

Backlash 2001: We Went From Wrestlemania X7 to This?

Backlash 2001

Date: April 29, 2001

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Attendance: 15,592

Commentators: Paul Heyman, Jim Ross

I'm not doing Backlash just yet but I'm coming up on this one in the Raw 2001 reviews so I figured I better knock it out so I don't have to do it later. There are two big matches here as we have Benoit vs. Angle in an Ultimate Submission match (iron man match, submissions only) and HHH/Austin vs. Kane/Taker in a match where the titles are on the line. Let's get to it.

Opening video talks about how he who has the gold has the power. Fitting start considering the main event has all the titles in it which is rather stupid indeed but whatever.

Dudley Boys vs. X-Factor

Six man tag here with all three Dudleyz vs. X-Pac, Credible and Albert. Dang they go from one of the most famous tag matches ever to a six man opening a PPV four weeks later. Brawl to start with the Dudleys clearing the ring. They launch Spike onto Pac and Credible on the floor which is always fun. Spike and Credible start us off with Spike getting a crucifix for two.

Off to Albert who counters the Dudley Dog to take over. Back to Justin and the white socks of fear. Powerbomb out of the corner gets two as this crowd is red hot. Double tags bring in D-Von and Pac and Albert cheats, allowing Pac to kick D-Von's head off to take over again. X-Factor minus Pac puts D-Von's balls against the post as this is a rather fast paced match.

Pac gets two off a legdrop and we hit the chinlock. D-Von tries a comeback but walks into a Boss Man Slam to keep him down. Off to Albert who hits a pretty sweet delayed butterfly suplex for two. After a double clothesline it's hot tag Bubba who cleans house on all three guys. What's Up to Justin and it's table time. Albert kills D-Von though and the distraction allows Credible and Pac to hit a double superkick on Bubba for the pin.

Rating: B-. Pretty solid opener here with some fast paced stuff. They got the crowd into the show (ok so this is Chicago so it's not like it was that hard) and the ending worked. Nothing wrong with having heels win the opener as the match was good enough to get the fans over it. Also the lack of feud prevents the whole emotional damage.

X-Factor tries to put Bubba through a table but due to the laws of wrestling, Pac goes through it instead.

The Duchess of Queensbury, a guy in drag, is here for the match later with Regal and Jericho. This was one of those weird ideas that isn't talked about after this show. Regal in a collared shirt and trunks is a weird looks.

Angle says he's confident and that's fine.

We get a clip of Jerry Lynn winning the Light Heavyweight Title on Heat with a handful of tights which was rather surprising.

Hardcore Title: Raven vs. Rhyno

Rhyno is champion. This is considered one of the best hardcore matches ever so let's see if it lives up to its hype. Rhyno tries a Gore immediately but Raven drop toeholds him into the stop sign. Trashcan shot gets two. Rhyno takes over with a running shoulder in the corner and the beating begins. Raven gets a trashcan up to block a running charge but it hurts him even more. He falls out to the floor and gets covered for two.

Rhyno sets up the steps and puts Raven in a chair. He tries a run up the stairs to set up a dive, only to crush the chair. Raven uses the same setup but gets a clothesline off the steps for two. Back inside for half a second as Rhyno takes over again. Raven gets his head taken off by a trashcan lid and a sign shot gets two. Back into the ring and Rhyno hits him with a shopping cart. Whatever works I guess.

Drop toehold puts Rhyno into the cart and down he goes. A bunch of sign shots take Rhyno down and a LOUD one does it again. Bulldog out of the corner gets two. Rhyno picks up the shopping cart but Raven gets a trashcan shot in to have the cart fall on Rhyno for two. Cart goes into Rhyno's ribs but Rhyno gets a sign shot in to get two. Momentum shifts back and forth a lot in this match. Rhyno tries the Gore into the shopping cart but misses and Rhyno is stuck inside the cart. We go to a replay of it and during that the Gore ends Raven. That fits the move as the move is supposed to come out of nowhere, which it did there.

Rating: B. Well they were right, this was good. The key thing here is it never got silly. This was more about violence than the weapons if that makes sense. Most of the time there would be comedy spots in something like this but here, it was all about the violence and the brutality out there, making for a far better and more entertaining match.

We get a clip from Smackdown where Shane read a book called Shane and the Beanstalk to Big Show. Funny stuff here. The idea of the feud is that Vince is mad at Shane for being all rebellious and for destroying him at Mania and buying WCW, so he sent Show out to kill him. That one piece swimsuit was deadly indeed. The story is actually kind of funny. It's last man standing by the way.

Shane is about to talk but Stephanie comes up and says he should apologize to Vince. Stephanie, you look great, but your acting is uh...bad.

Austin gets here.

Coach tries to find out the rules of the Duchess of Queensbury match. The Duchess doesn't know who Coach is. Regal breaks it up and yells at Coach.

