

Underrated Backlash Classics: Stealing The Show On The Show After The Show (Includes Full Video)

Underrated Backlash Classics

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Tis the season I guess as the WWE Vault is looking back at Backlash over the years. It's a series that started almost thirty years ago and that means there is quite a bit to look back on these days. At the same time, looking at the underrated stuff is often a lot more interesting than seeing the more famous stuff again. Let's get to it.

From Backlash 2018.

US Title: Randy Orton vs. Jeff Hardy

Hardy is defending. Orton knocks him down with a shoulder to start but Hardy comes back up with a dropkick. That's enough for Orton to be sent to the floor for a big clothesline from the apron, only for Orton to come back with a dropkick of his own. The Whisper In The Wind is broken up and Hardy gets tied in the Tree Of Woe. Orton stomps away (yes seriously) in the corner and Hardy is knocked outside.

That's fine with Hardy, who hits his half of Poetry In Motion against the barricade. Back in and the springboard is cut off with another rather awesome Orton dropkick and Hardy crashes out to the floor. Back in and Hardy is dropped ribs first across the top rope, setting up the chinlock. Hardy fights up and knocks him down for the legdrop between the legs. A

basement dropkick connects as well, followed by the Whisper In The Wind for two.

Orton is back up with a powerslam for two more but Hardy kicks him into the corner. The slingshot dropkick (dubbed the Hardiac Arrest, a name which never caught on) misses though and the hanging DDT drops Hardy again. The RKO is loaded up but Hardy reverses into a quick Twist Of Fate. That and the Swanton retains the title at 11:50.

Rating: B-. It was good seeing Hardy get a win over Orton, even if it wasn't quite when Hardy was at his peak. It's no surprise that these two can have a good match together as they're both rather talented and have some history. They were firmly in the midcard here and it makes sense to put them together like this, as you know it's going to be pretty good at the worst.

From Backlash 2000.

Light Heavyweight Title: Dean Malenko vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

Malenko is defending and jumps Malenko to start but Scotty hits a backdrop. A clothesline gives Scotty two but the bulldog is cut off with Malenko's own clothesline. Malenko starts working on the leg and drops some elbows before cranking away. The leg is wrapped around the post a few times and Malenko drops an elbow on the knee to cut off a comeback attempt. Scotty's leg is kicked out again and Malenko baseball slides the leg to keep things fresh.

A rollup gets two on Malenko, who blasts Scotty with a clothesline to cut him off again. Back up and Malenko kind of tackles him out to the floor for a double crash. They get back in and Malenko superplexes him down and they both need a breather. The Texas Cloverleaf is countered into a small package for two but Malenko suplexes him down.

Scotty escapes a powerbomb though and hits the bulldog into the Worm for two. Malenko's rollup gets caught with his feet on the ropes so he goes with a heck of a tiger driver for two instead. Malenko actually goes up top so Scotty follows, only to get pulled into a super DDT to retain at 11:48.

Rating: B-. I knew that ending was coming and it still looked great as Malenko planted him. The Light Heavyweight Title didn't have the greatest history in the WWF but this was one of the better matches. It's kind of annoying that Scotty is so well remembered for the goofy stuff as he could certainly go in the ring, though I'd assume his bank account doesn't quite see it that way.

From Backlash 2006 (I was there).

Money In The Bank/Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Shelton Benjamin

This is winner take all. Benjamin wrestles him down with ease to start before starting in on the arm. Van Dam reverses into a wristlock of his own but gets taken down with an armdrag, leaving him a bit impressed. A rollup gives Van Dam two and Benjamin hides in the corner for a change. Van Dam kicks him down to the floor and Benjamin kicks the steps to blow off some steam.

Back in and Van Dam kicks him down again, setting up a slingshot dive to the floor. With Van Dam on the apron, Benjamin hits a running sunset bomb to the floor for the nasty crash and Van Dam is in trouble for a change. We hit a chinlock with a knee in the back, followed by a running knee lift for two. The reverse chinlock goes on for a bit, with Van Dam fighting back.

