

Thunder – November 1, 2000: Much Like TNA

Thunder

Date: November 1, 2000

Location: Bren Events Center, Irvine, California

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Mark Madden, Tony Schiavone

We're out of October and things are....well they certainly exist. For a few more months at least. Scott Steiner is still insane and chasing Booker T.'s World Title but more importantly WCW has made it very clear that Mike Awesome, the athletic freak, has no future as a main event player. It's a good thing they caught that problem before it became serious. Let's get to it.

3 Count vs. Jung Dragons

There's almost no way this can't be good. It won't mean anything but it should be entertaining at least. Shannon doesn't seem to like Evan hogging the mic but this point is dropped as we see Leia from behind to make the announcers way too happy. They don't even bother waiting on the dives this time with everyone going nuts to start.

Jamie-San accidentally takes out his partners though until things settle down to Shannon vs. Yang with the former dropping a nice backsplash. It's off to Jamie who misses a springboard legdrop, allowing the tag to Evan. This is treated as a very sudden issue in the band because that's how plot devices work in wrestling. Yang pokes Evan in the eyes before Jamie accidentally clotheslines his partner. A double flapjack puts Jamie down but Evan tags himself in to steal the pin.

Rating: C. I can always watch these guys do their high spots and the storyline breakup is fine, but stop hammering it in like this. Would it have killed you to set this up over the course of a few weeks? I know it would have cut into Jeff Jarrett calling people Slappy but it might have worked a little better than inventing it in one night.

As you might expect, after the match 3 Count throws Evan out and Leia ejects Jamie-San. Jamie's mask is ripped off to reveal....Jamie Noble, who isn't a thing yet. Jamie and Evan look at each other, possibly setting up a third team. Why not at this point? It's not like they're doing anything else.

Nash and Palumbo say Stasiak couldn't cut it, suggesting that he's off the team. That's not a bad idea actually.

Bam Bam Bigelow attacks Crowbar, who just happened to be standing there waiting while a camera was on him.

Elix Skipper vs. Lieutenant Loco

This is still fallout from the parody and has nothing to do with the Misfits getting back the US Title or Major Gunns. Loco starts fast with clotheslines and a dropkick because what else is a midcard cruiserweight supposed to do. A pumphandle suplex gets two on Skipper but the Matrix is enough to let him take Loco out to the floor.

We finally start flying around with Skipper hitting a corkscrew plancha, only to have Loco suplex him again inside. Gunns finally does something besides show off her shorts but gets caught trying a low blow. The distraction lets Skipper load up the ring which goes upside Loco's head during a sunset flip to give Elix the easy pin.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but it's cool to see Chavo getting better and better every week. Skipper still doesn't quite get the finer points but he's more than athletic enough to make up for it. If nothing else though, I'll take a heel beating a face instead of doing all the insane and screwy stuff we're used to around here.

Chuck Palumbo vs. Shawn Stasiak

Nash is on commentary of course and talks about how this is going to settle all of the issues in the Thrillers. Actually there's no match as we cut to the back and see Palumbo out cold. Nash is ticked but Stasiak claims innocence.

Post break, Palumbo gets checked out while the rest of the Thrillers

promise to take out Stasiak tonight.

Bigelow says he's back and wants Goldberg, only to have Crowbar attack him for earlier.

Video on Goldberg vs. Bigelow. First, did anyone want to see Goldberg vs. Bigelow again? Second, how convenient that they had this ready at a moment's notice.

Mayhem video.

Boogie Knights vs. Rey Mysterio/Kidman

Konnan is on commentary. Kidman and Wright get things going with a pretty sweet technical sequence that you would expect from these two. A nice headscissors sends Wright down and it's off to the partners. For some reason Rey only throws a couple of kicks before it's back to Kidman who gets beaten down in the corner. The Knights work him over for a bit as Konnan babbles in what is supposed to be English.

Some knees to the back have Kidman in trouble and it's time for a surfboard. As usual that only lasts a few seconds so it's off to an abdominal stretch for some additional time. Kidman hiptosses out after Disco gets caught holding Wright's hand and it's off to Rey as things speed up. Everything breaks down and Disco gets crotched in the corner, setting up the Bronco Buster. The Kid Crusher puts Wright away.

Rating: C. As not great as the booking has been, WCW has actually been putting together a very nice tag division around this time. You have the Thrillers on top and Kronik as the monsters with teams like these two filling in the extra time. Now you even have the three teams from the opener and the thing is really stacking up. Factor in the Harris Twins disappearing again and everyone wins.

Crowbar wants to fight Bigelow tonight. I thought we had covered that already.

Sgt. AWALL vs. Lance Storm

Actually never mind as Storm has found a replacement.

