

Monday Night Raw – March 4, 2002 – It's Two Weeks Before Mania, Right?

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 4, 2002

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Attendance: 8,849

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're heading into Mania here with I believe only the go home show after this. The NWO is in town tonight and they're not happy with Austin. This is a request for something that happens in here if I remember it right. The main event tonight is Angle vs. HHH in a cage, which I guess is some kind of softening up match for HHH that I'd assume Jericho had something to do with setting up. Let's get to it.

We open the show with a shot of Vince who says Flair won't be here tonight, drawing big booing. Vince says that therefore tonight it's Fan Appreciation Night and announces the aforementioned cage match. His eyes look all crazy here and he says tonight things are back to normal. Oh yeah this was when Flair was making him crazy.

A member of the NWO will be in action tonight. No name is given but that's intentional.

Steve Austin vs. Booker T

Now how's THAT for an opener? Booker is mad about losing his shampoo deal and Austin has a bad knee due to the NWO. If I remember right they broke a cinder block over his leg. For no apparent reason his OTHER knee was bandaged afterwards but whatever. They go into the corner to start and it's a brawl. Austin does some WHAT stomping and some WHAT chopping. Booker

takes over with an elbow shot and stomps Austin down into the corner. Off to a chinlock and here's the NW0, meaning the match is thrown out. It wasn't long enough to rate but it was nothing special.

Austin VERY clearly blades on camera and then gets hit in the face with a wrench to bust him open. Booker is gone. There's something so awesome about Austin and Hogan being in the same ring. This just kind of goes on. By that I mean for like 4-5 minutes. Hall Stuns him.

After a break, Austin is STILL in the ring. Ever Austin, he won't take the stretcher out.

Scotty 2 Hotty/Albert vs. Test/Mr. Perfect

What a strange heel team. Test says Perfect is his partner for the fans or something like that. It's not Booker due to him being in the match earlier. Albert vs. Perfect to get us going. Test comes in without his tag being seen so Test beats on him instead. Perfect comes in but can't Perfectplex him and there's the tag to Scotty. No one, I mean no one, cares. Everything breaks down and Scotty loads up the Worm on Test...and then he walks into a Perfectplex for the win. This was nothing.

Test and Perfect beat him down until Rikishi of all people makes the save. Perfect gets a Stinkface.

Angle makes fun of the What chants and is glad there's a cage match tonight. HHH needs to worry about him. Angle says he has nothing to lose tonight.

Tough Enough 2 premieres Thursday.

We get a clip from Smackdown where Goldust stole the Hardcore Title from Maven.

Speaking of Goldie, he's in the ring with Lillian for an interview. That was the first 24/7 rule usage in years so

Goldust quotes movies. Taker was Hardcore Champion for awhile but no one challenged him out of fear. Cue Taz with a challenge.

Hardcore Title: Taz vs. Goldust

Taz takes over to start and kicks Goldie low. Jackie is the referee for no apparent reason. Shattered Dreams to Taz and here come the weapons. Taz kicks a trashcan into his head and there's the Tazmission which is easily broken up with a trashcan lid shot, which is also good for the pin. NEXT.

The NWO is drinking Austin's beer. Nash says he's bored so let's go take a walk.

RVD is fighting Regal later and won that shot after winning a triple threat last week, which we get clips of. Oh wait the match with Regal is at Mania. He gets Storm tonight and Storm pops up, saying he'll be serious tonight. Rob says lighten up so Storm slaps him. Rob says that's cool, we'll settle it in the ring.

We look at a history of Christian freaking out on Arn Anderson because he wants to quit. DDP comes up and becomes his mentor or something. Page says we can start with a smile. Anderson has no idea what to think of this.

Page and Christian are in the back working on Christian's Page-esque grin. It doesn't work but Page says that's a good thing. Christian gets a phone call and says pull the plug. His grandmother is about to die and apparently when she dies he gets a lot of money. Page has no idea what to think of that. Somewhat funny stuff.

The NWO beat up a stage hand wearing an Austin shirt.

Godfather is at WWF New York. He's been back for like a month and a half and has done nothing at all.

Women's Title: Jazz vs. Trish Stratus

Jazz is champion. Trish tries to fire away but Jazz is just too strong. Jazz slams her down and drops a leg for two. She hooks a wicked STF and Trish is in trouble. Trish finally makes the rope and makes her comeback. The not yet named Chick Kick gets two. Stratusfaction is blocked and Jazz literally throws her so hard she rips Trish's top off. Now Trish hooks an STF on Jazz who also makes a rope. Trish won't break on 5 and it's a DQ.

Rating: D. The match sucked but it's the first match out of four that I can actually rate. When you're almost halfway done with the show and it's the first match to break 3 minutes, you might be having a problem. For absolutely no apparent reason, Trish didn't win the title in her hometown of Toronto at Mania. I still don't get that.

Stephanie is on the phone with Y2J. Jericho is lost in Greenwich and is trying to find Stephanie's lotion called Pristine Mist. Of I remember this episode. HHH pops up behind her with a box. She finally sees him and gets off the phone. HHH makes Stephanie is a W**** jokes and Stephanie finds a bottle of her lotion in the box.

Here's Taker on the bike. His match at Mania was with Flair, but Ric is taking care of a family emergency. Oh wait it's not set yet. Taker is trying to get him to agree to the match. Got it. We get a clip from last week with Taker beating up Arn Anderson. Since that wasn't enough though, Taker went on a little trip this morning. He says Flair is at a hospital tonight, because Taker left him no other choice.

