

Thunder – February 4, 1999: When Bad Gimmicks Catch Up With You

Thunder

Date: February 4, 1999

Location: Providence Civic Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 10,319

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

SuperBrawl is rapidly approaching and unfortunately WCW's hot streak seems to have taken a hit. Nitro was a strangely booked show with stuff happening that didn't make a ton of sense, particularly Goldberg wanting to go after Bigelow instead of Luger despite Luger talking about Goldberg, even though Luger is in a feud with Rey Mysterio Jr. Sadly, this is probably the peak for WCW's remaining time. Let's get to it.

We open with a video of Hogan and Hell's Angel Chuck Zito (never named on camera on Monday that I heard) stalking David Flair to beat him down.

Tony and company promise us two tag team tournament matches.

Arn Anderson is on the phone, presumably with Ric Flair, and it sounds like David wasn't attacked.

The Black and White is waiting for Vincent and joke about him wanting to be World Champion. Adams: "That would kill the business."

Chris Jericho vs. Scotty Riggs

Riggs' eye is fine. They circle each other to start and Riggs nails a nice dropkick to take over. Back in and Jericho misses a dropkick, allowing Riggs to catapult him to the floor for a big plancha. Jericho shrugs it off though and hits a quick hot

shot to take over. Riggs falls to the floor and gets nailed by a springboard shoulder as we take a break. Back with Jericho sending Riggs into the buckle and getting two off the backsplash.

Riggs is sent to the floor again but manages to dropkick a chair back into Jericho's face. Back in and a top rope cross body gets two for Scotty but Jericho dropkicks him back down. A backbreaker has Riggs in more trouble and Jericho gets all cocky. He runs into a boot in the corner though and Riggs follows it up with a clothesline. Both guys try cross bodies and wind up down on the mat in a heap. An enziguri drops Jericho and he has to tell Scotty to cover him. Riggs gets the same off a running knee lift but Jericho sidesteps a dropkick and hooks the Lontamer for the submission.

Rating: C-. This was fine for the most part. Long but fine. Riggs is still having the same issues he's always had: he's not a very well rounded guy in the ring and he has nothing that makes him stand out at all. Generic looking wrestlers can overcome their lack of a gimmick if they're great in the ring (Jerry Lynn for instance) but Riggs is far from Jerry Lynn.

We see the same Luger/Liz video from Nitro.

Video from Nitro on how the mask vs. hair match was set up for SuperBrawl. I've liked the build to this feud so far and it's made Rey look like a big deal.

Disorderly Conduct vs. Rey Mysterio Jr./Konnan

The jobbers are Mean Mike and Tough Tom. The Tough one catches Mysterio in a hot shot to start but gets sent to the floor with a dropkick. Rey follows him out with a flip dive to take out Tom and Mike. Back in and a springboard sunset flip gets two on Tom before it's off to Konnan for some hard stomping in the corner. A spinning bulldog sets up the seated dropkick and it's back to Rey.

Tom finally gets in some more offense with a full nelson slam and a clothesline gets two. Mike comes in with a top rope ax handle for two but Mysterio rolls over and makes the hot tag to Konnan. Everything breaks down and Konnan hits the X Factor to set up the Tequila Sunrise on Mike as Rey hurricanranas Tom for the pin.

Rating: C. A nice match and logical booking as we build to a well set up match. What more can you possibly ask for? Mysterio and Konnan work well together and Konnan is good at getting the hot tag to clean house. They would have been a good entrant in the tournament to make a deep run if it wasn't for the Luger/Nash match.

The Black and White see Vince arrive three hours late in a limo provided by Hogan. Ray isn't cool with this.

Video on Hogan vs. Flair.

Stevie Ray hypes up Adams and Horace for their match later tonight when Vince comes in. Apparently Hogan has put him in charge of hyping up the champs but Stevie is tired of Vince's talk and leaves. Adams lightly shoves Vince and leaves.

Norman Smiley vs. Disciple

I had forgotten Disciple was around. A quick wristlock doesn't get Norman anywhere and we hit the chinlock less than a minute in. Back up and Disciple kicks Norman in the face but gets rolled up when posing. An armbar has Disciple in trouble and Norman teases the Big Wiggle. Back to the armbar as this is a total clinic so far from Smiley.

He's still not ready to Wiggle though so he stomps on Disciple's foot. Norman gets two off a butterfly suplex but Disciple holds the ropes to avoid a dropkick. Disciple's suplex is easily blocked and Norman hits a textbook suplex of his own. NOW we get the Wiggle and the Norman's Conquest gets the submission.

Rating: C. This was incredibly entertaining in a way I didn't expect at all. Disciple was completely dismantled here with Norman looking like a master out there. It was a chain wrestling clinic with Norman looking like he could have beaten anyone. That's not something you often see in WCW and it's a shame Norman's push is about to die. How do I know that? Because WCW of course.

Disco Inferno is looking for Vince. Adams says you can find him down there.

