

Smackdown – July 25, 2002: Who's That Jumping Off the Cage?

Smackdown

Date: July 25, 2002

Location: Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's another big night for Smackdown as we have the in ring debut of Rey Mysterio as well as the Smackdown debut of Brock Lesnar, who Stephanie stole this past Monday. We're also getting ready for Summerslam and that's the best thing that could happen after a rather dreadful summer. Let's get to it.

We open with a video of Stephanie introducing the show in a seizure inducing moment. See, Stephanie is all hip and cool and caters to the youth of the country with her hipness.

Opening sequence.

Kurt Angle vs. Mark Henry

Henry shoves him around to start and just glares him Kurt for trying a suplex. Kurt is sat on top where Henry pats him on the head for fun. A missed charge allows Kurt to hit the first suplex and really take over. Another powerslam puts Angle down but here's Lesnar to F5 Henry for the DQ. There was no one but Angle to be put in this spot right?

Angle follows Lesnar to the back and asks what was up with that. Brock was just trying to help Kurt out after Angle blew it at Vengeance. Now that Brock is here, Kurt's time as the top star on Smackdown is over.

Stacy Keibler goes in to see Stephanie and offers to help her in any way possible. Stephanie has her answer the door, which is a flower delivery from Eric Bischoff, who will be here tonight. The vase is thrown against the wall.

Reverend D-Von vs. Big Valbowski

Hardcore Holly is in Val's corner. Venis starts fast with a clothesline and big boot but both of them fall out to the floor in a crash. Back in and Venis gets two off a fisherman's suplex with Batista making the save. The partners get in a fight on the floor, leaving Val to grab a Blue Thunder Bomb for the pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here as D-Von's reverend gimmick has basically stopped save for the theme song (which is still awesome). Venis and Holly are fine for a low level veteran team but I can't picture them going any further than a single title shot and maybe not even on pay per view.

Batista cleans house post match. Just let him leave D-Von already and go after someone bigger.

On Stephanie's orders, Stacy sends security after Edge.

Lance Storm and Christian are ready for their first title defense against the Rock and Hulk Hogan. That's quite the step up.

Stephanie catches up with Edge, who assures her he isn't leaving to sign with Raw. Instead he was going to the production truck with a tape. The tape starts rolling and it's a countdown clock with about an hour and thirty seven minutes on it. That's how long there is left in the show and in that time, Edge is going to get his hands on Chris Jericho inside a cage. Wait WHAT? It's a video tape that seems to start with 97 minutes left and Edge got it into the tape player EXACTLY ON TIME??? Including being stopped by security and talking to Stephanie? She had to write this idea. Like, she had to. Only Stephanie could see this working.

Angle is on the phone with someone named Eric. It's going to be his brother isn't it?

Rikishi vs. Albert

Albert bicycle kicks him in the head at the bell for no cover. A few corner splashes set up a Vader Bomb for two but Rikishi gets in a DDT. The running hip attack in the corner sets up a Stinkface, followed by the Rump Shaker for the pin. What in the world is up with pushing Rikishi

like this?

Stephanie (yes again) calls Angle and demands an explanation via voicemail.

Remember last week when we saw a video saying Rey Mysterio debuts in a week? Everything is still on schedule.

Tag Team Titles: The Rock/Hulk Hogan vs. Lance Storm/Christian

The Canadians are defending. Hogan and Storm start things off and guess what the fans are chanting. Storm gets in a clothesline to start and is quickly pinballed back and forth by right hands from the challengers. Wait, we need to stop and look at a worried Stephanie. Ok now that we're done with that, let's talk about how worried she is! Rock gets double teamed for a bit until a Samoan drop drops Storm like a Samoan.

Test breaks up the People's Elbow though and you can hear the energy come out of the building. Back in and Test cuts off another comeback, followed by a superkick to give Storm two. Hogan comes in for the save but gets distracted to the floor by Test. Therefore there's no one for Rock to tag so he waits about ten seconds and makes the hot tag on the second attempt. A double belly to back gets two on Hogan but it's Hulk Up time, only to have Lesnar come in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Not the worst here but Rock could have been almost anyone. You really don't need to tie this in to the Summerslam match as the idea is more about treating Brock like a monster. The match was as good as an average tag team facing two of the biggest stars of all time was going to be.

Lesnar orders Hogan's limo driver to take himself and Heyman instead.

The announcers recap the talent stealing story. Would it kill Cole to wear a suit?

