

On This Day: August 8, 1999 – Sunday Night Heat: The Dying Days of RussoRiffic WWF

Sunday Night Heat

Date: August 8, 1999

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 13,793

Commentators: Michael Cole, Kevin Kelly

Somehow I've never touched on Sunday Night Heat. Introduced in 1998, it was the original second show until Smackdown debuted (a few weeks after this episode), after which it dropped like a stone in importance. This is actually a live episode for no apparent reason We're two weeks from Summerslam 1999 and Austin is champion. The question is who will he be facing. Somehow we wound up with about four #1 contenders matches in a month so it's hard to say who he's facing at this point. Let's get to it.

The opening sequence sounds like metal being hammered. The main color being orange didn't do the show much good either.

Intercontinental Title: Val Venis vs. D'Lo Brown

Brown is defending and is European Champion as well. Venis makes sex jokes about tax cuts. Here's Jeff Jarrett, the man Brown beat for the Intercontinental Title, comes out before the match, allowing Venis to get in a cheap shot. Brown takes over with ease and drops a leg for two as Jarrett blames Debra for costing him the title. Venis comes back with a spinebuster for two of his own as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. A Russian legsweep puts D'Lo down but Jeff runs in for the DQ.

Venis and Brown clear the ring.

Here's Al Snow with his dog Pepper for a chat. Snow wants to know why Kevin Kelly doesn't believe Pepper talks to him like Timmy and Lassie, Dorothy and Toto, George Jetson and Astro or Shaggy and Scooby. However,

tonight he's here to challenge Boss Man to a Hardcore Title match at Summerslam. Boss Man says ok and threatens to rape the dog with his nightstick and deep fry him into a real corndog. Or maybe he'll just step on Pepper's head. DANG this guy has some deep seeded issues.

Tori vs. Les Lexie Fyfe

Tori was good looking but one of the worst workers all time so we get to see her in a squash. You might know Fyfe from Shimmer or various other female promotions. The match is of course sloppy junk until Tori spears Lexie down and wins with a powerslam.

Ivory, Tori's opponent at Summerslam, runs in and attacks Tori, writing SL** on her stomach.

Tag Titles: Acolytes vs. Kane/Road Dogg

This is Ministry vs. others with the Acolytes defending. The Acolytes hit the ring before Kane is here and the beating is on. Dogg is taken apart but here's Kane for the opening bell. Kane cleans house to start but the numbers catch up to him. Bradshaw gets taken down by a side slam but Kane goes after Faarooq instead of following up. There's the top rope clothesline to take out Bradshaw and here's Hardcore Holly of all people.

He gets on the apron in Kane's corner and tags himself in which apparently counts....and turns on Kane (was he ever on Kane's team?)....before turning on the Acolytes and fighting everyone. The Acolytes lay out Holly and we cut to Big Show being held back by Undertaker for some reason. Did I mention this was when Russo was feeling stressed out and about to leave?

Meat (Shawn Stasiak) says Terri is wearing him out.

Godfather vs. Prince Albert

Albert is Tensai. No match as a fat guy in white (Vic Grimes I believe) comes in to help Droz and Albert attack Godfather but Val Venis and Chaz (Mosh of the Headbangers in a boring gimmick) make the save. No match.

Al Snow gives Pepper training in being a hardcore dog but he can't get

him to dive through a table. Snow goes to get something but leaves Pepper there. That's just dumb man.

Smackdown is coming.

COUNTDOWN TO THE MILLENNIUM! 26 hours to go.

Meat is too tired for his match but goes out anyway.

Snow has Pepper back and introduces him to Blue Meanie, who wants to put the dog on his taco. Al hands the dog off to a woman and destroys Meanie.

Meat vs. Big Boss Man

Boss Man is Hardcore Champion but this is non-title. Terri accidentally distracts Meat to start and Boss Man takes over. Boss Man hits the running crotch attack to Meat's back and follows up with the sliding uppercut. We hit a quick reverse chinlock before Meat avoids a charge in the corner. Not that it matters as his hurricanrana is countered into a powerbomb to give Boss Man the pin.

Rating: D. Do I really need to explain this? Meat is the kind of one note character that is there to make Russo and Vince chuckle and little more. The match was junk other than the good powerbomb to end it, but it's a squash match with the jobber being the subject of the match. Nothing to see here.

Rock comes out for commentary on the main event.

Billy Gunn vs. Undertaker

Billy jumps Taker to start but gets launched into the corner and stomped down. Rock is feasting on Cole and Kelly as Taker gets two off a big boot. Gunn comes back with a dropkick and a neckbreaker before choking away. Rock guarantees to beat Billy at Summerslam and demands Cole say something and "stop kayfabling like an idiot." Taker comes back with a running DDT but Rock gets up and pounds on Billy. Taker's partner Big Show goes after Rock but it's a tombstone to end Billy.

Rating: D+. The match was just an excuse to have Rock out there doing his

schtick. Billy was in the middle of a good push at this point but at the end of the day he was just Billy Gunn and that wasn't enough. Rock would get back to the big times soon after this and never looked back.

Rock is chokeslammed to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. It's easy to see when Russo is around and when he isn't. This show was a mess with all kinds of odd characters and non wrestling, but a few months later everything was great and the WWF destroyed everything in sight. It's amazing what happens when you let the great wrestlers put on great wrestling shows. This however, isn't one of those shows.

Here's Summerslam if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/08/04/summerslam-count-up-1999-an-out-of-body-experience/>

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