

Smackdown – January 15, 2004: Bad Checks, Soap and Gambling



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: January 15, 2004

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Connecticut

Attendance: 6,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

With less than two weeks to go before the Royal Rumble, it's still the Hardcore Holly Show around here. Thankfully there's some other stuff going on to balance it out, but he's an anchor on the momentum that the show could have. Other than that though we have Chris Benoit and John Cena having rockets strapped to their backs, which could be very entertaining. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Paul Heyman is in the ring to start things off and talks about how important gambling is here. There can only be fifteen Smackdown superstars in the Royal Rumble so tonight, only the winners get into the match. This brings out John Cena, whose presence has Heyman's mouth hanging open. Cena gets in his various insults and promises to bounce Heyman faster than an ECW check. Tazz: "I've had one of those. They

suck.” Cena asks the fans what they want to see and loads up the FU but Rhyno comes in for the save. Rhyno Gores him and Heyman promises that tonight will be a night that Cena never forgets.

Jamie Noble vs. Tajiri

Rescheduled from last week when Jamie was nowhere to be found and Nidia had to take his place. The winner gets Rey Mysterio, on commentary, for the Cruiserweight Title at the Royal Rumble. Tajiri wastes no time in firing off the kicks to take over and some kicks in the corner get two. Tazz of course isn't all that interested as he would rather accuse Rey of staring at Nidia. A neckbreaker gets Noble out of trouble and we hit the USA chant.

The ever patriotic Noble runs him over but Tajiri kicks him in the head to stop the momentum. For some reason Tajiri goes up but misses a middle rope legdrop, only to have Akio and Sakoda go after Nidia. Noble and Mysterio run over for the save so Noble sends him into the barricade. Tajiri loads up a dive but Noble pulls Nidia in his way, setting up the tiger bomb back inside to send Noble to the Rumble. But wait, shouldn't that put him in the Royal Rumble too, following Heyman's orders earlier tonight? I know there's another prize there but that needs to be explained a bit better.

Rating: C-. This didn't work very well with too much going on in a three minute match. Tazz's constant accusations of Mysterio wanting Nidia didn't help much either as it just was more annoying than interesting. As a bonus, Nidia continues to be the stupidest person in wrestling. We're supposed to believe that no one has told her about this in the month or so this story has been going? She's never heard the commentary on a show where the announcers are calling the show? I'd hope we get somewhere with this at the Rumble as it needs to end already.

We look back at the opening segment.

Here's Heyman, standing on the elevated part of the set, to say Cena is corrupting the youth of America. Therefore, tonight it's Cena vs. Rhyno in a Wash Your Mouth Out With Soap match with Cena's mouth against Heyman's mouth.

We look back at Hardcore Holly attacking Big Show last week.

Brock Lesnar and Show, in a neck brace are in the back and it's restraining order time. Holly can't come within fifty feet of Show and Lesnar is standing by his side all night. I get that they're trying with Holly but it just makes me shake my head more every week.

We recap the split of Los Guerreros in a great angle.

Kurt Angle comes in to see Eddie Guerrero and insists that he was only trying to help. Apparently Chavo Sr. will be here tonight to apologize for Chavo, who Eddie will be facing at the Rumble. Therefore, neither can be in the Rumble. That's not cool with Eddie, who rants about not wanting to fight his family. Beating up his nephew would be like taking out his own heart. It's about respect, not revenge.

Tag Team Titles: Basham Brothers vs. Rikishi/Scotty 2 Hotty

The Bashams are defending. And hang on a second as Dawn Marie comes out to announce that this is now Rikishi vs. Scotty with the winner getting in the Rumble. So when he said the winners tonight will get you into the Rumble, he only meant some of them. That's more clarification than we had earlier.

Rikishi vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

They stare at each other a lot until Scotty annoys Rikishi (imagine that) and some smacks to the head knock Scotty silly. The Samoan drop is escaped so Rikishi superkicks him down, setting up the Rump Shaker for the quick pin.

Video on recent house shows. A little research finds that those shows were main evented by Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. A-Train (and occasionally with Tajiri included as well) for the Cruiserweight Title. That certainly does sound like a great time.

Basham Brothers vs. World's Greatest Tag Team

Non-title, as announced by Tazz. However, the winners are in the Rumble. Danny runs Haas over to start but gets taken to the mat without much

effort. Shelton comes in for a heck of a t-bone suplex on Doug with Danny having to make a save. That means a trip to the floor where Shaniqua offers a distraction, allowing the Bashams to hit a double baseball slide to take over.

Back in and Shelton gets beaten down as he and Haas are the default faces, which doesn't quite work for them. Shelton ducks a clothesline and makes the hot (minus the heat) tag to Haas to clean house. Everything breaks down and Shelton gets in a superkick, allowing Haas to roll Danny up for the pin.

