

On This Day: February 7, 2005 – Monday Night Raw: Now This Is Puro I Could Get Into

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 7, 2005

Location: Super Arena, Saitama, Japan

Attendance: 16,657

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Yes, we're actually in Japan for this. I was going to do Great American Bash 2000 but that turns out to be kind of hard to find so while I'm downloading it you get this requested show. I barely remember 2005 WWE to be honest but we're approaching Mania 21 which wasn't too bad. Cena and Batista would be on the rise at this point so there's Big Dave to look forward to. Let's get to it.

Union Underground brings us into this. I love that song.

Obviously this isn't live but it was taped on Friday before the show.

This is listed from Tokyo so I'll assume it's a suburb or something.

Here's Bischoff who is GM at the moment. He has a translator and the fans aren't thrilled with him in the slightest. The translation is booed far louder than the English. Yes, the English that they didn't understand at all is booed out of the building. HBK vs. Flair tonight so that'll be good. Also Edge vs. HHH for the world title. But for an opener, here's Jericho vs. Benoit in a submission match.

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Yeah this works. No idea if there's a story here but does it

really matter? Apparently they had a tag title shot last week but lost and argued post match. They lock up and go to the floor with it as this is very intense right off the bat. They keep ramming heads together for a hard staredown and lock up again. Benoit works on the arm but Jericho grabs a Walls attempt which fails. Sharpshooter attempt has the same result and it's a standoff.

Springboard dropkick by Jericho isn't launched and they fight on the bottom rope but both crash to the floor as we take a break. Back with Benoit running over Jericho and adding a snap suplex. Jericho is bleeding from below the eye. Rolling Germans by the Canadian in Japan to the American (Jericho was born in New York remember) but Jericho busts out the Octopus of all things.

More Rolling Germans are countered into a half crab as Benoit is in trouble. Benoit gets the rope and tries the suplexes again but Jericho fights him off. Benoit is like oh son you done made me mad and BLASTS him in the back a few times and hits the Germans to set up the swan dive to the back. He dives in for a Crossface but Jericho escapes and takes him down with a clothesline. Lionsault misses but Jericho intentionally misses and grabs the Walls.

Benoit gets a shot in to block that but it's a slingshot into the corner. Benoit fights out of that and there's the Crossface but it's more of a chinlock than the regular grip. Still not enough to end it though as the other Chris manages to get to the rope so we're not done yet. Walls don't work because of the arm and Benoit kicking him in the face and there's the Crossface again, still with the chinlock but a lot more torque, this time enough for the tap.

Rating: B. Oh come on it's Benoit vs. Jericho on a stage where they intentionally want to look awesome. What were you expecting them to do? Sleepwalk through it? Naturally very good match between these two as they wrestled each other so

much that they could have a great match in their sleep, which always makes their great ones more impressive. Great opener to keep the crowd how.

The Divas are having a fashion show later.

Clips of the plane ride which must have taken forever.

Flair and HHH are getting ready and Flair says he's awesome. Batista gets...Maven later. Oh joy. The first Raw from this year I've watched in a long time and I get Big Dave vs. Maven. HHH is worried about what Batista is going to do as far as Mania goes. Flair talks some sense into him as HHH is going to talk him into going to Smackdown so Evolution will have both titles.

Christian is giving an interview as to how he got the name Captain Charisma when they run into Stacy. The interviewer wants to talk to Orton and Christian isn't that happy with it. Christian makes fun of him which is amusing since they're feuding now. Christian is rather amusing here. He challenges Orton for later and Tomko is skeptical. Tomko shouldn't worry though because the match is with Tomko, not Christian.

Ad for Wrestlemania, in this case HHH as Braveheart. I loved this campaign. Flair WOOing at a donkey is funny.

Maven vs. Batista

Maven is a cocky heel at this point and doesn't get an entrance. What do you think is going to happen here? He's mad he wasn't in the Rumble and calls conspiracy. Cue Big Dave and this is exactly what you would expect. The run time is 32 seconds if you're curious. These fans are losing their minds over a total squash. He really needs I Walk Alone which he would get soon after winning the title.

