

Armageddon 2002: Nine H's and a Not So Secret Video

Armageddon 2002

Date: December 15, 2002

Location: National Car Rental Center, Sunrise, Florida

Attendance: 9,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

In case you didn't get this from the Raw's leading up to this show, this is ALL about HHH vs. Shawn Michaels. It's so much about them that we're seeing them fight three times so HHH can win the title for the second time in just over three months. Oh and we might see Torrie Wilson and Dawn Marie's, ahem, home movie. Let's get to it.

The opening video has Freddie Blassie quoting the Bible about Armageddon, followed by The End Is Here playing over shots of bombs and missiles. And various wrestlers of course. That's not disturbing whatsoever.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm vs. Goldust/Booker T. vs. Chris Jericho/Christian

Jericho and Christian are defending, Booker/Goldust are having issues believing they should keep teaming, the Dudleys are REALLY fired up to be here, Regal and Storm are on a roll and this is under elimination rules. Got all that? Storm forearms Bubba down and actually gets the better of a quick slugout, only to have Bubba shout DIE CANADIAN SCUM and hit a corner splash.

Goldust comes in to uppercut Regal but the champs take over in the corner. That goes nowhere either so Bubba comes in for some stereo Flip Flop and Flying into the Bionic elbows in a somewhat odd visual. Everything breaks down and Christian eats 3D but Regal tags himself in. A small package (and an ugly one at that) gets rid of the Dudleys (with JR not being clear on what happened), followed by a Goldust rollup to get rid of Storm and Regal to put us down to two. Or what it should have been in the first place without the

extra five minutes being a waste of time.

The Hart Attack with the side kick instead of a clothesline drops Jericho with Christian making the save. Goldust misses a crossbody and falls to the floor, where Jericho sends him into the steps. We settle into the regular tag formula with Christian putting on an abdominal stretch, followed by a double stomping in the corner. JR explains the concept of cutting the ring off, which isn't something you hear explained that often. Perhaps because it's rarely done outside of a Revival match anymore.

Goldust finally catches christian in a sidewalk slam and it's off to Booker with a very nice pop. The Walls are countered into a small package for two but the second attempt works better with Booker in a lot of trouble. Goldust comes in with a bulldog for the save, followed by crotching Christian on the top. A missile dropkick gives Booker two but Jericho gets in a belt shot. The Lionsault is good for two but Booker grabs the Book End for the pin and the titles.

Rating: B-. So the first two eliminations really didn't need to happen and those teams could have been added to the show in their own match. Goldust and Booker FINALLY winning the titles is the right call and they went about as far as they could before getting the belts. I would have had Goldust get the win to prove he's not the weak link but just getting the win is all they needed to do.

Booker tells Goldust that he's not a weak link.

Brock Lesnar asks Josh Matthews who he is and says he'll make an impact in the Big Show vs. Kurt Angle match.

Edge vs. A-Train

Edge has a bad knee coming in and is here to defend Rey Mysterio's honor. A-Train shoves him into the corner to start before catching a crossbody with ease. Thankfully Edge tries to speed things up, only to get shoved into the barricade for his efforts. A charge only hits post though as the fast start continues. Back in and A-Train gets two off a powerslam before it's off to the chinlock less than four minutes in. Edge makes his comeback as this is feeling more and more

like a TV match every second.

The half nelson faceplant gives Edge two and the announcers keep calling A-Train Albert. A super spinning Edge-o-Matic gets two (with Edge pulling the trunks WAY too far up in the front) but A-Train bicycle kicks him out of the air for two. It's chair time but Edge gets in a baseball slide to knock it away. The chokebomb gives A-Train two and the spear gives Edge the same, only to have A-Train chair Edge in the knee for the pitiful DQ.

Rating: D-. I really need more from this on a pay per view as this felt like the match to set up the pay per view rematch. A-Train just hitting him in the knee for the ending doesn't work and certainly doesn't help him. Unless Edge is taking time off thanks to a big post match attack, I really don't get this one.

There's a post match attack, but it's Edge unloading on A-Train with the chair as his knee looks fine. What in the world was the point of this?

