

Thunder – March 5, 1998: Let The Non-Matches Begin

Thunder

Date: March 5, 1998

Location: Columbus Civic Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Lee Marshall

WCW is in an interesting little groove right now as they're not taking their shows seriously at all other than the main event and it's making things much easier to get through. We're ten days from Uncensored and the show is shaping up pretty well which means the TV has been good lately. Tonight's main event is Page defending the US Title against Raven, assuming we don't get more NWO drama instead. Let's get to it.

We open with a video of Randy Savage receiving the Harvard Lampoon's Man of the Year award. It's used as a promo for Hogan vs. Savage.

Here's a lot of the NWO led by Hogan and Bischoff to get us going. Bischoff talks about how Savage doesn't deserve the award because he isn't a real man. A real man wouldn't walk in Hollywood Hogan's shadows all these years and Savage is the second most delusional man in the world. Hogan talks about having the NWO watching his back and taking care of Savage and Sting on Monday. Savage winning Man of the Year is a joke and if you want to know how much of a man Hollywood is, just look at Liz's skinny legs. Uh....sure.

Anyway Hogan is going to need another opponent after the beating he gave Savage on Monday and if Savage is here tonight Hogan will beat him up again tonight. Brian Adams says everyone knows Hollywood is the real icon and Savage is scared of him. It would be an honor for Adams to take Hogan's place against Savage tonight if he actually shows up. Hollywood is all cool with that and that's that.

Bill Goldberg vs. Vincent

Heenan has assigned Tenay to find out how many matches Goldberg has won in a row. The spear and Jackhammer end this before I can finish typing that sentence.

We look at This Week in WCW Motorsports. I'll leave you to figure out how pointless this is.

Prince Iaukea vs. Eddie Guerrero

Feeling out process to start with Prince snapmaring Eddie down, causing Guerrero to complain of a hair pull. Eddie tries to drop down but gets a headbutt in the back to send him to the floor. A dive over the top rope takes Eddie out but back inside, Prince has to put his springboard on hold because Eddie pulls the referee in his path. Eddie goes after the knee to take over and puts on a spinning toe hold. Iaukea rolls him up for a quick two and gets the same off a superkick. He loads up another springboard but Eddie dropkicks his leg out and the frog splash is good for the pin.

Rating: C. This was by far the most entertaining Prince Iaukea match I can remember seeing. Based on his track record though, I'm going to give Eddie about 97% of the credit for the match succeeding. This was an easy win for Guerrero to set up Guerrero's title shot at the PPV and little more.

Juventud Guerrera vs. El Dandy

Dandy throws him down by the hair to start and fires off some kicks to the chest. The Flock arrives late as always. A pair of headscissors puts Dandy down and Juvy pounds away in the corner. Dandy is sent to the floor for a BIG Air Juvy dive to fire up the crowd. Guerrera can't suplex him back in though and gets caught by a belly to back for two. Juvy comes

right back with a quick DDT and counters what looked like a powerbomb attempt into a rollup. They speed things up a bit with some near falls each but Dandy goes up top, only to get slammed face first onto the mat. The 450 finishes this a few seconds later.

Rating: D+. Not bad here but Dandy never was anything more than a Bret Hart punchline. Juvy is gearing up for his showdown against Konnan which should be entertaining if they wrestle the kind of match they're capable of having. The Air Juvy dive looked great here but there wasn't much else to talk about.

Post match Konnan comes out to ramble on in broken Spanish and says Juvy has lost his identity. Juvy says he never surrenders, other than when he surrendered away his mask.

Here's Randy Savage with something to say. He wants Hogan and Adams out here right now and gets his wish plus a bonus Easy E. Savage says the rest of the NWO wants to stab Hogan in the back the first chance they get. The NWO's main goal is to get rid of Hogan because he's like a horse with a broken leg. At Uncensored, Savage is going to send Hogan to the glue factory. Brian Adams is betting his career on Hulk Hogan, so Savage will raise the bet: after Savage takes care of Brian he wants Hogan TONIGHT. Hogan says Savage should be a comedian and he'll be in Adams' corner tonight.

Video on Steiner vs. Luger for Uncensored.

Chase Tatum vs. Scott Steiner

Chase is well built but you know what's coming here: suplex, forearms to the back, whip into the steps, more pounding in the corner, butterfly powerbomb and the Recliner for the submission. Total squash.

