

Thunder – November 12, 1998: Cruiserweights A Go-Go

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Location: Roanoke Civic Center, Roanoke, Virginia

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

It's another taped edition which means I'm probably about to lose all will to live. The main story is still Bret attacking people and being a loose cannon, which is completely different from Scott Steiner attacking people and being a loose cannon. WCW is in desperate need of some top faces as Goldberg has been nowhere near the top story for months, Flair isn't wrestling, and all the other faces are being injured by Hart. Let's get to it.

The announcers run down the card as is their custom.

Glacier vs. Chris Adams

Before the match Glacier says he invented the Cryonic Kick, which I believe he told Saturn a few months back. At least he's consistent. They lock up a few times with no one getting an advantage until Glacier grabs a wristlock to take over. Glacier takes him down and hammers away with right hands, already making him more interesting than most Ernest Miller matches.

Adams gets back up and nails some right hands of his own after a kick to the face. They head outside for a few seconds before getting back in so Adams can kick Glacier out of the air. A powerbomb sets up the superkick from Adams but here's Sonny Onoo for the save. When I say save, I mean the referee takes forever to count because Sonny missed his cue. The distraction lets Ernest Miller come off the top with a kick to the head, allowing Glacier to drive his thumb into Adams' neck for the submission.

Rating: D+. This was actually better than I was expecting. Glacier has gotten a lot easier to sit through by just adding in some moves beyond

kicks. He's still not entertaining or someone I care about now, but I'd rather watch this version of him than the one that got a big push a year or so ago.

We look at the big Hogan Presidential announcement from Nitro.

Kenny Kaos vs. Kendall Windham

Kaos is billed as part of High Voltage despite being half of the Tag Team Champions with Rick Steiner. Or wait are the two of them still champions after the Judy Bagwell thing on Monday? And Kaos is ok here but was too hurt to wrestle Monday? You can see the confusion already setting in for this company. Kaos grabs a hammerlock to start but Kendall goes into the ropes.

Windham slugs away but gets caught in a wristlock and it's already time to talk about the battle royal in a few weeks. Kendall heads outside to sucker Kaos in and take over with shots to the back. He misses a middle rope knee drop though and Kenny takes over with a clothesline and powerslam. Kendall grabs a quick swinging neckbreaker but runs into an elbow to the jaw. After heading to the apron, Kaos comes back in with a springboard clothesline for the pin.

Rating: C-. As is always the case around this time, the question is the same: why Kenny Kaos? It's nice to see someone new pushed, but at the same time there are better choices out there than Kaos. To this day it doesn't make a ton of sense but Kaos didn't do a horrible job in the role.

Video on Lex Luger.

Stevie Ray vs. Jerry Flynn

Norton, Vincent and Horace are at ringside. Stevie actually needs Vincent to offer a distraction so he can take over to start. He works over Jerry with as basic of a power offense as you can think of, though he still finds time to work in a SUCKA or two. Flynn gets pounded down and sent into the buckle where Norton gets in some choking from the floor. Flynn comes back with some kicks and choking in the corner but gets sent to the

floor for a beating from the NWO. Back in and we hit the bearhug from Stevie before he kicks Jerry in the face and hits the Slap Jack for the pin.

Rating: D. This match is a good example of why the NWO stopped mattering. Norton, Vincent and Horace never meant much in WCW, but we have to sit through them being on screen and act like they matter because they're wearing an NWO shirt. Look at all the people that could use this spot to get a rub, but instead these guys are out there and never getting anything out of it because the top guys in the NWO weren't going to go anywhere.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Juventud Guerrera

Winner gets a shot against Kidman at the PPV. They shake hands to start followed by Guerrera grabbing a wristlock to take over. Rey drops to the mat and nips up into a spin move to escape. Mysterio's wristlock is countered with a slam and Rey bails to the floor for a second. Back in and they trade headlocks before actually slugging it out. A slingshot suplex drops Mysterio but he pops up and takes Juvy into the corner to hammer away. Rey misses a charge into the corner and gets taken down by a headscissors as we go to a break.

Back with Rey hammering Juvy down for the Bronco Buster before slapping on a headlock. Juvy comes out with a nice atomic drop before putting on a surfboard for a bit. He can't hold Rey up though so it's off to an armbar instead. Rey fights up again and hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker followed by a moonsault for two. Juvy gets back up and nails a quick powerbomb for two of his own but walks into a hurricanrana for the same.

Rey misses a charge into the corner and Juvy tries to go up top for the 450 but Mysterio grabs his feet for the save. Juvy kicks him away, only to miss a top rope legdrop and get caught in a figure four headscissors. That goes nowhere so Rey throws him to the floor. Juvy teases walking out but comes back in and nails a brainbuster as the time limit runs out. We're going to keep going though because the title shot is on the line. Imagine that: wanting a winner to get a title shot.

