

Monday Night Raw – March 11, 2002: For the Only Time In History, Steve Austin vs. Hulk Hogan

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 11, 2002

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another Twitter request which I'd love to get more of. Anyway the main event tonight is a pretty big match with the NWO vs. Rock/Austin in a handicap match. Other than that....oh this is the go home show for Wrestlemania. That probably has something to do with the request, but it's hard to say what to expect as far as quality. Either they'll be on fire or they'll be going at half speed because of fear of messing up Sunday. Let's get to it.

Rob Van Dam/Hardy Boys vs. Dudley Boys/William Regal

We're combining PPV match here, although the tag teams are in a four way with two other teams. Regal is IC Champion and cost Van Dam the Hardcore Title on Thursday. It's a big brawl to start with Regal vs. Van Dam in the ring. Van Dam gets two almost immediately off Rolling Thunder. The arena is full of smoke so Van Dam and the Hardys have an automatic advantage. D-Von tries to set up a table for no apparent reason but Rob baseball slides it into his face.

Jeff comes in but Regal kicks him in the head to take over. What's Up keeps Jeff down but he hits a Whisper in the Wind to take D-Von down. Hot tag brings in Matt vs. Regal with Matt cleaning house. Everything breaks down and it's a 3D to Jeff, a Twist of Fate to D-Von, a Bubba Bomb to Matt, a top rope kick to Bubba, a spin kick to Regal, and a Five Star to Regal for the pin. The last three were all by the same guy.

Rating: C. Not a terrible match here at all and I'm always a fan of putting two feuds together into one match. This doesn't do much for the tag teams but it makes Van Dam look like a bigger threat to Regal and the title which is the point of this match. Not a great match but the ending was good.

Vince and Flair are at an emergency board meeting in Connecticut. Vince says the company is in a state of emergency due to Flair. He talks about how the company is falling apart because they have no direction. Actually this speech would be better served later in the year but you get the point. Tonight, Vince would like a unanimous vote for full ownership and control of the company.

Here's Angle with something to say. He talks about how he got ripped off in his title match with Jericho due to Kane's interference. Angle calls himself the Big Red White and Blue Machine which makes me chuckle. They have a match at Wrestlemania now and Angle is going to make that whole burning alive thing look like a paper cut. However, Kane isn't the only one to blame for Angle not getting the title shot. It's also the fans' fault for the You Suck chants.

This brings out Booker in defense of the fans which is a surprise. The fans aren't stupid. They're beyond stupid. The fans have cost him his Japanese shampoo commercial and he doesn't even have for Wrestlemania. This brings out Edge who says Booker is stupid (complete with clips of Booker being stupid on the Weakest Link, a trivia show that had a WWF week) and that he'll be his Huckleberry for Wrestlemania. Booker says ok.

Angle says "You dang skippy, crystal clean with no caffeine." Booker glares at him and Edge says Angle is just the Big White Machine. Angle tries a Spinarooni and we've got a tag match set up for later with Edge having a mystery partner. Edge asks for Angle's music to be played so we can all practice our You Sucks.

Stephanie is in the back with HHH's dog Lucy. She rips into the dog which is apparently a spoil of war in the divorce. HHH comes in and takes the dog but Stephanie won't let him leave with the dog. A judge says the dog belongs to her because Stephanie told the judge how HHH mistreated Lucy.

At least until the divorce is over. Did I mention we're six days away from HHH being in the main event of WRESTLE FREAKING MANIA and they're arguing over a dog? HHH throws the dog onto Stephanie and says she does stink, doesn't she Lucy. Stephanie says she'll introduce Lucy to someone that hates dogs worse than she does.

Rikishi vs. Test

Rikishi pounds him down and into the corner to start but Test punches him right back. Rikishi superkicks him down and hits an Earthquake before setting up the Stink Face, only to have Mr. Perfect, the cause for this match somehow, come out and distract Rikishi. Test hits a big boot for the pin. This was nothing.

Jericho comes in to see Stephanie and Lucy and throws Lucy off the couch. Stephanie CAN'T FREAKING ACT. The dog relieves itself on the carpet. Six days until Wrestlemania. I want you to keep that in mind.

