

Monday Night Raw – May 22, 1995: The Pre-Game

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 22, 1995

Location: Broome County Arena, Binghamton, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

King of the Ring already can't get here soon enough and we're only eight days removed from the previous pay per view. There's just nothing interesting going on right now as Ted DiBiase and company aren't working as top heels. On the other hand, the top faces are Diesel, Shawn and Bam Bam Bigelow. This could be even worse than it sounds. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sid attacking Shawn Michaels a few months back to set up Shawn's big return tonight against King Kong Bundy.

Opening sequence.

Vince and Jerry have their opening chat.

Razor Ramon vs. Mike Bell

Razor has Savio Vega with him and has recently defeated Jacob Blu to qualify for the King of the Ring tournament. I know it's obvious that Razor would be involved but that's the best opponent they had for him? We actually hear about Razor and Jeff Jarrett trading the Intercontinental Title on a house show tour over the weekend, which isn't something you often hear mentioned on TV.

Bell takes him down for a surprising start but Razor comes right back with his driving shoulder blocks. There's the fall away slam and we hit something like an STF. Vince and Jerry argue about Lawler's mom at In Your House as the belly to back superplex sets up....nothing actually as Razor just shoves Bell down and pins him.

Rating: D. Standard squash here with Razor looking good. He should be making a strong run in the King of the Ring as he's certainly one of the

best midcard acts in a long time and above all else he has creditability. I'm really not sure why they didn't give Razor a stronger push as he should have been more than capable of handling it, assuming his personal issues were under control.

Here's Bret Hart to get in Lawler's face. Bret can't believe he lost at In Your House and now he doesn't want to hear Jerry calling himself the better man. We even get some Canadian swearing before Bret challenges Lawler to one more match with any terms Lawler wants. So that's where Christian got the ONE MORE MATCH chant. Even more swearing (WAY intense for 1995) has Bret going after Lawler with Vince having to play defense. No gimmick is announced here but that just keeps you wanting to come back for more.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. John Crystal

This is Helmsley's Raw debut so we actually have some history on this show. Helmsley works on the arm to start before slapping Crystal in the face like a true blueblood should. A chinlock doesn't last long and Helmsley finishes this quickly with a cutter, though the Pedigree would come soon enough. I'm always fascinated with these historical moments that no one knew would mean anything for years.

We go to Bob Backlund campaign headquarters for his first campaign ideas: children must purchase a dictionary, read one great American novel every week, ban calculators and computers and get rid of summer vacations. As a seven year old, this TERRIFIED me and I actually bought the whole thing.

The In Your House winner sees the inside for the first time and finds the Bushwhackers in a closet. I'm always stunned that they were still around at this point.

Allied Powers vs. Bill Payne/Tony DeVito

The match almost immediately goes to a split screen so we can see Bulldog electric chair Mabel. Bulldog throws DeVito around, Luger throws Payne around and the powerslam ends Bill in a hurry.

We recap Bam Bam Bigelow vs. I.R.S. from last week.

Kama Mustafa vs. Barry Horowitz

Kama is part of DiBiase's team. Barry swings away to start and has as much effect as you would expect, only to have Kama miss a charge and fall outside. Vince makes sure to mention that Barry has yet to win a match on Raw, which sounds like foreshadowing. Kama comes back with ease and finishes with a half crab.

Todd previews the Hall of Fame banquet, which is a really low level event at this point. Antonino Rocca is the first name announced for induction.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Shawn Michaels vs. King Kong Bundy

Bundy goes right after him to start so Michaels knees him in the back to put the big man on the floor. We take an early break and come back with Shawn hammering away, including some right hands in the corner. Michaels makes the mistake of going outside to mess with DiBiase though, allowing Bundy to hit him from behind and get in a slam on the floor.

We hit the fat man offense that you've come to expect from Bundy over the last ten years or so. It's off to a bearhug (a must have for any big man match) followed by a chinlock (a must have for almost any match longer than two minutes). We see Diesel and Bigelow watching in the back as Shawn avoids a splash and we take a break. Back with Shawn hitting the superkick for the pin. The post break part was less than thirty seconds.

Rating: D+. You know, this wasn't horrible. Bundy was fine for a monster for Shawn to slay, despite there being almost no chance for him to win in the first place. Michaels might be the shot in the arm this company needs as they're dying for star power and Shawn was one of the hottest acts on the roster.

Diesel and Bigelow come out to congratulate Shawn, who gives Diesel the jumping Too Sweet to show that they're cool.

Lawler won't pick a stipulation due to a dry throat.

Undertaker is ready for his King of the Ring qualifying match against Jeff Jarrett.

Overall Rating: D. Historic Raw debut aside, this was another boring show though not as boring as some of them. Shawn coming back is a really good thing for the promotion and another Lawler vs. Bret match should help them along. Above all else though they need a big bad and there really doesn't seem to be anyone capable of filling that role, including Sid. The roster is killing them right now and a big name turning heel would be the best possible option.

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