

On This Day: May 2, 2005 – Monday Night Raw 2005: Shelton Benjamin Is Still Out Cold

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 2, 2005

Location: Fleet Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 6,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Now that I'm done with all of the pay per views, I'm going to take a small break and do a show that I've wanted to talk about for awhile. This show is built around finding a #1 contender for Batista who is Raw World Champion at the moment. Therefore, we need to have a tournament. There's one match on this show that I'm reviewing it for and for you KB trivia fans out there, it's my favorite match ever. Let's get to it.

We open in the back with Batista hitting on Christy Hemme. Bischoff comes up and tells Batista he did well last night against HHH, so tonight we're starting the Gold Rush Tournament with the winner getting a shot at Batista. The eight people know they're in but they don't know who they're facing until the announcer says their name. Batista is told he has the night off but he says he wants a match tonight. Batista says he wants Bischoff and it looks like he wants to rape him. Eric screams and Batista implies he's only kidding.

Gold Rush Tournament First Round: Christian vs. Kane

Tomko is with Christian here and Lita is on a crutch with Kane. Christian talks trash to Kane to start and that's just not smart. Kane shoves him from the middle of the ring and out to the floor with ease. Back in and a big boot puts the Canadian down and an uppercut puts him outside again. Christian sends Kane into the steps to take over. He hits a springboard crossbody to the floor and Kane is put down again.

That gets two in the ring and Christian chokes away in the corner. Kane shrugs all that off and throws Christian into the air in retaliation. Chokeslam is countered and Christian hooks a sleeper. Kane counters that into a side slam but Tomko breaks up the top rope clothesline. Unprettier is countered but Tomko gets on the apron. Kane sends Christian into him and the chokeslam sends Kane to the semifinals.

Rating: D+. This wasn't bad but it was just a step above a squash. Christian would be gone to TNA a few months after this but he went down in the midcard so at least he advanced a bit. There wasn't much here as Kane pretty much dominated Christian the entire time. It could have been worse though.

Tomko gets a chokeslam post match.

Flair makes fun of Christian for losing. Flair "raps", and says HHH will win the tournament. The 80s just died a bit.

Muhammad Hassan complains about not being in the tournament and blames Hogan, Shawn, the fans, and Daivari for the loss last night. Daivari gets beaten down but he still follows Hassan to the back.

Here's Viscera who talks about how he loves women. He wants to go south of the border and looks at Lillian. Simon Dean comes out to keep this from getting even more uncomfortable. He offers Viscera a lifetime supply of the Simon System products and that ticks the fat man off.

Viscera vs. Simon Dean

Simon makes a bunch of fat jokes and gets run over. Viscera puts him in the Tree of Woe and crushes him but misses an elbow. That gets Dean nowhere as a chokeslam and splash literally squash him. This was nothing.

Viscera says he's back on the market.

Candice and Stacy are in the back to plug Stacy's STUFF Magazine photo shoot. Bischoff comes up to double the plugs and walks on to his office. HHH is waiting there and wants to know why this tournament exists. It should be his title shot because he got screwed out of the title last night. Bischoff says HHH gets his rematch if he wins the tournament.

Until then, get out of the office.

Benjamin is in the tournament and says he isn't nervous because he's the Intercontinental Champion. He has to be ready for anyone at any time, but Jericho interrupts. Jericho lost to Shelton last night and Jericho seems to respect Shelton now. Jericho is in the tournament and says he might be Shelton's opponent. Shelton wishes Jericho luck and they shake hands.

Gold Rush Tournament First Round: Shelton Benjamin vs. Shawn Michaels

This is the match that I was talking about. Shawn is back in the world title hunt after going after Muhammad Hassan for a few months. Shelton is on fire at this point so this is going to be great. They immediately hit the mat and Shelton dominates as you would expect him to. Shawn grabs a hammerlock and they hit the mat again. Shelton rides him again and Shawn has to head to the ropes to get a break.

Shelton takes him back to the mat but Shawn easily gets back up. A cradle gets two for Shawn out of nowhere and it's followed by a forearm to take over. Shelton comes back with a clothesline and both guys go to the floor. We take a break and come back with Shelton countering a belly to back superplex into a cross body off the top but he can't cover. Batista is watching in the back.

Shelton hits a Samoan Drop and both guys are down again. Things speed up and Shelton gets two off a backbreaker. Shawn hits the forearm and nips up, but Shelton nips up a second later, freaking Shawn out. We get a fast paced pinfall reversal sequence and Shawn takes Shelton down with a hard chop. Benjamin comes back with the Stinger Splash in the corner but the T-Bone is broken up.

Sweet Chin Music is caught and the Dragon Whip gets two. That sounded GREAT and JR's commentary is only making this better. Shelton loads up a superplex but Shawn knocks him down and hits the elbow for two. Another Chin Music attempt is countered by a high kick for a VERY close two. Shelton jumps from the mat to the top rope and hits a spinning clothesline for another two. This is getting better and better with each kickout. Shelton gets sent to the apron and tries a springboard, but he jumps right into the Sweet Chin Music in an incredible spot. Shelton is

DEAD and Shawn advances. That never gets old.

