

Monday Night Raw – January 21, 2002: Is It Really Nostalgia If It's Only Three Years Old?

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 21, 2002

Location: BI-LO Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Attendance: 9,420

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're done with the Rumble now and the road is pointing to HHH vs. Chris Jericho at the Rumble. Other than that...there's not much going on here. Basically it's all about HHH for the next seven or eight weeks, but now we need to bring in Stephanie as well because what would Monday Night Raw be without her? Let's get to it.

We open with the Martin Luther King Day video. What is Vince's obsession with that holiday? Not that I'm complaining but he never misses that thing.

We recap the winners of the Rumbles over the years before getting to HHH's win last night.

Rob Van Dam/Tazz/Spike Dudley vs. Booker T/Dudley Boys

Booker eliminated RVD last night to set this up. Spike is in a neck brace. Booker and RVD start things off by trading some forearms. Booker takes him down but stupidly tries to get into a kicking battle with Rob freaking Van Dam. Why in the world would you think that was a good idea? A dropkick and standing moonsault get two for Rob and it's off to Tazz. Some Dudley interference lets Booker take over before it's off to D-Von.

The jumping back elbow puts Tazz down and there's a tag to Bubba who knocks Spike off the apron. There's the ax kick from Booker but instead of the Spinarooni it's back to D-Von for more pounding in the corner. A legdrop gets two on Tazz and D-Von throws him to the floor. After some cheating by Bubba we head back inside where Tazz hits a quick suplex on D-Von to put both guys down.

The hot tag brings in RVD and let the rolls and flips begin. Rob cleans house but gets caught in the reverse 3D for two. Everything breaks down and everyone hits something, including a 3D to Tazz. As Bubba is getting up though, Van Dam hits him with the Five Star for the surprise pin.

Rating: C. This was a nice little tag match and the surprise ending made it that much better. I'm still a big fan of combining feuds like this as it allows them to save time while giving us some fresh matchups at the same time. This lets both feuds continue as a combination of both were involved in the fall. Decent stuff here.

It's Jericho time as he gets to gloat over keeping the title last night over the Rock. Jericho talks about how everyone knew Rock was going to win but he shocked the world. This is the kind of promo that Punk could have had after this year's Rumble but they went with the logical booking instead, which was probably the right move. Jericho demands respect and appreciation for his accomplishments, which are indeed pretty awesome. He wants a standing ovation but here's HHH instead.

The Game gives Jericho some applause and says Jericho has never beaten HHH. He talks about going to Wrestlemania to face Jericho, assuming Jericho keeps the title. In two months, Jericho has to be larger than life, because that's what it's going to take to face HHH at Wrestlemania. At Wrestlemania, it will be time for Jericho to play the Game.

This brings out Kurt Angle for his second interruption of HHH in three weeks. He yells at HHH for jumping him from behind to eliminate him in the Rumble last night. The brawl is on but Jericho hits HHH with the belt

to stop it short. Jericho puts him in the Walls but Rock comes out to make the save.

Intercontinental Title: Edge vs. William Regal

Regal won the title last night with the aide of brass knuckles. Edge jumps him on the floor while the referee looks everywhere for the brass knucks. Regal is sent over the barricade and suplexed right back to ringside as Edge is on fire early on. There's the bell as Edge comes in with a missile dropkick for two. A belly to back suplex gets two more and Regal bails to the outside.

They head to the floor for a bit and the champion sends him shoulder first into the post to take over. Regal fires off some knees tot he shoulder like a good villain before hooking a chinlock. That goes nowhere so the Canadian fights up and hits a cross body and a spinwheel kick to drop Willy. The Edge-0-Matic gets two so Edge goes up, allowing Regal to pull out the knuckles. Edge knocks them away though and decks Regal with the for...two as Patrick sees the knuckles and calls for the DQ.

Rating: C-. This wasn't awful but it didn't do much for me. Regal was only a short term champion anyway as he would lose the belt at Mania in the opening match. Edge would of course have the logical feud from here: fighting Booker T over a Japanese shampoo commercial. Don't you see the connection?

Edge beats up some referees post match.

Post break Edge is taken out of the arena.

Kane and Big Show talk for a bit about Kane eliminating him from the Rumble last night. Show leaves and Billy and Chuck come in (instead of out). They offer Kane a spot on the team complete with his own headband. A two on one beatdown ensues when he says no. Ok then.

Mr. Perfect and Debra chat about Austin. This also goes nowhere.

Here's Flair to liven things up a bit. He says we're in Flair Country tonight and thanks the fans for supporting him for 25 years. In that time he left his family behind because he was blinded by ambition to be the best. The only thing he knew about his children was that he was there when they were born. He couldn't be at their ball games or recitals because he had to be wrestling around the world. Flair doesn't regret a bit of it because the fans became his family. Lawler: "Good to see he's got his priorities in order."

