

On This Day: April 12, 2000 – Thunder: It Takes Guts, Talent and Insanity To Book Like This

Thunder

Date: April 12, 2000

Location: World Arena, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Attendance: 3,118

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan, Mark Madden

This is another show that I rarely talk about due to the high levels of suck which surround it. This was WCW's second show and this is from a time period where the company was all but dead. This is the go home show for Spring Stampede, meaning that every title in WCW is vacant. Russo's BRILLIANT idea was to completely restart WCW, meaning all title reigns were cut off two days before this on Nitro with tournaments being held on Sunday at Spring Stampede. Yeah the whole show is nothing but three tournaments and a Hardcore Title match, but first we've got to get through the show to set that up. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Russo returning and uniting with Bischoff before vacating all titles. Apparently there was a mini-tournament on Nitro with the winner getting to face Jarrett for the vacated title. Bischoff screwed Hogan over for the sake of Billy Kidman and Russo beat up Flair as well. Apparently Mike Awesome has debuted as well and beat up Kevin Nash. We also got a reveal of Bischoff as the Hummer Driver, which was a payoff to an angle from about ten months ago. I've just sat through this recap and I have no idea what happened on Nitro.

Bischoff and Russo arrived earlier today.

David Arquette is here.

Here's the New Blood Order to open things up. The actual name is the New Blood but pretty much everyone saw them as the latest NWO knockoff. They formed on Nitro two days before this so the roster is still kind of up in the air. It's Bischoff and Russo with some young talent and that's about it. Bischoff immediately screws up and says that last night all the titles were vacated (Thunder was taped on Tuesdays to air on Wednesday). Eric talks about Hogan getting hit by a car and being in the hospital as a result. Kidman brags about pinning Hogan and crushing him with the Hummer.

Russo says this town sucks because it isn't New York. Last night Flair and the people learned that Russo is Batman (he hit Flair with a bat) and that New Yorkers respect no one. When everything is done, Flair will belong to him. Shane Douglas talks about calling out Flair for seven years and says he's going to Franchise Flair. There's going to be a chain of Ric Flairs around the country?

Bischoff talks about Sunday being all new champions and how everything is going to change. As for tonight, Jarrett has the night off because we want the playing field to be level for Sunday. His opponent on Sunday, DDP, has the night off as well. However, we will get DDP's wife Kimberly in the ring against veteran Madusa. This brings out Page with a shirt saying "whatever", which sums up my attitude about most of these issues.

Page doesn't have a problem with Bischoff having a problem with Page, but leave Kimberly out of it. DDP wants to fight Bischoff tonight but Eric would rather see what outfit Kimberly wears tonight. Page comes to beat up Bischoff but gets jumped by Bam Bam Bigelow. Cue the old guys (the Millionaires' Club) for the first big brawl of the show.

We hear about how the other titles will be decided: Tag Titles in a tournament, US Title in a tournament, six way elimination for the Cruiserweight Title, and a singles match for the Hardcore Title. Now who

said WCW in 2000 was a mess? That sounds totally coherent.

Chris Candido/Juventud Guerrera/The Artist vs. Lash
LeRoux/Crowbar/Shannon Moore

These are the six men in the Cruiserweight Title match on Sunday. The Artist is somewhat more famous as Prince Iaukea. Artist gets beaten down to start before getting things going with Shannon. Things almost break down until we get Lash vs. Candido. Someone throws in a beach ball and here's David Flair to dance with Artist's chick Paisley (Booker T's real life wife Sharmell). Juvy pounds on Shannon as the match continues to be all over the place.

Moore hits a Fameasser to put Guerrera down and it's off to Crowbar. A quick northern lights suplex gets two for Crowbar but a headscissors sends him out to the floor. Crowbar and Flair get in a fight on the floor but Candido dives on both of them to take them out. Artist and Candido start fighting on the floor so Lash dives on everyone. Juvy sends Moore to the apron before diving onto everyone not named Shannon.

Moore hits a BIG Asai Moonsault onto all five guys as everyone is down. Shane Helms, Moore's partner, interferes but here's Daffney, Crowbar's chick, to take Shane down with a hurricanrana. Back inside and Juvy hits the Juvy Driver (scoop piledriver) on Crowbar but Candido and Artist hit a double DDT on Crowbar for two. Candido adds a top rope headbutt for one on Crowbar before Artist hits his jumping middle rope DDT on Candido (his own partner) to let Crowbar hit a front suplex for the pin on Chris.

Rating: C+. Well it wasn't boring. It wasn't really a tag match and I completely lost track of who was on what team more than once, but it wasn't boring. To be fair though that's the entire idea here and the point of the match was to set up the big match on Sunday where it's going to be every man for himself. A pair of triple threats would have been the better idea here but it was all over the place and not boring, so at least there's that.

DDP says he's going to rip Jarrett's head off on Sunday. He wants Bigelow tonight.

Russo and Bischoff make Sid vs. Harlem Heat 2000 for later.

Sting was at the Ready to Rumble premiere.

