

Thunder – March 14, 2001: That's So Thunder

Thunder

Date: March 14, 2001

Location: Knoxville Civic Coliseum, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

The long nightmare is almost over as we only have two shows left, including this one. This is the final show before Greed and things aren't exactly looking up. Monday's show was full of old guys having bad matches and not enough build to anything other than Sunday's main event. Let's get to it.

Nitro montage.

Cruiserweight Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: 3 Count vs. Rey Mysterio/Billy Kidman

The winners get Elix Skipper and Kid Romeo at Greed. Kidman and Moore start things off with a headscissors putting Kidman down. Moore misses a slingshot hilo though and it's Rey getting two off a moonsault. Evan comes in and gets taken down with a springboard ankle scissors (or an ankle lock according to Tenay) but he plants Rey with a spinebuster for two.

The double teaming slows things down for a bit until Rey 619s around the ropes and tags in Kidman to speed things right back up. The villains get Kidman to the floor for a whip into the barricade followed by a suplex/high crossbody combo. It's impressive when a team can do the high flying stuff and still be heels. Evan springboards into a dropkick to the ribs and the hot tag brings in Rey to clean house.

Karagias puts him down and a 450 gets two on Rey. Bottoms Up plants Kidman (illegal) for two with Mysterio making the save, followed by a Bronco Buster to Shannon. A middle rope seated senton (not Thesz Press Mike) drops Evan and Kidman dives onto everyone. Back in and Kidman holds

Moore up in a wheelbarrow suplex for a springboard missile dropkick to give Rey the pin and the spot in the finals.

Rating: C+. Standard high flying tag match here but at least the ending was a unique move. They flew around for about ten minutes and popped the crowd to open the show and that's really all you can ask for from the cruiserweights at this point. The downside to all this though: the tournament final won't have any of the six cruiserweights who have broken their backs for months to get the cruiserweight tag matches over. Those matches were almost all for nothing, as is the case way too often in WCW. Skipper and Romeo come out but are quickly dispatched.

Disco Inferno and Alex Wright are eating lunch with Disco stealing food off Alex's plate. That's enough for Wright and the team seems to be done.

Here's Diamond Dallas Page to say he's still standing and ready to take the title from Scott on Sunday. This brings out Dustin Rhodes, who says he's here on Ric Flair's orders. Cue Ric, Jeff Jarrett and Rick Steiner to the video screen to say Scott is off tonight (because who needs him to sell a pay per view on the go home show) and Cat/Booker T. are both gone. Therefore, the main event will be Paige/Dustin vs. Jeff/Rick, which we saw just a month ago. With the three of them on the screen, here are Rick and Jeff to attack Page and Dustin from behind. The heels are quickly cleared out.

Jason Jett vs. Alex Wright

Wright is ticked off and hammers away before getting two off a powerslam. Jett sends him into the corner and gets two of his own with an enziguri. A standing moonsault lets Jett show off even more but he misses a charge in the corner. Wright gets two of his own off a good looking spinwheel kick and a top rope superplex for the same.

Alex stays aggressive by knocking Jason outside with a forearm, only to have his suplex countered into a small package. Off to a modified abdominal stretch on the mat to keep Jason in trouble. Back up and Jason crotches him on the top before hitting a Tajiri handspring elbow. Jett's release suplex slam (the Crash Landing) is enough for the upset pin.

Rating: C+. Jett had some potential and looked like a new star in the making but unfortunately time caught up with him. You would think he would have gotten some time in the WWF but for some reason it never went anywhere. At least someone like Wright is putting him over here so they were kind of trying.

We get some more from Buff's "documentary" with Flair and Lex Luger wondering who attacked Midajah. Ric changes gears in a hurry and puts Buff, Luger, Palumbo and O'Haire in a four way elimination.

Video on Booker T. vs. Rick Steiner.

Here's Shawn Stasiak for a match and he has Stacy with him. Before we get to his opponents, Stacy has to talk about how awesome Shawn is. Shawn on the other hand insults the fans for being fat and tattooed because he didn't learn a thing on Monday. Cue Reno to say he's bald and tattooed so let's have a match.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Reno

Stasiak takes over to start which goes against the rules of a wrestler answering a challenge. A side slam and gutwrench suplex get two each for Shawn as we hear about Reno's pit fighting career. Reno stops a charge in the corner and grabs a suplex for two of his own. They head outside with Stasiak taking over. I guess a pit isn't as deadly as a padded section of floor next to the ring. A top rope clothesline gets two for Shawn and he quickly escapes a Roll of the Dice into a neckbreaker to put Reno away.

Rating: D-. So is there a reason why Stasiak got this push instead of Reno? Stacy couldn't be into the bad guy with the ponytail and tattoos instead of the muscle guy? I'd love to hear that production meeting where this was the answer they decided on. Bad, bad match here as Stasiak continues to be horrible in the ring. He's terrible on the mic too but one problem at a time.

Stacy dances to brighten things up a bit as Stasiak autographs a picture for Reno. Bam Bam Bigelow comes out to chase Stasiak off.

Chuck Palumbo vs. Sean O'Haire vs. Lex Luger vs. Buff Bagwell

Because we've seen these teams in singles matches so many times that this is the best we can get. Bagwell and Palumbo get things going which is arguably one of the best two combinations. Whatever keeps Luger out of the ring at this point. Just to show you how bad of an idea this is, we almost immediately cut to a shot of the crowd and come back to Buff on the mat, meaning someone botched the heck out of something.