In recent years though, Flair has wanted to become a better father who his kids can look up to. That's why when Vince started to screw with him and his family, Flair had to change his catchphrase to "to be the man, you've got to beat Vince McMahon." Last night, Vince took a camera from Flair's kids' hands and took pictures of Flair's bloody face. Then Flair's daughter got the camera back and took a shot of Vince's bloody face. We see the picture and WOW Vince's eyes looked insane.

Anyway here's a bandaged Vince to stare down Ric. Flair takes his jacket off but Vince leaves his on. He says people think he lost at the Rumble, but apparently Flair lost too. Vince says that after last night, Flair is going to do something bad. Something so bad that even Vince might regret it. Flair is going to see what it is and that's it. That announcement would come on Smackdown.

Val Venis vs. Mr. Perfect

Both guys returned at the Rumble last night. Val does the Rick Rude thing, although instead of getting a kiss, she gets to remove his towel. He doesn't even want to know her name so they don't get too attached. Val kisses her anyway. Perfect takes him into the corner for some hard chops but Val comes back with some knees to the ribs. A clothesline puts Val down...and here's Austin. He BLASTS Perfect in the head with a chair, presumably for something from the Rumble last night. The match is thrown

out.

Val gets in Austin's face and gets the Stunner he deserves. Austin has a story for us tonight: it's about a man named Jed, a poor mountaineer who barely kept his family fed. Austin goes through the entire theme song (get some culture if you don't know what I'm talking about) but says that's not the story he's here to tell us. Instead he wants to talk about Steve Austin going to the Royal Rumble.

He ate a bunch of Mexican food and drank a lot of alcohol but last night he was hoodwinked, bamboozled and flabbergasted by two guys from behind. He's entering the 2003 Royal Rumble right now and is going to Wrestlemania this year to beat someone up. Austin gets into nearly a sermon, talking about how he's going to bloody and torture someone at Wrestlemania. The direction for this seemed to be "Austin, go fill up five minutes because we have no idea what to do tonight."

Big Show/Kane vs. Billy and Chuck

Big Show is a surprise partner and the brawl starts on the ramp. Kane gets Billy in the ring and launches fire from the posts. Chuck gets kicked in the face and it's off to Big Show as he and Chuck are legal. Billy is pulled in as well as Show is beating up everything in sight. Kane goes up top but Show accidentally knocks him to the floor. Chuck takes Big Show's leg out and the Fameasser is enough for the pin. Next.

HHH yells at Rock for saving him earlier, which makes Rock ask a very good question: why is HHH so mad all the time when he's going to Wrestlemania? Rock recommends some ice cream and a ham and cheese sammich. Oh and he wasn't saving HHH earlier. It was just a preview for Angle and Jericho.

We get a clip of Maven eliminating Undertaker in a legit shocking moment last night.

The APA is at WWF New York.

The newly legit Godfather is here, now owning an escort service instead of being a pimp. He says he's in the Yellow Pages now and this needs to end already. It's time to dance but here's Lance Storm to complain. Storm: "This business is as legitimate as a three legged donkey...which is illegitimate as a donkey of course has four legs." Storm tries to clear out the ring but Godfather hits the running splash in the corner to dispatch the Canadian.

Goldust says there's a star that burns brighter than he does and Goldie is coming for him.

Stephanie yells at HHH for being Rock's partner tonight. She tells him to go beat up Rock but HHH tells her everything doesn't revolve around her. He finally tells her to shut up and walks out.

The Rock/HHH vs. Kurt Angle/Chris Jericho

Rock and Angle start things off but it's quickly off to Jericho as the villains take over. Jericho shoulders him down but Rock nips up and hits a spear of all things to put the Canadian down. Off to HHH as the beating continues. Chris is slammed off the top and HHH hooks a running choke to keep the pressure on. Back to Rock for a release belly to belly suplex and a spinebuster to set up the Elbow, but Angle low bridges him to the floor.

Rock gets to play Ricky Morton for a bit as Jericho drops a bunch of elbows for two. Back to Angle who gets punched in the face and put in the Sharpshooter, only for Jericho to quickly break it up. A DDT puts Chris down and there's the double tag to bring in HHH and Angle. The Game beats up both evildoers and catapults Jericho out to the floor. Angle gets speared as well and Jericho gets crotched.

There's the Pedigree for Angle but Jericho dives off the top for the save. It's off to Rock vs. Jericho with the champion getting punched over and over. Jericho is knocked to the floor and grabs the bell but hits his own partner before walking into the Rock Bottom to end things. Nice job of making the champion look strong going into Mania.

Rating: C. The match was a standard main event tag match which means it was just ok at best. Jericho getting pinned makes me roll my eyes more than anything else, but it's not like HHH wasn't clearly winning the title the second his return date was announced. The match was just ok but star power helped it a lot.

Overall Rating: C-. This show was more disappointing than anything else. The problem here was mainly the Attitude Era guys being brought back in but only being warmed over imitations of what they used to be. In 2002, I don't care about Val Venis or Godfather or Goldust. On top of that, we're coming up on the most obvious main event of Wrestlemania since 1998, but that's going to be overshadowed by what's coming on Smackdown. Not that it's a good thing mind you, but it's big.

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