

Thunder – April 22, 1999: Let Them Be Awesome

Thunder

Date: April 22, 1999

Location: Orlando Arena, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 9,429

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Larry Zbyszko

Welcome to the bottom of the cliff for WCW. On Nitro earlier this week we saw DDP turn heel for no apparent reason, Nash turn face after being one forever but then save Goldberg for no apparent reason and then Flair committed to a mental hospital for reasons of WCW being stupid. Hopefully a taped Thunder picks things up a bit. Let's get to it.

The announcers run down the card, which actually doesn't sound too bad. A six man between Benoit/Malenko/Kidman vs. Mysterio/Raven/Saturn sounds very appealing.

Hardcore Hak vs. Hugh Morrus

Morrus takes the kendo stick away and nails Hak to start as Larry is already ripping on the hardcore stuff. Now it's trashcan lid time followed by a mop to Hak's head. Hak comes back with a trashcan shot as Chastity starts handing in even more weapons. They head outside where Morrus reverses a whip into the barricade and nails Hak with another stick. Back in and Hak sends him face first into a chair because he doesn't know how to do many regular wrestling moves. He draps Morrus over the top rope and drops a leg over his back before bringing in a table.

That's not enough so he brings in a ladder but Morrus grabs a powerslam. No Laughing Matter connects for no cover. Hart comes in to set up two tables but Chastity sprays him with a fire extinguisher. The guys actually in the match climb the ladder with Morrus being shoved through the tables. Hak's White Russian legsweep through the pieces of the table is enough for the pin.

Rating: N/A. That's going to be my standard grade for this stuff going forward for the simple reason of this isn't wrestling. Hak got over because of his entrance in ECW and that's about the extent of his usefulness. This was a disaster and I believe Morriss was injured and out for a few weeks as a result of this. It doesn't even have the stupid charm that ECW has half the time.

Video on Nash vs. Page.

We look at the Black and White attacking Konnan on Nitro.

Konnan vs. Scotty Riggs

Konnan hammers away at Riggs, sending him looking for his mirror. The bulldog and low dropkick have Riggs in even more trouble and Konnan fires off more punches in the corner. Back in and Scotty fires off punches of his own followed by an actually awesome dropkick. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Riggs elbows Konnan down to stop his comeback bid. After a Rick Rude hip swivel, Riggs suplexes him down but misses a top rope ax handle. Konnan kicks him in the ribs, hits the X Factor and hooks the Tequila Sunrise for the win.

Rating: D. Riggs' continued employment astounds me but I'm assuming that dropkick has something to do with it. Konnan was his usual self here, even though he's fallen through the floor ever since getting thrown out of the NWO. He's just there anymore and doesn't do anything but get on my nerves with his odd language.

Video on Flair vs. Piper.

Video on the awesome fourway from Monday.

Vampiro vs. Al Greene

They trade armbars to start until Vampiro grabs a full nelson. That goes nowhere either so Greene shoves him off and nails a shoulder. Greene takes him down but Vampiro rides him on the mat to send Al out to the floor. Vampiro hits a plancha and takes him back inside for some chops. This is already going nowhere. A suplex puts Vampiro down but he comes back up with a superkick and a high cross body. Instead of covering off

that, Vampiro grabs a rollup for the pin.

Rating: D+. The high spots helped a bit but this was only a step or two above the previous match. Vampiro really doesn't hold up but at least he's somewhat better as a face. On the other hand, it's hard to hate someone named Big Al. Seriously, try it sometime. Anyway this was about what you would expect from this kind of match.

Hotline shill.

TV Title: Booker T. vs. Bobby Duncum Jr.

Booker is defending. Tenay offers condolences to Rick Rude's family as Rick passed away two days earlier. They trade some headlocks and Booker gets taken into the corner for some kicks to the ribs. Booker fights back with some kicks and a clothesline to send Bobby out to the floor. Duncum pulls him to the floor though and ties Booker's feet with his bullrope. Because he's a cowboy you see, because WCW loves cowboys.

We take a break and come back with Bobby holding a chinlock. A big boot and belly to belly get two on Booker and we're in the chinlock all over again. They head outside with Bobby having a pair of chairs taken away from him. Serves the cheater right. Back in and a top rope clothesline gets two for Duncum and we're back to the chinlock. A clothesline puts Booker down for two more and it's time for the bullrope again. Booker ducks a big swing and hits the ax kick and missile dropkick to retain.

Rating: C-. Duncum had a good look but being a cowboy is only going to take him so far. It gets dull watching a guy just carrying a rope and wearing a hat as the entirety of his gimmick. Booker is still doing well but he's back in the same rut he's been in for years with just having random matches that don't lead anywhere.

Video on Bagwell calling out Steiner.

