

Thunder – February 12, 1998: So Much For The Midcard

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Date: February 12, 1998

Location: Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Lee Marshall, Bobby Heenan

We're closing in on SuperBrawl and things are getting very interesting in WCW. Hogan and the NWO have basically thrown Savage out but Randy still wants to fight. The NWO also got a rare jump on Sting with the help of a net dropping from the ceiling. As for tonight Ric Flair is back and he's facing one of his most famous rivals in Lex Luger. Let's get to it.

Here are Hogan and Bischoff to open the show. Bischoff says it's time to get serious because things are getting out of control. The NWO is declaring war on anyone associated with WCW. They're going to start in alphabetical order and go from Anyone associated with WCW, from Ted Turner to the guys to mow the lawn at Turner headquarters. Hogan says even the fans are fair game, but let's get to the B's (were any A's mentioned?). The number one B on Hogan's list is Bret Hart, who is to blame for Hogan not holding the belt. He doesn't know where, but Hogan is going to beat up Bret Hart somewhere.

On a lighter note, Hogan wants to talk to Randy Savage face to face right now. Macho comes out and Hogan says he knows when he's right but he's wrong in this whole thing. It's time to look Savage eye to eye and let everyone know that an apology is necessary. Before we get to that though, this coming Monday it's going to be Hogan/Savage vs. Luger/Sting. Hogan says Savage should thank Bischoff for the match but now it's time for the apology. However it's Savage who needs to apologize and that's exactly what he does, right before decking Hogan and Bischoff with right hands.

The announcers are thrilled.

We talk about WCW Motorsports for a few moments.

Kidman vs. Prince Iaukea

Louie Spicolli has chased Lee Marshall off commentary. Kidman and Lodi taunt Iaukea into a chase, allowing Kidman to get in a shot as they get back inside. The Prince snapmares Kidman to the floor as Louie talks about eating pizza with Larry Zbyszko. Kidman dropkicks Iaukea into the apron but runs into a foot in the corner back inside. We cut to the back to see Raven sending Riggs off to get Van Hammer. Mortis comes up to Raven, apparently wanting to join the Flock. Raven asks why Mortis dresses in these clown costumes and says if he wants to be in the Flock, Mortis has to be himself. Oh and beat DDP as well.

Back in the ring Iaukea breaks out of a chinlock but gets taken down by a jawbreaker. A superkick doesn't drop Kidman so Prince fires off some chops. Kidman clotheslines him down and goes up but dives into a belly to belly suplex for two. A guillotine legdrop misses and Kidman hits a quick Shooting Star Press for the pin.

Rating: D+. Based on what we saw this wasn't much. Kidman was talented but he needed someone better than Prince Iaukea to have a good match. The Raven thing stopped the match in its tracks but that was a common idea for WCW: make it look like anything could happen at anytime. There is something to be said about that idea instead of having segments happen right after a match ends.

Meng vs. Hugh Morrus

Hugh jumps Meng before the bell and pounds on him in the corner but a splash has no effect. Meng comes back with chops to the chest and punches to the ribs followed by some choking on the ropes. A top rope splash gets two for Meng as Louie asks if Heenan used to manage him which shocks the Brain. Morrus comes back with a spinwheel kick and loads up No Laughing Matter, but Jimmy Hart rolls Meng out of the way. Tony informs us that we'll have the Steiners vs. Outsiders again at SuperBrawl along with Louie vs. Zbyszko. Meng kicks Morrus in the face and the Deathgrip ends this pretty quickly.

Post match Barbarian comes down to break up the hold but gets put in the Deathgrip as well.

US Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Mortis

Vandenberg shouts that he owns Mortis on the way to the ring. Mortis gets caught in a quick tilt-a-whirl side slam but bails to the corner to avoid the Diamond Cutter. Page misses a charge into the post and Mortis takes over, allowing Vandenberg to choke in the corner. The champ pops up and pounds away on Mortis, only to get kicked in the face and hits with a neckbreaker out of the corner for two. We hit the chinlock as Tony announces Page vs. Benoit II at SuperBrawl. Page suplexes his way to freedom and hits a discus lariat followed by a running Diamond Cutter to retain.

Rating: C-. Just a simple title defense here with Page hitting another version of the Diamond Cutter to fire up the crowd. Mortis' offense continues to change almost on a weekly basis with new moves coming out all the time. I miss midcard champions having matches against some random opponent like this. It doesn't hurt Mortis to lose because he's in over his head, so why not do matches like this more often?

Post match the Flock minus Raven comes out and carries Mortis from the ring ala Riggs when he joined the team. Raven appears at the entrance and DDTs Mortis on the ramp.

We recap British Bulldog vs. Steve McMichael. I keep forgetting this feud is happening.

