

Smackdown – April 11, 2002 (2016 Redo): It's A Start

Smackdown

Date: April 11, 2002

Location: Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This has to be better than Raw right? I'm almost convinced that it has to be just based on the law of nearly anything would be better than the mess that I sat through earlier this week. The big story continues to be the build towards Hulk Hogan vs. HHH for reasons of pure nostalgia. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Kurt Angle to get things going with his continued complaining about Hogan getting the title shot. He's beaten Russians and Iranians much tougher than Nikolai Volkoff and the Iron Sheik so how can Hogan be better than him? Then on Raw, Ric Flair made Undertaker vs. Steve Austin for the title shot after that so Kurt is out in the cold for a long time. Tonight he has a non-title match against HHH so he could prove what happened had Vince McMahon not gone mental.

The WHAT chants finally make Angle snap but here's Edge to calm things down a bit. Edge agrees that Angle's medal win was inspiring but IT WAS SIX YEARS AGO. Since Angle isn't getting a title shot soon, maybe he'd like to face Edge at Backlash. The match is accepted so Edge has one last thing: the fans need to shout YOU SUCK instead of WHAT whenever Kurt talks. And that's the rest of Angle's career. Angle freaks out as only he can and demands his music plays, only to have the fans chant to the tune.

Chris Jericho tells Angle that he'll take care of Edge tonight. So there's your heel alliance. Angle doesn't like loudmouthed Canadians with long blond hair who dress like a rock star. Angle: "Well not you of course. You're cool."

Tajiri vs. Hurricane

Hurricane has hacked off his hair. Tajiri drags Torrie Wilson out in a geisha girl outfit and you can just pencil in the big stripping scene from here. An armdrag sends Tajiri outside and Hurricane uses a rare over the top flip dive to take him down. Torrie looks miserable as Tazz says she's lucky to have someone like Tajiri. For once Cole has it right by saying it's the other way around. Hurricane gets in a hurricanrana but gets kicked in the head for the fast pin.

Rating: C+. This was a good way to set up Tajiri's rematch for the Cruiserweight Title at Backlash and treating Torrie like garbage is a classic, simple way to get him over as a heel. It's nice to have some actual characters in the Cruiserweight division instead of just giving them little time and having them do spots.

Tajiri berates Torrie until Kidman makes the save.

Stacy Keibler, in Miss Hancock attire, lays on Vince's couch until he shows up.

Albert vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

We get the debut of Albert in trunks here because we needed to see that chest hair. Albert jumps him during the entrances as Cole talks about Albert beating Scotty up last week and yelling about Scotty holding him down and making him do all the dancing. Cole: "But we still haven't heard why Albert did what he did." That's vintage Cole stupidity. Scotty stops a charge with a boot and gets two off a middle rope dropkick. The Worm is broken up by a bicycle kick and a Baldo Bomb ends Scotty in a hurry.

Albert beats him up some more after the match until Rikishi makes the save. You mean their big idea is Rikishi vs. Albert? As in the future Hall of Famer vs. future head trainer of developmental?

Vince arrives to find Stacy and says he's considering her for a position. There are a few more candidates though and he'll be interviewing them in the ring. Stacy promises to give him an offer that he can't refuse.

Rico makes fun of Maven's clothes and eyebrows. Al Snow comes in and a

tag match against Billy and Chuck is made for later.

Hogan wants to be the WWF Champion one more time. Jericho comes up and warns Hogan about the dangers of HHH. I'd pay to see a Battle of the Bands between Fozzy and the Wrestling Boot Band.

Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho gets caught by an early spinwheel kick and flapjack before Edge sends him outside. There's a baseball slide over the announcers' table as it's all young Canadian so far. Jericho hides behind the referee and rakes Edge's eyes, earning himself a HAS BEEN chant. It amazes me that Jericho had been wrestling for over ten years at this point and he'd still be around over fourteen years later. That's almost as long as Austin's entire career and it's not even half of what Jericho did.

Edge fights back with some chops and avoids a charge to send Chris into the post. A rollup gets two on Jericho and you can hear the fans getting fired up off the near falls. Cue Angle but Edge spears him down, only to walk into a bulldog. The Edge-O-Matic gets two but the referee stupidly gets in the way of a catapult. You know, because referees are dumb.

The Edgecator makes Jericho tap but there's no one to see it so of course Edge lets go. You know, because wrestlers are dumb. Jericho tries to bring in a chair but gets speared for two. Angle snaps Edge's neck across the top and that's enough for a rollup with tights to give Jericho the pin.

Rating: B-. That's probably the best match since the Brand Extension, assuming you ignore the nonsense with the referee and all the interference. Unfortunately that's how big matches go at this point in the WWF because they don't want anyone to lose even remotely clean. It's fine every now and then but that's what countouts and disqualifications should be for.

Edge goes after Angle but gets beaten down until Hogan makes the save.

Here's Vince for his job interviews or whatever they're calling them this week. There's a desk in the ring and it's really not that hard to guess

what they're setting up with Stacy. First up we have a professional looking woman with horn rimmed glasses named Sylvia Johnson. She can type 95 words a minute, can speak three languages and most computer languages. Vince says no because she's not his type. "Don't let the door hit you on the....oh yeah we don't have doors on the ring."

