

Thunder – August 20, 1998: The March To War

Thunder

Date: August 20, 1998

Location: Fargodome, Fargo, North Dakota

Attendance: 9,721

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

This is a rare taped show, meaning we're not likely to get anything new on the stories from Monday. Actually that could be a good thing as we don't have to hear about Warrior for the better part of two hours.

Hopefully the show is more entertaining than it has been recently as it's become nothing more than a set of worthless matches and next to no angle advancement at all. Let's get to it.

Cruiserweight Title: Juventud Guerrera vs. Psychosis

Unfortunately the announcers are already talking about the Warrior. They shake hands to start with Psychosis pulling the champion into a majistral cradle for two before getting caught in an early headlock. Psychosis fights out and elbows Juvy a few times as the announcers keep talking about WarGames. A cross body gets two for the champion and he puts Psychosis down again with headscissors and spinwheel kicks.

The 450 is broken up and Psychosis gets two off a rollup as we go to a break. Back and they're in the same places they were before the break with Psychosis putting Juvy down with a backbreaker. The guillotine legdrop actually connects but Psychosis takes forever to cover and Juvy gets up at two. Juvy flips out of a release German suplex and the Juvy Driver retains the title.

Rating: C. Simple, high flying cruiserweight match to open things up and there's nothing wrong with that. I was really hoping the announcers wouldn't spend the entire match talking about the Warrior but it was false hope at best. These two fought each other enough times that they could probably have a good match in their sleep.

Video on the Wolfpack.

Stevie Ray is going to take care of the Giant tonight and no one needs to worry about Booker T's condition.

Quick look at Warrior debuting.

Jim Duggan vs. Barry Darsow

It's a power slugout as you would expect with Darsow hammering away to no effect. Duggan fires back with those big right hands and they fall to the floor with Duggan still in control. Back in and the announcers discuss Warrior's contract situation and promise an update on Monday. Darsow catches Duggan with a knee to the ribs and puts on a neck crank but misses an elbow drop. Jim makes his comeback with a variety of punches and the three point clothesline sets up the Old Glory knee drop for the pin.

Rating: D. Duggan is another guy that's good at firing up a live crowd but he doesn't do much for anyone watching on TV. Darsow continues to be on television for reasons I don't quite get. He's not terrible or anything but who is going to stop flipping through channels because he's on Thunder?

Very nice video history of WarGames which fills in some time. This is the kind of stuff you don't get enough of from WCW. They never were one to talk about their history.

Bret Hart says he's part of Hogan's WarGames team before saying how great it is to be US Champion. He knows he can beat Goldberg too.

Mongo wants a piece of Curt Hennig tonight....for what he did to Flair. Wasn't that a year ago?

Dean Malenko vs. Brian Adams

Nice to see Dean getting to work with a more main event guy. Dean tries to take Adams down but Brian just knocks him away with pure power. A jawbreaker staggers Adams but he puts Dean down with a backbreaker for two. Malenko goes for the arm but is thrown away again before being

thrown to the floor for some shots from Vincent.

Back inside and Adams kicks Dean in the face and hits a gutbuster for two. Dean avoids an elbow but jumps into a bearhug, only to counter it into a nice DDT. It's Cloverleaf time but a Vincent distraction lets Hennig run in with a cheap shot, allowing Adams to hit the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for the win.

Rating: C. Surprisingly good match here with Dean playing David to Adams' Goliath quite well. The ending is all you can expect from an NWO match but it's nice to see Dean getting a chance to move up the card a little bit. Malenko vs. Hennig could be a great match if they give it more than four minutes.

Video on NWO Hollywood.

We look at Steiner and Bagwell's segment from Nitro with Steiner claiming various injuries.

Saturn vs. Horace vs. Raven vs. Canyon

Four corners match here and you have to tag. Raven and Saturn start but Raven tags in Horace before there's any contact. Horace takes Saturn down with a quick slam and sends him into the corner, only to have Saturn come back with kicks to the head and an elbow to the jaw to take over. Saturn blasts Canyon in the face for a tag and it's Canyon firing off forearms to keep the big man Horace in trouble. A swinging neckbreaker gets two for Canyon and it's Raven's turn to get a piece of Horace.

Raven immediately tries to boss Horace around but goes to the eyes when that fails miserably. Horace fights back but gets tagged by Canyon, only to have Horace help Raven put Canyon down. Raven works over Canyon with a knee lift before bringing Horace back in for a slam. It's quickly back to Raven for three straight Russian legsweeps before he brings in Saturn for the first time. A big belly to belly suplex puts Canyon down again and it's off to Horace who walks into a suplex from Canyon. This is moving faster than it sounds.

Horace comes right back with a splash for two but is tired of the

wrestling and gets the stop sign. He misses Saturn and hits Raven in the head though to put Raven and Kanyon down. Both guys crawl over to Saturn but he won't tag. Instead he smacks Kanyon in the face for a tag and beats on Raven like he stole something.

A pair of belly to belly suplexes sets up a top rope splash for two before hitting Kanyon in the face again for a tag. Kanyon picks up Saturn and throws him on Raven to get himself a two count but walks into a t-bone suplex from Saturn for two. The Flatliner gets two on Horace but the goons pull Kanyon to the floor. Saturn joins in the fight, allowing Raven to DDT Horace for the pin.

Rating: B-. Wild but fun match here with everyone getting to show off a bit. It's nice to see someone getting elevated out of this story, even if there's no end in sight. Raven getting a win is nice for a change as Saturn has been dominating the feud for a good while now. Best match on Thunder in awhile.

Giant promises to close the gap, and he doesn't mean the one between Stevie Ray's teeth.

Steve McMichael vs. Curt Hennig

Tony actually has some insight for us: if one man wins WarGames and gets a title shot as a result, what's the point of having teams? Hennig is tossed around and out to the floor to start before going after the knee back inside. Mongo gets tired of selling and beats Curt up some more before laying him out with a neckbreaker. A pair of shoulder blocks look to set up the tombstone but Rude hits Mongo in the back with a chair, drawing out Dean Malenko for the DQ. Thankfully this was short.

Mongo and Malenko get beaten down with ease.

The Giant vs. Stevie Ray

Giant is in street clothes for some reason. He taunts Stevie to start so Stevie kicks him in the face (nice looking one too) and Giant goes down. This brings in Hall to jump Stevie, but the bell doesn't ring until Giant picks Stevie up for the chokeslam.

The Black and White surround Stevie before a Warrior montage takes us out.

Overall Rating: D+. Let's see: the show sucks without the star power, but the star power isn't interesting either. Is it any wonder why the company was on its very last legs as far as being competitive? The main event and the main story of this show makes my head spin. With all of the talented people on the roster, they pick STEVIE RAY to push? I mean it's not like it matters because he's getting beaten down by the NWO so he'll join them before the month is out, but why is this not Jericho or even Eddie? The rest of the show, save for the fourway, wasn't interesting at all.

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