

Thunder – August 13, 1998: The Eraser To Nitro's Pencil

Thunder

Date: August 13, 1998

Location: Fargodome, Fargo, North Dakota

Attendance: 9,721

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone, Lee Marshall, Bobby Heenan

We're coming off the Nitro that should have been Road Wild with the biggest stories being a new US Champion and Goldberg thinking Nash hit him in the back with a chair. I have a problem believing WCW is capable of planning a feud that far in advance so we'll chalk it up to whatever random idea they're throwing at us which will likely end up benefiting Hogan. Let's get to it.

The announcers run down the card for a bit until Scott Hall interrupts. We get the survey with the Wolfpack winning before we go to a break less than five minutes into the broadcast.

Konnan vs. Scott Hall

We start with the stalling and a toothpick throw until Konnan slaps him in the face. Hall drives his shoulder into Konnan over and over before they trade paintbrush slaps to the back of the head. This match already has more energy than almost any match on Thunder in weeks. Hall fakes him out on a test of strength and pops Konnan in the jaw to take over. The fallaway slam gets two and Hall fires off some chops in the corner. This has been one sided so far.

There's the abdominal stretch with Hall grabbing the ropes like a villain should. Hall finally gets caught and Konnan comes back with the X-Factor but Hall doesn't even go down. Konnan rams him into the buckle but Scott

kicks him low. That doesn't have much of an effect as Konnan gets two off a small package, only to get caught in the Outsider's Edge for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was just a step above a squash which is surprising with two bigger names. It's also strange to see a match ending by pinfall instead of the constant run-ins and inconclusive finishes. While it wasn't a good match, it was nice to have something definitive for a change around here.

The announcers hype up War Games and wonder how Goldberg will be involved.

Horace vs. Raven

Raven says insubordination will not be tolerated and Horace costing him the triangle match on Saturday was the last straw. He jumps Horace to start and pounds him down in the corner before grabbing the stop sign. Lodi shows a spine and takes it away from him, allowing Horace to kick it into Raven's face for two. A slam onto the sign and a middle rope splash get two for Horace but he misses a charge into the sign in the corner. Raven throws him to the floor and hits the Russian legsweep into the barricade.

Lodi and Raven head back inside with Raven slapping Lodi in the face. Riggs, Kidman and Sick Boy run in for the beatdown as the bell rings, even though this is Raven's Rules. Saturn runs in to get the three goons off of Horace but the big man jumps Saturn, setting up a four on one beatdown. Canyon comes in for the real save and a good pop. I'm assuming the match was thrown out.

Rating: C-. The more I see of guys like Saturn, Horace and especially Canyon the more impressed I am. The match was too short and had too strange of an ending (Raven's Rules meaning no DQ remember) to be worth anything but I'm interested in where the story is going so there's something good there.

Saturn goes after Kanyon for no apparent reason before suplexing Horace down.

Stevie Ray doesn't want to talk about the TV Title but challenges the Giant to a match next week. That's quite the step up.

TV Title: Chris Jericho vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Jericho is defending of course. Pepe is taped together after being broken in half on Nitro. Feeling out process to start with Jericho taking Chavo up against the ropes and grabbing the wrist, only to be armdragged down. They trade leapfrogs until Chavo bites Jericho to send him outside. We take a break and come back with a shot of Pepe in the corner as Jericho gets two off the Lionsault.

A suplex sets up the arrogant cover for another two before we hit a surfboard hold on Chavo. Back up and Jericho gets his third straight near fall off a spinwheel kick. Chavo comes back with a running clothesline and a forearm in the corner. A bulldog gets a close two and a rollup gets an even closer one but Jericho goes after Pepe. Chavo freaks out and gets an even thicker Pepe (Tony: "That looks like a Clydesdale!") to blast Jericho for the DQ.

Rating: C-. This was more about Chavo's insanity and most of the match felt like it was just killing time until we got to the ending. It's a good sign for Chavo that his character is working against people other than Eddie. Jericho is his usual good self and his glee in breaking Pepe was very amusing.

After some stills from Hart vs. Luger from Monday, Bret says he's the best there is, was and ever will be even though the fans are all against him. The only reason Luger beat him was because he caught Bret off guard.

Dancing Fools vs. Public Enemy

Tokyo Magnum is with Disco and Alex. Rocco cranks on Alex's arm to start as the announcers debate whether the match on Saturday was a street fight or a Sturgis street fight. Rock gets sent to the floor and sent into the barricade with a baseball slide. Back in and Rocco blocks a middle rope ax handle, only to be suplexed down again.

