

On This Day: March 6, 2000 – Monday Night Raw: Is Russo Still In Charge?

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 6, 2000

Location: Springfield Civic Center, Springfield, Massachusetts

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another On This Day as we approach Wrestlemania. I did the show before this and you can check that out in the On This Day section for February 27. Anyway the main story is that Rock wants to be in the main event of Wrestlemania but Shane screwed him out of his chance last week. Wrestlemania is in less than a month so Rock has to hurry to get there on time. Let's get to it.

We open with what else but a recap of the battle of the McMahon siblings. On Smackdown it was Rock/Rikishi vs. Big Show/HHH but Show accidentally hit HHH with a chair, allowing Rock to pin the world champion. Shane and Stephanie started arguing post match but HHH saved his wife from any potential danger.

Here are Shane and Big Show to open things up. Shane shows us a clip of Show hitting HHH, asking us to figure out if it was an accident or not. Shane seems to think it's accidental but HHH shoving him down certainly wasn't an accident. Shane goes on a rant about how HHH made it personal by running Vince off and turning his sister into a cheap sl**. McMahon makes HHH vs. Rikishi in a Wrestlemania warm up match, but that brings out the Game himself along with his wife.

HHH says that he and Shane are brothers so they need to get along. He has to pause for a SL** chant at Stephanie before talking about how Wrestlemania is the Biggest Show of the year. At Wrestlemania, HHH is going to prove that Big Show isn't in his league. Stephanie, in her eternally high pitched voice, makes Kane vs. Big Show to open the show. As for the mean comment, Stephanie slaps the tar out of Shane. Well that

sums it up well enough I guess.

Earlier today the Mean Street Posse delivered room service to Crash Holly and brought referee Tim White with him. A Hardcore Title broke out in the hotel room but the Posse couldn't pin Crash down on a bed against his will and take something from him. The Posse hit each other with lamps by mistake, allowing Crash to escape.

Kane vs. Big Show

It's a brawl to start with Kane winning a brief slugout before hitting an enziguri to stagger Big Show. Shane low bridges Kane but the masked man lands on his feet of course. The distraction lets Show send Kane HARD into the steps though as HHH is watching in the back. Back in and Show pounds away in the corner but Kane comes back with an uppercut. HHH and Stephanie are still watching. A side slam puts Kane down but Show misses an elbow drop. Kane hits a DDT to drop Show and there's the top rope clothesline for no cover. They both load up chokeslams but here's Rock for a Rock Bottom on Big Show for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This wasn't bad but again the right move was to keep things moving fast. Big Show and Kane just do not work well together and they never have. The match was there for Rock to run in though and that Rock Bottom looked good. Rock always has had surprising strength. Decent enough all things considered.

Kane chokeslams Show post match.

Mae Young insists that she's coming out with Henry tonight despite having a hand last week.

The APA do a Pulp Fiction driving scene parody to establish that they're open for business now. Why? "Because we need beer money."

Mark Henry vs. D-Von Dudley

D-Von charges in but gets beaten down by Henry for his efforts. Mae and Bubba get on the apron as D-Von takes over, only to have Mark pull Bubba in. There's a Bronco Buster to Bubba and a powerslam for D-Von for the pin. Short and seemingly worthless.

Post match the Dudleys hit a good looking 3D on Henry before looking at Mae. In a scene that would get them thrown off TV in a heartbeat today, Mae is powerbombed off the middle rope through a table. Bubba's trance is still cool looking.

Road Dogg/X-Pac vs. Too Cool

Scotty and Pac get things going and the fans think X-Pac sucks. Scotty is flipped around and winds up dancing as a result. Off to Grandmaster for more dancing followed by a hip toss to send Pac to the floor. Roadie comes in and is sent down as well before Sexay hits a middle rope dropkick for two. Too Cool hits a double elbow on Roadie but he pops back up and throws Scotty to the floor.

X-Pac sends him into the steps and there's a spin kick to take Scotty down again. Back in and Hotty rams DX's heads together before it's back to Grandmaster. Everything breaks down and Grandmaster hits what we would call the Skull Crushing Finale on Road Dogg to set up the Worm. A flapjack puts X-Pac down but Tori crotches Sexay to break up the Hip Hop Drop. Not that it matters though as here's Kane for a piece of X-Pac and the DQ.

