

Clash of the Champions Count-Up – #18: Dangerous Alliance Time. FINALLY.

Clash of the Champions 18

Date: January 21, 1992

Location: Kansas Expo Center, Topeka, Kansas

Attendance: 5,500

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Jim Ross

Time for another Clash, but this time it's from a better era. This is during the Dangerous Alliance period, where the top heels in the company banded together to fight Sting and whoever he could get to back him up. However, he needed to win the world title first and we need to set up that match tonight. Also we get Cactus Jack vs. Van Hammer in a falls count anywhere match which I remember fairly well. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Heyman wanting to take over the company with the Dangerous Alliance.

As usual Eric and Missy are more or less the hosts.

Vader/Mr. Hughes vs. Steiner Brothers

Scott vs. Hughes gets us going. The Steiners are insanely popular. Scott throws Hughes around for a few minutes and that's exactly what I wanted to see. That's what the Steiners were awesome at: throwing big guys around like it was no big deal. Hughes powers him to the corner and everything breaks down. The Steiners get sent to the floor so they wait for the monsters to pose and both go to the top at the same time. A double Steiner Line off the same corner gives the Steiners the momentum again.

Vader vs. Rick now and Vader goes old school monster on him. There's a gorilla press and a splash in the corner but Rick keeps getting up because that's what he does. Steiner Line takes Vader down and there's an overhead belly to belly (great one too). Rick knocks him to the floor and dives off the apron, but gets caught and rammed into the post. Back in and Rick throws Vader off the top with a belly to belly superplex.

Off to Scott and the Steiners are all fired up here. Scott gets the best German suplex you'll ever see to a guy the size of Vader. He goes up but his cross body is countered into a powerslam and a splash keeps Scott down. Tag to Hughes and it's off to Rick soon thereafter. HUGE backdrop and Hughes is in trouble. Everything breaks down again and Vader accidentally hits Hughes. Vader and Scott go to the floor and the Steiner Bulldog ends Hughes.

Rating: B. That's probably high but I'm a sucker for the Steiners throwing everyone all over the place like it's nothing. They were so far and away better than all of the other teams at this point and it was very clear. Anderson and Eaton were champions at this point and the Steiners would get the titles back in just a few months.

Terry Taylor/Tracy Smothers vs. Brian Pillman/Marcus Bagwell

Tracy is still part of the Young Pistols and Taylor is the Taylor Made Man. According to Ross, a standard backhand chop is a judo chop. Didn't know that. Pillman cleans house on his own and speeds things up but walks into a backbreaker for two. Off to Bagwell and the good guys clear the ring with a double dropkick. There are some double dives to the outside and Taylor/Smothers are in trouble.

We get back to normal with Bagwell vs. Smothers and Tracy hits what was either a dropkick or a superkick to take over. We hear about Bagwell hanging out with Sting a lot lately as Tracy beats him up. He avoids a shot though and here's Pillman

again. A spinwheel kick gets two for Pillman. The heels double team to slow Brian down and Taylor suplexes him to the floor.

Pillman gets rammed into the post which gets two back in the ring for Tracy. Gutwrench powerbomb gets the same for Taylor. Back to Smothers and a jumping back elbow sends Pillman out to the barricade again. He comes back in with a springboard clothesline and it's hot tag to Bagwell. Everything breaks down and Bagwell gets a surprise sunset flip on Smothers for the three count.

Rating: C+. Fun tag match here with Pillman flying all over the place and just being awesome. Smothers and Taylor are two guys that I'm not wild on but they did their thing here and it worked well enough. Bagwell was still a glorified rookie at this point but he never really developed past anything slightly above average, which is pretty telling.

Video on Jushin Thunder Liger. He and Pillman will tear the house down at SuperBrawl II for the Light Heavyweight Title which Liger recently won from Pillman.

