

Monday Night Raw – April 8, 2002 (2016 Redo): This Made Me Mad

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 8, 2002

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 13,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Hopefully things pick up a little bit after last week's mess of a debut for the solo red show. Backlash is in thirteen days and it's really not clear what we should be expecting from either brand, save for some of the top matches. Steve Austin is officially on Raw though and you know he's going to do something big. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Vince deciding that Hulk Hogan will be #1 contender instead of HHH. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt that they didn't change their minds so quickly but that doesn't make for an interesting storyline.

Opening sequence.

Undertaker comes out to start and wants to know what's going on around here. You and me both big man. Last week he came out here and challenged HHH and the champ accepted. Now he's out of the match for the sake of HHH vs. Hulk Hogan and that's just unacceptable. This show isn't going anywhere until someone explains this so here's Ric Flair to try and calm things down. He was wrong when he made the match because that was up to Vince but Undertaker doesn't run things around here.

Undertaker doesn't buy it because he thinks Flair is still mad about Wrestlemania. If Flair knows what's good for him, he'll make Undertaker #1 contender for the match after Backlash. That means Austin time because we haven't seen Austin vs. Undertaker in long enough. Well to be fair it had been a whole eleven months since they had a bad match.

Austin isn't happy with the idea of Undertaker getting a title match because he has a stupid bandana, tattoos, gloves, pants and boots.

Maybe Flair is scared but Austin would rather ask why Undertaker has a shirt on that says Deadman. This WHAT game is already getting annoying but it might be due to the last fourteen years or so.

Austin wants an answer so Flair makes TWO #1 contenders matches (Austin vs. Scott Hall, Undertaker vs. Rob Van Dam) because both of these guys have attacked him in recent weeks. In other words, it's a mini tournament but it's not clear if Van Dam or Hall can get the title shot at all. Heaven forbid we just cut out the nonsense and give us the only match it could realistically be.

Flair says this is about becoming #1 contender and then wants to explain what he means. Undertaker: "I know what you mean!" Now hang on a second there Deadman. All he's done is explain it in very basic detail so we can't be sure that common wrestling fans understood it. Undertaker makes bald jokes and gets punched to the floor but Austin won't Stun Flair due to threats of Somehow this took well over fifteen minutes and I can personally guarantee you this was NOT needless filler.

Hardcore Title: Bubba Ray Dudley vs. Booker T.

Booker is challenging but before we get going, he's got something to say too. Well of course he does. Apparently people are here to see the Spinarooni so let's pause while he gives the people what they want. Bubba: "Play some funky music for this white boy!" JR calls Bubba overly Caucasian before they fight out to the floor. It's such a shame to see the Alliance members just not being able to get along like this. Bubba starts throwing in the weapons, which of course include a trumpet.

The middle rope backsplash misses (only one of those a century) and Booker hammers away (Lawler: "HIT HIM WITH THE TRUMPET!") with trashcan lids. Bubba gets in a Samoan drop and hits some big elbows but there's no D-Von to get the tables. The delay lets Booker get in a spinebuster but here's Goldust with another referee. Bubba powerbombs Goldust through the table and pins him, which somehow ends the match against Booker.

Rating: D-. In addition to the boring match, we also got a really stupid ending with the actually challenger not even being pinned. This division needs to die already as they're completely out of ideas and even their own rules don't make sense a lot of the time. Bubba dancing was funny enough but this was even more filler on a

show that has been full of it so far.

Trish Stratus (looking GREAT tonight) isn't pleased with Molly Holly attacking her last week but William Regal cuts him off to talk about wanting to hurt Spike Dudley. Apparently Spike is an abortion on society and will be turned into a vegetable.

Kane is reading the Divas Magazine (I'm sure he only reads the articles) and assures Terri that just because his face is burned, the rest of him is just fine. He loves freaks and declares them cool before sucking up to the Arizona Diamondbacks fans. Where has this Kane been for the other eighteen years?

X-Pac plays with his nunchucks and tells the NWO that he's got this on his own.

Kane vs. X-Pac

Falls count anywhere for reasons that aren't clear. X-Pac jumps him at the entrance and kicks away to start but gets clotheslined out to the floor. They head into the crowd and then into the back where the NWO beats Kane down to give X-Pac the pin. This wasn't even two minutes long.

X-Pac steals Kane's mask and gives him a Conchairto but Bradshaw makes the save. I mean, he wasn't on time and didn't prevent anything but he did in fact show up.

Flair suspends Nash. Odds are he's hurt again.

European Title: William Regal vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is challenging and hits Regal in the face with the brass knuckles to win in three seconds. The referee is fine with Regal being knocked unconscious before the bell.

Random people celebrate with Spike and I'm sure the fact that they all have 7-11 Slurpees with them is a coincidence. Bubba comes up and congratulates Spike in what's supposed to be a nice moment.

Rob Van Dam vs. Undertaker

Non-title and if Undertaker wins he's #1 contender at Backlash, whatever that means. Undertaker rips at Van Dam's face to start and clotheslines him in the corner because the Intercontinental Champion is miles beneath him. Undertaker kicks and elbows Van Dam in the head as this is completely one sided so far. The legdrop hits the apron though and Van Dam hits his moonsault off the apron.

Back in and Van Dam botches his top rope kick, hitting Undertaker in the leg by mistake. At least it makes sense even if it wasn't on purpose. Van Dam goes up but gets superplexed for two, meaning it's time for a chair. Well to be fair they've been wrestling (read as Undertaker has been basically squashing him) for about seven minutes now.

