

Thunder – September 3, 1998: The Best Thing In WCW Right Now

Thunder

Date: September 3, 1998

Location: Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, Illinois

Attendance: 7,128

Commentators: Lee Marshall, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

It's a taped show this week, meaning odds are there isn't going to be much in the way of storyline advancement. Then again this is Thunder so it's not like anything ever really happens here anyway. We're closing in on Fall Brawl with just ten days to go, meaning we can start to fill in the rest of the card. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about WarGames for a bit. The main event tonight is Konnan/DDP vs. Stevie Ray/Giant.

Rick Fuller vs. Marty Jannetty

Fuller shoves him against the ropes to start but gets rolled up for a quick two. Marty takes him to the mat for a front chancery before dropkicking Fuller into the corner. Fuller comes back with some hard chops in the corner and a big beal sends Marty flying. A hard chop puts Marty down again but he avoids a charge to send Rick shoulder first into the post, setting up the Showstopper (Rocker Dropper) for the pin.

Rating: D+. Not much to this one but a basic power vs. speed match is almost always going to work. Jannetty hasn't looked bad at all when he's given the right kind of opponent to bounce off of and a monster like Fuller works well in that role. However, when you reach the point where Marty Jannetty is getting singles victories, you're in for a long night.

We get some stills from the main event of Nitro.

We look back at Saturn saying he would work for Lodi because it was what he agreed to do. We also get a clip from their tag match on Monday.

Kaz Hayashi vs. Lenny Lane

Feeling out process to start as the announcers say Lane looks and acts more and more like Chris Jericho every week. Feeling out process to start until Kaz takes him down with a spinwheel kick. Lane comes right back by sending Kaz's head into the buckle four times in a row and does the Hogan hand to his ear. The fans are all over Lenny here as he chops away on Hayashi.

Lane's bulldog in the corner is countered but he still rolls through a high cross body for two of his own. Kaz sends him out to the floor and hits a nice Asai Moonsault to send Lane into the barricade, knocking the steel back a few feet. Back inside Lane grabs a powerslam for two and a suplex gets the same. A sunset flip gets two for Kaz but Lane elbows him in the face and puts Kaz up top. Hayashi comes back with a quick hurricanrana and a top rope senton backsplash is good for the pin.

Rating: C. Basic idea of taking two guys and letting them fly around the ring for six minutes. Hayashi was an entertaining guy and Lane as a Jericho clone was about as good as you could get for a midcard heel in the division. The fact that there are tiers to a midcard division is astounding when you look at the same kind of divisions in modern wrestling.

We look at Konnan saving DDP last week.

Disorderly Conduct vs. High Voltage

Tough Tom starts with Kaos as Heenan makes fun of the University of

Kentucky, making him a true heel. Rage slingshots in with a legdrop before it's back to Kaos for some arm cranking. Rage hits a nice spinning belly to belly suplex for two as Mean Mike comes in for the save. A double suplex gets two as the fans are completely uninterested in this. Disorderly Conduct puts Kaos down with double teaming as well with Mike getting two off an elbow drop. Kaos avoids a flying shoulder that hits Mike instead, allowing for the hot tag to Rage. Everything breaks down and a springboard Doomsday Device pins Tom.

Rating: D-. The good match streak ends at two. It wasn't so much that the match was bad but it was totally uninteresting. Disorderly Conduct was as boring of a team as I've seen in a very long time. High Voltage wasn't bad but it was clear that they were there for the size of their muscles and little more.

Wrath vs. Barry Horowitz

Wrath shoves him down to start and they head to the floor for chops. Horowitz is getting treated like the jobber that he is as Wrath throws him back inside for a slingshot elbow to the jaw. A rollup gets one for Barry but Wrath runs him over with a shoulder block and the Meltdown ends this quick.

We get a "sitdown interview" (read as Saturn sitting in the dark and talking) with Saturn where he talks about being tired of bullies like Raven and wanting to take the Flock apart.

Raven vs. Meng

This should be interesting, which is why it's not happening. Raven says it's Riggs and Sick Boy instead because Raven's Rules means a handicap match. The goons are easily dispatched so Raven offers Horace his spot back in the Flock if he fights Meng. A stop sign shot has almost no effect and it's a Death Grip for Meng. Sick Boy comes in again and gets a Grip of his own. Raven finally gives up and tells the referee to count

Sick Boy out.

Raven tells Lodi to order Saturn to get in there and get some. Saturn has a bit of luck and even staggers Meng with a superkick but Kanyon kicks Saturn in the back of the head, allowing Meng to Death Grip him as well.

Kanyon vs. Saturn

This starts after a break with Saturn still feeling the effects of the Death Grip. Kanyon hits his quick electric chair faceplant but stops to hold up one of Lodi's signs. Raven gets up on the apron and the distraction lets Saturn get two off a small package but he's too weak to follow up. A spinning wheelbarrow suplex puts Saturn down again before Kanyon tosses him outside for trash talk from Raven. Back in and Kanyon gets a neckbreaker out of the corner but won't cover. Instead he hooks a crucifix for two and frustration begins to set in.