Big Show wants to go yell at Stephanie but Heyman talks him out of it, making Stephanie sound like a mob boss who would have Show sleeping with the fishes if he dared cross her. Heyman promises to take care of things.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

The announcers basically call this a #1 contenders match though that's not official. Eddie takes him to the mat and works on the leg as we hear about their very long history together. It's off to a headlock on Benoit, who manages to tie their legs together to keep Eddie in check. A suplex sets up a chinlock on Guerrero but he reverses into a shortarm scissors as they're keeping it on the mat so far.

Benoit powers out in that Bob Backlund display that looks less impressive every time a smaller guy does it. Eddie keeps it on the mat with a headscissors and the fans think it's boring. I'm sorry they're not big, bald and hairy but try to let something fresh into your wrestling minds people. Eddie sends him outside for a good

looking dive before working on Benoit's knee back inside.

A variety of leglocks have Benoit screaming in pain but he finally pops up for the rolling German suplexes. Benoit gets all the way to seven before Eddie reverses into four German suplexes of his own. The frog splash is good for two and Eddie gives a great stunned look. They both fall out to the floor with Eddie getting back in first, allowing Chavo to run out with a belt shot to the back of Benoit's head. That's only good for two as well, more or less guaranteeing that Benoit is winning here.

A modified Lasso From El Paso sends Benoit straight to the ropes, allowing him to pop up with a heck of a powerbomb. More Chavo interference fails and Benoit hits the Swan Dive, which Eddie mostly no sells for another Lasso. Benoit will have none of that though and reverses into the Crossface. Eddie goes for the ropes so Benoit switches arms and rolls into the middle of the ring to make Guerrero tap.

Rating: A-. Were you expecting this to be anything other than great? You have two guys this talented and this familiar with each other with over sixteen minutes on pay per view so of course it's the likely match of the night. I know they can do this stuff in tag matches but it's refreshing to have them just do a great singles match. Benoit was the pretty clear winner here but Eddie was more than up to the task here. That switching of arms at the end made Benoit look even better though and he more than deserves a title shot at this point.

Paul Heyman comes in to Stephanie's office and talks about how much he'd love to sign Benoit. Stephanie doesn't want to hear it because Lesnar's suspension is already lifted. They talk about the integrity of the title with Stephanie saying we'll have to wait and see what Lesnar does tonight. This has been a commercial for the show you've already paid for.

Long recap of Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson. Dawn decided to marry Torrie's dad, presumably to get to Torrie. It turned out that she just wanted to sleep with Torrie so she offered to call off the

marriage for one night for her. Of course it was filmed and Dawn is threatening to show the tape tonight because Torrie enjoyed it. That would be the worst thing ever for some reason you see.

Here are Dawn and Al, who has no issue with any of this for some reason. Or maybe he's miserable. You never can tell with him. Anyway Dawn recaps things again and says Torrie isn't here tonight before showing the footage. After seeing everything we saw on Smackdown (twice now) before we get to the new stuff. Dawn gives her champagne and eats a strawberry before unzipping Torrie's leather jacket revealing....pretty much the same kind of outfit Torrie would wrestle in.

Dawn takes off Torrie's skirt to leave Torrie in her lingerie before taking off her own robe. She whispers that men can't give Torrie what she can. They kiss and Torrie seems to be getting into it but Dawn says freeze the footage. She tells Al that we're going to keep going so we see more kissing before Al stops it for good. Dawn promises they can make their own tape to make up for it and we're done. This ate up about ten minutes and was every bit the waste of time you would expect it to be.

Kane vs. Batista

Batista has Ric Flair in his corner but gets dropped by an early neckbreaker. An elbow gives Kane two but Batista hot shots him onto the ropes. Kane fights back but gets sent outside where he beats up Flair for fun. Back in and Kane boots the rookie down but the top rope clothesline misses. The Batista Bomb doesn't work though and Kane hits him low for a rather heelish move. The spinebuster gives Batista two but he walks into a chokeslam. Flair comes in for a distraction though, allowing the Batista Bomb to put Kane away.

Rating: D-. This wasn't just a bad match but it felt like it belonged on a TV show instead of a pay per view. Batista looked lost for the most part with the fans giving up on the match after he couldn't pick Kane up for the powerbomb. On top of that it was basically a handicap match with Flair involved, which makes for a really bad use of time.

Here are John Cena and B Squared (yes Squared again instead of Two) to rap about how awesome they are and how it doesn't matter who they tick off. Marcia Brady is mentioned as well. This took less than two minutes.

