

Smackdown – December 4, 2003: Chris Benoit's Showcase

Smackdown

Date: December 4, 2003

Location: HP Pavilion, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a request that I got a few weeks ago. This can best be described as the Benoit Show, as he's facing Cena in a #1 contenders match with the winner facing Brock for the title in the main event. Yeah that's probably a spoiler, but screw it, this happened almost eight years ago. Other than that, there's not much to say about this show. Let's get to it.

We open with clips of a battle royal for the #1 contendership where Benoit and Cena hit the floor at the same time. This was pretty much perfect as all four feet hit at the same time. Lesnar took out Cena after that and A-Train and Nathan Jones (combining to make Team Lesnar which didn't last long) beat up Benoit. Both guys got F5's as well.

The still cool black and white theme opens us up.

Here's Brock to open the show. Brock starts a you tapped out chant (he tapped to Benoit at Survivor Series) but says that after tonight you'll have nothing to say. After tonight, he'll never tap out again. Unless there's a heel hook involved. Now the chant is starting to get on his nerves. He says Cena and Benoit intentionally tied last week so that no one would have to face him tonight. Lesnar hurts people, like Angle and Holly. He guarantees he'll make someone tap out tonight.

Rikishi/Scotty 2 Hotty vs. Basham Brothers

The Bashams are tag champions but this is non-title. Shaniqua is with the Bashams and is the dominatrix to their....whatever

the term for that kind of person is. Danny jumps Rikishi to start and manages to avoid the Samoan Drop. Rikishi drops down onto the chest though and Basham is in trouble quickly. Off to Scotty and now it's Doug in trouble. Shaniqua trips Scotty behind the referee's back but is sent out for her efforts. Doug hits a Vader Bomb Elbow for two.

Off to Danny who works on the back and neck some more. The Bashams hit a double flapjack and a double nipup (nice) for two. Doug hooks an abdominal stretch but Scotty escapes and manages to get the tag to the fat man. Rikishi cleans house and sets for a Stinkface but Shaniqua comes back and the twins switch. Rikishi gets hit low but Scotty hits the Worm on Doug. Samoan Drop to Danny gets the pin.

Rating: C-. Not a bad match here but I never was huge on Rikishi and Scotty as a team. The Bashams were the flavor of the month of the tag teams and the dominatrix thing never worked that well because no one cared about Linda (who drops two very audible F Bombs in her berating of them post match). Rikishi and Scotty would get the titles in two months.

Dawn Marie (HOT) is in the back with Heyman and Heyman turns down sex with her for some reason. She's his assistant I think. He asks her to take a memo, saying that Hardcore Holly's suspension is extended. Oh and go tell Shannon Moore to get in the ring.

Matt Morgan (yeah that Matt Morgan) is with Nathan Jones in the ring along with Heyman. Morgan was also part of Team Lesnar. We see clips of Morgan and Jones destroying Shannon Moore over the last two weeks. Heyman calls out Moore who is apparently being punished for Matt Hardy bailing to Raw. He says that Moore has the it factor and he keeps coming back for more. Tonight, Moore is in action.

Big Show vs. Shannon Moore

Moore hits a baseball slide to start. That's the extent of his

offense in this match. Oh wait that was before the match started so the beating continues. Shannon fires off some forearms and has his head taken off by the US Champion. Show hits his step over legdrop which is called the Hog Log. Chokeslam ends this quick.

We get a tale of the tape between Benoit and Cena. Career accomplishments for Benoit: four IC Titles and two tag titles. Career accomplishments for Cena: PhD in Thuganomics and has battle rapped HALF of the Smackdown roster.

Noble asks Nidia to stay in the back because of her safety (she took mist in the eyes and is blind) but it's really because she costs him matches. Noble says he has an idea.

Sakoda vs. Jamie Noble

Sakoda was Tajiri's wing man. Nidia comes out with Noble anyway. Sakoda is a pretty muscular guy for a cruiserweight. Noble works over the arm so Sakoda uses the other arm to take Noble's head off. Sakoda hits a backbreaker for two and a belly to back for the same. Noble comes back with a neckbreaker and kicks away at Sakoda.

A middle rope legdrop gets two. Sakoda comes back with an exploder suplex but Noble hits a one knee Codebreaker for two and sends Sakoda to the floor. A suicide dive takes Sakoda out and throws Nidia in. Tajiri is with the referee so Noble throws Nidia into Sakoda and rolls him up for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was better than I expected. I don't remember much about Sakoda but I think he was part of what was supposed to be a Yakuza faction that never materialized. Nidia being blind wound up being a ruse like almost all other blind angles. I don't remember her being around much longer after this.

Noble is very excited about winning.

Cena makes fun of Josh Matthews when Benoit comes up and says he can make Cena tap anytime he wants.

Christmas in Iraq is coming.

John Cena vs. Chris Benoit

The winner gets Lesnar later tonight. Cena rhymes about the situation tonight before the match. He's a face at this point. Benoit jumps him immediately and knocks him into the corner. This is going to be mostly brawling. Suplex gets two for Benoit. Cena comes back with the pounding to the back and a clothesline for two. They're both trying to end this quickly for the sake of conserving energy for Lesnar later.

After a surfboard hold by Cena, a spinebuster gets two for John. Benoit is holding his ribs so Cena adds a delayed vertical suplex for two. Proto Bomb gets two as well. Cena sets for the FU but Benoit counters into the Rolling Germans and says Cena can't see him. Swan Dive misses so Cena pumps the shoes up. Benoit comes back with chops but walks into the FU for the pin out of nowhere.