Steve McMichael vs. Jim Neidhart

Neidhart shoulder blocks him down to start and a forearm smash sends Mongo to the floor. Mongo is sent into the steps but comes back with a three point shoulder block inside to take over. McMichael goes to the floor and picks up the steps, but the Bulldog runs in for the save and the DQ win for Mongo.

After the break we get a video of them brawling through the commercial.

Chris Adams vs. Buff Bagwell

Adams hits two quick slams to start but walks into a backdrop so Buff can pose. They shove and slap each other a few times until Chris takes over

with some clotheslines. Adams misses a charge and clotheslines himself on the ropes to give Bagwell control. Buff gets two off a neckbreaker but a splash hits knees. Adams makes a comeback with basic stuff followed by a terrible looking piledriver for two. Vincent gets superkicked down but the distraction lets Bagwell drill Adams from behind and finish him with the Blockbuster.

Rating: D. This really didn't work. Adams was trying but the lack of chemistry crippled any chance they had. He was 43 years old at this point and long past his best days but he could still do basic stuff well enough. Bagwell never was much in the ring but the Blockbuster looked as good as ever.

Video on Juventud Guerrera and how important his mask is to him.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Jericho has to be threatened with a DQ to take the belt off. Chavo chops him down but Jericho hits a running forearm to knock Chavo outside. A suplex back in allows Jericho to pose for the crowd, only to be SHOCKED by the booing. Jericho hits the butterfly backbreaker for the arrogant cover, only to miss a charge in the corner a few seconds later. He jumps over Chavo in the corner but gets caught by a back elbow to the face. Chavo's tornado DDT is easily countered into the Liontamer for the submission to retain Jericho's title.

Jericho won't let go of the hold so here's Juvy for the save. Chris goes for the mask but Juvy knocks him to the floor, sending the champion running away.

British Bulldog vs. Sick Boy

What an odd pairing. Eric Bischoff kicks Lee Marshall out of commentary and wants to know who is behind the conspiracy against the NWO, namely because They Live (a Roddy Piper movie) is playing right after Thunder. Bulldog hits a powerslam (not the powerslam) sets up a delayed vertical suplex but Sick Boy hits a springboard back elbow to take over. Sick Boy pounds away and Bischoff storms off. We hit the chinlock as Tony says They Live as many times as he can. Bulldog avoids a charge in the corner

and catches Sick Boy in the powerslam for the pin. This was a commercial for the movie, not the match.

Post match Mongo hits the ring to attack Bulldog again.

Chris Benoit vs. Raven

Raven's Rules of course. Raven jumps Benoit on the way to the ring and sends him head first into the steps. They head inside with a chair for the drop toehold but Raven is sent twice into the chair wedged between the top and middle rope. Benoit stomps a mudhole in the corner but Sick Boy pulls Raven out of the way, sending Chris into the chair. Benoit comes right back with rolling Germans but Kidman comes in for the save via a springboard...right into the Crossface for a tap out, which is good for the submission win? I want to see a copy of Raven's rules.

Rating: C. This was intense while it lasted but they needed more time to make the match work. The ending didn't make a ton of sense but then again neither did the Flock in general. Raven didn't wrestle often in WCW but when he did it was usually something good if not great.

The Flock comes in for the post match beatdown but DDP comes in through the crowd to make the save. He finally gets rid of Saturn to break up the Rings of Saturn. Benoit insists he didn't need Page's help but Page disagrees.

Glacier vs. Goldberg

Glacier's entrance nearly takes as long as the match. Goldberg does a standing backflip to avoid a leg sweep, spear and Jackhammer make Goldberg 30something-0.

Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger

It's almost strange for this to not be for the world title. Luger starts with a gorilla press and Flair begs off into the corner, only to come out with the poke to the eye. Lex shoves him across the ring and flexes before slamming Flair off the top rope. Flair rolls to the apron and snaps Luger's throat across the top rope followed by a low blow. The chops have no effect on Luger so he comes back with a clothesline and a

superplex to put Flair down. Luger loads up the Rack but the referee goes down, allowing Flair to hit a chop block to set up the Figure Four. Luger turns it over but Savage runs in for the DQ.

Rating: C. This was the abbreviated paint by numbers version of Luger vs. Flair, which still makes it more entertaining than most matches you'll find. At this point these two could have a decent match just on muscle memory alone. Savage running in makes sense given how insane he's been lately, plus it keeps either guy from having to job here.

Flair tries to save Luger but Hogan comes in to take Savage out. The NWO beats down everyone in sight but Sting runs in to clear the NWO out of the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The show did a good job of setting up the PPV, but the focus was on the main event stuff instead of the midcard like Thunder has been focusing on so far. The Raven vs. Benoit vs. Page stuff is interesting and the matches should be very fun. There's also the Cruiserweight Title stuff with Jericho being amazing at this point, so WCW continues to have a bright future. Good show here but nothing memorable.

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