

Smackdown – January 25, 2001: Speed It Up A Little



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: January 25, 2001

Location: Mobile Civic Center, Mobile, Alabama

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is the first of two shows that someone asked me to review in a row and since I've gone nuts covering stuff in advance this week, I might as well get to the first of them. We're just past the Royal Rumble and coming up on No Way Out, meaning Wrestlemania is just around the corner. Things are getting awesome again and hopefully that's the case here. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at last week, where Steve Austin cost HHH the WWF Title. HHH was ready to blast Austin with the sledgehammer but WWF Champion Kurt Angle came out to say he cost HHH the title. A fight was teased with Angle calling him monkey boy. Trish Stratus came out and challenged Stephanie McMahon for a bonus. After some, ahem, convincing from Trish, Vince agreed to make a mixed tag. Stephanie and Trish beat each other up until HHH Pedigreed Trish to give Stephanie the pin. Austin came out and beat up HHH to end the show. And now you're caught up on the main event, which you never get today.

Opening sequence.

Undertaker vs. Rikishi

Ah the days of main event heel Rikishi. The brawl starts on the floor with Undertaker sending Rikishi head first into the steps but stopping to glare at the referee. They get in for the first time with a running clothesline in the corner rocking Rikishi again. Old School connects but Rikishi runs him over and drops a big leg. Undertaker is right back up with the jumping clothesline for two of his own before it's back to the right hands. There's the running DDT but Haku (Rikishi's partner) comes in for the DQ.

Post match the beatdown is on with a double headbutt dropping Undertaker. Rikishi sits on his chest but here's Kane for the save. Undertaker isn't sure what to think of Kane before raising his hand.

A ticked off Vince arrives in the limo and yells at the driver for making him 20 minutes later. That's early around here. Vince fires the driver anyway.

Here's Vince in the arena to blow off some steam. Notice something here: we're about 20 minutes into the show and we've had a long recap (longer than necessary but fine) and a match. We didn't spent fifteen minutes settling into the show and kill the buzz right off the bat. Why is that so complicated? Anyway Vince complains about the driver again and says that believe it or not, there is intelligent life here in Mobile.

Now it's time to complain about the dental situation but Vince stops to listen to the fans booing. With that out of the way, Vince talks about the mixed tag from Monday and isn't happy about Angle manhandling Stephanie. Then to make it worse, Trish was driven CHEST FIRST into the mat by a Pedigree, all followed by Austin interfering again. To make sure that doesn't happen again, Austin and HHH have the night off. Instead they'll face off at No Way Out with the contract signing taking place on Monday.

As for tonight though, Angle needs to get out here RIGHT NOW. Angle comes out and talks about how much he respects him and even throws in a salute.

We get an official apology for what happened to Stephanie and Trish but that's not good enough. That's why tonight, Angle is defending against Kane. And they're out without some big explanation. Keep this stuff moving.

Jeff Hardy/Bradshaw vs. Matt Hardy/Farooq

Well ok then. This is fallout from the Hardys brawling in the Rumble so they start against each other here. Jeff punches him to the floor but misses a dive as Lita and Jacqueline are watching in the back. Back in and Jeff jumps over Matt in the corner and dropkicks him in the back to take over. Jeff gets shoved off the top to set up the screaming legdrop and there go the shirts. The jawbreaker takes Matt down so it's off to Bradshaw who gets two off a slam....with Faarooq making the save.

Now it's the battle of the APA (King: "We're about to experience Bar Wars!") with Faarooq nailing the powerslam. They fight to the floor and Bradshaw gets sent into the steps. The ref has to take a chair away from Faarooq so it's a spinebuster to drop Bradshaw instead. There's no cover though, allowing Bradshaw to hit the Clothesline for a double knockdown. Jeff tags himself in and the Hardys double team Faarooq, with Matt hitting the Twist of Fate into the Swanton for the pin. King: "Are the Hardys drunk?"

