

Smackdown – May 24, 2001: The TV Debut

This was requested recently but it was written over five years ago, meaning it might not be up to my usual standards.

Smackdown

Date: May 24, 2001

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a request I got a few months ago and got too busy to get around to until now. This is the TLC 3 night with Benoit/Jericho defending against three other teams. Other than that it's another episode of Smackdown without much to show for it. HHH is injured and Austin is the top dog in the company as a heel. The Alliance is coming and Austin would be getting ready either for Judgment Day in a few days or King of the Ring in a month or so. I'm not entirely sure. Let's get to it.

This is the Thursday after HHH and Austin lost the tag titles so this is the first title defense for the new champions. We open with a recap of the AWESOME tag title match where Austin and HHH lost the belts (can't wait to get to that one)

Theme song opens us up.

Here's Vince to start the show. He guarantees that we're going to have an historic night tonight. He calls the title change a miracle and the fans don't seem to agree. We hear about HHH's quad injury and the fans cheer. This might be the first time we hear that it'll be 4-6 months that he's out. In reality it would be closer to 7-8. He announced the main event: TLC 3 with Benoit/Jericho defending against the Hardys, Edge/Christian and the Dudleys.

X-Pac vs. Eddie Guerrero

Eddie cost Pac the European Title on Mondays so this is a revenge rematch. Eddie takes him down quickly to start as the fans don't really care as much as the match starts. Pac takes Eddie down and the fans aren't pleased. He sends Eddie to the floor and hits Christian's springboard dive over the top to the floor.

Pac slams him down but something like a swanton misses and here comes Eddie. He gets some basic stuff including the slingshot headbutt. Pac breaks the momentum and tries the Bronco Buster but Eddie moves. Eddie goes up but takes an enziguri followed by something like a dominator off the top for the kind of surprising pin.

Rating: C-. The match was ok enough but they weren't clicking out there. Even Tazz said that Eddie looked a bit off. Also it's kind of cool to see Pac getting a clean pin over someone like that, especially with something other than the X-Factor. Not a great match at all but it wasn't horrible or anything. Eddie would be sent to rehab later on in the month for pain killer addiction so this was one of his last appearances for awhile.

Tajiri is in Regal's office and Japanese is spoken. Oh this is his debut. Regal says Tajiri should pay some dues in the form of being the Commissioner's (Regal) friend. First off, no more bowing as it's a racial stereotype. Now go get my tea and crumpets.

We recap Angle celebrating the recovery of his Olympic medals but then Shane showed up to ruin the celebration. This set up an AWESOME street fight at King of the Ring. Kurt beat up Shane and Vince offered Kurt an IC Title shot as an apology. Shane cost him the title.

Kurt is looking for Shane.

Spike tries to talk the Dudleys out of hating Molly because

he loves her. D-Von guarantees she's going through a table sooner or later. The more famous Dudleys say they have more important things to worry about, like TLC. They part ways.

Molly is chilling in the back and Kurt comes up to ask about Shane. He threatens her for lying and says she's waiting on someone. Kurt makes fun of her and tells her to go find Shane. Spike pops up and calls Molly his girlfriend and a match is made for later. Scratch the later. Let's do it RIGHT NOW.

Spike Dudley vs. Kurt Angle

I mean literally now as they walk to the ring in the same shot. They both come through the crowd for some reason. Spike calls Kurt a chicken and tries to use speed but jumps into a suplex. Kurt unleashes the suplexes and Spike is in pain. It's so weird hearing Cole as a face commentator. Angle Slam off the steps kills Spike and the ankle lock ends it quickly. This was just a squash.

Kurt won't let go of the ankle so Molly comes out for the save. Kurt gets in her face so the male Hollies come out for the save. Back to the ankle lock on Spike and he's in pain.

Post break Kurt says he's proud of what he did to Spike. He blames Shane for what just happened.

Dean Malenko vs. Raven

Malenko is a ladies man here. Perry Saturn is with Malenko and is a bit loopy now. Raven starts fast and gets a pair of backdrops before setting up for the Raven Effect which is countered. Deano Machineo works on the leg but Raven fights back. Saturn slides in a chair which isn't used. Saturn's girlfriend Terri distracts the referee and Saturn hooks a neckbreaker on Raven, letting Malenko get the cheap pin. This was nothing, again.

Raven fights them both off and DDTs Saturn on the chair.

Trish comes in to see Steve Blackman and changes behind a screen. Blackman is intrigued.

After a break Trish is still getting ready and asks Blackman to help her with her top. Blackman has a stick with him at the time. If you can't figure out what happens next, go watch an Austin Powers movie.

Here's Austin to complain about life in general. He wants the fans to shut up as he has a sore throat so he can't talk loud. If they keep calling him the opening in a donkey he's leaving. And there he goes. Ok he changed his mind. He blames HHH for the title loss, saying he was about to break the Liontamer and hit a Stunner. Then when he was about to kick out of the Lionsault HHH accidentally hit him in the belly with a sledgehammer.

The other problem Austin has is with Taker who popped into the dressing room and says it's not over yet. You know, after losing to Austin twice in title matches. Now we can talk about Austin. He says he's a fighting champion and he says he'll put it on the line to anyone but not here in this town because they don't deserve to see him in action.

Tajiri brings in tea and a ton of crumpets for Regal. Rhino pops in and demands a Hardcore Title match but Regal says no. Rhino says ok then give me Austin and the WWF Title. That's a no also. Then how about Kane for the Intercontinental Title. Regal says no one wants to face Kane. Rhino says I do and that's about it. So you can just demand title matches now?

