

Smackdown – October 24, 2002: How Do You Like Your Wrestling?

Smackdown

Date: October 24, 2002

Location: Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Tazz, Michael Cole

With No Mercy done (and Undertaker probably still bleeding), it's time to start the road towards Survivor Series in about a month. The real buzz is about the Tag Team Titles though after Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle became the inaugural champions in a masterpiece. Unlike Raw, there are a few things I'm excited to see develop so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Matt Hardy vs. Rikishi

This is fallout from Matt getting a Stinkface last week. Before we get started though, did you know that Mattitude is practiced in over 100 countries or that Matt's bedtime is 4am? Rikishi wipes himself with Matt's shirt before taking him down off a clothesline. Matt's top rope clothesline gets two but the rotund Samoan wins a slugout. A Stinkface doesn't work but Matt is shoved away from the Twist of Fate, setting up the Rikishi Driver (I've missed that one) for the pin. Cole: "Mattitude has been deleted!"

Rating: D+. So Matt gets a new, amazing gimmick (which he probably came up with himself) and gets to lose clean to Rikishi to pay off a moment where he got humiliated. I mean, it's not as bad as almost anything Raw has done lately but this isn't the brightest booking in the world.

Rikishi dances post match but Big Show comes in and lays him out. Wasn't he teasing a face turn on Raw? Show challenges Lesnar for the title.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to present a trophy to Benoit and Angle. Kurt says he lead his team to victory last night so he'll accept the trophy and put it on his Wall of Fame at home. Benoit grabs the

trophy and says if it wasn't for Stephanie's ruling, he would have taken Angle out a long time ago. Angle says it's his because he got the submission last night. They fight over the trophy and Stephanie gets hit in the face as the thing breaks. That earns both of them a slap to the face before Stephanie makes a match for the broken trophy.

Cruiserweight Title: Jamie Noble vs. Tajiri

Noble, dressed as Elvis of course, is defending in a rematch from their good effort on Sunday. Tajiri hits the ring after a lame impression and elbows the wig off the champ. Of course Tajiri puts the wig on for a little dance before dropping Noble (still in the Elvis jacket) into the corner. The Tarantula is broken up and Nidia offers a distraction, meaning Tajiri kicks the post by mistake. Back in and Noble kicks the leg out but can't hit the Tiger Bomb. Nidia gets on the apron but Tajiri kicks the bickering couple together, only to get rolled up (with an assist from Nidia) to retain the title.

Rating: C-. These two work well together but you need more than four minutes to make something like this go. Noble has been champion for about four months now and I really don't think anyone has noticed. I know the idea was to have Mysterio fix the division but when he's doing all that other great stuff, it seems like a waste of time.

Tazz has the wig and we hear about next week's Halloween party.

Dawn Marie, with the lowest cut dress legal by law, finds Torrie and apologizes for her behavior in recent weeks. She really cares for Al but she'll break it off for the sake of Torrie and her family. Torrie says great and walks away, not really convinced.

Eddie and Chavo have a standoff with Angle and tell him that Benoit had some plans for him after the tournament was over. Naturally Angle believes him and tensions continue to heighten.

Edge/Rey Mysterio vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero

The winners get a title shot at some point in the future. Edge and Chavo start things off with Edge's armbar not getting him anywhere. Instead a shoulder puts Chavo down but he gets his knees up to block Rey's springboard moonsault. Everything breaks down in a hurry with Rey sending the Guerreros outside but face miscommunication lets Eddie take over.

Eddie elbows Rey in the mask and it's time to work on the ribs and back, which were banged up on Sunday. I love when they remember stuff from just a few days ago. A pumphandle backbreaker gives Eddie two and Chavo's tilt-a-whirl version gets the same. Rey dropkicks Chavo into his cousin though and it's off to Edge as things speed up again. An Edge-0-Matic gets two on Eddie but he's still able to save Chavo from the 619.

Instead it's the spear for two on Chavo, followed by the 619. A powerbomb/springboard seated senton crushes Chavo but Eddie makes the save with a slingshot hilo. The referee goes after Eddie, allowing Rey to sneak in a springboard legdrop to give Edge the pin. Eddie not realizing what was going on behind him gives us a great visual.

Rating: B. This didn't have the time to work as well as their other stuff but these people are incapable of having a bad match at this point. Mysterio and Edge vs. Benoit and Angle in a rematch makes perfect sense after their masterpiece on Sunday. I'm sure the Guerreros will get in on the titles soon enough because they're too good to leave out.

Undertaker is looking for Lesnar. Why would that feud continue?

Video on the Cell, narrated by Paul Heyman, about how Lesnar owns him now.

