

Smackdown – June 7, 2002: That Might Be A Record

Smackdown

Date: June 6, 2002

Location: Cox Convention Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Attendance: 6,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're two and a half weeks away from King of the Ring and it looks like we're coming up on Hulk Hogan vs. Kurt Angle and HHH challenging the Undertaker for the WWE World Title. Neither of those are exactly interesting but I'll take it over Hogan being in the main event again. We also get to find out where Edge goes from here after getting a pretty decisive win in his feud with Kurt. Let's get to it.

Most of the roster is in the ring. Vince comes out and says the winner gets a title shot at King of the Ring. Just in case the next challenger wasn't clear when Undertaker beat HHH up last week. This is another segment that didn't need to air. Just have the ring announcer say this is for a title shot and then the announcers can repeat it. Vince: "The battle royal begins NOW!" So they're not waiting until later and bringing everyone back out?

Battle Royal

D-Von, Lance Storm, Test, Val Venis, Albert, Faarooq, Kidman, Randy Orton, Hardcore Holly, Chavo Guerrero, Christian, Hurricane, Godfather, Al Snow, Mark Henry, HHH, Hulk Hogan, Chris Jericho, Hugh Morrus, Kurt Angle

Godfather, in his final match with the company, and Faarooq are thrown out early on to clear some space. D-Von follows them out and that's got to be racist somehow. Test gets rid of Kidman to avoid an Affirmative Action issue and Christian throws Venis out. Christian is eliminated, followed by HHH being thrown through the ropes for a double beating by Test and Storm, neither of whom have been eliminated either.

Orton and Jericho go out next with Henry eliminating Storm and Chavo a few seconds later. A chokeslam to Angle is quickly countered and there go Hurricane and Hugh Morrus. Angle stays hot by getting rid of Albert and throwing Holly through the ropes. Henry is tossed as well and we're down to Holly, Test, Angle, Jericho, HHH and Hogan. HHH knees Angle in the face and Holly actually throws Kurt out. So Holly is the latest veteran getting a push? Maybe, but he certainly does get a big boot from Test to get us down to four.

The evil Canadians double team our resident superheroes for all of five seconds before Jericho and Test are thrown out, leaving us with the big showdown. We get the staredown and Hogan rips off the shirt. Wouldn't HHH benefit from kicking him while his arms are busy? Instead HHH hits a Cactus Clothesline and we've got two winners.

Rating: D-. This was bad even by battle royal standards with little doubt about who was winning. Why Hogan is still anywhere near the main event scene is beyond me as this run has been one of the biggest disasters in a long time. I get why they wouldn't want to announce Hogan vs. HHH all over again but was there no better way to do this?

Post break Vince comes on screen to say he's called Undertaker, who doesn't care who he faces at King of the Ring. Therefore, there's going to be a regular #1 contenders match later tonight, making that whole battle royal entirely pointless.

Angle thinks it's Screw Kurt Angle Month and wants to fight Holly tonight. I get the idea of elevating people, but they're elevating the same characters who have been around for years. Val Venis is still Val Venis, Test is still Test and Hardcore Holly is still Hardcore Holly. You can't just throw these same tired acts out there and expect it to go anywhere. At least Storm has only been around for about a year and is still relatively fresh, but almost everyone else feels like a lost cause.

Billy and Chuck are annoyed at Rico for losing the titles. Rico comes in and says they've let themselves go, including Billy having a pimple on his cheek. Yes that cheek, which we get to see due to reasons of comedy.

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

Billy and Chuck are challenging and this is under elimination rules for no apparent reason. Rico and Chuck get things started and a wristlock makes Rico tap in five seconds. Tazz: "Looks like Rico has a limp wrist." Cole thinks Rico did that on purpose. Rikishi cleans house on his own because the Brand Split has turned Rikishi into some kind of juggernaut who can beat up former Tag Team Champions. A Samoan drop gets rid of Billy so we're down to Rikishi vs. Chuck for the Tag Team Titles in about two minutes.

The eliminated Billy sends Rikishi into the steps as Rico removes a turnbuckle pad. Something resembling Snake Eyes sends Rikishi into the buckle for two more. Billy's interference fails so Rico kicks Rikishi in the face, setting up a superkick from Chuck to give Billy and Chuck the titles back, despite Rikishi's foot being on the ropes.

Rating: F. I'm really not sure if this was an upgrade or another step down. To recap the last two weeks: Rico was thrown into this story by Vince (never involved again), won the Tag Team Titles, failed to screw his partner (and himself) over and then succeeded in screwing him over to give the titles back to Billy and Chuck. This story served no purpose other than to waste the teams' time and devalue the titles without even offering any comedy. Oh and Rikishi is now a big deal for some reason.

I know the Dudleyz and the Hardy's are stale but they're WAY better than this. Does Billy and Chuck vs. Matt and Jeff sound worse than this mess? Is there any reason why the titles aren't on both shows? Raw doesn't exactly have a ton of tag teams either but at least it opens up some more options. Do something with these things because they're horrible right now.

Hurricane finds a note in catering saying whoever is leaving these notes is in his locker room. Wait....wouldn't he have JUST BEEN THERE? When was that note placed? Back from a break and Hurricane finds Nidia in his locker room. Apparently they hooked up once but Hurricane says it's over. Cue Jamie Noble to jump him from behind because he's with Nidia now. So there's your next Cruiserweight Title feud and another vindictive woman because that's one of the two ways WWE books women: vindictive or sleeping with anyone who can get them ahead.

