

Smackdown – January 30, 2003: Undertaker is Cheap

Smackdown

Date: January 30, 2003

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're getting closer to No Way Out and the big story is the return of Hulk Hogan, who showed up last week and punched out Vince McMahon. Other than that we have the far less important story of Brock Lesnar chasing Kurt Angle and the Smackdown World Title. You know, that secondary issue. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Vince vs. Hogan. Stephanie announcing that she had a surprise last week is included, solely for the purpose of getting Stephanie on TV.

Opening sequence.

A-Train vs. Rey Mysterio

Mysterio tries a 619 as A-Train gets in but settles for a dropkick off the apron before the bell. A spinning crossbody is easily caught and A-Train hammers away, only to get kicked in the face for his efforts. Rey gets two off a running dropkick but the Derailer cuts him in half for two.

Cole talks out the referee's birthday because he's running out of things to talk about less than three minutes into a match. A full nelson with Rey's legs wrapped around A-Train's thighs slows him down until Mysterio spins out and gets a DDT. Not that it matters as A-Train hits the bicycle kick and finishes with the Train Wreck (over the shoulder kneeling backbreaker).

Rating: D. I was hoping that last week's loss in the tag match was the end of A-Train but we're just lucky enough to get more of him. I

mean....have you seen the size of his head? What I want to know though is why he'd use a move called the Train Wreck when he's the train. Wouldn't that be something a bit self destructive?

Paul Heyman says Big Show won't be facing Big Show tonight because Big Show has the night off.

Eddie Guerrero vs. John Cena

Cena cuts a fairly racist rap with almost every Mexican stereotype you can think of. Oh and overweight girls are bad at dodgeball. Eddie slugs him down in the corner and throws Cena outside for some cheating from Chavo. Back in and Cena tosses him into the air for a crash as Tazz compliments his rapping skills. Now it's Red Dogg getting in a few shots of his own but the fans chant for Eddie anyway. What a double standard.

Cena shows off the power with a delayed vertical suplex and a side slam for two each. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Eddie fights up, only to have Red Dogg grab his foot. The distraction completely fails as Chavo shoves Cena off the top, setting up one of the best looking frog splashes I've ever seen for the pin.

Rating: C-. You could see things starting to click for Cena and that's a very good sign. Couple that with Eddie being at his normal level of awesome and there's almost a guarantee that it was going to be entertaining. Unfortunately they didn't have the time to do anything and Dogg isn't as entertaining as Buchanan, who was fun in a stupid goofy kind of way.

Heyman has an idea and flags down newcomer Brian Kendrick to help him out.

Vince comes in to see Stephanie and talk about the Hogan return last week. She turns it into a discussion of Eric Bischoff trying to bring back Steve Austin. Stephanie: "Your nemesis!" I love how Stephanie has to explain Steve Austin's connection to Vince McMahon himself because A, Vince might not remember or B, the fans might not remember. She goes on to explain that Hogan is in fact a legend and tell Vince how awesome he was during the Monday Night Wars. Since there's really nothing to say to

that, Vince says he has a surprise for later. This has been the latest version of NO ONE TALKS LIKE THIS.

Shannon Moore vs. Billy Kidman

Non-title. Shannon has Matt Hardy, who thinks that Shannon has an iota of Mattitude and was the longest surviving Smackdown superstar in the Rumble, in his corner. During the entrances we hear about Torrie Wilson vs. Dawn Marie in a Rumble rematch....on Velocity. Thank goodness they finally took the hint on that one. Kidman gets jumped to start but the threat of a right hand sends Shannon bailing to the floor.

The fans chant WE WANT JEFF as Shannon whips Kidman hard into the corner to set up a chinlock. Kidman fights out of the second chinlock and gets in a jumping elbow to the jaw as things speed up. Something like the Sky High gets two but Shannon hits a running Blockbuster from the side. That just earns him an enziguri and the shooting star gives Kidman the pin.

Rating: C. Shannon was showing some aggression here to play up the idea of having more Mattitude and that's a good sign for him. He's certainly not the most intimidating guy in the world so having him be more intense can only do good things for him. Moore always had the in-ring abilities but he needs a strong gimmick to get him anywhere.

Post match Matt lays out Kidman, hopefully giving him a challenger for the title. It would be nice for a change.

Here's Vince for his surprise. He goes on a long and rather good rant about how Hulkamania is dying and he can't wait to kill it himself. Hogan can talk about the power of Hulkamania all he wants and wear the red and yellow (Vince: "I still don't get it.") but the truth is that Hogan is a bloodsucking bottom feeder who is a manipulating businessman. What Hulk doesn't want you to know is that Vince created Hogan and Hulkamania itself. That gets Vince to No Way Out, where Hogan will be going one on one with the Rock. Speaking of the Rock, here he is....via satellite of course.

