

Thunder – February 23, 2000: Ten Years Too Late

Thunder

Date: February 23, 2000

Location: Lawlor Events Center, Reno, Nevada

Attendance: 3,777

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan

After Monday it's very clear that this is the old guys/NWO (assuming you still think of them as the NWO) show. The wrestling has taken a backseat to "let's see how simple a feud the old guys can put together" and it's really not working too well. There have been a few glimmers of light with some young guys getting some upgrades lately and hopefully they continue tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick recap from Monday.

Mike Graham talks to Kevin Nash but Nash's memory is screwed up from the guitar shot. He doesn't remember that he's Commissioner but likes the idea once Graham reminds him.

Opening sequence.

Evan Karagias vs. Fit Finlay

Finlay breaks up the performance. There's going to be a long list of heels for doing that. Finlay quickly slugs Karagias outside and beats up the other two to break up the interference attempt. Shannon's chair shot has no effect so Evan takes the Regal Roll in the aisle. A trashcan lid knocks the chair out of Evan's hands so Shane hits Fit in the back with the big green circle. Back in and Shannon hits a dropkick from behind, only to have the band screw up, allowing Finlay to tombstone Evan for the pin. One more time, please, TELL US IF IT'S HARDCORE.

Nash and the nurses are in the dressing room and they remind him that he's the Commissioner. If he's the Commissioner, the nurses need to call

Batman because the Joker is on the loose. If that doesn't work, call Bruce Wayne because he always knows where Batman is. I'm trying to hate this. I want to hate this. I should hate this.....but this is so stupid and Nash is so funny when he's trying to be that I'm digging it. I mean, yeah the fans are going to run away as fast as they can, but would you rather see Kevin Nash thinking he's Commissioner Gordon from the 1960s Batman show or watch a Lex Luger match?

Jarrett says Sid loses at Uncensored.

Buff hits on Daffney like he did with Symphony on Monday, earning him a scream to the face.

Here's Ric Flair, holding Hogan's weightlifting belt, for a chat. Flair rips on the town and calls a fan fat boy because he's Ric Flair and how can he not say those things? Flair mentions whipping Hogan on Monday and talks about Luger being oh so amazing. My goodness does 1988 mean nothing anymore? Since Flair has the belt and Luger has a match with Sid tonight, Ric wants an opponent. This brings out....Vampiro? As WCW races to find out how old Vampiro is, he agrees to give Flair a beating tonight. I know Vampiro isn't the most popular guy in the world, but a veteran fighting a young guy is very, very good.

La Parka's dubbed voice talks about how he's back. Gene: "Not this again."

David Flair is annoyed at Daffney for Buff hitting on her.

Nash thinks he needs to call Alfred....but gets Ralphus. Oh yeah this is going to be good.

Berlyn vs. La Parka

Sure why not. Berlyn rants about how much American sucks and how he can't wait to get out of Reno. I'll take cheap heat over no heat. La Parka does the chair dance but Berlyn doesn't like dancing gimmicks and dropkicks him down. Fans: "USA!" La Parka tries a DDT but gets countered into a German legsweep, only to have the masked man go up top and hit a corkscrew dive for the pin in less than a minute. The TV version doesn't

make it any more logical.

Bagwell blames Kidman for the KidCam footage earlier tonight. Kidman says the camera was stolen....and doesn't do anything else. In a normal world, that would set up a match but here, it sets up a commercial.

Shane challenges Tank Abbott to a fight. Actually Shane is now calling himself Mike Jones (his real name). Big Al and the knife aren't mentioned, which is probably better for everyone.

Buff Bagwell vs. David Flair

David gives Daffney the crowbar and tells her to shut up. That's not nice. A quick slam puts Buff down so he comes back and punches David in the face a few times. Buff nails a clothesline and punches Flair in the face to break up a sunset flip. I'm really not sure who I'm supposed to be cheering for here and I'm really not sure I care anyway. David loses his shirt and here come Maestro and Symphony because their thing on Monday is turning into a feud. Daffney yells at the two of them and holds up the crowbar, which David is sent into head first, setting up a reverse DDT to give Bagwell the pin.