Tag Team Title Tournament: Horace Hogan/Brian Adams vs. Faces of Fear

I've given up on the rounds as the double elimination has thrown me off. Neither team has lost so far. Horace and Barbarian get things going with Barbarian nailing a shoulder block. Everything quickly breaks down and the Faces of Fear take over. Things settle down and Horace stomps away on Barbarian before bringing Adams in. Brian hammers away but makes the mistake of trying a double noggin knocker, allowing Barbarian to nail a clothesline.

Meng comes in legally for the first time and Tony clarifies that last week's Outsiders match was NOT a tournament match, even though Windham and Hennig implied that the Outsiders were in the tournament. So either a match between two tournament teams wasn't a tournament match, or someone has no idea what's going on. Given that Nash is in a totally different story, I'd assume it's Hennig/Windham who have no idea what's going on. We take a break and come back with Barbarian getting two on Horace off a side slam.

Horace gets chopped in the corner and Barbarian rakes his back. Back to Meng who slams Horace down but misses a legdrop. Adams comes in and is easily taken down before it's back to Barbarian. The boring chants start up as Adams comes back with an atomic drop. Horace comes back in and kicks at the leg

before dropping an elbow for two. Brian gets the same result off the same move before a piledriver gets two more.

A fall away slam gets two for Horace but Barbarian sends him out to the floor. They have a dull sequence of Horace trying to get back in but he falls down a few times. Hart gets in some cheap shots but Vince runs out with the slap jack to knock him cold. Back in and Barbarian powerbombs Horace for two and the Kick of Fear gets the same. The referee is busy with Meng and Adams, allowing Vince to hit Barbarian with the slap jack. Horace drops a middle rope elbow for the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't so much bad as much as it was incredibly dull. The match ran an absurd SIXTEEN MINUTES and the fans stopped caring after about two. I like the idea of longer matches, but there are guys that can do this kind of stuff far easier than the Faces of Fear and the B Team. It's not terrible but it should have been about four minutes long.

This Week in WCW Motorsports: the pit crew stays in shape!

Stevie Ray can't find his slap jack.

The announcers talk about Bret Hart defending the US Title against Scott Hall at SuperBrawl. This leads into clips of Benoit vs. Hall from Nitro.

We see Goldberg calling out Bigelow from Nitro. That's kind of a step backwards for Goldberg. You would think he would go after another member of the NWO. Like Luger, but that would make too much sense.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Jerry Flynn

Bigelow shoves him into the corner to start and we actually get a clean break. Flynn grabs a cross armbreaker but Bigelow is into the ropes before he feels the power of mullet. After Flynn chokes some more, Bigelow realizes he's facing Jerry Flynn and takes over with kicks in the corner. A running

splash crushes Flynn but he stops another with a boot. Jerry misses a bicycle kick though and Greetings From Asbury Park connects for the pin.

Rating: F+. The piledriver looked good but it's Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Jerry Flynn. I think that speaks for itself.

Stevie is choking Vince for stealing his slap jack but the Black and White drags him off.

We see Scott Steiner causing Kimberly to fall before Nitro and Page wanting to fight Steiner.

Glacier vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Page is all ticked off and runs Glacier over with a clothesline. A hard forearm sends Glacier to the floor but Page pulls him back in to hammer away even more. Glacier gets crotched against the post and there's the discus lariat. Tony tries to write off the bored crowd as being in awe of Page's aggression. Glacier gets in a single shot and goes up, only to get caught in a Diamond Cutter from the middle rope for the pin.

Rating: D. Total squash here but it did what it was supposed to do. It amazes me how much stock WCW put into Glacier and now he's doing jobs on the B show less than two years later. Page needs to do something of note soon as he's been in the same place on the card for the last few months here.

Tag Team Title Tournament: Barry Windham/Curt Hennig vs. Mike Enos/Bobby Duncum Jr.

This is the main event people. Let that sink in for a minute. Hennig starts with Enos and it's Curt slamming him down before tagging in Windham. Barry is actually taken down in a wristlock but comes back with one of his own. Bobby and Windham slug it out until Duncum takes over and hits a Vader Bomb into an elbow.

We take a break and come back with Enos powerslamming Curt for two. Hennig quickly fights back and starts in on the knee before giving it back to Windham who can't hook the figure four. Instead he sends Enos out to the floor so Hennig can....do nothing at all. Back in and it's off to Curt for some chops but Enos nails a hard clothesline.

Bobby comes in off the tag and runs Hennig over with a shoulder and middle rope clothesline. A bulldog gets two on Hennig and a horrible looking Skull Crushing Finale gets the same. Enos tries to come in for no apparent reason, allowing Windham to nail Bobby in the back of the head so Curt can get the pin.

Rating: D. The match was watchable but the fact that this was the main event showed how little this show mattered. This is another annoyance about a double elimination format: we have to sit through matches like these because the teams have to wrestle at least twice each. Enos and Duncum just aren't interesting as a team and it's a waste of someone who looks and works like Duncum.

Overall Rating: D+. The show had its moment and they were few and far between. The tag tournament is starting to come into form as we're seeing some teams for the second time, but that doesn't mean they're teams I want to look at. Having Thunder as the wrestling show is a good idea, but it would be nice if I cared about more of the wrestlers. Windham/Hennig vs. Duncum/Enos is a Saturday Night match at best, not the main event of a show. Good idea on the structure here but horrid execution.

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