Curt Hennig jumps Shawn Stasiak in the dressing room in retaliation for an attack on Monday.

Sid vs. Harlem Heat 2000

That would be Big T (Ahmed Johnson), Kash (4x4 from the No Limit Soldiers who you probably don't remember) and Stevie Ray. This is No DQ and if Sid loses, he's not in the US Title Tournament. Sid clears the ring to start but can't chokeslam the lawyer manager J. Biggs. T and Ray get back in and beat Sid down but T is so fat that he can barely do anything right at all. A splash gets two for Kash but New Blood member Booker (he had lost the rights to the letter T to Harlem Heat. Yeah, seriously) makes the save and lets Sid powerbomb Stevie for the pin. This was barely a match.

Immediately after the bell, The Wall (he used to hang out with Berlyn. Again, yeah seriously) cracks Sid with a chair.

Bischoff and Russo are mad at Booker for betraying them.

Sid is still down in the ring so here's Bischoff to disqualify Sid....in a No DQ match. In other words, Sid is out of the tournament.

Bischoff yells at Booker in the back in front of the New Blood members.

Shane Douglas vs. Total Package

Luger (Total Package. This was the best thing they could come up with to “develop” his character. He’s the same exact guy) and Flair are partners and Douglas hates Flair so here’s a match to set up the obvious tournament final on Sunday. Luger pounds away to start and apparently tonight it’s Bigelow vs. Page.

Shane makes a comeback and hits his belly to belly suplex, which would win world titles in ECW but here it’s a way for him to go up top and get slammed down. We head to the floor so Luger can clothesline him down and Luger takes over. Since this is a three minute match on the secondary show, there’s the ref bump, the low blow by Shane and the run-in by Flair. He hits Douglas low too and the Rack ends Shane.

Rating: D. Again, three and a half minutes long on the Wednesday B-show and we had a ref bump, two low blows and a run-in. I think by this point it’s clear what’s wrong with Russo’s booking. You know, aside from Lex Luger being an upper midcard guy in April of 2000 instead of like, retired.

Jimmy Hart can’t get Eric Bischoff’s attention.

Later tonight, if Luger interferes in Bagwell vs. Flair, there will be suspensions. In other words, we need a special ruling to prevent interference because it’s that common anymore.

We get an update on Hogan who was in a limo and then crushed by a Bischoff-driven Hummer on Monday (culmination of a LONG storyline with about a ten month break in between to the point that no one remembered the stupid thing anymore). Hogan is out for two weeks.

Here’s Jimmy Hart to the ring who wants some answers from Bischoff about why he did that to Hogan on Nitro. Hart talks about being the liaison between Hogan and Bischoff over the years but gets interrupted by Billy Kidman and Bischoff. Kidman sprints to the ring and beats up Hart, as this is part of the Flea Market feud.

Basically Hogan said Kidman couldn't be champion of a flea market so Kidman went after him. This is the feud that people point to when they say Hogan gave young guys rubs. The problem is Kidman never beat Hogan clean and Hogan made him look like a jobber the entire way through. Kidman spray paints Hart's back to make the NWO rip-offs all the more clear.

Page tells Kimberly she's not going to the ring. Kimberly says yes she is.

Scott Steiner vs. Booker vs. Vampiro vs. Billy Kidman vs. The Wall vs. The Cat

This is a Colorado Collision match and these are the six guys in the US Title tournament so far. Two guys start and one minute later someone else comes in. Elimination rules apply and last man standing wins. Booker and Wall start things off with the far more famous one pounding away. Wall immediately shoves him into the corner for some choking but Booker comes back with a slam and the ax kick for no cover as Wall pops up. Cat (Ernest Miller) comes out early and superkicks Booker to the floor.

Wall chokeslams Booker through his table (it was his prop) and since both guys are counted out, it's time for Cat to dance. Actually he talks a lot and gets Scott Steiner instead. Steiner gets in some hard shots but Miller hits a GREAT superkick to take Steiner's head off. That looked awesome. Kidman is fifth along with Torrie but he's content to let Steiner beat up Miller for awhile instead. Steiner goes to pose so Kidman runs in to pin Miller and get us down to two. Vampiro is in last as Steiner pins Kidman with a belly to belly. Before there's any contact, Sting comes in and lays out Vampiro so the Steiner Recliner can get the win.

Rating: D. Again, in a six man gauntlet match, we managed to have a run-in. Steiner barely even broke a sweat here and would run through the tournament like a roided up freak destroying a bunch of guys way beneath

him and Sting in an overbooked tournament. Nothing to this match again as everyone lost in like 90 seconds.

Team Package (yes really. It's Flair/Luger/Liz) freak out with Flair saying he'll beat up Russo.

Madusa vs. Kimberly Page

Kimberly looks GREAT here in barely there leather shorts and a bright green top. I'm sure there's nothing to the fact that she's in DX colors and dressed exactly like DX member Tori. Madusa is basically Chyna so she destroys Kimberly for a bit until DDP comes in for the save and the DQ.

