

Thunder – August 26, 1998: The Stevie Ray Show

Thunder

Date: August 26, 1998

Location: Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, Illinois

Attendance: 7,128

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

For once in a very long time we're coming off a strong ending to a Nitro. We're heading into Fall Brawl and WarGames with Team WCW fully in place and two members of the Black and White set. The Wolfpack hasn't been announced yet but with only four members it's not like they have a lot of options. Let's get to it.

We open with a chat about WarGames with Lee Marshall saying Hogan has never pinned Piper or Page because Lee Marshall is bad at history.

Wrath vs. Scott Putski

Total squash with Wrath winning in less than a minute with a top rope clothesline and the Meltdown, though he didn't turn Putski all the way and it was more of a Dominator. I was always kind of a Wrath fan as long as he didn't talk.

Here's Stevie Ray for his first interview since joining the NWO. He owes Hogan and Bischoff a debt of gratitude (for costing him the TV Title?) for standing up for him three years ago and will serve them up DDP tonight, as per Hogan's orders.

Mike Enos vs. Bull Pain

Bull Pain has been kicking around the indies and smaller promotions for

years now. Enos starts fast and pounds away before hitting a nice side slam. Lots of walking around and posing by Enos. Pain comes back with some right hands and kicks to the ribs but that's about it for him. A middle rope fall away slam is enough to finish Pain and gets Enos the only pop of his WCW career.

Rating: D. The fall away slam was good but we're seriously having Mike Enos squashes now? This is how far Thunder has fallen? Bull Pain is a good name for someone but when you get a jobber's entrance to face Mike Enos, it might be time to look for a new line of work. Nothing to see here.

Disco Inferno vs. The Cat

Disco says everyone is here to see him dance but he turns around into a spinning kick to the face for the pin in 12 seconds.

Post match Miller complains about WCW trying to make him a wrestler because he's a three time world karate champion and there's nothing we can do about it. So he turns heel by attacking a heel?

Konnan vs. Silver King

Somehow this sounds better than anything we've seen all night. Konnan starts fast with the nicest hurricanrana I've ever seen him use to send Silver King out to the floor. Back in and Konnan works on the knee to set up the Tequila Sunrise before going to his signature stuff. After the rolling clothesline and X Factor, it's the 187 and Tequila Sunrise for the win.

Rating: D. Just a squash but it's nice to have something to rate tonight. Silver King is yet another name on the list of jobbers with more talent than they're given credit for. Konnan got the crowd into the match which was his main job in the Wolfpack. It wasn't anything to see but that hurricanrana was nice.

Post match Rude and Hennig come out to make fun of Konnan before asking who he'd rather get his beating from. Konnan calls out the rest of the Black and White but runs away and laughs on his way out. Nothing to see here again.

Here's DDP to talk a bit about WarGames. After running down Bischoff, Page praises the Warrior for helping him take down Hollywood SCUM Hogan. Page says we'll find out who the third man for Team WCW is on Nitro. Wasn't that covered already? He'll make Stevie Ray feel the Bang soon enough.

Hour #2 begins.

Kaz Hayashi vs. Evan Karagias

Hayashi starts fast with a cross body and kick to the jaw. Before we get very far, here's Sonny Onoo to give advise to Kaz. The distraction lets Evan take over with a quick suplex followed by a slam. Not that it matters though as Karagias spends the time Hayashi is down yelling at Onoo instead of following up. He finally goes up for a top rope splash but hits Kaz's knees. Hayashi yells at Onoo as well before going up top for a senton backsplash for the pin.

Rating: C-. Well I guess rehashing Sonno Onoo's Japanese team is better than no story at all. The high spots here were decent but they didn't do enough to carry the match into good territory. Karagais was a good example of someone with the right look but no substance to him for the most part.

Lodi comes to the ring and says that Saturn broke his fingers (it was Raven) so he wants a piece of Saturn right now. This brings out Saturn who points out that it was Raven, but Lodi says Raven would never hurt him because they're friends. Raven even bought him a new rubber ducky. Lodi even sweetens the pot a bit: if Saturn beats him, he'll leave the Flock, but if Lodi wins then Saturn has to be Lodi's slave until Fall

Brawl. Saturn jumps him and it's on.

Lodi vs. Saturn

Saturn pounds away to start and destroys Lodi like the sign carrying goof that he is. A suplex and short arm clothesline have Lodi in big trouble but here are Sick Boy, Riggs and Raven for the save. It's Raven's Rules so the match keeps going with Saturn cleaning house. The Death Valley Driver looks to end Lodi but here's Canyon to hit the Flatliner on Saturn. Canyon shakes Raven's hand as Lodi is able to pin Saturn in a huge upset.

