

Monday Night Raw – September 24, 2001: Happy Birthday Stephanie! Here's A Bad Show For You

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 24, 2001

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Attendance: 7,730

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

We're past Unforgiven and the biggest detail is that we have a new WWF Champion in the form of Kurt Angle, who beat Austin in a pretty good match. We're four weeks away from No Mercy and it'll be the first show where things look even the slightest bit different in the main event picture. And then that'll all mean nothing as it'll be time for the Survivor Series and the end of the Alliance. Let's get to it.

We open with Angle being announced as the new world champion and his family coming in to celebrate with him.

We're waiting on Austin to arrive so in the meantime we'll play a theme song.

Kane/Undertaker/Bradshaw vs. Dudley Boyz/Test

Kronik has been fired due to last night's debacle so we have a new Alliance team for Undertaker and Kane to beat up. The Dudleys are WWF tag champions and Kane/Taker are the WCW counterparts. Bradshaw jumps Test to start and escapes the full nelson slam. Test absorbs some right hands and clotheslines Bradshaw down. Off to D-Von who gets slammed down and there's a tag to Kane.

Sidewalk slam puts D-Von down and the top rope clothesline puts him down even further. Big boot from Test changes momentum and gets two for D-Von. Kane gets beaten up on the floor a bit as Undertaker tries to help, thereby allowing more cheating. Bubba drops some ax handles for two. Test comes in and pounds on Kane but the Spaniard slugs back and tags in Undertaker. Everything breaks down and Taker avoids the 3D. Bubba gets taken down by the Clothesline and a Last Ride pins D-Von.

Rating: D+. Total meh match here with nothing going on at all. Undertaker looks strong which doesn't really help anything. I guess this sets up Dudleys vs. Brothers but it doesn't really make the big tough team look all that vulnerable. Also as usual, the match doesn't mean anything past the latest win/loss for either side.

Stacy comes in to see Torrie and wants to know what she sees in Tajiri. Stacy thinks he's short and not much of a man. Torrie says at least she has a man (does Stasiak ring a bell?) so Stacy says she can get one anytime she wants (Stasiak? His dad was world champion?) so a challenge is set up for later.

Christian arrives and Heyman thinks it's Austin. Christian warns the security guard to be ready for the mob of people that will be here soon. Oh and go get his bags later. He talks to two people ignoring him and says that he'll sign all their autographs post show.

Shane fires up the Alliance by saying Austin will be here later. He says Austin is still champion because his arm was under the rope. Booker and Shane got screwed by Hebner too, so tonight is about revenge. Stephanie pops in and thinks they're all here for her birthday. You know, because they wouldn't show up for work otherwise. Stephanie (looking GREAT again this week) says that tonight is about leadership and following the example of...RVD. Booker comes out of his pose to complain so it's Booker vs. Angle for the WWF Title and Rock vs. RVD

for the WCW version.

Tajiri vs. Tazz

Tajiri kicks him down but walks into a Tazplex to take over. Tajiri comes back with the kicks and the Tarantula. Buzzsaw kick connects but Stacy kisses Tajiri which lets Taz hook the Tazmission for the tap out.

Shane talks to Booker about how it's time to move up to the WWF Title.

US Title: Rhyno vs. Jeff Hardy

Rhyno won the title last night off Tajiri. Jeff speeds things up to start and sends it to the floor. Slingshot dropkick sets up a rana off the apron to take over. Back in the champion hits a spinebuster but misses a top rope splash. Jeff hits a flipping legdrop for two but walks into a belly to belly. Whisper in the Wind puts Rhyno down but the Swanton misses. The first Gore attempt misses but Jeff goes to the corner and when he lands, Rhyno kills him dead with the Gore to retain.

Rating: C. Rhyno was on a roll at this point and couldn't have a bad match if he tried. He was great at the power matches and using that Gore to split people in half. He didn't really have a character but he didn't need one with his finisher. On top of that he added in some psychology with the constant rib work which makes perfect sense. Good stuff.

Hurricane tells Citizen Ivory and Citizen Storm that he's glad they're studying for the match. He also thinks Ivory is in danger and tells her to wait at the entrance. She leaves and Hurricane confides to Storm that he's ready to take Holly on as his full time sidekick. He makes Storm do Wonder Twin Powers Activate in a funny bit.

Kanyon comes in to see RVD because he's worried about Austin freaking out on him. Van Dam says just chill.

Ivory/Lance Storm/Hurricane vs. Big Show/Spike Dudley/Molly Holly

Spike is in a Show costume for no apparent reason. Show and Hurricane start things off and the masked man wants a test of strength. That goes nowhere so he slaps Big Show, which gets him thrown across the ring. Off to Ivory and Molly with the latter hitting a northern lights suplex for two. Storm and Spike come in and things speed up a bit. Spike chases Hurricane around and gets kicked down by Lance coming back in. Hurricane and the cape come in with a cross body for two. Show comes in and cleans house but Ivory hits him low. Molly gets on Show's shoulders for the Molly Go Round for the pin on Storm.

Rating: D+. Just turn Molly into a sidekick already and get it over with. It was clear that's where they were going so just get it over with already. On top of that, Show needs something to do. He's been doing nothing for months now and it's getting a little tiring to sit here and watch him do nothing at all.

Earl Hebner comes in to see Shane, who yells at him about an apparent screwjob last night. We see a clip of Austin tapping out but being under the ropes. Hebner admits his mistake but says the decision stands. Shane is barred from ringside for Angle vs. Booker for some reason.