Rating: D. Well that's a thing that happened and actually it made me want to see the APA have a one off hoss fight. It's likely to be more entertaining than the various Hardys matches over the years. The ending at least made sense as the Hardys are going to be more about each other than themselves so everything is fine. Well not the match but everything else.

Tough Enough video auditions in the days before digital cameras.
Included: Justin Roberts.

Vince is on the phone with someone (presumably Trish) and tells her to just stay in bed and get better. Linda's doctor calls in and Vince tells him to double her medication. Vince sees HHH arrive and gets off the phone.

Post break Vince wants to know why HHH is here. HHH thinks Austin will be here because things happen. Like what happened to a certain lady on Raw. HHH wants to know which lady Vince is more worried about. Vince throws him out.

We look at the still incredible Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho ladder match from the Rumble.

Here's the Rock to do commentary on the next match.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Big Show

Jericho is defending while being very banged up after winning the title on Sunday. It's weird seeing Show slim after his stint in OVW where he lost a ton of weight. Jericho charges in to start and is gorilla pressed onto his face for a crash. Show goes after him and gets his throat snapped across the top rope to give Jericho an opening.

A ribs first ram into the post keeps Jericho down as the fans chant for Rock. The bearhug goes on (well duh) for a bit until Jericho slips out and goes for the knee in a smart move. A Walls attempt is easily blocked by a hand around the throat and the Final Cut (Eye of the Hurricane)...draws in Chris Benoit to go after Show for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere and Jericho couldn't do much against someone that big. What we got wasn't too bad though and they could have done something better with the right amount of time. That being said, Jericho wasn't about to lose the title so soon after winning it in such a great match just a few days earlier.

Post match Show gets rid of Benoit and goes after Rock, who hits him in the head with the title. Jericho's forearm off the apron sets up the Rock Bottom on the floor to leave Show laying.

Austin is here. I'm shocked too.

HHH looks around the room where Austin just was but no one has seen him. Threats ensue.

K-Kwik vs. Tazz

That would be R-Truth, who is basically the same person he would be about eighteen years later (minus the insanity). Kwik starts fast (quickly you might say) and kicks Tazz in the face, followed by a missile dropkick for two. Tazz is right back with a t-bone Tazplex for two of his own, followed by a hard clothesline. Some slaps (called punches) have Tazz in trouble and there's a powerslam, but here's Kaientai for the overdubbed voices (those still make me laugh). They're impressed by Kwik's funky hair and the distraction lets Tazz grab the Tazmission for the win.

Post match Kaientai admits that they distracted Kwik on purpose, due to reasons of EVIL.

We look at Drew Carey's time at and in the Royal Rumble. Still one of the best celebrity cameos ever.

Austin is outside drinking beer.

Post break HHH goes to find him but there's no Austin. The beer cans are still there though.

European Title: Test vs. Christian

Test is defending. Before the match, Christian says Edge is out with a stomach ache after eating the food here in Mobile (which he pronounces incorrectly). Since Alabama is stupid, Christian gives us a quiz: Test is either A, a Reekazoid, B, has more teeth than everyone in this city or C, is about to become the shortest reigning European Champion of all time. It's D, all of the above (it always is).

Christian jumps him at the bell and bumps the referee, allowing him to miss a belt shot. Test gets in a shot to put him on the floor and there's the full nelson slam but the ref is still down. Now the belt shot can connect for a slow two and frustration is upon up. Test's always cool looking tilt-a-whirl slam sets up a faceplant for two more as they're certainly moving out there. The pumphandle powerslam is broken up so Christian heads up, only to get backdropped down. Test's big boot retains the title.

Rating: C. This was another short one (more on that later) but rather

entertaining as I really liked Test at this point. He had the look, the power game and the athleticism to make himself something entertaining but after last year, there wasn't anything else for him to do. This was as good as he was going to get and that's not the worst place to be.