Rating: A+. It's my favorite match ever. What grade did you expect me to give it? Also, this probably furthers Shawn's record of most A+ matches for a single guy held by Shawn. The last few minutes of this has some of the best near falls on TV that I've ever seen. This is easily one of the best TV matches of all time. The only issue I have with it: what was Shelton going for at the end other than diving into the kick? I've never gotten that. The idea here was simple: Shawn was fighting himself from ten years ago. That's very interesting and it worked like a masterpiece here.

Edge says he's in the tournament because he wants another shot to go with his MITB contract. Apparently if he gets drafted, he loses the shot in the case. Ok then. Edge says he'll be champion and goes up to Lita and Victoria. Victoria says she's looking at nothing. Nothing here.

Raw Tag Titles: La Resistance vs. Hurricane/Rosey

Hurricane and Rosey won the belts last night in tag team turmoil. Rosey gets jumped before the match starts and the fat man gets to start with Grenier. A Hart Attack gets two on Rosey and it's off to Conway. Back to Grenier for nothing of note and it's back to Conway. Rosey breaks free and it's off to Hurricane. No one is responding to any of this at all. A top rope rana gets two on Grenier and Conway is sent to the floor. A side slam/Eye of the Hurricane combo gets the pin on Grenier to retain.

Rating: D. What in the world was the point of this other than filling in time? The answer to that would be nothing, as it was nothing but filler. These four guys were in the horrible spot on the card as they had to be thrown out there in between the major matches and had to fill in time. That's a horrible spot to be in but at least they got on the show which is more than Hurricane and Rosey would do for a long time.

Gold Rush Tournament First Round: Chris Jericho vs. Edge

Jericho works on the arm to start and sends Edge into the buckle over and over. He goes up but Edge shoves him over the top rope and out to the floor. Back in and a backbreaker gets two. Off to a chinlock which is

quickly broken and Batista is watching in the back. Edge stops to dance but misses a charge, getting sent into the ropes for his dancing abilities. Jericho speeds things up and hits the running hip attack to Edge's back while Edge is in 619 position. That really needs a name.

Jericho hits an enziguri for two and stays on Edge. A sleeper drop gets two for Jericho but the bulldog is escaped. A big boot puts Jericho down but as Edge goes to get the case, Jericho hits the springboard dropkick to send it into Edge's face. Jericho takes Edge down with a plancha but back inside Edge hits the Edge-0-Matic for two. Jericho counters the spear into the Walls but Edge makes the rope. As the referee tries to break it up, Edge gets in a case shot and a missile dropkick gets two for Edge. A spear sends Edge to the next round.

Rating: B-. This was getting good for awhile but Edge using the case was a cheap ending. At least it was new at this point and it hadn't been driven into the ground yet. Edge would spend most of the rest of the year feuding with Matt Hardy while Jericho would do next to nothing until leaving in August. Good match but it needed a few more minutes.

Here's Chris Masters for the Masterlock Challenge. He offers four grand and an autographed Red Sox jersey. A plant is brought in and this goes as well as you would expected it to.

Gold Rush Tournament First Round: Chris Benoit vs. HHH

A quick Pedigree is countered into a Crossface attempt but HHH escapes. Benoit escapes a belly to back suplex but can't hook the Sharpshooter. Another Crossface attempt is countered and they head outside. Back in and HHH clotheslines him in the back of the head to take over. They head to the floor and Benoit's eyes are absolutely bugging out of his head. It looks like something from a comedy horror movie actually.

We take a break and come back with Benoit's eyes still messed up. That's so scary when you look at things now. HHH drops a knee on the back of the head for two. Benoit comes back with some chops but gets caught in a sleeper. After a few moments it gets broken up via HHH being sent into the buckle but Benoit can't follow up. A belly to back suplex puts HHH down as does a German suplex but HHH elbows him in the head to escape.

Now the Rolling Germans hit and the Swan Dive gets a very delayed two. Benoit is looking scarier and scarier with every hit to that head. HHH charges but gets caught in the Sharpshooter. Flair is brought in and chopped in the corner but HHH hits Benoit in the head and the referee goes down. Cue Batista who cleans house, including a spinebuster to HHH. Benoit puts on the Sharpshooter and Batista pulls the rope away so HHH has to tap.

Rating: B. This was a good match but the Benoit stuff was scary at times. Even taking out what we would learn about him later on, this was some bad stuff, as Benoit's eyes were all over the place during some of the match. Those shots to the head looked vicious and it was hard to watch. The ending was good too as Batista's smile was great when he was holding the rope away. Good match.

Overall Rating: A. With five matches on the card and three of them being above average to great and the other two being short, what more can you ask for from a show? This was excellent from a wrestling perspective and the stories advanced well enough. I can't ask for much more than this which is a great surprise in a show from 2005. This is well worth tracking down.

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