

Smackdown – June 26, 2003: Old Guys Out

Smackdown

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Commentators: Tazz, Michael Cole

We're back in the World's Most Famous Arena with the blue show, including a likely six man tag after the end of last week's show. Odds are we're looking at Brock Lesnar/Kurt Angle/Mr. America vs. Big Show/Shelton Benjamin/Charlie Haas, which offers some interesting combinations. Of course it also offers Mr. America wrestling and that might not be the best thing in the world. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Zack Gowan/Sable/Vince McMahon/Stephanie McMahon issues, including Sable humiliating Gowan to Vince's amusement and Stephanie going on a rant about how her father treated her like garbage. In other words, it's still all about Vince and Stephanie.

Opening sequence.

Here's John Cena to brag about how awesome his rookie year has been. Eh it's been good, but when you're in the same class as Brock Lesnar, it's not much to brag about. However, none of it would have started without answering an open challenge. Let's have another open challenge right now.

John Cena vs. Orlando Jordan

Josh Matthews is ring announcer for some reason. Cena laughs this off and insults New York but Jordan takes him down to start fast. A belly to belly suplex gives Jordan two but Cena plants him with a release spinebuster. The FU is countered with Jordan landing on his feet and coming back with a dropkick. Jordan goes up for a high crossbody but Cena rolls through and grabs the trunks for the pin.

Undertaker comes out and chases Cena off before giving Jordan the respect pat on the ribs. I'm not sure this one is going to work as well.

Undertaker/APA vs. FBI

And you know Undertaker needs help with this one. Palumbo headlocks Undertaker to start but it's already off to the arm cranking. A kick to the face just annoys Undertaker and there's Old School. The Italians take over in the corner with Nunzio dropkicking him in the face but easily allowing the hot tag off to Faarooq.

Palumbo gets in a cheap shot and it's Faarooq giving the FBI their false hope for a bit. We hit a reverse chinlock until Palumbo crotches himself on Faarooq's knee. The hot tag (minus the fans reacting) brings in Bradshaw to clean house. Everything breaks down and it's a chokeslam for Palumbo, followed by the Clothesline From Bradshaw for the pin on Stamboli.

Rating: D. I'm not even sure what to say here. Undertaker regularly beat up all three Italians and now we're supposed to be impressed or interested when two other big brawlers beat them up too? The match was a glorified squash with the minute or so of Faarooq being in trouble not exactly making this thrilling. Can we please find something else for Undertaker to do now?

Jamie Noble and Nidia annoy some fans on the streets of New York when an attorney comes up. Apparently Jamie's aunt died and left him \$827,000. I'll ignore the questions about how the attorney knew they were there or why he did such official business on the streets, or at least in a parking lot. Nidia tries to take the attorney's pants off but they decide to go to a fancy dinner at Applebee's instead.

Wrestlemania Recall: the first edition.

Sable tries to make up for last week to Vince but he turns her down. He has something to do tonight.

US Title Tournament First Round: Matt Hardy vs. Rikishi

No one with Matt, who has better abs than Rikishi, this week. Matt is

also officially out of the cruiserweight division so the experiment is over. Rikishi shoves him over to start and Matt already has to bail from the threat of a Stink Face. A posting lets Matt crank on both of Rikishi's arms, which is about the extent of the offense.

Rikishi plants him with a belly to belly suplex and the Rikishi Driver knocks Matt silly. It doesn't knock him out for three though, which is a rather questionable knockout when Hardy's head bounced off the mat. The Rump Shaker hits raised knees though and the Twist of Fate gets two. Matt takes off a turnbuckle, avoids a charge into said buckle, and hits a second Twist for the pin.

Rating: D+. That Rikishi Driver looked great (as it did most of the time) but they really could have just ended it after the first Twist of Fate. The tournament isn't exactly setting the world on fire yet but it might get better with some brackets or at least a list of names in the thing. You know, assuming they know who is in the thing at the moment.

Billy Kidman, still out of action with an injury, is in the front row but wants to be back in the ring.

Tag Team Titles: Roddy Piper/Sean O'Haire vs. Eddie Guerrero/Tajiri

Eddie and Tajiri are defending as we need to wedge an MSG legend onto the card. O'Haire jumps Eddie at the bell but gets taken down for a quick slingshot hilo. It's off to Tajiri for the handspring elbow and a superkick for two. Piper has to break up a Tarantula and then comes in legally to a nice nostalgia reaction. After a few stomps and some slaps to Eddie, it's already back to O'Haire for a chinlock. A powerslam is countered with a reverse DDT and Tajiri brings Eddie back in. Everything breaks down and Piper gets misted, setting up the frog splash to retain the titles.

