

Date: May 19, 1997

Location: Ashville Civic Center, Ashville, North Carolina

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Larry Zbyszko

We're FINALLY past Slamboree and we have four weeks before the Great American Bash where the world title still won't be on the line. At least that show will have a big time grudge match in the main event but we'll get to that later on. Anyway tonight is likely going to establish the PPV main event and deal with the fallout from last night. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the ending of the show last night with the old guys winning and Tony declaring it the BIGGEST MOMENT EVER in WCW.

Here's Flair to open the show. Flair says that last night he erased everything the NWO has done with the help of Piper and Greene. This draws out Syxx who says that the wrong guy got pinned last night and that he doesn't like the idea of Flair saying he can beat Syxx. Syxx says he can beat Flair and challenges Flair to a match tonight. Flair says he doesn't

know if he can beat Hall and Nash but he knows he can beat Syxx so it's on.

TV Title: Prince Iaukea vs. Steven Regal

Regal pounds the punk kid down to start and hammers him in the corner. A sunset flip gets two for Iaukea and the fans are on fire tonight. Iaukea crucifixes him down for another two but Regal counters a headscissors by slamming him down face first onto the mat. Regal kicks him in the head and suplexes him before the Regal Stretch ends this. Seeing Prince Iaukea get beaten up makes me smile.

We get some clips from last night with Mortis and Wrath beating up Glacier until Ernest Miller debuted made the save.

Masahiro Chono vs. Dave Taylor

Chono is NWO. Tenay talks about a major name debuting on June 30 on Nitro. I won't say who but if what I can find is correct, two major names would debut that night. Taylor controls early with some European uppercuts but walks into an atomic drop. Chono knocks him to the floor but back in the ring a piledriver is broken up by Taylor. Not that it matters as Taylor charges into a boot and the STF ends this quick. The STF is Chono's signature hold if you're not familiar with him.

Sonny Onoo says Chono has a debt to pay with New Japan and Onoo has someone coming in next week but won't say who.

JJ Dillon reinstates Nick Patrick.

Scotty Riggs vs. Michael Wallstreet

Wallstreet isn't allowed to be in the NWO but he's anti-WCW. Riggs speeds things up to start and hits his decent dropkick, only to have Wallstreet

take him down soon thereafter. Wallstreet hooks a chinlock as the fans look at something in the crowd. A small package gets two for Riggs and Wallstreet tries to pull something out of his pocket. Nick Patrick stops him and Riggs gets a sunset flip for the pin. Another short match, but did we REALLY need to see Scotty Riggs vs. Michael Wallstreet when we had an hour for the show? I get that it's for Nick Patrick, but do we need to focus on him either? Really?

Speaking of wasting time, here's NASCAR driver Mark Martin to talk about a sweepstakes to win a racecar. The car being brought in is probably what the fans were looking at in the Riggs match. Flair comes out with Martin to try to make this look like it's important.

Time for the road report to waste some more time. This includes Lee Marshall singing some Elvis.

We get a video from last night with Page holding off Savage and the NWO with a crutch. The Giant eventually made the save when Page got in trouble.

Jeff Jarrett/Steve McMichael vs. Steiner Brothers

Jarrett and Scott start things off with Jeff being sent into the corner quickly. Jeff comes back with a neckbreaker to take over but a suplex is no sold. Scott gorilla presses Jeff down and hits a kind of Angle Slam off the top for two. Off to Rick vs. Mongo and it's a slugfest of course. Mongo takes out Rick's knee but gets caught by a suplex and what was supposed to be the middle rope bulldog but wound up being like a cravate-dog if that makes sense. Everything breaks down and Kevin Greene runs in with a briefcase shot to Mongo's back, giving Rick the easy pin.

Rating: C-. Apparently they thought last night's match with White vs. Mongo was so great that we MUST do another battle of the football players. I mean, having Mongo as a ring general is a can't miss idea right? The match was barely long enough to rate but it's the longest

match of the night so far. The problem with these tag matches is there's nothing to fight for because the Outsiders weren't going to defend the titles, so why bother having the other teams fight?

We get a video from during the break where Mongo and Greene got in a fight backstage.

Ric Flair vs. Syxx

Syxx jumps Flair as he comes in but a charge into the corner misses. Flair fires away with punches and chops and here are the Outsiders for the DQ. The match wasn't even a minute long.

Flair gets destroyed because the Horsemen were escorted from the building due to the Mongo vs. Greene fight. Nash says it's about putting the old guys out of business. Syxx has flowers for some reason.

Here's Bischoff for the closing segment. He says that last week he wanted to talk to Sting but he was nowhere to be found. The NWO called him and looked for him and even sent a private detective agency after him. Sting isn't in the rafters or the locker room tonight because he's a coward. Sting will never get a match with Hogan because it would mean bad things for the Scorpion enthusiast. Bischoff says if Sting were here, he'd slap the paint off his face. Sting pops up through the ring and lays out Bischoff to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This definitely wasn't a good show but it was miles better than the previous week's. I know they only have an hour at this point, but does WCW know that? At times I'm really not sure given some of the stuff they put out there. This show felt like it had some energy to it this week which has been lacking for awhile. Maybe it's because they're coming off a PPV or maybe it's because the build to Slamboree was incredibly long, but this felt much fresher and it made the show go by a lot faster. They're back to the full two hours next week.

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Monday Nitro – May 12, 1997: A Horrible Go Home Show For One Of The Most Worthless PPVs Ever

Monday Nitro #87

Date: May 12, 1997

Location: 1st Mariner Center, Baltimore, Arena

Attendance: 8,058

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Larry Zbyszko

I think this is another of those hour long shows due to the NBA Playoffs which is a good idea lately. Slamboree is this Sunday and THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT. The shows have been so insanely boring lately that they need something to be completely changed. 1997 wasn't kind to the company but everyone remembers it as being awesome for some reason. Hopefully there's more Sting and Hogan here tonight as without them, these shows suck. Let's get to it.

Michael Buffer of all people opens the show.

Here are Savage and Liz with the Macho Man on his own feet instead of crutches. He talks about Page jumping him last week and firing him up. Savage wants a fight tonight and that's it. He talked for 25 seconds max. That's kind of refreshing.

Apparently Sting wants to conduct a one on one interview with Bischoff. The source of this news: Bischoff. Naturally the announcers accept this with no questions.

TV Title: Juventud Guerrera vs. Ultimo Dragon

Dragon is defending and Regal talks about how he can outwrestle anyone and will take the title on Sunday. Guerrera starts with a springboard cross body for two followed by a headscissors to send the champ to the floor. Back in and Dragon fires off some kicks followed by an over the shoulder backbreaker for two. Juvy kicks him in the face for two and hits a northern lights fisherman's suplex for two.

A rana is countered by a Dragon powerbomb and things slow down. Juvy rolls through a rana into a sunset flip for two before escaping a dragon and tiger suplex. They both go up top, resulting in Dragon hitting a superplex to put both guys down. Juvy gets pulled to the floor by Sonny Onoo and Dragon jumps on Guerrera from behind, saving Sonny in the process. Onoo kicks Juvy in the back and back inside, the super rana sets up the Dragon Sleeper to retain the title.