John Cena thinks Test has ugly teeth and gets slapped in the mouth for it.

Stephanie comes up to Jericho and it turns into an ad for the new Fozzy

CD.

Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero

I remember thinking that it was a different Mysterio since he had the mask back on. Rey starts fast with his variety of headscissors (smart way to go) but Chavo sends him into the corner to take over. We hit an abdominal stretch for a bit before Chavo drives him back first into the apron. Rey has enough of being on defense and busts out a big flip dive to knock Chavo silly. A sweet cradle gets two but a Gory Bomb plants Rey for the same. That goes nowhere so it's the 619 (no pop yet and Tazz calls it the Six Nineteen) into the West Coast Pop (no name either) to give Rey his first win.

Rating: C. This could have been better by letting Rey fly around more but this is WAY past the point where he blew the doors off the place. That being said, he's miles better than almost anyone in the division and it was another big name from WCW that could actually mean something in the future. In other words, it's potential, which isn't something you can never have enough of in wrestling.

In the back, Test lays Mysterio out.

John Cena vs. Test

Cena goes right for him to start but a hard knee to the ribs slows him down. A quick DDT gets Test out of trouble but let's talk about Bischoff again! A Jericho style flying forearm drops Test again and the ProtoBomb gets two. Back up and Test tries a powerbomb but gets sunset flipped to give Cena another upset.

Rating: C-. I'm a Test fan (I think there are three of us) so I liked this a bit more than I should have. That being said, Cena really, really needs a finisher outside of a fluke rollup. That's all he's used to win so far and while it's not great, the ProtoBomb would be fine for a finisher until he gets something better. Cena is good enough at the moment but he needs some upgrades.

Test kicks him in the face post match.

Stephanie calls Angle and basically rips him apart for not calling her back. If he's going to Raw with Eric, the least he could do is tell her face to face. It's going to be his brother isn't it?

Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Inside a cage and this is actually joined in progress. You don't see that too often in a big match. Jericho goes head first into the cage and Edge rips some skin off his chest with chops. A spear up against the cage makes things worse but Jericho sidesteps a second attempt to send Edge into the steel. That means a nasty cut on Edge's head and a sleeper drop gets two.

Back up and Edge ducks another charge to send Jericho into the cage but Edge can't get out quite yet. A sitout gordbuster (not an inverted powerbomb Tazz) gets two on Jericho as they're already trading big moves, though there's not a lot of drama yet. Cole: "You've got to give the businesswoman Stephanie McMahon a lot of credit!" Well of course we do! We haven't talked about her all match and just to be clear, she's a totally professional businesswoman and our role model.

Edge escapes the Walls so Jericho goes for the door, giving us the fairly standard "heel grabs the chair right next to the door" spot. A very loud chair shot gets two with Edge's spear connecting for the same. Both guys head to the top for a super bulldog from Jericho and it's time for a double breather. Jericho goes up again and gets pulled right back down with a super electric chair for a nasty looking crash. Both guys are down but it's Edge getting up over the top for the escape before Jericho can get out the door.

Rating: B-. This wasn't the best cage match in the world as there wasn't enough build to the big spot trading section. Edge going over clean is the only call here and now he's beaten Angle and Jericho in back to back feuds. That's how you build someone up and it's a good sign when the fans are responding to someone rising up the ranks like this.

Post match the Un-Americans come in for the beatdown. Cena tries to make a save but instead it's Mysterio diving off the cage to take everyone down.

Bischoff is in the parking lot so HERE COMES STEPHANIE! She tries to get into the limo while he talks about knocking Stephanie out. The limo pulls away with Eric laughing along with someone we can't see. Angle comes up and Stephanie is thrilled because IT WAS HIS BROTHER ON THE PHONE! GEE! SHOCKING INDEED! Stephanie wants to know who is in the limo to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I know I keep harping on this but Stephanie is already killing these shows. It feels like we have to stop and see whatever nonsense she's up to almost every five minutes and it boils down to this Raw vs. Smackdown show. What that ignores though is the fact that you can watch both shows and not miss anything. The pay per views give you the payoff to all the feuds and the TV shows are on the same nights.

Why should I care if Bischoff and Stephanie are stealing talent from the other show? It doesn't help that it's treated as the biggest story in the company because that means we don't really have an option other than watching As Stephanie's World Turns. The wrestling wasn't bad but it really feels like it's a few miles behind the big story, which isn't interesting.