We recap Regal vs. Jericho with the exact same video from Mania. Basically Regal is commissioner and Jericho said he was boring so Regal tormented him. This is the second match and no one knows the rules of this match but Regal. Gee, think there's a swerve coming?

William Regal vs. Chris Jericho

Either Regal got taped up in record time or that Duchess thing was taped earlier. This is a Duchess of Queensbury Rules match. He brings out the Duchess after some donkey-hole chants. The Duchess has the whole old school British stereotype stuff on. There's even a throne there for her. Jericho makes fun of Regal pre-match. There's the bell and there's still no idea what the rules are. Technical stuff to start as Jericho speeds things up. Out to the floor with Regal being besmirched a lot.

Back into the ring and the missile dropkick misses, giving Regal the advantage. Off to the chinlock which doesn't last long. Regal goes up but Jericho gets a dropkick to slow him down and a rana to bring him back down. Lionsault hits and the bell rings before the count even begins. That's the time limit for round one so the match has a break. Regal immediately grabs a rollup for two.

Jericho misses a dropkick and Regal hits a slingshot to send him into the top rope throat first. The Englishman hits a German to the Canadian as the Oklahoman complains. Regal Stretch goes on but Jericho grabs the rope. Jericho rolls through a rollup into the Walls and Regal taps immediately. And if you really believe that's the ending, you have no business reading this. You can't win by submission apparently, which clearly explains why Regal had the hold on a few moments earlier.

Jericho goes after the Duchess and Regal pops him with her scepter. It's No DQ of course though, because that's how the Duchess rolls. That only gets two back in the ring as Regal takes over again. Butterfly suplex gets two. Enziguri takes down Regal and Jericho stomps a mudhole in the corner. Jericho sets for the Walls but kicks Regal in the balls instead. Regal heads to the floor and a baseball slide sends Regal's face into the Duchess' royal vagina. The Duchess goes into the Walls and Regal pops him with a chair three times to end it.

Rating: D+. Pretty weak here as the ending was about as obvious as you could ask for. Also, this doesn't really mean anything given that Jericho isn't champion anymore. Granted the Alliance was coming soon so all of this would be forgotten. Not much going on here but it wasn't terrible, just stupid.

Vince tells Show to hurt Shane.

We recap Angle vs. Benoit. Do you really need an explanation here? It's an Ultimate Submission match with Benoit and Angle. There's your explanation.

Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

30 minute time limit, most submissions win. Angle says Chicago is full of fat sweaty pigs and needs winners. He makes fun of the city which is kind of funny. There's a thirty second rest period between falls. After some feeling out stuff to start, Angle takes it to the mat and Benoit is all cool with that. Ankle lock doesn't work so Kurt hits the floor to think for a bit.

This is going to be a long one as the clock is on the screen the entire time. Back in the ring and Angle takes Benoit down which gets him nowhere. Back to the mat again and this time to the floor. Benoit gets the Crossface out there and Angle taps but they're outside so it doesn't count. Five minutes in and no falls yet. Angle tries to bring in a chair as we stall a bit. With half an hour I can understand that though.

Back in and Angle is holding his shoulder a lot. And never mind as he was faking since he charges straight in and grabs the ankle lock for the quick tap. You could argue Benoit tapped early to prevent further damage but it still looks kind of weak by Benoit. Angle works on the ankle/knee but charges into a Crossface attempt. That doesn't work so Benoit shifts to a cross armbreaker to tie us up.

Benoit rams Angle's shoulder into the post and there's the armbreaker again but Kurt leans forward to avoid a lot of the pressure before making the rope. Shoulder breaker by Benoit and he goes after Kurt, only to take out the referee at the ten minute mark. Angle gets a chair shot to the head and the ankle lock makes it 2-1. Angle jumps him during the rest period and you can't really DQ him I guess.

Angle puts on a Crossface seconds later to make it 3-1. Maybe 10 seconds between the end of the rest period and the tap. Kurt hammers him some more and rams his face into the announce table. Benoit backdrops Angle to the floor but doesn't take the time to breathe. Kurt's shoulder goes into the post but Benoit's everything goes into the steps. Ankle lock goes on but it's still on the floor, meaning Benoit tapping doesn't mean anything.

We go back in with fifteen minutes left and a 3-1 lead for Kurt. Benoit avoids a cross armbreaker by Kurt which wastes some time. Off to an abdominal stretch which Benoit counters into another cross armbreaker attempt but he can't get the tap. Out of almost nowhere Benoit gets a Sharpshooter, only for Kurt to make the ropes again. A German is countered into a half Liontamer by Benoit (he used it before Jericho in WCW) for the tap to make it 3-2.

