

Judgment Day 2003 (2017 Redo): Judge Not Lest Ye Have To Watch This Show

Judgment Day 2003

Date: May 18, 2003

Location: Charlotte Coliseum, Charlotte, North Carolina

Attendance: 13,000

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

Let's get this over with. I don't remember a time when the TV leading up to a pay per view has been this miserable and the mere idea of this show is making me cringe. Sometimes a show can throw in a surprise or two but I can't think of a single match that actually gives me hope on this one. Let's get to it.

The opening video is a shot of gallows with kids reciting a rhyme about evil (it's the same one from the Biker Taker vignettes). Basically everything leads us here and it ends tonight.

Here's Steve Austin to open things up with an interview instead of a match. I'm so thrilled already. He's not out here to run his mouth and waste your time because there's a bunch of great matches tonight. Are we looking at the same card? Austin is going to watch in the crowd with the fans...in a sky box, with a bunch of beer. Lawler seems to think a sky box means sitting in the cheap seats as Austin gives Tazz a beer and heads into the crowd.

John Cena/FBI vs. Spanky/Chris Benoit/Rhyno

Cena says that being he's with the FBI giving out black eyes, he'll have the people cheering the bad guys. It's Palumbo/Stamboli with Cena here as this is a bonus match. Spanky dives onto everyone but gets decked by Cena as we start fast. Cole says he knows all about rapping because he's a shoelace. The FBI plants Spanky with a double slam and cranks on his legs for good measure.

Palumbo slaps on a bearhug as Tazz and Cole discuss beer. A hard clothesline cuts Spanky off but he headscissors Palumbo into Stamboli. That's enough for the hot tag to Benoit, meaning it's time for the German suplexes. Nunzio comes in and eats a Gore but he's still able to break up Sliced Bread #2. The distraction is enough for Stamboli and Palumbo to hit the Kiss of Death (Demolition Decapitator with a legdrop instead of an elbow) for the pin.

Rating: D. The match was energetic while it lasted but that's the problem: it wasn't even four minutes long. Why in the world did we need a pay per view opener that lasts as long as a TV match? The people involved in this match deserve a little more than this, though at least they were on the pay per view card.

Austin is in the sky box having a woman make him a hot dog when Eric Bischoff comes in. Everything they have is split between them so Austin gives him the hot dog. Bischoff is annoyed that there's no scotch so he'll have a beer. In a glass that is, which Austin doesn't appreciate.

We recap La Resistance vs. Test/Scott Steiner, which is all about the Iraq War and how horrible you are if you don't completely support it.

Test/Scott Steiner vs. La Resistance

Test and Rene Dupree slug it out to start until a backdrop puts Rene down. It's off to Steiner for some more aggressive offense, including a push-up elbow. Dupree sends him outside though and Sylvan Grenier drives him back first into the apron. The announcers debate France vs. America as Grenier's chinlock doesn't get him very far. A middle rope clothesline gives Grenier two but Steiner suplexes his way to AMERICAN freedom.

The hot tag brings in Test to clean house to silence. Test steals the beret and gets rolled up for two as everything breaks down. The pumphandle slam plants Rene but Stacy Keibler gets on the apron for no logical reason. Dupree dropkicks Test into Stacy, who lands in Steiner's arms. After putting Stacy down, Steiner tags himself in for the reverse DDT on Dupree for no cover. Test boots Steiner by mistake and gets sent outside, leaving Steiner to take the double spinebuster for the pin.

Rating: D. Another TV match here but in this case keeping it short was the right idea. This feud isn't interesting and Test vs. Steiner isn't likely to be much better. Fighting over Stacy is fine, but it would be better if they could have anything resembling a good match. The tag division needs La Resistance though, even if they're not all that interesting of a team.

Stacy stays behind to check on Steiner.

Mr. America arrives and runs into Gregory Helms, who has been told that he's Hulk Hogan. America's sources have told him that Helms is really the Hurricane. They agree that their sources are idiots. Clever idea but it's hard to buy Hogan's push meaning much when he's having a match with Roddy Piper.

Eddie Guerrero has found a replacement partner for the injured Chavo. It's Tajiri, who gets a gold medal and knows that they lie, cheat and steal.

