

Smackdown – May 2, 2002: The Expiration Date For Nostalgia

Smackdown

Date: May 2, 2002

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We've got a big match scheduled for tonight as WWF World Champion Hulk Hogan is defending against Chris Jericho. I'm sure we'll get an explanation for why Smackdown can have a #1 contender when it's been established that the shows trade possession of that status. Maybe Jericho can carry Hogan to passable tonight too but I wouldn't bet on either. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Undertaker costing HHH the title shot last week and busting Hogan open on Raw the next week.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Rikishi/Hurricane vs. Billy and Chuck

Rikishi and Hurricane, who have no previous association, are challenging. Billy slugs away at Rikishi's head to start. You would think a veteran would know better than that but Billy has never been the brightest guy. Hurricane sunset flips Chuck for two as Tazz tries to figure out a connection between the challengers. Well at least he's trying to do something. The champs take over on Hurricane until a DDT gets him out of trouble. Rikishi comes in to clean house but Rico comes in to kick Hurricane down and give Chuck the retaining pin.

Rating: D. The only good thing here was starting the show with a match. You would think they could come up with some better teams than "here are two guys with no connection at all" but that's how the division is likely to work for a good while because they didn't think this Brand Split all the way through.

Hurricane chokeslams Rico to blow off some steam and Rikishi adds a Stinkface.

Lance Storm and Val Venis are in the back when Kurt Angle comes in. Kurt says neither of them have done anything on Smackdown so he offers them the chance to model his real shirt. Venis says no but Storm seems interested. He does however point out that there might be some risks involved. Angle isn't worried about fans chanting YOU SUCK. I mean, this is Angle's town. They would never chant YOU SUCK at him. Angle makes fun of Mario Lemieux and that's about it.

Here are Angle and Storm for the shirt reveal, mere minutes after he showed it to the camera. Angle defends Storm despite his bad case of being Canadian and reads off all the accomplishments on the back of the shirt. See, it's only available in XXL or larger because he's done so many things. That explains why the thing is so baggy on Storm.

Here's Edge to interrupt of course, complete with Venis in the YOU SUCK shirt. You know, shouldn't that say I SUCK? It doesn't fit for the chants but it makes sense on the shirt. Angle another match with Edge at Judgment Day but Storm whispers a suggestion to Angle, who thinks we should make it a hair vs. hair match. Edge agrees as the stipulations are getting fast tracked around here. Angle isn't sure about putting his own hair up but Val suggest giving him a YOU SUCK if you want to see the match. That's enough for Kurt to agree and Edge promises to make him red, white and bald.

Earlier today, Randy Orton was working out when Stacy Keibler came up to hit on him some more. This seems to annoy him, which should probably make him a heel.

Hardcore Holly vs. Randy Orton

Rematch from last week. Orton's headlock doesn't get him anywhere so Holly goes with the hard chops that he uses on rookies. The Oklahoma roll only gets two on Holly this week and it's time for more chops. Orton gets in a high crossbody for two and that's enough to make Holly hit him low for the DQ.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here and I'm sure we'll get to see more nothing in a week or so when Orton can get another clean win because the first one didn't matter. There's some value in having Orton get a first win here but having the two of them feud for a few weeks isn't going to go anywhere as it's still Hardcore Holly.

Holly gives him an Alabama Slam on the stage to keep this going.

Faarooq tries to give Mark Henry some of the money he's won betting on Mark's strength in the last few weeks. D-Von comes in to say that money can go in his donation box. Henry says no so D-Von threatens violence.

Vince talks about wanting to kiss Stacy's belly button (seriously) when Chris Jericho interrupts. After Vince freaks out over the interruption (fair), Jericho talks his way into making tonight a No DQ match and getting everyone barred from ringside. Jericho has a seat but Vince throws him out so Stacy can get some more attention. Vince to Stacy: "What do you say we get busy?" This is another one of those segments designed to do nothing more than set up stuff for later.

Tributes to Wahoo McDaniel and Lou Thesz. That makes me feel better after they didn't even mention Thesz's passing on Monday.

Lance Storm/Kurt Angle vs. Edge/Big Valbowski

Angle slugs Edge into the corner to start so it's off to Val for an elbow to Kurt's jaw. Amazingly enough, Val can't keep up with Angle and gets beaten down in the bad corner. Storm comes in and gets slammed down, setting up something like an Octopus Hold on the mat. The fast tagging continues and it's right back to Angle suplexing Edge to take over.

Storm rips at Edge's hair, which isn't often a body part that's worked over. Edge powerslams Storm out of the air and it's Val getting the hot tag to clean house. Everything breaks down and Angle starts throwing suplexes until Edge spears him down. Val's Money Shot is broken up as Angle runs the corner for the superplex and Storm superkicks Val into a rollup for the pin.