Rock immediately goes a bit heelish by ripping on Green Bay being way too cold for him to show up. The reality is that Rock doesn't answer to Vince

because he belongs to the people. Rock is going to bring the electricity like he brought at Wrestlemania where records were broken. At No Way Out, you're going to have the biggest star of all time and on the other hand there's Hulk Hogan.

When they meet again, Hogan is going to Hulk Up and Rock won't be able to care less. It's going to be Wrestlemania all over again with Hogan taking a beating, if you smell what he's cooking. Rock was sprinkling the heel attitude throughout the promo but was getting cheered anyway. The key here was he didn't go full blast with it, meaning he'll be inching into his new attitude instead. You don't get that enough and it takes someone as good as Rock to really pull it off.

Bill DeMott vs. Rikishi

It's the rubber match! Why this warranted a second match, let alone a third, is beyond me. Rikishi grabs a headlock as the announcers talk about the Tough Enough match on Raw. DeMott sends him shoulder first into the post and grabs an abdominal stretch. Does that work when there's so much gut there to pull on? A slam makes the ribs worse but the moonsault is countered with an electric chair. Rikishi superkicks him down and tries a DDT but DeMott grabs the ropes to send Rikishi crashing down. A cover with DeMott laying on the ropes gives him the pin.

Rating: D-. The ending here made things even worse than they would have been on their own. DeMott is going absolutely nowhere as this heel turn is a disaster so far. Having him beat up the cruiserweights was fine enough but you knew he was done as soon as they started having him trade wins with Rikishi of all people. Thankfully this is pretty much it for DeMott, who would have two more matches on Smackdown for the year while being shunted down to Velocity instead.

Undertaker comes out almost immediately after the match with DeMott bailing. After a break, Undertaker is sitting on the steps, saying this is where he's supposed to say all the things he's going to do to Big Show. Forget that though because we need to just shut up and fight. It's Heyman instead though, reminding us that Show isn't here tonight. Show has a message for Undertaker though and here's Kendrick on a kid's

bicycle in a singing telegram outfit.

Undertaker has about as much of this as you would expect but tells Kendrick to do whatever he's supposed to. Kendrick "sings" something about Big Show never doing something (he wasn't easy to understand) so Undertaker threatens Heyman. Brian actually asks for a tip...and gets \$100! Undertaker has him sing again and the beating is on in a hurry. Naturally Undertaker takes the money back. Well to be fair Kendrick was off key.

Kurt Angle gives his team a pep talk, even quoting Vince Lombardi but making sure to insult the Green Bay Packers to avoid the face reaction. I would list off what Kurt says but I'm too distracted by how sweet those track suits are. The gist of it: win at any costs.

Video on Brock Lesnar, which is basically just an edited version of his talk from last week.

Sean O'Haire tells us to drink and smoke.

Team Angle vs. Edge/Chris Benoit

The winners get a title shot next week and Angle sits in on commentary. Kurt: "They call me Captain Kurt." Cole: "How's Mr. Spock?" Benoit takes over on Haas to start and chops away in the corner. Benjamin comes in for a gutbuster because he's better than Haas. Shelton misses a charge so it's off to Edge as the pace picks way up. With his team in trouble, Angle gets up on the apron but gets speared right back down. Why Edge spearing the title doesn't cause him damage isn't clear but whatever.

The house cleaning continues with Edge missile dropkicking Benjamin for two and we take a break. Back with Benoit stomping on Benjamin and Edge starting in on Charlie's shoulder. An armbar cuts off Charlie's comeback but Benoit can't get the Crossface. Coach Kurt talks Charlie to his feet for a belly to belly though and the Angleites take over.

Shelton starts in on the knee and Charlie works on a leglock. A reverse Figure Four keeps Edge in trouble, much to Edge's delight. Shelton cannonballs down onto the leg and grabs a regular Figure Four. Benoit

comes in and breaks it up by hitting Benjamin in the head, only to have Haas grab a Figure Four of his own.

He's no Shelton though so Edge gets out and sends him into the corner for the hot tag to Benoit. Chris starts rolling the German suplexes and Swan Dives Shelton for two. The Crossface is broken up and Angle hits Benoit with the title to give Shelton the pin and the title shot.

Rating: B. Good stuff here, like it would have been anything else. Team Angle has taken to the ring very smoothly and it makes for some very entertaining matches. I'm glad they went with the regular team instead of another two man combination who teams together when they need to. Kurt cheating to win is the right move here too as it plays off the speech he gave to them earlier.

Overall Rating: D+. Strong main event aside, there's not enough here to really get excited about. Hogan vs. Rock should be good but watching stuff like A-Train wreck Mysterio and DeMott vs. Rikishi, followed by Undertaker beating up a guy just trying to make a living isn't exactly thrilling TV. The talking really hurt things this week and there's only so much that one really good match can do to counter that.

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