

Monday Night Raw – July 22, 2002: Let's Get Ready To... Have Way Too Much In One Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 22, 2002

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another request from a long time ago and I'm not quite sure why people want to see it. Looking over the card there's quite a bit of stuff that could be worth looking at so maybe there's actually a decent show in here. Given that I've done so much of the year already though, I can't imagine this is going to be anything special. Let's get to it.

Here's new GM Eric Bischoff to open things up. He insists that he loves all of us and promises the Rock will be here tonight. On top of that, we're getting the man that is going to make this show #1 in all of entertainment: HHH. Cue the Game (with a LONG entrance) for his first official night as a member of the Raw roster. Bischoff tries to say he's bringing up Raw but HHH says he's bringing up his best friend instead. Shawn comes out to a very nice reaction but Bischoff cuts it off to name Shawn as HHH's new manager.

He makes sure to say that Shawn will always be a few steps behind HHH, but that's not cool with Shawn. Eric and Michaels have a brief exchange over who has more stroke with Bischoff saying he isn't Vince. Shawn suggests Bischoff learn who he is, because he doesn't react well to ultimatums. He'll always take the highway instead of someone else's way so he's out of here. Bischoff says Shawn is walking out on the fans but Shawn leaves anyway. HHH goes after him, allowing Eric to announce that the Intercontinental and European Titles will be unified in a ladder match tonight.

HHH catches up with Shawn in the back but Michaels doesn't like being told what to do. Shawn knows HHH came to Raw because of him but Michaels didn't choose to work for Bischoff. HHH says being his manager wouldn't be that bad with Shawn's back being that bad. Don't be like Stone Cold and walk out with your ball. Trips has an idea to make this work and Shawn begrudgingly agrees to stay and listen.

Intercontinental Title/European Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Jeff Hardy

Van Dam is IC, Jeff is European and this is a ladder match in case you have the attention span of a goldfish. Rob scores with an early dropkick and covers out of instinct. Instead he throws Jeff to the floor and nails him with a ladder. An early climb attempt doesn't work as Jeff pops back up for a save. Now it's Jeff loading up the ladder but getting it dropkicked out from under him.

Another dropkick knocks the ladder out of Van Dam's hands so both guys slide in fresh ladders. They ram the ladders into each other and both guys go down. Rob gets the better of it and puts Jeff on the ladder for a cartwheel moonsault. Hardy pops up for another save with a Russian legsweep off the ladder. That's not enough for Hardy of course so he puts the ladder on top of Van Dam for a Swanton to keep Rob in trouble.

Both guys go up again but it's Van Dam with a sunset bomb to take Jeff down. Rolling Thunder onto Jeff onto the ladder keeps Hardy in trouble. Rob goes up but gets nailed in the back with another ladder, only to kick Jeff off his ladder. Van Dam drops a splash off the ladder before climbing back up to win the title in less than seven minutes.

Rating: C. The crashes were good but seven minutes with five minutes to get ready? That's the best they can give to the last match for the European Title? And that's really been gone for twelve years now? The match was fun enough but again, give it either a build or some more time. This was pretty ridiculous all things considered.

Here's Christopher Nowitzki with something to say. He sucks up to Bischoff for giving him the chance to get something off his chest. Ever since he got here, he's been perplexed as to why people hate a Harvard graduate. Before he can brag any further, here's Undertaker to interrupt.

He isn't in the best mood after losing the WWE Title last night and it's Nowitzki getting the beating to let off some frustration. A quick Last Ride and we're done.

Bischoff tries to get Rhyno, almost back from neck surgery, to join Raw. Rhyno seems interested but doesn't sign yet. Shawn Stasiak and D'Lo Brown come up and ask for a chance to get on Raw. Bischoff gives them three minutes to entertain him later tonight. I don't see this going well for them.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Trish Stratus vs. Molly Holly/William Regal

The genders don't have to match here. Bubba is very banged up coming off a tables match last night. The guys start with Regal taking a big backdrop but Bubba only has one good arm. Regal crawls over and hides with Molly before tagging her in. Molly wants a test of strength so Bubba does the arm switches into a dance, earning him a slap. Bubba spansks Molly to retaliate before it's off to Stratus for some dropkicks. Regal cheats from the apron so Molly can grab a northern lights suplex for two.

Trish has to fight off the Englishman and scores with a dropkick before making the hot(ish) tag. Everything breaks down and Molly gets crotched on the top, leaving the good ones to What's Up Regal. Bubba loads up the chest slap on Trish but puts the brakes on to keep it PG. As he goes to get the tables, Regal Germans Trish and puts on the Regal Stretch for the win.

Rating: D. Standard comedy match without much of the comedy here. Bubba stopping himself at Trish's chest was a cute bit but other than that I have no idea why these teams were fighting. JR mentioned that the girls got to pick their partners but there's no reason given for anything else.

Bischoff tells someone that they're on when three minutes are up. He turns around and sees Benoit, who will be in a match later with Booker T. for a shot at the Intercontinental Title.

Here's the new WWE Champion the Rock with something to say. Actually scratch that as he can barely get any words out over the fans' cheering. FINALLY he's ready to talk and says he won't be riding motorcycles with

Undertaker or drinking milk with Kurt Angle. After last night though, he has to thank them for having such a great match. That was last night though, but this is tonight.