Tag Team Titles: Team Angle vs. Eddie Guerrero/Tajiri

Eddie and Tajiri are challenging in a ladder match. The brawl starts in the aisle as the champs aren't happy with Eddie destroying their framed picture of Angle earlier in the week. Eddie gets sent into the ladder, leaving Tajiri to get double teamed inside. A gorilla press drop onto Haas' knee has Eddie in more trouble and it's time for another ladder. Tajiri seems to mess up a dive over the top so Eddie dives over the top onto Shelton to get the focus back.

The champs go for the belts but Tajiri breaks it up with the handspring elbow. Haas gets crotched by the ladder in the corner and it's time for a second ladder. Shelton pulls Tajiri off the ladder, sending him face first into one of the rungs for a scary looking crash. Thankfully he's ok, though Eddie isn't quite as good thanks to a powerslam into the ladder in the corner. In a creative spot, Haas puts Tajiri across a ladder and bridges it over the top, leaving Shelton to jump off the ladder, over Haas, and onto Tajiri's back.

Eddie has to make a save with Haas falling out to the floor in a heap but

then wedges the ladder in the corner instead of going up. Naturally he gets sent into the ladder for his efforts, satisfying wrestling rule #3. Tajiri is back up with the hard kicks to the face and he runs them over with the ladder for good measure. The Tarantula has Haas in trouble but it's Shelton making the save with a shot from the ladder.

Back in and the champs beat on Eddie but Shelton gets monkey flipped into the ladder into Haas to put everyone down again. Eddie sends Benjamin outside but the champs are back up for the save. Benjamin is knocked right back down, only to have Eddie frog splash him instead of going for the belts for no apparent reason. Charlie and Eddie go up and this time it's a sunset bomb to bring Haas right back down. Tajiri is finally back up to mist Shelton, allowing Eddie to pull down the titles for the win.

Rating: B-. Good though not a great match here. This would have been a much better match with Chavo involved (As in it would have made more sense. Tajiri's work was fine.) but as it is, it feels kind of thrown together. That's not on the wrestlers of course, but at least they made it work as well as they could.

Bischoff and Austin think they should sign Eddie but Austin makes Bischoff eat a hamburger and have another beer. Hang on though as Austin has to make fun of the way Eric drinks, including opening the box to get the crowd even more on his side. This eats up way too much time.

Chris Jericho thinks he'll win the Intercontinental Title when Roddy Piper comes in to make fun of him. They insult each other's talk shows and Chris brings up Piper ripping the kid's leg off on Thursday. That was an accident though, just like Jericho being born. They both promise to win their matches tonight and that's about it.

We get a very nice video on the history of the Intercontinental Title before the battle royal to bring it back. They cover a good chunk of the title's history and show off some great moments. As usual, WWE knows how to do its history well.

Intercontinental Title: Battle Royal

Booker T., Christian, Lance Storm, Chris Jericho, Goldust, Kane, Val

Venis, Test, Rob Van Dam

The title is vacant coming in and only Booker isn't a former champion. Naturally, Pat Patterson gets to come out and hold up the title. And yes it's Venis, as the Chief Morely gimmick is officially gone. After some VERY long entrances, we're ready to go. Everyone goes after Kane to start (well duh) but he shrugs them off without much effort and gets rid of Storm. With Van Dam down, the others are able to get rid of Kane but he comes back in to beat everyone up.

Booker is up first and dumps Test, followed by Goldust doing the same to Venis. Jericho tosses Van Dam and we're down to Christian, Goldust, Booker and Jericho in about two minutes. Then why not just do a four way for the title? It turns into a glorified tag match with the good guys fighting back so Goldust can hit Shattered Dreams on both guys. Booker does a Spinarooni to celebrate but Goldust tries an elimination. That's fine with Booker, who dumps him out without too much trouble.

That leaves Booker and the Canadians and the double teaming is on in a hurry. Booker fights off an elimination attempt though and throws Jericho over, only to have him skin the cat in an always impressive move. Back in and the now bloody (not bad) Jericho forearms Booker down but Christian shoves him over the top during a Lionsault attempt.

Booker kicks Christian down and scores with a flapjack but the referee gets bumped. If you can't book a nine man battle royal without a ref bump, you might just kind of suck at your job. As you might expect, Booker dumps Christian but no one sees it, leaving Christian to deck Patterson. Booker gets belted as well and Christian tosses him to win the title. As you might expect, Austin does nothing to fix this and the fans' chants for GOLDBERG go unrequited.

