

Smackdown – November 20, 2003: Wrestling With A Purpose



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: November 20, 2003

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're past Survivor Series and that means a few months of calm as Smackdown doesn't have a pay per view until January and it's own show isn't until February. There are several ways to go with the World Title hunt at the moment but Chris Benoit, who made Brock Lesnar tap out on Sunday, should be the likely next challenger. Let's get to it.

Here's a very banged up Vince McMahon, accompanied by Sable, to get things going. Vince can barely breathe once he gets in and says he almost died. He was pummeled and bleeding from various places to the point that he had to have a transfusion. Undertaker "practically pummeled his privates" and Sable had to relieve the pain with a massage. Then Undertaker shattered his ankle and hit him in the head with a shovel.

After all that they went to the grave but Vince never lost faith. The higher power sent an avenging angel in the form of Kane and Vince was saved. Kane will be here tonight for Undertaker's eulogy and Vince has never felt more powerful. He feels invincible and untouchable...and here's John Cena.

Vince is confused and Cena accuses him of stealing his catchphrases. Maybe Vince just has nothing to touch. We could ask Sable, who is just here for the money. When Vince is gone, she comes to tickle Cena's funny bone. Vince is standing in his ring so Cena offers to stretch him. Oh and

Sable is good for one thing: she taught Vince how to suck. Funny stuff, and it's nice to see Cena getting a rub like this.

Brock Lesnar yells at his Survivor Series team, blaming them for the loss. They're the reasons he tapped out to Chris Benoit and THEY MADE THE FANS CHANT YOU TAPPED OUT! He's the WWE Champion and that shouldn't happen to him. He'll be getting respect and tonight, the team will be facing the members of Team Angle tonight. Lesnar gives them all individual pep talks and wants them out of his face because they disgust him.

Rey Mysterio vs. Akio

Tajiri and Sakoda only come to the entrance so Akio is here alone. Rey slugs away to start but gets dropped by a hard shoulder from the bigger Akio. A tilt-a-whirl headscissors works a bit better for Mysterio so Akio takes him down and pulls on the arms while putting his foot on Rey's head. One heck of a clothesline turns Rey inside out for two and we hit the neck crank.

For some reason Akio goes up top but gets crotched down, which Cole thinks might be a turning point. You mean because control turned on a point Cole? Rey gets two off a tornado DDT but gets kicked in the face. Akio's corkscrew moonsault misses though and it's the 619 to set up the West Coast Pop for the pin.

Rating: C. This was getting going when they wrapped it up. Mysterio beating one of Tajiri's goons should move him closer to a Cruiserweight Title shot, which would be a nice story for everyone involved. Tajiri is starting to get some traction so eventually losing the title to Mysterio would work well. As usual, having goons around is a great way to extend a feud like this.

Paul Heyman is looking for Shannon Moore but finds the Bashams chained up with a ball gag in Danny's mouth as Shaniqua whips them. CHAMPIONS ladies and gentlemen. Shaniqua says they're celebrating and the Bashams seem very pleased but Shannon comes in to save us all. Heyman is ready to make Shannon a star and he has a match next. His opponent: Matt Morgan.

Matt Morgan vs. Shannon Moore

Shannon slaps him in the face and hammers away to start, earning a heck of a faceplant. Matt chokes in the corner and hits a hard slam, only to have Shannon kick him in the head. Morgan throws him around even more, including a one handed toss over the top, giving us one of Shannon's great bumps. Back in and Matt pulls him up at two, followed by a spinning sitout powerbomb to complete the destruction.

Ad for Smackdown, showing nothing but the women in various stages of undress. I've heard of worse advertising campaigns, but this feels so out there compared to today's family friendly stuff.

A-Train vs. Bradshaw

Rematch from last week because of reasons. The brawl is on in the aisle before the bell, meaning we're officially getting a bonus. They get inside with Bradshaw pounding on the back and in the corner until A-Train knocks him down and gets two off a splash. Bradshaw gets a horrible looking DDT (A-Train fell to the side) and they're both down. A-Train is sent outside and it's a Derailer on the floor to knock Bradshaw silly. That's only good for two back inside and Bradshaw gets the same off a small package. A-Train's Vader Bomb hits a raised boot and a bicycle kick blocks the Clothesline for the pin.

Rating: D. Who in the world was asking for this to be a trilogy? They had two matches and Bradshaw pinned A-Train on Sunday. Other than Hardcore Holly, it's not like you can get much lower on the Angle team than Bradshaw so why would I want to see him fight over and over? Not the worst match but some of the least interest I can imagine having.

Nathan Jones vs. Chris Benoit

Brock Lesnar is with Jones. Benoit goes straight for the knee but gets shoved outside for his efforts. Back in and Jones gets low bridged to the floor because Jones may be strong but Benoit is smart. Lesnar throws him back in and Jones doesn't disappoint him by grabbing a powerslam. A chinlock is somewhat more disappointing but a spinning side slam gets two.

It's already back to the chinlock (try a neck crank next time) until Benoit fights up and avoids a running big boot. The rolling German suplexes set up a missile dropkick (pretty rare for Benoit) but the Swan Dive only hits mat. Benoit slips out of a gorilla press, slaps on the Crossface, takes Lesnar out, grabs the Crossface again and gets the tap.

Rating: D+. Benoit was trying here and Jones could have been worse, but it's clear that he's not ready for this spot no matter how much WWE is obsessed with his look. Thankfully it looks like they're setting up Benoit vs. Lesnar, likely in the big TV show when they don't have a pay per view in December, so at least we have something to look forward to.

