

Thunder – January 31, 2001: I Think I Feel A Stupid Plan Coming On

Thunder

Date: January 31, 2001

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone

I'm running out of things to say about these intros. We have less than two months to go in this company and it's most likely a skippable B-show with a main event between two midcarders who don't have an interesting feud. Or maybe a tag match with two members of a heel stable against a semi-regular tag team. I would offer a suggestion of a great cruiserweight match with two people being elevated to new heights but that's not the WCW way. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday's events, including a big focus on the return of the Rhodes Family.

Cat is willing to give Rick Steiner a US Title shot at SuperBrawl, provided Ric Flair doesn't find out about it. Good thing he's just the CEO and doesn't watch the show or look at the pay per view card. It's always cool to see wrestlers act like a fan.

Opening sequence.

Billy Kidman vs. Shane Helms

Helms goes straight at him to start until charging into a raised boot in the corner. Kidman tries a wheelbarrow suplex but gets flipped out to the floor, allowing Shane to hit a good looking dive off the top. They head into the crowd with Kidman hitting a quick dive off the barricade before taking Shane back inside. Helms grabs a fireman's carry into a facebuster before a running neckbreaker drops Kidman again.

A middle rope fist drop ala Jerry Lawler gets two for Shane and for some

reason Kidman reaches out under the bottom rope for a tag. Helms' front facelock slows things down a bit and a chinlock makes it even worse. Back up and Kidman grabs a belly to back suplex into a side slam for two.

In a change of pace, Shane grabs a double underhook and pulls back on the arms for a submission attempt. The hold is broken with Kidman scoring off a dropkick and backdrop for two. Kidman's superplex is broken up though and Shane gets two off a top rope sunset flip (that's always cool looking). The Kid Crusher is countered into the Vertebreaker but Kidman flips out of that as well. He takes Shane into the corner where Shane flips out again, setting up the Vertebreaker for the big upset.

Rating: B. As usual the cruiserweights are just awesome around this time and it almost never gets boring watching them. I've been digging the heck out of Chavo lately but it's really time for someone to take the title off of him and turn the belt into something more valuable. Helms is the best bet and I'm almost sure this is the launching pad for him to move up to the title scene.

Here are Scott Steiner and Midajah with the champ insulting everyone he can think of but focusing on Dustin Rhodes, who was stupid for not taking the sure thing on Monday. Steiner even rips up Dustin's contract, which is at least better than eating it. Cue Kronik to ask about a fight but Totally Buff jump them from behind. Rick Steiner tries to make the save but gets guitared by Jeff Jarrett. Kronik takes the real beating and I'm sure this means Luger/Bagwell vs. Kronik for the third time this month on Thunder.

Post break, Flair makes Jarrett vs. Rick Steiner and Totally Buff vs. Kronik.

Ron Harris vs. Lash Leroux

Don has a doctor's note but the referee has a solution to prevent more twin magic (which implies that someone actually watches these matches, which makes me skeptical): drawing an X on Ron's hand with a marker....which the Harrises take away before the bell rings. Ron pounds Lash with the intensity you've come to expect from a Harris Brother match.

Lash quickly dropkicks him to the floor and it's already time for the switch as Don throws the marker back in with the referee thinking it fell out of his pocket. Well to be fair the referees are often rather stupid so play it up a bit. Don gives him the H Bomb for the pin. Now why do I have a feeling no one is going to watch this and say, suspend Don from ringside?

Some guy laughs at Kwee Wee and tells him to crawl back into the closet he crawled out of.

Chavo Guerrero says he needs a better challenger than Rey Mysterio. As he's talking, Hugh Morrus sneaks in and jumps Wall.

Norman Smiley wants to make sure Glacier will have his back and is given an affirmative.

Chuck Palumbo and Sean O'Haire think Mark Jindrak and Shawn Stasiak are just jealous of the Tag Team Titles.

Ric Flair gives Mike Sanders a match with Konnan and tells him to come up with something dirty.

Norman Smiley vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

There's no Glacier to start so Norman is even more freaked out than usual. Norman makes the mistake of trying to work on Bigelow's arm but actually takes him down. Unfortunately there's not much of a way around Bigelow's power as he shoves Norman to the floor, allowing him to look around for Glacier. Back in and the beating continues as Glacier comes out, just in time to see Norman take Greetings From Asbury Park for the pin.

