

Monday Night Raw – March 18, 2002: Behold The Beast

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 18, 2002

Location: Molson Center, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Attendance: 17,346

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after Wrestlemania and there are two major developments. First and more importantly, Hulk Hogan turned face and helped the Rock when the Outsiders attacked him. Second, HHH won the world title by beating Chris Jericho, shocking no one at all. Tonight is all about fallout, but there's something big looming next week. Let's get to it.

I've already done the March 25 and April 1 shows and links can be found at the end.

Here's Hogan to open the show to one of the most famous ovations ever. While it's loud, it's the length that makes it memorable. They're on their feet, bowing down and chanting for Hogan. It's already been going for a minute since he's been in the ring. Hogan can't even talk. Minute and a half straight. Hogan finally gets a word in after nearly two minutes of cheering, saying he loves the fans. He expected the match with Rock to be great and for Hall and Nash (pause for booing) to not interfere.

While he also expected to give Rock the beating of his life, he didn't expect 70,000 people to be on their feet cheering for him. The fans start cheering for him again but Hogan says he has to thank the Rock. Hogan came back to the WWF to embarrass Rock but he couldn't get rid of him. He didn't believe it was possible, but Rock came back and beat him 1-2-3 in the middle of the ring. Hogan doesn't know when, but there will be a rematch one day. This brings out Rock for the showdown.

Rock has the heel sneer on his face as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. He lifts the mic up but the fans keep chanting for Hogan. Rock does the angriest FINALLY you'll ever hear but gets cut off again. He finally gets to say Montreal before saying Hogan has FINALLY come back to the Hulkamaniacs.

We stretch the truth a bit by saying 70,000 people stood for 30 minutes straight (more like 68,000+ for about 17 minutes) to show their passion and for that, Rock thanks the people and Hogan. The challenge is accepted any time, any place and it would be Rock's honor. It would be in this very building actually about ten and a half months later.

However, Rock does have one problem. Even though Hall and Nash turned on Hogan last night, Hogan is still wearing the NWO colors. Rock wants to know what Hogan thinks of that and there's the shirt rip. Cue Hall and Nash to demand answers from Hogan. They were brought in to be a lethal injection by picking off one guy at a time, starting with Austin. The plan didn't work though because Rock had to challenge Hogan at Wrestlemania.

That was fine, but Hogan just had to say yes. Hogan could have helped them beat Austin and then he could have fought Rock if he wanted to. Nash calls Hogan the NWO poison and rips him apart for siding with the fans. Rock makes fun of Nash for whining and challenges them to a tag match tonight. Hall grabs the mic and asks if Rock is sure so Rock goes into a HILARIOUS imitation of Hall, complete with the slumped shoulders and arm waving. Hogan says just bring it and the match is on. Nash asks if Hogan is going to choke like he did last night but Rock does Hogan's catchphrase to close this 25 minute opening segment.

Intercontinental Title: Christian vs. Rob Van Dam

RVD is defending after winning the title last night. Christian pounds him into the corner to start but Rob comes back with a middle rope kick to the face. Rob charges into an elbow in the corner and gets draped ribs

first across the top rope, sending him out to the floor. That goes nowhere so Rob brings him back inside for a spinwheel kick and a legsweep to set up Rolling Thunder for two. Christian gets in a forearm and goes to the floor to get the title belt, but Diamond Dallas Page won't let him walk out. Van Dam kicks Christian's leg out and the Five Star retains the title in a quick match.

Jericho arrives, beats up an overly enthusiastic backstage guy (who I believe was Sylvan Grenier), and leaves for the night.

Trish Stratus vs. Lita

Trish looks great as always. Lita goes right after her to start and the fight is on quickly. A clothesline puts the redhead down but she suplexes Trish down a few seconds later. Lita scores with a headscissors but Trish comes right back with a Chick Kick. Stratusfaction is shoved off and the moonsault gets Lita the pin in barely 90 seconds.

Post match Jazz comes out to go after Lita but Trish helps her out. Ivory comes out to help Jazz and the good girls are laid out.

Linda McMahon is in her office and makes a major announcement: next week there's going to be a Brand Extension, meaning Raw and Smackdown will be split into two rosters. Next week there will be a Draft where the rosters will be split into Ric Flair's Raw and Vince McMahon's Smackdown. The WWF and Women's Champion will split time between brands.

Here's Vince to talk about the Draft a bit more, but first we get the YOU SCREWED BRET chants. He's here to say goodbye to Raw and reminds the fans that he's been nice to them over the years. Vince insists that they miss him and his speeches, but he's not going to miss any of them. The fans will get Ric Flair, who isn't bad but he's no Vince McMahon. Flair doesn't have the killer instinct or the ability to manipulate anymore. The fans sing the Goodbye Song but here's Flair to interrupt.

Vince wants to know why Flair is out here after Undertaker beat him up last night at Wrestlemania. He enjoyed watching Undertaker beat Flair to a bloody pulp but there's the song again to interrupt Vince. Flair says he'll tell Vince what's on his mind of McMahon will shut up. Yes, Raw is Vince's baby but he used it to flaunt his wealth, drawing up a You Screwed Bret chant.

Vince used Raw to shove Stephanie down our throat week after week but that's not going to happen anymore because Flair owns Raw. Vince goes to leave but the song brings him back inside. He offers and wins a coin toss for the first pick, which Vince says is the way things will always be. Flair stares him down so Vince decks him, only to have Ric put him in the Figure Four.

