

Smackdown – December 12, 2002: It's Like NXT But Not

Smackdown

Date: December 12, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final stop before the final pay per view of the year and there are two major stories at the moment. First up we have Kurt Angle becoming the new #1 contender to Big Show's Smackdown World Title, meaning the hopes of most of the fans are on his Olympic shoulders. Other than that we have the sports entertainment shock value of Dawn Marie and Torrie Wilson. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps the Torrie/Dawn stuff from last week with Torrie agreeing to spend a night with Dawn to keep Dawn from marrying her dad. They're really not hiding the soap opera nonsense are they?

Opening sequence.

Rikishi vs. B2

Now it's B Two instead of B Squared. Sounds like a vitamin. Either way he poses at Rikishi and gets punched in the face but it's way too early for the Stinkface. Bull's chinlock doesn't go anywhere but Cena offers a distraction and gets kicked in the face. The second distraction works a bit better though as Bull hits him low, allowing Cena to chain Rikishi in the head for the cheap pin.

Torrie Wilson arrives and Jan the Makeup Lady says she's been hearing rumors about what happened in the hotel room last week. I thought it was pretty obvious given how things started but maybe we need to spell it out: they did a Jungle Book jigsaw puzzle and watched the Facts of Life.

Earlier today, Kurt Angle interrupted a Brock Lesnar autograph signing and offered to get the suspension lifted in exchange for Lesnar being in

his corner on Sunday. If Brock helps him, he'll get the first title shot. Lesnar says if the suspension is lifted, he'll think about it.

Big Show is with Albert, who is now named A-Train (certainly an improvement), and Paul Heyman. New interviewer Josh Matthews (shoot me now) comes in to ask about the Lesnar/Angle situation and the champ is livid. For reasons that I don't even want to be able to fathom, these two segments were edited off the WWE Network version. The only way to know about them is Cole's recap in the next match.

Show and Heyman yell at Stephanie, who throws them out.

Bill DeMott vs. Shannon Moore

DeMott is now an official bully, meaning he and Ryback should go out for soup and grape juice. Moore tries to hammer away but gets thrown around and smashed with a clothesline. A powerslam sets up a heck of a moonsault to give Bill the pin.

Now Stephanie will hear from Heyman and Show, the former of whom doesn't want to hear about Scott Steiner. As for Lesnar, he makes Smackdown money so the suspension is lifted. Then why did she suspend him in the first place? To prove that he'll get a week off if he breaks the rules? This was Stephanie showing off her power side with the hands on the hips and lethal sneer. To be fair the look works for her.

Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Billy Kidman/Chris Benoit

Eddie and Chavo are defending and it's Benoit vs. Eddie to start in a preview of their match on Sunday. An early Crossface attempt doesn't work but a backdrop has Eddie in trouble. It's a double tag to bring in Kidman, only to have Eddie cheap shot him a few times to take over. The slow stomping begins and a spinebuster gives Chavo two.

Even Eddie can't powerbomb Kidman but it's still not enough for the hot tag. Kidman starts wildly swinging to slow Eddie down and a powerbomb is enough for the hot tag to Benoit. Eddie gets caught in the Crossface and we take an abrupt break (just like on Raw). We come back with Kidman holding Chavo in a chinlock as we see Eddie tapping during the break,

albeit behind the referee's back.

The champs take over with Eddie legbarring Kidman very close to the corner. He really should know better than that and I don't have much sympathy for him when Benoit comes in and kicks Eddie in the head. Eddie blocks the tag though and grabs a keylock. Some good old fashioned cheating sees Chavo switch places for a keylock of his own. Chavo decks Benoit off the apron but Kidman gets in an ankle scissors.

The referee doesn't see a tag but Benoit comes in with the rolling German suplexes anyway. Chris Swan Dives onto Eddie for two (with Cole asking why there's a count) as everything breaks down. Benoit Crossfaces Chavo for the tap but the referee is looking at Kidman, who misses the Shooting Star. Eddie grabs a rollup and puts his feet on the ropes to retain. So he watches Benoit cover but not when he has the Crossface? Biased jerk.

Rating: B. It's almost like the tag team formula works very well when you let it have the time to go somewhere. These four work very well together and, as usual, Kidman proves that the cruiserweights can easily hang with the heavyweights, thereby proving that the weight divisions are stupid in wrestling. Great match, as you would expect.

Torrie goes to yell at Dawn and says what happened in the hotel room was personal and just between them. Dawn can't believe what she's hearing and takes off her robe to reveal lingerie. Torrie doesn't seem to mind it at first before yelling at Dawn to cut it out. There hasn't been one lie though and Torrie doesn't deny it. She does however demand that the wedding be called off tonight. Torrie leaves and Dawn smiles.

