

Clash of the Champions Count-Up – #22: It's WCW, It's From 1993 And It's... Good?

Clash of the Champions 22

Date: January 13, 1993

Location: The Mecca, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Attendance: 4,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jesse Ventura

Well this is it. This is the 9th level of torment. It's the absolute greatest form of torture in recorded history. This, is WCW in 1993. I'll wait for your hearts to start beating again. WCW was great at times, but when they were bad sweet merciful crap they were bad. This is some of their worst. The main event is an 8 man cage match pitting the evil team against the good team. That's not a simple way of putting it. That's what they say in the opening video. Let's get this over with so we can move on to something more pleasant like a root canal.

Tony and Cowboy Bill Watts open the show as Watts talks about the old days because having the actual boss on TV was something that WCW thought was a good idea for no apparent reason at all.

Van Hammer is hurt and off the main event tonight but there's going to be a replacement named Vinnie Vegas for the arm wrestling contest that Van Hammer is in. No mention is made of him not being in the main event. The arm wrestling thing is big news though baby!

Erik Watts, Bill's son, has been arrested. Dang they're not hiding anything here are they? Bill: Erik has always been like my son. Maybe because he is your son you stupid, stupid man. Erik is suspended tonight. He happens to be here for an

interview though and the booing is really loud. He was supposed to fight Cactus Jack and can barely talk. Erik was a guy that was supposed to be awesome, but only his dad thought that. He was absolutely terrible so Bill put him on the upper midcard because he could.

Ross and Ventura open the show and talk about the main event like sane people would do. This was one of JR's last major shows so Eric was about to take over.

Cactus Jack vs. Johnny B. Badd

Cactus, a heel, gets a noticeable face pop. Badd is rather effeminate tonight to put it mildly. This stems off of Starrcade 92 where they were Lethal Lottery partners and they brawled to lose the match. Jesse points out that there are signs for Cactus Jack everywhere and it makes him wonder what is wrong with these people.

Naturally Cactus makes it a brawl (aww why not MAKE IT A WIN?) but Badd wrestles him which works far better for him. Oddly enough he's a brawler by nature who is wrestling to his advantage. That says a lot about Jack's brawling abilities. Small package gets one for Badd. Top rope sunset flip doesn't connect and Cactus drops an elbow for the pin and a BIG pop.

Rating: C. This was confusing to say the least as Cactus had gotten very over all of a sudden and WCW wasn't exactly sure what was going on with it. Not a bad match but it was a very quick match so it's not like you could say much about it at all. Fun little match though and the face pop is interesting if nothing else.

There's a new NWA Champion and his name is the Great Muta. He won it at the WCW/NJPW Supershow III which I recently reviewed.

We get more or less a music video of 2 Cold Scorpio which shifts into a PSA and then back into a video. And hey he's in

the ring. Oh never mind it's a highlight video now. I won't get tired of Scorpio in the ring though so this is fine by me.

2 Cold Scorpio vs. Scott Flamingo

It's an ECW preview match here as Flamingo would change species later as he turned into Raven. Scorpio spins out of some stuff and we have an early standoff. He likes to use a lot of cartwheels. We head to the floor early with Flamingo taking a flying shot to the back. Back in with Scotty getting a nice running dropkick before a dive over the top to the floor, taking out the Cold dude.

Small package gets two for Scorpio but he's in trouble so far. We hit the chinlock as they need a bit of a break. Scorpio speeds things up a bit again and hits the Tumbleweed for two. A spinning legdrop in the corner sets up the original 450 to end this though. Far better than you would expect.

Rating: B. This was just four minutes but DANG it was a good four minutes. Scorpio is a guy I've always liked and this was no exception at all. He looked great out there and Flamingo was no slouch either. They were both MOVING out there in a match that would have been a good Cruiserweight match about five years later. Good stuff.

What the heck? This show was supposed to suck remember.

Video on Thundercage which is the main event tonight. In essence it's Hell in a Cell. We hear about how Rude is out with an injury and Team Vader needed a replacement. Cactus and Orndorff had a match with the winner getting the spot. Jack took out Vader's manager and got jumped during the match by Vader, more or less pushing him to the brink of a face turn without actually going the other way. Later in the night Cactus drilled all of them with a shovel. Dang I want to watch Halloween Havoc 93 and the Texas Death Match now. If you don't get it, Cactus in 93 was AWESOME.

Brad Armstrong vs. Chris Benoit

This is more or less Benoit's debut. He had a one night appearance back in a tag tournament but that's more or less forgotten here. Armstrong is an incredibly solid wrestler that most people haven't seen much of which is a shame. We hear about how Benoit survived the Dungeon so they know he's good. To give you an idea of how good Armstrong is, he's not only keeping up with Benoit but he's even beating him to a degree in technical style.

