

Hidden Gems #16: Wrap It Up

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Date: 1997, 2001, 1986, 1980, 1995

I'm finally doing something outside of the full shows and that's quite the relief at the moment. This time around I'm going to be looking at some completely random matches/segments instead of one big show. I'm not sure what is going to be coming here but that's what a random number generator is for. Let's get to it.

Undertaker/Steve Austin vs. Shawn Michaels/HHH

Date: November 15, 1997

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 15,479

This is six days after Montreal so Shawn has about as much heat as you can imagine. It's also handheld footage so no commentary of course. Austin is Intercontinental Champion so he throws the belt in, as was his custom. They seem to be clipping things a bit too, as Undertaker's entrance only takes about a minute. Indeed it is as we go from Undertaker dropping the coat to the floor to circling with Michaels. And then the bell rings so I'm even more confused.

Undertaker misses a right hand in the corner so Shawn slugs away, only to get LAUNCHED into the corner (one of my favorite Undertaker spots) so the real beating can begin. The upside down bump in the corner lets Undertaker choke away and he does it again to HHH as well. Austin comes in to work on the arm and hits an atomic drop to make HHH bounce. A poke to the eye gets HHH out of trouble so it's back to Shawn as the fans get WAY into this all over again.

Austin hits a backdrop and brings Undertaker back in to clean house. They go outside where Undertaker seems to post Shawn but the camera is on the other side of the ring and rather

shaky so it's hard to tell. Back in and Shawn hits the ropes to break up Old School and it's time to stomp away. HHH gets in a whip to the steps on the floor (as opposed to the steps in the ring) and the choking is on back inside.

The knee drop gives HHH two but Undertaker slugs away at Shawn without much trouble. Shawn knocks him down and there's the sit up, followed by the double clothesline. The hot tag brings in Austin and it's time for the big comeback. HHH gets Stunned but Shawn makes the save and kicks Austin low. Austin's leg is wrapped around the post and we look at the crowd as HHH pulls Austin's trunks down a bit too far.

We hit the chinlock on Austin and look at the crowd again for no apparent reason. We're clipped to the hold being broken but Shawn pulls Austin back into the corner. Austin crawls over to the ropes for the tag anyway though and NOW it's time to clean house. A chokeslam each drops DX and Undertaker Tombstones Shawn for the pin at 12:48 shown.

Rating: B-. It wasn't a great match or anything but for a big time house show main event, this worked very well. The interesting thing is how Austin looked fine despite being dropped on his head at Summerslam about three months earlier. He looked horrible at Survivor Series but looked normal here, which should tell you everything you need to know about the benefit of hiding weaknesses in a tag match.

Post match Road Dogg (I think) comes in and gets chokeslammed as well. Chyna comes in to get in Austin's face but backs into Undertaker. The distraction lets Austin hit the Stunner for the big reaction.

Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar

Date: November 29, 2001

Location: Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, Kansas

This is a dark match from a Smackdown taping and while the show took place on November 27, I'm assuming they're putting

the TV air date because...well probably because it wasn't that well researched. Orton is suddenly from Wichita because wrestling likes to lie about things (as they should in cases like this). It's always weird seeing Lesnar with the lightning bolts or wings or whatever they were on his trunks instead of the straight black.

Lesnar drives him into the corner to start but Orton kicks him away and hits a dropkick. Orton tries to start in on the arm and is suplexed across the ring for his efforts. A cross armbreaker works a bit better for Orton until Brock powerbombs the heck out of him. Some backbreakers into a powerslam into the corner rock Orton and Brock stomps away in the Tree of Woe.

Brock switches to the shoulders to the back for a change and hits a spinning belly to back suplex for two. We hit the camel clutch, with Brock leaning forward towards Randy's head for a weird look. Now it's a regular chinlock but Orton fights up with a swinging neckbreaker. The high crossbody (Orton's old finisher) gets two and a sunset flip out of the corner gets the same. Back up and Brock powerslams him for the fast pin at 5:53.

Rating: C. I always like seeing matches like this because there are no reputations and the guys just have to go out and make the fans care on their own. It was a fine enough match with Orton trying to take away a limb and getting overwhelmed by the power. Imagine that: OVW students being well trained at in-ring work. These two worked well together, which isn't surprising given how many times they probably fought in both training and on OVW TV.

