

Smackdown – May 30, 2002: Brutality, Bald Men, and a Strange Edit

Smackdown

Date: May 30, 2002

Location: Saddledome, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're still in Canada and maybe we can find the next challenger to Undertaker for the WWE World Title. As much fun as it was to see him make Tommy Dreamer drink tobacco juice and then beat him up, I could go for an actual match with a challenger instead of just random attacks. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Hulk Hogan's retirement from last week to set up what is likely our show long story. Vince McMahon isn't going to let Hogan retire as punishment for Hogan leaving him ten years ago. An explanation for what he means by that might be nice for the casual fans.

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

Rikishi and Rico are defending and Rico comes out to the challengers' music. Chuck gets sent into the corner for an early Stinkface attempt but Rikishi has to deal with Rico. A double flapjack plants the big man but he comes right back with a double clothesline. Rico tags himself in as Rikishi sits on Chuck's chest, leaving the Samoan to superkick his partner right into the cover to retain the titles. If this is the best they can do with the Tag Team Titles, drop them already because this is an embarrassment.

Hogan arrives.

Torrie Wilson kisses Maven and sexual escapades are implied. Tajiri watches from behind a door. So in other words, Torrie and Maven are Booker and the NWO while Tajiri is Goldust, even down to sneaking around

behind them to eavesdrop.

Christian vs. Maven

Maven knocks him outside to start and scores with a dive as the announcers plug Tough Enough 2. Back in and Maven's middle rope bulldog gets two but here's Tajiri to kick Maven in the head, setting up the Unprettier for the fast pin.

Vince is on the phone for some exposition about how Benoit is allowed to go to either show because he's injured. Since when was that written into the Draft charter? Dawn Marie Rinaldi (the last name was later dropped), a paralegal, comes in to give Vince something to sign. Chris Jericho interrupts them to complain about his match with Faarooq tonight. Vince doesn't think much about that as HHH has to face Test tonight as well. This is your "Still To Come" segment. The Canadian leaves and Vince gets comfortable with Dawn. I guess Stacy is off this week.

GET THE F OUT!

Chris Jericho vs. Faarooq

We start with the power game, including a clothesline to put Jericho on the floor. A hot shot onto the barricade has Jericho in even more trouble and Faarooq drops a knee for two. Jericho realizes he's only fighting Faarooq and gets in a middle rope dropkick to take over. With the wrestling not working, Jericho pulls off a turnbuckle pad followed by the bulldog. The Lionsault misses though and Faarooq hits that always good looking spinebuster. Not that it matters as Jericho sends him into the exposed buckle for the pin.

Rating: D-. Less than two weeks ago, Chris Jericho was inside the Cell in a major match with HHH. In the last two weeks, he's had a match against Mark Henry and had to cheat against Faarooq. HHH fought Lance Storm and gets Test tonight, which isn't much better but they're almost guaranteed to be stronger matches. How does this stuff benefit anyone?

Lance Storm asks D-Von to take his confession....in the men's room. Storm's sin: being from western Canada. D-Von forgives him but isn't

pleased with Storm's small donation to the building fund.

Hogan is in the back for an interview but first let's stop to soak in some cheers. Hulk was all ready to retire last week but Vince wants to treat him like an indentured servant. Vince can stick that contract in a rather uncomfortable place and Hogan will follow it with his size fifteen. After winning the title, Hogan only has one thing left to do: fight Vince McMahon, one on one. Vince comes in for a staredown but Angle jumps Hogan from behind with a steel exercise bar. There's a big match at King of the Ring.

WWE Undisputed Title: Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

Here's a major feud three years from now. Before the match, Undertaker actually sucks up to the Calgary fans for reasons unclear. Orton accepts a handshake to start and is actually granted a clean break in the corner. Undertaker walks into an armdrag and backdrop before a clothesline puts him on the floor. A big dive follows and I'm stunned at Undertaker actually selling here.

The Oklahoma roll gets two on the champ and a surprised Undertaker clotheslines him down. We get the second exposed buckle of the night but Orton gets caught with some dropkicks. That earns him a running DDT though and it's time for Undertaker to get serious. Unfortunately serious means being sent into the exposed buckle, allowing Orton to hit the Overdrive (or whatever it's called this week) for two.

I'm not sure why but there's a major edit there as Orton grabs the near leg for the cover but a camera cut shows the far leg being held on the kickout. On top of that, Undertaker loses his bandana in between camera cuts. No idea what that's about. That's enough for Undertaker though as it's Snake Eyes and a big boot for two, followed by Orton grabbing a rollup for his own near fall. A chokeslam retains the title.

Rating: C-. Not terrible here actually as Orton actually got in a lot instead of just getting squashed. I'm not sure what was up with Undertaker being nice at the beginning (just pure cockiness maybe) or the weird camera cut in the middle. At least Orton got a rub here because that's what they need more than anything else: young guys getting to look

good. Also, it makes sense to see Orton's offense still being very basic. His big move is that Overdrive and the rest is all basic stuff. He's adding more stuff though and that's how he should be going.