A bridging Moss <http://onhealthy.net/product-category/alcoholism/> Covered Three Handled Family Credenza gets two for Kanyon and a spinning northern lights suplex snapped forward into a spinebuster gets another two. Kanyon isn't sure what to try now and the delay lets Saturn hit a quick overhead belly to belly. There's a second one followed by a t-bone suplex but Lodi gets up on the apron and says he wants to see Saturn lose. Lodi wants to see the Flatliner and since Saturn has to do what Lodi says, he takes the Flatliner to give Kanyon the pin.

Rating: C+. Mainly storytelling here as the feud is finally leading up to something. There's a good idea here and the matches being good are a bonus. Saturn finally getting his hands on Raven at the PPV is going to be something well worth seeing as this might be the best thing going in WCW at the moment.

Dean Malenko vs. Brian Adams

No match as Curt Hennig jumps Malenko from behind during his entrance. Rude, Adams and Hennig give Malenko a big beatdown including a Rude Awakening, complete with hip swivel, to stop a comeback attempt. Curt asks for a trainer to check on Malenko before referencing slamming a door on Ric Flair's head a year ago. He talks about Malenko wanting a cage match with Hennig but says the Horsemen are finished and no one can beat him in a cage. Rude brings in a piece of a cage and lays it over Malenko's body.

Norman Smiley vs. Riggs

Riggs is still banged up from the Tongan Death Grip from earlier but he still pounds away on Norman to start. The injuries seem to be an act which could be a new career path for Riggs since wrestling doesn't seem to be his strong suit. Norman quickly escapes a sleeper and headbutts Riggs in the corner as Malenko vs. Hennig in a cage is announced for this coming Monday. A slam puts Riggs down and Norman drops a leg, backflips to his feet and drops an elbow for two.

Off to an armbar with a leg around Riggs' neck for a bit in a nice looking hold. Riggs gets up and rams a charging Norman into the corner to take over. Smiley is sent outside and might have injured his knee on the landing. Back in and Riggs puts a knee in the back and cranks on the arms because an opponent holding his knee is a bit too complicated for him. Norman avoids a middle rope knee drop and grabs a leg bar for a surprising submission.

Rating: C+. Riggs not being able to use basic psychology aside, this was a rather entertaining match. Smiley is a guy who could always give a good performance if he wasn't being over the top with his comedy. It's always fun to see a relative unknown get an upset win over a name, even one as lowly as Riggs.

Armstrong Brothers vs. Disco Inferno/Alex Wright

The Armstrongs are Steve and Scott (referee in WWE). Alex takes Steve down with an armdrag to start and scores with a nice dropkick before bringing in Disco. Steve doesn't notice though, allowing Disco to come in off the middle rope to break up a cover. Off to Scott who walks right into a slam as the announcers talk about the Armstrong Curse Inferno dances a bit and drops a fist on Scott for two but the Brothers both come in, allowing Scott to hit a nice clothesline for no cover.

Scott and Steve stomp away in the corner until the referee finally breaks it up, though it keeps him from seeing Disco backslide Steve. Disco and Steve collide and everything breaks down. Scott accidentally dropkicks Steve and a Disco facebuster into a Wright neckbreaker is enough for the pin.

Rating: D. Much like the other tag match, this was was much more uninteresting than it was bad. The Armstrongs are nothing without Brad and even then they're nothing of note. Disco and Alex aren't bad for a low level tag team but they're nothing higher than that. Not much to see here.

Konnan/Diamond Dallas Page vs. Stevie Ray/Giant

It's Konnan being kicked down by Ray to start before Stevie pulls on his pants. The most interesting part of the opening segment: Tony says WCW is different from the Wolfpack because WCW cares about tradition. That's the first explanation I've heard from the announcers. Off to Page vs. Giant with the big man countering an Irish whip into a clothesline to take over.

A choke into a backbreaker works on Page's bad ribs but DDP comes back with a running DDT to put both guys down. Page finally covers but the kickout launches him into the air and spins him around. Konnan and Stevie come in off tags with Ray taking over and knocking Page off the apron. An X Factor puts Ray down and the hot tag brings in Page to clean house. Ray walks into a Diamond Cutter but Giant breaks up the pin as the NWO comes

in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was your usual main event tag match for WCW with nothing happening and the NWO running in before anyone has to do a job. To be fair though that's probably the right idea with WarGames less than two weeks away. I'm still not sure why Stevie Ray of all people is getting this push.

The NWO beats up our heroes until Goldberg makes the save and stares down the Giant to set up the dark match main event.

Overall Rating: C-. Better than average Thunder here but that doesn't make it a good show. There was some solid action here but all of the tag matches dragged things back down. It's amazing how much easier this is when the main event stories get less than twelve minutes of screen time and no talking. Not a good show but it was far easier to sit through than most Thunders.

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