

Monday Night Raw – July 1, 2002 – Worst Ladder Match Ever

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 1, 2002

Location: Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, New Hampshire

Commentators; Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Back to something other than TNA for a nice change of pace. This is a request and it's probably due to just the main event. This is the show where somehow midcarder Jeff Hardy is getting a world title shot in a ladder match against the Undertaker. Other than that, this is a very generic looking card. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week where Vince talked about Ruthless Aggression. Vince wanted to know who had it, and that man would be the new King of the Ring: Brock Lesnar. Van Dam, the guy that Brock beat in the finals, disrupted the coronation and beat Lesnar up. Kind of. They had a rematch later that night for the IC Title which RVD had won with the Five Star but Heyman caused a DQ. Brock powerbombed him through a table to end the show.

I forgot how much I liked Across The Nation as a theme song.

Here are Heyman and Lesnar to open the show. Paul says this will be the summer of Lesnar, not the summer of RVD. Heyman talks about how Lesnar has intelligence and is inspired by Kurt Angle. Angle issued a challenge to any rookie to debut against Angle (some guy named Cena debuted). Heyman says Brock is issuing a challenge to anyone.

Brock Lesnar vs. Ric Flair

Not bad for an opener. They do also cover themselves here by saying that this open contract was issued at 1pm this afternoon so it's not completely illogical to have Flair ready to go. Flair yells at I think Heyman about interfering in a match that cost Flair control of Raw. Lesnar says Flair is in the wrong place with the wrong guy in the wrong year. Flair gets run over to start but manages a chop to slow him down.

More chops and Flair tries to get Brock to chase him. Knee drop gets two for Ric but he gets launched over the referee with ease. Brock takes over and there's the Flair Flop in the corner. Lesnar works on the back and they go to the floor for a little bit. He goes shoulder first into the post back in the ring and Flair has an opening. Flair chops away but runs into a bearhug. A pretty weak spinebuster (no snap or pop at all. Maybe some crackle though) takes Flair down but he hits a low blow. Figure Four goes on but here's Heyman for the distraction. Flair goes for him and walks into an F5 for the pin.

Rating: D. Apparently the bad booking of monsters isn't a new thing. Lesnar is supposed to be an animal, yet it took Heyman to save him from Ric Flair? Yes, Flair is a veteran but that doesn't mean Lesnar shouldn't kill him. Would you see a 53 year old boxer destroying a 25 year old phenom? I didn't think so. Not a fan of this at all. The veteran will possibly have better technique and be more polished, but at the end of the day he isn't going to be able to take a right cross to the chin.

Coach hits on Jackie Gayda in a creepy way, talking about the Divas Undressed competition. Jackie gets annoyed with him, blaming her last tag team loss on Molly. Molly comes up and says Jackie should follow a role model. They brawl into the arena and Molly tries to kill her with a pipe. Time for a match no one is interested in!

Molly Holly vs. Jackie Gayda

Molly hits a missile dropkick and beats Jackie into the ground. I don't think this is an actual match. There was no bell or referee or pin. Trish comes out to save Jackie and takes Molly's pants off. I clearly get the point in this. Don't you?

Christopher Nowitski has challenged Bradshaw to a match that isn't for JBL's Hardcore Title.

Christopher Nowitski vs. Bradshaw

King has Chris' Harvard ring. JBL kicks his head off to start and it's a beating. Jibbles goes for weapons but it's not hardcore. In the confusion, Chris hits Bradshaw with a cowbell and pins him. This didn't even last a minute.

Regal is watching on a monitor in what is apparently Heyman and Lesnar's dressing room. RVD arrives limping and wants to know where Brock and Paul are. Regal says be on time next time and they'll have a match later apparently.

Jeff is in the back and is offended to hear he's the underdog tonight. He has to climb a ladder and he runs around in the back climbing various things. We really should have seen the signs back then.

Booker and Goldust are in the back and Goldust is dressed as Darth Vader for no apparent reason. Booker doesn't like Star Wars but apparently he likes handling a Lightsaber. "Obi-Book-Kenobi." WHAT AM I WATCHING???

Vince gives the fairly newly back Eddie a pep talk before he teams up with Benoit later. Vince asks what the translation is for Ruthless Aggression in Spanish. "Eddie Guerrero holmes!" Benoit is in his first match back in like a year after his neck injury.

Rob Van Dam vs. William Regal

Van Dam is IC Champion and Regal is European Champion but this

is non-title. Regal takes him to the match very quickly and counters the stepover kick. Out to the floor after a suplex and a Knee Trembler gets two back in the ring. Regal keeps it on the mat and hooks a crossface minus the arm trap. Rob manages to grab a monkey flip and hammers away in various corners. Spinning cross body gets two as does Rolling Thunder. Butterfly suplex is countered and the Five Star ends this.

Rating: C-. Eh not bad and definitely the best of the night. They were starting to push Van Dam at this point and he got some world title shots later in the year, but then the company decided to go with Shawn as champion and then HHH forever instead of Van Dam. RVD got the title in like 4 years, but then proved that he couldn't handle it so that's all well and good.

Van Dam calls out Lesnar but gets Heyman instead. Heyman says we'll do it at Vengeance. Ok then.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Spike Dudley vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chris Benoit

This was set up last year with Benoit returning and putting a wicked Crossface on Bubba. Eddie vs. Spike gets us going and Eddie controls as he should. Bubba comes in and hammers on Guerrero, only to walk into a dropkick. Eddie does a fairly unnecessary roll but it brings in Benoit. Benoit goes all psycho with the chops in the corner and Bubba is in trouble.