And the joke KEEPS GOING as Jericho takes the dog for a walk. Jericho ties her to the door of a limo and leaves her outside.

DDP is at catering when Christian comes up. He's DDP's protege but it's not quite working. DDP gives him a smiling lesson so Billy and Chuck come up and make thinly veiled gay jokes. Christian vs. Billy is made for later.

Back to the board meeting, which is totally cool to have cameras in of course. Vince shows a clip from Smackdown with Flair beating up Undertaker. Flair was arrested but he's at the meeting anyway. I can't remember his name but the cop is from OVW.

Hardcore Title: Goldust vs. Al Snow

Goldie is defending. There are weapons in the ring to start so they fight on the floor to get things going. The champ loads up Shattered Dreams but Snow gets out of the way. There's a fire extinguisher shot and the Snowplow gives Snow the title in like a minute.

Jericho tries to find air freshener for Stephanie and is going to an all night store to get some. It's like 9:45 and they need an all night store?

The limo backs up and apparently it hit Lucy.

Back with MORE DOG STUFF! HHH finds out what happened and Lucy is still alive. Help is requested. I'm terrified to think of what the payoff of this is going to be tonight.

Booker T/Kurt Angle vs. Edge/???

The mystery partner is...Big Show. I know Kane isn't here tonight, but WHY isn't Kane here tonight? I don't think we've ever been given a reason for that. Booker and Show start with Booker hammering away to no avail. Angle comes in and gets thrown around as well and chopped in the corner. Apparently Kane has a concussion. See, that wasn't so hard. A quick ankle lock is countered by pure power. Both heels are sent to the floor and Edge plays the Jimmy Snuka to Show's Andre and dives onto both of them on the floor.

Back in and Angle charges into a Canadian boot but Angle Germans Edge down to take over. Booker comes in but gets kicked down as well and it's off to Big Show. Off to Show vs. Angle and another kick to the face takes Angle down. A double chokeslam is countered so Show suplexes both of them instead. Everything breaks down and Booker kicks Show in the face as he's trying the chokeslam on Kurt. Edge spears Booker down but it's an Angle Slam and ankle lock for the tap out from Big Show.

Rating: C. Well it's not like Big Show had anything to do on Sunday anyway so him doing the job is the only possible answer. Not a great match or anything but again it does some work for two matches which is a great idea coming into Sunday. Edge vs. Angle would get started later this year and it would launch Edge WAY up the ladder.

Stephanie freaks out about Lucy but Jericho has a plan.

Torrie, Jackie and Terri are in swimsuits at WWF New York to promote a Divas special. THANK GOODNESS Jackie is blocked out by a guy's head.

Billy vs. Christian

DDP jumps in on commentary. Billy pounds Christian down in the corner to start and hits a Jackhammer for no cover. Fameasser is avoided and

Christian has a tantrum on the floor. Page goes over to calm him down but it lets Chuck clothesline Christian down. Billy hits the Fameasser on Christian but Page Diamond Cuts Billy to give Christian the cheap win.

Christian turns on Page post match and we've got a European Title (Page is champion) match on Sunday.

Back to the board meeting and Vince gives a big corporate speech about how Flair is an embarrassment to the company. This is MR. MCMAHON giving this speech. Keep in mind, Flair is fighting Undertaker on Sunday, not Vince. The Board is going to go talk and then vote on either Flair or Vince.

Lita/Trish Stratus vs. Jazz/Stacy Keibler

I always loved how Lita looked in those tied off Wrestlemania baseball jerseys. Trish is just starting to get good and she has her signature look down now. Trish gets jumped and double teamed to start but let's talk about Lucy! She has a broken leg apparently but HHH is on his way back. Jazz and Lita start things off with Jazz (the Women's Champion) hitting a double chickenwing on Lita.

Off to Stacy for a corner leg choke but Lita realizes that she's fighting Stacy freaking Keibler and slams her down. Off to Trish as everything breaks down. Jazz takes a double flapjack but Trish accidentally kicks Lita, giving Jazz a quick rollup win. Trish, Jazz and Lita would have a triple threat on Sunday for the title and for the life of me I have no idea why Trish didn't win the title there but rather a month or so later.

