

Smackdown – August 14, 2003: The XFL, the WBF and Cracker Barrel vs. Bob Evans

Smackdown

Date: August 14, 2003

Location: Savvis Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're in a new era around here as Brock Lesnar has turned heel again, this time siding with Vince McMahon against Smackdown World Champion Kurt Angle. You can pretty much guarantee the Summerslam title match now, but it does beg the question of why Vince refused to give Lesnar a title shot in the first place. Either this plan came together in the span of a week or there's a bit of a lack of logic there. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's a smug Vince to get things going. Vince wants to talk about the REAL Brock Lesnar, many of whom probably think they know quite well. He won the NCAA Title right here and the fans may know some things about him, but there's a side Vince knows and we don't. Brock is really an animal (at least he's not a manster, which Cole is still trying to get over) and we see a few clips to sum up last week's charade.

This includes Angle being tossed into the cage, which Vince says is Brock's version of dwarf tossing. Brock comes out and explains his definition of friendship. The only reason you need friends is to help yourself but after that's no longer an option, they're no longer your friend. As soon as Angle became champion, Angle's value to him ended. The fans can't judge him because they would do the same. They suck too.

Vince gets to the bigger point: Angle is defending against Brock at Summerslam. This brings out Stephanie (dang it had been a nice two weeks and dang that's some really bad canned applause) and Brock seems to hide behind Vince. Give him another ten years or so. Stephanie yells at Vince

for sending A-Train to attack her so Sable could win a match. She thinks Vince is scared of her having power but she's not going to quit.

Vince is a great businessman but as a father and husband, he's a piece of garbage. Screeching mode ensues with Stephanie shouting that Vince is NOTHING. Vince says that Stephanie is a bad investment, but the worst investment was the day he married Linda. As for tonight though, Stephanie can face A-Train. That's three out of four TV main events with a McMahon in the ring and again, I can't say I'm surprised. They did make this faster though as it only took fourteen minutes instead of sixteen, all to set up Stephanie vs. A-Train.

Tag Team Titles: Rey Mysterio/Billy Kidman vs. World's Greatest Tag Team

Haas and Benjamin are defending. Kidman and Haas start things off and we hit that Stephanie discussion. An armdrag takes Haas down but Shelton kicks Kidman's knee out and cannonballs down for good measure. A missed charge allows the hot tag to Rey though and things speed way back up. They seem to botch something in the corner but Rey switches into an attempt at a tornado DDT.

That's broken up as well as Shelton throws him up for something like a northern lights suplex....which hurts Shelton? Was it supposed to have been turned into a neckbreaker? Anyway Haas gets in a cheap shot from behind and Shelton grabs a t-bone for two. Everything breaks down with Kidman diving onto Haas, leaving Shelton to take a super hurricanrana for a delayed two.

We take a break and come back with Rey taking a big backdrop to the floor and clutching his knee. It's Mysterio so that's likely six months off. Charlie takes over by choking on the ropes and starts kicking at the ribs. Not the knee that Rey was holding of course, but the ribs. It makes sense when his finisher is the Haas of Pain but they're kind of ignoring what they're being handed.

Benjamin comes in for a bearhug and an abdominal stretch. As usual, I greatly approve of mixing up your holds when you have so many options. Shelton's jump onto Rey's back gives Charlie two and a dropkick to the ribs makes things even worse for Rey. Haas grabs an armbar of all things,

allowing Rey to hit a dropkick of his own. That bangs up his knee again though and Shelton breaks up the hot tag. They're building the heck out of that thing and it's working very well. Imagine that: it's easy to sympathize with Mysterio.

Rey gets in a flying mare though and a basement dropkick allows the hot tag to Kidman. Everything breaks down in a hurry as Kidman takes both champs down, including a BK Bomb for two on Haas. A belly to belly cuts Kidman off but it's Mysterio springboarding in with the legdrop for a sweet save.

Rey hurricanranas Benjamin to the floor and powerbombs Haas off the ropes, right into shooting star press position. The referee is too busy watching Rey 619 Benjamin though, allowing Haas to kick out at two. Awesome sequence. Benjamin tries to grab a belt but Rey takes it away, distracting the referee long enough that Benjamin can superkick Kidman into a rollup to retain.

Rating: B+. Heck of a match between these teams and that's all you could have expected. Kidman and Mysterio work very well together and it's no surprise that they were able to have a highly entertaining and quality match with another very talented team. I could live with this a lot more if Mysterio wasn't the Cruiserweight Champion but really, who else is there for him to face at the moment other than Kidman?

Doug Basham vs. Billy Gunn

Gunn goes straight at him to start and hits some clotheslines as the announcers talk about Shaniqua. The hiptoss into a neckbreaker gets two as Shaniqua throws Torrie in. The distraction lets the Bashams hit a Russian legsweep/clothesline combo (the Ball and Gag, because of course it is) for the very fast pin.

Post match the Bashams keep up the beating until Jamie Noble runs in to save Torrie (and her torn trunks). Thankfully the Bashams don't run from the powers of redneck violence and everyone is beaten down. The beatdown takes two or three times as long as the match.

The APA thinks Shaniqua is Shelton Benjamin in drag. Faarooq shifts gears

and thinks the APA Offices should be opened again. Bradshaw goes back to the Shaniqua thing and it's really not funny.

Big Show leaves Vince's office with a smile on his face.