Raw Retro: HHH interrupts Stephanie and Test's wedding. Again, edited off the Network but it could be because the Motorhead theme is edited over My Time.

Here's Dawn, after the fastest change into a dress in recorded history, for a chat. She asks Al to come out here and confirms that everything he's heard about her and Torrie is true. Al doesn't seem to care so Dawn talks about looking into Torrie's eyes and seeing Al in them. If that's not creepy enough, every time she kissed Torrie's lips, it was like she was kissing him.

Dawn knows Al will never find a woman like her and he wants to marry her anyway. Torrie comes out for some of the most violent slapping you'll ever see so Dawn promises to show the full tape on Sunday to prove how much Torrie enjoyed it. This is pure trash but Al's "acting" is so bad that it's hard not to laugh. He just stands there with no reactions, even to the fact that his fiance slept with his daughter and they kiss alike.

Tazz immediately starts basically promising various adult material on Sunday as we look at replays. This really is the second biggest Smackdown story (and not that far from first). On a show with the Smackdown Six mind you.

Jamie Noble vs. Crash

Tazz thinks Jamie's cousin Nunzio is 6'11 and 320lbs and works for the mob. Jamie elbows Crash in the face to start and they slug it out with Crash getting the better of it. A faceplant gives Crash two and it's Crash Landing time, only to have Nunzio (ECW's Little Guido, who Tazz suddenly doesn't recognize despite the ECW chants) come in for the DQ.

The double beatdown ensues but Nidia doesn't look pleased.

Scott Steiner arrives.

Stephanie comes to the ring to sign Steiner as Tazz and Cole look at WWE Magazine, naturally featuring their boss. Steiner takes the pen but won't sign because last week, after the cameras stopped rolling in the limo, nothing happened. See, Stephanie didn't put out for him because she's wholesome, unlike that Torrie Wilson. Now why would you think Stephanie was on her level in the second story based on sex in exchange for a deal on this show?

Anyway, Stephanie suggests that she'll do it if he signs so Scott puts her on the table and wants to go right now. Stephanie goes on a rant about her moral standards but Scott doesn't want to hear it. If he can't trust her in his personal life, he can't trust her in his business life. Therefore, he's signing with Raw. Eric Bischoff comes out to gloat and Stephanie throws a fit.

We get an update on Rey Mysterio's knee injury, which is worse than they thought. There's no word on his return time.

Edge has a knee injury of his own but he's ready to focus on his tag match tonight. Angle comes in and agrees to have Edge's back in the tag.

PPV rundown. Tazz says Eddie vs. Benoit has five stars written all over it.

Edge/Kurt Angle vs. Big Show/A-Train

Good thing the production team had a new song with a train whistle ready in case someone changed their name. Edge and Big Show start things off as Cole goes over Angle and Edge's history together. A chop staggers the Canadian so it's off to Angle, who gets A-Train. One heck of a shoulder drops Kurt and it's back to Edge, who unloads on A-Train in the corner.

A-Train throws Edge hard into the corner and it's time for Heyman to start the trash talk. For reasons of general large headedness, A-Train takes his sweet time getting around to Edge's bad knee before handing it off to Big Show for some knee work of his own. The slow beating begins with Show laying on the leg.

After more lifeless offense from the giants, Edge gets in a tornado DDT to stun A-Train and the hot tag brings in Angle. A German suplex actually sends A-Train flying as everything breaks down. Edge spears A-Train down instead of Big Show but the big bald pops up and chairs Edge in the back. The Angle Slam drops both monsters but a Heyman distraction lets Show chokeslam Kurt for the pin.

Rating: D+. They did what they could here but with Edge on a bad wheel and Big Show/A-Train as the heel team, you're only going to get so far. The match wasn't bad but this better lead to Angle winning the title on Sunday as it's clear Show can only do the bare basics at this point. A-Train was trying but calling him limited would be an understatement.

Overall Rating: C-. You know what this felt like? An early 2017 episode of NXT. You know there's talent there and the people behind the scenes know what they're doing but there's only so much you can do when you're

this limited. We've done the Smackdown Six matches so many times and since Lesnar is suspended, you have to come up with something fresh.

That means you're pretty much stuck with short matches to build up new talent without exposing how bad they really are. This show wasn't the worst but it's clear that they're trying something new, which isn't the easiest thing in the world. They need more time and better talent but things could be rough for the time being.

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