

Thunder – October 28, 1999: What Are You Talking About?

Thunder

Date: October 28, 1999

Location: Cox Arena, San Diego, California

Attendance: 5,091

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Mike Tenay

The company has been turned upside down in the last week and a half as suddenly there's a World Title tournament for the vacant belt, wrestling doesn't matter, and the Filthy Animals are ALL OVER THE PLACE. Now to be fair that means Torrie on TV a lot more so maybe this isn't all bad. Heaven help us with whatever Thunder is going to become. Let's get to it.

Opening montage.

Juventud Guerrera vs. Evan Karagias

This is a rematch from when Bret interrupted their match on Nitro a few weeks back. Evan misses an early dropkick and gets headscissored down but Juvy stops to pose. He spends too long though and gets sent into the buckle so Evan can hammer away in the corner. A spinwheel kick drops Evan but he reverses a suplex into one of his own. They're starting to pick things up a bit. Juvy nails a dropkick and a headbutt before yelling at the fans....and here's Sid so never mind.

Sid actually doesn't destroy them and lets Juvy leave. He says he's undefeated and has proof that Goldberg didn't beat him. Sid throws out an open challenge to anyone in the back and Juvy comes back in to sit on the ropes. Thankfully that's just a red herring as Benoit comes out to accept the challenge. Sid promises to cripple Benoit tonight and chokeslam the cruiserweights to restore our faith in him.

The announcers chatter about Benoit.

The Maestro is in the back and talks about being the star of the show.

This character is as much of a disaster as Berlyn.

Chavo Guerrero is looking for Goldberg because he wants TV time.

Prince Iaukea vs. The Maestro

Good grief end this show already. Iaukea dropkicks Maestro as he turns around so Maestro points a finger at him. THE DEVASTATION! We get into some basic stuff with both guys trading wristlocks until Maestro slugs him into the corner. A whip sends Prince across the ring and Maestro follows him up with even more punches. Prince chops and backdrops for two but eats a knee lift and gets caught in an STF (the Encore) for the submission. Short, bad and the Maestro vs. Prince Iaukea. I think that sums the whole thing up.

Quick recap of the Revolution vs. the Filthy Animals with Torrie being kidnapped on Monday.

Perry Saturn/Dean Malenko vs. Silver King/El Dandy

Shane says Asya is keeping Torrie wherever the Revolution wants her. Malenko threatens to break Benoit's legs on Monday in their tournament match. The Revolution throws their victims to the floor but Silver King comes back in for something like a running DDT to Saturn. Dandy comes in for a double drop toehold and a double kick to the chest to keep Saturn in trouble.

Back to King but Dean offers a distraction and Saturn kicks Silver in the face. It's off to Dean for a basement dropkick and a lot of spitting, setting up Saturn's top rope knee. The Revolution takes King outside for some choking before a suplex/high cross body combo gets two. King gets in a few shots for the tag to Dandy for a missile dropkick to Dean. A plancha takes Saturn down as well (barely touching him but the dive looked good) but Dean nails Dandy with a chair, setting up the Cloverleaf for the win.

Rating: D+. Another squash here and a bit better performance from the luchadors than I was expecting. That being said, we're two days into the Revolution vs. Animals feud and I'm already sick of both teams. Neither

is likeable in the slightest and the Revolution has gone completely against their original idea. This was acceptable but at least it didn't involve the Animals.

Chavo searches for Goldberg.

Long recap of Nitro. This felt like filler.

Harlem Heat is ready for Curly Bill tonight but Chavo interrupts to talk about looking for Goldberg.

The Revolution gets in a car.

Curly Bill says there are no problems in the Rednecks and he needs to go back and tend to the moose on his ranch. Gene doesn't think ranches have moose and Curly goes off on him about being the real cowboy here. Ok that wasn't bad.

Stevie Ray vs. Curly Bill

Oh....joy. Stevie jumps him at the bell and stomps away in the corner as Booker is on commentary, talking about facing Jeff Jarrett in the tournament. Stevie misses a middle rope elbow but no sells Curly's shoulders and kicks him in the face. They head outside with Curly going face first onto the announcers' table (Booker: "ARE YOU OK?", followed by a right hand to the face). Back in and Stevie gets two off a side slam but the referee gets bumped. Dear goodness enough with that nonsense. Curly hits him with the boot but Booker comes in for a hard Harlem side kick, setting up the Slap Jack for the pin.

