

Thunder – November 4, 1999: Option B

Thunder

Date: November 4, 1999

Location: Cox Arena, San Diego, California

Attendance: 5,091

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Scott Hudson

It's a taped show in the Russo Era, which is the kind of thing nightmares are made of. I'm not sure anyone wants to see what's going on with this show but at least it's only two hours instead of three and there are no tournament matches in sight. Maybe it'll even make sense! Ok I got ahead of myself there. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Evan Karagias vs. Juventud Guerrera

This is the third shot at this match after having Bret and Sid interrupt the previous attempts. The fans aren't pleased with Juvy so he fires off kicks at Evan, only to charge into a boot and a powerslam for two. Well we're already closing in on the first match's time. Juvy escapes a suplex but fails on a rollup attempt, setting up a double clothesline to put both guys down.

Back up and Evan chops away, only to duck his head and get caught by a DDT. Juvy again stops to pose for the crowd and walks into a gorilla press hot shot. Evan misses a Lionsault but is still able to crotch Juvy on the top. They slug it out until Norman Smiley of all people comes out to interrupt, meaning the match doesn't end again.

Rating: C-. This could potentially be a running joke. Granted the joke would have a shelf life of about a month but there's potential there. Unfortunately I don't think that's the plan and they just don't care about the match and are using it as a backdrop for people to come out here and break the script for whatever they have to talk about. As usual,

Russo has so much to do that he can't fit it all into five hours of TV a week.

Norman asks Juvy (in Spanish) for a minute. Now, everyone knows that Norman is hardcore to the bone and is here to bring the Big Wiggle to the division. When you think of hardcore, you think of one man: NORman. Both cruiserweights beat him up but he eventually collapses, causing them to dropkick each other. With both guys down, IT'S WIGGLE TIME! Norman is WAY too talented for this but he's hilarious in the role.

Shane Douglas thinks the Revolution should allow new members if someone good is available. Saturn says even NFL teams screw up in their first draft picks sometimes.

Sid, in red pants and a hat that covers about 25% of his hair, is told that there's a change in booking tonight. His match: teaming with Saturn to face Rick Steiner and Chris Benoit. Oh that wacky Russo. Sid isn't happy but he'll do it.

Booker T. vs. Kaz Hayashi

Booker easily sends him into the corner to start but lets him out with a clean break. That Booker is a nice guy. A powerslam drops Hayashi but Booker poses too long (common problem tonight) and misses an elbow, allowing Kaz to fire off some low dropkicks. Why do I have a feeling that's the extent of his offense in this match?

T. heads outside where Kaz teases a dive to make Booker duck, only to hit the slingshot dive on the real attempt. Sensing his brother being in trouble, Stevie comes over and pounds on Kaz and of course the referee is all fine with this. Back in and Booker nails a Rock Bottom, followed by the 110th Street Slam and the missile dropkick for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was supposed to be a squash but it wound up being Harlem Heat having to team up to beat Kaz Hayashi. Booker really shouldn't be having issues like these against someone as low level as this. It's almost like they have no idea how to book someone in the midcard. Also, this is going to be the closest thing we have to a clean finish all night isn't it?

The Filthy Animals steal Doug Dillinger's wallet with Torrie offering a distraction. Again, we're supposed to cheer for these guys right?

Rick Steiner says he and Sid will be the last men standing in the tag match tonight. Ok then.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Coach Buzz Stern

That's Glacier if you've tried to block this from your memory. Coach actually takes over with a shoulder block and backbreaker to start as student Luther Biggs takes notes. That makes sense, as does the Animals taking his notebook. Hoodlums. Eddie nails a headscissors that sends Stern over to yell at the Animals, who promptly destroy him for about 30 seconds. Of course this doesn't matter because WCW referees are worthless, including allowing Kidman to hit the BK Bomb to set up the frog splash for the pin. Comedy match.

Biggs gets beaten down as well and the Animals steal Stern's shirt.

The challengers for the Tag Team Titles don't seem to get along but are ready to win the belts. Their names: Berlyn and Curly Bill. This really shouldn't surprise you.

Rick Steiner warns Benoit that it's going to be a long night. I reiterate: ok then.

Tournament recap.

The Revolution want to know why Sid is teaming with Saturn, but Sid just says he isn't happy. Were they running really short tonight?