Buff Bagwell vs. Fit Finlay

After starting a USA chant, Buff takes him down with a quick armdrag to send Finlay out to the floor. Back in and Finlay nails him in the face with a European uppercut and slams Buff face first onto the apron. He

tries to bring in a chair ala Duncum and has it taken away just like Bobby. Back in and Finlay pulls on Buff's nose (seriously) but Buff fights up with a jawbreaker. They trade slams and Buff nails a headbutt but walks into a knee to the ribs. Another European uppercut staggers Buff and the rolling fireman's carry gets two. Buff stops a charging Finlay in the corner with a boot and nails the Blockbuster for the pin.

Rating: D+. They're firmly in the "here's wrestling" mode tonight with no real emotion or energy to anything. Buff's face run continues to work well enough, but he's only a little bit ahead of Scotty Riggs as far as in ring abilities. Finlay was his usual good self but he didn't have much to work with here.

This Week in WCW Motorsports.

We look at Flair being committed on Monday.

Disco Inferno vs. Rick Steiner

After a commercial for some reason, Rick quickly kicks Disco out to the floor before choking him down in the corner. More punching and choking ensues as this is all Steiner so far. Some kicks send Disco running out to the floor out of fear for this boring match. Back in and Disco nails the swinging neckbreaker and a middle rope elbow. He goes up again but dives into a belly to belly suplex. A regular suplex sets up the Steiner Bulldog followed by a kind of STF to make Disco tap.

Rating: D-. Total squash here and the rise of Rick Steiner begins. This is another one of those things in 1999 that really makes me shake my head as Rick would get worse and worse in the ring and get higher and higher on the card as a result. Disco got in almost nothing here and might as well have been from In The Corner To My Left.

We look at Page embracing the dark side to end Nitro.

Goldberg vs. Ernest Miller

Miller offers him the five count but kicks Goldberg at two. Some kicks have Goldberg staggered but he just punches Miller in the face. Sonny Onoo tries to interfere but Goldberg gorilla presses him at Miller and

immediately spears both of them down in a cool looking spot. Jackhammer ends this quick.

Kidman/Chris Benoit/Dean Malenko vs. Rey Mysterio Jr./Raven/Saturn

Main event time and Kidman doesn't look thrilled with his partners. The three teams are scheduled for a triangle match at Slamboree which sounds awesome. Robinson is guest referee of course. Mysterio and Malenko get things going with Rey hammering away in the corner. An armdrag takes Malenko down and we get a standoff. Off to Raven vs. Kidman with the bird enthusiast driving shoulders in the corner.

Raven crotches him on the top rope and Saturn nails a missile dropkick to put Kidman on the floor. A plancha nails Kidman on the floor as Mysterio protests. The argument allows Kidman to tag in Malenko for a dropkick to Saturn's knee. Dean chokes away and Kidman is hesitant to come in under such circumstances. Saturn's powerbomb attempt is countered but Raven breaks up a Shooting Star attempt.

That's fine with Saturn as he belly to belly superplexes the crotched Kidman across the ring. Off to Raven for an atomic drop but Kidman sends him into the corner and tags out to Dean. Raven and Saturn take over on Malenko just as easily before tagging in Mysterio for a dropkick. Malenko suplexes Rey down and we take a break.

Back with everyone in the same spot due to the wonders of taped shows. Saturn has a red headdress for no apparent reason. Benoit goes after Rey's knee, drawing in Saturn for an attempted save. That's exactly what the Horsemen want as they switch behind the referee's back to keep control. Dean gets two off a suplex and brings in Kidman who tries to help Rey up.

Benoit will have none of this compassion stuff and tags himself so he can throw Kidman to the floor. A superplex drops Rey again as the Horsemen keep control. Dean throws Mysterio outside and everything breaks down. That goes nowhere as Malenko takes Rey back inside and bends Mysterio's back over his knee.

Rey finally takes Malenko down with the sitout bulldog and makes the tag

to Saturn. Everything breaks down again with Rey tagging himself back in after a few seconds. Kidman clotheslines Malenko “by mistake” but Anderson crotches Rey on the top. The spinebuster plants Rey and Kidman protests, but Dean dropkicks Kidman onto Mysterio for a fast count pin.

Rating: B-. Take six guys and give them about fifteen minutes to be awesome. It wasn't a classic but it blew away everything else on this show. This likely sets up some tension between the Tag Team Champions as we head into Slamboree. That match is going to rock given the talent in the ring. Good main event here.

Overall Rating: D+. The main event brings this up a good bit as everything else was basic, boring stuff that didn't need to exist. At the end of the day though, I'll take dull, generic wrestling over stuff that insults my intelligence, making this show a bit more tolerable than the worst of Nitro. It's also a step up over some of the worst Thunders they've had over the last few months.

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