Rating: C. Better match than I was expecting here as Too Cool was on one heck of a roll at this point. The tag division was showing signs of actually being alive at this point as there were several decent to good teams running around. The division got hot as a result, but it reached unthinkable heights with the advent of triple ladder matches with tables and chairs on the side.

Post match Kane beats up Roadie as well.

Intercontinental Title: Kurt Angle vs. Chris Jericho

Angle is defending here but doesn't like the idea of facing a has been like Jericho. Cue the Canadian who makes fun of Angle for living with his mom and tells said mom to put down the whiskey and watch her son get a beating. I believe this is the debut of the Kirk Angel moniker. They speed things up to start while I believe botching a leapfrog spot with Jericho hitting an elbow instead of ducking underneath but it looked ok.

The champion comes back with a hot shot before pounding away in the corner, only to have Jericho do the exact same thing. Well if you're going to copy someone, copy an Olympian. Angle gets up a boot in the corner to stop a charging Jericho. Chris tries the flying forearm but hits the referee by mistake. There's the Lionsault but there's no referee meaning no new champion. Angle loads up a title belt shot but gets caught in the Walls for his efforts. Jericho pulls it to the middle of the ring but...BOB BACKLUND comes in for a crossface chickenwing on Jericho for the DQ.

Rating: C+. It's Angle vs. Jericho so you know it's going to be good. This was unfortunately short but they would get a lot more time and a lot more Benoit at Wrestlemania, making for an awesome match. These guys would dominate the midcard for over a year and then move up to the main event soon after that. Good stuff here but short.

HHH vs. Rikishi

Non-title of course. Rikishi has a bad ankle coming into this. A quick Pedigree attempt is countered but Rikishi can't sit on HHH's chest just yet. Instead is an avalanche in the corner to put HHH down and there's the Stinkface. A Stephanie distraction allows for a low blow to stop Rikishi dead. Rikishi is sent shoulder first into the post so HHH can stomp and choke away back inside. A facebuster puts Rikishi down because HHH doesn't follow his racial stereotypes. HHH finally wakes up and goes after the BIG FREAKING CAST on Rikishi's leg. He pounds away in the corner but walks into a Samoan Drop to give the fat man a breather. Rikishi knocks him into the corner but Stephanie slides in a chair. A blast to the fat man's back is good for the DQ and we're done.

Rating: D+. Not much here as yet again it's to set up the post match stuff. Rikishi would go on to solid success over the rest of the year, but at the end of the day he was a dancing Samoan in a thong and there's a limit on how far you can take that. The match was ok enough but the ankle stuff took way too long to get to. Also what is with all the DQ's tonight?

Post match the Rock comes out and hits a Rock Bottom on HHH to set up the

Banzai from Rikishi. Too Cool and Rikishi do some dancing.

Promo for Rock being on Saturday Night Live in a few weeks to promote Wrestlemania.

Big Show and Shane go to talk to HHH about something.

Matt Hardy vs. Steve Blackman

This would still be the Head Cheese period for Blackman so Snow wants an army of midgets carrying platters of cheese during the entrance. Blackman threatens the production guy with violence if any of that happens. To show you how confusing the Hardys were back in the day, Jeff is announced as the guy in the match but it's Matt in there instead. I couldn't remember which was which either at this point. Blackman kicks Matt down to start and blocks the tornado DDT out of the corner.

A quick legdrop by Matt gets two as the fans are dead for this. Blackman gets sent to the floor and there's a big dive to take him out. Matt heads to the apron, only to get caught in a kind of gutbuster, sending him face first into the steps. Back inside Blackman poses some more and hits a backbreaker, only to jump into a boot to the face. A DDT gets two for Matt but the Twist of Fate is countered into a German suplex by Blackman for two. Jeff and Snow get in a fight on the floor as Blackman goes up for a kick to the chest for the pin.

Rating: D. I have no idea why this match got five minutes but it didn't work at all. This kept going and going before it ever got anywhere close to going anywhere. The Hardys were a good bit away from being what they would become yet while Head Cheese never quite got anything going. The fans were into them though so I guess there's that.

Shane and Big Show convince HHH to make Rock vs. Benoit in a cage match. Didn't Shane have match making powers an hour and a half ago? Why did he need HHH and Stephanie?

Dean Malenko/Perry Saturn vs. Edge and Christian

This was during the brief period where Terri managed Edge and Christian so she's on commentary here. Edge gets double teamed to start but he

fires off a faceplant to stop Saturn. Off to Christian for a double hiptoss by the Canadians. It's back to Edge who has his knee taken out by Saturn with a chop block. Saturn works over the knees as Terri rambles on about how awesome she is. Dean comes in to crank on the leg a bit before cannonballing down onto it.

Edge comes back with an enziguri to take Malenko down and there's the double tag to bring in Christian vs. Saturn. JR is getting sick of Terri and I can't blame him a bit. Thankfully she gets up to watch as everything breaks down, only to get knocked down by Edge as Dean punches him. An Eddie Guerrero distraction lets the Radicalz go High/Low on Christian for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match was acceptable but DEAR GOODNESS was Terri annoying. Thankfully Edge and Christian got away from her soon after this once the brass figured out the truth about Terri: no one cared about her at all. Besides, Trish Stratus would be debuting in less than two weeks and she blew Terri out of the water in the looks department so there was no real need for Terri to be around anymore.

Hardcore Title: Crash Holly vs. Viscera

The challenging Viscera throws Crash around to start and we head into the crowd very quickly. Crash runs to the back but gets caught again and whipped into whatever Viscera can find. They wind up at the APA office where Crash gets in a low blow. Viscera stumbles into the card table so the APA lays him out, giving Crash the fluke pin. Surprisingly enough, Viscera's only Hardcore Title reign came in the battle royal at Wrestlemania. You would think he would be a natural fit for that belt.

We look at Mae getting beaten up earlier.

Rock thinks HHH and Stephanie are nuts if they think the cage match tonight gets rid of their problems.

Mark Henry goes after the Dudleys but gets beaten down.

The Rock vs. Chris Benoit

Cage match here and I think it's escape only for a change. They slug it

out to start with Benoit pounding away into the corner. A big clothesline puts Benoit down but Rock can't escape. Benoit suplexes Rock down but there's a hard elbow from Rock to come back. Benoit comes back as Shane and Big Show come out for a closer look. Chris pounds away in the corner but gets backdropped into the cage to shift the momentum again.

Rock gets crotched as he tries to get out and here are HHH and Stephanie. Another suplex puts Rock down but he comes back with right hands and choking. Benoit suplexes him again to put Rock down but he crotches himself trying to get down. Rocky's problem becomes apparent: Rock can't escape because of who is waiting outside. Benoit fights back with chops, tying Rock up in the ropes in the process.

Rock escapes the ropes and avoids a charge before sending Benoit into the cage. Benoit goes up top for the Swan Dive but it knocks Benoit silly again. Rock stops him from escaping and hits the spinebuster, only to get caught in Rolling Germans from the Canadian. Rock escapes the third and grabs a Rock Bottom out of nowhere to put both guys down. The climb has to be slow though because of HHH and Benoit. They both climb the cage but Rock sits down and hits a wicked powerbomb to take him out. HHH tries to climb up and stop Rock but is punched down onto Big Show, allowing Rock to escape for the win.

Rating: C-. This didn't work all that well for me. As is the case with almost everything else associated with the main event at this point, this was overdone. I get the idea they were going for, but the match became all about Rock having to deal with HHH and Big Show instead of Benoit, who was made to look like an afterthought here.

Post match it's a 3-1 beatdown and they get him back inside the cage. HHH gets a chair and the fans want Rikishi. Rock gets sent into the cage but HHH's chair shot hits Big Show instead. HHH gets punched down as Shane runs out of the cage to escape. Rock stands on the stage to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This didn't do it for me all that well. I'll give them this though: the reaction when Rock gets into the main event of Wrestlemania is going to be through the moon. Other than that though, the show isn't really clicking all that well. That would be the case at

Wrestlemania as well, with only the main event and two other matches having any kind of interest whatsoever. This didn't work all that well but with the amount of wrestling on it, there isn't much to complain about.

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