

Monday Night Raw – July 30, 2001: The Rock Is BACK!

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 30, 2001

Location: First Union Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

It's still the Invasion and we're heading towards Summerslam in about three weeks. That takes a big back seat to the return of the Rock, who is back tonight after a long absence. Gee some things never really change do they. Anyway the wrestling tonight looks just ok. Oh wait I almost forgot: Angle won the WCW Title from Booker on Smackdown last week so there's that too. The rematch is tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week with Vince reinstating the Rock. On Thursday there was a video was aired showing all of the horrible things Vince has done to Rock over the years.

Dreamer and Heyman come out with Tazz and throw Cole out of commentary so Heyman can take over. Tazz gets in the ring and says Booker gets the title back tonight and Rock joins the Alliance after that. Jericho interrupts him and has a mic in hand. He says he's tired of hearing from the voice of the Alliance and that Tazz shouldn't be staring in Tough Enough but rather Jackass.

Tazz vs. Chris Jericho

Lionsault, 35 seconds. There was an escaped Tazmission in there too.

There's a bunch of decorations in Vince's office for Rock. Regal and Tajiri come in with some pies. Vince says Rock likes other kind of pie, and besides the blueberry pie is missing a slice. They accuse Tajiri of taking it so he pops up his own

eyebrow. Yeah he stole it. Regal tells Tajiri to bugger off and go win the Hardcore Title. Vince: "I don't think blueberry pie and Hardcore Titles go well together." Regal: "My mother used to say the exact same thing." Get Regal his own show. Please.

Hardcore Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Tajiri

They trade some kicks but none connect. RVD does the finger point so Tajiri KICKS HIM IN THE FACE. Out to the floor and Van Dam hits a flip dive for two. Rob gets a chair but Tajiri hits his handspring to kick it into Van Dam's face, getting two on the floor. Rob goes up and gets crotched but is caught in the Tree of Woe.

Tajiri puts two chairs in Rob's face and hits a baseball slide for two. Handspring elbow is countered by Tajiri counters into a German suplex for two. Tajiri hooks some freaky rolling body scissors/hammerlock/Koji Clutch combo. Van Dam hits a rolling fireman's carry slam and a middle rope moonsault for two. The chair is put on Tajiri and the Five Star crushes him to keep the title in the Alliance.

Rating: B-. This was really entertaining. Tajiri was incredibly awesome at this point and some of his stuff still impresses me today. That handspring into the chair was great. Rob's selling was a bit lacking, but it's a hardcore match so that's to be expected. Fun stuff and I'd love to see more from these two.

The Alliance has a welcome home party for Rock as well. Austin brought Rock his own cooler and Debra brings her famously bad cookies. Booker comes in and is nervous. Nick Patrick comes in and says Rock is about five minutes away. Austin yells at Booker not to use the Spinarooni but Booker keeps looking at the cookies. He tries one and almost gets sick.

Vince goes to greet Rock but runs into Big Show who has a few ideas to pitch to Vince. He and Gunn are now a team and he has

some names to pitch. The first is Show Gunns which Vince isn't thrilled with. The Big Gunns, the Show Bills and Big Billy Show Gunns are also suggested but Vince gets tired of hearing it. He says call yourselves Double Trouble Crap on a Stick. Show likes it. And we'll be moving on.

Video on how Angle won the WCW Title on Thursday.

Angle talks about Mary Lou Retton and says he's better than Booker. He also makes fun of Booker for crying after losing the title. Angle is also better than Austin and wants to fight him at Summerslam.

All three McMahons are here to greet Rock. There are photographers as well. The limo pulls up and it's Kanyon who has been awarded the US Title by Booker.

Hurricane Helms/Torrie Wilson vs. Matt Hardy/Lita

Anything good in this match would result in Torrie staying on the apron and looking good. Naturally she starts with Lita and helps Helms with a double suplex. We finally bring in Matt and he gets two off a clothesline. Lita hits running clotheslines in both corners. Helms throws Lita to the floor but his superkick is countered. Litarana and Twist of Fate get two as Torrie saves. Another Twist puts Helms down but Torrie hits him low so a small package can pin Hardy.

Rating: D. Torrie had a great smile but she had little business in a wrestling match. Stacy and Torrie as the female Alliance representatives never worked at all, especially against Lita and an improving Trish. Not a horrible match but it should have been one on one.

Austin fires up Booker but Booker has a stomach ache. Booker thinks it's butterflies but Austin says it's the cookies.

Test is very sweaty and says he didn't like being branded a traitor. He's with the WWF.

WCW World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Booker T

BIG pop for Angle. Angle meets him in the aisle and this is No DQ. The Alliance runs in and beats Angle down before the bell, including a Gore by Rhyno. The WWF guys run in and beat down the Alliance guys. Shane and Booker are hiding in the crowd. Booker's eyes bugging out are hilarious. After a break Angle is in big trouble on the floor. I'm not sure if the bell has rung yet or not.

There's the bell and an answer to my question. Back in and Angle hammers away but Shane comes in. Booker hits a jumping superkick and Angle is right back down. German Suplex is countered by a low blow by Booker. Booker drops a knee and a clothesline gets two. A slam sets up a chinlock but Angle gets up, only to be sent into the corner and stomped down again.

Angle fights back with right hands and snaps off a German. We cut to the back and there's a big brawl with the WWF guys dominating the Alliance. Shane slides a chair into Booker but Angle avoids the swing. Angle hits some forearms and a German for two. There's the Angle Slam and the fans erupt. Ankle Lock goes on and here's Austin who takes a right hand as well. The distraction lets Booker hit the Axe Kick but there's no referee. Shane calls in an Alliance referee who gets two. Robinson (WCW referee) goes down and Booker does too from an Angle Slam. Stunner to Angle and the WWF referee counts the pin.