Post match Lesnar goes after Benoit but Hardcore Holly runs in and puts on the dreaded full nelson until Heyman and security come out to have Holly arrested. Oh and he's indefinitely suspended too. As I said before the pay per view: I still don't know why WWE thinks people care about Holly.

Here's Kane to eulogize Undertaker. Kane talks about how the man we knew as Undertaker has been dead for a long time. They used to be monsters together and strike fear into the hearts of mortal men. Then Undertaker betrayed his family by having compassion and defended Stephanie (add this to the list of stories she's driving without being here).

A monster isn't supposed to have weaknesses and Undertaker is a fraud. The people cheering for him are true to their nature, unlike Undertaker who was dead before Survivor Series. All Kane can say to him is rest in peace. That's the start of a long term story if I've ever heard one.

Cruiserweight Title: Jamie Noble vs. Tajiri

Tajiri is defending after successfully doing so this Sunday on Heat. The referee throws Akio and Sakoda out so this is going to be one on one. Jamie wastes no time in chopping away as the announcers recap Tajiri blinding Nidia. Noble gets sent outside and walks back in for a spinning kick to the shoulder.

We hit the armbars for a bit until Tajiri kicks him in the arm again to cut off the comeback. La majistral gets two on the champ so he kicks

Noble in the head to slow him down again. Another kick to the head gets two but the Buzzsaw kick misses. Noble's tiger bomb gets two as Tajiri gets his foot on the ropes. Cue the blind Nidia for an accidental distraction, allowing Tajiri to grab a rollup (with jeans) to retain.

Rating: C. Can we please let these two have about ten minutes for once? If you add up both of their matches, they don't even have nine minutes total. They have chemistry but you can't get much out there in less than five minutes, especially with the ending being angle advancement. That being said, there's a good chance this is it for Jamie as he's lost twice in a row now and seems to be moving on to something else. Unfortunately, that something else is likely not going to get him much TV time.

The World's Greatest Tag Team wants to get their hands on Los Guerreros and put them on the shelf, just like Eddie and Chavo did to them. Haas: "What he said."

Los Guerreros vs. World's Greatest Tag Team

The brawl is on in a hurry with Chavo dropkicking Shelton down. That's it for Los Guerreros to start as Shelton goes for Chavo's knee and takes over early on. Haas comes in and grabs a Boston crab for a few seconds before it's back to Shelton for more knee work. The Haas of Pain goes on but Eddie is right there to rake his boot over Haas' eyes for the break. That's enough for the hot tag to Eddie and things speed up in a hurry. Shelton gets monkey flipped into Haas and a rope walk hurricanrana drops Charlie again. Chavo tornado DDTs Benjamin and springboards into a bulldog on Haas, setting up a frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. Another match that could have been better with more time but I'll take what I can get. At least what we had was good while it lasted and it's nice to see Eddie getting a win for a change. It's pretty clear that there's something big coming between he and Chavo and I'm all for that, especially if it goes somewhere bigger for Eddie.

Post match Haas and Benjamin clean house and wreck Chavo's knee, including wrapping a chair around it and putting on the Haas of Pain. Eddie makes the save with another chair but Chavo wants to know what's going on.

The Cat got a key to Boise, Idaho in a really badly scripted segment. He debuts next week. Back in the arena, Cole dances to Cat's music.

Chavo is still yelling at Eddie and blames him for everything while getting treatment for his knee. Eddie leaves and Chavo yells at the trainer, saying it's time to rely on his real friends.

Vince gives Big Show a pep talk.

Big Show vs. John Cena

Non-title because Big Show is holding the title hostage. Cena starts fast with a baseball slide but walks into a hard clothesline to cut him down. That's enough for Cole to compare Show's hand to a frying pan because that's what he does every time Show chops someone. A big clubbing forearm to the back has Cena in early trouble and Show pulls on his face. Cena gets tossed around the ring, leaving him down so Show can stand on his head.

Cena gets in a dropkick and avoids a big boot to crotch Show on top. The Throwback gets two and Cena grabs a chair...as a decoy so he can kick Show low. Well to be fair he was still a heel like two weeks ago. That doesn't seem to have much effort so Show hammers on Cena in the corner. The chain to the head rocks Show again but Cena collapses in an FU attempt. They head outside with Show loading up the announcers' table, only to drive Cena back first into the post instead.

Back in and the referee gets bumped, allowing Show to grab the steps. He lifts them above his head in the fashion only done for the sake of having Cena kick his knee out and send him face first into said steps. Another shot with the steps is good for the pin, counted by another referee who was paying enough attention to see that a referee was needed but not enough to see the steps shot that set up the cover.

Rating: C-. This was a little too weapons based for me and, again, another instance of Big Show not really doing anything worthy of being US Champion other than being tall. I mean, I know that's about all there is to him a lot of the time but that's WWE for you. Cena is still shaking off the heel mannerisms and that might take some time but the fans want

to cheer for him, which WWE is at least acknowledging.

Overall Rating: C+. There was a story going on throughout the show and that's always better than throwing a bunch of stuff out there and hoping for the best. We're heading for Cena vs. Vince/whomever he picks to fight for him and Lesnar vs. Benoit (and eventually Holly) so we have to get through the good before we get to the bad. This show was mainly wrestling focused so at least they're moving in the right direction in certain ways.

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