

Smackdown – June 24, 2003: I'm Trying To Believe

Smackdown

Date: July 24, 2003

Location: Selland Arena, Fresno, California

Commentators: Tazz, Michael Cole

It's the go home show for Vengeance and hopefully the improvements continue around here. The big story continues to be the McMahon family drama but the World Title scene is starting to heat up. There are a few other good things going on around here and I'm actually looking forward to the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's handicap match with Kurt Angle defeating Big Show and the World's Greatest Tag Team (albeit with some assistance from Zach Gowen).

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to get things going. She's had a rough week but tonight she's taking Smackdown back. Tonight's main event will be Big Show/World's Greatest Tag Team vs. Kurt Angle/Zach Gowen/Brock Lesnar. After some threats to Sable, here's John Cena to interrupt. Cena had a dream about Stephanie last night and it had him standing at attention. He makes a bunch of jokes about her chest and gives Stephanie \$20 to rip Sable's top off. Cena: "I got this little fetish with nipples."

What he'd really like to do is give her a spank though and Stephanie actually lets him, complete with bending over to help him out. Cena does in fact spank her but here's Sable to interrupt, ending this week's edition of "Stephanie is a sex symbol and we're going to know about it". She shows us a clip from last week's messy brawl before bringing up Linda being attacked on Monday. Stephanie can worry about Linda though because Sable can take care of Vince. Chase is given and we take a break.

Back with Stephanie screeching about Sable and being told she's in the

parking lot.

Rey Mysterio/Billy Kidman vs. Matt Hardy/Shannon Moore

I wonder what Matt, who is considered sacred in Japan and defeated Mysterio and Kidman on consecutive pay per views, thinks of Stephanie's spankability. Mysterio headlocks Matt to start before stopping a charge in the corner. Kidman adds a slingshot legdrop for two and it's off to Shannon, who lured Kidman into a cheap shot from Matt.

For some reason the announcers debate whether Kamala was from the Himalayas until Matt gets two off a neckbreaker. The double teaming continues with Matt adding another forearm from the apron. We hit the double arm crank with Hardy's boot in Kidman's back. That's broken up without much effort and the hot tag brings Mysterio back in. Things speed up in a hurry with Rey hitting the sitout bulldog.

Matt breaks up the 619, allowing Shannon to kick Rey in the chest to take him down. A sitout powerbomb plants Rey again to give Shannon two but Kidman is back in with a high crossbody. Matt breaks that up with a top rope legdrop but Rey hurricanranas him out to the floor. The 619 takes Shannon down and it's the shooting star for the pin.

Rating: B. This took its time to get going but the last few minutes were excellent fast paced stuff. Mysterio and Kidman should be awesome as challengers to Haas and Benjamin on Sunday and if it's given enough time, we could be in for a show stealer. I don't think the titles are changing hands but at least it's going to be fun while it lasts. That being said, the fact that I completely forgot Mysterio was Cruiserweight Champion until later in the show is a bad sign. Just don't put the title on him if this is what you're using him for.

Stephanie chases Sable, who was just standing there while Stephanie came running up. Of course Stephanie WON'T STOP SCREECHING, even as she rips Sable's top off. Sable gets in the limo but Vince pops up to stop Stephanie from breaking the window. Vince won't answer why he's not at home taking care of Linda. They really aren't hiding what they're doing with Sable and Stephanie and it's not working. Stephanie as the vicious fighter is rather laughable and they're all but advertising that someone

is losing clothes on Sunday. The screeching is ruining almost any positives about the whole thing though and that's a problem.

Jamie Noble vs. Billy Gunn

Well at least it's not at the pay per view. Nidia isn't here tonight but it has NOTHING to do with Jamie offering Torrie money for sleeping with him. Billy charges in and hammers away before hitting his hiptoss into a neckbreaker (cool move). They head outside with Jamie sending him into the barricade. A Torrie distraction lets Billy grab a slam into a swinging Rock Bottom for the very fast pin. Now let this stupid thing be over.

Post match Jamie says he's better than Billy in every way, including in bed. Torrie grabs the mic and says they can have a rematch at Vengeance and if Jamie beats him, she'll sleep with Jamie. Right here on Smackdown next week.

Video on the Asia tour.

We see Torrie's proposal again.

The A-Train comes in to see the APA, who invite him to the Bar Room Brawl. Brother Love, the Conquistadors, Tough Enough guys and the EASTER BUNNY will be there. A-Train: "Where I come from, we HATE the Easter Bunny." A-Train doesn't want Bradshaw's new book and leaves. Cue the Brooklyn Brawler, who wants in so he can beat Doink up for whatever reason. Brawler has to prove himself tonight.

Cena is standing in a flaming pentagram and cuts a rather religious promo about how evil he'll be on Sunday. This show is all over the place tonight.