Rating: D. That ending actually made my head hurt. How in the world do you overbook a battle royal that doesn't even last twelve minutes? Christian winning is fine, but there are other ways you can make it work. Have he and Jericho as the final two and then have Christian dump Jericho out. That's not even cheating but makes him look like a villain at the same time. Why is that so complicated?

Sable and Torrie get catty before the bikini contest. I think this is supposed to be Sable hitting on her again. If Sable wants one of the Divas this badly, go after Dawn Marie who seems to be more into it.

We recap Sable vs. Torrie, which is as obvious of an idea as you can get.

Tazz is hosting, which is only slightly better than Lawler. Lillian Garcia sings Torrie to the ring as they're putting a little too much thought and effort into this. She sings the chorus three times as this is going on WAY too long already. Anyway, both get fifteen seconds to disrobe and gyrate.

They both do their thing and the fans say it's a tie, even though Sable's reaction was clearly louder. The fact that her swimsuit was smaller has no bearing on this at all I assure you. Actually hang on though as Sable takes off the swimsuit she's wearing to reveal a smaller one, which is enough for Tazz to give her the win. Torrie gives Sable a rather passionless kiss to end things.

Austin torments Bischoff with more food and beer.

Piper rants to Sean O'Haire about Jericho when Vince McMahon comes in. Roddy better be ready because it's a big night for the boss. Without Piper there would be no Hogan and now Piper is the epitome of ruthless aggression.

We look at Piper attacking the fan who Mr. America had waving the flag, resulting in the fan's artificial leg being ripped off. Piper seemed upset but Vince didn't buy it, which was all the proof he needed to send Piper after America's mask. As usual, there is so much wrong/stupid about that idea, I don't even know where to start so we'll move on.

Roddy Piper vs. Mr. America

America brings out a chair, presumably to counteract Sean. Actually it's for Zack Gowen, the fan whose leg was ripped off. So to clarify: this story is now about Vince, Stephanie, Piper, Mr. America and Gowen. After those five people is Sean O'Haire, whose lone match in this whole thing was a less than five minute match with Rikishi, where Piper had to help

him win. And people wonder why this period is so loathed. America gets double teamed to start until Sean is sent outside.

Some right hands get America out of trouble and as the referee yells at O'Haire, the mask comes up to bite Piper. So I'm assuming Vince isn't watching the match and can't see 90% of Hogan's face there? O'Haire pulls America to the floor for some right hands, allowing Piper to whip him with the weightlifting belt. We hit a terrible sleeper until it's time to America up. The big boot connects but here's Vince so Piper can get in a low blow. O'Haire brings in a pipe but hits Piper instead, setting up the legdrop to give America the pin as Gowen holds Vince back.

Rating: F. Of course it was terrible but at least they kept it fairly short. As anyone could have guessed at the beginning of this thing though, it's not doing anyone other than Hogan and Vince any good. Unfortunately that includes O'Haire, who has gone from what should be a can't miss prospect to a bumbling lackey who can't do anything right.

Stephanie McMahon tells HHH to be careful.

We recap HHH vs. Kevin Nash, which is over Nash coming back and not liking HHH and Shawn Michaels fighting. HHH then attacked Nash for not picking the right side and we have a World Title match as a result, despite Nash making Roman Reigns like Hogan in the 80s.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Kevin Nash

HHH is defending and Ric Flair and Shawn Michaels are the seconds. I'm not sure who was thinking it's a good idea to have Flair come out in his own entrance in Charlotte if they want Nash to be cheered but this show has bigger problems to deal with. The brawl is on in the aisle before the bell with Shawn and Flair fighting to the back. I doubt we'll be seeing them again.

Nash and HHH slug it out on the floor with the bell ringing shortly thereafter. A backdrop has the champ in early trouble as JR is already saying this isn't going to be the highest quality match. Nash hits a big forearm and flips the hair so you know it's serious. HHH finally gets in a neckbreaker to get us up to about five moves in the first three

minutes. Nash is back with more right hands and a shove to the referee, who pulls him off by the hair. He'll never referee in this town again.

HHH gives us the required ref bump and a low blow before taking the turnbuckle pad off. Nash comes back with the usual but gets sent into the exposed buckle. The Pedigree gets two with the kickout earning a slightly disturbing positive reaction. A backdrop puts HHH on the floor and he comes back in with the sledgehammer to knock the referee down for the DQ.