The kicks put Benjamin down, only for the Rolling Thunder to be countered into a Samoan drop for two more. Van Dam fights up again and goes to the top, where Benjamin jumps from the mat to the floor for a superplex and another near fall.

Benjamin's dropkick misses though and Van Dam makes the clothesline comeback. A springboard kick to the face sets up Rolling Thunder to give Van Dam two and they're both back up.

Van Dam's step over kick to the face connects but the Five Star misses. A nice DDT (Van Dam always sold those well) gives Benjamin two so he sends Van Dam face first into the apron. Back in and Van Dam rolls through a high crossbody for two but the referee gets bumped. Benjamin grabs the briefcase but Van Dam takes it away and hits a Van Daminator. The Five Star gives Van Dam the pin and the title at 18:41.

Rating: B. I've seen this match quite a few times and it has grown on me over the years. It's longer than it needs to be but there is something to be said about seeing Van Dam facing someone more athletic. You don't see him have to go there very often but he knows how to make a comeback. Good match here, even if Van Dam would lose the title back very shortly thereafter.

From Backlash 2001.

Hardcore Title: Raven vs. Rhino

Rhino is defending and misses an early Gore attempt, hitting a stop sign by mistake. A running trashcan shot to the head gives Raven two but Rhino's running shoulder connects in the corner. Raven gets kicked out to the floor for two and Rhino sends him into the steps. A jumping clothesline off the steps drops Rhino for two and Raven sends him back inside...to knock him right back to the floor. Rhino trashcan lids him down for two more so let's get a shopping cart.

Said cart hits Raven in the face on the way back inside but he drops toeholds Rhino face first into the cart. Some street sign shots to the head put Rhino down and a bulldog out of the corner gets two. Rhino is back up with the cart, which is knocked down onto his face and then driven into his ribs in the corner. Another shot cuts Raven off though and Rhino

Gores...the cart, even getting stuck inside of it. Raven unloads on him with a sink, which just wakes Rhyno up so he can hit the Gore for the retaining pin at 8:12.

Rating: B. This was about two guys beating each other up and making the weapon stuff feel better than usual. The shopping cart was a nice bonus and the Gore that went into it is certainly a memorable spot. You don't see these matches reach this level very often but dang they made it work here. Heck of a match.

From Backlash 2002.

Cruiserweight Title: Tajiri vs. Billy Kidman

Kidman is defending and gets sent into the corner to start, meaning it's time for the tradition exchange of chops. A catapult sends Kidman into the corner but he comes back out with a missile dropkick. The fans respond by chanting for Torrie Wilson (in Tajiri's corner and forced to wear a rather covering robe) and Kidman is knocked into the ropes.

Tajiri heads outside and hits a heck of a kick to the head for two. The chinlock goes on for a bit before Kidman is sent back first into the post. The backbreaker keeps Kidman in trouble and the Tarantula makes it even worse. With that broken up, Tajiri's handspring elbow is dropkicked away but Tajiri kicks him right back down.

A bridging rollup gets two so Tajiri superkicks him for two more. The powerbomb (which Tajiri is so known for using) is countered into a faceplant but Kidman misses the shooting star press. Tajiri's Buzzsaw Kick gets two (that was a surprise) so they head up top. A super sitout spinebuster gives Kidman two but Tajiri mists him down for the title at 9:11.

Rating: C+. That near fall off the Buzzsaw Kick was good, as was Kidman's top rope spinebuster but that's about all that stood out here. I kept waiting for Wilson to get involved but

nothing ever happened. It's a good enough match, but Kidman was almost squashed for a lot of it.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah this was fun, as Backlash has a nice built in advantage from coming straight off of Wrestlemania. You have some momentum coming in and get some good stuff on the card as well. That was the case here, as you had some matches with Wrestlemania fallout and some stuff which was just good on its own. I liked this as a flashback, as there has been some quality stuff at this show over the years, even without touching the main events.

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