Big Show pops up on the screen and says he's not worried about facing Batista at Mania. No real point to this as apparently

it's a running theme.

Batista yells at Bischoff in the back about it. He's getting tired of Smackdown talking about him so Bischoff gives him a sales pitch about staying on Raw. The fans pop at the mention of Batista vs. HHH.

Raw Tag Titles: William Regal/Tajiri vs. La Resistance

Gee I wonder what's going to happen here. Conway and Grenier here. The place ERUPTS for Tajiri who is all fired up here. Regal and Eugene were champions but Eugene is injured so Regal picked Tajiri as his new partner. Massive Tajiri chant starts up so Regal starts off with Conway. Regal Stretch goes on but it's off to Tajiri who adds the low dropkick as the offense is on.

Regal plays Ricky Morton for a bit here despite getting some shots in to try to break the momentum. The fans chant something but it's in Japanese. Grenier punches Tajiri so when Regal takes him down there's no one to tag. STF is broken up quickly and there's the hot tag to Tajiri who cleans house. Let the kicks begin! Enziguri hits Grenier for two as everything breaks down. Double handspring elbow takes out the French dudes and it's Tarantula time. Regal takes Conway down and there's the Green Mist and a Buzzsaw kick gives us new champions.

Rating: C+. The match totally doesn't matter and is rated too high, but this is about giving the fans something to erupt for and that's exactly what they did here. Tajiri and Regal would hold the belts about three months so this wasn't just a fluke title reign. No problem at all with this and while it's not great or anything, it was perfectly done as it made Tajiri look like a star.

Regal and Tajiri go into the crowd to celebrate.

We go over the HOF class for 2005 which was the second year

that this was revived. Going in this year are Orndorff, Iron Sheik, Nikolai Volkoff, Bob Orton Jr. and Jimmy Hart. They say others will be named, which would include Piper and Hogan.

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Can't say they're not giving them a big card tonight. Pretty much just a showcase match. Shawn's pop is bigger. Flair elbows Shawn on a break in the corner to take over. They hit the floor and Shawn chops away. Backdrop has Flair moaning in agony. Back in and Flair begs off which gets a big reaction for some reason. They slug it out some more and it's Flair Flop time. Shawn actually gets two off that and it's time to work on the knee. Basic leg work follows and Flair loads up the Figure Four.

Shawn fights it for a bit and then reverses as this is about as basic of a match between these two as you could ask for. It's fine and all but they're going through the motions here. Rollup gets two for Shawn and the knee gives out again. Small package gets two as does a backslide. There's an enziguri by Shawn and you know what's next. Nip up but Flair tries to go up. Even the Japanese fans know that joke. Backdrop sets up the elbow which sets up Sweet Chin Music (with questionable selling by Shawn) for the clean pin. You can tell they weren't going with much if it's a clean pin like that.

Rating: C. It's Flair vs. Michaels so it's going to be solid at least. Very weak match from these two but the point was to allow the fans to see a pair of legends go out there and do their thing for an historic match. That's what they did here and there's really no reason to complain about it. Not exactly Mania 24, but still fine for what it was.

Time for an All-American Diva Fashion Show. Lawler of course hosts and I'm a bit surprised by this getting a big pop. Up first is Maria who is dressed as a western chick apparently. Victoria is a biker, meaning more or less a bikini and a

leather jacket. Christy represents the beaches and is just in a bikini. Not complaining but is there a point to this?

Ah here it is as Simon Dean comes out to protest. He wants to use the time to pitch his Simon System of products to an international audience. An American sumo wrestler protests the jokes and then sits down. Simon says the girls are all fat and I think we can see where this is going rather quickly. Jerry defends the Divas and Simon busts out the Burger King line. The girls beat him up anyway and Lawler gets a group hug.

