

No Mercy 2003 – McMahons All Around

No Mercy 2003

Date: October 19, 2003

Location: 1st Mariner Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 8,500

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're finally back to WWE PPVs here with three more No Mercy's. This is a smackdown show with the main event being a Biker Chain match with Brock defending against Taker. Also on the card is Vince vs. Stephanie where Stephanie is fighting for control of the brand. This is the culmination of a VERY badly received feud between these two where they wouldn't get off of the show no matter how much people said they were sick of Vince vs. Steph. Let's get to it.

We open with a video about Stephanie vs. Vince. This was by far and away pushed as the main event of the show. This is tied into home movies of the two of them and how she was daddy's little girl. Oh and there's a world title match too.

The set looks cheap and like it had about 4 seconds of thought put into it.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Tajiri

Tajiri is defending and is the EVIL Japanese guy who spat mist at Nidia to blind her recently. They tie up and roll to the floor quickly but head back in to strike it off. Rey goes into a leglock to control which is reversed into an armbar by Tajiri. Rey dropkicks the knee out and counters the handspring elbow with a dropkick to the back. There's a big dive and the crowd gets into it a bit.

Back in Rey goes up but has his arm draped over the top and

the champ takes over. Tajiri kicks him HARD in the corner and works over the arm again. Rey hits his climbing the ropes wristdrag but Tajiri kicks him in the arm again and adds one to the head to take over. No one has been able to keep an advantage that long at all. They go up but Tajiri is knocked off, allowing Rey to hit a tornado DDT for two.

Springboard crossbody gets two as well. Crucifix is countered by Tajiri but Rey counters into a pin attempt of his own. With one good arm, Rey uses his legs to send Tajiri to the floor and adds a rana to take over. Back in Tajiri kicks him in the stomach and whips him in but Rey comes back with a 619 to the ribs. West Coast Pop is countered into a powerbomb for a close two.

Rey gets launched onto the top but lands on his feet and hits a moonsault press for two. AWESOME looking sequence. Rey rolls through a sunset flip and hits a dropkick to the face. Here comes the 619 and Tajiri is in big trouble. Mysterio hits the West Coast Pop but a “fan” runs in. Rey goes after him, allowing Tajiri to kick him in the head for the pin to retain.

Rating: C+. The fan was Jimmy Yang who was supposed to be part of Tajiri’s Yakuza faction which never really came together. As for the match, the selling hurt this one a lot for me as Rey’s arm seemed fine after about ten seconds and Tajiri didn’t really sell anything at all. It’s a good opener but nothing really memorable.

Vince says anyone that interferes tonight is fired and will be blacklisted from this business. Josh Matthews looks like he’s about 14 here.

A-Train vs. Chris Benoit

A-Train got probably the biggest push of his career at this point as he was in the midcard. This would more or less be the last part of said push. Tazz: “They love pierced nipples in Denmark.” Benoit tries to go for the knee but A-Train runs him

over with the power. Train throws him to the floor again and Benoit isn't sure what to do with him. A-Train takes over again and pounds him down, hitting a splash for two.

We talk about Stu Hart dying three days before this as A-Train stomps away even more. Cole praises him as he always does while Train pounds on Benoit's neck in the corner. He hits that slingshot into the middle rope move he used most of the time to further work on Benoit's neck. Train loads up a Pedigree grip but lifts Benoit into the air and drives Benoit's head into his knee, getting two and a busted mouth for the Wolverine.

Benoit fires back but Train rams him down with a double ax to the chest. Off to a bow and arrow hold but Benoit speeds things up and hits a DDT to slow the Train down. In a big change of pace, the American hits a German on the Canadian to put him down. A-Train goes to the floor and pulls in a chair. Train tries something on Benoit but Benoit tries to slide down into a sunset flip. Instead, Benoit falls and lands ON HIS HEAD on the chair. FREAKING OW MAN!!!

Benoit grabs the Crossface but A-Train counters. Instead it's Rolling Germans time but A-Train gets up and slams him off the top to counter the Swan Dive. The bald one mocks the Benoit throat slit signal and looks to go up. He realizes how crazy that would be and comes down for a Derailer (chokebomb) instead. That only gets two so he loads up the bicycle kick. He kicks through the chair in the corner though, making Benoit dragon screw him and the Sharpshooter gets the tap.

