

Thunder – April 9, 1998: The Chris Jericho Show

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Date: April 9, 1998

Location: Leon County Civic Center, Tallahassee, Florida

Commentators: Lee Marshall, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

We're still rolling through NWO a-go-go here with Hogan, Savage and Nash in a three way war for control of the team. Sting is still an afterthought and the midcard guys are still stealing the show most of the time. You can see them starting to be pulled down into the downward spiral from here. Tonight's big draw is a major announcement from Flair on his future in the sport. Let's get to it.

We get the Savage parking lot video from Nitro.

Perry Saturn vs. Tokyo Magnum

Saturn takes him hard into the corner to start and slugs him down. A tiger suplex sends Magnum flying and Saturn keeps pounding away. Saturn kicks him in the head and puts on a quick Rings of Saturn, only to let Tokyo go and put the hold on again for the win. Total squash.

Saturn wants Goldberg so here's the undefeated one. The Flock pulls Saturn to the floor so Goldberg beats up everyone else. Saturn and Hammer are fighting up the ramp. Raven is in the crowd and doesn't seem to care.

Prince Iaukea vs. Yuji Nagata

Nagata easily takes him down and pounds away with forearms. They trade some quick belly to back suplexes and Nagata puts on a chinlock. Back up and Prince goes after the leg as the announcers talk about how awesome

Nagata is. Nagata shrugs it off and kicks Prince's leg down before working on the arm. Prince misses an enziguri and gets caught in a cross armbreaker as the match continues to drag.

Prince pops up with no sign of damage at all, dropkicking Yuji down for two. Yuji sends him to the apron where Prince sells the leg for a bit before coming back in with a Samoan Drop. The announcers aren't even pretending to pay attention to the match anymore. Sonny Onoo interferes so Prince dives on him as well, only to have to escape the Nagata Lock. The northern lights suplex is enough for the pin by Iaukea.

Rating: D. Good grief these two are boring. I have no idea what the company saw in either of them other than maybe some of Nagata's Japan work. Iaukea has been around for over a year now and is still the same uninteresting guy that he always was, yet he's getting a title shot on PPV. Dull match.

Post match Jericho comes out and declares Iaukea too fat to challenge for the title. We could have spent the last six minutes listening to Jericho jokes but we had to sit through the match instead. Lucky us.

We get clips from weeks ago of Mortis trying to join the Flock but losing his match to Diamond Dallas Page. Random but still more interesting than what we've seen so far.

Here's Raven with something to say. He talks about how Page was the hardest working man in wrestling...and a fan pulls him out of the ring. Ever the pro, Raven gets right back in the ring and talks, but his mic doesn't work. He doesn't realize the mic isn't working but the camera zooms in enough to hear him talking about wanting Page to get Bischoff to hire him away from ECW. They finally swap out the mic and Raven says Page isn't here to accept a challenge for Raven's US Title. At Spring Stampede, Raven is going to kick out of the Diamond Cutter and win the title with the Even Flow.

Buff Bagwell hypes his match with Luger on Nitro. Somehow this takes almost three minutes.

Konnan vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit shoves Konnan away to start before firing off chops. Konnan is backed into the corner and chopped even more, only to have Vincent interfere, earning him chops of his own. Konnan gets in some cheap shots to take over but Benoit keeps chopping at Vincent. Finally Konnan takes Benoit down but Chris chops away even more.

Vincent interferes for the second time in a minute (how does the referee not notice that?) and gets kicked in the head, followed by Benoit sending Konnan to the floor. They chop it out on the floor before going back inside for a failed Crossface attempt. Konnan hooks a quick DDT for two but the 187 is countered into a German suplex for two. Benoit slips around him and throws on the Crossface for the submission.

Rating: C-. This was better than I expected and it was very nice to see Benoit getting to look dominant. One thing I've always wondered: why would the NWO keep paying Vincent? Do they really think he's doing a good job? Come to think of it, has he ever done anything right in the ten years he's been a bodyguard? Anyway, nice little match here with Benoit getting to show off.

Jim Duggan vs. Curt Hennig

Well at least it's not Neidhart. Duggan gets caught with a knee lift to send him into the corner and there's the Hennig necksnap for a quick two. Duggan fights up and pounds Hennig with the big lumbering right hands followed by a few clotheslines. The Three Point Clothesline connects but Rick Rude grabs Duggan's arm and cuffs him to the ropes for a fast DQ.

The beatdown ensues until Davey Boy and Neidhart make the save.

Lex Luger vs. Glacier

Who thought this was a good idea? They should be tied to a chair and forced to watch this match over and over until dance craze sets in. Luger easily runs him over before hiptossing Glacier down, setting up the MUSCULAR POSE! Buff Bagwell is watching from the entrance, likely trying to pick up tips on what not to do as a wrestler. Glacier fires off kicks to the ribs and one to the head, sending Luger down. More kicks set up a kick off the top, only to have Luger punch him out of the air. The clotheslines set up the Rack for the submission. More squashification.

