

Thunder – January 22, 1998: The Midcard Show That WCW Needed

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Location: Von Braun Center, Huntsville, Alabama

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Lee Marshall

It's the go home show for Souled Out and things are actually cooking for WCW. We still don't know anything about the world title situation other than Hall has to fight somebody for the title at SuperBrawl. As for Saturday, it looks like the main event is going to be Hart vs. Flair in a really well built showdown for respect. Tonight we have Giant vs. Hall in the main event which brings two major matches for Saturday together. Let's get to it.

The announcers tell us that we'll get an announcement on the world title situation on Saturday as well as an appearance from Roddy Piper.

Scott Steiner vs. Konnan

Scott overpowers him to start and shoves Konnan down to the floor with ease. Back in and Vincent earns his paycheck by tripping Steiner up to give Konnan control. Scott comes right back with a gorilla press and a gorilla press as we're in squash territory here. The top rope Frankensteiner is loaded up but Buff and Norton hit the ring for the quick DQ.

Rick Steiner and Ray Traylor run out for the save but Scott walks out to pose at Bagwell.

Here's Nash to say that in 90 minutes, he's going to be \$1.5 million richer. Giant wants Nash more than a lap dance after being at sea for 20 years but Nash isn't afraid of him at all. Saturday is about the physical torture but tonight is all about the psychological. Good promo here as

Nash keeps it simple.

Super Calo/Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Silver King/La Parka

This is Lucha Libre rules, meaning you can change with your partner if you go to the floor. Chavo starts out with Silver King and takes over with a quick headscissors on Silver. Everything quickly breaks down with Calo pounding on La Parka but getting caught in a powerslam. Raven comes through the crowd sans Flock as La Parka dives over the top to land on Calo's stretched out back.

Back in the ring Silver King powerbombs Calo down for two before La Parka comes in for a double enziguri on Calo. La Parka and King allow Calo to make the tag as everything breaks down again. Chavo dives to the floor to take out La Parka as Super Calo hits a top rope hurricanrana on King for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was an entertaining mess with the emphasis on mess. The match didn't get anywhere near the excitement that these matches are capable of reaching and none of these guys did anything to set themselves apart from the others. La Parka was the only guy in the match who was a big deal at this point but he was barely in the match at all.

Post match La Parka blasts everyone with the chair until Juventud and Lizmark Jr. run out for the save. Psychosis and El Dandy run in as well and it's a big brawl. Nearly everyone gets to hit a big dive to make up for the so-so match.

Nick Patrick wants to talk about something but Rick Martel walks in behind him. Kidman comes in to yell at Martel for the fight on Nitro. Saturn runs in and throws Martel through a glass door. It's as out of nowhere as it sounds.

Dean Malenko vs. Marty Jannetty

They start with an armbar each with Marty actually taking over on the mat. Dean escapes and goes after Marty's knee, only to be put in a front facelock. The technical exhibition continues with Dean going after Jannetty's knee again, only to be countered into a catapult into the

corner for two. We hit a chinlock on Dean for a few moments before Malenko fights up with a belly to back suplex.

A regular suplex gets two for Malenko but Marty comes back with a clothesline for two of his own. Jannetty goes after the leg...and now the arm a few seconds later. I guess all that cocaine made the limbs look the same. Dean fights up again but gets caught in a faceplant for two. In a rare botch in a Malenko match, Marty loads up a snapmare but Dean falls like a neckbreaker, making it look more like a Stunner. A few seconds later Marty tries the Rocker Dropper but is countered into the tiger bomb and the Cloverleaf for the submission.

Rating: C-. This was slow paced and methodical but it wasn't bad at all. Jannetty didn't look as good as he did on Nitro but his WCW run isn't going badly at all. Malenko has been left out in the cold since Starrcade due to Mysterio and Jericho taking the focus on the Cruiserweight Title.

Goldberg vs. Kendall Windham

Goldberg takes him to the mat with a leg lock but Kendall makes a rope. A clothesline gets two for Windham but it's spear/Jackhammer for the pin. The reactions are getting louder and louder.

Here's Hall for his survey with WCW taking the night. Hall is looking forward to Saturday so he can shut Zbyszko up once and for all. Cue Louie Spicolli with Larry's golf clubs which are rapidly bent and broken. Larry comes out and is ready to fight Hall but Spicolli wants a piece of him instead. Zbyszko immediately takes him down with a guillotine choke but has to avoid an elbow drop from Hall. Larry bails and says he'll have backup at Souled Out.