Rating: F+. Only because it was slightly more watchable than Hogan vs. Piper. The match didn't even last as long as their brawl a few weeks back and now the feud gets to keep going because they're friends. Nash showed that he was washed up in 1999 and has only gotten worse in the years since. It was as bad as you would expect and a World Title match going less than eight minutes on pay per view is pretty unacceptable.

Nash beats up HHH because THIS MUST CONTINUE. He grabs the hammer and stalks HHH up the aisle, setting up a Jackknife through the announcers' table.

Austin makes Bischoff eat jalapenos and vomiting ensues.

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

Jazz is defending and this is one fall to a finish. It's a brawl to start until the villains are sent outside, leaving Trish to counter an early wristlock. Victoria and Jazz come back in with with the champ hitting some double chickenwing facebusters. Trish gets caught in the STF and Jacqueline puts Victoria in the half crab at the same time.

It's Trish getting to the rope first so Jazz can kick Jacqueline for the save. After a Matrish to avoid a clothesline (Lawler: "Trish just got reloaded!"), the Chick Kick gets two on Jazz. The Stratusfaction is broken up with Trish being thrown over the top and landing face first on the floor in a scary crash. Back in and Jacqueline suplexes Victoria, only to get DDT'd to retain Jazz's title.

Rating: D. That Trish landing looked great (and rather scary) but the time and a lack of a story killed whatever they could do here. What are

you supposed to get out of a sub five minute match that you could probably see on Raw? The division is still dying for some fresh blood as these four can only fight so long. We passed that point months ago but it's still the same lineup every month.

Trish has a cut lip and stares at Jazz, again meaning this must continue.

We recap the main event. Big Show attacked Rey Mysterio at Backlash so tonight it's Brock Lesnar standing up to the monster in a stretcher match.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show

Lesnar is defending and you have to put your opponent on the stretcher and get it over the finish line. During the entrances, Cole mentions that this is the first stretcher match in the company in 17 years since Andre the Giant vs. Killer Khan in 1986. You really would think he would get it right after all these weeks but alas, Cole isn't that bright (it was 1981). Also, Show brings a stretcher backboard with him with Mysterio, Benoit and Lesnar written on the back. Only Mysterio's name is crossed off, making Show look even lamer than usual.

Lesnar wastes no time in taking over and hitting Show with the board to knock him outside. A few more shots have Show in trouble and Brock sends him into the board, which is in front of the post. Show is back up and drops him across the stretcher before hitting Brock in the back with the backboard. A chokeslam plants Lesnar in the ring as I wonder why there's a referee inside with them.

Show drops a leg onto Lesnar onto the board and it's stretcher time. The champ kicks his way off though and a few backboard shots has Show in trouble. Some choking with a camera cord and Lesnar puts Show on the stretcher as the announcers say it can't be done. Seriously it's not that big of a deal. Show fights out again so Lesnar rams the stretcher into his ribs.

A tug of war goes to Show....and he throws the stretcher down and puts its pad on another stretcher. More backboard (albeit from a different backboard) have Lesnar in trouble as this just keeps going. Back up and

Brock knocks him off the apron and onto/back off of the stretcher. As Cole incorrectly says the first WWE Champion was crowned forty years ago yesterday (it was forty years ago yesterday that Bruno won the title to become the second champion), Rey Mysterio comes out to distract Show.

The distraction lets Brock drive a freaking forklift into the arena and dive off the thing with a crossbody/clothesline. A suplex into the F5 (more of an AA) allow Lesnar to throw him onto the forklift (Why can't he just put him onto the stretcher then?) and wheel him across the finish line to retain.

Rating: D+. This could have been a lot worse and it needed about five minutes cut out but it was a watchable enough main event. The problem here was the stretcher rule was completely tacked on and Show only having one of the three names crossed off made me shake my head. They should have done a last man standing match here or something like that, though it's not terrible or anything.

Overall Rating: D-. Yeah this really didn't work in the slightest. The ladder match was good and the main event was watchable but everything else was anywhere from terrible to a disaster. Aside from the America vs. Piper match and the awful World Title match, everything on here felt either unimportant or worth your time. Nothing on here felt like it needed to be on a pay per view and that scares the heck out of me considering the single branded shows start in June. Really bad here and that's not surprising when you consider the TV leading up to it.

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