Richard Morton vs. Johnny B. Badd

Badd is pretty new at this point and is still the gay character that we don't acknowledge as being gay. He takes off the rainbow colored robe to put on a pink and blue boa. Badd has to fire the Badd Blaster (confetti gun) before we can get going. He tries to punch Morton so Morton wisely hides in the ropes. Double axe off the middle rope gives Badd control. A bad looking atomic drop by Morton lets him send Badd to the floor. Badd gets a sunset flip for two. This isn't meshing at all. Powerslam gets two for Johnny. They slug it out and Morton tries a cross body which Badd rolls through for the pin.

Rating: F. Just awful here and the ending looked horrible with Morton barely running when he hit the cross body. It took Badd a few years but he would get way better. The Light Heavyweight

division never worked like it was supposed to because they had no idea that there was a difference between being small and knowing how to wrestle small.

Badd and Pillman are with Bischoff and Badd puts a lips sticker on Eric's cheek. They both want to fight Liger. Pillman gives a bizarre speech about Japanese automakers and how he's defending the honor of Americans and bringing the title back to America. And then Badd puts lips on Brian's cheek, earning him a right hand. I have no idea if that was a heel promo or not.

PN News vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Page is a manager recently turned wrestler and more or less is a jobber here. News is a very fat white rapper. He raps a bit before the match. This makes JR's from two nights ago look bearable. Page (in a singlet) jumps him to start and they try running the ropes for a few seconds, but News can't do it due to high levels of fat. News tries a dropkick to send Page to the floor as the announcers shill the WCW Hotline. All News until he misses an elbow. Page hammers away and gets two off a Russian legsweep. For some reason he tries a slam and guess how well that goes. News hits a belly to belly and a top rope splash for the pin.

Rating: D-. Barely better than the previous match but Page was trying. The problem was that he wasn't very good yet. News...you're fat and you need to go away. The match was nothing to see and was there to get News on TV, because WCW was stupid enough to think that was a good idea.

Here's the WCW Top Ten.

10. Larry Zbyszko
9. El Gigante
8. Big Van Vader
7. Dustin Rhodes
6. Cactus Jack

5. Rick Steiner
4. Ricky Steamboat
3. Steve Austin
2. Sting
1. Rick Rude

Kip Allen Frey is introduced as the new boss of WCW. Why WCW insisted on having actual executives on TV as the boss characters is beyond me. They FINALLY woke up in like 1995 and had a character played by a wrestler (I mean Bockwinkel, not Watts, who actually was the boss). Frey was actually really good at what he did though, and SuperBrawl II would be proof of that. He had a very interesting policy: whoever had the best match at a televised show received (I believe) a \$5000 cash bonus. Think that might get people motivated? He announces Sting vs. Luger for the title at SuperBrawl II.

The other thing Frey does is bring out the newest WCW color commentator: Jesse Ventura. This was a legit big deal and was probably the first high profile guy they took from Vince in a very long time. Jesse puts over WCW as the future and says he'll be debuting soon, which also was at SuperBrawl.

Tony brings out Sting who high fives Jesse on the way to the ring. Luger (recorded) says he's been gone to get ready for the match. In reality, he only had one contracted appearance left so he just sat out for two months. His match with Sting was HORRIBLE, and in one of the rare instances in history, it can be completely blamed on one guy instead of two as Luger didn't care at all and gave maybe a 4% effort. Sting signs and the match is on.

For those of you wondering about Frey, he would be fired after the PPV because of an unspecified reason. The common answer is he was actually good at his job and that was simply unacceptable in WCW.

Cactus Jack vs. Van Hammer

Hammer was a guy that made David Otunga look like Lou Thesz in the ring, but man was he popular. After Sting and Hogan, he was probably my favorite when I was a kid. Jack is a crazy man and this is falls count anywhere. Hammer has a guitar with him and fires something out of the end of it into Jack's eyes. A slingshot cross body gets two about a second after the bell.

A big leg gets one (he would usually use a big boot beforehand. Hammer was tall and blonde. You figure it out) and Jack takes over. Cactus Clothesline puts them on the floor where Cactus gets two. Jack peels back the mats on the floor and jumps off the second rope with a sunset flip, hurting himself more than Hammer. They're on the ramp now and we get a wrestling hold in the form of a sleeper by Jack.