Video on Nash vs. Giant including Giant's powerbomb from Monday.

Curt Hennig vs. Jim Neidhart

You can see the dilemma of Neidhart at this point: he's being used to put over the Bret vs. Hennig feud but that legal stipulation kept Neidhart and Bret from associating on TV. Hennig stalls on the apron to start, gets shoved into the corner, and stalls yet again. Back in and Neidhart runs him over before putting on a headlock.

Lee Marshall buries the Hart vs. Hennig feud, saying they sound like a couple of three year olds fighting on a playground. Curt bails to the floor for a chat with Rude before Neidhart pounds him down and puts on a chinlock. With Curt distracting the referee, Rude pulls out a 2x4 from under the ring and knocks Neidhart silly with it, setting up the HennigPlex for the pin.

Rating: F. So we have Marshall burying the feud, a stupid ending, and about a minute of "action" in a three and a half minute match. This was a disaster in just a few short minutes which is quite impressive. I'm guessing Curt was, ahem, under the weather for this one as he barely did anything at all.

Bulldog runs out for the save.

Raven comes to the ring to talk about labyrinths and corridors. He helped DDP back in the day but Page never thanked him. Raven spent three years in Barbed Wire City and was so scarred he no longer feels the pain. Tonight is Page's Waterloo and when Raven wins the title, he isn't defending it at Uncensored. The challengers will have to wait until his pain is gone.

Jericho talks about being loved by the fans and how they should put him on a pedestal for everything he's done for them. He's nailing this character to perfection.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Ciclope

Before the match, Jericho tells us all to Wang Chung tonight. Also he's been counting and knows 1004 holds, meaning he's better than Malenko. More on that in a few days. Jericho takes him into the corner to start and grabs the arm but Ciclope trips his leg. A kick to the ribs sets up a brainbuster from Ciclope and Jericho is sent to the floor. Ciclope tries a dive but Jericho casually sidesteps him and stomps away. Back in and Jericho counters a quick victory roll into the Liontamer for the submission. Not much to see here.

Jericho won't let go of the hold until Malenko comes out for the save and puts Chris in the Cloverleaf.

Scott Norton vs. Renegade

I've sat through El Dandy and Prince Iaukea tonight and this is my reward. Norton shoves him into the corner and hits a LONG string of knees and forearms. As in he goes on for well over a minute doing nothing more than those two moves. Presumably out of boredom, here's Giant to lay out both guys. Norton gets a Jackknife and Renegade is chokeslammed to the amusement of the crowd.

Giant is handcuffed but the cuffs don't fit. Instead Doug Dillinger puts chains around Giant's wrists.

US Title: Raven vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Raven insists on No DQ, which I thought was always the case for him. Page wants no referee, which is a great way to guarantee you keep the belt. He knocks Raven to the floor and hits a big plancha before sending Raven into the barricade. Raven comes back with a whip of his own and they head up to the stage. Benoit comes out and jumps both guys to make it a threeway fight. They fight in the aisle and then inside the ring with

Benoit missing the Swan Dive on Raven. The 7'2 Reese debuts to distract Page and the Flock comes in for the double beatdown. Both guys get DDTs onto a piece of guardrail to end this non-match.

Randy Savage vs. Brian Adams

Hogan comes out with Adams so we're guaranteed a run-in palooza to end the show. Before the match, Savage says it's true that Liz managed the both of them, but Liz says Savage is clearly the real man between the two of them. Adams has to hold Hogan back but Savage says if Hogan wants to know who the real man is, ask Hogan's wife. It's a big brawl to start with Savage having to fight both guys.

Lee Marshall continues his brilliant commentary with this gem: "We're going to find out who is the kahuna and who is the kahu-not." Savage whips Hogan with the belt and gets in a shot on Adams as well. They head back in and Liz gets in a cheap shot on Adams. Savage saves her from Hogan but Disciple comes in for the DQ. This was a match?

The NWO destroys Savage and Sting makes the save to end the show (no belt of course).

Overall Rating: D. This didn't do it for me. The matches were all either really short, really bad or not matches at all. Savage had some good lines, but the focus being entirely on Hogan vs. Savage and the NWO split is getting really tiresome. The world title was mentioned in a single throwaway line which led to another Hogan discussion. Also, did WCW really think we would care about Brian Adams this much? This was a bad show and one of the worst in the series so far.

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