Rating: D-. This ref bump stuff has to stop. There's one on almost every show now and they're not even in the main events. This was a three and a half minute squash but the squasher needed a ref bump to win. That doesn't make sense and misses the entire point of basic wrestling booking.

Konnan/Kidman/Eddie Guerrero vs. Steven Regal/Chris Adams/Dave Taylor

Before the match, all of the Animals talk about wanting to do various things to the Revolution, including playing them like marks. Rey jumps in

on the announcers' table to talk about the Revolution. Taylor goes right after Eddie to start and avoids an early dropkick before taking Eddie down with European uppercuts and a basement dropkick of his own.

Off to Adams, who gets caught by a rolling clothesline from a crotch grabbing (his own at least) Konnan. As Rey tries to get money out of Zbyszko, Konnan jumps over Adams in the corner but eats a European uppercut from Regal. Off to Kidman who sends Regal into the ropes, nearly knocking Adams off by mistake. Kidman throws Regal down but charges into a hot shot to change control again.

The Brits start stomping away until Kidman blocks a powerbomb. Konnan, ever adherent to the rules, comes in to nail Adams without tagging. Kidman charges into Regal's elbow in the corner and it's off to Adams, who goes up and tries....something resembling a Superman Punch but crashes down. The hot tag brings in Guerrero to clean house as everything breaks down. Eddie hits a quick suplex on Taylor and a big frog splash is enough for the pin.

Rating: C. Not the worst match in the world, Filthy Animals annoyance aside. They're just unlikeable people who ramble on with lingo that ranges from sounding stupid to making no sense while seemingly want to rape every member of the Revolution. Somehow, one of the most likeable wrestlers of all time in Rey Mysterio is associated with this group and WCW seems to think the fans will find them to be the good guys.

Oh and the Filthy Animals steal the losers' robes for good measure.

Chavo is on the phone, saying he's going to get himself over since Goldberg isn't here to do it for him. Wrestlers using this lingo today would appeal to an extremely niche audience. In 1999, this might as well be Martian.

Berlyn speaks English to say that his master plan is in effect and we will all serve him one day. His plan is to lose to Brad Armstrong?

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Lash Leroux

Lash says he's going to win the tournament and be the younger World

Champion ever. I think Giant still has his beat even if he wins. Chavo comes out and reminds us that he's looking for Goldberg for no apparent reason. Lash goes right after him to start and does his splits but misses a clothesline, allowing Chavo to hook a headscissors.

A belly to back gets two for Chavo and he slugs away in the corner. Lash jawbreaks out of a chinlock and gets two of his own off a suplex. That goes nowhere so Chavo takes him into the corner for a stomping but gets forearmed in the head, setting up a chinlock. We get a very sudden BORING chant which almost feels piped in.

I would ask why a company would do that, but this is one of the least stupid things WCW has done in recent weeks. More really basic stuff changes control a few times until Chavo gets a positive reaction and a near fall off a dropkick. Guerrero scores with a clothesline and some chops in the corner, only to get caught in Whiplash for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D+. So Chavo wants to find Goldberg, gets cheered by the fans and then loses to Lash Leroux. Somehow they've managed to fit that much plot into about 75 minutes after Chavo having almost nothing to do for weeks. If they could find a happy middle ground, I'd be curious to see where some of these ideas went. As it is, I barely remember them by the end of the show because of how fast they come and go.

Kidman records Buff Bagwell and Scotty Riggs talking about the finish of a match. I think I know where this is going and I can feel the headache coming.

Ernest Miller, flanked by three women, gets out of a white limo. So he's the Godfather now? I've heard worse ideas.

Berlyn vs. Jerry Flynn

Just cut the cord already. During the entrances, we hear that WCW is filming a movie in Los Angeles. My goodness it's Ready to Rumble time isn't it? Berlyn goes right at him and hits a kind of floatover DDT before cranking on a wristlock. Shouldn't that be the other way around? They trade kicks before Berlyn sends him into the ropes for a kick to the

face, a nipup and another dropkick for the best looking sequence he's done in years.