A Van Daminator sets up the Five Star but here's Eddie Guerrero to go after Rob. As usual, the referee is TOTALLY FINE with this and the brawl allows Undertaker to grab a chokeslam for a near fall. Rob kicks the knee out and hits the top rope kick to the chest. The Five Star looks to finish but Eddie gets in a belt shot, setting up the Last Ride to send Undertaker....somewhere for something.

Rating: D+. It's nice for a match to get some time and I'm glad Undertaker didn't pin the champ clean but egads they were piling up the nonsense on this one. We had interference on the floor (not a DQ), a chair and a belt shot with Undertaker looking like he would have rather been anywhere else. Like on Smackdown, where there's a lot less of this nonsense.

Trish Stratus is in the ring for her match but first, Terri asks Molly Holly if she's upset because she's not as beautiful as someone like Trish. This is one of those things that I can't stand about wrestling culture (and culture in general): Molly isn't good enough because she's not Trish. I for one would never be interested in a 24 year old with shoulder length brown hair, a very natural look and the body of a professional athlete. After all she's not a great looking blonde with a lot of plastic surgery (nothing against Trish of course as she's gorgeous as well).

Molly says she's beautiful enough and doesn't need to be in paddle on a pole matches. Since this is the WWF though, that makes her a heel because in the WWF's eyes at this point, all that matters is how much skin you show. Not only is that sad but it's one of the worst possible messages you can present.

Trish Stratus vs. Molly Holly

Women's Champion Jazz is on commentary and has a black eye thanks to Trish (house show injury). Molly is back to the brown hair and it really, really suits her. Trish hammers away to start and has to drag Molly back inside. Back in and some shots to the face put Trish down but a Stratusphere draws Jazz to her feet. Trish loads up

Stratusfaction off the apron but Jazz hits her in the face with the Women's Title. Molly puts on something like an Indian deathlock before rolling Trish over for a weird looking bridging pin.

Rating: D. Is this show incapable of having a match end clean tonight? I guess we're forgetting Trish vs. Molly (and likely Molly in general) to set up Jazz vs. Trish at Backlash. This match somehow got the second most time on the show so far and it's just going downhill every single segment.

Paul Heyman tells Brock Lesnar to not attack fans, even here in Phoenix.

Here are Lesnar and Heyman with something to say. The fans tell Paul that the Yankees suck but he doesn't seem interested. Some fan. Heyman is now Lesnar's agent because Paul has managed Steve Austin, Undertaker and the WWF as a whole thanks to ECW. The important thing is that Heyman knows how to spot the next big thing, such as Brock Lesnar. We get a long video of Lesnar's destruction to date before the Hardy's run in for the beatdown. A few chair shots to the head that would get them fired today put Lesnar on the floor but can't knock him off his feet. At least he leaves for now before mauling them later.

Big Show vs. Mr. Perfect

Perfect's offense works as well as it's going to before Show chops him out to the floor. Back in and a low blow (DQ? Anybody?) sets up a PerfectPlex for one. The chokeslam ends Perfect like he's nothing.

Austin takes over Flair's office. Do we really need another angle tonight?

The announcers try to explain the #1 contenders situation and it really doesn't make sense. This includes a bunch of clips from earlier in the night and it's even more filler.

Austin throws Flair's pens around until Ric comes in to FINALLY make it clear: if Austin beats Hall tonight, he faces Undertaker for the #1 contendership. Austin: "Thank you for explaining it to me because I was a little confused." Thanks for speaking up for everyone else Steve.

Scott Hall vs. Steve Austin

Hall has X-Pac (with the Kane mask) in his corner. Austin starts fast (likely wanting to get out of here as fast as possible) and

choking with a shirt. They take turns throwing each other to the floor and Hall is sent into the steps. There's no fire to Austin here and it's showing horribly. Back in and an X-Pac distraction lets Hall take over for the first time. The chinlock doesn't go anywhere but Hall does manage to fall down when Austin tries to suplex him for the break. Some slow stomping and punches have Austin down again.

A double clothesline puts both guys down though presumably it's so Hall can have a breather. Back up and an awkward looking Thesz press has Hall in trouble but it's time for a ref bump. X-Pac gets taken out but here's Undertaker to chokeslam Austin. That brings out Bradshaw to fight Undertaker into the crowd. Hall gets the fall away slam and the referee is bumped again so X-Pac can come in. That means Flair comes out to knock X-Pac into a Stunner. Another Stunner to Hall sends Austin to Backlash.

Rating: D-. Both of these guys need to be off this show almost immediately. Austin might have a bit of a role for a while but Hall was a DISASTER here, barely able to do even the most basic stuff right and looking embarrassing in the process. The fact that we had four people interfere and two ref bumps in a nine minute match to hide how bad this would have been otherwise tells you all you need to know.

Austin Stuns Flair to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. This was horrible and you can pick your favorite reason why. It could be Molly possibly being evil because she's not pretty enough, it could be the horrible wrestling, it could be one screwy finish after another or it could be the main story that was so confusing that multiple people called it complicated. I don't remember a show this bad in a long time and I can't imagine it's going to get much worse than this. The match of the night was the Intercontinental Champion losing in a match just a step above a squash. If that's the best that Raw can do, this show is in big, big trouble.

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