

Monday Night Raw – November 23, 1998: Shawn Michaels, Leaf Blowers and Embalming

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 23, 1998

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

After last week's show we have a lot of stuff to deal with. For one thing, it's the continuing story of Rock as the Corporate Champion. He needs an opponent now and since Austin got his head knocked off last week by a shovel from Undertaker, it isn't going to be the Rattlesnake. Other than that we've got to deal with Hawk falling off the Tron, which isn't something I'm looking forward to talking about. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of Survivor Series and the events of last week.

Apparently Austin blacked out yesterday in San Jose and is in the hospital.

There's going to be a new Commissioner announced tonight. I think I know who that is.

Here are the McMahons and company to open the show. Vince denies being behind Undertaker's attack last week and you know he never lies. He talks about how everything he does he does for us and says Slaughter has stepped down as Commissioner so we can have a new and independent one. This person will have authority over everyone on the roster except for Steve Austin. The new Commissioner is....Shawn Michaels.

Shawn comes out and says that he doesn't answer to anyone and things will never be the same again. JR is acting like this is a huge deal even though Slaughter never did a thing as Commissioner for the last year or so. Shawn decides to book his first match right now: Rock is defending

the title against X-Pac.

The Insane Clown Posse says they're not ready to face the Headbangers tonight and they need the Oddities to take their place.

Headbangers vs. Oddities

This would be Golga and Kurrigan. Kurrigan and Mosh get us going with Mosh diving into a slam. An elbow gets two for Kurrigan and it's off to Golga. One of the clowns gets up on the apron while Golga is setting for the Earthquake and is knocked to the floor. As Golga checks on him, the clown turns on the Oddities and sprays paint in his eyes, giving Most a rollup pin. This was an angle instead of a match.

All of the Oddities get painted and Luna gets her hair cut.

We recap Kane going on his path of insanity over Taker dumping him. Was there a point to the segments with him walking around last week?

Steve Blackman vs. Blue Blazer

Blazer clotheslines him on the top rope to start but Blackman chops him down. We head to the floor for nothing of note followed by a spinwheel kick from Blackman back inside. The Blazer hooks Owen Hart's Dragon Sleeper but Blackman makes the rope. The Sharpshooter goes on but another rope is grabbed. Steve hits a shoulder and the bicycle kick for the pin out of nowhere. JR says that was dominance by Blackman, which makes me think poorly of the Oklahoma school system.

Blackman goes for the mask but Owen Hart comes out for the save.

We get a clip of Austin blacking out after a match in San Jose yesterday as part of the aftermath of a concussion. This was back when angles happened at house shows as opposed to Johnny Ace fighting on them two months after he was fired on PPV.

Edge/Gangrel vs. D'Lo Brown/Mark Henry

Edge and D'Lo start us off. My goodness does Edge look young here. A rana and dropkick take Edge down and it's off to Gangrel. The Brood double

teams Brown, including a double DDT out of the corner. Henry gets thrown around as well and it's back to Brown vs. Edge. A kick to the face takes Edge down and it's off to Henry. The move that we would call the World's Strongest Slam gets two and it's back to Brown for something close to a Liger Bomb for no cover.

The former Nation guys tag again and Henry hits a tilt-a-whirl slam for no cover again. Brown comes back in and gets cross bodied down for two. Given the chest protector D'Lo has, that probably shouldn't have hurt. Henry slams Edge down but Brown's somersault legdrop misses. I thought he was using the Low Down by this point. Hot tag brings in Gangrel who does a pretty boring job of cleaning house. Everything breaks down and Edge dives onto D'Lo on the floor. Here's Chyna for a distraction, allowing Gangrel to roll Henry up for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was fine from a technical standpoint but no one really cared about the Brood yet. Once Edge and Christian hooked up and Gangrel was pushed to the side, the team got a lot better in a hurry. This was more about Henry and Chyna, which wound up being one of those wacky Attitude Era angles.

Chyna says she's go on a date with Henry.

Austin is in the hospital in a t-shirt and is told he has a bad concussion. He needs a few weeks off which ticks him off. Austin takes his medicine which apparently will make him sleepy. That sounds like a plot point. JR: "How do you feel Steve?" Austin: "Like I got hit in the head with a shovel!"

Goldust vs. Marc Mero

Jackie cost Mero a match last night on Heat and was promptly fired, thank goodness. Mero jumps Goldie to start but gets clotheslined down for his efforts. A charge misses and Mero pounds away with the punches. Here's Terri in a rather revealing outfit, especially for an allegedly pregnant chick. A clothesline gets two for Goldust as the fans tell her to take it off. Here's Jackie as well and I think I know where this is going. The guys trade rollups for two and the bulldog gets another two for Goldust. He loads up Shattered Dreams but Terri distracts him so Jackie can hit

him low. Terri kicks Mero low and the match is thrown out.

Rating: D. And now we have PMS. This would be the female stable known as Pretty Mean Sisters and basically they would just be annoying for months on end. It resulted in them having a male sex slave in the form of Shawn Stasiak and it just didn't work at all, namely due to Jackie.

A nurse gets Austin's autograph while he rants about the Buried Alive match with Taker.

Hardcore Title: Mankind vs. Ken Shamrock vs. Big Boss Man

Mankind is defending here and both challengers are in the Corporation. The challengers surround him and the double beating begins. Mankind finally comes back with some clotheslines and they head up the ramp. Jerry says he thinks he saw a hearse coming up the hospital Austin is in. Mankind takes out both guys and suplexes Shamrock on the ramp. Boss Man gets in a shot and we head back to the ring.