We get some clips of Piper on Walker Texas Ranger. When Chuck Norris is the best actor in a scene, you know you're in trouble.

Cruiserweight Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

Rey has a bad knee. Eddie is challenging and charges right at Rey, only to be taken down by an armdrag. A hurricanrana sends Eddie most of the way to the apron as his leg is caught in the apron on the way down. Back

in and a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker puts Rey down for two as it's all Eddie so far. A brainbuster looks to set up the frog splash but Rey gets up top for a superplex to put both guys down. Eddie is dropkicked out to the floor and Rey hits a dive over the top, reinjuring his knee again in the process. With Eddie down on the floor, Jericho runs to attack Rey for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This didn't have the time to go anywhere but it was angle advancement anyway. Rey's knee is very banged up thanks to Jericho's recent attacks and this match didn't do it any favors. Eddie is in the same spot that Malenko is in at the moment: just floating around waiting on something to do.

Eddie and Jericho stomp Mysterio down but Eddie is mad at Jericho costing him a match. Benoit sneaks in behind Jericho for their upcoming match as Eddie bails. The look on Jericho's face when he sees Benoit is priceless.

Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho

Benoit sends him into the corner as Dean Malenko and referee Mickie Jay carry Mysterio to the back. Jericho bails to the floor as we take a break. Back with Jericho continuing to run but getting caught by a suicide dive. They head back inside and Jericho hits a quick dropkick to take over. A spinebuster looks to set up the Liontamer but Benoit chops his way out of it. Jericho runs some more but gets caught in a dragon screw leg whip.

Benoit is taken down by a back elbow for the ARROGANT COVER for two. The Lionsault connects but Jericho waits for the fans to cheer him instead of covering. Instead a superplex gets two on Benoit and it's off to a chinlock. Benoit fights up with a belly to back suplex followed by a German and a whip to send Jericho into the Tree of Woe. There's the Crossface but Jericho taps out before the hold is even on. That's a smart move given his title shot in two days.

Rating: C+. These two have a natural chemistry that few other pairs can rival. The ending shows thinking as well which isn't something you often get in wrestling. It's also nice to see actual stories develop and intertwine with each other with all people involved being elevated. It's

like the company is planning for the future or something like that.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff with something to say. Hogan says it's going to be a big party when he gets the title back on Saturday because he never lost it in the first place. Bischoff and Hogan praise each other and Hogan poses to end things.

Rick Martel vs. Perry Saturn

Martel charges at the ring and runs Saturn over as the bell rings. Saturn is sent to the floor and into the steps for good measure. Back in and Martel pounds on Saturn in the corner but the Flock comes out for a distraction. Martel is crotched on the top rope before getting suplexed down for two. The Flock leaves and Martel misses a charge into the post. Saturn puts on an armbar and then a cross armbreaker but Martel counters into a quickly broken STF.

We take a break and come back with Martel pounding away in the corner but getting caught with a swinging neckbreaker. Saturn gets some quick rollups for two before going to the middle rope. A sunset flip gets two on Rick but he rolls through into the Quebec Crab to make Saturn submit in a hurry.

Rating: C-. Martel has only been back for a few months but I'm starting to buy into him here in WCW. He looks very smooth in the ring and has more than enough experience to back it up. The window stuff from earlier added nothing to this so the fans weren't caring at all, but they got an ok match out of it.

Post match the Flock runs in but Martel rolls away to let Kidman hit Saturn.

Scott Hall vs. The Giant

Hall gets in Giant's face and is launched across the ring as he should be. A front chancery gets Hall placed on the top rope and he dives into the bearhug. Giant headbutts Hall down but here are Hogan and Nash to ringside. Nash gets in a cheap shot with some kind of a weapon as Hogan gets in the ring for the DQ in less than two minutes.

Savage tries to intervene but Luger runs out and Racks him. Nash looks at Savage in the Rack down and does nothing about it. Instead Nash comes in and pounds on Giant but Giant doesn't touch him. Instead Giant goes to the floor, grabs the post, and BREAKS THE RING to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was the kind of show Thunder was designed to be: focus on the midcard feuds and have the main event guys do some stuff to close the show. It built up the Souled Out matches that we didn't get to focus on Monday while giving us some solid action tonight. Good show here and I want to see Souled Out.

Here's Souled Out if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/06/15/souled-out-1998-redo-one-of-wcws-best-shows-ever/>

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