Gene interviews La Parka of all people, with La Parka speaking Spanish about making it big in the United States and facing Buff Bagwell. That's pretty basic stuff, but the captioning is a huge rant about La Parka wearing his costume as a tribute to He-Man villain Skeletor because he has every episode on tape at his house and will defeat Bagwell tonight BY THE POWER OF GREYSKULL! I know I rip on Russo a lot (and with good reason), but this was hilarious.

Buff Bagwell vs. La Parka

After a quick recap of what these two have been through so far, we see that Buff isn't that into the match again. La Parka does his dance but throws in the Hogan hand to the ear to keep himself the most over unimportant luchador on the roster. An armdrag puts Buff down and they take more time to play to the crowd. After a lot of strutting from both men, La Parka slams him down a few times.

Buff tries to get the fans to cheer for La Parka, but the masked man gets ticked off. He tells Buff to come after him so Bagwell stomps away in the corner before kneeling in the middle of the ring so La Parka can kick him like he did on Nitro a few weeks back. This time though Buff ducks and stomps away, setting up the Blockbuster for the pin.

Rating: D. La Parka is rapidly becoming a favorite of mine, but this Buff storyline is killing whatever interest anyone else can dig up. It's all this "haha we're so smart that we're going to expose the business to make the sheep keep watching", even though the shows are getting almost unwatchable at times. But hey, people are talking! They're laughing and calling this show a disaster and it's killing any future potential, but they're talking!

Kidman is too preoccupied with Torrie being back to worry about defending the titles tonight. Usually that line would make me roll my eyes, but it's Berlyn and Curly Bill. Come on.

Tag Team Titles: Konnan/Kidman vs. Berlyn/Curly Bill

Guess who's defending. The intros take forever as all of the Animals have to jabber on like all those young 90s kids talked. I'll give them this on their entrances: going from rap to opera to country is quite the variety. Berlyn fires off a bunch of strikes at Kidman to start but Kidman ducks under some clotheslines and gets two off a cross body. A powerslam puts Kidman down but Berlyn is dumb enough to try a powerbomb.

Kidman has been practicing though as he punches down instead of breaking it up with the usual faceplant. Off to Konnan for his finishing sequence but he whips Berlyn into the ropes instead of going for the Tequila Sunrise, earning him a clothesline. Off to Bill who CLEANS HOUSE (!) but quickly wants the tag. That's not good with Berlyn, who knocks him out

with the loaded glove, setting up the Tequila Sunrise.

Rating: D-. So the Neo Nazi punched out the black cowboy so the Spanish speaker and his fellow thieves can retain their titles. Which part of that makes you scratch your head? That's a serious question actually as I'm really curious to see which one of them is the most bizarre. This is another stupid idea that just gets thrown out there for surprise value.

The Animals stomp Bill because they're good guys like that.

Gene brings out Lash Leroux, who says he doesn't trust Disco as far as he can throw his granddaddy's mule. Disco has his Cajunweight title and Lash is coming for it.

After a break, Gene brings out Van Hammer, who is the rumored newest member of the Revolution. "For the Revolution, I'll be a revelation." No you won't be. You suck too much.

Silver King vs. Lash Leroux

Feeling out process to start until Leroux gets taken down with a drop toehold. A standing Harlem Hangover gets two for King before Lash rolls under a spinwheel kick to send King down. It's time for the dance into the splits into a clothesline before they head outside where King whips him hard into the steps. Back in and Leroux comes right back with a high cross body, only to get kicked HARD in the head to put him down again.

King goes to the ropes for something like a springboard Whisper in the Wind splash for two. They head outside one more time and now it's King being sent into the barricade. Back in again and Lash gets taken down by another drop toehold but he avoids something like a Lionsault. A quick dropkick sets up the Whiplash for the pin.

Rating: C-. When did Silver King get this good at high flying? He was busting out some pretty insane stuff out there despite looking like a little butter ball. Lash isn't bad but he really doesn't have a character outside of being Cajun, and you can only rely on that accent for so long.

Benoit says Malenko is his prey now and he'll fight Sid and Steiner by himself if he has to.

Dean Malenko vs. Van Hammer

Hudson says three fourths of the Revolution is here. I'd assume he means Benoit is the missing link because WCW announcers are stupid. Hammer says he should be in the Revolution and says they can do this the easy way or the hard way. Dean decks him for general purposes and goes after the knee. Hammer limps around but actually catches Dean in a powerslam. He can't follow up though because of his knee and Dean nails him with a flying clothesline.