Rating: B. Now THIS is how you keep a feud going while also giving

someone else some ring time. Bringing in two talented guys with nothing else to do is a great way to keep Edge and Angle's story going without having them burn through matches. The match was really good too, which helps set Smackdown apart from Raw. There's your tagline: The wrestling doesn't suck!

Here's Jericho for a talk to hype up the main event. Jericho proclaims himself the king of the world because he beat HHH last week and is about to beat Hollywood Has-Been to become champion a-gain. Tonight Jericho is going to drive a stake through the heart of Hulkamania, as so many others have tried over the years.

This brings out HHH, who is out here AGAINST VINCE'S ORDERS. If HHH touches Jericho, his career is over. Well you know what that means. Jericho goes into a rant about how HHH can't do anything to him and gets right in HHH's face to talk about it. This is the cool HHH though so he just smiles. HHH knows something Jericho doesn't: he won't win the title tonight. That's quite the bombshell Trips.

Mark Henry/Faarooq vs. Christian/Test

Henry clotheslines the Canadians down to start and gorilla presses Christian onto Faarooq's knee. The bad guys start beating on Faarooq as D-Von comes through the crowd for a collection. Henry gets annoyed and throws the money into the crowd. That leads to a chase and Christian hits the reverse DDT for the pin on Faarooq. Too much time was spent on D-Von to rate it but this was the match you would expect here.

Cruiserweight Title: Tajiri vs. Billy Kidman

Kidman is challenging in the same match we've been watching for over a month now. Tajiri starts in on the leg and Kidman is in very early trouble. An enziguri gives Kidman a breather and we actually get a Kidman chant. The Tajiri handspring is broken up by a dropkick to the back because it takes so long to set up. Kidman stays on him by breaking up the Tarantula but Tajiri shoves Torrie into the path of a charging Kidman, setting up the Buzzsaw Kick to retain the title.

Rating: C. If there's a point to this feud, I've yet to see it. These two

are just going back and forth with nothing really changing and a match not even lasting four minutes isn't going to make it any better. This isn't a division and the matches aren't exciting enough to make me want to see them again. In other words, it's the same problems we're seeing today.

Vince and Stacy are putting their clothes back on (her makeup is still perfect of course) when Vince tells her to send HHH in. That's quite the followup. After a break, Vince tells HHH that he has to stay out of the main event. That's the third time we've established that tonight but at least we got to see Vince after fun time with Stacy.

WWF World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho is challenging and gets shoved down to set up some posing to start. They're going to be much better off if Hogan stands in the middle of the ring and does as little as possible here. Jericho gets in a shoulder and steals the bandana because there's no shame in Canada.

Hogan pops up and fires down right hands in the corner until Jericho gets in a low blow. The fans get behind Hogan (though not enough to actually watch the shows) and he sends Jericho outside for a breather. Jericho gets in a few shots and comes off the top with an ax handle as an "I'm With Meltzer" sign can be seen.

Back in and Hogan scores with right hands but misses the big.....elbow? The announcers are as confused as I am and there's the Lionsault but HHH comes out for a distraction. HHH sits in on commentary because Jericho doesn't think to cover Hogan in the minute and a half he's watched HHH slowly walk around. As soon as you see HHH on the ramp, why not cover Hogan because HHH can't run down there in time?

Hogan Hulks Up but the legdrop is countered into the Walls. Amazingly enough, a Boston crab isn't enough to make Hogan give up. Jericho pops Hogan in the back with a chair as HHH suggests that Undertaker is here. On cue, Undertaker's music kicks on but no one comes out. It serves its purpose though as the distraction lets Hogan grab a rollup to retain.

Rating: D. They can't get the title off of Hogan fast enough at this

point. The problem with nostalgia acts is simple: people like them in small doses and Hogan's was over a long time ago. It's one thing to have him do his old schtick at Wrestlemania in front of 65,000 people but there's nothing special about something like this. If he could still have perfectly watchable matches like Flair at this point it would be one thing, but Hogan is standing there while everyone else does the work because he's too old and broken down.

Overall Rating: D+. The main difference between Raw and Smackdown is this show has something to look forward to. At least on here they're setting up some fresh stuff (Edge getting a big push with the Angle feud, Orton looking to have potential) and you get at least one good match with some time every week. Over on Raw you get good talking from Flair and Austin but at some point that has to lead to a good match. I'll take the good matches leading to something unknown over the good talking leading to a bad match any day and that's what you get with Smackdown over Raw at the moment.

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