

Smackdown – November 18, 2005: Viva La Legacy

Smackdown

Date: November 18, 2005

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is another request and it's the Smackdown version of the Eddie Guerrero Tribute Show. On top of that, it was also taped the same night as the Raw version (double taping on a Sunday due to the European trip) which was the day Eddie passed away. I've grown to respect Eddie a bit more over the years so it should be interesting to see how this goes. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Smackdown World Champion Batista in a low rider to Eddie's music for a perfect opening. Batista immediately starts crying and says he's not sure he's the right man to be out here. All he knows is that Eddie loved his family and loved this business. He had a lot of demons to deal with but the pain went away when he walked through that curtain. Batista has to pause a bit to fight back the tears and you can feel the real emotion here. Eddie is with God now and Batista isn't going to let anyone ever forget him.

Eddie video set to 3 Doors Down's Here Without You. They're my favorite band so this is about as perfect as it's going to get. Above all else though: that frog splash was a thing of beauty.

Clip from the Eddie documentary focusing on his childhood and family. It's kind of weird to hear Eddie talking about his brothers and sister.

The low rider, with Batista's title on the hood, will be in the aisle all night.

Matt Hardy vs. Carlito

This is interpromotional as Carlito is from Raw. As you're probably going to guess, these matches aren't going to mean a thing. Matt is freshly on Smackdown after losing the feud with Edge on Raw. It's so strange to see Matt looking absolutely svelte. He's probably 30 pounds lighter than he is today and looks great. Matt grabs the afro to start but gets sent outside to give Carlito control.

The announcers aren't even bothering with the match as they're just telling Eddie stories for a nice touch. Carlito loads up the middle rope legdrop but dives into a raised boot (still hate that spot). The Side Effect gives Matt two but Carlito grabs the Backstabber for the same. Matt comes right back with the real middle rope legdrop and the Twist of Fate is good for the win.

Rating: C. This is a good indication of how this night is going and there's nothing wrong with that. There's no need to try and make this show mean anything storyline wise so just go out there, have decent matches, and give the fans something to smile about. Good little match here too.

Vince gives a tribute to Eddie, who was a true craftsman. He actually tears up talking about how much Eddie loved his family, both blood and co-workers.

Another documentary clip talking about Eddie meeting Vickie then marrying, losing and getting her back.

Road Warrior Animal/Heidenreich vs. Lance Cade/Trevor Murdoch

I still have issues calling Animal and Heidenreich the LOD. This is another interpromotional match, which is probably going to be a trend all night. Cade and Heidenreich start things off with the cowboy being taken down off a hard clothesline. The announcers get in a debate over which Tag Team Titles belong on which show (which is why I just go with the show's name and ignore the official names) as a cheap shot puts Heidenreich in trouble. That goes nowhere as he spears the villains down and makes the hot tag. Everything breaks down and the Doomsday Device ends Cade.

Rating: D+. I'm going a bit lighter on the matches tonight as there's no reason to go crazy with the ratings, especially when the wrestlers probably aren't all there mentally. This version of the LOD never worked as Heidenreich didn't feel like Hawk at all. It didn't help that the tag divisions were such a mess at this point and even interpromotional stuff wasn't interesting.

Booker T. and Sharmell miss Eddie with Booker telling a story about getting in a fist fight with Eddie back in WCW.

Documentary stuff on the Lie, Cheat and Steal vignettes. These were some of the first things that really made me appreciate Eddie as a character instead of just a performer. This transitions into a look at all the cheating over the years, which really was hilarious at times.

A sweaty Big Show is glad Eddie isn't in pain anymore.

Eddie talks about playing other sports but giving them up because he only cared about wrestling. We also hear about his childhood growing up around wrestling because his dad was a promoter.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Chavo still has blonde hair from the Kerwin White gimmick, which was completely done after Eddie passed away. JBL has image consultant Jillian Hall with him. Some forearms in the corner have Chavo in early trouble so he snaps off a headlock takeover. We hit the cheating, including a thumb to the eye to send JBL outside. That's quite the selling for a basic move.

Back in and the crossbody is caught in a fall away slam to put JBL in control like he should be. The heavy right hands in the corner are accompanied by stories of sewage and burritos. We hit the sleeper, which looks really weird from someone so big on someone so much smaller. Or maybe it's just that JBL isn't good at using that move.