To the surprise of no one we're on the mat with more or less a test of strength going on. Benoit powers up in a bridge and Jesse is impressed. Armstrong does the same thing as this is good stuff so far. Some moron shouts boring and is promptly booed out of the building. Armstrong gets a nice reversal to send Benoit to the floor. Back in Armstrong hits some more dropkicks and back to the arm. Basic stuff but well done so far.

Benoit gets the suplex drop onto the top rope as he's pretty firmly in control at the moment. Benoit gets a running springboard clothesline (think the dropkick that Jericho does and the cross body that Christian does) to Armstrong on the apron to take us to the floor. It's very clear that this is pre-steroids for the pre-Crippler. Snap suplex gets two.

Armstrong gets a knee in but it gets him nowhere as Benoit hooks a backbreaker to get himself out of trouble. Diving headbutt misses though and here comes Armstrong. And never mind as Benoit hooks the Dragon Suplex out of nowhere (full nelson suplex) to get the pin. Sweet bridge on the pin.

Rating: B. I really liked this one but then again when you have two talented guys out there this is what you get. Nice little story being told as Armstrong was able to beat Benoit with basic stuff but once they cranked things up Benoit was far too much for him. It shows that Benoit can turn on the

jets and blow people away, which is a good sign for him in this impressive debut.

We get some clips of the Rock N Roll Express in Smokey Mountain Wrestling which is pretty much brand new at this point. They're going to be at Superbrawl which is one of WCW's first steps into cross-promotional. We see them beating the Heavenly Bodies for the Smokey Mountain Tag Titles. Ok so we don't see the title change and the clip just kind of ends. Ok then.

Jesse is in the ring to do his arm wrestling thing. This was a worked tournament thing he did which went nowhere. Van Hammer, the winner of the tournament, is hurt though so it's Tony Atlas vs. Vinnie Vegas, more commonly known as Kevin Nash. Nash is allegedly left handed so we'll use the left arms. Atlas sounds like he's in labor and Nash wins after a LONG contest that the fans aren't exactly thrilled with.

Back from a break with Vader's challenge to Sting for the White Castle of Fear. This is just Vader standing in snow instead of the official video which is Sting in a helicopter and going to a party with more or less S&M, an orgy and midgets. It was indeed weird but it was WCW in 1993 so there you go.

Larry Zbyszko talks about the tournament for the #1 contender spot to the US Title. The finals turned out to be Dustin Rhodes vs. Ricky Steamboat but since Rude was injured the finals became for the title instead of the title shot with Rhodes winning the belt. We get clips of all four first round matches, none of which are anything special at all. We throw in clips of the semi-finals just because they can.

Wrecking Crew vs. Johnny Gunn/Tom Zenk

One of the Wrecking Crew is a dead ringer for Animal and upon further review yeah it's his brother. Gunn is Tom Brandi who some of you may have heard of but if not he's not worth

looking up. Rage starts for the Wrecking Crew against Z-Man. This is power vs. speed with speed clearing the ring to start. HUGE dive by Gunn to take down both guys on the floor. That was sweet looking!

Heel miscommunication gets a rollup for two for Gunn. The Wrecking Crew takes over with basic power stuff as this isn't much at all. A facejam by Gunn brings in Zenk. We get a really awkward spot as Fury was supposed to charge out of the corner into a backdrop but he just stopped, making Zenk look like an idiot. I mean more of an idiot than he typically does.

The referee ducks a clothesline and the Wrecking Crew continues to take over. Z-Man (they use that name and Zenk interchangeably) gets a boot up to block an axe handle off the middle rope and Gunn comes in. Forearm/clothesline takes down Fury who has been in there forever. And then a shot to the back of Gunn results in a move called the Wrecking Ball where Fury gets Gunn over his shoulder and Rage jumps off with a forearm smash to end it.

Rating: D. This was really rather weak and definitely the worst match of the night so far. This wasn't anything special at all with the Wrecking Crew more or less disappearing after this and Zenk/Gunn never meaning anything at all. Pretty weak match that went nowhere at all but at least it was only about six minutes long.

Larry Z talks to the Hollywood Blondes and their title match against Steamboat/Douglas up next. They aren't called the Blondes yet but it's coming.

Sting comes out and accepts Vader's challenge. Simmons and Rhodes, his partners tonight, say they're not worried.

Vader's team says they're ready for a handicap match. Race says they'll get back at Cactus Jack eventually, which resulted in a really stupid angle which resulted in a really good match. They beat up Barbarian because he's Jack's friend

to make it 3-3 because they're very stupid.

We get highlights from the first two SuperBrawls to give us a reason to buy the third one. The show wound up being not bad. This eats up a few minutes. Ok make that several minutes.

Steamboat and Douglas say they'll keep the titles. They're the Unified Tag Champions which was something far too complicated that crippled WCW in the second half of 92 but hey, whatever the NWA says goes right?