Powerslam on the ramp gets two for Hammer. This is a very hard hitting match. Jack keeps clotheslining him down while Hammer tries to wrestle. Hammer throws Jack off the ramp where he lands with a thud. A clothesline to the floor gets two. They brawl to the back as the fans boo (no big screens yet) and we take a break. The stuff after the break was taped earlier, because it's 1992 and that's how they rolled back then.

They're out in the parking lot and Jack hits him with a 2x4. A traffic cone to the head and they fight over to the bulls that are in place for an upcoming rodeo. Missy Hyatt is there to get on my nerves. Hammer chokes him with a rope so they climb into the pen with the bulls. Abdullah the Butcher pops up dressed as a cowboy and whacks Hammer with a shovel by mistake so Jack can get the pin.

Rating: B-. Before the break, this was a SICK brawl. Post break, it goes downhill quickly. Butcher as a cowboy is a very strange vision and not one that I need to see every day. Hammer would never really mean much after this which is probably the best thing that could have happened to everyone involved. It has nothing on Sting vs. Jack but it's still good.

Butcher and Jack fight a bit with Butcher throwing Missy into a water trough.

Freebirds vs. Brad Armstrong/Big Josh

The Birds are now faces and no one cared. I mean no one AT ALL cared. They're still singers and have a song nowhere near as good as Badstreet USA. They dance through the crowd and I want this to end already. Big Josh is a lumberjack that liked to dance with bears. Armstrong used to be a Freebird lackey in a mask (never acknowledged as the same guy). Hayes and Armstrong start us off.

The Birds, despite being a long running tag team, really doesn't work together all that well. Granted that might be due to Garvin not being all that good. Off to Josh who has far better luck. He stomps on Hayes' ribs and I think this is face vs. face but I'm really not sure. Back to Garvin and Josh punches him for awhile too. They ram heads which has no effect on Garvin at all. Back to Armstrong who hits a bunch of dropkicks. Everything breaks down and the Birds cheat to hit a double DDT on Armstrong for the pin.

Rating: F. This was one of the worst tag matches I've ever seen. The song didn't help either with the title being "I'm a Freebird, What's Your Excuse?" This was horrible and thankfully the Birds weren't around much longer after this. It didn't work at all and was one of the worst matches I can remember in a long time.

Video on the Steiners and how awesome they are. We get some clips of them winning huge matches and hear about Scott's arm tearing apart and putting him on the shelf for a long time.

The Steiners say they'll get the titles back because they never lost them fairly.

Vinnie Vegas vs. Tommy Rich

Vegas is more famous by his real name: Kevin Nash. Vegas is in suspenders, a white collared shirt and dress pants. Snake Eyes end this in less than a minute.

Dangerously says that someone is getting taken out tonight. He lists off what might happen to each of them and it's classic Heyman. You can see in his eyes how fired up he is here. He gets in the great line of someone is going to the Magnum TA Wrestling Retirement Home.

Arn Anderson/Bobby Eaton/Larry Zbyszko vs. Barry Windham/Dustin Rhodes/Ron Simmons

Windham still has a bad hand due to Zbyszko. Eaton vs. Windham starts us off and Barry is all fired up. It works against him though and he gets caught in a superplex which he no sells. Big lariat puts Bobby down and Windham hits his own lariat (his finisher) for two. Everything breaks down and the Alliance is all put in Figure Fours. Off to Larry vs. Ron with Larry trying to use power on him for some reason. Arn and Larry combined can't overpower him.

Ron is beating them up all on his own. For some reason Barry and Dustin just let him fight on his own and to be fair, it's working pretty well. Off to Dustin and they work on Larry's arm. Bobby comes in and Dustin is all fired up, throwing him over the top (behind the referee's back) and hitting a huge diving clothesline to the ramp. Off to Larry vs. Barry and Barry misses a lariat. That's the big feud to this match as Zbyszko and Anderson broke Barry's hand at Halloween Havoc.

