

Smackdown – June 5, 2003: America First, And Then Lord Littlebrook

Smackdown

Date: June 5, 2003

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This week is almost all about Kurt Angle, who is back from the rather ridiculous two months off after having another major neck injury. To be fair, he's long been established as a crazy man anyway so it's not like this is out of character. As for an actual match, Rey Mysterio is challenging Matt Hardy for the Cruiserweight Title. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Roddy Piper and Sean O'Haire to get things going in Piper's Pit. There's a legend in the back named Zack Gowan, who has fought against all the odds to get here. Piper makes fun of Gowan by calling him special over and over again. Instead it's Vince McMahon power walking to the ring. Vince has been blinded by his hatred for Mr. America and Hulk Hogan, which is why he wants to make things right. It's time to congratulate a great American success story like Gowan. Therefore, Gowan will have the chance to earn a contract.

Cue Gowan, albeit flanked by Mr. America. Vince isn't pleased again and accused Hogan of faking the lie detector test last week. As for Gowan, he has the chance to get his contract next week, in an arm wrestling contest against Vince. America insults Vince a bit more as this takes longer than it needs to. Vince shoves Gowan down and gloats a lot.

We get a great Kurt Angle moment in Milk-A-Mania. Eh yeah that worked.

Undertaker vs. Chuck Palumbo

Yes this is still going. Palumbo headlocks him to start and actually

shoulders Undertaker down. Undertaker is right back up with a leapfrog of all things and Old School connects (on the second attempt that is). An FBI distraction lets Palumbo get in a spinebuster to take over and a running right hand knocks Undertaker outside for the cheap shots. Back in and Undertaker grabs a suplex for a breather but Palumbo knocks him right back into the corner. You don't see Undertaker sell this much in a match like this...and as I say this he hits the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D+. Palumbo got in some offense here but it wasn't exactly a thrilling match. I'm still waiting on the FBI to go away though as they don't have anything special for a gimmick and it's not like there's a star for the team. I have no idea why Undertaker is stuck with them, but at least WWE isn't wasting any potential big stars on him.

Post match the FBI goes after Undertaker but is dispatched in short order.

Rey Mysterio's family is in the front row for his title shot later tonight.

Quick look at Big Show laying out Brock Lesnar last week.

Show vs. Lesnar for the title next week. At least it's not on pay per view.

We get a video tribute to Freddie Blassie, who passed away earlier in the week. This is edited off the Network version due to music issues, though an RIP graphic is there so it's better than nothing.

Eddie Guerrero/Tajiri vs. Basham Brothers

Non-title. Tajiri takes him Doug down with some armdrags to start and Eddie chases him into the corner for the first tag. That's fine with Eddie who rolls some suplexes but Doug breaks up the frog splash. Again, it doesn't seem to bother Eddie who wristdrags Doug and headscissors Danny at the same time. We hear about Team Angle calling in sick tonight as Doug gets in a suplex of his own for two on Eddie.

Another suplex gets Eddie out of trouble and it's off to Tajiri for a superkick. A DDT gives Tajiri two on Danny and we hit the Tarantula (with

Tajiri crossing Danny's legs instead of pulling back like a Boston crab). With the referee trying to break it up, Eddie adds a frog splash to Doug's back, setting up the Buzzsaw Kick for the pin.

Rating: C+. The more I see of Eddie and Tajiri together, the more I like them. Tajiri is always smooth in the ring and that's what makes them work so well. Eddie can do all the talking and technical stuff while Tajiri can come in and kick people really, really hard. That's quite the combination. I'm not sure what the point is in having the Bashams come in and lose like this after a single win over the makeshift team of Rikishi and Spanky.

Another great Angle moment: singing songs with Austin while playing ukulele.

Here's Angle, to quite the face reaction. He says it feels great to hear people tell him that he sucks so PLAY THAT MUSIC AGAIN! Angle is so overwhelmed that he lays on the mat listening to the chants. Things settle down a bit and Angle talks about wanting to be the World Champion again. As for his recovery though, there was one person who came to see him in the hospital and became a true friend. That person....will be named later as here's Big Show to interrupt.

Show doesn't care that Angle is back because Angle hasn't earned his respect yet. Show gets right in Angle's face and says if Angle wants to be champion again, he can come face Show after he wins the title next week. Angle better pray that doesn't happen though because Angle won't come out of the hospital again. Kurt pulls out some breaths strips and reminds Show that he took the title from him back in December. Oh and he won a gold medal with a broken freaking neck.

Angle does a quick fan poll on whether they want to see him beat Big Show up tonight, asking for a YOU SUCK. Cue Lesnar so Show bails, leaving Angle to say he could have handled that himself. Angle says Show has been getting the better of Lesnar as of late (Huh?) and thinks Brock is losing the title next week. Lesnar promises to keep the title and offers Angle a shot down the road. That sounds good to Kurt, but he's glad Lesnar came out here. It was Brock who was visiting him in the hospital and being a

friend. That means a big best friends hug and we have the latest version of the mega powers.