We recap the women's triple threat match. Victoria took the title from Trish Stratus at Survivor Series and then Jacqueline beat Victoria in a non-title match on Raw because SHE'S FROM TEXAS AND ALL TOUGH AND STUFF LIKE THAT. Now we're having a triple threat for the title.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jacqueline vs. Victoria

Victoria is defending. It's a brawl to start with Jackie being sent outside as Jerry wonders if Victoria is horizontally accessible. A superplex drops Trish with Jackie stealing two as you can hear JR getting annoyed at Lawler's jokes. The challengers make a wish on Victoria's legs and send her outside, leaving Trish to hit a neckbreaker on Jackie. The Chick Kick drops Jackie again but Trish takes WAY too long covering, followed by a slow count, which really screams blown save. Victoria grabs the title and hits Trish, setting up the pin on Jackie to retain.

Rating: D+. They were trying here but Jackie didn't need to be involved and the timing really hurt things here. Trish vs. Victoria is one of the better feuds they've had in a long time but they've pretty much reached the peak of the feud. We're pretty much just waiting for Lita to come back at this point and that makes things a bit hard to sit through.

Victoria steals Trish's hat.

Angle keeps trying to convince Lesnar to be in his corner, including promising him retribution if Brock joins him. We see the end of the Survivor Series title match but Lesnar still won't say anything.

We recap Big Show vs. Kurt Angle. There isn't much to talk about though as Show won the title four weeks ago and Angle won a four way to earn the title shot. Lesnar was suspended for a few weeks in a side angle that added absolutely nothing to this, aside from giving

us more Stephanie TV time.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show

Angle is challenging and there's no Brock to start, meaning he'll be the official run-in. Show easily tosses him down to start so Angle tries a front facelock. That just earns him a toss over the top and right onto Heyman, but the distraction allows Angle to dump Show out to the floor. Back in and Show continues his dominance with a clothesline and suplex as Angle can't get anything going so far.

The match is so one sided that Cole gets to list off all of Big Show's measurements that you've probably memorized over the years. The Final Cut gets two as the fans chant USA with Tazz pointing out that Big Show is an American too. We hit the bearhug that you knew was coming until Angle bites his way out. Angle chokes him down and gets most of a tornado DDT to put both guys down. Tazz: "Big Show is the same size as Kurt Angle right now!". That line still drives me crazy and it's even worse when they're both down.

Angle dropkicks the leg out and a good looking missile dropkick gives Kurt two. The moonsault press only has Angle's feet hit Show in the head and the Angle Slam is good for two. The ankle lock goes on in the middle of the ring and the kickoff sends Angle into the referee. You can see a lot of the crowd looking towards the entrance as the Brock chants start up. Heyman throws in a chair which goes upside Show's head for two with the kickout wiping the referee out again. Cue A-Train to break up the ankle lock but here's Brock to F5 Show to give Angle the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. This was watchable because they had Big Show laying around for about a third of the match but it could have been FAR worse. At least they did the smart thing by giving the title to one of the hot acts who can have a great match with just about anyone, thereby opening the doors to a ton of fresh opponents, including Lesnar down the line. It's not good but this could have been a disaster, so we'll call this a success.

Rob Van Dam is at the World and picks Shawn to win.

Long recap of HHH vs. Shawn Michaels. They hate each other, they beat each other up, now it's three matches for the price of one because we need that much HHH in our lives. This is 2/3 falls with the first fall being a street fight, the second being a cage match and the third being a ladder match.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Michaels is defending and HHH's right quad, as in the leg that he didn't tear, is taped up. Shawn has that weird sleeves made of mirrors thing that he wore at the 1997 Royal Rumble. To be fair he's the only one who could pull that off. Before the bell, the referee ejects Flair because THIS IS THE KIND OF IMPORTANT MATCH THAT NEEDS TO BE FAIR!

Shawn hammers away to start and skins the cat before baseball sliding HHH into the barricade. A plancha misses though (with HHH not really moving so I'm not sure what Shawn was aiming at, save for maybe a trashcan that HHH had pulled out) and HHH is limping less than two minutes in. Shawn's second dive hits the trashcan (at least it was from the ropes instead of over them so it was a different spot) but HHH can't follow up.

Instead Shawn grabs a table but has a trashcan kicked into his face. HHH's limping is getting worse and since this is getting AT LEAST half an hour, we could be in for a very long night. HHH sets up a second table next to the one Shawn loaded up but gets suplexed back inside for two. The jumping knee with the bad leg knocks HHH down as well and I get more and more worried about how bad this could get.