Post match Bagwell beats up Maestro and Symphony. Again, who am I supposed to cheer for here?

SuperBrawl clips. Clips, not stills.

Tank Abbott vs. Mike Jones

It's Virgil, who gets punched out in about a minute. I don't think the details in between are all that important.

Ralphus comes in to see Nash (despite not recognizing him on the phone). The big man (Nash that is) thinks Sid is the Joker. Ralphus: "Concussion?" Nurse: "Bingo." Nash: "B-I-N-G-O and Bingo was his name-o!" Dang it I laughed. Why did I have to laugh?

Vampiro vs. Ric Flair

Please don't waste him. Please don't waste him. Please don't waste him.

The fact that I'm begging for Vampiro to look good is a very telling sign. They start slow with Vampiro hitting an early shoulder before grabbing a legbar out of nowhere, sending Flair off to the ropes. Vampiro flips out of a knee crusher and hits some clotheslines. Flair bails to the floor as we're firmly in his formula. Back in and Flair gets in a thumb to the eye to set up the chops in the corner.

That earns Flair a spinwheel kick as this is going exactly as it needed to. The guillotine legdrop misses though and we've got a knee injury. My goodness Flair has a great luck streak of opponents coming up with a bad knee against him. Some kicks to the leg set up a Figure Four but Vampiro small packages him for two. Cue Luger and Liz to make sure Vampiro is put in his place. Vampiro kicks him down again but Luger hits him in the knee with a ball bat, setting up the Figure Four for the win.

Rating: C. Well...it was an improvement. Notice that Flair is more than willing to let Vampiro get in a ton of offense before the ending, making it a far more even match. That's the key thing that so many wrestlers never got: you can take a beating and even take a loss, because if you're someone at or even near Flair's level, you can get a single win or cut a single promo and no one is going to remember this. For Vampiro, it's one of the biggest matches of his career. Why almost no one else ever got that is beyond me, but it would have done wonders for WCW.

Vampiro gets a big beatdown post match.

Kidman and Booker are a team now.

Vampiro won the match by DQ due to Luger and Flair beating him down. It's better than nothing at least. For some reason Finlay jumps Vampiro from behind.

We recap Dustin Rhodes turning on Funk on Nitro.

Here's Dustin to explain his actions, but first he has to tell a fan to shut up. If Funk respects him so much, why did he do what he did on Monday? He was born and bred into this business to be great but all he wound up with was a broken home and a closet full of gold costumes. If you don't like his new attitude, you can all CENSORED off because he

doesn't care anymore. Dustin remembers all the nights that Terry put his daddy in the hospital.

Dusty isn't here anymore but Dustin is here to kill Funk if he messes with the Rhodes Family. He can't wait to light up a victory cigar and put it out on Funk...who appears on the screen. If Dustin wants to rekindle the Rhodes vs. Funk feud then so be it, because both Dusty and Dustin are big piles of manure. Dustin beats up some production guys because he's an EVIL cowboy. It was a pretty good promo, but it's setting up a match against Terry Funk, which defeats the purpose.

This Week In WCW Motorsports.

Mickie Jay gets permission to beat up Slick Johnson. Why is this still a thing? Seriously, who thinks that a referee feud is worth anything? If it isn't Nick Patrick or Earl Hebner or Charles Robinson not as Little Naitch, who cares?

Cruiserweight Title: The Artist Formerly Known As Prince Iaukea vs. Crowbar

Prince is defending, but first we get to hear Paisley talk about what a genius he is. Right. Anyway, after Crowbar lays his namesake gently in the corner, Prince slaps him in the face to get things going. Iaukea slowly stomps away because that's what fans want out of the cruiserweight division. An attempt at a toss over the ropes doesn't work though and Crowbar headscissors him out to the floor.