Next up is a guy who looks like Steve from Blue's Clues. Vince tells him to get out before anyone can say a word. The third option is a decent looking woman who is a bit more Vince's type. She can type fast and takes dictation but the fans want puppies. Vince thinks he's found his personal assistant but wonders if there's one more applicant.

Cue Stacy and Vince's eyes bug out despite knowing it was coming. Ok to be fair the Hancock outfit can have that effect. Stacy throws the other woman out and dances on the desk to get the job. Vince falling out of his chair when she pulls up her skirt is great, unlike this HUGE waste of time. Yeah Stacy looked great but this was nothing other than a way for Vince to have some fun.

D-Von, now in a suit comes in to see Vince and tells him to testify. See, now he's a preacher. His mission is to save the sinners of the world but he needs a benefactor. Vince agrees, despite the fact that it's D-Von. At least this is something different though and that's what someone like D-Von needs, which is what TNA never understood.

Mark Henry holds a limo (driven by Test) back with his legs. Test cranks it up and hurts Henry's legs (which you never actually see touching the limo of course). So we're going to get Rikishi vs. Albert and Test vs. Mark Henry?

Chuck vs. Al Snow

Everyone is at ringside. I'd rather they have this match instead of giving Snow and Maven a Tag Team Title shot out of the blue. Snow kicks him into the corner to start as Tazz yells at Cole for getting a town's name wrong. A belly to belly sends Snow flying as the announcers debate weed whackers. Snow gets two off a sitout spinebuster but Rico gets in the ring. Maven chases him into the crowd, leaving Chuck to hit the Jungle Kick for two. A quick Snowplow gives Al the pin.

Rating: D. I'm fine with setting up some challengers for the titles as it's not like there are many teams on either show at the moment. Snow and Maven aren't exactly doing anything else and it can plug the second season of Tough Enough at the same time. Nothing to see here but at least the booking makes sense. Unfortunately that doesn't make it interesting but that's what you get when WE HAVE TO SPLIT UP THE TAG TEAMS BECAUSE REASONS!

HHH is getting taped up when Hogan comes in to talk about Jericho and Angle. The face alliance is offered but HHH will have nothing to do with it because they're going to fight at Backlash. Just like last week, Hogan being everybody's favorite grandpa and HHH being all serious really doesn't work. HHH holds up the title and talks about it like his secret girlfriend for when Stephanie throws him out for not respecting the lady balls enough. Finally, as is custom for HHH, I have time to drywall my house by the time he finishes his really simple point.

Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Non-title. Angle's top wristlock goes nowhere as HHH shoves him into the corner. Cole again tries to push the "HHH grew up idolizing Hogan" schtick, which only works if you ignore the fact that he was a teenager when Hogan first won the title. A sunset flip with tights gives us a two count and an Angle thong shot. We're lucky enough to have Angle not realize that they're down so HHH gives him a hard spank. Angle finally figures out what's going on and throws some German suplexes for two.

We hit the sleeper on the champ but HHH flips him over and grabs a DDT. HHH starts choking for no real apparent reason before a spinebuster gets two more with Jericho coming out to pull the referee to the floor. A Lionsault gives Angle two so Jericho decks the ref and the beatdown is on. Hogan comes out for the save and beats down Angle....to set up a Pedigree for the pin. WHAT??? Jericho pulled the referee out, hit a Lionsault and beat the referee up before Hogan came in and beat up both bad guys AND THE REFEREE DIDN'T NOTICE??? Are you kidding me?

Rating: C+. The match was what you would expect from these two but WOW that ending was ridiculous. It's not like HHH absolutely had to pin Angle

here as he was getting double teamed by two former World Champions and...oh wait it was HHH. How did I miss that when I was saying all this made no sense? Of course he had to beat Angle. It means so much after having Hogan come in for the save and all.

Post match HHH yells at Hogan for coming out. They get in each others faces and HHH tells him to stay out of his business until Backlash. Hogan says HHH is his business until Backlash (Shouldn't that be until after Backlash?) and goes to leave but Angle hits HHH from behind, knocking him into HHH. Hulk hits the usual and holds up the title. Jericho and Angle beat the good guys down and stand....well about average height to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Let's get this out of the way at the start: this was WAY better than any of the other single brand shows from either Raw or Smackdown to date. There was good, longer wrestling and story advancement with characters that people care about. Really lame main event feud aside (especially with the Hogan nostalgia not working as well as it was a few weeks ago, likely due to a lack of the Rock's charisma helping things), a lot of the show made more sense.

However, we still have a lot of major problems. You have Maven and Al Snow as the only challengers to the Tag Team Titles, Rikishi vs. Albert and Test vs. Mark Henry looming and the regular "Vince gets a gorgeous woman" storyline. They're starting to come around on top but the midcard and lower card are both death right now and that's going to last for a long time until we get some new characters over. It's a better show but they really need to fix some things.

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