Undertaker vs. A-Train is set for Summerslam. You may notice the lack of Rey Mysterio and John Cena on the pay per view. No room for people like that of course.

Big Show vs. Undertaker

Show tosses him down without much effort and breaks up a waistlock without about as little effort. Some clotheslines stagger Show though and Undertaker slips out of a chokeslam into a Fujiwara armbar. A DDT gets a very bad looking cover (Undertaker was over his arms and face instead of the shoulders) and the apron legdrop makes things even worse for Show.

Old School connects but Undertaker walks into a side slam to bang up his previously bad ribs. Show's clothesline gets two but the fans aren't impressed and tell him he sucks. Well yeah but you don't have to remind him of it so often. Undertaker gets in the jumping clothesline and a legdrop for two before the straps come down. You don't see that too often from Undertaker and he goes into boxing mode in the corner.

Show grabs the referee to block the chokeslam though and hits the bad ribs. The referee is down from a shot that shouldn't have dropped him and the fight goes outside. Show gets posted and clotheslined into the crowd, only to have A-Train come in with a 2x4 to Undertaker's ribs. Only Show can beat the ten and wins by countout.

Rating: D+. This was better than I would have guessed and it did help set up the pay per view match. Big Show is kind of just there again but that's the case with him more often than not. Maybe he'll heat up a bit down the line but for now, it seems time for him to fall back down from the main event scene. As for Undertaker vs. A-Train...well maybe it'll be short.

Post break, Undertaker needs to be treated before he interferes in the "main event".

Tajiri vs. Rhyno

Eddie Guerrero and Chris Benoit are on commentary. Tajiri kicks away to start until a hard clothesline takes him down. Rhyno, with a glare at Eddie, gets two off a suplex. Another kick gives Tajiri the same as they're certainly not wasting time here. Benoit and Eddie debate Bob Evans vs. Cracker Barrel as Tajiri sends Rhyno into the corner and hits the Buzzsaw Kick for the fast pin.

Post match Benoit wants a ride in Eddie's truck but first, we need some hydraulics. That's too much for Eddie who leaves Benoit in the truck and walks away. Benoit isn't often put into comedy roles but it worked well here. It's still not something he should be doing too often but once in a while, it's entertaining.

Zach Gowen vs. John Cena

Before the match, Cena raps about Gowen having one leg, including saying he would be the perfect partner in a three legged race. Normally I wouldn't laugh but having to keep Gowen around as a glorified mascot has made me lose a lot of patience for him. Cena runs him over with a hard shoulder before working Gowen over in the corner. The FU is teased but Cena lets him down, instead having the super version countered into a flying armbar on Cena's bad shoulder. That's good for two but the FU puts Gowen away in short order.

Rating: D. Do you get the idea with Gowen yet? I didn't know if him doing the same thing over and over again was enough to make the idea clear yet. Cena winning and winning in short order should seal Gowen's fate just a little bit more but leave it to WWE to keep going with the guy and not get the hint just yet.

We recap Undertaker and A-Train from earlier.

Stephanie is warming up (good thing she had gear ready) and the fans seem pleased. I mean the outfit being very low cut has a lot to do with it but Stephanie will take any cheering there is to be had. A-Train comes in and hints at wanting rough sex. I'll leave you with getting that image out of your head.

During the break, Matt Hardy jumped Gowen as he was leaving the arena. I knew I always liked Matt for a reason.

Spanky, in what looks like a Kool-Aid shirt, chugs chocolate syrup and gets some on Vince. The boss doesn't recognize Kendrick, who says he's been working here for like a year (it hasn't even been five months since he officially got a contract in storyline terms). Kendrick is annoyed and brings up the failures of the XFL and the WBF (I didn't know the second was allowed to be mentioned). As a result, he'll face Brock later tonight.

Spanky vs. Brock Lesnar

The opening charge is cut off by three straight powerbombs and Tazz wants the match stopped. Instead it's a LOUD chair shot to the head to bust Spanky open for the DQ. That was horrible looking and I can't say I'm all that surprised. Brock does look like a killer though. Cole: "This is not about chocolate syrup."

Post destruction, Spanks is pressed ribs first into the post and is covered with more blood. Vince comes out to smile at his new toy.

Stephanie McMahon vs. A-Train

Let's get this over with. Before the match Vince introduces Sable as the guest ring announcer. Stephanie tries to get at Sable, who makes it no countouts. The catfight is on, much like the canned heat. A-Train comes out and runs Stephanie over before hitting a running splash in the corner.

Vince gives it a thumbs down and A-Train puts her over the shoulder, only to have Undertaker come to the aisle for the brawl. Undertaker chairs A-Train in the back (I guess no countout now means no DQ) but Big Show comes in for the save. Now it's Undertaker getting chaired in the ribs, allowing A-Train to go back in and hit a Vader Bomb for the win.

Vince and Sable kiss to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The opener helps this a lot but EGADS the A-Train and McMahon's stuff is killing this show. If you don't like the tales of the

boss and his family, there's no point to watching most of this show. There's some good wrestling but most of the time it feels like they're just throwing stuff out there for the sake of throwing it out there with Vince vs. Stephanie getting most of the time and thought.

It would be nice if they actually had a reason to be fighting but really, it's something about Vince being a bad father and Vince not just firing her for some reason. Such is life on Smackdown, but maybe Summerslam can help things a bit. Then again that might suggest that this story is ever going to end, or if anything else really matters around here. The dead times continue for this show and I can't imagine that changing in the near future.

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