Universal Wrestling Federation Heavyweight Title: Jim Duggan vs. Terry Gordy

Date: May 30, 1986

Location: Sam Houston Coliseum, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Jim Ross, Bill Watts

Ah the magic of a random button. This is a tournament final for the inaugural title and the UWF is the rechristened Mid-South Wrestling. Hold on though as One Man Gang is here to say he would have won this tournament if he had been invited so this match isn't happening. Gang says he wants a shot at the winner immediately after so Duggan says make your move.

The fight is on with Duggan taking him to the floor to trade postings. Duggan is busted open badly and seems to have a concussion but why would that stop him? The also busted Gang is knocked outside but comes back in, only to miss the splash. A running shoulder (called a spear) sends Gang outside and we take a break.

Jim Ross runs down the rest of the show (as in Power Pro Wrestling) before throwing it to Duggan for a chat. Duggan talks about how he was given five minutes to get ready to face Gordy and how dizzy he was.

We're clipped to a taped up Duggan slugging away at Gordy and hitting the three point shoulder. A second attempt is sent outside though and Michael Hayes posts Duggan again. Duggan talks about how Gordy finished him off after that but we don't actually see it. Well that was rather lame as the Gordy vs. Duggan stuff was less than two minutes long.

US Title: Ric Flair vs. Greg Valentine

Date: July 17, 1980

Location: Norfolk Scope, Norfolk, Virginia

Flair is defending and this is from Mid-Atlantic. This is raw footage so no commentary and again, not the complete match. Valentine bails to the floor to start (shocking I know) so Flair grabs the mic and tells him to have some guts and get in here. Valentine gets in and begs off as this is HEAVILY clipped, with about five seconds between jumps (though you can still tell the general idea). Flair takes him down and works the arm in a variety of ways, including an armbar (with WOO).

Valentine gets up and hammers (hey now) away but Flair gets in what might have been a low blow. The slugout goes to Flair but a knee to the ribs cuts him off in a hurry. Valentine hammers away in the corner and Flair is busted open (of course). Some elbows to the back of the head get some near falls, with Valentine covering vertical instead of horizontally for a weird look. Flair fights up and hits a right hand but falls down due to exhaustion.

Valentine misses a charge into the corner and the comeback is on with Valentine going head first into the corner over and over. A bunch of right hands let Flair hit the WOO and there's the suplex into the...elbow. Dang it's weird seeing something other than the big knee that he used forever. Flair wraps the leg around the post and puts on the Figure Four but Valentine makes the rope.

They go outside where Valentine can win the brawl before taking it back inside. A shinbreaker cuts Valentine off again but the Figure Four is broken up. Valentine forearms away on the apron and tries a belly to back suplex but Flair spins onto him for the pin to retain. This was more a collection of clips than a match so no rating, though it looked like a heck of a match.

Post match, Valentine is livid. He would win the title before the end of the month.

And one more to wrap it up.

Women's Title: Alundra Blayze vs. Lioness Asuka

Date: November 21, 1995

Location: Wicomico Youth & Civic Center, Salisbury, Maryland

Blayze is defending at this is a dark match from a Superstars/Raw taping. Asuka's (no not that Asuka) entrance isn't shown but the camera feed is the same as you would see on any regular TV show. Asuka kicks her down to start and hits a shot to the ribs, followed by a suplex for two (Blayze's

bridging escape is always cool). Some kicks put Blayze down into a reverse chinlock but she's out in a hurry. Blayze kicks her to the floor but she misses a dive off the top.

Back in and Asuka grabs a Sharpshooter (without looking at the camera because she doesn't know how to work). That makes Blayze scream a lot so it's off to some choking on the ropes. Blayze fights up with a hair takedown and some legdrops for two, with Asuka rolling outside. This time Blayze follows her out and kicks away but the powerbomb is countered. Asuka goes up so Blayze hits what would become the Stratusphere (with her hands on the mat instead of the rope). Back to back missile dropkicks get two and the German suplex retains the title at 7:37.

Rating: C. This was so many miles ahead of anything most of the American women were doing in the 90s and it's kind of refreshing to see. It wasn't a great match or anything but it was an actual match instead of Lawler shouting about various things over and over. You could tell Blayze wasn't quite into this though and this would be her last match before she trashed the title the next month.

Blayze looks so miserable and gets out of there with almost no emotion on her face at all. If you didn't know better, you would still know something was very wrong at this point.

Overall Rating: C. Not a bad set but there is only so much you can get out of these random assortments. I like these one off matches but with no theme or anything, it can be kind of hard to pick up on anything. The Flair vs. Valentine match (or at least what you could see of it) was the best, though I can't exactly imagine that is very surprising. Pretty average in ring stuff here, but the surprises you can find in here are at least worth a look.

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