Terry Funk/Norman Smiley vs. Hugh Morrus/Meng vs. Brian Knobbs/Fit Finlay

This is a hardcore triple threat tag match and the winners fight for the Hardcore Title on Sunday. Tony tries to talk us into buying Spring Stampede instead of Backlash which is so pitiful it's cute. Meng and Knobbs fight into the crowd before the bell and good luck in trying to keep track of this mess. Morrus knocks Smiley into the crowd and Norman screams a lot. They head to the stage and Morrus sets up a table but let's go back to Punk vs. Finlay in the ring.

Morrus misses a dive off the stage through the table as we see Meng and Knobbs fighting in the back. Meng has a drink thrown on him and there's a trashcan on top of it. Tony: "TO THE CONDIMENTS!" Meng makes his comeback...and stops to spear a cardboard cutout of Goldberg. He then breaks it over Knobbs' head as they go outside. Knobbs charges at a railing and goes flying over, with Tony saying it could be a thirty foot drop. Now they're stealing ideas from Halloween Havoc 1995. Let that sink in a bit.

We cut back and forth between the two brawls and Norman hides inside a big cat head that hockey players skate out of to start a game. Morrus

charges and crotches himself on a tusk as we cut to Finlay DDTing Funk on the exposed concrete. Finlay puts up a table in the corner instead of covering, meaning of course Funk sends him through said table.

A piledriver on the piece of table puts Finlay down and here's the run-in by Dustin Rhodes to beat up Funk. There are some Shattered Dreams for Funk and a chair shot for good measure. Rhodes pounds on Funk before heading to the floor....so Smiley can run in and pin his own partner for the win and the title match.

Rating: D. Between the apparent death of Brian Knobbs, a Goldberg cardboard cutout used as a weapon, condiments, crotching Hugh Morrus on a cat tusk and that ending, what more do you expect me to think of this match? Not to mention we're now 6/6 on matches having interference tonight with three more to go.

Eric and Vince give Los Villanos a pep talk for their handicap match against Sting. Apparently Sting has to beat all of them as opposed to Sid only needing one pin.

Sting vs. Los Villanos

The Villanos are III, IV and V and remember Sting has to beat them all. They all jump Sting to start but Sting Hulks Up and fights them all off like they're uh...Los Villanos. Sting hits a double Death Drop to eliminate let's say III and IV and we get a ref bump. Sting beats up V but takes a low blow on a leapfrog. V hits a low blow of his own and goes to get a guitar. Sting gets cracked in the head and V unmask to reveal Jeff Jarrett. Page runs in for a Diamond Cutter to give Sting the pin and make us 7/7 for run-ins tonight. Too short to rate but it was an angle disguised as a match.

Jeff Jarrett threatens to knock Gene's liver spots off if he doesn't shut up. He's coming for Arquette and Page tonight.

Buff Bagwell vs. Ric Flair

Flair is in street clothes for no apparent reason. According to Tony it's because he's fighting the New Blood instead of wrestling. Buff takes over to start and hits a quick backdrop followed by some clotheslines to take Ric down. There are some knees to Flair's arm as this is one sided so far. Yes Flair getting beaten down in a Bischoff booked company. Flair comes back with an elbow and some punches in the corner before they head to the floor where Russo in a Sting costume (stealing from 1997) blasts Flair with a bat for the DQ. Another match too short to rate and another run-in.

Douglas and Luger run in post match with the New Blood guys standing tall.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Bigelow takes him into the corner to pound away but Page comes back with shots to the head of his own. A discus lariat gets two for Page but Bam Bam comes back with a Samoan drop for two. We hit a camel clutch and Page slaps the mat but it doesn't count here. Bigelow drops a headbutt on the bad back of Page for two.

Page fights out of a powerbomb for two of his own and a neckbreaker gets the same. The Cutter is countered into the third ref bump of the night but Bigelow misses the top rope headbutt. Now the Cutter hits but Bischoff runs in to count two before straightening his head. Jarrett cracks Page with a guitar as the match is thrown out.

Rating: D. NINE FOR NINE BABY! The match was once again a means to an end here so we could have Page and Jarrett brawl to end the show. By brawl of course I mean a weapon shot and a beatdown but that's interesting TV under Russo's watch. Nothing to see here though, much like the rest of the show tonight.

David Arquette tries to make the save but gets beaten down with a Stroke. He would be world champion in two weeks. Now Canyon runs in to beat up Jarrett but Bischoff lays HIM out with a chair. The New Blood runs in and spray paint everyone to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This show is VERY interesting to say the least. For one thing, how in the world can you manage to book three ref bumps and NINE RUN-INS IN ONE SHOW??? That takes either an amazing talent or complete insanity. On top of that, this was all to set up a bunch of new champions at Spring Stampede, and over half of those titles would change hands in less than a month. Oh and Kimberly would join the New Blood on Sunday because....well why not. Anyway, this show is a great lesson in Russo booking as he managed to fit ALL THIS into 90 minutes, and somehow it would only get worse.

Here's Spring Stampede if you're interested:

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