Rating: D. And I'm sure Haas and Benjamin will be announced for a title shot soon after pinning the champions clean. This was a weird choice for the sake of a qualifying match and it really didn't work. Haas and Benjamin are the less heelish of the two teams but it's not like the fans were going to cheer them anyway. It got the right team into the Rumble but that's about all it got right.

Here's Chavo Sr. to apologize for his son. He understands why he's being booed with what is going on with his family. Chavo is here tonight to say that he is ashamed of his son and he wants an apology to Eddie. This brings out Eddie, who thinks it's a setup. Chavo says he's out here on his own behalf but that's not cool with Eddie, who doesn't think this is enough.

Eddie calms down and says his anger isn't towards his brother but towards Chavo Jr. Is that how Chavo raised his son? Eddie doesn't understand this so here's Chavo Jr. as well. As you probably guessed, the double teaming is on and Eddie gets laid out. Cole thinks this MIGHT have been a setup, because being lead commentator makes him a little slow. Angle runs in for the save.

The FBI comes out for a six man tag but that's another changed match as we now have a three man battle royal for a Royal Rumble spot.

Nunzio vs. Chuck Palumbo vs. Johnny Stamboli

Nunzio tells them to get out so he can win, eventually screaming in their faces to do so. Palumbo teases leaving but punches Nunzio in the face

instead. The big guys fight in the corner until Palumbo knocks Nunzio silly. A buckle bomb rocks Nunzio and Palumbo kicks Stamboli out, only to be dumped by Nunzio for the win in short order.

Post match Nunzio tries to explain while Stamboli falls down.

Eddie is going Chavo hunting but finds Angle instead. Things get very intense but Angle doesn't want to fight. Eddie wants to beat up Chavo Jr. instead.

Big Show vs. Funaki

Non-title but a Royal Rumble qualifier with Show in his neck brace. Chops, hiptoss, Hardcore Holly comes out for a failed distraction, a right hand puts Show in the Rumble.

Heyman gives Rhyno a pep talk. He needs to do this for AMERICA, because Cena is poisoning the youth's minds! Heyman wants the old Rhyno back.

The #2 Billy Gunn moment: winning the 1999 King of the Ring. Over X-Pac, because Gunn vs. Road Dogg in the finals was too complicated for Vince Russo.

John Cena vs. Rhyno

Cena's mouth getting soaped out vs. Heyman's mouth getting soaped out. Before the match, Heyman tells the referee to DQ Cena at the slightest indiscretion. Rhyno on the other hand can't be counted out or disqualified, called ECW rules. Cena slides in and gets knocked right back to the floor. The second attempt works a bit better with some clotheslines putting Rhyno outside this time.

Back in again and Cena tosses him a second time but Rhyno comes back in with a kendo stick. A few shots have Cena in trouble and they head outside for the fourth time combined, which suggests that this is going to go on for a very long time. Rhyno chairs him down for two more and the chair is wedged in the corner for good measure. Of course Rhyno gets whipped into the chair because that's what happens when you put one in the corner.

Cena scores with the Throwback and the top rope elbow to the neck has Rhyno in more trouble. Heyman comes in with a low blow to block the FU though and they're both down again. The Gore misses so they head outside again, this time with Rhyno loading up a table. Back from a break with Cena being slammed onto the unfolded table but he rolls away from a top rope splash. The table is set in the corner but first, Rhyno has to hit a spinebuster for two. The missed Gore sends Rhyno through the table (which explodes) and the FU gives Cena the pin.

Rating: D. For a match that wasn't exactly in doubt, this went on a lot longer than it should have. The stipulation was a nice idea and could have been done better with a bigger name against Cena but this didn't work very well. Cut this down in about half and you have something much better but the seventeen minutes it got went too long.

Heyman tries to run but Chris Benoit cuts him off. Some kendo stick shots from Heyman just annoy Benoit, who takes Heyman down with ease. As Heyman screams for help, Benoit puts on the Sharpshooter. Cena grabs a mic and says this was all Heyman's idea so it's soap time. Hang on though, as Cena has an idea. Heyman is in pain, but Cena can make it worse by saying CHRIS, which causes the hold to be pulled on even harder. Heyman won't lick the soap so that means CHRIS.

They try it again and Heyman screams, earning him some soap in the mouth. Heyman promises to make Cena miserable and makes threats of Vince McMahon's authority. Cena: "He's got a point but I've got a better one. CHRIS!" That means more soap for Heyman, who starts apologizing to Benoit. Cena: "That sounded like he said CHRIS!" Heyman: "FU! FU! FU!" Cena: "CHRIS!" More soap and more cranking knocks Heyman out to end the show. At least this was a fun way to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Well, they did something to advance towards the Rumble and Holly was kept to a near minimum tonight, but the show still came off as flat. Having a bunch of short qualifying matches for the Rumble didn't so much get me excited for the show as much as it showed me how weak the Smackdown roster is after the top names. The ending segment was completely fine though and it helped boost the show up a little bit.

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