Rating: C. Not bad here but they kept starting and stopping. Juvy is a good choice for an opening act though as he can fly all over the place and do it almost as well as anyone else. That being said, he had no chance at winning the title, but for the most part that's ok. Sometimes it's fine to throw out an entertaining match even if the ending isn't in doubt.

Here are Piper/Flair/Greene to talk about Sunday. Please let this be short. Greene says that everyone pays taxes, everyone dies, and on Sunday he's going to hurt the NWO. Flair says they'll be there on Sunday. Piper says he's isn't Dorthy from the Wizard of Oz. The NWO shows up and makes fun of the guys in the ring. On Sunday, it's no DQ and no countout.

Dean Malenko vs. Steve McMichael

Dean takes him to the mat almost immediately but Mongo shoves him down almost just as fast. Malenko goes after the knee but Mongo escapes a Cloverleaf attempt. The leg lariat gets two for Dean but a Jarrett distraction lets Mongo clip Dean from behind. Mongo powerslams Dean but the referee went down during the slam.

Here's Reggie White but Jarrett distracts him too, allowing Mongo to get in a shot. White hits a clothesline and splash on Mongo (Bobby says it's not fair as Mongo has already been in there five or ten minutes. It hasn't even been three yet) giving Dean the pin. This was a mess and it set up Reggie White vs. Mongo on Sunday so if it could be rated, the grade would be very low.

Reggie says he's fighting for Wisconsin on Sunday.

Lee Marshall does his thing. Remind me again why this guy was getting a paycheck?

Scotty Riggs vs. Wrath

Even Scotty Riggs gets pyro. Man how much money did they have to burn at this point? Before the match, James Vandenberg names his monster as Wrath. As for the match, picture any squash between a small pretty boy and a monster that lasts about 40 seconds. That's the match you get here. Wrath wins it with his double arm Rock Bottom.

Here's Glacier post match. He doesn't do anything but he does in fact show up.

Konnan/Hugh Morrus vs. Alex Wright/Ice Train

Clearly a main event in any arena in the country. Tonight, it's the main event in the 1st Mariner Arena. The Dungeon team jumps Train to start with no avail at all. Train and Morrus officially start us off with Ice

Train hitting a powerslam to take over. Off to Wright who is booed out of the building. Wright won't tag out and it lets Morrus take over. A clothesline puts Train down and Wright bails to the floor. Train fights back but Wright claims a knee injury and walks away. The Dungeon double teams Ice Train until the Tequila Sunrise gets the submission.

Rating: D. This was all about the heel turn and not about the match at all. This didn't lead to a match between Ice Train and Wright, at least not on Nitro. This would be Train's last match on Nitro that I can find for over three years. Nothing to see here as it was an angle instead of a match, but at least the angle seemed to be what was needed given the crowd hating Wright when he came into the match.

We recap the beatdown on DDP by the NWO last week.

We cut to the back where Piper is down and injured. To the best of my knowledge this wasn't mentioned at all on Sunday.

Here's Bischoff for the big interview with Sting. Bischoff stalls a lot and we're rapidly running out of airtime. To the shock of absolutely no one with a functioning brain, it's the NWO Sting. The fans say they want Sting. Bischoff says a bunch of things that run Sting down while praising Hogan and Sting nods in agreement with everything. The real Sting comes out and beats up the fake one. Bischoff runs to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. The only thing keeping this from being a total failure is that it was half the length of a usual show. There was NOTHING on this show of value at all and it was pretty clear that no one was interested in what they were doing out there. Slamboree would wind up being the textbook definition of a throwaway show and even though the main event wound up being decent, it didn't mean anything at all past Sunday night. This show however was horrible and thankfully we're moving towards something new now.

Here's Slamboree if you're interested:

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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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Monday Nitro – April 21, 1997: Nash Explains Why The NWO Makes No Sense

Monday Nitro #84

Date: April 21, 1997

Location: Saginaw Civic Center, Saginaw, Michigan

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

We continue the marathon of shows between Spring Stampede and Slamboree and the big story tonight is the decision regarding the future of Eric Bischoff. Other than that, there isn't much here as we're heading towards Slamboree with a meaningless six man tag team main event. Nothing on the card looks like anything of note at all. Let's get to it.

James J. Dillon arrives to open the show. He doesn't really mean anything other than being a legend at this point.

Hogan is FINALLY out of the intro sequence.

US Title: Yuji Nagata vs. Dean Malenko

I think this is Nagata's company debut so he doesn't mean much yet. Dean takes him down to the mat and puts on a headlock. Yuji counters into a headscissors, followed by an enziguri and a chinlock. Reggie White is here again so let's put the camera on him for about ten seconds. Dean hits a jawbreaker to escape the hold and suplexes Nagata down for two. We hit chinlock #3 in the third minute of the match, this one with Dean in control.

Nagata escapes and puts on a modified STF but after letting it go, Yuji walks into a leg lariat for two. Nagata tries some kicks but gets caught

in a dragon screw leg whip. The injury doesn't last long as Yuji superkicks Dean down and hits an overhead belly to belly for two. Nagata misses another kick and Dean drops an elbow on the leg before throwing on the Cloverleaf to retain.

Rating: C. When they weren't using the chinlocks this was a pretty fun match. Dean was on fire in 1997 and there was almost no one he couldn't have a good match with. Nagata would come back later in the year and have an incredibly dull feud with Ultimo Dragon. I understand that these guys are Japanese legends and are incredibly talented, but it takes a lot more than a resume in another country and a six minute match on Nitro to get people to care about you, and most of the guys from other countries never got the chance to prove otherwise.

Glacier vs. Ciclope

Glacier's entrance takes longer than the match as he kicks Ciclope in the head and pins him in about thirty seconds.

Post match Glacier does more of his posing stuff until Wrath (not yet named) comes out. The distraction lets Mortis come in and jump Glacier from behind. Mortis steals Glacier's helmet which is like 700 years old or something. They try to injure Glacier's eye as this goes on WAY too long. When the fans spent the entire match chanting GLACIER SUCKS, giving this whole beatdown nearly four minutes was a bad idea.

Tony tells us that JJ Dillon is the new head of the executive committee. This brings out Nick Patrick to give his reasons as to why he should be let back into WCW. This isn't exactly Benoit and Mysterio from last week in the opening segments.

TV Title: Ultimo Dragon vs. Bobby Eaton

Eaton pounds him down to start for a surprising early advantage. Dragon

fires off the kicks though and Bobby has no idea what to do. You would think after hanging out with Stan Lane for so many years he would be familiar with martial arts. Sonny offers a quick distraction and Eaton gets dropkicked to the floor. Onoo kicks Eaton into the barricade and sends him back inside for the super rana and the Dragon Sleeper to keep the title in Japan.

Regal says he isn't dating Sarah Ferguson and that he'll get the TV Title back. He actually would, which makes you wonder what the point was in having Dragon win it in the first place at all, when Dragon would win it back a few weeks later.

Meng vs. Chris Jericho

Meng immediately clubbers him down and all of the fans look at something in the crowd, presumably a fight. Jericho and Meng chop it out with the savage taking over. Chris hits a middle rope dropkick but Meng won't go down. Meng hits a belly to back suplex for one and then chokes a bit. The fans are finally sitting down. Now they look at something else. Geez what is going on over there?

