

Thunder – September 9, 1999: A Real Alternative

Thunder

Date: September 9, 1999

Location: Wendler Arena, Saginaw, Michigan

Attendance: 4,653

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Mike Tenay

We're into a new era here in WCW as I'm convinced the company gave up at the last Nitro. Unfortunately that means we have a taped Thunder to sit through, even though the previous show felt like the taped episode. I know I keep saying that things can't get any worse and I've been wrong every single time. Let's get to it.

This show is in memory of Mark Curtis who died of cancer shortly before this show.

Buff Bagwell vs. Barbarian

Buff poses, then locks up, then poses, then gets kicked in the face. I like this Barbarian's style. He hammers away with every sort of strike you can think of, only to miss a clothesline and get dropkicked out to the floor. After a chat with Jimmy (who apparently speaks monster), Barbarian comes back in and gets stomped down yet again. Jimmy distracts Buff (like it's that hard) so Barbarian can hammer away.

Even Hart gets in some choking on the ropes as he continues to be one of the hardest working manager in wrestling. Barbarian gets two off a side slam and it's already time for Buff's comeback with a cross body and neckbreaker for two of his own. Jimmy throws something in but Buff intercepts it and knocks Barbarian cold (1. Some hero. 2. Does no one remember racial stereotypes?) for the pin.

Rating: D. Maybe Berlyn is right and we should all start speaking German. They couldn't even let the guy who is supposed to be the hero win with his cool looking finisher? If there's a guy who had one of the easiest

paths to being a face it's Bagwell, but instead he has to cheat to win a match to set up a match where he's supposed to be fighting for America. These are the kind of small things that really shouldn't be happening but WCW seems to think no one is going to notice and/or care.

Clip of Berlyn from Nitro.

Now here's something that has no business on this show: a genuinely good video history of Sting and Luger, dating back to their arrival in the Crockett territory and including clips from their time together as a team (including Crockett Cup footage) and their feud over the World Title.

Van Hammer vs. Blitzkrieg

Hammer starts fast by throwing Blitzkrieg across the ring like the cruiserweight he is....and talks to the wrong camera. Blitzkrieg tries to get in some kicks and speed things up but dives into something like the Eye of the Storm (a Razor's Edge but Hammer spins him around and drops him without ever leaving his feet). Hammer nails a running corner clothesline and drops a leg (on the chest but close enough) for two. A sunset flip goes as well for Blitzkrieg as you would expect and Hammer suplexes him down again.

Another suplex drops Blitzky again and Hammer goes up for a Swanton of all things. Since it takes him as long as frozen molasses going uphill, Blitzkrieg rolls away and hits a standing moonsault. He tries again since nothing else has worked but only hits mat, allowing Hammer to throw him around the ring again. They head outside to kill even more time, and so Hammer can no sell a moonsault off the apron. Back in and the cobra clutch slam ends Blitzkrieg with ease.

Rating: D-. So we had a long and boring squash with Blitzkrieg getting destroyed for the sake of Van Hammer, who hasn't been going anywhere and won't be going anywhere for the sake of filling in time on a taped Thunder. And for some reason it got over five minutes, just so Hammer could no sell Blitzkrieg's big spot and win with a move as lame as a cobra clutch slam? All hail WCW.

Video on Page vs. Goldberg.

Video on who was driving the Hummer. Why am I supposed to still care about this?

Chris Benoit/Perry Saturn/Shane Douglas vs. Chris Adams/Steven Regal/Dave Taylor

Regal and Benoit trade headbutts to start as the fans chant USA. Off to Taylor for some hard European uppercuts before a double tag quickly brings in Saturn and Adams. Perry slams Adams down and drops him on his head for a pretty scary semi-botch. It's off to Shane for some stomping as he still wrestles like a heel after shoehorning his way onto this team.

Ever the genius, Shane goes over into the corner and gets nailed by the Union Jack to give the Europeans control. The triple teaming only lasts a few moments but does include a save by Saturn. Shane rolls over for the hot tag off to Benoit and everything breaks down. Benoit and Adams stay in the ring and it's a German suplex into the Swan Dive and Crossface for the submission.

Rating: D+. Really standard six man here as Benoit continues to be the only one in the team that gets to show off in the ring. Malenko has the skill but doesn't get to do much, Saturn is more flashy than skilled at this point and Shane is a talker who is only average in the ring. I do however like the Europeans as the talented losers who are always going to look at least passable.

Lodi vs. Kaz Hayashi

This match....again? Kaz goes after Lenny but Lodi screws up the double team attempt. The spot is oh so hilarious that they do the same thing again until Lenny finally proves his worth by distracting Kaz long enough for Lodi to grab a suplex. Lodi takes him to the floor and sends him into the barricade a few times before heading back inside for the basic stuff he can do, mainly because he's just a comedy character who is wrestling to continue an angle that should have died months ago.