Kidman vs. Psychosis

This should be good. Kidman takes over with some forearms to the back to start but Psychosis slams the back of Kidman's head into the mat for two. Psychosis sends him to the floor and hits a big dive over the top rope which almost missed badly. Back in and Kidman hits the sitout spinebuster but stops to scratch. A sunset flip gets two for Psychosis but Kidman comes back with a bulldog while climbing the corner.

Kidman loads up a superplex and here's Chris Jericho of all people. Psychosis shoves Kidman off and hits a spinwheel kick but there's no referee. A victory roll still gets no count for Psychosis as Jericho still has the referee. Psychosis loads up the guillotine legdrop but here's La Parka with a weak chair shot to knock him to the mat. Kidman hits the Seven Year Itch for the pin.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it could give Russo a run for his money with the overbooking, but Psychosis continues to look good. It's nice to see him get a story, even one as minor as the Flock fighting for Lodi's honor. Nice little match here but the fans didn't care.

After a break Jericho is still in the ring with a bathroom scale. Jericho refuses to answer Schivaone's questions until Tony refers to him as the

Man of 1004 Holds. He tells Doug Dillinger (head of WCW security) to keep the fans away from him as he proves that Prince Mackamackey is over the 225lb Cruiserweight limit. Iaukea comes out and weighs 218, so Jericho claims improper calibration. Jericho blasts him in the head with the scale and puts him in the Liontamer. Jericho continues to be the most entertaining thing in WCW.

Scott Steiner vs. Disco Inferno

Steiner dominates to start and shoves Disco around with ease. Disco is choked against the ropes and an elbow drop gets two. Disco tries a comeback with a neckbreaker but Steiner suplexes him down faster than I can finish saying Disco is making a comeback. The Recliner ends this quick.

TV Title: Booker T. vs. Chris Jericho

Booker hits a quick clothesline after a few lockups go nowhere at all. A second clothesline gets two and Booker peppers him with forearms before clotheslining Jericho to the floor. Jericho tries to bail but gets pulled back in by the ponytail. Now that's just not nice. Back in and Jericho scores with a quick hot shot before dropping Booker crotch first on the top.

The springboard dropkick puts Booker down and a suplex gets two via the arrogant cover. The Lionsault misses and Booker hits that snap spinebuster of his to get a breather. Booker hits the ax and side kicks but the missile dropkick takes out the referee. The guys fight a bit more until the referee gets up and DQ's Jericho for apparently pulling him in front of the dropkick.

Rating: C. This didn't have enough time to go anywhere but it's nice to see Jericho doing something other than just cruiserweight stuff. Also, how nice is it to see a champion vs. champion match where neither guy gets pinned? It's like they're trying to keep the champions looking

strong instead of having them lose half their matches.

Here's Tony for the announcement from Flair...but Flair isn't here due to "bad weather", which translates to he's watching his son wrestle in an amateur tournament. Instead here are Eric Bischoff and Scott Steiner to run Flair down, saying that it was Hogan who built WCW. Bischoff gives us a preview of Hogan's new Three Ninjas movie which is as stupid looking as you would imagine it to be.

Steiner and Bischoff run Flair down so much that Arn Anderson comes out to defend his friend. Flair may not be a Hollywood actor or have arms like Scott Steiner, but he left part of himself in every arena around the country and he is wrestling. Bischoff calls Arn fat so here's Lex Luger to defend Flair as well. Lex and Scott get into a brawl and Rick Steiner comes out to suplex Bischoff.

Rick Steiner vs. Kevin Nash

Nash has something to say before the match. He's seen Hogan running his mouth out here about how things are all under control. Kevin finds it interesting that Hogan thinks everything is great when it's going his way but loses his cool when he loses control. He had Sting beaten on Monday but Hogan had to stick his nose into Nash's business. At Spring Stampede, they might be in trouble because Piper is the best switch hitter in the business. He'll take care of Giant as well.

Rick pounds away to start and takes Nash down to the ground for more right hands. The NWO flunkies distract Rick (it's not that hard of a job) and Nash takes over with a shot to the back of the head. There's the foot choke in the corner but Nash charges into a boot to the jaw. A clothesline sets up the Steiner Bulldog but Konnan comes in for the DQ. Nothing match, as expected.

Post match the NWO beats Rick down and the Giant makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. As is almost always the case with WCW, when the younger guys get to showcase themselves, the shows are more entertaining. The stuff at the end with Nash and Bischoff didn't do anything for either myself or the live crowd, but they were WAY into the Jericho vs. Booker match. The signs are on the wall for what the company should have done, but of course that wasn't to be.

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