Jericho hits a spinwheel kick but Meng won't go down. An enziguri misses for the Canadian so he tries a standing Lionsault. Meng literally stands there while Jericho hits him and slides down Meng's body. This is getting embarrassing in a hurry. The Canadian hits a German on the Tongan for two but a rana attempt is countered into a hot shot. Tongan Death Grip gets the win for Meng.

Rating: D-. Oh this was bad and the majority of that seems to be on Meng. He wouldn't sell ANYTHING here, as Jericho was hitting all kinds of kicks but Meng would just stare at him. I'm assuming this was the beginning of Meng push #84 which would likely wind up going nowhere at all.

Jimmy Hart says that was a message to Benoit, who faces Meng at Slamboree. Oh so there was a point to it. Sullivan and Jackie (about as

close to falling out of a dress as you can be without being censored)
come out to talk about Benoit too. When is the retirement match already?
This time Sullivan rants about his kids and says something about sorority
sisters for his daughter. Meng goes after Sullivan for no apparent reason
but Jackie gets in his way. Meng speaks English and says that if it
wasn't for her, he would take both of them. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THIS
STABLE?????

Video on Benoit.

Steiner Brothers vs. Public Enemy

Before the Steiners come out we cut to the back where the Steiners are
fighting with the Dungeon of Doom. The Steiners are the hometown boys
here and their dad is here. Rick and Grunge start with Grunge being
powerslammed down almost immediately. Off to Rocco who grabs a headlock
but Scott tags himself in. He picks up Rocco and throws him at Grunge out
of a gorilla press in a scary power display. Back to Rick vs. Grunge
after the Public Enemy bails to the floor for a bit. A double clothesline
puts Rick down but Rocco misses a flip dive off the top. Not that it
matters as Konnan/Morrus run in for the double DQ.

Hour #2 begins so we get the usual recap.

Here's JJ for his introductory speech, which isn't even good enough to
put in the ring. Tony interrupts him to ask about Nick Patrick. JJ says
he'll consider the reinstatement. As for Bischoff, he has no authority
but he still has a contract and he can still be around. JJ goes into a
bunch of legal jargon and for some reason Mr. Wallstreet and Big Bubba
are under contract to WCW instead of the NWO. Bischoff comes out and says
bite me. Eric explains how great he is and how he doesn't care what
anyone else says.

JJ says Eric has made the center of the wrestling universe WCW instead of
Stamford, Connecticut. Eric says bite me. JJ says this isn't acceptable

but Bischoff leaves. Since it's JJ Dillon, he talks about shoes to close things out (old school fans will get that reference). Absolutely nothing was accomplished here, but thank goodness they got a wrestling guy to be the authority figure so that A, people know who he is and B, he knows how to talk in front of a live audience.

Scotty Riggs vs. Jeff Jarrett

This is a rematch from Saturday Night which the world was waiting for. Jarrett lost on Saturday and beat him up post match so we needed a second match. Riggs charges in and gets beaten down by Jeff. A swinging neckbreaker and release gutwrench suplex put Riggs down followed by the move that would eventually be called The Stroke.

Riggs gets in some quick offense but Jarrett backdrops him to the floor which isn't a DQ because we're not enforcing that rule right now. Time to look at Reggie White as Jeff misses an enziguri. Scotty's top rope cross body gets two and here's Mongo with the briefcase. White jumps the railing to stop him and Mongo runs away. Jeff takes out the knee and a quick Figure Four gets the submission win.

Rating: D+. This was barely above a squash and was pretty much here for the White vs. Mongo stuff. At the end of the day, I'm not sure who cared about White vs. McMichael but it's something different than the Horsemen arguing over Debra which makes it a huge improvement. Well maybe not huge but it's better at least.

Cruiserweight Title: Syxx vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

Syxx is defending. Nash is the only NWO backup here so far. Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get an extended advantage. Rey takes him to the mat with a headlock and Syxx slaps the mat but it doesn't count as a tap for no apparent reason. Back up and Rey slaps him in the face before headscissoring Syxx down. Syxx gets in a kick and drops that fast leg to take over.

More kicks in the corner set up the Bronco Buster which isn't named yet. That would be Syxx hitting it as Rey hadn't yet adopted the move. The champ hooks an abdominal stretch but gets caught holding the ropes. After Rey is sent to the floor for a second, Syxx misses another Bronco Buster back inside. A somewhat messed up West Coast pop gets two and a top rope rana sends the champ to the floor. Nash comes in and kills Rey with the Jackknife (which the referee somehow didn't notice), allowing Syxx to put on the Buzz Kill for the easy win.

Rating: C. Not bad here but the ending sucked. Seriously, how could the referee not notice Rey slamming into the mat two feet away from him? Syxx would hold the title for a few more months while Rey did his thing for the foreseeable future. Either way, this was fine but the ending was about what you expected.

Dillon comes out post match and yells but nothing comes of it. Rey is taken out on a stretcher.

Video on Luger.

Hogan is in a movie and we take a look at him on set.

Here's the NWO again with something to say. Syxx talks about how Flair and Piper were out here last week talking about respect. He wants to know what kind of respect it is to rip off the Nature Boy gimmick from Buddy Rogers. Nash isn't worried about Piper because he looked down the road the old guys paved and saw nothing but potholes.

He goes on a big rant about backstage politics, talking about how people's kids were getting pushed and that was it. Then they went to New York where everyone was trying to get the business out of the funk the old guys left it in. Nash talks about how Piper and Flair are going to have to beat respect out of them because this is their generation now. Where do I even begin?

First and foremost, this is 1997. I'm writing this review in the year 2012 and odds are if you're reading this, you knew what Nash was talking about. That being said, you're probably in the minority of wrestling fans that got what Nash meant. Now imagine how small a percentage that was back in 1997. At the end of the day, most wrestling fans either A, didn't get what Nash was talking about and/or B, don't care what he's talking about.

This was the period where the "real" stuff was brought into play more and more and it's a big reason why things started to go downhill a few years later. Most of the fans, especially WCW fans, wanted to see Hogan get beaten up and the NWO get what was coming to them. The problem was that was the logic on paper.

Then you get promos like this one, where the NWO paints themselves to be the young guys who are being treated badly and make themselves the heroes. It all got way more confusing than it needed to be, and when you make things too confusing in something that's supposed to be fun and mostly mindless entertainment, your audience is going to stop caring.

As if that's not enough, listen to what he was talking about: people that took over the business and wouldn't leave anything behind for anyone else. Nash's boss in the NWO is HULK FREAKING HOGAN. So not only would most fans not have gotten what he meant, but the ones that did would see him as a hypocrite. Then on top of all THAT, this set up a totally meaningless six man tag which didn't mean anything and was never mentioned again after Slamboree.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Psychosis

The luchador hits a dropkick and goes up, only to get pulled into a Diamond Cutter for the pin in less than a minute.

Savage pops up in the crowd and implies Kimberly is in love with him but nothing comes of it.