Evolution has a meeting where HHH tries to convince Dave to go to Smackdown. Dave says he'll think about it and Flair/HHH aren't thrilled with that idea but go along with it anyway. They have to focus Edge tonight though so they go to get ready for it.

Edge says he's ready but is tired of being overlooked because of Evolution all the time. He's a heel here but not a very good one yet.

Another video about the fans loving WWE. I'll give them this: Japanese fans are passionate about their wrestling at a level American fans have never hoped of approaching.

Randy Orton vs. Tyson Tomko

Orton is still a face at this point but his heel turn to fight Undertake at Mania was coming incredibly soon. Orton doesn't look like he had ringside seats to a nuclear explosion here and you can actually see his arms. Basic stuff to start until Christian drags Stacy, Orton's current kind-of-girlfriend, down the aisle. Orton is also suffering from a concussion from the Rumble which was 8 days ago.

The distraction from Stacy being dragged out there allows Tomko to start hammering away. He pounds on Orton's head as they're playing up the head injury here. It's not a bad one where he's going insane or anything, but if it did that would

explain a lot about his character from a few years ago. Orton fights back with the backbreaker but he's stumbling a bit. He wants the RKO but gets dizzy when trying it. He settles for a rollup instead, which is a good ending since he got his concussion trying the RKO on HHH.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match here and there's nothing wrong with that. They had to protect Orton's head for the storyline so the ending was a good way of going about doing that. This was really just to advance Christian vs. Orton and again that's just fine. Not a bad match or anything but pretty unremarkable.

Christian gives Orton the Unprettier (Killswitch) post match.

Orton was taken out during the break.

We recap the rest of the show so far, namely the title change.

Raw World Title: Edge vs. HHH

Edge tried to spear Shawn last week but speared the Game instead so there's actually a point to this. They trade some technical stuff to start and it's a standoff. We actually get a pinfall reversal sequence into a backslide which gets a LOUD gasp. HHH is showing off athleticism here which is rather shocking but if he can do it rock on dude. Edge's shoulder goes into the post and then does it again.

Make it three times as who says HHH isn't repetitive? We take a break and come back with Edge hitting a backbreaker for two. During the break HHH got sent up and over the corner and hurt his back so Edge hit a suplex on top of that. Facebuster stops Edge's mini-comeback for two. Edge manages to get a missile dropkick for two. He gets a bit going but walks into a spinebuster.

Pedigree doesn't work as the fans are definitely staying with this. Edge sets for the spear but remember he has a bad

shoulder. Not that it matters as HHH gets a knee in for a close two also. Edgecator (kneeling Sharpshooter) goes on and HHH is in trouble. Rather back and forth match here. There's a rope though as Flair plays cheerleader. Edge tries the hold again but HHH kicks him off.

Out of nowhere Edge misses the spear, taking out the referee. Neckbreaker puts HHH down but there's no referee. Cue Flair with a chair but he gets speared also. Edge misses a chair shot to HHH and a suplex takes both guys down. They both crawl for the chair but Batista comes down and pulls it out of the ring, which HHH isn't pleased with. HHH knocks Edge into Batista with unclear motives and a Pedigree is countered into the Edgecution. Edge wants the spear again but Batista kills him with a spinebuster. Pedigree finally ends this.

Rating: B-. This was pretty good actually as they had time and it advanced the story with Batista and HHH. I don't think anyone thought the title was changing but at times having a guy like Edge go out there and have a long title match with the champion is a good thing. It spawned a PPV series called In Your House so it's not that much of a stretch. Pretty good main event.

Batista and HHH celebrate but Batista looks at the title and HHH sees him so a staredown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very good show overall with a white hot crowd all night. Very interesting that for their own product they're silent most of the time yet here they were barely quiet all night. Anyway this was an awesome show as they had a spectacle in Flair vs. Shawn, a good main event and a title change, plus Benoit vs. Jericho. I had a good time with this show and it goes to show you what they can do when they let good wrestlers have time. Shame that didn't happen often in 2005.

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