Rating: D+. This was all about the storyline instead of the match which is fine as this story is FINALLY going somewhere. Now to be fair it doesn't make much sense and is taking out one of the most interesting characters on the roster but at least it's something instead of what we've been seeing for months now.

Scott Norton vs. Jim Neidhart

Norton runs Jim over with a shoulder to send Neidhart out to the floor. Jim goes after Vincent instead of getting his head handed to him by Norton, but Scott just goes to the floor and lays him out. Back in and Jim tries a second rope shoulder but just bounces off of Norton. That was impressive. Norton powerbombs him half to death for the pin.

Rating: D. They're doing a good job of making Norton look like a killer before he's fed to Goldberg. They did the same thing with Meng a few weeks back and the result was far better than I was expecting. I can't remember the last time he lost a singles match and that powerbomb is awesome.

The announcers talk a bit.

TV Title: Chris Jericho vs. Alex Wright

This has to be good right? Jericho is defending of course. Both guys play to the crowd for a bit before we're ready to go. They fight into the corner before being separated with Wright complaining of a hair pull. Alex bails to the ropes to get out of a wristlock and Jericho does the same to avoid a German suplex. Chris complains about a hair pull and Alex heads outside for a breather. Back in and Alex clotheslines him down before stomping Jericho out to the floor.

Chris is whipped into the barricade but comes back up with chops before sending Alex into the barricade as well. Back in with Wright hitting some European uppercuts. Heenan: "Tony do you know why that is called a European uppercut?" Tony: "I'm scared to ask this but why?" Heenan: "I was hoping you knew." Alex hits a nice overhead belly to belly suplex for a near fall but Jericho kicks him in the chest to take over again. The champion gets two off a suplex as the announcers talk about the good Hennig vs. Jericho match from Monday.

Wright snapmares Jericho down before throwing him to the outside. An ax handle off the apron has Jericho staggering but he grabs a quick chinlock back inside. Jericho shifts over to a stump puller before rolling backwards so Wright is on Jericho's stomach. It doesn't last long and I think the hold would be more effective on the mat. The Lionsault connects but Jericho does the long walk around the ring instead of covering. Alex comes back with an elbow to the jaw and a backbreaker for two.

A spinwheel kick gets the same and there's a chinlock on the champion. Jericho fights up with a jawbreaker to put both guys down but it's Wright with another spinwheel kick to take over. They seem to botch a spot with both guys coming off the ropes but Jericho hits a butterfly backbreaker, only to have Wright come back with a backbreaker of his own. Wright misses a top rope ax handle but goes right back up for a sunset flip. It's all for naught though as Jericho rolls through into the Liontamer to retain.

Rating: C+. This was good but it's nowhere near enough to save the show at this point. Wright was trying here and Jericho has been on a roll as of late with the Hennig match being a high point. Alex continues to be a guy that could have been something special if he was treated seriously for a longer stretch.

Curt Hennig vs. Van Hammer

Haven't seen Van Hammer in awhile. Hammer grabs a very quick rollup for two and Hennig is frustrated on the floor. He comes back in and just blasts Hammer in the face with a right hand to put him down. Rude gets in some choking from the floor like any good heel manager would. Hammer ducks a clothesline and fires off some sloppy right hands of his own but misses a knee in the corner. Curt kicks at the knee a bit before getting bored and hitting the PerfectPlex for the pin.

Rating: D. Hammer looked lost out there and could barely throw a decent right hand. It's pretty clear why we hadn't seen him in a few months. Rude was the highlight of the match as he punched Hammer in the face and then checked to make sure his nails were still clean. I miss managers that were actually effective.

Stevie Ray vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Tony calls this a bounty match, whatever that means. Ray shoves Page around to start and Page gives him a wry smile. Page comes back with right hands and the driving shoulder blocks to send Ray outside. DDP follows but Vincent grabs the leg to let Stevie take over. Back inside and Ray hits a nice backbreaker before choking a lot. We hit the nerve hold and bearhug for a bit but Page is quickly in the ropes. The Slapjack is countered with a backdrop and Page scores with a neckbreaker. He calls for the Diamond Cutter but hits it on an interfering Vincent, drawing the DQ.

Rating: D+. For a Stevie Ray match this wasn't completely terrible. They

backed themselves into a corner on the ending though as Page isn't getting pinned and you don't want Ray getting beaten clean in his first match wearing the Black and White. When all else fails, call for Vincent and the DQ.

Giant comes out to help Stevie with the beatdown but Konnan makes a save to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Another below average show as Thunder gets less and less important every week. The main story tonight was focused on Stevie Ray which isn't something that is going to draw in an audience. There was a lot of talk about WarGames, but why say Piper isn't confirmed as a member of the team when he and Page agreed to an alliance on Nitro? Bad show for the most part but there were a few bright spots sprinkled here and there.

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