Here are Flair, Piper and Greene to close the show. They call out the NWO and Hall finally returns to stare at them. The B Team gets beaten down to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. What a worthless show. From the Nash promo to the short (longest topped out at 6:01) and dull matches to JJ Dillon being treated as less than nothing on his first night as WCW boss, this was absolutely horrible. Slamboree would wind up being perhaps the most pointless show in the history of WCW which is saying a lot when you think about it. Terrible show tonight with absolutely nothing of value.

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Slamboree 1997: Agoobwa

Slamboree 1997

Date: May 18, 1997

Location: Independence Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

Attendance: 9,643

Commentators: Dusty Rhodes, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

So you remember how Spring Stampede was a filler PPV? This one is as well but probably moreso than that one. The main event is the Wolfpac vs. the Horsemen in a meaningless six man. Hogan had this annoying habit of taking the summer off and he did it again here too. He wouldn't be back until July with Bash at the Beach for another meaningless tag match. To give you an idea of how dominant WCW was, the world title wasn't defended on PPV from February until August and they still dominated WWF. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about the three former football players that are wrestling tonight. You know, because that's what we

bought wrestling PPVs to see.

The announcers babble about tradition.

TV Title: Steven Regal vs. Ultimo Dragon

Regal is challenging. Dragon goes to a wristlock and manages to stop Regal's usual counter to it and hooks an armbar. Test of strength goes on with Regal taking him down but Dragon pops right back up. They go to the corner and Dragon does his stand on his head in the corner deal. Why does no one ever hit him while he does that? I get the real life reason that he might die, but in kayfabe why not hit him?

Back on the mat Dragon fires off some kicks and hooks a half crab. Regal makes the rope and fires off some kicks of his own to send the champion to the floor. Back in a suplex gets two for Regal. They trade full nelsons and Dragon gets a sunset flip for two. Regal Stretch is avoided and Dragon is all fired up now for some reason. They get into a chain wrestling match and Regal is in his element. Regal tries the Stretch again but Dragon grabs his own mask to block it.

Since the Stretch won't go on it's time for the bow and arrow/surfboard (Dusty and Tenay call it either or) but Dragon escapes and fires a kick to the back. Here's the bridging Indian Deathlock and the fans chant for Regal. Dragon switches to a camel clutch and it turns into a brawl. Dragon dropkicks him to the floor and Sonny fires off some kicks. Those get him yelled at by the champ so Dragon sends Regal back in and hits a top rope rana for two.

Regal tries the Stretch again but Dragon makes the ropes. The fans are firmly behind Regal now which is strange as this is heel vs. heel and Dragon has been the good guy by default. Both guys try rollups for two but Dragon takes over with a spinwheel kick. Tiger suplex is countered but Dragon sends Regal to the floor. Asai Moonsault hits and Sonny adds in some more kicks. Dragon stops him so Sonny kicks Dragon, allowing

Regal to take over. In the ring a reverse suplex sets up the Regal Stretch and we have a new champion.

Rating: B. This was getting really good at the end and was still good when Sonny got involved. Was there ever a more useless manager now named Paul Jones? Really good opener here as they were beating the tar out of each other. Dragon would get the title back in a little over two months.

Madusa vs. Luna Vachon

This is the fallout from last month. Luna is billed from the Other Side of Darkness. Lee Marshall is brought in as a women's wrestling expert here. Luna takes her down to start and chokes a lot. Madusa tries to throw punches but gets beaten down again. Marshall talks about Martina Navratilova as Madusa kicks Luna's head off with a SWEET spin kick. Luna comes back with a stomach claw which that schnook Marshall calls scandalous. Madusa hits something like a Stinger Splash and screams a lot. Clothesline gets two. Luna manages a thumb in the eye, misses a top rope splash, and gets German suplexed for the pin.

Rating: D-. Nothing at all to see here as neither girl cared and none of the fans cared either. Bad match and there was nothing going on. The division didn't exist but we got this stuff every now and then so that WCW could claim they had women's wrestlers. Bad match but Madusa is kind of cute at times.

Post match Madusa takes her vest off to reveal her bra, which you could see 80% of already.

Here are Savage and Liz for a little chat. They throw Gene out and head to the ring. He talks about how the NWO is the center of the universe and how Page doesn't matter because he doesn't want any more of Savage. Cue Page through the crowd with a crutch to taunt Savage. The NWO has a conference in the aisle as Page makes fun of Savage, saying that he washes Hogan's

car. Savage finally comes in and gets beaten down by the crutch. More NWO comes in and beat him down but the Giant makes the save. Page vs. Savage would main event the next show. This took almost eight minutes.

Rey Mysterio vs. Yuji Yasuraoka

Yuji is a guy who I can only find very infrequent matches in New Japan for. He debuted last night on Saturday Night and that's about all they've got on him. In other words, he's a nobody. They both trade some quick holds and Rey works on the leg. Yuji comes back with a suplex and a kick to the back to take over. He's the heel by default here because he's Japanese and therefore evil. Oh and because he's facing Mysterio.

Spinwheel kick gets two for Yuji. He puts his hands on the chest instead of a usual cover with a leg hook to really show how evil he is. Rey sends him to the floor and sets for a dive but the referee gets in the way. Rey is like screw it and dives over Curtis the next time instead to hit Yuji. Back in the ring Rey hooks a camel clutch which looks really awkward for him. Yuji comes back and hooks a Fujiwara Armbar as things slow down again.

Apparently Yuji is a former partner of Lance Storm. Heenan: "He sounds like a weatherman from Omaha." Now it's a cross armbreaker to really put the fans to sleep. Well not to sleep but remember that this is a no name guy keeping things on the mat in a non-title match. Why should we care? Out to the floor and Yuji hits a double ax off the top to take Rey out. Suplex back in gets two. Rey sends him into the corner and hits a split legged moonsault for two.

Time to trade some reversals with both guys getting two, Yuji's off a countered victory roll and Rey's off the counter to the counter. Yuji tries a rana but gets powerbombed for two. Rey misses a top rope splash and Yuji hits his finisher, a double arm DDT, for two. Another attempt at it is countered

into a northern lights suplex for two. A top rope cross body is dropkicked down by Rey and the West Coast Pop gets the pin.

Rating: C. It's not a bad match but at the end of the day, it's just another cruiserweight match that doesn't mean anything because Syxx wouldn't defend the freaking title. On top of that the match was only ok. Yuji would never be seen again that I know of and after this, I can kind of see why. Again not a bad match, but nothing we haven't seen a million times.

Mortis vs. Glacier

This is one of those feuds that went on forever and I don't think there was ever any real resolution to it. Glacier charges in and the fight is on quick. Mortis goes after the knee and Glacier is down in the corner. And here's Wrath who has debuted before this apparently. Glacier hits a German on Mortis before Wrath gets here but there's the DQ like two minutes in. This is what NITRO is for people!

Ernest Miller comes in through the crowd for the save. He hasn't been named yet at this point. Oh ok he is named and the announcers immediately recognize him as a world karate champion, because Eric Bischoff seemed to think that EVERYONE followed tournament karate.