Bubba hits a sidewalk slam for two but the Canadian hits a German on the American to take over again. I love watching people throw German suplexes. Bubba gets a neckbreaker and it's off to Spike. Spike grabs a rolling cradle for two. He tries another but Benoit grabs a Crossface to draw in Bubba. The heels make an illegal switch and Eddie pounds on Spike for a bit. Spike goes into the post but there's heel miscommunication and the Dudley Dog.

Both guys are down and there's the hot tag to Bubba. They were pushing him as kind of an upper midcard guy around this time,

possibly as a world title challenger when HHH got the Raw title. Believe that playa. Sorry I had to do it. What's Up to Eddie and Bubba orders a table. There's one set up on the floor but Benoit pops Spike. Eddie hits a nice springboard rana to take Bubba out but the Frog Splash misses. Bubba Bomb ends Eddie.

Rating: C+. Not exactly the ending I was expecting but it was a good tag match which is what this show needed. The Dudleys were still an odd pairing as while Spike is indeed a Dudley, he's not the Dudley that you think of as part of the Dudley Boys. Also, kind of an odd return for Benoit wouldn't you think?

Spike goes through the table and Benoit hooks a Crossface on Bubba for a good while.

Rey Mysterio is coming. The music almost sounds like it's from Halloween.

DarthDust comes up to Big Show and it's just weird. Goldust says he's Show's father and breaks a plastic sword over his head. Goldie goes to leave but walks into Nash who kills him. It was NWO time if I didn't mention this.

Video on Hardy's history in ladder matches.

Taker says he's going after Angle and then Rock. He's not worried about Hardy at all.

Show finds X-Pac unconscious in the back. Make your own jokes.

Booker T vs. Big Show

This was supposed to be a tag match but take what you can get. Booker had been kicked out of the NWO and was on a revenge tour...kind of. The NWO would be gone in two weeks anyway so it doesn't really matter. The mashup of Show's music with the NWO theme doesn't work at all. Show and his one piece women's swimsuit of doom takes over quickly on Booker with the size

and power game.

There's a suplex for two. This was a period for Big Show where he was getting way too big and way too slow and it hurt his game really badly. Bearhug now and Booker is in trouble. Sidewalk slam gets two. They go to the floor and Show keeps up the dominance. Show gets the steps but they get kicked into his face. We'll ignore the laws of physics that would suggest that it's IMPOSSIBLE for the steps to hit him in the face from that angle but whatever. Booker wins by countout.

Rating: F+. This was nothing and the ending sucked. Booker got in one move other than the kick to knock the steps into Show's face. Other than the tag match, all of these matches have just sucked, mainly due to them being short. The NWO never worked in the WWF but they kept shoving them down our throats until WWE woke up and stopped it in a few weeks.

Nash and Michaels, also in the NWO, punch Big Show. Make that just Nash actually. Michaels says they're after Booker, not each other. Shawn says the NWO is a family and they'll be a more complete family when the injured member returns. That would be HHH and he never would join. After a LONG speech, he kicks Show in the face and they leave.

Vince tells Taker how awesome he is. Taker vs. Rock is announced for Vengeance.

Matt wishes Jeff good luck and Lita pops in in a neckbrace to wish him good luck too. Jeff nearly destroys the door and screams a lot as he leaves. We really should have seen the signs coming.

Undisputed WWE Championship: Jeff Hardy vs. Undertaker

So the idea here is that Jeff has been destroyed by Taker every time they've fought but Taker has never been in a ladder match so Jeff should have a chance. Taker goes for the ladder but gets it kicked into his face. Jeff gets a chair shot in

but Taker catches the ladder shot from Jeff. They haven't been in the ring together yet. Taker hammers on Jeff for awhile but gets sent into a ladder to slow things down.

Jeff launches himself at the ladder with Taker under it, probably hurting himself even worse. They get into the ring and Jeff is down again. Taker gets a big shot with the ladder to knock Jeff into the table. He has the match won but instead Taker climbs down and pounds on Jeff even more. This is SO slow. Jeff tries to fire in some shots and goes off on Taker but a single punch slows him down.

Taker hits a running clothesline in the corner. This is the least interesting ladder match I've ever seen. Taker misses a charge in the corner and slams into the ladder...but is back on offense about 4 seconds later. Whisper in the Wind takes Taker down but the champ is back up and hitting a big boot before Jeff gets in another shot. A low blow puts Taker down as does a flip dive to the floor.

Jeff gets the big ladder but Taker stops him with a Last Ride attempt. The WORST RANA EVER sends Taker to the floor as a counter and Jeff climbs. He touches the gold but Taker makes the save. Taker goes for the Last Ride again but Jeff cracks him with a chair twice and climbs very slowly. And never mind as Undertaker cracks him with the chair and "choke-slams" (more like choke-shoves) him off to retain.

Rating: D. I remember this a lot more fondly than it was here. The ending is good and is some decent drama, but the rest of it is just SO slow and uninteresting. Jeff never had a chance but Taker did nothing but punch the rest of the time and that doesn't make for an interesting match at all. Very weak match but a good ending.

Jeff gets back up so Taker goes back in and hits a Last Ride. Taker rides off but Jeff gets the mic and says he's still standing. Taker comes back to hit him but stops and raises

Jeff's hand, supposedly turning face in the process. I don't remember that coming for a few more weeks but allegedly it was here.

Overall Rating: C-. Well the second hour was much better but the first one was just horrible. The problem here is that it felt like a throwaway show but they didn't want it to be if that made sense. It set up some stuff for Vengeance but not a lot happened here. Oh and Thursday is the show where Angle made the Undisputed Title disputed, which I've already reviewed actually.

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