Sgt. AWALL vs. Meng

Of course it's a brawl to start with only AWALL selling anything. Meng pounds him into the corner but gets taken down with a clothesline. For once Tony freaking out over this offense makes sense. A low blow stops AWALL again and it's already time for a table. AWALL pops back up and chokeslams Meng through it for a big upset.

Storm yells at Meng post match and gets the Tongan Death Grip.

Vampiro and Jeff Jarrett are ready for the main event.

This week's big interview is with Shawn Stasiak of all people because WCW has no idea what these things are supposed to be about. The interview is listed as from yesterday, which is either Sunday or Tuesday depending on how much you're expected to listen to the commentary. Stasiak gets right to the point by talking about how he didn't train at the Power Plant (thanks for finally acknowledging that) and was always the outcast. Nash may be a great talent (he is) but Stasiak doesn't like this stuff from Palumbo.

This week on Thunder, there's going to be a big surprise, which may or may not have been the attack which may or may not have been Stasiak in the first place. Stasiak wants to be the first former Thriller to be the World Champion. Given that none of them have yet, this isn't impossible actually. Ignore the fact that Stasiak isn't a wrestler anymore and hasn't been for fourteen years or so.

Lance Storm vs. Norman Smiley

They better not screw this up. Storm can't do his usual yelling so it's National Anthem time. Storm starts with a full nelson for a nice series of reversals, capped off by the start of a Big Wiggle. Oh how I missed that one. Norman's sunset flip sets off a pinfall reversal sequence before Storm gets in a hot shot to really take over. Storm starts in with his usual well done stuff, including a suplex and legsweep before having his leg lock broken up with ease. There's something so cool about watching two guys who are this skilled on the mat trading holds.

Norman climbs the middle rope for a jumping back elbow and gets two off a rollup. That's enough wrestling though because IT'S WIGGLE TIME. Storm gets two off a northern lights suplex and they hit the mat for even more fast counters. A piledriver doesn't work as Smiley backdrops Storm off, only to get caught in the Maple Leaf for the submission out of nowhere.

Rating: B-. I'm a sucker for this kind of stuff as they kept it moving fast enough to avoid being boring but showed off a lot of technical stuff at the same time. It would be nice if this was setting up a match against someone Storm could work off of but why do that when we can have Hugh G. Rection instead? Also can we get Smiley some more TV time? Would that be asking too much?

Meng has to come out and break up the Maple Leaf. This would mean more if he hadn't gotten pinned in two minutes earlier tonight.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Crowbar

Bigelow drives him into the corner and blasts Crowbar with a hard clothesline. If there's one thing Bigelow can do, it's hit smaller people very hard. They head outside for dueling whips into the barricade with Crowbar actually getting the better of it. Something like a DDT gets two on Bigelow but he pops back up for Greetings From Asbury Park and the fast pin.

Booker isn't happy with never pinning Scott Steiner so he's willing to have another rematch at Mayhem with Steiner getting to pick the stipulation.

Jeff Jarrett/Vampiro vs. Mike Awesome/Sting

Jarrett doesn't get why Ric Flair has been named CEO when he's the only one with the stroke around here. Of course it's a brawl to start with Awesome throwing Vampiro over with a belly to belly while the other two fight on the floor. The pairings switch places with Sting getting the better of Jarrett off some right hands in the corner. Unfortunately the announcers make sure to bring up the Halloween Havoc match for reasons I'll never understand.

Jarrett backtracks up the aisle before sneaking back in for a cheap shot on Sting as a tag match breaks out amid the fighting. A double back elbow gets two on Sting and Vampiro kicks him in the face for two. The announcers bring up Sting flying off the video screen a few months back as it occurs to me that Nitro and Thunder are shot very differently.

On Thunder, the camera is mostly from ringside instead of the standard hard camera. It actually makes the shows feel different, aside from the fact that nothing happens on Thunder. Jarrett slaps on the required sleeper until Sting breaks free and makes the tag to Mike. Everything breaks down and Sting uses the ball bat to block a guitar shot. The Awesome Bomb is enough to pin Vampiro a few seconds later. STRIKE UP THAT 70s ELEVATOR MUSIC!

Rating: C+. This was about as good as a main event tag is going to get at this point and that's really not saying much. After Sunday's disaster it's clear that they need to go somewhere new with all four guys but here we are again combining two feuds that aren't interesting in the first place. At least the Awesome vs. Vampiro match was good but Sting vs. Jarrett needs to stop now.

Overall Rating: C+. Definitely a better show for the most part here as you can (in theory at least) see where they're going for Mayhem. I'm not wild on a lot of the booking but that's almost always the case with WCW. The important thing here is a lot of the action was good and a higher standard than what WCW had most of the time. Much like TNA today, when they cut out the nonsense and just wrestle, the shows are MUCH easier to sit through.

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