

Thunder – May 20, 1999: The Conqueror of the Cruisers

Thunder

Date: May 20, 1999

Location: Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Mike Tenay

After a week off for the NBA Playoffs, we're back for a show taped before the latest Nitro, meaning we're not likely to get any storyline developments here. The main story is the start of Savage vs. Nash for the title and the ongoing drama around who is in charge. One question to tie the stories together: if Bischoff didn't have the power to overturn the ending of Piper vs. Flair, why did he have the power to restart Page vs. Nash? Let's get to it.

We open with Gene bringing out Buff Bagwell for a chat. After some sucking up to the Kansas crowd, Buff says Scott turning on him wasn't a surprise but Rick was. There's no loyalty in the NWO, though I'm not sure there's even an NWO anymore. Buff randomly challenges Randy Savage for a fight later on so that's likely the main event.

Clips from the main events at Slamboree.

Clips of the Steiners teaming up again at Slamboree.

Clips of Booker T. calling out Scott and getting beaten down off camera from Nitro.

TV Title: Rick Steiner vs. Scott Putski

Rick is defending in case you weren't paying attention and comes out in a Red and Black shirt. He hammers on Putski to start and drops an elbow before already putting on a chinlock. Seriously. Steiner drops some forearms to the head as Tenay incorrectly says Steiner won the TV Title at Starrcade 1989.

More pummeling ensues as Rick puts him upside down stomach first into the

top turnbuckle for two. Choking and some face rubs into the mat set up elbow drops for two, which just seems to tick Steiner off. Putski's comeback goes as badly as you would expect and he gets dropped by a knee. The Steiner Bulldog and a weird looking arm lock retain the title.

Rating: D-. Of all the things WCW did badly over this year, putting Rick Steiner in this spot for so long might be the worst. He wasn't over, he hadn't meant anything without his brother in about nine years, and his matches looked to be bordering on dangerous rather than just stuff. Look at the roster that could use the TV Title and see how stupid it is to keep it on Rick Steiner this long.

Flair and the Horsemen convince Barry Horowitz to lay down for David Flair tonight.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Kidman

The fans are behind Kidman here even though Guerrera slaps hands on the way to the ring. We immediately get the focus off the match as Tenay tells us that Hogan will be back on Monday. Must be time to panic about the ratings. They lock up to start and Juvy heads to the corner to dance a bit. Juvy gets shoved down again and walks into a dropkick as they're taking their time to start. Kidman's German suplex is escaped with a backflip and Juvy kicks him in the face to block a backdrop.

We finally start getting some high flying in with Juvy going up but getting crotched, sending him down to the floor. Kidman nails him with a plancha and we take a break. Back with Kidman slamming him down and putting on a chinlock for a bit before Juvy nails a bulldog and talks a lot of trash. Some right hands in the corner stagger Kidman but he powerbombs Juvy down to escape. Not that it matters as Kidman misses something like a Stinger Splash and falls out to the floor. The announcers' response? To talk more about Hart vs. Nash on the Tonight Show.

Back in and Kidman counters a powerbomb in the sequence that won't die but can't follow up. Juvy heads up top and dives onto Kidman's raised boots. They trade suplex counters until Juvy headscissors Kidman out to the floor for another plancha. Back in and Kidman dropkicks him out of

the air for two two.

Juvy knocks him off the top but gets crotched and superplexed for his efforts as this is finally hitting a higher gear. In a nice bit of poetic justice, Kidman's powerbomb is countered into a sunset flip for two and a missile dropkick gets the same. The BK Bomb gets the same before Juvy loads up the Juvy Driver, only to get rolled up for a quick pin.

Rating: C-. The problem here is that we've seen these guys blow the roof off the place so many times that there's almost no way they can top it. It wasn't a bad match but it's been done so many times that it's hard to care. Still though, not bad and I have a feeling it's going to be the best thing on the show.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Kaz Hayashi

Mysterio is defending of course. Kaz takes him into the corner to start and slaps him in the face to tick the champion off a bit. A hard elbow to the head puts Rey down and Kaz slaps him a little more. Hayashi rakes the eyes and hooks a bulldog but misses a charge into the corner. The champ takes him down with a headscissors, only to get dropped throat first onto the top rope.

With Mysterio down, we get an OH YEAH as Savage and the girls come out for some reason. He welcomes us to the house of madness and says Mysterio is a fine wrestler. Buff may be the stuff but Rey is the man, despite being caught in a reverse chinlock at the moment. Savage keeps praising Mysterio and brings up Rey beating Kevin Nash before offering Rey a spot on Team Madness.

As he says this, Rey's hurricanrana attempt is countered into a powerbomb. Savage: "HE'S FANTASTIC!" Miss Madness 1999 (called Mona here) says Mysterio is their man and we take a break. Back with Mysterio getting a pin off a top rope hurricanrana. It's the only move we saw after the break.

Rating: D+. I was tempted to not rate this as a big chunk of the match was spent looking at Savage and the girls. Apparently just taking over Nitro and boring me to death there wasn't enough for Savage as he's now

taking over title matches. Hayashi was dominating Rey for the most part here as the champ only hit a few moves of his own. What we saw wasn't bad but there wasn't much to see.