Also, what was the point of the notes? The picture Nidia was cropped out of last week looked like any standard photo of a wrestler posing with a fan but it was supposed to be some relationship? Ok, fine, but what was gained by teasing notes if it was just "oh hi Hurricane, I'm Nidia. Remember when we used to sleep together, which doesn't seem to cause any major issues?"? The division has all of four people at the moment. It's ok to just introduce someone as a new challenger.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Christian vs. Big Valbowski

If officially renaming Val by one of his own nicknames is the best they can do for a repackaging, they're in a lot of trouble. Christian jumps him at the bell (that's getting way too common) and gets two off a suplex. Val comes back with a spinebuster and a reverse figure four of all things. He might not be the most interesting person in the ring but Val always seemed like he was trying and new holds like that are a reason why. The Unprettier is countered into the Blue Thunder Bomb to give Venis the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much here but I was always a bit of a Val fan. Neither is exactly an interesting option but Christian is much higher up on the totem pole than Venis. Like I said earlier: they're trying to move some people up the roster but fans are going to see Val Venis and roll their eyes.

Linda and Jackie (the Tough Enough winners) come in to introduce themselves to Vince. The boss is of course impressed but here's Ivory to yell about respect and etiquette. Vince makes a match...for Velocity. Their big draws so far have been a lingerie match and now this. And people wonder why Velocity never went anywhere.

Kurt Angle vs. Hardcore Holly

Holly ducks a right hand to start and scores with a hot shot. A sleeper slows Holly down and Cole calls Holly the toughest man in WWE today. Ok then. Holly reverses into a sleeper of his own which is reversed into a belly to back suplex to put both guys down. Angle goes shoulder first into the post and a powerslam give Hardcore two.

Things are picking up a bit so Angle picks Holly up off the top turnbuckle for the running belly to belly superplex. Holly comes right back with a powerbomb but the Alabama Slam is countered into an ankle lock. There's no tap since Holly is tough so Angle rolls him up, while grabbing the rope, for the pin instead.

Rating: C+. Actually good here, which is the case for most of these veterans receiving renewed pushes. They're certainly better than stuff like Tommy Dreamer's vomit over on Raw but they're not exactly interesting. That being said, I'll definitely take veterans having watchable matches over gross out humor every single day.

Holly hits the Alabama Slam but can't get the wig off as Kurt hits him low. Angle grabs a chair but gets it knocked into his own head. Why Holly doesn't go for the wig again now that Angle is knocked out isn't clear.

Torrie Wilson visits Maven in the hospital (broken leg) and a banana is involved. Maven tells the nurse he's very elevated. The nurse (one of the worst actresses I've seen since Nidia) leaves and Torrie takes off her top. We cut to Tajiri at the nurse's desk, trying to find Maven's room. For some reason Tajiri grabs his side like he's having an appendicitis but stands up and goes to Maven's room.

We look back at the end of the battle royal and the announcers argue over Hogan vs. HHH.

Tajiri is now posing as a doctor and gets called away for an emergency. Shouldn't the orderlies realize he's an impostor? Also have we gotten an explanation for why this story is continuing if Maven is supposed to have a broken leg?

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Edge vs. Chris Jericho

And never mind as Edge has a shoulder injury from the cage match and can't compete. He has to be out for awhile but he's always willing to take the risk. When he comes back, his only goal is to win the Undisputed Title. He can't wrestle tonight though, meaning Jericho advances. Jericho jumps him anyway and the beating is on until Venis makes the save.

Stacy Keibler and Dawn Marie get all catty over who gets Vince. I wonder who wrote this one.

Storm tells Kidman that the office thinks Kidman is boring but Kidman gets in a jab at Storm's haircut.

Maven is all smiley as Torrie stands next to him. Cue Tajiri to mist her and kick him in the knee. So the medical emergency went nowhere and served to waste even more time on a show full of wasted time.

Lance Storm vs. Billy Kidman

Billy tries to fly early on but gets dropkicked off the top for his efforts. A springboard clothesline gives Storm two and a hard DDT is good for the same. The half crab is broken up but Storm crotches him to avoid the shooting star. Lance superkicks him for the pin to end this entertaining filler.

HHH doesn't have anything to say about Undertaker beating him up or having to face Hogan.

We look back at Jericho attacking Edge.

Hulk Hogan vs. HHH

Hogan starts with his variety of clotheslines and punches, one of which sends HHH outside onto his bad elbow. What doesn't kill HHH (which is nothing) makes him stronger though and he sends Hogan into the post to take over. Back in and we hit the sleeper on Hogan with the announcers asking how much damage that does to the elbow.

The answer seems to be "not much" as the hold stays on until we get two arm drops and a finger wave. It's Hulk Up time with the big boot setting up a missed legdrop. The Pedigree is countered and the legdrop gets two. Hogan is shocked at the near fall and gets Pedigreed for the clean pin in less than seven minutes.

Rating: D. Well ok then. This could have been HHH vs. almost anyone but it happened to be the fastest clean job Hogan has ever done (I can't imagine he's ever done one faster and there aren't many to pick from in

the first place). HHH vs. Undertaker was obvious and I'd prefer they use Hogan for this instead of some up and coming name as there's not much of a rub to be gotten from a short match with HHH going over clean.

Hogan shakes HHH's hand but Angle and Undertaker (who Vince had been calling "at home" all night) come in for the beatdown to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This is a weird one as it's very clear that Smackdown is suffering from a weak roster. There's way too much down time and a lot of what they have comes off like filler. I get the idea of pushing the older veterans and I'll take that over throwing out disasters which have no chance of going anywhere. It's not a horrible show by any stretch but they're really in need of some fresh talent around here. The big goal should be to develop some fresh talent and if that means sacrificing the Torrie loves Maven and Dawn and Stacy love Vince segments, so be it.

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