Booker T/Kurt Angle vs. Edge/Kane

Take two matches from Wrestlemania and throw them into a tag match. Kane pulls Booker into the ring to start and puts him down with a side slam. The top rope clothesline gets two with Angle making the save and a double suplex puts the monster down. Booker misses the ax kick and Kane tags in Edge to speed things up. Angle tries to run the corner to suplex Edge down but the Canadian holds onto the top and gets two off a missile dropkick.

The Edge-0-Matic is countered into the ankle lock but Kane breaks it up with a chokeslam. Booker sends Kane to the floor and Edge tried the Edgecution but Angle counters into an Angle Slam attempt. Booker accidentally kicks his partner in the face and Edge spears Angle for two. Kane sends Booker into the steps and Edge counters the German suplex into a rollup for two. The Edgecution follows a few seconds later for the pin.

Rating: B-. This was one of the most entertaining four minute matches I can remember in a LONG time. They basically did the hot ending without any build but that's often the best part of a match. I'd love to see these four have a fifteen minute version of this but for what we got,

this rocked.

Hardcore Title: Maven vs. Al Snow

Maven is defending after about 10 title changes the night before and Snow was his trainer on Tough Enough. Snow jumps him at ringside but gets sent into the barricade to give the champion a breather. They head inside with the weapons as Snow blasts Maven in the head with trashcan lids. Cue Spike Dudley with a stop sign to knock Snow out, but a monster can be seen jumping the barricade. He hits one of the biggest spinebusters you'll ever see on Snow, slams Maven down with ease and triple powerbombs Spike in half. The monster's name: Brock Lesnar.

JR and Lawler complain that Paul Heyman was with Lesnar.

We recap the opening segment because fans can't remember something that happened an hour and fifteen minutes ago. By recap, I mean air about four minutes of it.

Matt and Lita are making out in the back when William Regal comes up to say that's disgusting. Matt says don't get mad because you're not getting any. Lita: "OH TAG!" Regal has no idea what to make of that (neither do I) and says the two of them might be split up by the Draft. He throws in a ta-ta because he's a snooty Englishman.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Billy and Chuck

Billy and Chuck are defending and the Dudleys have Stacy in her Dudley attire, still the hottest I ever saw her look. It's a brawl to start until D-Von and Chuck clothesline each other down. A double tag brings in Bubba and Billy with the future Bully cleaning house. What's Up keeps Billy in trouble as everything breaks down. Stacy gets up on the apron and shakes a bit to distract Billy but there's no effect, so she hits Billy with a title belt for the DQ.

The Dudleys are rightly furious and put Stacy through a table. They were heels coming in, so is that a face turn for Keibler?

Here's HHH for his big new champion speech and JR immediately calls it an honor to hear from him. The entrance takes forever and HHH still has both belts. HHH talks about being injured for a long time before coming back with his quad hanging on by a thread. He defeated Chris Jericho to become Undisputed Champion and has to stop to soak in some chants. He's a happy man right now and wants to share it with us by showing a clip of him Pedigreeing Stephanie.

This brings out the wife wearing a neck brace. She promises to get rid of the smile on HHH's face because Jericho wants his rematch next week on Raw. HHH thinks we should up the ante: a handicap match with Jericho and Stephanie against him, but if he wins then Stephanie is gone. That's an interesting idea since she only lost a match to get thrown out of the company four months earlier.

HHH won't grant the rematch without that stipulation so Stephanie reluctantly agrees after whining for five minutes. The fans sing the Goodbye Song at her as well, because this whole segment is about HHH vs. Stephanie and Jericho is just there on the side. That's why the Jericho vs. HHH match at Wrestlemania was such a disappointment. Everyone knew Jericho was just there and the real feud was between HHH and Stephanie.

The Rock/Hulk Hogan vs. Outsiders

Hogan's entrance is already going when we get back from a break and the Outsiders are in the ring. Good to know that's not important enough to make Stephanie quit whining. The brawl is on quick until we start with Hogan vs. Hall. Hulk hits his punches in the corner and rakes the back before Hall gets caught between the right hands from the superheroes. Off to Rock for the spinebuster but Nash breaks up the People's Elbow.

Nash comes in legally with the side slam before ramming knees in the

corner. Hall comes back in and stops Rock's comeback with the fallaway slam for two. The Outsiders take turns stomping on Rock but Rock escapes Nash's Snake Eyes and hits the Rock Bottom for no cover. The hot tag brings in Hogan to clean house as everything breaks down. Hogan drops the leg despite coming from the wrong direction but Hall rolls to the floor for the countout.

Rating: D+. This was energetic while it lasted but they didn't have time to go anywhere. Also there was no way this was going to be about the wrestling and there's nothing wrong with that on a show like this. It was entertaining and a fun match to see happen and that's all you need sometimes.

Overall Rating: C+. The night after Wrestlemania is always a different kind of show and that's what it should be. With the Draft coming up in a week there was no point in doing anything substantial tonight so everything was about the fallout. Still though, it was entertaining enough and a fresh start after a very boring winter.

Here's the March 25 show if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/10/11/monday-night-raw-march-25-2002-first-wwf-draft/>

Here's the April 1 show if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/09/09/monday-night-raw-april-1-2002-only-an-april-fool-would-like-this-show/>

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