Ultimo Dragon is coming.

John Cena vs. Chris Benoit

Before the match, Cena rips on the cruiserweight division and thinks they don't deserve any air time. We even get a Lord Littlebrook reference, making this even more awesome than usual. Benoit goes straight at him to start and drops Cena with a hard shoulder. Cena's charge in the corner misses and Benoit easily takes him down into a failed Crossface attempt.

They head outside where Benoit gets posted and it's off to a chinlock. Benoit pops back up and elbows Cena in the face before countering the FU into a DDT. The Swan Dive gets two but the ref gets bumped. That really doesn't need to happen in a match that hasn't run three minutes yet. Cena gets in a low blow but here's Rhyno to take the chain away. Unfortunately he hits Benoit in the head by mistake, giving Cena the easy pin.

Rating: D+. Not enough time to do anything here but it was more about setting up the Benoit/Rhyno split anyway. That being said, it's not like Rhyno and Benoit are guys in need of a big time split in the first place. It's also not like the division is deep enough to be burning off teams, but why let that get in your way?

Jamie Noble/Nidia vs. Torrie Wilson/Rikishi

The guys take turns twirling their partners around before we're ready to go. Nidia slaps Rikishi so he shoves her down, which Cole says she deserved. Torrie shows off her ability to do some not great armdrags before sending her into the corner. It's off to Rikishi for a Stinkface attempt but Noble comes in instead.

Rikishi misses a sitdown splash but knocks Noble around without too much trouble. Nidia is brought back in to face Torrie, meaning the announcers get to talk about her outfit. Some bad clotheslines set up a high crossbody for two on Nidia but Noble trips Torrie. That earns Noble a superkick and Nidia a Stinkface as this is still all about Rikishi.

Torrie finishes with a neckbreaker.

Rating: D-. Total filler here and mainly a way to look at Torrie for a few minutes. I've heard worse ideas but it's getting annoying having to watch her horrible matches while acting like she's something great. Throw in the WAY too strong support for Rikishi and it's not my favorite time of the show.

Rey says he's healthy and ready to take the title. Eddie comes in and gives him a pep talk.

We recap the opening segment.

Vince is in Stephanie's office where she asks what's up with him lately. She threatens to give Gowan a contract anyway, but Vince promises to fire her if that happens. Yet he didn't do that for Mr. America? Why not make it one of those Iron Clad contracts then? Anyway, Vince brings in his new assistant: Sable, who has seemingly forgotten the whole Torrie angle.

Stephanie brings up Sable's lawsuits against the company (which I don't believe has been acknowledged before) and suggests that Vince is only looking at Sable's body. After Stephanie's Stating the Obvious Segment of the Week, Vince says she's just jealous of Sable's looks.

Cruiserweight Title: Matt Hardy vs. Rey Mysterio

Matt, who is taller than Rey Mysterio and despises traffic, is defending with Crash and Shannon Moore in his corner. We get the staredown and my goodness it's weird to see Matt towering over someone. Matt works on a wristlock to start as we hear about various people holding the title over the years. You mean like Mysterio?

Rey gets bent around the ropes but comes right back with a slingshot dropkick through said ropes. A springboard is broken up with a forearm though and the goons get in their shots. The referee finally wakes up and we have a double ejection, which should make things a little bit better. The disgruntled Matt gets taken down by a springboard seated senton and we take a break. Back with Rey escaping Splash Mountain but getting caught by a low blow. Eh it worked for Cena so it can work for Matt.

The champ starts in on the recently injured groin (well, hamstring in this case) as Rey's family is starting to panic. We hit a half crab for a bit until Rey dives for the ropes. He can't run for the 619 though and gets taken into the corner to continue the beating. The Tree of Woe goes badly for Matt as his charge hits the post, followed by a spinning DDT for two on the champ. Rey heads up top but gets pulled down with a super Side Effect, which isn't as impressive of a crash as you would have expected.

Back up and Rey grabs a Twist of Fate of his own before hobbling into a 619. They fall out to the floor though with Matt slowly remember what planet he's on. The referee checks on Matt though, allowing Shannon and Crash to run back in for a double reverse suplex drop. The top rope legdrop gives Matt a close two. Hardy is livid and it's a quick rollup to give Rey the pin and the title.

Rating: B. Good enough here, but it certainly didn't feel like a cruiserweight match. Instead this came off like a regular heavyweight match which happened to have Mysterio involved. Not that Mysterio and Hardy can't work that style, but if they can wrestle the regular style, what's the point in having then in the cruiserweight division? Oh right: there's no midcard title.

Rey's family comes in to celebrate to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Better show than usual here, partially due to having the main event focused on ANYTHING other than the Mr. America nonsense. Mysterio winning the title felt like a big deal and Angle coming back was cool, though the bottom half of the card continues to feel completely unimportant. Good enough show though and miles better than anything Raw has produced in a very long time.

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