We're in overtime now with Juvy missing a charge into the corner. Rey

slams him down but misses a top rope legdrop to give Guerrera a two count. Mysterio rolls to the floor and gets caught by a big old dive over the top. Back in and Juvy hits the Juvy Diver, only to have Rey break it up and nail the top rope hurricanrana for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: B-. This is another match that is really hard to screw up. Rey is the best high flier WCW had and Juvy is probably right behind him. Both guys looked good here despite the lack of high spots. It's an encouraging sign when they can mix up what they do out there to make the match feel different.

Cruiserweight Title: Billy Kidman vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Kidman is defending and it's face vs. face here. They lock up a few times to start until Chavo grabs a headlock. That goes nowhere until Kidman sends him into the ropes and nails a dropkick. The champ grabs an armbar and Chavo can't even slam his way out of it. Chavo eventually shakes Kidman off and scores with a clothesline and belly to back suplex for two. A powerslam gets the same but Chavo grabs Pepe until we take a break.

Back with Chavo still in control but he stops to talk to Pepe. Kidman can't capitalize though and has to kick out of a German suplex at two. We hit a camel clutch on the champion before Chavo shifts over to an Indian deathlock with a crossface. The crowd audibly gasps on that one and I can't blame them. That move always looks awesome.

They get back up and Chavo avoids a dropkick before getting two off an elbow drop. Time for more Pepe, but this time Kidman is able to get up for a high cross body and a two count. Guerrero comes back with a pair of rollups for two each but has his suplex countered into a powerbomb. Back up again and Chavo wins a battle of the forearms before walking the corner for a bulldog. He makes the eternal mistake of trying a powerbomb and gets slammed face first down into the mat. Kidman loads up the Shooting Star but here's the LWO for the DQ.

Rating: C+. Another good cruiserweight match which got the time to go somewhere. Chavo's character is starting to come into form by being a very talented guy who keeps getting distracted by the horse. It's a

better gimmick than being completely insane and is a logical evolution for the character as he's done with Eddie now and has no reason to play as many mind games.

World War 3 ad.

Dean Malenko vs. Kanyon

Malenko doesn't care to hear Kanyon's catchphrase so he easily takes Kanyon down and slaps on an armbar. Back up and it's off to a headlock from Dean before he runs Kanyon down with a shoulder. Kanyon tries to get in a cheap shot off a lockup and Dean is all ticked off now. Dean gets warned by the referee and Kanyon gets in a few cheap shots to take over. He hammers away on Malenko and chokes away before hitting the middle rope Fameasser.

A sleeper is countered by a belly to back from Malenko but he gets rammed into the buckle. Kanyon grabs a suplex of his own and gets two off a slingshot elbow drop. Dean gets taken down with a swinging neckbreaker but is still able to avoid a top rope splash. Kanyon is able to get his boot up in the corner and throws Malenko outside but Raven doesn't do anything. Raven walks to the back to distract Kanyon, allowing Malenko to break out of the Flatliner. Dean takes him down and loads up the Cloverleaf but Lodi runs in for the DQ.

Rating: C. This wasn't as good as I was expecting but it wasn't a bad match. Kanyon was using most of his usual stuff here but he was so different than most of what anyone else was doing so it still looked unique. Malenko didn't look on his game here but he's still perfectly fine while being off a step.

Konnan vs. Giant

Much like Dean, Giant doesn't want to hear what his opponent has to say so he shoves Konnan to the side. Konnan bails to the floor but it doesn't do him much good as Giant hammers him down again. Giant misses an elbow in the corner but falls on Konnan in a slam attempt. A Russian legsweep drops Konnan and Giant chucks him to the floor. Giant follows Konnan outside and just mauls him like Konnan isn't even there. A table is set

up against the steps (drawing an ECW chant) but Konnan moves to send Giant through it instead. Konnan grabs a chair and blasts Giant, drawing the lame DQ.

Rating: D+. There's something about Giant throwing large men around that entertains me. Of course it could be that most of Konnan's talking makes me cringe and I enjoy seeing him get beaten up. This was your usual "we've got no time left but this show needs some star power so here you go" main event.

Giant shrugs it off and chokeslams the referee for yelling about the table to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The C is for cruiserweights here as they carried this show on their backs. I got tired of the disqualifications but at least we got some long entertaining matches leading up to them instead of the garbage we usually get before the DQ. There wasn't much storyline development, which is going to become a problem as the PPV is in ten days.

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