Eddie Guerrero of all people interrupts and says he has a problem with La Rocka. He has two little girls at home and they both worship the ground their father walks on. However, he's found posters of the Rock next to the posters of him. Eddie ripped the Rock poster down because Rock is just a movie star, so Rock calls him a sick psychopathic freak. Rock says Eddie is a movie star as well but doesn't remember if Eddie was Cheech or Chong.

That's a sign of jealousy in Eddie's eyes, because everyone knows he's a better wrestler than Rock. Eddie brags about his haircut, which Rock describes as Billy Ray Cyrus having sex with a stupid hyena. What does that even mean? Anyway, Eddie wants a match tonight and if he wins, he gets a title shot next week. Rock sings a Latino song and agrees to the match. As Rock is leaving, Brock Lesnar comes out for his match and walks by Rock, his opponent at Summerslam, without even looking at him.

Brock Lesnar vs. Tommy Dreamer

Singapore cane match. Tommy hammers away with the cane to start but Brock just ends him with a belly to belly on the floor. Back in and Brock drives shoulders to the ribs in the corner but Dreamer nails a low blow. The DDT gets two but Lesnar pops up for the F5 and academic win.

Undertaker comes out with some cane shots for revenge on Lesnar for an attack last week.

Big Show cuts on Shawn in the back and brings up a superkick from a few weeks ago. There's no NWO to save Shawn now and Michaels agrees that he might not be able to fight now. Show laughs and leaves. Ok then.

Bischoff reminds Brown and Stasiak that they have three minutes.

Shawn Stasiak vs. D'Lo Brown

Brown hammers away to start and gets a few early two counts as Bischoff stands on the stage, checking his watch. Stasiak puts on an armbar and

Bischoff rips into him for being boring. He cuts off the time and we get to the point: 3 Minute Warning (Jamal, later known as Umaga, and Rosey, later known as Rosey) debuts and mauls both guys.

HHH gives Shawn a bag and tells him to wear whatever is inside. Shawn looks pleased.

Goldust praises Booker's performance against Big Show last night at Vengeance. It was like David beating Goliath and Booker is like a king. He gives Booker a Don King wig as the comedy continues.

Chris Benoit vs. Booker T.

Winner gets a future IC Title shot. Booker has bad ribs coming in from his match last night. A quick shoulder drops Benoit and a superkick does it even better. Benoit comes right back with a running elbow to the face for two before a hard whip drops Booker in the corner. Back up and another superkick drops the Canadian but he suplexes his way out of a sleeper.

Booker scores with another elbow to the jaw, followed by a missile dropkick for a close two. The ax kick misses and Benoit goes after the ribs. It's Rolling Germans time with a bridge getting two. Booker's spinning sunset flip out of the corner gets two more but Benoit sends him face first into an exposed buckle. The Crossface makes Booker tap.

Rating: C+. This is another pairing that it's really hard to screw up. Booker's rib injury made the match work well enough as it slowed Booker down to the point where Benoit winning that quickly made sense. This was back when both guys were still young enough to put on good matches and this worked better than most other stuff all night.

Bischoff comes out for commentary on the next match.

Big Show vs. Spike Dudley

I think you know the drill here. The chokeslam ends it in about a minute.

Bischoff tells Show to get a table, but Bubba comes out to save his half brother. That earns him a chokeslam through the table along with Spike

for his efforts.

ARE YOU READY? The DX theme comes on and here are HHH and Shawn with the old colors on once again. Shawn talks about the rebels being back and HHH does the Are You Ready bit. They load up the pose and HHH turns on Shawn with a Pedigree. They kept this quick as it only took about four minutes from beginning to end.

HHH is leaving when Smackdown GM Stephanie pulls up. She sends a production guy to tell Bischoff that the competition has arrived.

The Rock vs. Eddie Guerrero

Non-title but Eddie gets a title shot next week if he wins here. Eddie cranks on a headlock but eats a shoulder for his efforts. Some armdrags set up an armbar from the champion and a big clothesline stops Eddie's spinning escape. Eddie gets in his first real offense with a belly to back suplex before stomping away in the corner. A slugout almost gives Rock some momentum but he eats an elbow to the jaw.

We hit the chinlock from Guerrero before a dropkick gets a near fall. Off to a figure four headscissors to keep things fresh (more wrestlers could use that lesson) but Eddie gets caught cheating. A dropkick stops another comeback bid and we're back in the chinlock. Back up and Rock scores with some right hands but the Rock Bottom is countered into a rollup for two. That was sweet as Eddie was coming down before he rolled through. The Frog Splash misses and it's the spinebuster and a People's Elbow for the pin.

Rating: C+. I know it wasn't much but I really liked that counter. I didn't expect it and the move looked cooler as a result. Guerrero wasn't quite back to his old self yet and it would take awhile for him to get back into a groove. Rock was on his way out but still had it at this point. Nice match.

Post match Brock runs out and grabs the title. We get a staredown until Lesnar throws the belt down at Rock's feet.

Bischoff goes up to Stephanie's limo to mock her. She's here to teach him

a lesson and gets out of the limo. Eric mocks her with some Karate Kid poses as Heyman and Lesnar show up. Stephanie backs down...and leaves with Brock and Heyman, making both of them Smackdown exclusives. Bischoff is STUNNED to end the show. Oh wait we're making fun of Austin now. Bischoff is SHOCKED to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The main event helped this but it's still not a great show. So much stuff felt rushed but at the end of the day, both main events of Summerslam are set (mostly) with Shawn vs. HHH looking like a great emotional feud. The show flying by so fast was annoying, but man alive does this sort of show hold up compared to the modern three hour version.

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