Wright of course stops to dance, allowing Rocco to get his knees up to stop a splash. Off to Disco vs. Grunge but Johnny quickly brings Rocco back in for a double flapjack. Everything breaks down and Rocco is thrown into Disco. A table is brought in but Tokyo Magnum takes the bullet for Alex, allowing Wright to pin Grunge off a neckbreaker.

Rating: D+. This is becoming one of those matches that I do not need to see ever again. We've pretty much gotten the same story every single times these four have gone at it and there's no reason to see them tell that story one more time. The matches aren't horrible but they're rapidly losing the limited interest I had in them.

Post match Meng runs in to destroy the dancers. Barbarian comes out to make the save but Meng shrugs him off and death grips Barbarian down. Public Enemy gets taken down as well.

Here's Big Kev to spout catchphrases and invite Goldberg to join the Wolfpack whenever he feels like it.

Kevin Nash vs. Curt Hennig

Nash takes him into the corner for the heavy knees and a hiptoss across the ring. Hennig twists around in the air as is his custom. There's the choke with the boot but Hennig avoids a charge, sending Nash's leg into the ropes. Curt goes after the weakened leg but Nash gets right back up and hits Snake Eyes, thankfully using the ropes to support the injured leg. Nash looks for the Jackknife but Rude comes in to deck the referee for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Not enough time to go anywhere but much like Konnan vs. Hall, it was nice to see Nash have a singles match for a change. Also I was relieved by him holding the ropes on the Snake Eyes. I love little things like that which are unfortunately rare anymore as it helps to keep the fans in the match. The ending was expected because Heaven forbid a veteran job or anything like that, but not terrible while it lasted.

Rude squares off with Nash so Hall can come in for the beatdown. The fans want Goldberg but get Luger for the save instead.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Stevie Ray

Stevie shoves Eddie away and stands in the middle of the ring for a bit. Eddie literally jumps at Stevie and spins around while Stevie stands still. An armdrag and dropkick to the ribs put Ray down but Stevie just kicks him in the face to take over. Scott Hall and the Giant are watching from the stage.

The camera keeps cutting back to them but thankfully we can see the match on the video screen. Stevie gorilla press drops Eddie down and bicycle kicks him off the apron. Eddie comes back with something I can't make out because the camera is focusing on the NWO guys but Stevie breaks up a belly to belly attempt. Eddie goes up top but dives into a big boot. The Slapjack is enough to pin Eddie completely clean.

Rating: N/A. I can't rate a match when I missed long portions due to putting the camera on Hall and Giant every few seconds. On top of that, Stevie Ray just beat Eddie Guerrero clean in about four minutes. This is the Eddie Guerrero that had possibly the best match in WCW history less than a year before. Is it any wonder that he wanted out?

US Title: Lex Luger vs. Bret Hart

Luger won the title on Monday and this is the rematch. He shoves Bret

around a few times before grabbing a headlock. Bret hiptosses him down and drops an elbow for two, only to have Luger take him into the corner and stomp away. Bret comes back with some stomps of his own before hitting the headbutt to the abdomen. Luger is catapulted throat first into the middle rope for two as Bret doesn't seem interested in being out there.

The middle rope elbow only hits mat and Luger makes his comeback with the clotheslines and forearm. Luger clotheslines him to the floor instead of Racking him though, allowing Bret to get a chair. Another clothesline drops Hart and now it's Luger with the chair. The referee tries to take it away and gets knocked down, allowing Bret to DDT Luger on the chair for two. Not that it matters though as Bret puts on the Sharpshooter and Luger passes out to change the title back.

Rating: D-. They clearly didn't care and the ending was nothing interesting. Nitro's match is basically erased and Bret has another meaningless title reign. Again, this is more and more like the Alliance every day: these title changes don't make a difference and just prolong an already uninteresting feud.

Overall Rating: C-. This is an interesting show as it erases almost everything that happened on Nitro, but Nitro was so horribly dull that taking it all away is a good thing. Yeah Goldberg doesn't resolve anything with Nash, but there's nothing to resolve in the first place. In theory Goldberg should be fine after spearing Nash and Big Kev doesn't seem mad at Goldberg at all. The wrestling was kept quick for the most part tonight and only the main event was bad. This show benefits from all the other shows around it being so uninteresting that even a mediocre show like this comes out looking great.

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