Rating: C. This was better than I would have expected, but then again it's Benoit against a big monster. That's probably what he's second best at and it worked well here. A-Train wouldn't mean anything after this and after Benoit took everything he had, I can't say I disagree with that. Decent match but I'm not sure it belonged on PPV.

Matt looks for Shannon Moore in the back for his match but finds him being choked by Heidenreich. Heidenreich talks about Little Johnny which is something they never really explained. There's something about a highlight video being thrown away and Heidenreich being mad about it. Matt calms him down.

We acknowledge the presence of a bunch of military people heading to Iraq tomorrow. That's a new war at this point.

Zach Gowen vs. Matt Hardy

Gowen is the guy with one leg that got pushed to the moon for some reason. Matt's Facts for the night: Matt cannot be grossed out and Matt has survived five car wrecks. This has something to do with Brock breaking Gowen's leg and Matt declaring a win over Gowen at Summerslam. Gowen uses his speed and some kicks to take over. A middle rope bulldog gets two.

Shannon breaks up a springboard to give Matt his first advantage. A big clothesline flips Gowen inside out for two. Matt hooks a suplex and works on the arms for some reason. Hey Matt, GO FOR THE LEG! Matt goes up and misses a moonsault as Gowen tries to get the crowd to care. Gowen kicks Matt to the floor and hits a somersault plancha to the floor. Cross body gets two back inside. Matt grabs the Side Effect for two. Gowen goes up again but Matt follows. Hardy is knocked off and a moonsault by Gowen gets the pin.

Rating: D. And that's the last you'll see of Zach Gowen. That's one of the more questionable booking choices you'll ever see but it's WWE in 2003 so what are you expecting? Gowen was supposed to be a feel good story but the word from backstage was that he was a total jerk who thought he was some huge star. I never got the appeal of him.

Linda appeals to Vince to not have the match. He says he's going through with it but changes the rules of the match: Stephanie can pin him instead of just winning by submission. Oh and the match is now no holds barred.

Basham Brothers vs. APA

This is about the APA hurting the Basham's manager Shaniqua. The Bashams are named Doug and Danny, which are the names of my uncles so I've always liked this team. Bradshaw is blonde here which doesn't work for him at all. He and Doug start things off but it's off to Farrooq quickly. Off to Danny who has no luck, just like his brother. Were they brothers? I know they really aren't but were they on screen? I'm not sure.

Doug gets in a shot to take over but his splash hits Farrooq's knees and a brawl breaks out. Cole and Tazz get into a stupid argument as the Dominator is escaped. The Bashams hit a double belly to back suplex for two and Farrooq is in trouble. Bradshaw runs in to try to help his partner, because doing it a minute ago worked oh so well.

Off to a chinlock to eat up a few minutes until Farrooq hits a spinebuster and makes the hot tag. Bradshaw cleans house and hits the powerbomb for two on Danny. Everything breaks down and it's Last Calls (fall away slam) all around. There goes the referee and Bradshaw hits the Clothesline. Shaniqua comes in and hits Bradshaw with a club of some sort for the pin.

Rating: D. The match wasn't terrible I guess, but what in the world was the reason to give this nine minutes on PPV? Also why did we have to see Shaniqua in a dominatrix outfit? The match should have been on Smackdown or cut in half, but that's the danger of single branded PPVs. The Bashams were the flavor of the month on Smackdown while the APA would split in March.

The Bashams and Shaniqua celebrate in the back and Shaniqua talks about her chest swelling, which is her explanation for some plastic surgery. Whipping is promised. I didn't need to see this.

We recap Vince vs. Stephanie, which of course gets the biggest build of anything on the show. They were all nice and close (the Alliance Era being completely overlooked I guess) and

Vince made her the GM of Smackdown. There was something about Vince sleeping with Sable and wanting Steph to resign and A-Train was involved, beating up Stephanie. The recaps were really weak back then, making it hard to tell what was going on. Vince wanted Steph to quit but she wouldn't resulting in an I Quit match where the loser would have to resign their job. The acting is cringe worthy.

Vince McMahon vs. Stephanie McMahon

I Quit match and Stephanie can win by pin as well. It's also no holds barred and no one can interfere on her behalf. Linda is here too to make sure this match is acted even worse. Sable is with Vince. Vince jumps Stephanie to start. He's evil you know. Stephanie jumps on his back and screams a lot. She kicks him into the corner so he runs her over. Vince throws her around and Cole is up to about 20 "THAT'S HIS DAUGHTER" lines a minute.