Steve Blackman/Grandmaster Sexay/Trish Stratus vs. Ivory/Goodfather/Bull Buchanan

The RTC would be gone very soon after this. Richards has been thrown out of the team. Buchanan vs. Blackman to start us off. After Blackman kicks him around a lot Ivory tags herself in. Goodfather comes in to meet Trish so there's the tag to Grandmaster. Why is he teaming with Blackman?

They were in the dark match at Mania and I guess they're together for an odd pairing? It's really just a filler match as Grandmaster does some basic stuff to Buchanan (lot of tags in this) before tagging in Blackman (see what I mean?). Everything breaks down, axe kick to Blackman, top rope legdrop to Buchanan, pin.

Rating: C. Eh all things considered this was fine. It's more or less the final nail in the coffin of the RTC and that's all it needed to be. Trish looked good in her shorts and was getting a lot more competent in the ring all the time. Not a great match or anything but it was fast paced and did its job so I'll give it the benefit of the doubt.

Post match Trish and Steve dance.

Dean and Terri aren't sure how Saturn is. He comes out of the trainers' room and is insane now.

Edge and Christian say they've been in these matches and have a habit of winning them.

Intercontinental Title: Kane vs. Rhyno

Kane won the title at Judgment Day from HHH. It's a good thing they changed the title when they did. Kane still has a bad arm. He takes over to start and hits some of his favorites, such as the side slam and clothesline for two. Rhyno hits a running shoulder to the back while Kane is in the corner but he gets his head taken off by a clothesline for two again. Rhyno works on the back and hooks a camel clutch but Kane stands up and hits an electric chair drop. British Bulldog style powerslam gets two. Rhyno gets most of a belly to back suplex and takes over. And scratch that as the missed Gore sets up the chokeslam to end it.

Rating: C. Nice hard hitting match here which is the right idea with guys like these. Rhyno never really got a huge push in WWE but he's pretty good at his job: being the tough guy who could give you a quick and good match. For a

three-four minute TV match, there's not much more you can ask for given who was in there.

The Canadian Chris's talk about winning the titles and keeping them tonight.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Hardy Boys vs. Edge/Christian vs. Chris Benoit/Chris Jericho

Think this will be awesome? Everyone goes after the champions immediately and Edge throws in a ladder. Expect a lot of play by play here as there's not much else you can do. Edge and Christian (Dang I can't call them the Canadians here) go up but get pulled down, foiling their attempted fast one. The Hardys and Dudleys are in the ring with a ladder being put in front of Bubba. He throws it back at Jeff to counter Poetry in Motion.

The champions take over with ladders but their fellow Canadians take them down. The fans want tables. There needs to be a crack addiction center for table lovers. Matt powerbombs Christian off the ladder and gets in a fight with Edge on top of the ladder. Benoit shoves them off and then gets beaten up by Bubba for his efforts. Jericho puts Matt on a table on the floor and Benoit goes up. He dives off in a huge swan dive which hits the table and no Matt. That was in the Smackdown opening montage forever.

Back in the ring Jericho bulldogs Bubba off the top of the ladder and Benoit hasn't moved yet. Tazz goes to check on him so you can tell it's a big deal. Yeah he leaves on a stretcher as we go to a break. Back with two ladders in the ring and Edge climbs one. Jericho comes up for the save and puts Edge in the Walls on top of the ladder which looks awesome. Christian comes up and shoves Jericho off the top and onto a buckle.

The Hardys shove off the other Canadians and it's Hardys vs. Dudleys. Works for me. D-Von hiptosses Matt off and Jeff gets suplexed to put everyone down. We get a highlight

package to fill in some of the time with everyone down. And here comes Benoit. Benoit goes up but Edge and Christian make the save. They pull out some chairs and it's Conchairto time. Benoit covers his head but takes two chair shots to the ribs, which were announced as bruised or perhaps broken.

Edge gets taken down by What's Up and it's Table Time. Jericho pops D-Von with one and then Christian pops Jericho with one. With a table still in the ring, Christian goes up a ladder in a corner and D-Von chases him up. You know it's coming. There's a Super 3D off the ladder which knocks both Dudleys out as well for some reason. The Hardys set up a ladder outside and it's the big one. Matt caves in Ray's head and Jeff goes a climbing. Using another ladder Jeff hits that jumping legdrop over the big ladder through Bubba through the table. There's your huge spot of the match.

Matt and D-Von both have ladders and it's a race up there. They slug it out up there but Matt gets a Twist of Fate off the top. It looked worse too as Matt pulled too hard and D-Von landed on top of his head. FREAKING OW MAN! Matt goes up but Jericho makes a last second save. He sets a ladder but Edge climbs up another one and spears Jericho down. When I was a kid I wanted Jericho to reach out and grab it on the way down. Benoit realizes he's still alive and climbs up to win the titles. It's as out of nowhere as it sounds.

Rating: B+. Oh come on it's TLC with the three teams plus the Canadians in there. Did you expect something other than great? It's a smaller scale than TLC 2 but that's Wrestlemania so that's kind of a high expectation to reach. Still though, this was some great carnage and the usual great spots. 8 people in there is a bit much and I think that's what's slowing it down. Also it needs JR to be freaking out to be a classic but we can let that slide as it's not their faults.

The champs pose on the ladder with their titles to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. You get a free 20 minute TLC match so this show is automatically good. The rest of it is pretty average but nothing is too horrible and like I said, YOU GET TLC ON THIS SHOW. This was one of the really good shows before the Alliance came in and threw everything up in the air. The rest isn't worth watching, but check out TLC, although it's not as good as I or II.

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