WWF Title: Kurt Angle vs. Booker T

BIG USA chant goes up. You know Booker is an American too. Angle hits a quick overhead belly to belly for two. Booker grabs a headlock but Kurt grabs the ankle lock which is quickly broken. Angle goes for the ankle again but Booker hits an enziguri to take over. Booker drops a knee to what I think is a bad neck and stands around a lot. Off to a chinlock to take some time out of the match.

Kurt fights up and hits some elbows to the ribs but walks into a spinning forearm for two. Booker hits the ropes but walks

into a belly to belly suplex and a belly to back gets two. Booker shoves off the referee to avoid the Slam and kicks Angle down. Belt shot puts Angle down for two. Bookend is countered into a northern lights suplex for two. Ax kick misses and Kurt rolls through a suplex into the ankle lock to retain.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match here but it wasn't anything great. Booker jobbing again shouldn't surprise anyone and I don't think it did. He's the biggest WCW star there was so of course he lost. That was another of the big issues with the Invasion: the Alliance guys were always second and third fiddles to the WWF guys.

Kanyon hits on Lita which is a lot more awkward in retrospect. She makes fun of his speech impediment.

Intercontinental Title: Christian vs. Chris Jericho

Christian won the title last night. He makes fun of the former champion Edge pre-match and we get a solo Five Second Pose...or we would have if Jericho hadn't interrupted. Jericho takes him down to start and chops away. Christian comes back with punches and knocks Jericho into the corner. Backbreaker gets two. Jericho hits the forearm and avoids a dropkick. Christian avoids the Lionsault and rolls to the floor. A bell shot draws the LAME DQ to end this. Nothing match.

Christian loads up the Conchairto but Jericho avoids it and hooks the Walls.

X-Pac is sitting in Regal's chair when the Commissioner comes in. Pac complains about his lack of TV time despite having two titles. Regal rips into him and says that it's Pac vs. Regal tonight.

We get America the Beautiful from last night which is by one of those women singers that basically screech the words but it's called great for some reason.

Raven asks RVD for advice about how depressed he's been lately. RVD suggests being more positive about being negative. Raven thanks him and leaves when Stephanie comes in. She says win and you're the leader of the Alliance. Some mild sexual tension is teased.

Matt Hardy vs. Kanyon

Matt punches him down to start and hits a moonsault press for two. Kanyon takes him down and heads to hit on Lita, who slaps the taste out of his mouth. Back in Kanyon drives Matt's head into the mat for two. Kanyon talks to Lita more and gets rolled up for two. A bad Russian legsweep by Matt puts both guys down. They go to the corner with Kanyon getting shoved down and the middle rope legdrop sends Kanyon to the outside. Lita hits her hurricanrana off the steps. Twist of Fate is countered and Matt is shoved into Lita. Flatliner gets the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing match here and as usual it doesn't mean anything. These one night made feuds and their resolutions were fine for filling in TV time but it didn't help anything long term. This was just ok as Matt was nowhere near what he would become yet (take that for what you will) and Kanyon still didn't mean much.

EXTREME CLOSEUP of DDP who is very positive now. He's into the motivational speaker gimmick now.

We go to WWF New York with the Tough Enough finalists. The five finalists are Nidia, Taylor (cute but never did anything), Chris Harvard, Maven and Josh Matthews, who looks like more of a tool than he does now.

Rock brags about retaining the title last night and now he has RVD. As for Stephanie, if she cheats she's going to get a birthday spanking. She's 25 tonight. He singe a version of Happy Birthday to her as well: "Happy Birthday to Steph, you're a ho with big breasts, so take the night off from

hooking, if ya smell what the Rock is cooking." Ok that was awesome.

William Regal vs. X-Pac

Regal knocks him down but gets caught in a suplex for two. Bronco Buster hits and Regal comes back with the Regal Cutter for the pin. What in the freaking world was the point of this?

WCW World Title: Rob Van Dam vs. The Rock

Since Shane is barred from ringside for some reason, Stephanie comes out to watch the match. Rob counters a headlock and the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. Rock Bottom is countered as well and they head to the floor. A clothesline puts Van Dam down but Rob comes back with the spinning kick to Rock who is draped over the barricade. Back in the top rope kick gets two.

Rock grabs a belly to belly for two. Back to the floor and Rob loads up the announce table, only to get punched in the face for his troubles. Rock throws him onto the table but Van Dam bounces off of it. Back inside a spinebuster gets two. RVD kicks him down and tries the split legged moonsault but Rock moves. Stephanie slaps Rock into a rollup for two. Rock hits a DDT and the Sharpshooter goes on but Stephanie comes in again. He chases her up the aisle and throws her back in as Van Dam slams him down. He gets ready for the Five Star but Stephanie shoves the referee into the ropes. Rock Bottom gives Rock the win.

Rating: C-. We'll continue the running theme tonight by talking about how this is another problem the Invasion had: this match wasn't about RVD, it wasn't about the WCW Title and it wasn't about the Invasion. This match was about Stephanie and how The Rock wants to ruin her birthday. That's a fun single night thing and the more I get to see mid-20s Stephanie the happier I am, but this doesn't do a thing long term. It doesn't set up a PPV match, it doesn't give Rock a new challenge, it doesn't do anything. That's fine once in awhile,

but this is like the fourth week in a row. That's not good.

Austin never arrived.

Overall Rating: D+. This didn't work at all for me. It's a total throwaway show with nothing happening and the whole thing being about Stephanie and her birthday with the usual world title matches that meant nothing at all. No Austin, so that went nowhere (nice bait and switch guys) and Angle and/or Rock have no opponents yet, so what was the point of this? Oh yeah, Stephanie is 25 now. Pointless show.

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