US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Dean Malenko

Dean is defending and Debra brings out Jeff. They fight over a lockup to start and Dean gives him a clean break in the corner. Jeff takes him down with a shoulder but doesn't follow up. Even Tony is confused by that. Dean hits a drop toehold but doesn't follow up either. They both seem hesitant to charge in here. Dean hooks a quick chinlock but Jarrett counters into a mat hold of his own that is countered so quickly that it's off to an STF by Dean.

Debra says something and they're still feeling each other out

in the ring. Dean hooks a leg bar which goes nowhere either. Out to the floor and Jarrett's leg is put over the railing and kicked, but he's fine enough to rapidly stomp Dean on the way back in. Dropkick gets two. Off to an abdominal stretch which lasts for a few moments. Dean tries to speed things up and sends Jeff to the floor.

Back in Dean still won't go after him and for the life of me I don't get why. It's Jeff Jarrett in 1997. Armbar goes on followed by a swinging neckbreaker. Here comes the Figure Four but Dean escapes by hitting Jeff's knee. Cloverleaf is countered into a small package for two. Another Cloverleaf attempt is countered by Dean being sent to the floor. Back in the ring a cross body is rolled through for two for Dean.

Off to a sleeper so Tony talks about Piper. Now Malenko counters into a sleeper of his own but Jeff quickly counters into the Figure Four. Dean panics then realizes he's 8 inches from the ropes. The fans are all over Jarrett here. Dean sends him into the corner and we get an embarrassingly bad collision. Here's Mongo to pull Debra away and throw Jarrett back into the Cloverleaf so Dean can retain.

Rating: C. Again the match isn't bad but so what? Back in February Mongo and Jarrett were fighting because of Debra and now it's May and they're still fighting about Debra. Also keep in mind that this is when Jarrett was still REALLY boring in the ring and could pretty much just throw dropkicks and put on a Figure Four. Nothing to see here as Malenko keeps the title and that's about it. Jarrett would get the title about three months later in an attempt to make the Mongo feud mean something.

Meng vs. Chris Benoit

This is a death match which means last man standing. Speaking of feuds that WOULD NOT END, this is more Benoit/Horsemen vs. Dungeon. At least Woman looks pretty good here. Benoit is

tentative to start but grabs a dragon screw leg whip to put Meng down for about a second. Meng comes right back so Benoit heads to the floor where he gets counted for no apparent reason.

Back in the ring Meng hits a belly to belly suplex. Meng tries to throw a punch but Benoit slips behind him and hits a German. Benoit keeps going for the legs which is smart strategy but he gets kicked off. Out to the floor and Meng is sent into the steps in a scary looking bump as the corner almost hit his eye. Meng comes back in and pounds him down in the corner but Benoit comes back with chops.

Meng goes all psycho Samoan....and for the love of all things good and holy freaking Jacqueline is here. NO ONE LIKES YOU AND NO ONE CARES ABOUT YOU NOW GO AWAY!!! Woman chases her away for some reason that I don't care about at all. Meng hooks a half crab and I think you can win by submission as well. Benoit makes the ropes which is a break in a match that has no DQ.

Benoit tries a comeback but gets headbutted right back down. A good piledriver puts Benoit down for eight. Out of nowhere Benoit grabs the Crossface (not named yet. Ok apparently it is but Tony calls it an armbar submission at first) but Meng slides to the floor to break it. Now Dusty says you have to break in the ropes. What happens if you don't? Benoit keeps getting up and screams for more so Meng keeps kicking him in the face.

A running kick in the corner misses and Benoit fires away at him. Here are the rolling Germans which that idiot Tony calls dragon suplexes. This show is ticking me off already and now we have to listen to Tony screw up move names. Here's the Crossface again but Meng rolls outside again. Wicked suicide dive takes Meng down but Benoit can't follow up. Back in a suplex puts Meng down but he catches Benoit in the Tongan Death Grip while Benoit tries the swan dive. Benoit passes out

for the loss.

Rating: D+. Another match that more or less was a singles match but more hard hitting. It wasn't terrible but with Tony and Jackie out there messing up everything, it was hard to care. On top of that, why have Benoit lose here? That would apparently be so that they could do THE EXACT SAME MATCH the next month.

This show is already bad but the problem is that none of this stuff matters. That's the case for Spring Stampede, this show and the Great American Bash, because most of the big names weren't here and none of the matches meant anything because it was clear that everything was leading up to Sting vs. Hogan, and Hogan didn't appear on any of these shows, nor did Sting I don't think. In other words, we had three months of worthless PPVs, which make them even harder to sit through.

Konnan/Hugh Morrus vs. Steiner Brothers

See my point? Scott and Morrus start. Dusty says these teams both want to be tag champions. That's hilarious: like the Outsiders would ever defend those things. To give you an idea of things: the Steiners won the belts in October. From October 1996 until May of 1998, ONLY the Outsiders and the Steiners held the belts (not counting the Giant/Luger title win as they had to return them the next night). On top of that, aside from 18 days in Spring of 98, either an Outsider or a Steiner held the titles from October of 1996 until January of 1999. Think about that for a minute.

Morrus gets thrown around by both Steiners and Rick hits some Steiner Lines. A top rope Steiner Line puts Morrus on the floor and the Steiners clear the ring. Rick vs. Konnan now with Konnan getting thrown all over the place with "that move that Benoit used in the last match" (German suplex). Back to Scott as we're in squash mode so far. Konnan finally gets a boot up in the corner to give the Dungeon an advantage.

Never mind of course as Scott suplexes him over. Morrus comes in again and Jimmy trips Scott to give his team a chance. Hugh manages a suplex and it's back to Konnan who gets two off a neckbreaker. Morrus hooks a Fujiwara Armbar but it's off to Konnan for a modified Rings of Saturn. Scott gets up and hits an overhead belly to belly. Morrus tries a double ax while Scott is on his back because the put the boot up while the other guy does a move that only exists to jump into the boot spot is REALLY what I want to see right now. Hot tag to Rick, bad top rope bulldog, everything breaks down, Frankensteiner, pin.

Rating: D. Another whatever match here as none of it means anything and we got a glorified squash on PPV. Then again Rick lost a glorified squash last month as well but hey, it sucked last month so maybe it will here too! Nothing to see here (of course) as the Steiners wouldn't get a title shot until AUGUST.

Konnan beats up Morrus post match, quitting the Dungeon to become a rapper.

Reggie White vs. Steve McMichael

GREAT. This is EXACTLY what this show needs. Why is Reggie White fighting? Who knows? Who cares? My guess is because even though Mongo is a face here, he turned heel on Greene like 11 months ago and this is REVENGE. You would think that Greene would want revenge himself, but he's in the main event with the guys that Mongo turned on him for. In theory White is a heel here, but naturally he's treated as the hero against a Horseman in CHARLOTTE. He has his strength coach with him. This is White's first match ever and they put him with STEVE FREAKING MCMICHAEL. Let's get this over with.

Feeling out process to start as Mongo is definitely playing heel. They collide and both stumble. They do it again and Mongo stumbles a bit. White hooks a headlock and they ram

again with Mongo going down this time. Steve draws the scrimmage line and they go at it with Mongo taking the leg out. They do it again and White jumps over him, then hits him in the side of the ribs which is a "clothesline."