Rating: B. Angle looks strong still and Booker gets his first major win here. Throw in the Austin vs. Angle feud being advanced and this was a very successful match. The storylines aside, this was entertaining and fast paced with the No DQ stipulation helping things since this way we don't have to have some stupid excuse for all the insanity.

Austin runs to the back and drives away.

Angle runs into Debra with the cookies. THEY SUCK. Someone

finally tells her. Angel telling Debra that her cookies suck got a big pop. Do you get how hot this crowd is for Angle?

Kanyon/Lance Storm vs. Edge/Christian

Storm says he enjoys a good party but hates these constant offbeat shenanigans from Edge and Christian. The brothers (I think they still were at this point) jump the Alliance and we're under way. The regular team makes Storm drop an elbow on Kanyon but Kanyon grabs a crucifix with Storm hitting a PERFECT dropkick to knock Christian down into it for two.

Christian plays Ricky Morton (the hair is close enough) and the heels work him over. Suplex gets two for Kanyon. Kanyon hooks Colt Cabana's Billy Goat's Curse while Storm drops a fist from the top into the back of Christian. Kanyon comes back in but Christian escapes a belly to back suplex and hits the reverse DDT. There are the tags to Edge and Storm and the Spear gets two. Everything breaks down and Storm brings in a title but walks into the Edgecution. Kanyon comes in and hits a Flatliner on Edge onto the belt and Storm gets the cheap pin.

Rating: D+. Not a great match or anything but it was ok enough. These matches have been really lackluster tonight other than the match with the top guys. The problem is that these matches don't really gain anything for anyone. Then again the Rock is the whole point to this so we're filling in time until then.

Angle jumps the Alliance.

Regal tells Vince Rock is coming and confirms the license number of the car Vince sent for Rock, making Vince very happy.

Cruiserweight Title/Light Heavyweight Title: X-Pac vs. Billy Kidman

Title for title. Pac tries to throw him in the air but Kidman hits a great rana to take over. Pac sends him outside and hits a great flip dive to take over. They chop it out and Pac is launched into the post. Back in and Kidman goes up top. A top rope splash misses and X-Pac hits a few spin kicks. Powerbomb gets two and the Bronco Buster hits. Pac jumps into a dropkick for two and they trade rollups. Kidman's corner walking bulldog is countered and X-Pac goes up. Kidman tries to meet him up there but Pac counters into an X-Factor off the top rope. That looked great and it unifies the titles.

Rating: C+. Another good match here from guys that know how to work together. They needed a lot more than four minutes but they could have done somet

hing interesting with more time. The unification would be gone pretty soon as there was another unification match at Survivor Series which got rid of the Light Heavyweight Title all together.

The McMahons and Regal wait with the photographers but this time it's The Fink. Why is the Fink arriving at Raw with about 35 minutes left? Oh ok he was supposed to go pick up Rock but he couldn't understand the directions.

Vince says he'll wait on Rock in the ring.

We look at last week when Sara got knocked out by an Undertaker chair shot.

The Dudleys asked for a tables match with Kane/Undertaker because he's vulnerable. Sara goes through a table tonight. They say that Sara isn't safe at home or in the back either.

We cut to the Rocky statue and the Rock is looking up at it. Cool visual.

Dudley Boys vs. Kane/Undertaker

Tables match. The brawl starts on the floor until we get down

to Kane beating on D-Von in the ring while the other two fight outside. Top rope clothesline puts D-Von down. I'm not sure if you need one or both to go through a table to win here. Taker and Bubba are in the ring now. The Dudleys double teak the Dead Man and the reverse 3D puts him down.

A table is brought in but so is Kane. D-Von is left alone with Taker who loads up a chokeslam, but Nick Patrick shoves the table away. Page runs in with a low blow and they load up a superbomb for Sara through the table. She holds Bubba off until Kane and Taker get bac up and Ray is chokeslamed through the table for the victory for the tall brothers.

Rating: D. The match sucked but it was there to fill in some time and I guess kid of almost advancing the Taker vs. DDP feud. Can you really even call it a feud when DDP hasn't won a single round of it? Not a horrible match but again it was more filler for the ending of the show with Rock.

Rock is here.

All three McMahons are in the ring. Here he is. Shane talks first, talking about how Vince screwed both at Wrestlemania and the night after. Vince even screwed Rock at Wrestlemania 16. Vince admits that he's made mistakes including backing Austin against Rock. Vince isn't offering an apology for the past because he wants to talk about the future. He says he might screw Rock again in the future if it's good for business. That's the truth and Vince is the devil Rock knows as opposed to the devils he doesn't know. Vince says listen to the people.

The people cheer and Vince says Rock's future is with the people and the WWF. Shane says the Alliance is the future and where the people are going to be. Rock hasn't said a word this whole time. Vince says give the people what they want and Rock lays out Vince with a Rock Bottom. Shane celebrates and Rock stares him down. Shane shakes Rock's hand but is pulled into a

Rock Bottom. Rock grabs the mic and says FINALLY, the Rock has come back.....to the WWF. Shane gets an elbow.

Overall Rating: B. Better show but like I said, almost everything was just setting up the ending. To be fair though, that trumps everything else. I'm not wild on Angle having a four day reign but it gives Booker the first big win in the WWF which he needed. This was one of the better shows in awhile but they needed to actually go somewhere with the story, which they weren't really doing.

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