Chavo comes back with a dropkick and a DDT to break up another fall away slam. It's time for a few chairs and of course Chavo throws one to JBL and falls down just like Eddie did so many times. Ok I smiled at that

one. The distraction lets Chavo get in a low blow, followed by Three Amigos and a frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C-. The result here means nothing at all as this was all about paying tribute to Eddie. Chavo winning was the only possible option here as he was basically Eddie's little brother and could wrestle the same style so well. It's not a good match (fine enough though) but it was exactly what it was supposed to be.

Video of Eddie's mom talking about his childhood.

The announcers talk about Eddie a bit.

Video on Eddie at Wrestlemania XX. That was the rather awesome match against Kurt Angle where Eddie took his boot off, which they played up in the Summerslam rematch. This leads to the ending of the show which is really hard to watch now.

JBL was Eddie's arch nemesis but he was lucky enough to be his friend.

Video on Eddie winning the World Title from Brock Lesnar at No Way Out 2004.

Cruiserweight Battle Royal

Tajiri, Gregory Helms, Paul London, Kid Kash, Brian Kendrick, Scotty 2 Hotty, Nunzio, Funaki, Psychosis, Super Crazy, Juventud

Nothing on the line as Juventud is already Cruiserweight Champion. Everybody gangs up on Helms and Tajiri (the Raw guys) but don't bother to actually eliminate either of them. Kendrick gets kicked out for the first elimination and Super Crazy goes out as well. Tajiri and Funaki follow them, leaving London to do a bunch of springboard kicks to the back. Helms and Nunzio take a double Worm.

Scotty dumps Kash and London does the same to Helms to get us down to five. Make that three as Nunzio gets rid of Scotty, leaving us with Nunzio, Juventud and London. Nunzio's attempts at alliances don't work and the Italian is sent out. Both guys wind up on the apron for a kicking battle until they both crawl back inside. Juventud dropkicks London out

for the win.

Rating: D+. I've seen worse battle royals but few that were more pointless. The champ is entered into a match and then wins the thing? The division wasn't the most interesting in the world at this point and other than having some cruiserweight stuff involved on the show, I have no idea what this has to do with Eddie.

Video on Eddie and Chyna, which was pretty awesome stuff. His kids try to figure out what Latino Heat means.

We look at Eddie's last match, a DQ win over Mr. Anderson.

Shane McMahon talks about how cool it is to have major families like the Guerreros (and the Jarretts). He talks about what Eddie meant and breaks down in tears.

Video of the end of Wrestlemania XX with JR's voice giving out.

Chris Benoit vs. HHH

HHH is a heel here but plays to the crowd during the entrances. Given the circumstances, that's totally fine. An early Crossface attempt sends HHH to the ropes and we take a breather. Back in and Crossface attempt the sequel gives us the same plot (but likely fewer laughs). This time Benoit follows him out and sends HHH head first into the steps, only to get sent crashing outside as well.

Back from a break with HHH hitting some forearms to the back and getting two off a spinebuster. We hit the abdominal stretch but the powers of an EDDIE chant....don't really do much as HHH throws Benoit down. Your standard sleeper reversal sequence is followed by an exchange of failed finishers. That means it's time for the rolling Germans on HHH and a Swan Dive for two. The Pedigree is countered into the Crossface, which Benoit lets go in favor of a rollup for the pin.

Rating: B. Even the announcers said this was just about having a good match and that's what we got here. When HHH gets rid of the whole "I'm amazing and one of the best ever" stuff, he can put on some outstanding performances because he really is that talented. I liked this match for

different reasons than I usually would have but it was still good stuff.

Benoit chants Eddie's name and Dean Malenko comes out for the big hug ala Wrestlemania XX to wrap things up.

Overall Rating: A. This is a weird one to grade as the wrestling was actually good but it had nothing to do with the show's quality. This was about celebrating Eddie's life and nothing else. I had a lot of fun watching it and actually started missing Eddie as the show went on. I've never been the biggest Eddie fan but things like this, where you look back at his career and life, really show how special he truly was. I may not be a huge fan but I certainly respect him, which is probably more important.

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