Post match and post Bigelow leaving, Glacier says he'll always have Norman's back.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Rick Steiner

Jeff wants the countout like he got over Page on Monday but Steiner is, you know, here. Steiner takes it to the floor to avoid having to wrestle, only to have Shane Douglas come out in a hurry. The chain shot hits Jeff

by mistake and Steiner gets in a bad looking Death Valley Driver for the fast pin.

Kwee Wee vs. Scotty O

Scotty is a Power Plant guy who would wind up in OVW for a long time and the person who laughed at Kwee Wee earlier. Kwee Wee slaps him in the face and it's Angry Alan time with something like Dalton Castle's Bang-A-Rang planting Scotty. A jawbreaker doesn't get Scotty out of trouble as Kwee Wee folds him in half with a belly to back. Some hard shots to the head and a face plant set up a German suplex as this is a total squash. A piledriver puts Scotty away.

Rating: D. Kwee Wee continues to be an interesting "what if" case as he certainly had some in ring abilities and good charisma but he's stuck with one of the gimmicks that are just going to cripple your career. Even a regular haircut and dark tights would have done him a world of good but there was no way this was ever going to be taken seriously.

Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo vs. Mamalukes

Non-title. Palumbo and Vito, in street clothes instead of his gear, get things going before Johnny comes in for a quick double team to take over. A double spinebuster plants Sean for two with Palumbo making the save. Vito grabs a swinging neckbreaker followed by a gorilla press from Johnny to send O'Haire flying but he hot shots the Bull to take over for the first time. It really is amazing what happens when you get rid of Jindrak and Stasiak and let the two more talented wrestlers represent the team.

O'Haire doesn't quite jump all the way over Palumbo as he tries to land on Johnny's back (more on Palumbo's head) but it looked good in theory. Everything breaks down and it's O'Haire elbowing Johnny in the face on the floor. The Jungle Kick to Vito sets up the Seanton Bomb for the pin.

Rating: C. Not bad here as the Mamalukes are really gelling as the jobbers to the stars tag team. There's just enough there that you could buy them pulling off an upset and making this non-title made it even more possible. O'Haire and Palumbo need more seasoning as a team but you can see the chemistry there.

Post match Jindrak and Stasiak run in and want a title shot. The champs agree and get beaten down.

Scott Steiner, Jarrett and Flair are off to jail, presumably to annoy Page.

Sanders gives Reno his match against Konnan and tells him to tap out in a hurry. I think I feel a stupid plan coming on.

Totally Buff say they beat Goldberg and he beat Kronik so they can beat Kronik. You know who else beat Kronik? YOU TWO, YOU PISTACHIO HEADS!

Konnan vs. Reno

Konnan calls him Reno Riggins in a joke that probably goes over 99% of the fans' heads. They trade arm holds to start but Konnan does a nice roll over into a quickly broken ankle lock. The rolling lariat drops Reno and something like Kofi Kingston's SOS gets two. Konnan grabs the Tequila Sunrise and Reno taps before the hold is on.

Sanders comes out to say things aren't always what they seem. Reno hits a quick Roll of the Dice. Wait so they just gave up a clean submission for the sake of hitting a move after the match? Indeed, that was a stupid plan.

Totally Buff vs. Kronik

For the third time this month. Bagwell takes the heel beating you would expect him to take to start off with Kronik hitting all of their standard power moves, including a big gorilla press from Adams. He always was good at that. Luger comes in for an elbow to Clark's jaw but a tag back to Adams breaks everything down. Buff saves Lex from High Times, only to have Animal blast Clark with a chair so Adams can take the Blockbuster for the fast pin.

Rating: D. And you thought the Usos vs. the Club was overdone. This is another match that I never see again but in this case I never wanted to see it in the first place. Animal interfering wasn't shocking and it keeps him from falling asleep in his soup for another week. Bad match of course, but I do like Adams' press slams.

Flair and company arrive at the jail but Page made bail an hour ago. Ok pause for a second. WCW acknowledges that Nitro and Thunder are taped on the same nights. Now did Page get arrested on Monday and make bail Wednesday or did he get arrested and make bail less than three hours later? Anyway they go into Page's cell for no apparent reason and find a letter he's left them to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. There's some good stuff here and the wrestling is enough to carry it over a lot of the really uninteresting storyline stuff but the show still doesn't work that well. There's only so much you can do when your main story is so all over the place and Page is leaving letters in prison while Nash is just not here. If they threw someone younger into the main event scene it might be ok but as it stands they're destroying the other good stuff they having going on.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>