

Thunder – January 14, 1999: And It's Only Going To Get Worse

Thunder

Date: January 14, 1999

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Attendance: 8,597

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

It's the go home show for Souled Out and we actually have some matches set for the show now. The main story coming out of Nitro is Giant being beaten down and thrown out of the NWO and the company as well. Other than that there's Flair torturing Bischoff in comedy bits that are lacking comedy. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about recent events as is their custom.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Scott Putski

The monster hammers away to start but misses a charge to give Putski a brief opening. It lasts all of three seconds as he whips Bigelow in and gets taken down by a nice spinwheel kick. Well nice for a guy Bigelow's size. A hard elbow puts Putski down but Bigelow misses the top rope elbow and gets punched in the jaw. Again it only lasts for a few seconds though as Bam Bam catches him in a powerslam.

We hit the chinlock on Putski as the announcers have barely acknowledged anything outside of Goldberg vs. Hall. You could at least talk about Wrath vs. Bigelow as the commentary was clearly done with knowledge of what happened/was going to happen on Monday. Putski's next comeback is stopped when he runs into Bigelow's boot, followed by some elbows and headbutts.

A choke has Putski in trouble and we hit another chinlock. Back up and Bigelow runs into a boot as Putski is getting WAY too much offense. Some clotheslines put Bam Bam down but he comes right back with Greetings From Asbury Park (over the shoulder tombstone) for the long delayed pin.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't terrible but six minutes is way too long for Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Scott Putski. Bigelow looked bored out there for the most part, even though he hit some of his bigger spots. To be fair though, who expected an effort in a match like this? Putski's pirate style garb continues to be bizarre.

Norman Smiley vs. Prince Iaukea

Oh good grief we have to see this AGAIN? Feeling out process to start with Iauke running Norman over with a shoulder for two. An armbar doesn't last long on the Prince but this time he gets shouldered down. The spinning slam sets up the Big Wiggle and a chinlock as we take a break. Back with Smiley dropkicking him out to the floor and it's Wiggle time again.

Prince comes back in with a cross body for two but gets clotheslined down. Say it with me: Big Wiggle time again. Norman nails a European uppercut and puts on a headscissors on the mat. Prince quickly fights up and hits his second cross body for two more. They head outside with Iaukea ramming him into various metal objects but Norman nailing some chops back inside. Norman hammers away a bit more but takes too long on another spinning slam, allowing Iaukea to slip out. Iaukea fires back but gets caught in the Conquest for the submission.

Rating: D. This got TEN MINUTES. Smiley is incredibly charismatic but he needs more than just the Big Wiggle and that spinning slam. On top of that, FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THINGS GOOD AND HOLY GET PRINCE IAUKEA OFF THE SHOW ALREADY! The guy is just not interesting at all and can do nothing special in the ring whatsoever. Why we've had to sit through this match

three or four times in less than six weeks is beyond me.

Jimmy Hart says he's great and that the Faces of Fear are back together as the First Family and will win the Tag Team Title tournament. This was far more interesting than either match tonight and I almost dozed off during this segment.

Recap of Bischoff being forced to set up the ring, leading him to leave a wrench behind for Nash to knock Giant out with. Because there would never be a wrench near a wrestling ring unless Eric Bischoff was there.

Jericho comes out to talk about how amazing he is and allows the crowd to applaud him. He thinks Saturn will retire on Sunday because he doesn't have the legs to wear a dress.

Chris Jericho vs. Van Hammer

Van Hammer's early power stuff has almost no effect so Jericho dropkicks him down and does the long steps. A clothesline from Hammer allows him to do the long steps, but that's not cool with our Canadian hero. Not that his anger matters though as Hammer easily counters a monkey flip by putting Jericho on the top rope.

Jericho comes back with a spinwheel kick and a suplex as Saturn is standing on the ramp. We hit the chinlock on Hammer for a bit before Jericho misses a dropkick. Hammer pounds away (you might say he even hammers) before crotchting Jericho on the top. A superkick and cobra clutch slam get two for Hammer but he misses an enziguri and has his lions tamed into kittens for the submission.

Rating: C-. Match of the night so far by about a mile. It's amazing what you can do when you have someone with as much charisma as Jericho had out there, especially after seeing Scott Putski and Prince Iaukea earlier in the night. Van Hammer wasn't anything special but he was fine in a role like this.