Rating: D. As usual, Eddie and Tajiri looked fine, albeit at the expense of someone who should be winning the US Title tournament. This push for O'Haire hasn't gotten him anywhere and, again, it's almost all about Piper. There's no benefit to the two of them being associated and O'Haire is floundering more and more by the day. Of course none of that matters as this was it for Piper in the company due to some comments he made in

an interview with HBO. Really, it's not much of a loss for WWE as Piper was barely worth keeping around at this point, save for the occasional good line in Piper's Pit.

We see the end of last week's show, which set up tonight's six man tag.

Here's Vince to call out Stephanie and Gowan. Vince sucks up to Stephanie, calling her the apple of her father's eye. She grew up in a hurry and when she was seventeen, he did have her, ahem, close some business deals for him. Those actions stole her innocence and it was as if Vince personally deflowered her (I know it's never flat out stated, but it's pretty clear what he's talking about and that's rather disturbing). He'll never forgive himself and that brings him to Gowan.

See, Vince wants to be like Zack, because it's the one thing he can't be. Therefore he wants an apology from Gowan, who says no. Gowan goes into a good rant about how he wants to be a wrestler and Vince is spitting on his dreams. All Gowan wants is a contract and Vince calmly gives him one. Well, with one condition: he has to join Vince's special club. Vince takes his pants down but gets hit low instead. At least they kept it shorter here and stayed closer to the point, albeit with Vince losing his pants.

Ultimo Dragon vs. Shannon Moore

This is Dragon's debut and Rey Mysterio is on commentary. Dragon spins out of a headscissors and a wristlock to start before kicking Moore away without much effort. Shannon gets sent outside so Dragon moonsaults back into the middle of the ring. Back in and Moore gets two off an elbow to the jaw before grabbing a chinlock.

Dragon fights up and hits a sloppy inverted hurricanrana/release victory roll (started in an electric chair and rolled forward). Shannon is sent outside again for an Asai moonsault and the New York fans are rather appreciative. A super jawbreaker sets up a standing backflip into a reverse DDT (basically a Salida Del Sol) to give Dragon the pin.

Rating: C-. This was way more competitive than it needed to be, especially with someone who has been hyped up as strongly as Dragon. I

was never the biggest fan of his but he had a good finisher and a great looking moonsault, which is often all you need. If nothing else the division needs some fresh blood and a top challenger for Mysterio.

Rey and Dragon shake hands post match.

Kurt Angle/Brock Lesnar/Mr. America vs. Charlie Haas/Shelton Benjamin/Big Show

The USA chants start up (Tazz: "I don't get this. Everybody in the ring is an American.") until Angle and Haas start things off. The chants shift to Angle as he takes Charlie down for a far too early chinlock. Haas drags him into the corner though and it's a good looking double dropkick to put Angle down. A crossbody gets Angle out of trouble as the fans want Hogan.

They'll have to settle for Mr. America though for a clothesline, only to have Brock come in for some REAL clotheslines. Brock gorilla presses Haas as Tazz tries to get Manster over as a nickname. It's back to America for a belly to back suplex and we take a break. Back with Lesnar cleaning house again and staring Big Show (who hasn't done anything yet) down.

Benjamin breaks up an F5 on Haas and it's the leapfrog over Haas and onto Lesnar's back. Now Show will come in and Brock can't slam him. Lesnar can however belly to back suplex him because physics are weird in wrestling. The hot tag brings in Angle to clean house with the release German suplexes (that's very un-American of him). Show has to break up the ankle lock on Haas and it's double teaming time again.

That lasts all of five seconds as Kurt gets in another suplex and brings America back in. Some right hands have Show rocked and Lesnar and Angle pull him outside. An F5/Angle Slam take out Haas and Benjamin, only to have Show come back in for a double chokeslam. That leaves America to take care of Show but here's Vince carrying Gowan. The distraction lets Show chokeslam America for the pin.

Rating: C+. Not bad here, mainly because they mostly focused on Haas/Benjamin vs. Angle/Lesnar. America and Big Show could have a passable five minute match but they're much better off saving them for

short bursts like this. They still need to find someone else for Lesnar to face besides Big Show though as it's getting repetitive. The other stuff was good though and that's what matters most. I'm sure Mr. America will find something fresh to do soon enough.

Vince makes Gowan/Stephanie vs. Big Show for Gowan's contract next week.

Overall Rating: C-. The first forty minutes or so were pretty dreadful but it picked up strongly enough in the second half to make it watchable. They're getting to a point with the main story but the rest of the card is kind of all over the place. We still have no idea who is in the tournament and O'Haire/Piper are the best they have for challengers to the Tag Team Titles. It's certainly better than Raw though and while that's not much of a bar to clear, it's better than nothing.

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