Post match the rookie gets beaten up some more until HHH comes out to clean house. A challenge is issued but Undertaker is sent off by the Game's music. I can't imagine it was intentional, but you could look back at that as a sign that HHH thought something of Orton. Randy joined up with HHH in January so it's not like there's an unthinkable gap of time in there.

Hurricane/Kidman vs. Chavo Guerrero/Tajiri

Hurricane takes Tajiri to the floor to start and does the rocking horse move to send Tajiri's head into the bottom buckle over and over. Tazz: "Just like Maven and Torrie!" A superkick gets two on Tajiri and it's off to Kidman (who looks really weird in regular trunks) for the Sky High on Chavo.

Tajiri goes with the standard cheating by kicking Kidman from the apron and grabbing a Tarantula to take it a step further. That just makes him cocky though and it's time for Kidman to counter a powerbomb with the X Factor. Hurricane comes back in to clean house with the Overcast getting two.

A flip dive takes Tajiri out again, followed by Kidman busting out a shooting star from the top to the floor onto both villains. Back in and Hurricane's music hits as a message pops up on screen, saying the reveal is next week. As a bonus we see a woman's hands on Hurricane's chest, meaning this is likely going to be ANOTHER love triangle story. Tajiri kicks the distracted Hurricane for the pin.

Rating: B. This is what I'm looking for with the cruiserweights, minus the angle that is. These guys know how to fly around the ring and make the division look like a lot of fun. That shooting star from Kidman looked awesome and is the kind of thing I want out of this division. There's no need for anything beyond basic characters because the action should be the driving force around here.

HHH vs. Test

Fallout from Test attacking HHH last week and I'm having flashbacks to 1999 when this meant something. Triple H knocks him into the corner and out to the floor for a good posting. Cue Lance Storm for a distraction so Test can get in a quick legdrop as HHH gets back inside. A good looking side slam gets two and Storm gets in a better looking superkick on the floor. Back in and HHH gets the spinebuster so Storm jumps on the apron like a good evil Canadian. Storm is finally thrown at Test and eats a big boot from his buddy. Cue the Undertaker for a distraction though and Test kicks HHH in the face for the pin.

Rating: D. Here's the thing: this really doesn't do anything for Test because it was all about HHH being dragged down by the overwhelming odds. Test really could have been anyone here and that's not doing anyone any good. Orton got in offense on Undertaker on his own and looked like he had potential. HHH beat the heck out of Test anytime it was one on one. That doesn't help Test, which makes this little more than time filler until Undertaker got there.

The beatdown is on post match, including a chokeslam and a bunch of chair shots. Referees and suits finally break it up.

The cage is lowered.

Val Venis tells Edge to rip off Angle's wig. So Venis has gone from an adult star to a censorship advocate to Edge's buddy. That's quite the character evolution.

Angle swears his hair is natural and threatens pain for anyone who tries to show footage of his haircut. Violence against Edge is promised.

The Hart Family, including Stu, is in the crowd.

Kurt Angle vs. Edge

They have a lot of time for this one and it's inside a cage with pins/submissions or escape as winning options. For some reason Edge tries to take it to the mat early on before opting to send Angle flying into the cage. A spear attempt hits cage though and we hit a front facelock.

The rolling German suplexes get two on Edge and he gets thrown into the cage a few times to draw some Canadian blood.

Edge's half nelson faceplant has Angle staggered but it's time for a ref bump. You can tell this is going to get stupid now. A belly to back superplex cuts off Angle's escape attempt and Tazz is amazed that Kurt's hair is still on. Edge goes up and gets low blowed back down, setting up one heck of a super Angle Slam. It's always cool looking when someone goes flying through the air into a big crash.

Angle goes over the top and escapes but here's Hogan for revenge from earlier. Back from a break with another Angle Slam getting two. Edge hits his own Slam but gets caught in the ankle lock. Angle is sent into the cage so Edge puts on his own ankle lock (Angle LOVED that stealing finishers spot).

That's reversed as well and Angle goes over the top, only to have Edge kick the door open to crotch Angle back down. Back inside and Kurt tries to run the corner for a superplex but a top rope spear (more like a shoulder but the timing was hard to pull off) gives Edge the pin. So does that make it one fall apiece?

Rating: B+. Hogan really brings this one down as he feels so out of place. You have a match with Angle and Edge beating the heck out of each other but then you do a false finish (with Angle winning completely legally) for the sake of advancing Angle vs. Hogan. I don't see a reason why you couldn't wait until after the cage match and then start the new feud as it's not like losing to Edge is going to take away all of Angle's heat. Hogan didn't help Edge get the win at the end but he was way too big of a factor in the match, which was excellent without him but just very, very good with him.

Post match Hogan goes after Angle but can't get the wig off. Hogan's music plays to end the show because that's how things work around here.

Overall Rating: C+. The first hour or so was dreadful but once you get to the meat of the show, this turned around in a hurry with some hard work and good wrestling. The holes are still there with stuff like HHH vs. Undertaker for the title (though there isn't another main eventer ready

for the shot at the moment) and the mess that is the Tag Team Titles. The main event more than bails the show out though and is worth checking out if you have the time.

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