Off to Dustin and he misses a cross body, sending him flying and therefore crashing onto the ramp. Dustin takes a cell phone shot to the ribs and the Alliance is in control. Back in the Anderson Spinebuster gets two. Dustin gets in some punches but walks into a DDT. Arn's cover is delayed though so it's only two. Off to Eaton who hits a top rope elbow instead of the Alabama Jam for two.

Eaton misses a corner charge but Anderson saves the tag. Then we get to the big problem Arn has in his matches. Dustin is on the mat and Arn goes to the middle rope. He jumps off with a double axe handle and Dustin hits a boot to the jaw. What in the world was Arn going for, since he was jumping at the feet of Dustin the whole time? Either way it's off to Barry vs. Larry Z and everything breaks down. Eaton comes off the top and jumps into the cast on Barry's hand and that's good for the pin.

Rating: B. Very fun tag match here and it shows the reason the Dangerous Alliance worked: everyone on the team was REALLY good and considering they only feuded with talented guys, the matches were almost a guaranteed awesome showcase. JR called the Alliance an All-Star team in this match and that's about as good of a description as you can give them.

Tony is with the winning team in the back and Barry says he doesn't care who says what because he's coming for revenge. Awesome stuff again as Windham is all fired up.

Sting/Ricky Steamboat vs. Rick Rude/Steve Austin

Austin is TV Champion and Rude is US Champion. My goodness Sting is ridiculously popular. Remember that Top Ten thing earlier? Check out #1-#4. Steamboat vs. Austin starts us off and Austin still has hair here. Jesse has joined commentary to replace Tony here. Ricky takes over to start and Steve has no idea what to do with him. Steamboat gets a bunch of two counts on Steve and fires off a superkick to knock him down. Rude takes a kick as well and the ring is cleared.

Rude comes in and he wants Sting. He slaps some of the paint off him and here's the Stinger to the biggest pop of the night. Rude, ever the heel, hides in the corner immediately. Sting hits a pair of atomic drops and we get the best selling ever of that move. Sting rakes the back and we get some classic Jesse/face commentator banter of how can Sting do that

and claim to be a hero.

Sting hooks a modified camel clutch for some reason. Rude's ribs are his strong point so why put a hold on them? Now it's Steamboat and they do the non-tag thing. The fans swear they did though and that's good enough. They do it again as Austin tries to come in. JR, speaking of Sting: "Well he's the legal man! That's what you want right?" Sting tries to cannonball down onto Rude's ribs but does the Anderson spot and lands balls first on the knees.

Austin vs. Sting in what would have drawn at least seven figure buys in 1998. Rude hooks a front facelock and keeps Sting from tagging. Back to Austin who punches the mat in an attempt to block a sunset flip and there's the hot tag to Steamboat. Rude takes his head off as Sting was trying to come in and the Alliance controls some more. Austin avoids a rollup and everything breaks down. Sting and Austin fight up the ramp and then they come back. That was kind of pointless but whatever. Austin picks up Steamboat but Sting dives off the top with a crossbody and both pin Austin at the same time.

Rating: B. Remember the previous reason as why the six man was good? Same reason here but with four guys and better talent involved. The Alliance angle had YEARS worth of material in it but instead they lasted about six months because this is WCW. The Alliance was one of the greatest gatherings of talent ever, but it never became a memorable team because of WCW's incompetence in promoting stars.

By the way, everything in that last sentence starting with the word one was from Arn Anderson, not me. So it's not just my opinion but from someone on the team itself.

Rude and Austin annihilate Steamboat post match, whipping him with a belt as Sting tries to protect him.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a free TV show and we got pretty much 80% good stuff. When's the last time you remember 80% of

Raw or Impact being good to very good? The first half of 1992 was pure gold for WCW and once Luger's laziness left and Sting got the title, it was all gravy for a long time. Then Vader came in and Sting had his best matches ever with him, so it got even better. Good show, but I still like 17 better I think.

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