HHH sees Austin having a beer with Kaientai. Since there is no Austin after the break, HHH beats both of them up. Since they're EVIL, does that make HHH a hero?

We look at Chyna injuring her neck in a match against Ivory at the Royal Rumble. That earned her a stretcher job and a ride in an ambulance. She currently has bone fragments in her neck, which have to be removed.

Hollys vs. Right To Censor

That would be the same Right To Censor (Goodfather/Bull Buchanan for the team here) who were very pleased with what happened to Chyna. The hometown Hollys have Molly with them to counter Steven Richards and Ivory. Crash gets taken into the wrong corner to start and the beating is on in a hurry. A powerslam takes him down again and Buchanan does his awesome rope walk clothesline (unfortunately that was the only thing he could do).

Some forearms are cut off by Goodfather's elbow as King worries about Angle facing Kane tonight. The Ho train misses and it's off to Hardcore for the house cleaning. The hanging kick between the legs (to the stomach of course) keeps Buchanan in trouble and Richards gets taken down. Buchanan is right back with a DDT on Hardcore but Ivory's Women's Title hits Buchanan by mistake, allowing Hardcore to get in the dropkick for the pin.

Rating: C-. See, now why is that so much to ask? The hometown guys get a win to make the fans happy and it's a protected loss for the RTC as they have something going on. This is the kind of thing that can be done without ticking the fans off and it's not like anyone outside of the live audience is going to remember this in a week.

HHH has been ordered to Vince's office.

We recap the night, which seems a bit like filler.

HHH comes up to Vince, who didn't send for him. They figure out that Austin is waiting in the office so Vince keeps talking as HHH looks behind those see thru screens that serve no purpose. Now given that they are see thru, Austin would be able to see HHH motioning for Vince to keep talking, but that's beside the point, mainly because Austin followed them in. HHH accidentally hits Vince with a metal tray and Austin beats both of them up.

And now, here's the same thing again.

WWF Title: Kurt Angle vs. Kane

Kane is challenging and Angle is scared to death. Before the match, Angle calls Kane out for his short title reign back in 1998. If Kane thinks he's winning it back, his brain is more burned than his face. Angle insists that it is NOT a knock against burn victims, because he has a lot of fans who are burn victims! Angle's belt shot misses (there have been a lot of those tonight) and the fight starts on the floor before the bell.

Kane throws him halfway inside for the bell and some elbows to the chest keep the champ in trouble. The threat of a chokeslam sends Angle to the ropes but we cut to the back to see Haku and Rikishi beating Undertaker down. Back in the arena, Kane doesn't notice and hits a clothesline. Some suplexes just make Kane sit up a few times and a clothesline does the same. A backdrop sends Angle flying as he can't do anything with the monster. Angle finally goes with a front facelock to slow him down but that doesn't work either.

Instead Angle grabs a chair, which Kane kicks straight back into his face. There's the side slam top drop Angle again and the top rope clothesline connects. Cue Haku and Rikishi though with the referee somehow not calling for the DQ. With the referee yelling at Rikishi, Haku chairs Kane twice and superkicks him down so Angle can retain.

Rating: C+. Not bad at all here and they even covered why Undertaker wasn't out there. This was another protected loss and that's the right move with someone as hot as Kane was coming off the Royal Rumble. Angle

escapes with the title, which fits him perfectly, and the match was fine enough. It was well booked instead of being great, which is an acceptable way to go.

Post match Kane gets beaten down so here's a beaten up Undertaker for the save. Another beatdown lets Rikishi and Haku stand tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. So why did this work so well? A lot of it would be how fast they kept things, which yes, does mean they kept the matches short. It's ok to have a long match every now and then but when you're having multiple fifteen minute matches every week, the fans aren't going to keep paying attention. This show moved around very well and the big stories held it together. Of course the talent helped, but they kept things flowing and that's almost as important. Very fun show here and the followup should be good too.

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