Here's a limping Undertaker to call Lesnar out. He gets Heyman instead because Lesnar has no interest in hearing what Undertaker has to say. Scratch that though as Lesnar comes out and gets right in the ring anyway. So why was Heyman necessary there? Everyone has told Undertaker that his hand injury cost him the match but the reality is that Lesnar had his number on Sunday. Five years ago the hand wouldn't have mattered but it mattered on Sunday.

Now the purists are going to complain about Lesnar bringing in Undertaker's personal life (that sounds rather out of character for Undertaker) but he understands head games. He's fought and beaten the best but Sunday, Lesnar was the better man. Undertaker goes to leave when Brock stops him and takes the mic. As for Sara, Brock needed and edge but he's supposed to be all about business. I guess that's an apology and leaning towards a face turn for Lesnar?

Brock and Heyman leave but Heyman stops and nods in respect to Undertaker. We're not done though as Undertaker says that after

twelve years, his body is....going to be interrupted by Big Show. He can't believe what he's hearing because it's been him beating Undertaker up for the last two years, not Lesnar. Undertaker says he'd rather be a broken down has been than a giant never was.

It's time to leave again but this time Big Show follows and eventually passes Undertaker. Ever the moron (he is a face you know), Undertaker poses on the edge of the stage. Big Show, gorilla press, crash (onto what looks like a big pad that we never get a good look at). This took WAY too long to set up Big Show vs. Undertaker.

Post break some of the locker room has come out to check on Undertaker. Stephanie has now decided that she's a medical expert and is bossing the EMT's around. Undertaker is slowly put on a stretcher as Stephanie threatens the medical people if they don't get him out of here faster. Eventually he gets off the stretcher and stumbles around with Arn Anderson shouting "LET US HELP YOU TAKE!" Agents eventually help walk him to the back.

And now, Dawn Marie! She tells Al that they should say goodbye now before turning around. See, she's only been with a few men and he was the most passionate. Kissing ensues.

John Cena vs. Billy Kidman

Rematch from last week when Cena cheated to win. A dropkick puts Cena on the floor to start but a drive into the barricade has Kidman in trouble. Back in and a spinebuster gives Cena two but Kidman hits some more dropkicks. A middle rope back elbow to the jaw drops Cena and a hurricanrana (with a handful of rope) puts John away. So to recap we have two cheaters with .500 record in recent weeks. The WWE formula in a nutshell.

Cena lays Kidman out post match and shows some fire. I mean it's some slightly extinguished fire because he just lost but that's common around here.

Lesnar gets interviewed and wants to know where Funaki is. Anyway if Big Show wants a fight, he's not hard to find.

Eddie apologizes to Benoit for what's happened between them and offers to show some respect. Benoit smells an ulterior motive.

Big Show goes into Lesnar's locker room. Heyman tries to talk things down but Brock says Show can have a title shot.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

For a broken trophy. Angle takes over on the mat to start and Benoit looks annoyed at not being able to sit out on him. Kurt does it again until Benoit elbows him in the face for the break. A hard clothesline cuts Benoit off and a belly to back gets two. They're not really following up on stuff here as it's one move and then a breather before they do anything else.

Benoit speeds things up a bit with a clothesline to the back of the head, followed by some rolling German suplexes. It's hard not to cringe watching their heads slam off the mat like that. Angle reverses the third suplex into two of his own but the Angle Slam is reversed into a release German suplex. One heck of a Swan Dive gets two so we hit the Crossface.

Angle rolls him over and reverses into the ankle lock but Benoit small packages him for two. The Angle Slam connects for the same and it's back to the ankle. That's reversed back into the Crossface but Angle reverses that as well. Benoit goes up and gets belly to bellied right back down....but here are the Guerreros for a distraction so Chavo can hit Angle with a belt, giving Benoit an easy pin. Benoit might not have seen what happened.

Rating: B. The match was good but they didn't have nearly enough time to do what they're capable of pulling off. These two have some of the best chemistry in wrestling and even if we've seen it multiple times, it's cool to see them bust out all those ridiculous counters. The ending is annoying but if it gives us more Eddie greatness, I think I can live with it.

Angle pops up and hits a quick Angle Slam on Benoit, followed by breaking the trophy. I'm glad some things never change.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling was good here but this one depends on your taste in stories. Lesnar vs. Big Show is just depressing, Dawn Marie and the Wilsons works for an obvious reason and the tag stuff is outstanding. If you can stand some of the slow paced stories and at times dumb ideas (What is Dawn doing this for?), you can get to the excellent wrestling. Unfortunately, Big Show coming in at such a high place isn't going to help anything as I'd be more than fine with Lesnar vs. most of the Smackdown Six. The good stuff is REALLY good right now though and that's what matters most. Well that and no Katie Vick.

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