This morning, Taker went to visit Flair's oldest son, David. We see a clip from this morning where David is training at a WWF facility. Taker comes in and DESTROYS him. They go into a shower and Taker gives commentary. This is really reminiscent of Gunner going nuts a few weeks ago on Impact, but Twith more talented people. David: "What are you doing?" Taker: "What do you think I'm doing? Beating you up! That's what I'm doing."

Taker kind of cuddles him and talks to Ric. It's implied that Taker will beat up more Flairs if Ric doesn't say yes.

Rob Van Dam vs. Lance Storm

Rob beat him last night on Heat which is why this match is happening in the first place. Er...second place. They quickly head to the floor and RVD hits the spinning kick to the back. RVD tries his rolling monkey flip into the corner but Lance kicks the knee out. Can't argue with the thought process there. Van Dam fights out of the corner but Storm breaks up the Five Star attempt and hits a superplex for two.

Storm wraps the leg around the post and Rob is in trouble. How nice it is to see a match actually getting some time on this show. There's a leg drag and Storm hooks the Mapleleaf. See? PSYCHOLOGY AGAIN!!! To be fair though, he was trained in the Dungeon so you know he's going to be smart. Rob gets in a shot but can't jump to the top due to the knee. Storm tries another superplex but gets knocked down and a sunset bomb gets two. Springboard clothesline gets two for the Canadian. A spinwheel kick puts Lance down and the Five Star ends it.

Rating: B-. For a five minute TV match, this was pretty awesome. It's no classic or anything and it might be due to how weak the wrestling has been on this show so far, but I was digging this. Then again I like Storm's in ring stuff so I'm extra biased. Still though, fun match and I was really liking it.

The NWO plays Rock Paper Scissors to determine who wrestles tonight and pours hot coffee onto the coffee checker. Who has a guy whose job is just to check coffee? Hall is wrestling tonight if you're curious.

Music video on Rock set to P.O.D.'s I Feel So Alive. This was a recurring thing they were doing at this time, usually set to My Sacrifice by Creed. I could do without the song when I see him ask Hogan for the match at Mania, which is still a pretty

awesome moment. This eats up a bit too much time. Rock is cool and all, but is there really a point to this?

Back to the NWO and we hear that Rock is going to be at Smackdown. They have a hopper with names in it. They use it to pick Hall's opponent. Hogan: "I hope it's not Andre the Giant." They seem nervous, so I'll set the Squash-0-Meter at about a 15/10.

The NWO is in the ring and Hall says the fans appreciate the beating he gave Austin. Whoever comes out next, he sees as Steve Austin.

Scott Hall vs. Spike Dudley

I'm as shocked as you are, and I knew who the opponent was. What exactly do you expect here? Jerry calls Spike Austin, Hall is in street pants and an NWO shirt, Spike gets in a few shots and it lasts about 150 seconds. Razor's Edge ends it.

Mark Henry returns. Recently he won a strongman contest. He's officially the World's Strongest Man. And so it begins.

The cage is lowered.

We go to the back and Angle comes in to see Stephanie, who has her back to us. He sees her and says "Holy sweet mother of God." I remember this and I thought it was hilarious. Not the payoff but Kurt's reaction. The camera swings around and Stephanie's skin is all messed up because HHH switched her lotion with something else. She freaks and it's a pretty funny scene.

Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Cage match, escape only. They feel each other out to start for a few seconds but it's quickly a fist fight. Angle goes for the door so HHH kicks him low. All Game so far. Angle finally hits a clothesline to take over. He goes for the escape but HHH throws him back to the mat. A low blow puts HHH down as

Jerry keeps talking about HHH's balls. Belly to belly puts HHH down and Kurt pounds him in the corner.

Here are some rolling Germans for HHH. He goes to leave but the door isn't allowed to be open. Uh...why not? HHH comes back with a facebuster and up he goes. Angle's attempted save misses but his second works. Back to the ring they go as Jerry talks about HHH. Angle Slam hits as the door was open for a bit. Angle walks into a Pedigree but here's Stephanie.

To her credit she rams Teddy into the cage and slams the door on HHH's head because that's what you do to guys about to win cage matches. Angle goes to leave but Stephanie won't let him out so he'll hurt HHH more. HHH is busted a bit by a shot into the cage. Angle goes to leave but walks in on his own decision.

HHH counters with a slingshot into the cage and both guys are down. Stephanie slides a chair in but it's right between the two guys so it'll likely be a race to who gets it. Double clothesline puts both guys down. HHH grabs a DDT onto the chair and climbs. Stephanie comes in and cracks him with the chair the does it again. She grabs Kurt and pulls him out for the win while HHH is stuck in the ropes.

Rating: C. Did you know Stephanie was involved in this? If not, just open your eyes, because she's in it EVERY TWO SECONDS. Angle could have been anyone out there and it wouldn't have mattered. He was there as a soldier for Stephanie but in the end she had better luck against HHH than he did. Gee, I can't imagine who wrote this storyline can you?

Overall Rating: D. The matches were short, the main event was weak, and if it weren't for the 5 million videos about it, I wouldn't have had any idea that Mania was coming. It's two weeks before the biggest show of the year and the world champion doesn't even make a cameo? Does something seem wrong about that? Anyway, nothing to see here and a really weak show

before what I thought was an underwhelming Mania.

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