Since you need help with Van Hammer, Saturn gets in a knee shot of his own. Back up and Dean misses a charge, setting up a quick Flashback for two. We hit the cobra clutch but of course there's a ref bump (that should be the center square on Russo Bingo so far), allowing the rest of the team to crotch Hammer on the post. The Cloverleaf makes Hammer tap.

Rating: D. Gah they can't just let a match go simply can they? At some point the fans are going to catch on to all the ref bumps (by at some point I mean by the second one) and stop caring. Then again one of the big stories right now is THIS IS ALL FAKE AND I HATE THE BOOKING so I don't think insulting their intelligence is all that big of a priority.

Video showing how much the Powers That Be have been screwing with lower midcard guys and Madusa. This doesn't make the whole thing any better.

Battle Royal

Steve Regal, Dave Taylor, Chris Adams, Jerry Flynn, Prince Iaukea, Scotty Riggs, El Dandy, Chavo Guerrero

E freaking gads man. Apparently this is an Opportunity Knocks battle royal and the seven non-winners are on the bubble for roster spots and the winner gets a golden opportunity on Nitro. Why do I have a feeling that's code for getting squashed by Goldberg or getting nothing because WCW won't remember it?

Oh and just because we need one, Hudson says this isn't a good time "to go up north." This is from November 1999. The WWF had been a national promotion for what.....at least twelve years now? And yes I get that it's

their headquarters but it's another stupid insider line that most fans won't get and another reason why WCW is stupid.

It's a huge brawl to start with El Dandy being thrown out just after the bell. The Brits get in a fight (it's expensive living in England) and Chavo takes advantage by knocking out Adams. Regal responds by kicking him low before Riggs, Flynn and Iaukea are all out in a hurry, leaving us with Regal, Taylor and Guerrero. The Brits get together but Taylor clotheslines Regal by mistake but gets eliminated anyway. A quick catapult sends Regal out to give Chavo the win as the announcers say there are seven roster spots open.

Rating: F. I don't often do this, but I'm going to give a spoiler for this coming Nitro: Chavo wins nothing. He goes into the Powers That Be's office and asks for his opportunity. Russo says that the opportunity for Chavo is selling Amway and throws him out. I knew something like that was going to happen as soon as this match started not because I read a spoiler, but because that's how WCW works these days. Total waste of time and a nothing match.

Rick and Sid talk about doing the finger poke ending. That's referenced and used WAY too often.

Sid Vicious/Perry Saturn vs. Chris Benoit/Rick Steiner

Let's get this over with. Asya and Saturn come out, with Saturn saying that's one fourth of the team. If Asya counts as a member, it's one half. If Asya doesn't count as a member, it's one third. Again, WCW announcers are all stupid. It's in their contracts. Here's the opening of the match: Rick drops down for a cover but small packages Sid for two (just like Hall did on Monday). Sid responds by powerbombing him (hopefully ending their friendship) and leaving, meaning it's Saturn vs. Benoit. Somehow this match might now suck!

They slug it out in the corner with Benoit getting the better of it with chops and a back elbow to stop a running Saturn. A backbreaker gets two on Saturn but he pops back up with a t-bone suplex. Benoit has to raise his knees to block a Lionsault and Rick gets on the apron for a tag.

Thankfully Benoit is a wrestling fan and doesn't let him in....and Steiner blasts him with a clothesline because WE NEED RICK STEINER IN OUR LIVES! Steiner suplexes Saturn too, just so we know he's way better than both guys, and leaves. The Crossface doesn't work so Benoit rolls some Germans instead. The Swan Dive misses but Malenko comes in for the DQ anyway.

Rating: C. This was one of the biggest messes I've seen in a good while but it was mostly Benoit vs. Saturn for four minutes so I can't complain. Yet again we have more overbooking because Russo is so sure we need it, meaning we get nonsense like Sid getting a paycheck for 45 seconds of "work" and Rick Steiner laying out everyone because he's Rick Steiner and therefore has to be dominant. Oh geez we're getting Sid vs. Steiner now aren't we?

The Filthy Animals run in to attack everyone to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This was actually a pretty watchable show when they let the wrestlers wrestle. They kept things moving for the most part which is the best thing they could do on a show like this. It's kind of nice to have something almost completely unrelated from the title tournament stuff, but it's kind of terrifying that this was their second best batch of ideas.

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