More kicks to Jerry set up a belly to back but Flynn avoids a charge against the ropes. Jerry fires off his usual array of strikes but throws in some right hands to show his versatility. The Bodyguard intercepts Jimmy Hart (who is the face here anyway?) and nails Flynn for missing a charge, giving Berlyn an easy victory.

Rating: D. He's evil, German and apparently athletic when he wants to be. This character is dead in the water though and they need to find something else for him to do. That's one area where Russo truly was excellent: finding a new character for someone. The words "creative has nothing for you" do not exist on his watch. The gimmick might be insane and ridiculous, but he would have something.

Chavo is still looking for Goldberg but finds Sid instead. "YOU WANT TV TIME?" A chokeslam leaves Chavo on a cart, end scene.

Here's Ernest Miller with the three good looking women. After telling the rednecks to sit down, he informs us that he'll be in the tournament on Monday against doctor's orders. THIS warranted coming to the ring and talking?

Benoit thinks Sid is running his mouth too much. I'd say it's more that he's wrestling too much but that's just me. Benoit isn't done with Malenko either.

Scotty Riggs vs. Buff Bagwell

Some things never change. We recap Buff's kayfabe murdering story about not wanting to job ever again because he doesn't care for the Powers That Be. This would be the REAL part in the middle of all the fake stuff you're seeing. I have no idea if Bagwell is a face or a heel here and I think that's the point. Riggs doesn't have the mirror anymore. They trade full nelsons to start until Buff breaks out and just stands in the corner.

Tenay promises us eight more tournament matches on Monday. Be still my

beating heart. Riggs gets taken down in a headlock but walks into a dropkick to send him into the ropes for more staring. Some leg work keeps Bagwell down and a high cross body gets two. Riggs looks stunned because, I kid you not, that was supposed to be the finish. The referee yells at Bagwell but he small packages Riggs for the pin with the referee slowly counting it. Bagwell's music doesn't play and THAT WAS A SHOOT. BECAUSE FANS KNOW WHAT THAT IS!

Rating: F. "Come see Buff Bagwell! He's bored and not trying because he doesn't agree to our scripted finishes! By paying us your money, you'll get to see him stand around and not care and barely put any effort into his matches!" Vince Russo was paid to think of this idea and then asked you to pay money to watch it play out on pay per view. Russo somehow convinced people he was a genius by doing this. Maybe he's smarter than we all are and we just can't keep up with him.

Mayhem ad.

Chris Benoit vs. Sid Vicious

Please....be gentle? Sid shoves him around to start and fires off some kicks to the ribs (Daniel Bryan has nothing to worry about) followed by a right hand to the jaw. Benoit comes back with strikes of his own and a middle rope dropkick for two but the kickout sends him flying out to the floor. Back in and Benoit flashes back to Fall Brawl by going after the leg. Why he thinks Sid will sell now is anyone's guess.

A few cannonballs down onto the leg look to set up the Figure Four but Sid kicks him right back to the floor. This time the big man follows him out and drops Benoit across the barricade before taking him back in for choking, choking, forearms to the chest and more choking.

Benoit's comeback is stopped cold by a big boot and we hit the camel clutch so Sid can rest after his hard day in the ring. A few slams get two each on Benoit but he pops up and grabs a German suplex. The Swan Dive misses but Sid is too spent to follow up, allowing Benoit to slap on the Crossface. You know Sid isn't tapping though so here are Saturn and Malenko for the DQ.

Rating: D+. So to clarity, Benoit is now the guy that puts up a good fight against the bigger names but is never allowed to be on their level. Thanks for wasting our time with the Bret tribute match and the US Title reigns, because it's pretty clear that none of it means anything just a few weeks later.

Sid powerbombs everyone to make it clear that no one is on his level. The Filthy Animals run out to beat up the pieces of the Revolution to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. I can't believe I'm saying this but Nitro was more entertaining than this. Thunder continues to be almost nothing beyond average and makes us sit through a ref bump in a Curly Bill vs. Stevie Ray match. The wrestling is bad, the stories range from nonsensical to previews for a Nitro way too complicated to keep track of. Yet somehow, I'd take this over the recent episodes. At least this is so insane that it's fascinating to watch in a way while the recent ones were a way to cure my sleepless nights.

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