Post match Savage offers Rey the spot on the team again and says all four members have already voted yes. Mysterio says he's honored but has other plans for himself. Savage: "OUCH!" He offers again and gets the same response so Savage nails him in the back of the head. Rey actually fights back with a springboard missile dropkick but the girls get in a few shots, setting up a piledriver from Savage. Kidman comes out for a save and has the same luck. Now Konnan tries Savage but gets hit low, allowing Savage to slam him down and drop the big elbow.

This Week In WCW Motorsports.

We see clips of the almost show saving Tag Team Title match from Monday.

Tag Team Titles: Raven/Saturn vs. Horace/Vince

Raven and Horace brawl before the bell but Saturn breaks it up with a superkick. Saturn cranks on Vince's arm as we get the opening bell, followed by an easy suplex for two. Raven comes in for the mock Total Elimination and a front suplex into a swan dive from Saturn. Off to Horace as Canyon has replaced Raven on the apron. I guess we've got a Freebird Rule now. Anyway Horace misses a charge and gets forearmed in the jaw. Canyon comes in for a swinging neckbreaker and it's already back to Saturn. Well they're faster than the Freebirds at least.

A double sidekick puts Horace down again but Vince earns his pay with a shot from the apron. Saturn gets beaten for a few moments as Raven switches back with Canyon. Horace gets in a few shots such as a clothesline and elbow drop followed by a backrake. And yet he still puts in more effort than his uncle. Vince comes back in with a top rope ax handle and a wide variety of fists before it's back to Horace for another clothesline.

Saturn is sent outside for some cheap shots as this just keeps going. Back in and Horace puts on a sleeper but Saturn reverses into one of his own. Horace breaks it up and the double tag brings in Raven and Vince.

There's the drop toehold onto the chair followed by some heel miscommunication, setting up the Death Valley Driver to pin Vincent.

Rating: D. You know, I can live with bad matches and stupid segments, but these matches that are just borderline ok and go on for what seems like ever are almost impossible to take. We know it's going to be a squash with the champs barely breaking a sweat, so why in the world do I have to sit through eight minutes of Horace and Vince boring everyone to tears? At least get someone out there who could have a decent match.

Clips of the Hart vs. Nash Tonight Show stuff. Owen's accident derailed whatever plans they had for this.

We see part of Parker vs. Flair from Monday.

David Flair vs. Barry Horowitz

After a handshake, Barry pats himself on the back and we're ready to go. He takes David down and we've got Horsemen. Some very basic offense has David reeling but the Horsemen get on the apron to remind Barry of the deal. Horowitz chokes in the corner but misses a knee drop, allowing David to hook the Figure Four for the win. So wait, did Barry miss on purpose or did David just avoid a move and capitalize for the win? The same thing happened in the Parker match: he was supposed to be throwing the match but didn't show any signs of doing so. Again, WCW can't even keep its own stories straight.

Another side note: Charles Robinson was fine here but the announcers talked about Savage injuring him on Nitro. Since this was taped in advance, Robinson was in perfect health, making WCW look confused again.

Clips of Savage challenging Nash from Nitro.

Main event fireworks.

Curt Hennig vs. Disco Inferno

Hennig takes him into the corner to start and runs him over with a shoulder followed by a dropkick. Back to the corner for some chops from Curt but Disco hiptosses him down. Curt hammers away again and here come

Savage and the girls because it's been thirty minutes since we saw them. Disco goes after him for no apparent reason and the match is thrown out.

The girls help take Disco down and peel back the mats so Savage can rub his face in the concrete. Buff comes out for the save and it's main event time.

Buff Bagwell vs. Randy Savage

Bagwell hammers away to start and actually does pretty well, nailing ten right hands in the corner, an elbow to the jaw and a dropkick for two. He kicks Savage in the face and puts on a chinlock but gets sent to the floor to stop him cold. Back in and Bagwell gets two more off a small package but gets nailed by an ax handle. They trade elbows until Madusa slaps Buff from the apron (referee? What referee?), which is enough of a distraction for Savage to send him outside. Savage chokes on the barricade and with a chair, finally drawing a DQ.

Rating: D. For DEAR GOODNESS ENOUGH RANDY SAVAGE! The match was just there for Savage to beat up someone else on his path of boring to the World Title match at Great American Bash. Buff was trying but his push was crippled by the loss to Steiner at the pay per view. There's just nothing there now.

Savage nails Buff in the neck with a chair until security comes out to end the show.

Rating: F. In the span of two hours, Randy Savage beat up the greatest cruiserweight of all time, one of the biggest starts in Mexican wrestling history, a multiple time Cruiserweight Champion, a former TV Champion and a former multiple time Tag Team Champion. So we're setting up Nash vs. Savage, which they have to know is going to be a disaster, by having Savage destroy half of the roster? I agree it makes him look strong, but you can't space it out a little bit?

The best match on this show was an underwhelming Kidman vs. Guerrera match and that's nowhere near enough to bring this up. This was one of the worst yet and that covers a lot of ground. WCW is floundering right now and I really don't see anything being able to turn it around, at

least not for a few months.

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