Mongo tries to leave but one of White's teammates comes out to throw him back in. It's a nose tackle from the Packers apparently. White gets some great height on a dropkick for two. The kick sucked but he was UP THERE. The fans cheer for Mongo but he keeps playing heel because that's what was set before the match and White (not his fault) doesn't know how to be a heel because HE ISN'T A WRESTLER.

Mongo hooks an armbar and shouts about how Jesus may have White's soul (White was known as a very religious man) but Mongo has him right now. That gets McMichael sent to the floor and it's more stalling. White hooks a headlock but Mongo escapes and clips him to take over. Side slam puts Reggie down but he comes back up quickly and puts the headlock on again before hitting a cross body for two.

Off to a nerve hold by White but McMichael hits him low and makes fun of church bells. Off to another leg lock and then a half crab. They ram each other into the corner a few times but Steve kicks the knee out. Figure four is countered and White shoves him down. He actually SELLS THE KNEE...or maybe he's just tired. They slug it out in the corner and Reggie is all fired up.

There's an atomic drop and a much better clothesline to put Mongo on the floor. Back in and McMichael takes over, only to have his suplex countered. He hits a splash but there's no referee because of Debra. Briefcase is stolen by the other football player but Jeff Jarrett comes out and throws in another case and the shot with that gets the pin on White.

Rating: F. As in FIFTEEN MINUTES that this match got. Now before I get into this, I want to emphasize something: Reggie

White was TRYING out there. He looked fired up, he was going the entire time, and there have been far worse celebrity performances in the past. That being said, the match was WAY too long and McMichael was the totally wrong person to try to carry him.

Think back to the 97 Great American Bash when it was Mongo/Greene debuting as a team. They faced Arn Anderson and Ric Flair, two of the best ring technicians ever. Flair and Arn walked then through a 20 minute match and it wasn't that terrible. That being said, this was a HORRIBLE idea. You took basically a rookie and had him work a fifteen minute match with a football player. Horrible match, but more based on the people that put it together rather than the wrestlers.

Kevin Greene/Roddy Piper/Ric Flair vs. Syxx/Kevin Nash/Scott Hall

Here's your main event. Nothing on the line, just pride. It's Flair's first match back in 8 months. Greene played for the Carolina Panthers so he's incredibly popular. Flair vs. Syxx to start. Syxx takes him down quickly and grabs a headlock. Flair chops him down but Syxx kicks him in the face. Syxx chops him in the corner and Flair is all like boy please. There's a backdrop and a pelvic thrust to the Outsiders.

Hall comes in and takes a punch and Flair wants Nash. Greene and Piper haven't done anything yet. Hall comes in legally and Flair says bring it on. Now it's off to Greene and it's time to stall. Nash comes in before Hall does anything. They shove each other around and Nash pounds away with the usual stuff in the corner. Greene comes back with a shoulderblock to take down the other Kevin and he does it again. Nash heads to the floor so Greene beats up both other Wolfpac members.

Hall wants Piper so here he is. Piper has a HUGE bandage on his right thigh. Into the corner and Piper rifles off rights and lefts as we continue the start and stop nature of this

match. A knee lift by Piper puts Piper down (not a typo) but Hall shoves him into the corner. Roddy fights off all three of them at once but Syxx manages to get in a shot to the leg to give the NWO their first advantage.

Piper kicks away a figure four attempt and dives to Flair, putting the total time the NWO was in control at 19 seconds. Flair comes in but gets knocked into the corner for the Flair Flip. He comes off the top and jumps into the fallaway slam by Hall. They all head to the floor and Greene runs over Syxx. Flair is the face in peril and gets caught in Snake Eyes.

Back to Hall for nothing of note and it's back to Syxx. He hits the Bronco Buster, drawing a homosexual slur chant. That of course fires up the He-Man known as Ric Flair but Syxx takes him back down almost immediately. Flair tags in Piper but the referee doesn't see it. Piper is like screw that and decks Anderson and everything breaks down. Nick Patrick, freshly good again, replaces Anderson. Flair hits Hall low and puts on the Figure Four. Piper puts Nash in the sleeper and Syxx gets powerslammed for the triple win.

Rating: C. This was a basic six man tag but MAN did the place pop for the win. This is supposed to be a big deal for some reason with Tony calling it the biggest moment in the history of WCW. It's probably the best match of the night other than the opener and this one kind of almost means something so I'll give it the point. Greene was having a blast out here and did what he could.

Overall Rating: N. As in nothing. I've got nothing that could accurately describe how worthless this was. Some of the matches are ok at best but for the most part they were either bad or pointless. Nothing to see here at all as none of the big stars were here for the most part, at least not wrestling. This was the second of three straight PPVs with no Hogan and as annoying as he was, without him there was really no point to anything because he was world champion. Horrible show that

was actually making me mad at times, which is a rarity.

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Souled Out 1997 – Quite A Different Experience

Souled Out 1997

Date: January 25, 1997

Location: Five Seasons Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Attendance: 5,120

Commentators: Eric Bischoff, Ted DiBiase

This was requested a long time ago and I never got around to doing it. This is a very different kind of show as it's the first and more or less only official NWO PPV. And when I say NWO PPV, I mean full on. The ring is different, there's a house band, an NWO beauty pageant, all WCW vs. NWO matches and a guy making jokes about WCW guys on their way to the ring. It's way out there but definitely intriguing. Let's get to it.

We open with a black and white video of a full police escort bringing people to the arena. It's really hard to see anything and we get the old school style NWO promos. You can't see anyone's faces until they get into the arena. Hogan has the Dallas Cowboys with him for some reason.

The main event here is Hogan vs. Giant for the title, which makes limited sense to me as he fought Piper at the last PPV. They always had this weird concept of have Starrcade then have Souled Out as a completely different theme of show and then have Superbrawl to complete the trilogy of S-named shows.

The set is completely different looking than most shows with big lights saying New World Order and a bunch of steps. Nick Patrick is the referee for every match tonight which must be tiring.

Chris Jericho vs. Masahiro Chono

Chris is billed as "from somewhere north of the border, Chris "I should have played hockey" Jericho". It's the same voice that would say the-the biggest icon in wrestling in the NWO theme song. Chono was part of NWO Japan which became Team 2000 when the angle ended. The WCW guys get no theme music.

Patrick accuses Jericho of pulling hair right off the bat. Jericho is more or less nothing at this point so this should be a glorified squash for Chono. A bunch of WCW guys come out to sit in the audience, including Anderson and Harlem Heat and a bunch of others. Eric says they didn't have to give away tickets to fill the place. Considering how bad things got in about two or three years, that's hysterical.

Nice side Russian legsweep by Chono as the glorified squash theory is right so far. Nice plancha by Jericho to the floor as Chris is giving it a go at least. After some stuff on the floor where Jericho hurts his knee we get some knee work from Chono in the ring. Kind of boring but not bad so far. The idiot fans chant USA as Jericho hits an enziguri.

Bischoff decided jump back leg round kick is a better name than enizguri. And hey, anyone that follows tournament karate knows that right Tony? Dragon screw leg whip (dang some moves have long names) sets up the STF which doesn't work. VERY slow count by Patrick off a German by the Canadian to the Japanese as the fans chant USA. Is that joke getting old? I can never tell.