The McMahons come out on stage to gloat about Mankind getting destroyed and the fans all start paying attention to them. Shamrock hits Mankind in the ribs with the nightstick and Mankind is in big trouble. The champ (as in the Hardcore Champion, not the IC version) finds a broom of all things under the ring and blasts both guys in the ribs with it to take over. Mankind pounds on Shamrock but Boss Man blasts him in the head with an electric fan and a Coke to take over again.

They head back inside and Boss Man accidentally blasts Shamrock with a chair. Mankind DDTs Boss Man on the chair but can't cover. The champ sends Shamrock to the floor and hooks the Mandible Claw but Boss Man makes the save. Back inside the Claw is put on Boss Man but Shamrock saves again. The ankle lock goes on Mankind but Al Snow and the JOB Squad comes in and blasts Shamrock with Head to give Mankind the pin to retain.

Rating: C. They were still getting the idea of the Hardcore Title down at this point because it was initially meant as just a joke. Mankind was getting more and more popular every week until they finally pulled the trigger on him in January. This was a decent match although I don't think the JOB Squad was mentioned on Raw up to this point so the ending was

confusing.

Taker jumps Austin in the hospital room and chokes him out. Taker and Bearer drag him out.

Light Heavyweight Title: Christian vs. Duane Gill

Gill is a joke character who was brought in as a joke big deal against Mankind at Survivor Series. Christian hits the reverse DDT for two to start and Gill misses a splash in the corner. Gill is thrown to the floor for a stomping from the Brood. Here's the JOB Squad again to jump the Brood, giving Scorpio a chance to run in and attack Christian, giving Gill the pin and the title. This would grow into something new soon.

Austin is being put in a grave. Taker says Austin is going to be embalmed alive.

Godfather vs. Tiger Ali Singh

Godfather offers Singh the girls but Regal comes out and says don't do it. Godfather gets double teamed until Val Venis comes out for the save. No match.

Shawn and Vince argue a bit in the back.

New Age Outlaws vs. Bob Holly/Scorpio

Road Dogg and Holly start us off and it's time to juke and jive followed by the shaky knee drop for two. Holly comes back with a pumphandle powerslam for two. The titles aren't on the line here. The fans might be chanting ECW. Off to Scorpio and Gunn with Billy clearing the ring and taking over on Scorpio's arm. Roadie comes back in but gets caught by a spinning kick to the face from Scorpio. When all else fails, kick the guy in the face.

Back to Holly who blocks a charge with a boot before Scorpio comes in again. The hot tag (who are the faces in this match?) brings in Billy who cleans house again. A tornado DDT puts Scorpio down, but here's Mankind with a freaking leaf blower to the head of Billy to give Scorpio the pin.

Rating: D+. I don't know what it was but this match wasn't clicking. The Outlaws never quite worked all the well in the ring and the JOB Squad was an odd fit to say the least. Either way, this wasn't a great match and the ending was hard to understand too. Why was Mankind mad at DX? Did I miss something or am I getting forgetful?

Boss Man and Shamrock come out and beat everyone up. Patterson and Brisco come out to recruit the Outlaws.

Taker and Bearer take Austin to a funeral home.

Taker puts Austin on an embalming table and Paul gets ready to do the embalming. Taker mentions Austin disturbing the ministry, which is a new term. They get ready to embalm him and Undertaker starts speaking in tongues. They get the big spike ready when Kane comes in out of nowhere and breaks it up. Austin wakes up and escapes. For the life of me I don't know how to explain this other than it's the Russo era.

WWF World Title: The Rock vs. X-Pac

Shawn comes out and throws out the Outlaws and the Corporation guys. Pac tries to speed things up and hits a flipping clothesline but Rock punches him down and knocks him to the floor. Out to the floor and Pac gets crotched on the post before we hit the chinlock back inside. Vince and Shane pop up on the stage. After too long in the hold, Pac gets up and hits a spin kick to put both guys down. JR is so excited that he calls X-Pac Sean.

The challenger starts his comeback and hits a big spin kick for two. There's the Bronco Buster but Rock ducks another kick and hits a Samoan Drop for two. An X-Factor out of nowhere puts Rock down but the cover is delayed and only gets two. Pac charges into a powerslam for two and Rock gets a chair. Shawn will have none of that, so he (Shawn) hits X-Pac with the chair instead, giving Rock the easy pin (after the Corporate Elbow) and giving us another corrupt Commissioner.

Rating: C. This was more along the lines of a plot advancement moment rather than a match but at least the near falls were good. At the end of the day, we went from one worthless evil Commissioner to a valuable evil

Commissioner, so I guess that's an upgrade. Still though, there wasn't much here and it was there for the ending and that's it.

Overall Rating: D. This is one of those shows where can see the weaknesses of the Attitude Era. First of all, what was the point in having Shawn turn two hours after he takes the job? There's no time to build any suspense or anything at all for him as Commissioner, and at the end of the day he's unnecessary because he's in charge of everyone else while Vince is in charge of Shawn? So what exactly is Shane there for? Sand castle making advice? On top of that you have the Austin vs. Taker stuff which is a feud we just got done with what, two months ago? This wasn't a very good show and it doesn't work well at all.

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