Sable slaps Stephanie so Linda chases her around. Vince hooks a half crab and Stephanie screams a lot. Off to a bow and arrow and Stephanie can't even sell her face properly. Sable slides in a pipe but Linda stops her. Vince grabs Linda so she slaps him and Steph hits Vince low with the pipe for two. She pulls the pipe back and hits him in the ribs and the back and in the face but Vince doesn't go down. A shot from the middle rope to the top of the head gets two.

This match has been going on about four minutes and I already hate it. Sable gets in a fight with Stephanie so Stephanie rams Vince into her and bulldogs him for two. She gets the pipe again but Vince grabs her by the throat and shoves her down. Now Vince has the pipe and hits her in the ribs. He chokes her with the pipe and Linda shouts to quit because it's not worth it. Linda throws in the towel because Stephanie can't give up. You know, to protect her reputation and all that.

Rating: F. This got more of a build than the world title match, the US Title match and the Angle vs. Cena match. You figure out why this was a failure.

We get about four minutes of replays and Vince gloating because we really need to drive the point home. Stephanie does the big walkout because people are supposed to care. Paul Heyman would replace her as GM. Cole and Tazz treat this like Stephanie was murdered in front of us.

We recap Cena vs. Angle. Cena is a rapper here who says he's the real American icon and Angle is jealous about replacing him. Cena is the heel here which is a rare sight. This gets the music video treatment. There was a battle rap which was pretty funny, as was Angle dressing as a "thug". There was an Angle midget too, which is the height of WWE comedy.

John Cena vs. Kurt Angle

Cena does a quick rap implying that Kurt is stupid and isn't, uh, large. Oh and he's gay. Cena as a totally disrespectful young punk is an interesting character for him. Angle is here as the old veteran that's going to beat respect into Cena. Kurt takes him to the mat and runs him all over the place. Cena gets to the corner and looks terrified. The fans chant for Cena as the fans are still starting to like him here.

John runs him over a few times but Kurt easily takes him to the mat and works on the arm again. Angle ducks under a right hand and flips Cena a double bird. Cena comes back with a HARD clothesline and gets to the ground and pound. Angle comes back with a shoulder to the ribs in the corner but a second one hits post. Neckbreaker gets two for Cena. Protobomb gets the same and it's off to the front facelock.

The dueling chants begin and Angle fires off some punches but he walks into a spinebuster for two. Cena goes up but Angle runs the corner. He gets knocked off so Cena jumps off with a double ax, but Angle dropkicks the knee on the way down. I

can't believe it: Angle actually hurting the leg before the ankle lock. Kurt wins a slugout and hits a Russian legsweep for two. He grabs the ankle lock but Cena grabs the rope immediately.

Out to the floor but they're back in before I finish typing that sentence. They slug it out on the apron and Angle tries to German him off to the floor. Cena counters and DDTs him (landing on the shoulder) onto the apron to put Kurt down. Angle staggers back in but Cena dives off the top with the Fameasser for two. Kurt comes back with a German but Cena dropkicks Kurt's knee out. Throwback gets two.

Cena misses a charge and it's time for the the Rolling Germans which get two. Kurt can't follow up so Cena hits a Buckle Bomb for two. The FU hits but Angle gets out at 2.9. I know the finish to the match already and even I thought that was going to be three. Another FU is countered into the Angle Slam but Cena gets out at two as well. Cena gets the chain but has them taken away. Gold medals to the head get two. Another FU attempt is countered into a backslide for two. FU is countered into the ankle lock and Cena taps. There's something you don't see everyday.

Rating: B+. It's Cena vs. Angle for 18 minutes. What were you expecting here? Cena was nowhere near as good as he'd get but you could see the abilities here that were about to shine through. The near falls in this were great and it was clear that they had something special with Cena. He would turn face by Mania and would win the US Title there and the world title the next year.

Wrestlemania is coming.

We recap Big Show vs. Eddie. Eddie poured human wasted on Show so Show destroyed Eddie on a truck.

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Big Show

Eddie is defending. His back looks AWFUL from going through the windshield of the truck on Smackdown. Eddie jumps Show to start which goes about as well as you would expect. Show comes back with a clothesline and works over the bad back of Eddie. Guerrero manages to duck a charging Show and send him to the outside. Eddie throws in a chair to distract the referee then whacks Show in the head with a trashcan lid.