They botch a belly to belly off the top which kills the crowd pretty badly. Chono busts out a table which is a very different thing here in 1997, especially for mainstream

wrestling. Jericho reverses a suplex through it and hits a missile dropkick for two which actually was fair.

Lionsault gets two in another fair count as his knee is hurt badly here. He goes up again but gets caught by the Mafia Kick. Oddly enough that doesn't knock him off so Chono has to shove him through the table. Another Mafia Kick in the ring kills Jericho dead for the pin.

Rating: C+. This wasn't as bad as I expected. Wait why would I think this was bad? You have two of the best ever in there and we got a pretty good match. It was more competitive than I expected is probably a better explanation. Solid stuff here for the most part but nothing incredible.

We get a bit of the Miss NWO stuff. Some radio host named Jeffrey Katz is the host. Basic questions are asked, the girls are stupid, the word fellatio is used. Yeah that sums things up pretty well I'd think.

Big Bubba vs. Hugh Morrus

This is Dungeon vs. NWO as Bubba jumped so the Dungeon is after him. This is a Mexican death match despite the lack of Mexicanocity. No intro for Morrus at all. Morrus looks like Big Dick Dudley. Ok then. The whole death match aspect here is never really explained but whatever. Morrus hits a clothesline to put Bubba on the floor.

Bubba finds a chain from somewhere and whips Morrus with it. We're told that a Mexican Death Match means anything goes. No Laughing Matter hits and of course no cover. Oh ok it's more or less last man standing. Patrick counts as slowly as possible so Morrus gets after him.

Boss Man gets back up and does nothing but really basic punches and strikes. Morrus just blasts him with a low blow and Bubba heads out for a walk. We go to the stage where Morrus misses a moonsault, which was completely messed up

anyway so they would have been on top of each other. Bubba grabs a motorcycle and runs down Morrus Rikishi style to of course end it.

Rating: D. Kind of just a brawl here with Bubba not doing much at all. Naturally this had no point and would only be on this PPV and this one alone. This went nowhere and the ending was really stupid. At least it was short. Whenever we get to that point it's never a good sign.

The NWO chicks are still stupid. This is five minutes that nothing is coming from.

There's an NWO website. Nice job updating it to remove the guy not in the team anymore.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mr. Wallstreet

Oh wow this is going to be bad isn't it? Wallstreet gets a bad rollup to start for two as Jarrett argues with Patrick. Basically it's a handicap match with the announcers praising the FAR over the hill Wallstreet. Debra, in the audience, likes Jarrett. Jarrett goes into the audience and no one cares.

Sleeper goes on as Debra is trying to get Mongo to do something. Far too many rest holds in this as we're on our third in like a minute and a half. Eric says the crowd is getting anxious. Ok so in the NWO language anxious means bored out of your mind and wanting to crack your freaking skull open to end the pain of this match.

This is during the Jarrett wants to be a Horseman period which went a grand total of nowhere. Anderson is kind of scouting Jarrett at this point but it's not like he's going to get much here. Wallstreet is just boring beyond belief. Figure four goes on and Patrick literally drags them to the ropes so Wallstreet can get the break. Wallstreet gets an abdominal stretch as Mongo jumps the guardrail and DRILLS him with his

briefcase and threatens to revoke Patrick's parking pass if he doesn't count the pin.

Rating: F. Yeah this was awful. Rotunda (Wallstreet) was just worthless by this point and Jarrett as a face is just boring beyond all comprehension. Horrible match.

The pageant is still going! It's just them answering questions like you would see in a beauty pageant but they're biker chicks and not attractive and stupid.

And now we have a song. Yeah the house band does some weird metal/bad rock song where the only recognizable words are NEW WORLD ORDER. It's as stupid as it sounds.

Buff Bagwell vs. Scott Riggs

Bagwell had very recently turned black and white so this is the blowoff I guess. I don't know about you but I was begging for that American Males showdown. Bischoff talks about how Bagwell has the IT factor and is going to be a movie star according to Hogan. That's rich. Buff channels his inner Hogan and poses so Riggs jumps him to start us off. And now we stall.

The constant camera cuts are reaching TNA levels here. They're doing a weird handheld look here and it's really not working at all. Apparently Buff has a new move for us tonight. He slaps Riggs and it's on. Buff is sent to the floor which isn't a DQ here for no apparent reason. I hate that rule but love how they constantly change it.

Eric: "Everybody has to go somewhere. Horses have glue factories and people here have Connecticut." And then there's Orlando I guess. Amazingly enough, this is a fairly boring match. Bagwell leads the fans in a Bagwell Sucks chant for some reason. He gets a powerbomb for two. This match is just rather boring. We get a back shot of Buff off a sunset flip attempt.

And now let's look at the biker chicks again. Sure why not. Bischoff points out that the fans are restless and I'm rather surprised. This match would be perfect for me to get some rest to. It's putting me to sleep. Riggs reverses a slam into a small package for a long two. The crooked referee schtick is getting very old.

Tornado DDT puts Buff down and Riggs of course doesn't cover. Eric picks New England for the Super Bowl which was the wrong selection of course. After some more camera cuts and more slow counting, the fans are miserable. Patrick is tired here and I can't really blame him for that. They go to the corner and Buff debuts the Blockbuster to end this. Yes, this got 14 minutes.

Rating: F+. And that's just because I love the Blockbuster. This was incredibly boring and not even a fast paced match. At the end of the day, this was Marcus Bagwell vs. Scotty Riggs for almost 15 minutes on PPV. There is no way that works no matter what you say.

Yeah we get it: the girls are stupid.

There's an NWO hotline. What's on it? FIND OUT ON NITRO!

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Scott Norton

So Page turned down the NWO and became a MASSIVE face in the process so the ending here is about as obvious as you could ask for. Norton is strong of course. Page isn't quite his usual self at this point but it's coming very soon. Page vs. Savage would ignite his career and make him the superstar that he would become. He's moving here which is odd to see.

And we still get it: Norton is strong. They keep talking about taking over Japan which was a thing hyped for awhile and then it never happened of course. Page pancakes him (Piledriver but he slams them forward instead) but Norton's power takes over again. I never got why he was supposed to be all awesome or

something. Sting is in the corner of the building so the whole match is thrown off course now.

Shoulder breaker sends Page to the floor and he's in trouble. He gets beaten up a good bit on the floor as the PA guy calls Page a loser which has happened in every match so far tonight. All Norton for awhile but Page punches his way out of it and hits a nice top rope clothesline for two.

Page calls for the Diamond Cutter but here come a bunch of the weaker NWO guys led by Bagwell to offer the spot on the team to him again. He says yes and puts the shirt on before dropping Norton and then, in an actual SMART move from a face, gets the heck out of there before they kill him. Norton wins by countout I'd assume. Yeah he does.

Rating: D. Boring match but Page was trying at least. Like I said his big old push was coming soon and to say it worked is an understatement. This was obviously just to set up the angle at the end and the match was pretty bad because of it. That clothesline was good though.

We narrow it down a bit in the pageant. There's just nothing to say about this.