We see Goldberg's sitdown sound bytes from Nitro.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Faces of Fear vs. Mike Enos/Bobby Duncum Jr.

Barbarian hammers on Enos in the corner to start before missing a charge and getting kicked in the ribs for awhile. Off to Meng vs. Duncum with Bobby's offense having no effect at all. Meng rams his own head into the turnbuckle and hits an atomic drop before bringing Barbarian back in. Duncum gets beaten down by both monsters as this is already dragging. Meng ducks his head but Bobby can't slam him, instead getting suplexed down.

Back to Barbarian who fights off a sunset flip until Enos shoves him down for two. Barbarian comes right back with a backbreaker and we hit the chinlock. Duncum escapes with a jawbreaker but Meng breaks up a tag attempt. A piledriver gets one on Duncum....and here's the NWO for the no contest.

Rating: D-. So the Faces of Fear are back together and somehow less interesting than they were before. Jimmy Hart's career as a manager nosedived after the NWO showed up and it's rather pathetic to see him toiling down here. Also, Duncum goes from a few TV Title matches to this in less than two months. Such is life in wrestling.

Hogan talks about how Nash is the real giant and no one is going to mess with them. Nash says there will no tournament.

This Week In WCW Motorsports.

Wrath vs. El Dandy

Dandy's offense has almost no effect to start and a big side slam puts him down. They head outside with Wrath easily hammering away and sending Dandy into the barricade. Back in and Wrath chokes a lot before hitting the Rock Bottom (now called the Death Penalty) and the Meltdown for....no pin as

Bigelow runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D. Just let Bigelow beat him like you know he'll do on Sunday because Bigelow is an older guy and Wrath's push was stopped dead by Nash last month. There wasn't anything to this and I don't see why they didn't just have Bigelow come in after the match and let Wrath get the pin. Not that it matters anyway.

Wrath clotheslines Bigelow to the floor.

Konnan has a new t-shirt with the NWO logo on it.

Five minute recap of the NWO's actions on Monday.

Disco Inferno vs. Super Calo

Disco is extra aggressive tonight and stomps Calo to the mat to start. He rams Calo into the barricade and hooks a front facelock as Heenan takes a phone call. Scott Hall comes out with the taser and walks around the ring. Calo hits a bad looking spinwheel kick and a better looking middle rope dropkick for two. Not that it matters as Hall zaps him into the Chartbuster for the pin.

Rating: D. Egads this show feels like it's about 19 hours long. Disco as the new lackey isn't interesting and feels more like an idea to amuse the writers more than anything else. It's like they took the Louie Spicolli idea and put Disco into the exact same angle about a year later. Calo continues to be worthless.

Hall says Nash and Hogan want to talk to Disco in the back right now. Disco leaves and Hall talks about Goldberg winning 174 wrestling matches, but now it's a gimmick match (his words). Hall says go rent some of his ladder matches and explains the rules of their match on Sunday.

Chris Benoit/Steve McMichael vs. Barry Windham/Curt Hennig

Chris and Curt get things going as the announcers talk about the Flairs' match on Sunday. Neither guy can take over on the other so they circle each other for a bit. Some chops have Hennig in trouble and it's off to Mongo (wrestling in a shirt for some reason) for some knees to the ribs. Curt outsmarts Mongo with relative ease and brings in Windham to hammer away. Barry hits a belly to back suplex before it's back to Curt to stomp away.

The heels take over on McMichael and we take a break. Back with Windham getting two on Mongo off a lariat before putting on a reverse chinlock. Hennig comes back in but a double clothesline puts both guys down. Benoit gets the hot tag to clean house and a suplex gets two on Barry. There's the Crossface on Windham but Hennig hits the referee with a chair for the DQ.

Rating: D+. It's so clear that most of these people just don't care at all and it's getting harder and harder to watch. Benoit was trying and Hennig was kind of trying, but the other two were just out there because a schedule said they were supposed to be. Thankfully Mongo would be gone soon after this.

Ric Flair tries to come in for the save and gets beaten down. David tries to come cover his dad but gets attacked as well. Hennig picks up the chair and we're done.

Overall Rating: F. What a depressing show. I'm not sure what the main event is on Sunday, though the Flair match is getting more time than the ladder match. Other than that this was a lot of boring to horrible matches with a quick cameo from the NWO. Things should pick up a bit after Sunday but it can't get much less interesting at this point.

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