Unified Tag Titles: Shane Douglas/Ricky Steamboat vs. Steve Austin/Brian Pillman

Both teams are in the ring when we get back. The time limit is thirty minutes here instead of the usual hour which allegedly is going to cause faster pin attempts. Steamboat and Austin start us off and do I need to explain to you why this is awesome? Steamboat and Douglas send the Blondes to the floor almost immediately as this is going to be fast paced for sure.

Steamboat won't shake Austin's hand so Austin pounds on him. Off to Pillman and we unleash the chops. Shane comes in off the top as we talk about Bruno Sammartino for some reason. The champions tag in very quickly and Pillman hurts his knee on a leapfrog attempt. Stu Hart trained him though so of course he's faking. He tries a springboard cross body but gets the heck powerslammed out of him by Shane for two.

Shane works on Austin's arm as the future bald man is in trouble. Brian breaks up a pin as this is completely one sided. Steamboat throws Pillman onto Austin and Stone Cole is in trouble. Finally the challengers take over off a suplex and some double teaming. They work over Steamboat's back with a slam on the floor. Steamboat manages a sunset flip but Austin has the referee.

Ricky drills Pillman to put him into the steel but Austin saves the tag with a suplex for two. Steamboat counters a body

vice but his back is hurt pretty badly at this point. Pillman sets for his springboard clothesline but down goes Austin as Steamboat ducks. A double chop STILL can't bring in Douglas but Ricky gets a belly to back to Pillman to put both of them down.

FINALLY the hot tag brings in Douglas and the beating is on. That's good as the roof is now off. Dropkicks and clotheslines all around as Steamboat is amazingly up after about three seconds. Belly to belly out of nowhere drills Pillman but Austin (illegally) comes off the top (screw you Bill Watts) but it only gets two. Austin is finally like screw this and drills Shane with the belt for the DQ and a bunch of blood. Big heel beatdown follows and they leave with the stolen belts. They would get them for real in a few months.

Rating: B+. Fun match all the way around as they played the NWA formula to the letter here. You can often tell how good someone is when they can have great tag matches and this is a great example of that. They put on a great show here and the whole thing worked very well. Fun match and more or less the first of the Blondes great matches.

We see a clip of Vader winning the world title back from Ron Simmons and messing up his shoulder. Jesse brings out Race and Vader who say Vader is awesome. Simmons comes out and says he's going to get his title back, which of course he never did. The fight is on with Simmons THROWING Vader down in a spinebuster. That was awesome looking.

Simmons goes after Race but Vader destroys Simmons and reinjures his shoulder with some shoulderbreakers on the floor. Sting and Rhodes come out for the save as it looks like it'll be 3-2 in the main event.

Sting/Dustin Rhodes vs. Vader/Barry Windham/Paul Orndorff

This is the Thundercage match which like I said is more or less the Cell without a top but it comes up at an angle so

it's more or less impossible to climb in and out. Sting vs. Vader is always awesome so this is going to be good. You can't be disqualified but you have to tag in and out. Sting and Orndorff start us off. Ok so only Vader is chilling on the apron. Ah there it is as the former tag partners in Rhodes and Windham start us off.

Everyone not named Vader is in street clothes here. Off to Sting vs. Vader which is one of those feuds that always worked very well. Sting hammers away and the Splash hits in the corner but Vader doesn't go down. Sting pounds him down into the corner and the fans are WAY into it. Everyone but Dustin comes in as he more or less lets Sting fight everyone off on his own.

The numbers catch up with Sting though as Vader goes up and half kills Sting with a shoulder block. A splash misses though and Sting sends him to the floor. Is Dustin allergic to HELPING HIS PARTNER or something? Off to Orndorff who hammers away on Sting. Windham comes in now as Rhodes has been totally worthless in this. Vader gets a corner splash on Sting who might have been in there seven minutes straight now or so.

FINALLY Dustin comes in and since he's a cowboy he can beat up anyone. And here's Cactus Jack with bolt cutters to break in and hit every heel in sight with a boot. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a face turn. Orndorff goes for the Piledriver on Dustin but gets popped by said boot and Cactus falls on him for the pin. Sting's music plays for some reason.

Rating: C+. The cage here meant a grand total of nothing. They beat Sting up pretty well but Dustin did nothing for the most part. Not a bad match and the crowd was way into it, but dude the whole cage aspect was completely pointless here. It set up Sting vs. Vader...somehow and I guess advances Jack vs. Orndorff which someone thought was a good idea. Anyway not bad but kind of a head scratcher.

Cactus says he's in over his head but not as much as Orndorff is. He's getting into that zone of his on the mic here.

Overall Rating: B. This was light years ahead of what I was expecting. You can kind of see how odd it is in the main event as Sting vs. Vader were about to feud or were feuding I guess but it was still pretty confusing. The NWA was clearly getting on their nerves here and when Flair came back the NWA's days were numbered. That being said, this wasn't horrible at all but it was a bit confusing and odd at times. Still though, good wrestling overrides that so definitely a good show.

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