HHH is back and he's in ANGRY mode. He's looking for Stephanie but Steph is coming to the ring. She swears it was an accident and here's HHH. Stephanie runs but HHH drags her back to the ring. The only good thing about this: Stephanie tries to crawl away but HHH grabs her by the pants, giving us a great uncensored view.

HHH loads up a Pedigree but Jericho runs in and hits him in the repaired thigh with a sledgehammer twice. HHH thinks it's torn again. The Game is taken to the back and Jericho takes the leg out again. See here's the thing: why did we need the Lucy stuff? Take that away and do this angle

and it's THE SAME EXACT THING.

JR and Jerry debate if this was a setup or not. IS EVERYONE THIS FREAKING STUPID???

Back to the board meeting because we haven't been dumbed down enough tonight. Flair says he's going to have his match on Sunday no matter what, so Vince gets a full vote of confidence, giving him full power back....until Wrestlemania, after which the board can review the decision. Flair thanks the board for meeting tonight (despite the video saying this was earlier today) and talks about his match on Sunday. You have to remember that Flair and Vince hadn't had any issues since February and it's been Flair vs. Taker for the last month or so, making this even more ridiculous.

Hogan is fired up for tonight and for Wrestlemania and getting to face Rock. The NWO promises history tonight.

New World Order vs. Steve Austin/The Rock

This is the first time the NWO has ever competed together in the WWF. Rock and Hall start things off but a Hogan distraction lets Hall take over. This is a handicap match if that didn't come through. Rock comes back and Hogan bails from the apron in fear. A clothesline gets two for Hall and it's off to Nash. Rock pounds away but a sidewalk slam gets two for Nash. Snake Eyes puts Rock down and it's off to Hogan.

Hogan pounds on Rock a bit and suplexes him down before Hall and Nash work Rock over a bit. There's the hot tag to Austin who cleans house. Nash somehow botches a Thesz Press from Austin so Austin hits a spinebuster on Hall instead. Nash can't even hit Austin in the head right so Austin clotheslines the Outsiders down. A big boot, the only move even Nash can't screw up, takes Austin down and it's back to Hall.

The fallaway slam gets two for Scott and it's back to Nash. Kevin pounds on Austin in the corner and it's back to Hall. A clothesline puts Austin down for two and now for the only time that I can EVER remember, it's Hogan vs. Austin. Hogan pounds away with some punches and a chokeslam before tagging out to Hall. It only lasts 25 seconds, but that actually

felt special. Hall chokeslams Austin down but the Razor's Edge is broken up by a backdrop.

Austin's comeback is stopped AGAIN by a clothesline but he takes Hall right back down. Hot tag brings in Rock vs. Nash and Rock cleans house...for about 20 seconds before Nash takes him down again. This feels like WCW all over again. Off to Hogan to clean up the Rock scraps, but Rock nips up to terrify Hulk. Nash of course stops the momentum and everything breaks down. In a REALLY anti-climactic ending, Hogan punches Rock, hits the boot and legdrop and gets the pin.

Rating: D+. Huge historical moment aside, this was a really odd match. It was basically a squash with the NWO never really breaking a sweat against two of the biggest stars of all time. Nash looked like he had never been in a ring before and the whole thing looked awful. Then again, this had Steve Austin vs. Hulk Hogan in a legal match so it gets an automatic pass.

The NWO cleans house to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was AWFUL. Between the two WAY too long stories that went nowhere, the matches sucked and it felt like they threw Wrestlemania together six days before the show. Austin vs. Hall, pretty much the third biggest match on the show, wasn't mentioned until the last fifteen seconds. On top of that, Jericho is a total afterthought to both Stephanie and A FREAKING DOG. He's the Undisputed WWF Champion heading into the main event of Wrestlemania and he's playing third fiddle to a wife and a dog. Absolutely horrible show and one of the worst go home shows I have ever seen.

Here's Wrestlemania if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/25/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-18-should-have-been-hogan-vs-austin/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews