

Monday Night Raw – January 1, 1996: The Football Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 1, 1996

Location: Bob Carpenter Center, Newark, Delaware

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

So for some reason, the WWF felt the need to do a football themed show called the Raw Bowl. There isn't much to it other than an elimination tag match with time outs and everyone in football jerseys. Other than that it's a normal episode of Raw with a lot of extra jokes and puns from Lawler. Let's get to it.

The opening video has Vince making a lot of football jokes and hypes this up as some big annual event even though it never happened again. Apparently Coach Blassie is getting the wrestlers ready in the back.

Smoking Gunns vs. Savio Vega/Razor Ramon vs. Sid/1-2-3 Kid vs. Owen Hart/Yokozuna

This is the Raw Bowl which isn't even for the Gunns' tag titles. Vince and Jerry's commentary is already irritating with Razor being called a perennial Raw Bowler and Savio being referred to as a walk-on. Goldust's usher tries to give Razor some gold roses and gets punched in the face. Sid and the Kid are part of DiBiase's Million Dollar Team which Vince says is under investigation by the NAACP for recruiting violations. Lawler: "OFFSIDES MCMAHON!" This is under elimination rules and each team has a time out they can use at any time.

The mat is green with football lines painted on and Earl Hebner is dressed like an NFL referee, complete with flags. Owen and Bart get us going but it's quickly off to Billy to face his partner. They make the

required contact before tagging in Owen and Yoko to fire up the crowd. Owen is forced to get in with threat of a penalty flag and bounces off Yoko with a shoulder block. Off to Vega to face the fat man but he's quickly taken down with a Samoan drop.

Yoko tags out to Vega as Lawler mentions a lot of penalties. A spinwheel kick gets two on the Kid and it's back to Owen who gets two of his own with an enziguri. King hits on some chick who has been named Raw Bowl Queen. Back to the ring with Bart vs. Razor before it's quickly back to Savio. Vega quickly tags off to Sid as the crowd goes silent. Bart is taken down by some shoulders but he comes back with a very nice delayed vertical suplex on the big man.

Savio replaces Bart and is immediately pounded down by Sid, who quickly tags Owen back in. Owen scores with a quick enziguri and tags in the Kid for a spinwheel kick to the jaw. Yoko comes back in as we cut back to Brother Love in the locker room talking about something I can't make out. Yoko doesn't stay in long at all before it's back to Kid who misses a legdrop on Savio, allowing for the tag to Razor.

The fallaway slam puts the Kid down but he calls a quick timeout to prevent a Razor's Edge. Razor hits it anyway but DiBiase gets up on the apron for a penalty. Either way, Sid clotheslines Razor from behind to give the Kid the easy pin. Down to three teams now and we take a break. Back with Yoko and Owen taking turns pounding on Bart.

Hart misses a top rope splash and Bart is able to tag Billy for some cleaning of the house. The offense is quickly cut off by a kick from the Kid to knock Billy down. Owen drags Billy over for a Banzai Drop but Bart pulls his brother away, leaving Owen to take the fat man drop. Yokozuna doesn't realize what he did until too late and Owen's unconscious body is pinned to get us down to two.

Sid comes right in and stomps on Billy, then he stomps on Billy, then he stomps on Billy against the ropes. Kid comes in with a dropkick in the

corner to set up a clothesline from Sid for two. Bart gets on the middle rope to play cheerleader but Sid kicks Billy in the face to silence the crowd immediately. Billy walks into a chokeslam (Jerry: "Intentional grounding!") but Sid picks him up instead of covering. Bart gets kicked off the apron to distract the referee as Razor runs out to shove Kid into Sid, giving Billy a fluke pin.

Rating: C-. This was really just a bunch of annoying and unfunny jokes over an elimination tag match. I don't know why the titles weren't on the line here because otherwise it's more goofy than important. The timeouts didn't really change anything and the gimmick didn't matter at all. Not a bad match but the tag division was so worthless around this time that it wasn't going to reach anything more than moderately interesting.

We get a halftime report with Doc Hendrix which is a glorified parody of football halftime shows and includes a plug for the Rumble, no interview from Diesel, and a clip of Jeff Jarrett attacking Ahmed Johnson.

I'll give them credit for this: they have a marching band playing them back from the halftime show. Nice touch.

Now, since they don't have enough ideas to fill in 43 minutes, here's the hogpen match with Henry Godwinn vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley from In Your House 5, held only a few weeks ago.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Henry Godwinn

This is a hogpen match, meaning there's an actual hog pen with pigs and mud near the entrance and the winner is the first man to send his opponent into said pin. Why is this match happening you ask? Simply put it's because Godwinn is a hog farmer so he associates with hogs. One note characters like him had a lot to do with the downfall of the WWF at this point, as there's no interest to such characters, meaning there's no reason to stick around and watch them. The guest referee is 1980s crowd

favorite Hillbilly Jim.

Godwinn slops the ring announcer before the match starts for no apparent reason. Helmsley jumps Godwinn but is quickly sent to the floor for his efforts. Back in and Henry ties him in the ropes so he can rub more slop in Helmsley's face. After nearly retching, Helmsley takes it back to the floor, only to be bulldogged face first into the steps.

They head up the pen with Henry being whipped into the gate but still managing to block a Pedigree attempt with a backdrop. Helmsley lands on the edge of the pen and kicks Henry down before dropping an elbow to the chest. Lawler makes Jeff Foxworthy style jokes about being from Arkansas as they head back inside where Godwinn hits a big wheelbarrow slam. Helmsley is whipped to two corners and out to the floor for another handful of slop. Henry hits the Slop Drop up by the pen but can't follow up. Instead he charges at Helmsley and gets backdropped into the slop to end things.

Rating: C-. This actually wasn't that bad as it was a regular match until the ending. Again though, why am I supposed to care? It's the lowest level of comedy and storytelling possible, which doesn't mean it's necessarily bad, but we have no reason to care about either of these guys so why should I be interested in the match?

Post match Henry slams Helmsley into the pen for fun. That's a nice idea as at least the fans get the (limited) payoff.

Next week: the main event from In Your House 5! My goodness.

King Mabel vs. Diesel

Bell, big boot, Mabel is pinned in less than ten seconds. WHY DID THIS NOT MAIN EVENT SUMMERSLAM 95???

Jerry is about to get an interview with Diesel when the Queen gets up and walks off with Diesel instead.

It's time for the Lombardi Trophy presentation. The STEVE LOMBARDI TROPHY presentation that is, which at least gets a smile out of me. Brooklyn Brawler presents it to the Gunns and gets beaten up for his efforts. A cooler of iced tea is dumped on him as well.

We run down the entrants in the Rumble and VADER is officially entered. We get his debut video here.

We go to Billionaire Ted's Wrasslin War Room for one of those HILARIOUS WCW parodies. Ted asks for new ideas and the top suggestion is they incorporate moves from wrestlers such as Razor Ramon and Diesel. Oh that makes me laugh a lot to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This wasn't so much bad as it was unnecessary. The football jokes and references really just make me want to change the channel and watch the Rose Bowl instead of an uninteresting four team tag match. Other than that there's really nothing here and it was a good sign of things to come for the company in 1996.

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