Here's Eddie Guerrero for a chat. Before getting in the ring, Eddie polishes the low rider's chrome for a bit (drawing the face pop of the night). In spite of the rest of this show, that's not a euphemism for anything else. Eddie talks about being ready to face his best friend Chris Benoit on Sunday so here's Benoit to interrupt. Benoit laughs off the idea of them being best friends because Eddie hasn't called him in

months. How many best friends does Eddie have?

Eddie laughs off the idea but it's ok because he was just lying. After seeming to forget his lines, Eddie says he can't stand Benoit and we go over their history together. Eddie is sick of being the second in command to someone like Benoit. That's why he's winning the US Title on Sunday. Benoit is ready to fight right now but Eddie uses the "on my time" excuse. Eddie tries a cheap shot but settles for blinding Benoit with the car polish, drawing a loud EDDIE chant. Rhino comes out for the save and it's time for a challenge. Eddie ignores him and plays with the polish bottle in a glorious moment. The match is finally made.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Rhino

Joined in progress with Rhino pounding on Eddie and cutting off a charge with a raised boot. A powerbomb into Snake Eyes gives Rhino two and we're off to an early chinlock. Rhino slams him down and grabs the same hold. Eddie fights up and grabs a northern lights suplex for two but Rhino comes back with a Crossface. It's very odd seeing Rhino wrestle as the heel here, just a few minutes after Eddie TRIED TO BLIND Benoit.

Eddie sends him outside for a slingshot dive to take over for the first time, much to the crowd's delight. Back in and Eddie stands on Rhino's hair before soaking in the cheers. Rhino is back up with a shoulder block for two, followed by a spinebuster for a very delayed near fall. Eddie is right back up with a super hurricanrana but has to avoid the Gore. That means a low blow to Rhino with Eddie being smart enough to claim that he took one instead. The confused referee doesn't seem to mind and counts the pin on Rhino (with Eddie's feet on the ropes just because).

Rating: B. Eddie is a national treasure and the company is smart enough to not even really try to push him as a full on heel. It says a lot when he's so talented at being a villain that the fans can't help but cheer him even more. This is some of the best stuff he's ever done and it's becoming more and more of a treat to see him every single week.

The APA visited the troops this week and invited Saddam Hussein to the Bar Room Brawl.

APA vs. FBI

Heel miscommunication leads to the Clothesline ending Palumbo in about thirty seconds.

Nunzio gets beaten up as well so here's the Brawler to chair the APA down. The Bashams, the A-Train and Sean O'Haire come in to join on the beating.

Vince comes in to see Gowen but Lesnar and Angle make the save. You know, because the would-be hero needs to be saved from Vince.

Pay per view run down. This isn't on the Network version, likely due to a music issue.

Big Show/World's Greatest Tag Team vs. Kurt Angle/Brock Lesnar/Zach Gowen

Angle grabs a front facelock on Shelton before getting shouldered down. That's enough of this wrestling stuff so Angle tosses Shelton with a suplex. Haas comes in and gets armbarred as well before Brock comes in for some hard shoulders in the corner. Lesnar tosses Gowen onto Haas and Benjamin, again making me wonder why I'm supposed to care about a glorified mascot.

Show tosses Gowen around and it's back to Angle as everything breaks down. Cue Vince to chair Gowen in the good leg, leaving Angle and Lesnar to suplex/spinebuster Haas and Benjamin. Gowen is taken to the back and we go to a break. Back with Angle hammering on Show until Shelton makes a save. The jump over Haas onto Angle's back gets two and it's off to Big Show for a half crab.

Shelton's superkick gets two but Angle throws Charlie down, allowing the hot tag off to Lesnar. More house is cleaned until Big Show kicks him in the face to slow things right back down. Everything breaks down again and the Angle Slam into the ankle lock has Show in trouble. Lesnar F5's Charlie but breaks the hold by mistake, leaving Show to grab the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: C. The match was starting to drag but thank goodness they got rid of Gowen so soon. It seems that they're already realizing that there's

nothing there and it's a big waste of time to pretend otherwise. The World Title feud has been well built, but have either Haas/Benjamin or Mysterio/Kidman mentioned that they're fighting each other on Sunday? I don't think either seem to realize it.

Lesnar mauls all three villains post match but gets in a fight with Angle. The distraction lets Show hit a double chokeslam to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Vengeance is getting one of the oddest builds I've ever seen. The World Title match is perfectly fine, but the rest is this weird combination of stuff that makes me want to gouge my ears off (anything McMahon related) and outstanding stuff (anything Eddie does at the moment). Above all else though, there's a ton of good stuff to look forward to on Sunday but at the same time, there's a lot of stuff that feels like an excuse to torture us. The show was good though and I'm more interested in seeing the pay per view than I was, which is all this was supposed to accomplish.

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