Sean comes in and eats a jawbreaker so it's off to Luger for an atomic drop, giving us another crowd shot. I know the match isn't very good but they botched that badly twice in a row? Sean gets in a suplex on Luger and tags Buff in, which lasts all of no time as Luger hits Palumbo on the apron so Buff can tag out. A quick chop block brings Palumbo down and Buff grabs a rollup to get us down to a handicap match. Sean slams Luger for two with Lex's foot on the rope but Palumbo shoves it off to make it a pin. So it's one on one now and a quick clothesline into the Seanton Bomb puts Buff away in a hurry.

Rating: F. It's never a good sign when you completely run out of ideas for a feud. It's also not a good sign when you don't have anyone else on the roster to feed into this match so the champs could have a quick squash etc. At least O'Haire got to look like the conquering hero as his push continues to seem like it could have gone somewhere if the company had stuck around.

Totally Buff gets chased to the back.

Disco tries to get Mike Sanders to team with him tonight. Sanders so no, until Flair comes up and asks Mike to go fix a toilet, because in WCW's world the company fixes building issues. Mike decides to team with Disco instead, albeit after taking his time thinking about it.

Video on the Rhodes Family vs. Jarrett/Flair.

Flair tells Animal to go interrogate Page about Midajah's attack. After Animal leaves, Flair accuses Animal of doing it.

Kwee Wee vs. Shane Helms

So Kwee Wee has gone from "I should be in the heel stable" to Sanders'

wacky partner to jobbing to the #1 contender to the Cruiserweight Title. Dang he's on a roll. I mean it's a roll down a hill but a roll is a roll. If nothing else there's Shane's really cool entrance. Unfortunately there's also a shot that shows WAY too many empty seats.

They start slowly as the announcers keep referring to Kwee Wee as Kiwi. To be fair that would probably have extended his career. Kwee Wee slams him for two as you can tell they're not exactly interested in trying tonight. Helms gets in an armdrag to send Kwee Wee to the floor for a baseball slide followed by a high crossbody.

Back in and another crossbody puts Kwee Wee down, followed by a northern lights suplex for two. The Vertebreaker is countered into a rollup for two and Kwee Wee goes back to the slam. He tries to go a bit too high though and a top rope legdrop only hits the mat, setting up the Vertebreaker to give Shane the pin.

Rating: C-. Shane is on a roll at this point and there's no reason for him to not win the title on Sunday. Chavo has been great with the belt but Shane is clearly the top guy in the division at the moment. It's a rare instance of a story being well put together to set up a big title change, which you almost never see around here.

We look back at the post match shenanigans from the four way.

Hugh Morrus/Konnan vs. Mike Sanders/Disco Inferno

I guess this is a warmup for Morrus/Konnan, who are described as locker room leaders. No wonder the company went under. The bad guys jump them from behind to take over but Disco stops to dance. Disco and Konnan fight on the floor (aftermath of that music video feud), leaving Morrus to clothesline Mike over the top. We settle back into a regular tag match with Sanders elbowing Morrus off the apron to keep Konnan in trouble.

Tenay actually brings up the Dungeon of Doom and Tony sounds stunned. A chinlock doesn't get Sanders anywhere as Tony is still on the Dungeon reference. The hot tag brings in Morrus for running splashes in the corner and a Hart Attack with Konnan playing Bret (payback for teaching him the Sharpshooter perhaps). Konnan grabs a Last Dance (Stunner) on

Disco to set up the No Laughing Matter and the Tequila Sunrise.

Rating: D. For Dungeon of Doom, the highlight of the match. I got a good chuckle out of hearing Konnan and Morrus as the locker room leaders but there's nothing wrong with throwing them together for the sake of having another midcard team. It's not like either of them had anything to do in the first place.

Team Canada attacks post match.

Buff Bagwell finds Animal laid out with the words IT WASN'T HIM and an arrow over his unconscious body.

Video on Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page.

Diamond Dallas Page/Dustin Rhodes vs. Jeff Jarrett/Rick Steiner

All four get their own entrances to further illustrate how this is just two singles matches at the same time. The bad guys are cleared out in an opening brawl until it's Page and Steiner to start. Rick has already sold enough before the match so he blasts Page with a Steinerline to take over and already hands it off to Jeff. That goes nowhere so it's time for more Steiner because he's the veteran here and therefore needs to get the ring time.

Rick and Jeff take turns beating on Page until a jawbreaker staggers Rick enough for the hot tag to Dustin....which the referee doesn't see. The hot tag works a few seconds later and Rick accidentally Steinerlines the referee. Steiner powerslams Dustin and here's Ric Flair to count the cover with Page making the save. In the melee, Jeff guitars Dustin for the pin.

Rating: D. This was your run of the mill filler match to close out a taping with the audience completely not interested. To be fair though, how interested can you be in something like this? It's a boring match with the #1 contender having no reason to be in the match other than "Booker isn't here". It's fitting that the final Thunders end with main events like this one: the big stars are in the building but they don't feel like working this show.

A bunch of people come out for the NWO style brawl. Page escapes to say he's still standing to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. If you couldn't tell before, this show has turned over and died. It's very clear that they don't care anymore and nothing is going to change that in the last few weeks. The big stars not being here (Save for Booker who had a storyline excuse. I mean, it was a completely unnecessary storyline excuse but it's better than nothing.) is ridiculous, but then you realize that aside from Booker and Scott Steiner, the biggest names probably are the Cat, Page and Rick Steiner. I don't think I need to offer much more of an explanation as to why WCW wasn't around much longer after that.

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