Tag Titles: Outsiders vs. Steiner Brothers

This was built up forever and included attempted vehicular manslaughter by the heels. I mean there was a video of the two teams in their cars and the Outsiders ran them off the road. The Scotts start us off with various levels of arm work. These camera angles are really getting annoying as it's hard to tell what we're looking at sometimes. And let's talk about Hogan.

Rick vs. Hall now. And now back to the arm. Rick gets out of it by punching Hall in the face. Again, when all else fails: HIT THEM IN THE FACE! Chokeslam gets Hall out of trouble and here's Nash. They don't exactly look energetic out there if that makes sense. Scott hits that spinning belly to belly and

now more arm work. Everyone has had the arm worked on at various times here.

This has been half punches, half arm work and half suplexes. There were occasions where both were going on at the same time. BIG boot puts Rick on the floor. The ring color is very offputting here. This is your usual slow and plodding Outsiders match with not a lot going on but a lot of time wasting, which technically is something I guess. And now let's yell at DiBiase because we don't care about the match.

Nash misses an elbow which takes us nowhere. Scott reaches out to Rick but Rick is facing the wrong way. Maybe Scott wants to take up proctology. Snake Eyes on the apron as we're on the floor now. It's Nash and Rick still if you're wondering. Scott Steiner drills the other Scott and drops a bunch of F Bombs. Good night this needs to get going already.

Scott FINALLY comes in and beats up anyone that enjoys being outside with ease. Everything goes nuts and Scott gets the Razor's Edge to Scott but there's no referee. Top rope bulldog ends Hall and Randy Anderson comes in out of the crowd and counts the pin. If you're stupid enough to think this lasted through Nitro the next night, you're a very stupid person.

Rating: D+. Just rather boring again as the Outsiders couldn't move at all and it just isn't interesting to see them fight. Nothing special at all here as this DRAGGED. It's the longest match of the night at fifteen minutes almost and it felt like a lot more than that. The screwjob ending doesn't help much either but not a lot is going to help this show at this point.

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Syxx

Remember what I said about nothing being able to help this show? I still think that's correct but this isn't going to hurt it any. Eddie is champion here but Syxx has the title itself. Oh and it's a ladder match. The lack of music for the faces is really weird. Syxx is of course introduced as US

Champion of the World. Bischoff calls him a one man rock concert. Oh dear he's almost Heath Slater.

Eddie jumps him as the belt is being lifted up into the air. That would be cheating right? Wow even I find the jokes and writing in this review boring at this point. I think that might be due to this show just being weak so far. It's different for sure but there's just nothing of note in the ring so far. Granted that could be said about almost all WCW PPVs from this era.

BIG dive from Eddie sends Syxx's head into the ground and HARD. Easily the biggest spot of the night so far but that looked very bad. Waltman (that other name is irritating for some reason) hits a spin kick off the second rope as the crowd is at least awake to an extent here. Bronco Buster hits Eddie but it's just one shot at this point so it's not as annoying yet.

Eddie hits a dropkick and Waltman goes FLYING. You would think he was catching a cannonball or something off that. Some LOUD fan shouts a gay slur at Eddie and even Eric has to respond to it. Big suicide dive by Waltman and the crowd is clearly restless even though this has been a pretty decent match so far. Well granted that's based on like six minutes or so but it's a breath of freaking air after watching Scott Norton and Scotty Riggs on PPV.

Scott Hall made ladder matches awesome. Did you know that? Teeter Totter shot to Waltman's head and Eddie controls pretty easily here. It becomes your standard what vile things can we do with a basic piece of hardware match which is always pretty entertaining, especially with talented guys like Eddie and pretty good guys like Waltman. He's off here because of the head shot earlier though I think.

Big old top rope suplex from Eddie as Waltman looks a little dead at the moment. Both guys go up and Waltman does something

I've never seen before, jumping into the air and hitting a dropkick (kind of and closer to that than whatever Bischoff called it) to Eddie which looked great. Waltman of course crashed like a car driven by a penguin with bad eyesight.

Waltman can barely move as Eddie cranks it up again. Both guys go up as Eric says do it for Alice in Chains. Both guys go up and grab the belt at the same time. Eddie drills him with it and they both fall, but Guerrero holds onto it to get the title back for good this time.

Rating: B-. Match of the night BY FAR. This was actually good with these two being able to have some time and show off a bit. This was pretty good but nothing great. See what happens when you have two young guys out there and give them something where they can show off? YOU GET A GOOD MATCH!

The pageant begins (what?) and ends with a fat chick getting to make out with Eric. Again as stupid as it sounds.

WCW World Title: Hollywood Hogan vs. The Giant

The pyro for Hogan is set to his music which is pretty cool looking. The Cowboys are with him again here. No t-shirt for Hogan which is weird to see. Nate Newton is here as is George Teague. Oh and Ray Donaldson. Other than to big Cowboys fans only one of those names will mean a thing. Hogan is tiny looking here which is very weird to say the least.

I don't mean because he's against Giant. I mean his muscle mass is WAY down. Punches just tick Giant off. This is happening because Giant won World War III and Hogan said no title shot, thereby ticking Giant off. He was the first to leave the team after being in it like three or four months. And Hogan stalls. He begins his offense with punches before shifting slightly to harder punches and then going full boar with very hard punches.

Why does every move have to be heard around the world? Double

clothesline and both guys are down already. Giant takes over and Hogan overacts. That's always weird as he never acted at all as an actor but as a wrestler he acts far too much. Shoulder block gets nothing for Hogan and Hogan actually tries a small package. You see something new every day I guess.

It looked cool too as Giant just kind of held him there when he was trying to roll through with it. I love basic counters like that which get to show off someone's power and size. After some very basic and weak looking heel stuff from Hogan, Giant goes up for a top rope elbow which misses of course as it would have hit Hogan so far that the hair inside Hogan's skull would have popped out and his image would have been ruined. It also would put a lot of bandana companies out of business.

Giant no sells a big boot. Ok that's pretty freaking cool. A weak slam (but still a slam nonetheless) sets up the legdrop which is completely no sold. Hogan parades around and doesn't seem to notice the lack of Giant laying there. Chokeslam kills Hogan dead but Patrick keeps saying the shoulder was up even though he doesn't move.

The run-ins begin of course and Giant piles them up like a chronic hoarder. The announcers hit the ring too until Hogan gets a (real) guitar as Hall and Nash get there. Good to see Hogan get rid of Giant with the instrument or the Outsiders might have had to do two things in one night! The fans want Sting which does nothing. Spray paint job ends this. The match was just thrown out I guess.

Rating: D-. This was their usual boring match that had nothing of note for it. It felt like the main event of a house show with the shoulder not being up thing but it's better than the fake shoulder injury concept I guess. Another boring match to cap off a very boring show though.

The copyright says NWO which is a nice little touch.

Overall Rating: F+. I've seen some people say that this show is recommended because it's so different. Well yeah that's true it is different. It's somehow more annoying and stupid than the rest of WCW's stuff around this time. There's one good match out of like eight and even it's nothing worth going out of your way to see. The atmosphere is most certainly different and it's true that there never really has been another show like this, but that doesn't mean it's worth seeing. Bad show and different, but not worth watching.