A clothesline and powerslam get two on Kaz and a middle rope bulldog gets the same. We get the old Earl Hebner spot as Kaz tries a sunset flip but

Lenny and Lodi grab hands, only to have the referee kick them apart for two. Kaz gets two more off a brainbuster before Lenny gets on the apron again but Kaz sends Lodi into his partner, setting up a rollup for the pin.

Rating: D+. The worst part about this match is it was fairly entertaining and had a story to it: whenever Lodi was on his own he beat Kaz up but whenever he tried to have Lenny help, everything fell apart. That being said, it's fairly stupid to have Kaz in trouble against Lodi before he has a title shot this Sunday.

Lenny tries some elbows on Kaz but keeps hitting mat.

Video on Sting and Hogan, who are suddenly friends after all those years of like, hating each other.

Sid Vicious vs. Adrian Byrd/Bobby Blaze

Both guys are allowed in at once and it makes about as much difference as you would expect. The powerbomb ends Byrd in less than a minute.

Blaze gets the same treatment and Charles Robinson gets to hold up the signs. Sid says his usual schtick about being the Millennium Man.

Here's the Revolution with Benoit missing the US Title and Dean carrying the TV Title for no apparent reason. You would think Saturn, as in the guy challenging for it on Sunday, would be holding it but I'm not sure WCW remembers what they're doing that far in advance. Dean rambles about the title belonging to people like them and says Rick can get it back in a match tonight, one on one with Sid staying in the back. Shane does a bit better as he talks about the Revolution being addicted to gold and not stopping until they have all the titles.

Barry Windham vs. Booker T.

Booker seems to like the look of that title belt. Kendall tries to validate his employment by offering a distraction, allowing Barry to get the early advantage. Booker hammers away with his usual array of strikes and the flying forearm. They head outside and both sets of partners (well partner in Booker's case) get in some cheap shots.

Back in and Barry nails a DDT, probably the only non-striking move he can do at this point. Windham hammers away and shocks me with a suplex before throwing Booker outside for a Redneck beating. Back in again and Barry slowly stomps away, only to miss an elbow. Mr. T. comes up with his series of kicks and we even get some breakdancing. He loads up the missile dropkick but the Rednecks come in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Somehow this is one of the better matches of the night. I'm fine with Harlem Heat being back together, but it astounds me that the Rednecks are the best team they can find for them to chase. Kendall isn't getting a rub out of this as he continues to be one of the most useless guys I've seen in years. Can we get to something else for these guys already?

Stevie tries to make the save and gets beaten down as well.

Clip of Sting getting laid out on Monday.

TV Title: Dean Malenko vs. Rick Steiner

Dean is challenging but has the belt, which apparently he stole at some point earlier in the night. Rick jumps him before the bell and plants him with a suplex as we already take a break. Back with Dean nailing a dropkick and getting punched square in the face for his efforts. Cue Sid as Malenko rolls Steiner up, only to kick him off and right into the chokeslam for the fast DQ. The match might have been four minutes, counting commercial.

Shane comes in and gets beaten down as well. Benoit is able to grab the Crossface on Sid but Steiner makes the save. Cue Saturn so we can see the ENTIRE REVOLUTION getting beaten down by these two main event legends. Yes I said MAIN EVENT LEGENDS, meaning only other MAIN EVENT LEGENDS can fight them because that's how WCW works. Saturn finally backdrops Sid to the floor and Steiner bails.

Goldberg vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

From something nearly on top of a pay per view to main eventing a taped Thunder. Bigelow jumps him during the weapons check so Goldberg easily

slams him down. We get some Zbyszko level stalling from Bam Bam on the floor before Goldberg catches a cross body attempt in midair. Goldberg just holds him there before a World's Strongest Slam sets up a bad looking armbar.

The referee gets knocked down before Goldberg knocks Bigelow silly with a clothesline. Bigelow hammers away with offense that doesn't require a referee bump. Goldberg no sells everything and hits the Bret Killer kick, drawing in Page. The referee, apparently in a coma by this point, is still down as Goldberg spears Bigelow down. Page bails to the floor as Goldberg Jackhammers Bam Bam for the pin.

Rating: D. The match wasn't any good but Goldberg was showing the old fire from when he was World Champion. When he gets that power game going, he's one of the most awesome guys you'll ever see and he was knocking Bigelow silly out there. Page running in was pretty obvious, just like the fact that he's going to get mauled on Sunday.

Page nails Goldberg with a chair but runs away to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. See, Thunder does offer a legitimate alternative to Nitro. While Nitro is a horrible show because it's illogical and repetitive, Thunder is a horrible show because it's incredibly boring and doesn't have good matches. They really need to get to the Russo era so we can get something more interesting instead of just bad. Total waste of TV time here and I don't want to see Fall Brawl.

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