And never mind because Benoit's feet were in the ropes for a Dusty Finish. We take a break and come back with Benoit ramming Cena's shoulder into the mat and homing in on it to control. Northern Lights suplex gets two. Benoit chops away and hits a clothesline for two. Cena hits a hard right but that's the bad arm so he can't follow up. Benoit drops elbows on the arm for two.

Cena tries to go to the floor but Benoit gets him back in immediately. All Canadian right now. He cranks on the arm with a modified armbar but Cena fights back and hits the Throwback for two. Benoit trips the legs and puts on the Sharpshooter but Cena makes the rope. Benoit goes for the arm again but Cena grabs a bad FU (he fell down so it was more like a Death Valley Driver instead of the release Death Valley Driver that it usually is) and both guys are down. Big Show comes out for

no apparent reason and the distraction allows Benoit to grab the Crossface for the tap out.

Rating: B-. Not a classic or anything but this was a good one. I couldn't quite go higher than this because it never hit that next level, but Cena wasn't ready to go there with Benoit yet. Big Show and the Dusty Finish didn't help either but you can't fault the guys in the ring for that. Good match.

Chavo is warming up when Eddie comes up. Eddie is going to the ring with Chavo but Chavo asks Eddie to stay in the back. They've been having problems lately. He blames Eddie for his knee injury and tonight, it's about Chavo, not Eddie.

Chavo Guerrero vs. Shelton Benjamin

Chavo has a bad knee coming in. Eddie comes out anyway to tick Chavo off. Shelton jumps Chavo to start but Guerrero comes back with a headscissors. Eddie gets a lawn chair out of his lowrider and has an energy drink hat. You know the kind with the cans on the side that you can drink from. Chavo lands on the knee and Shelton superkicks the injury to take him down. He adds a Robinsdale Crunch because he's from Minnesota.

Shelton stays on the knee with a Flair knee crusher and then a basic leg lock. Eddie looks hilarious with the energy cans on the side of his head. Now he's got a magazine to read. Shelton hooks another leg lock and Chavo is in trouble. Chavo comes back with some clotheslines and a dropkick for two. A tornado DDT puts Benjamin down but Haas gets the referee. Eddie comes in and hits the Frog Splash on Shelton and Chavo gets the pin. I don't think Chavo saw the splash.

Rating: D+. Nothing much to the match here but it was more of an angle than a match anyway. Chavo would turn heel soon enough and fight Eddie at the Rumble, followed by Eddie turning into a mega star and winning the world title the following month. These two are always interesting to watch.

Chavo yells at Eddie post match and doesn't want to ride with him.

Tazz plays Final Fantasy.

Video package on Lesnar.

Benoit says that Lesnar is in fact an animal but that video didn't show Lesnar tapping out last month so let's look at it now.

The FBI is taking bets on the main event and Brock is a 3-2 favorite. A-Train bets \$10,000 on Benoit. Remember that he's part of Team Lesnar.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Chris Benoit

Brock jumps Benoit during his entrance and hammers on the ribs. Benoit comes back and clotheslines Lesnar to the floor. He chops at the chest and sends Lesnar shoulder first into the post. Benoit throws Lesnar in for a Crossface attempt but Lesnar bails to the floor. Lesnar gets in a shot at the ribs and Brock takes over again. In a cool move, Brock sets for a fisherman's suplex but holds Benoit up almost in a rack position before dropping him down.

Benoit gets sent to the floor and is rammed face first onto the announce table. Cole's mic seems to mess up as he sounds like he's on the arena mic. Back in because Lesnar wants to win by tapout like he promised. Off to a choke with a bodyscissors by the champion. Benoit fights up but walks into a tilt-a-whirl powerslam for two. Brock is bleeding from the nose.

We take a break and come back...with the same thing. I'm not sure if that was a break or not. Taz and Cole are whispering and I don't think we're supposed to hear it. I think this is footage from the break. That would explain something from Cena vs. Benoit as well as the announcers said welcome back but I

didn't see anything change. Lesnar puts the hold back on and Cole starts talking again.

Lesnar charges at Benoit and they tumble out to the floor. Benoit goes into the steps and the ribs are in big trouble. Lesnar seems more willing to take the countout win this time. Benoit pulls him to the floor and pounds away, sending Brock into the steps as well. Brock runs back into the ring but catches Benoit in a release German suplex. He charges into the corner but the shoulder goes into the post and Benoit snaps off Rolling Germans.

A shoulder block puts Brock down and Benoit hits the Swan Dive but can't cover. A delayed cover gets two. The crowd is way into this now too. Benoit goes for the Crossface but Brock gets an arm out to block the hold. Chris settles for an armbar instead but Brock counters with an attempted side slam.

Benoit's legs hit the referee though as Benoit grabs the Crossface. Lesnar taps but there's no referee. Benoit lets it go and walks into the F5 which only gets two. The referee goes down again so Lesnar gets a chair and blasts Benoit's knee with it. He hooks the Brock Lock (Benoit's knee goes over Lesnar's neck and Brock sits on his back while cranking on the knee) and Benoit passes out.

Rating: B+. It was around this point and possibly because of this match that there was no way the company could avoid putting the title on Benoit anymore. Lesnar would go on to feud with Hardcore Holly of all people while Benoit would go on to win the Rumble. Very good match that could have been the main event of a PPV.

Brock puts Benoit in a Crossface position and makes him slap the mat post match because he's a jerk.

Benoit is helped up and gets a lot of cheers.

Overall Rating: A. This was back in the day of the single

branded PPVs so on the off months for the other brand, you would get super shows like this one. The PPVs sucked most of the time but shows like these were AWESOME. It was a Benoit showcase here and there's nothing wrong with that at all. With two very good matches and some other ok stuff, you can't ask much more from a free TV show than that.

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