Crowbar hits a splash off the apron but Charles Robinson grabs Crowbar's crowbar to keep this fair. Back in and the middle rope DDT is countered into a northern lights suplex for two on the champion but the girls get involved to flirt with the opposite guys. Cue a catfight with Daffney losing her wig, allowing Iaukea to hit a superkick and the middle rope DDT (read as a forearm to the back) to retain the title.

Rating: D+. Iaukea reminds me of the old World Junior Heavyweight Champions from the early 1980s. They didn't wrestle anything like the cruiserweight style and were really just wrestlers at a lower weight having matches, which doesn't make for entertaining matches most of the

time. Crowbar continues to be a hidden gem and likely destined to be cannon fodder for Brian Knobbs.

Sid is ready for the main event against Luger.

The Wall vs. Disco Inferno

2XS attacks the Mamalukes in the back, leaving Disco all alone. Panic sets in and Disco tries to offer Wall a handicap title match but gets kicked in the face instead. A press slam drops Disco again but he avoids a charge in the corner. Disco hammers away with a clothesline, punches, stomps and a neckbreaker but runs right into the chokeslam for the pin. Wall wins again, which is a good sign before some old midcarder beats him.

Luger and Liz are ready for Sid. For some reason Luger calls himself Sid.

Booker/Kidman vs. Harris Twins

So much for letting this build up. The Leave it to Beaver music is gone, somehow making Booker even lamer. Ron throws Kidman around to start until Kidman scores with a dropkick and Bodog. That's about it for Ron selling though as he throws Kidman outside instead of trying to do anything interesting. To be fair it's getting him the biggest push of his career so why change things up? Back in and a side slam sets up the tag off to Don, who whips Kidman across the ring twice and tags back out.

Kidman finally counters a slam with a headscissors and makes the hot ta....oh wait I can't say hot for Booker after the lawsuit. Uh....Kidman makes the tag with absolutely no temperature relevance whatsoever and Booker cleans house. A Rock Bottom plants Don and sets up the ax kick but Kidman gets laid out on the floor, allowing an H Bomb to pin Booker.

Rating: D+. So let me make sure I've got this straight: Booker has been in a feud about the letter T. and Kidman has been having a semi-featured feud with Vampiro and now they're teaming together for a glorified squash against the Harris Twins, who are lackeys for a midcard champion chasing the World Title. Welcome to WCW in 2000.

Video on Regal vs. Duggan for the TV Title this Saturday on Saturday

Night. That sounds like a way to write Regal out of the company.

Total Package vs. Sid Vicious

Non-title and the NWO is watching from the back. Sid shoves Luger around with ease and throws him to the floor for the worst ram into the steps I've ever seen. There must have been at least ten inches between Lex's face and the steps but he sold it anyway. These guys just do not care anymore and it's very obvious. Back in and Lex wins a test of strength but Sid fights up as heroes always do. The powerbomb is loaded up but Flair runs in to slug away on Sid for no effect. Luger gets chokeslammed but Liz gives him the ball bat to break up a powerbomb for the DQ. Yeah that Flair interference wasn't enough for a bell.

Rating: D. Maybe in 1990 but it doesn't work here. This was another lame main event match between the "draws" as Luger continues to be one of the worst top stars I've seen in a long time. All he does are forearms and punches plus the motion for the Rack. Luger and Flair are decent as a heel team but it stops as soon as Lex gets in the ring.

Flair and Luger beat Sid up and the NWO (you can tell it's them as they now have an NWO sign in their room) is stopped by some referees. Jarrett guitars Mickie Jay to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was still bad, but it was at least better. There are some things going on in here like the Flair vs. Vampiro match and the KidCam stuff, but of course there's more than enough bad bringing it back down. The Dustin vs. Funk feud could work better if Funk could actually work a match instead of a brawl, but at least there's something new there. I'll take small glimmers where I can get them, but this was just a few steps better than the drek they've been putting on recently.