Kurt heads to the floor and it's time to play defense. Benoit catches him

pretty easily and sends him into the steps. Kurt tries to run again and the fans aren't thrilled at all. With ten minutes to go Angle catches Benoit coming in and they slug it out a bit. Benoit can't get back in for a bit and Kurt stomps him when he does. Angle hits a snap suplex back inside and keeps trying for the ankle lock.

Out to the floor again and they chop it out. Back in and Benoit gets a dragon screw but can't hook the ankle. Benoit misses a dropkick and Angle locks in some freaky looking hold before going to a chinlock. Five minutes left as Benoit gets his arm up before a third drop. With four minutes left Benoit breaks the hold with a jawbreaker. And never mind as Kurt takes his head off with a clothesline.

Belly to belly by Kurt which is scary considering how long they've been out there. Another hits with three minutes left. Benoit manages to grab some Germans but gets reversed into an ankle lock which he reverses into an ankle lock of his own to tie it up at 3 with just over two minutes to go. The clock keeps running during the thirty second rest. Chop block by Benoit with 1:20 to go. Minute left and it's German time again. Low blow by Kurt breaks that up but the ankle lock is broken quickly. Ankle lock goes on fill with 8 seconds left and we're done. Benoit taps after the bell ends in a draw.

Just like in 96 though with Shawn and Bret, it's time for some overtime, first submission wins it. If it continued though, why wouldn't the tap just after the bell have ended it? Angle hammers him and the fans aren't thrilled with him. They go to the mat and Angle grabs an abdominal stretch down there. There's a Crossface out of nowhere and Angle taps for the ending. Like Benoit was losing in sudden death.

Rating: B. It was entertaining, but the main idea of Benoit vs. Angle is

all about having them go back and forth with insane counters until one of them finally gets caught in something. That was taken away here and it brings the match down a lot. To be fair it's still good but by comparison it's definitely not as good.

Taker is mad at Kane but we can't hear them. HHH and Stephanie are watching and say they're coming up with excuses for tomorrow on Raw.

We recap Shane vs. Show which we've been over already so I'll spare you from repeating it.

Big Show vs. Shane McMahon

Show hits the ropes a few times before Shane comes out. Shane comes out to a version of Here Comes The Money here. He has that stupid book with the fable in it with him also. Shane hides under the ring but pops out with a kendo stick to get in some solid shots. Big old clothesline takes him down though and we head back into the ring. Shane gets some solid chair shots and finally takes Show down.

Shane goes to the floor and gets a bag. He puts a surgical mask on and some gloves before grabbing a rag to put over Show's face. This works for the most part and Show goes down to his knees. Now down to his stomach. The fans are completely behind Shane here. At about five Vince runs down and pops Shane with a chair. Show, ever the genius, pulls Shane up at about 8.

Final Cut puts Shane down again as we wait around more while the referee counts. That's a large portion of most last man standing matches and it

takes too much most of the time. Show picks him up again and drops him with a chokeslam. He picks Shane up again despite Shane being mostly dead. Torture Rack goes on but here's Test to pound on Show. They had a thing on Smackdown so this works.

Show beats him down also and the big men go to the floor. Up towards the stage and Test gets in some weapon shots to slow him down a bit. Show beats on him some more and here comes Shane again. After some sign shots by Shane, Show finds a pipe from somewhere. Shane climbs the set to escape and Show goes after him. Test pulls him down and beats him up, allowing Shane to hit a HUGE dive, as in literally 25 feet or so to crush Show with an elbow. Test holds Shane up with a boom mic and we're done. That spot was insane beyond belief.

Rating: C. You can only get on Shane so much for these, but the whole thing is basically Show beats on him, Shane is dead, Show picks him up, repeat. That took twelve minutes somehow. The big spot was cool but it didn't really save the match. Also the replays showing that he totally missed didn't help.

Vince is ticked off about Shane so Stephanie gives a badly scripted speech to chill him out. Vince declares HHH his only son.

Steve Blackman is at WWF New York and is impressed by the big dive. Grandmaster Sexay pops up to make me want to go on a shooting rampage.

European Title: Matt Hardy vs. Christian vs. Eddie Guerrero

Matt is champion, having beaten Eddie sometime between this show and

Mania. Apparently it was three days ago. Good to know. Matt fights off a double team to start and that doesn't last long at all. Matt is tossed to the floor so Christian jumps Eddie as a result. Powerslam gets two for the Canadian. Eddie snaps off a rana and pounds on Christian a bit more. Matt back in now and everyone is down.

Matt takes Christian down with a clothesline for two. Eddie is off somewhere, probably looking for a taco. Ah there he is and he pulls Matt to the floor, only for both of them to be taken down by a baseball slide by the Canadian. Matt gets a tornado DDT on the floor but is pulled back in by Eddie who hits a brainbuster for two. There goes Matt's shirt and there go the teenage screams.