It's time to start in on Shawn's back but Shawn gets in a side slam to drive HHH through the chair in a smart counter. They head outside again with Shawn working on the back despite THE BIG BANDAGE ON HHH'S LEG. Even Lawler is pointing out the lapse in thinking so you know it's bad. HHH blocks the superkick and twists the knee around, meaning they're both working on the others injured body part. A chop block sets up the standing Flair working on the leg package, capped off by the Figure Four.

Shawn turns it over after nearly two minutes in the hold so HHH goes

with a trashcan lid to the head for two instead. They head up the aisle with HHH sending him into the set before finding the barbed wire 2×4. HHH isn't done though as he lights it on fire first. Shawn takes it away though and hits HHH with it, drawing some blood. It had better given that it's a flaming 2×4 wrapped in barbed wire.

Back to the ring with HHH on his feet despite being hit in the head with something that should have killed him. HHH plays Raven with a drop toehold to send Shawn into an open chair but the Pedigree is countered with a low blow. Not that it matters as HHH hits the bad knee and gets the Pedigree for the first fall.

The cage is lowered and it's pinfall or escape (I'm assuming Fink forgot to say submission but JR doesn't say it either). Before the cage is all the way down, HHH throws in some more weapons, including a table and chair. One heck of a chair shot knocks Shawn sillier and the table is set up in the corner. Shawn gets catapulted into the cage and both guys are busted. The pace gets even slower and Shawn hammers away with right hands. They fight up to the top of the cage and here's Flair back at ringside because why not.

Ric sets up two more tables on top of the original two as they slug it out on the top without much going on. There's no big crash though as they go back inside with HHH getting crotched on the ropes. The top rope elbow seems to suggest that Shawn's knee is much better in a hurry....and Flair is in the cage because the referee is incompetent. Shawn cuts him off and chairs both guys in the head, naturally making Flair bleed as well.

With Shawn beating up Flair, HHH walks away from the open door (some cerebral assassin) and it's back to back superkicks to drop the villains. The stupidity continues as Shawn doesn't cover or run out of the cage but rather sets up another table (that would be five I believe). A splash off the top of the cage drives HHH through the wood and ties things up. So now it's a ladder match with both guys basically dead.

A very bloody Flair is helped out as the cage is raised and Shawn gets a ladder. Various ladder shots (which Lawler says is like being

hit by a car) have HHH in even more trouble and Shawn suplexes him onto the ladder for good measure. The ladder is set up in the corner but Shawn misses the huge splash, landing right on his face.

HHH gets in a weird Pedigree as he has to stretch the bad leg out so it doesn't slam into the mat. The fans are busy looking at something in the crowd as HHH makes the slow climb. That's broken up but Shawn's slow climb is countered with a shove through the tables, allowing HHH to climb up and regain the title.

Rating: C-. This is a really, really hard one to grade but let's get the big problem out of the way first: there was no reason to have this be more than one fall. Either do a street fight (which was boring but watchable) or one of the other two but the whole three falls thing was ridiculous with the ladder match not even breaking eight minutes. The cage match was basically a continuation of the street fight with just one attempt at escaping, plus Flair just walking into the cage, making it a complete waste of time. HHH looked horrible out there but Heaven forbid we don't cater to him, bad leg or not.

There's a good match in there somewhere, but it only works with HHH on two good legs. On top of that, this needed to be cut in half. It's just under forty minutes total and easily could have been about twenty with every bit as much effect. Shawn looked passable but old, which isn't exactly the best combination in the world. The match could have been better but with what they were going for here, it's a pretty hard disappointment. In other words, cut out HHH's ego and it's probably far better.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a pretty solid surprise with a few good matches (and one great one) but there's also a lot of really bad stuff dragging that right back down. The Dawn and Torrie stuff really started bringing the show down as it's not only stupid but fairly worthless to anyone with the internet at that point. You can see almost anything you want so two women in lingerie isn't quite enough.

The problem is the rest of the show takes a big dip after that with

the best match probably being Angle vs. Big Show, mainly due to it not being forty five minutes counting intros. The first half of the show is better but it hits a hard wall and there's really no recovering from that point on. I was expecting a disaster though so this was a good bit better than I thought I'd get.

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