Back in and Eddie chops him which just angers the monster. He takes it to the floor and rams Eddie into the barricade. Back in and Show stays on the back. The fans aren't all that thrilled but Eddie manages to ram Show's head into the exposed buckle. When the buckle was exposed I'm not sure but it certainly was exposed. Froggy Cross Body gets two and the referee gets crushed.

Eddie pulls out a foreign object to clock Show and wakes up the referee for a two count. He hits Show in the head with the title and hits the Frog Splash but the slow count only gets two. Show's arm didn't actually get off the mat but whatever. Eddie charges into a spinebuster for two. There's a chokeslam but Eddie gets his foot on the rope at two. Eddie kicks him low to break up another chokeslam and a DDT puts Show down for two. And then a chokeslam gives Show the title. Totally anticlimactic ending.

Rating: C-. This was pretty dull. The problem as always with Big Show is that it's hard for anyone to get much realistic offense in on him. Eddie was certainly trying here but the ending didn't help anything at all. It just happened and that's usually the worst kind of a loss. Eddie would be world champion in February, so I don't get this one at all.

Show says he told us so.

We recap Brock vs. Taker. Brock had turned heel recently and was Vince's main monster so Taker is his first challenger. This gets another music video treatment.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Undertaker

This is a Biker Chain match which means chain on a pole. Brock runs from Taker to start but Taker grabs the arm. Lesnar hooks a bearhug to block it, so Taker spends the next two minutes trying to get the stupid thing but still can't hook it. FINALLY he hits the thing and rolls Brock up for two. The chain is optional apparently. Out to the floor and Taker is sent into the barricade to give the champ control.

Brock takes over back in the ring and rams Taker into the corner. Fisherman's suplex gets two. The crowd doesn't care at all here. Out to the floor again and Taker hits an elbow to the face. Taker comes back with a clothesline for two and then hot shots Brock to buy himself a break. Taker goes after the chain and the lights go out. He hops down and Brock breaks up his run up the corner.

A powerslam gets two for the champ. This is so boring it's unreal. The steps are brought in so this is No DQ I guess. Brock does the Raven drop toehold to send Taker into the steps. Deadman blocks some shots into the steps and knocks Lesnar to the floor. Taker follows and piledrives Brock onto the steps. Cole thinks Taker might have gotten the worst of it. How exactly? Brock is down, Taker is up and walking around. Why am I trying to figure Cole out?

Taker goes after the chain again but Brock saves. As he brings Taker down, Brock gets caught in a triangle choke over the top rope. Back in and the steps go into Taker's head for two. The steps are kicked into Brock's head on the second attempt. The steps are accidentally thrown to the floor and Taker loads up the Last Ride. Lesnar escapes and they collide to put both guys down.

Clothesline sets up snake eyes which sets up the big boot. Taker calls for the chokeslam but Lesnar counters and hits a spinebuster for two. The cover is countered into a triangle

choke minus the choke. The chain has been completely forgotten here. Lesnar powerbombs out of the choke and knocks Undertaker down again. Brock gets caught in a standing Dragon Sleeper but he counters into the F5. This is a lot less interesting than it sounds. The F5 gets two.

Brock goes for the chain but gets chokeslammed off the top. Naturally Taker looks for the chain instead of covering the dead champion. It wakes the crowd up at least but the freaking FBI runs in to break up the attempt. They're a jobbing trio that Taker beat up earlier in the year. Taker beats them up and the F5 is countered into the Last Ride. Ok, so Lesnar is done. Taker's next move? The Taker Dive onto the FBI. Why are faces such idiots? Nunzio goes after the chain but Taker knocks him down and FINALLY gets the chain. Then Vince pops up to crotch Taker and Brock gets the chain and knocks Taker out to retain.

Rating: D-. AWFUL ending to a boring match. It was like the whole point of this match was to bore the crowd as much as they could and then tease them with something interesting before the fourth guy running in could cause the ending. This set up Survivor Series with Taker vs. Vince which set up Taker leaving and becoming the Dead Man again. Just awful here though and no one cared until about 22 minutes in.

Overall Rating: D. It's not the worst show ever, but it's that awful combination of bad and boring which only a few shows have. Angle vs. Cena is quite good but the rest of it is stuff that isn't required viewing at all. This is a show you easily could have passed on and I'd assume most people probably did, especially due to Vince and Stephanie being pushed this hard. Bad show.

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