Christian saves Matt from taking a rana for some reason and Matt drops Christian onto Guerrero. Matt takes over and Christian accidentally takes out Eddie. Middle rope legdrop gets a big pop and a close two on Eddie. Edge pops up out of nowhere to spear Matt in the aisle and toss him back in for two for Eddie. Edge gets in but here's Jeff to cancel him out. Unprettier to Eddie but Jeff mostly misses a Swanton to rbreak that up. Twist of Fate ends Christian and Matt retains.

Rating: C. Just kind of there really but this could have been on Raw. That being said, it was pretty good for a buffer match between the big ones as only the main event is left. Not a horrible match at all but at the same time it wasn't all that great. Just kind of there which isn't something you want on a PPV. I've seen worse though.

Ad for WWF New York.

We recap the main event. Basically HHH and Austin are the monster heel

team with Vince in their corner and they destroyed the Hardys for fun. Taker and Kane are their first real challengers and are tag champions. HHH is IC Champion and it's one of those matches where all the titles are on the line and whoever gets whatever fall gets whatever title.

WWF World Title/Intercontinental Title/Tag Titles: HHH/Steve Austin vs. Undertaker/Kane

Kane has a bad elbow/arm here so that'll likely play into the ending. Oh and if HHH wins he's a Grand Slam Champion. The heels stall a lot and Austin can't even throw his vest into the ring. There's the bell and it's time to go. Kane gets a shot into HHH's head and we stall even more. HHH finally gets in alone and down he goes again. They've been on the floor about three minutes now.

Finally the tall dudes go out to the floor and the slugout begins. HHH goes into the announce table as Austin and Taker are actually in the ring now. They switch off with HHH and Kane in the ring now. No idea if anyone is legal yet. Kane chokes both guys but his arm is hurting. Ok so HHH and Kane are the official starters now. There's the jumping knee and down goes the big fried freak.

HHH brings in Austin but Kane gets the tag and Austin tries to run. His reward is having a mudhole stomped into him. Taker destroys him for a bit and Austin offers a handshake. This is the guy that a month before was at war with Rock. Wow indeed. Taker reluctantly tags in Kane, which makes sense here. Back off to Taker and HHH and Old School hits. Old School to Austin also and Taker clears the ring.

The Two Man Power Trip tries to leave but Kane makes the stop. Back in

the ring and HHH breaks up the Last Ride. Double mudhole is stomped into Taker in the corner and we head to the floor again. Austin vs. Taker now in the ring and make that HHH instead. The challengers (kind of) are tagging in and out rather well. Taker fights out of it and gets a DDT on HHH but won't tag. Not can't, but won't.

Austin hits a Thesz Press but the middle finger elbow is caught in an attempted chokeslam. HHH makes the save but Taker gets a double clothesline to put all three guys down. Kane tags himself in and hammers on Austin. Another chokeslam is broken up by HHH and Kane avoids a Stunner. HHH finally wakes up and works on the arm. This is kind of a mess. Austin gets a chair shot to the arm and it's an ARMBAR in the ring by the Game.

Kane's face is pounded on a bit more but Kane reverses to pound on Austin a bit more. HHH makes another save as it keeps seeming like this is a handicap match rather than a regular tag. Top wristlock goes on which Kane fights out of again. HHH gets tossed to the floor where he's able to break up a tag. Austin comes in sans tag and he and Kane botch something badly. It looked like it was supposed to be a clothesline but Austin didn't go down or anything like that.

HHH tries to comes off the top but Kane gets a foot up but still can't tag out. He picks up Kane's leg and Kane looks like he's setting for an enziguri but he just hops for awhile and HHH takes him down. Pedigree hits and HHH tags out for no apparent reason. During the confusion Taker comes in and chokeslams Austin. Stephanie distracts Hebner so he shoves her down and counts two on Austin.

Kane hits the enziguri this time which makes me think they blew the spot earlier. The referee goes down for a bit and doesn't see the hot tag to

Taker. Taker pummels them both and it's a Last Ride to Taker but he's not legal a minute after being tagged in. Low blow by Austin to Taker and a Stunner to Kane. Taker and Austin brawl into the crowd and HHH gets a tag title belt, only to get it kicked into his face. Chokeslam is loaded up but Stephanie comes in, only to get kicked in the face also. Vince runs in with a sledgehammer which HHH gets for a pair of shots to Kane, one in the head, for the tag titles.

Rating: D+. This was about half an hour long and the whole thing didn't work for the most part. It was just a big mess with everything going all over the place and nothing of note going on other than the arm work. It was more about everyone doing random moves instead of a coherent match, which is rarely a good thing at all. Not a good main event.

Overall Rating: D+. Didn't really do it for me here. Not really anything great at all on the whole card. There was some good stuff here but at the same time it didn't work for the most part. The lack of titles other than at the end hurt it a lot as it usually does. The company fell down quickly after Mania and the Alliance only helped for a little bit.

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